



Reaching Out to Darfur:
The humanitarian crisis in the war-torn region has affected food and housing prices as more people are displaced.

USF Faculty, Students Gauge Impact of Aid in Darfur

University of San Francisco professors of sociology, economics, and environmental science have combined their expertise to assess the impact of humanitarian food aid, a flood of internally displaced persons, and the influx of foreign aid workers on the daily lives of city dwellers in war-torn Darfur.

Anne Bartlett, assistant professor of sociology and director of the Darfur Centre for Human Rights and Development, Jennifer Alix-Garcia, assistant professor of economics, David Saah, assistant professor of environmental sciences, and Abdelbagi Elsadig Elawad, formerly of the Western Sudan Development Project, are leading the first comprehensive look at the effectiveness of aid in the region.

The study will analyze the connection between local economies, social well-being, and the environmental effects of the conflict. Little empirical data have been collected about the impact of the ongoing genocide to city residents, with most attention paid to

the forced removal of rural populations from their land and the wholesale destruction of their communities. Those who flee often seek shelter in camps near cities, driving up housing and food costs, degrading the surrounding environment, and straining government and aid organization resources, Bartlett said.

Establishing the impact of refugees to their host cities is critical because many urban residents themselves survive at a subsistence level, Alix-Garcia said.

Analyzing the unintended consequences of the largest humanitarian effort in the world could help aid organizations improve their efficiency, while avoiding criticism of current efforts, Bartlett said.

“There is now an abundance of evidence (showing) that poorly directed aid can often do more harm than good, and that it is imperative to have a thorough understanding of the dynamics of a local situation before sending money and technical assistance,” Alix-Garcia said. [USF](#)

Summer Abroad Popularity Soars

For a growing number of University of San Francisco students, summer is less a time for road trips and extended family weekends than it is for immersion in a foreign culture.

From taking classes in sustainable development in Nicaragua to exploring international business in Spain and tending to homeless children and HIV/AIDS patients in South Africa, more USF students than ever are signing up for study abroad, immersion, and volunteer service-learning trips.

Since 2005, the number of USF students spending part of their summer abroad has increased by 157 percent, to about 230 from about 90, according to Sharon Li, director of the Center for Global Education,

which oversees university-related student travel programs.

She attributes the increase to more for-credit courses being developed by faculty and a greater focus on encouraging students to challenge themselves by experiencing a foreign culture. “It’s the whole idea of internationalizing our campus,” Li said. “Having gone on a couple of these trips myself, I have seen the students change and their minds opening to different perspectives.”

In all, USF managed or had students participating in 16 for-credit foreign study trips, 11 immersion or volunteer or not-for-credit trips, and four graduate field tours last summer. [USF](#)