



As a community extension worker, Bakeet supports Adam from the very beginning of the farming process until the harvest. Here on Adam's farm, Bakheet holds a sample of the success Adam achieved. Photographer: Monjid Mustafa/CRS

# Integrating Social Cohesion Sudan

## CASE STUDY 4: THE POWERFUL IMPACT OF STRENGTHENING SOCIAL COHESION TO IMPROVE LIVELIHOOD AND RESILIENCE OUTCOMES AROUND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN DARFUR, SUDAN

In western Sudan's Darfur region, a CRS-led consortium strengthened social cohesion and community conflict management capacity around natural resource management (NRM) and resilience activities. CRS and partners developed more inclusive community groups and focused on dialogue-centered approaches toward equal participation in accessing and managing shared resources. This was an important contribution in a context with eroded trust in traditional government institutions and their limited capacities for natural resource governance.

As a result, diverse communities of subsistence farmers and nomadic pastoralists organized themselves to develop an inclusive and equitable approach for effective community governance.

This plan yielded significant improvements to year-round access to land and water for their crops and livestock. CRS' emphasis on deliberately integrating social cohesion and justice around natural resource management considerably improved outcomes for diverse communities in fragile contexts.

**Country:** Sudan

**Project location:** 283 communities in 16 localities across five states of Darfur region

**Target population:** 60,000 households directly and 95,000 households indirectly; farmers and pastoralists, returnees and host communities

**CRS' role:** Leads consortium and implements project in West Darfur (Habla and Foroboranga) and East Darfur (El Firdous and Assalaya)

**Duration:** Approximately 7,5 years. The project covers two implementation periods: Taadoud I operated from 2014 to 2017 and the current Taadoud II project period is April 2018 to March 2022

**Donor:** UK Department for International Development (DFID)

**Partners:** Norwegian Church Aid Sudan, Oxfam America, and World Vision. The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) is the technical lead for disaster risk reduction and does not have implementation responsibilities

## THE TAADOUD PROJECT

Taadoud is Arabic for ‘working together in solidarity.’ The project aims to build resilient livelihoods for rural populations (returnees and host communities) affected by conflict. It operates in 283 communities across all five Darfur states. CRS leads the consortium and implements the project in West Darfur and East Darfur.

A defining feature of the current phase emphasizes governance and NRM as the entry point for addressing broader environmental and social issues. In the project operational areas, livelihoods center around livestock (cattle, camels, goats and sheep) and rain-fed subsistence farming of the three most commonly grown crops (sorghum, millet, and groundnut). In response to competition and conflict in an environment of scarcity and absence of formal government institutions or structures, different groups came together to develop diverse community-level groups.

*“Social cohesion is built when diverse communities come together to discuss, negotiate and collaborate to plan for access and use of natural resources.” Mohammed Adam (Chief of Party CRS/Sudan).*

The groups optimize dialogue-based activities to learn how to work together best and develop plans for sharing natural resources. From that process, communities recognize the value of positive relationships to ensure equitable and inclusive solutions and reduce tensions that could escalate to conflict.

### MAIN PROJECT INTEGRATION STRATEGIES



**Empower community-based groups through inclusive, diverse representation**

Based on the premise that local communities drive both the identifiers of need and solutions, CRS and partners revitalized the structure of existing community-led groups to be more inclusive of the primary livelihood groups. Farmers and pastoralists joined catchment-level Community Action Groups (CAGs) and local-level NRM and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) committees, offering knowledge, insights, and perspectives on natural resource use and management. CAGs, in addition, included extension and local authorities. Broader stakeholder engagement produced conditions and opportunities to hold conversations on breaking down existing barriers and creating a shared agenda.



**Build capacity of communities through participatory training and dialogue-based approaches**

CRS and partners conducted trainings to build the governance and social cohesion capacity of all stakeholders. CRS’ 3Bs and 4Ds<sup>1</sup> method focused on creating positive dynamics between groups,

contributing to identifying and managing natural resources in mutually beneficial ways. From these trainings, CAGs, for example, assessed vulnerability around scarce common resources and drew from their capacities to effectively address complex situations.



**Develop and implement equitable and inclusive plans for shared natural resources**

Community-based CAGs and NRM and DRR committees led the development of plans to manage shared resources. The interplay between plan development and implementation relied heavily on strengthening social ties to avoid any potential conflict and make long-lasting gains for the entire community. Developing these plans is highly dependent on the full participation of all stakeholders to promote and secure buy-in.



**Promote efficiency of the entire natural resource system**

In the processes of NRM plan development and implementation, emphasis is placed on promoting resilience of the natural resources base, recognizing the fact that the ability of the environment and resource base to support livelihoods and the local economic outlook is a determining factor for lasting peace. To this effect, both demand-side and supply-side management have been considered to promote efficient use of natural resources while maintaining the sustainability of these resources for present and future generations.

### RESULTS OF INTEGRATION

- Improved equitable and uninterrupted year-round access to natural resources for farmer households, increasing from 13% in the 2018 baseline to 44% in the 2020 survey.<sup>2</sup>
- 80% of the project participants manage stressors together as a community rather than as individual households (6% increase from baseline).<sup>3</sup>
- Improved community members’ knowledge of peaceful coexistence and supporting friendly relationships. By supporting local groups such as CAGs, Taadoud II has supported the social cohesion fabric in the project areas.<sup>4</sup>
- Strengthening community-level organizations with broad levels of inclusivity contributed to improved social ties and strengthened social fabric in marginalized communities.<sup>5</sup>
- Project participants and staff report improved cohesion in the form of decreased tension, fewer disputes between farmers and pastoralists over grazing land and tree cutting and reduced numbers of conflicts between host and refugee community members over the ownership of agricultural land.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CRS’ 3Bs (Binding, Bonding, Bridging) peace-building approach and 4Ds of Appreciative Inquiry (Discover, Dream, Design and Deliver) method

<sup>2</sup> 2020 Taadoud II interim survey and mid-term evaluation, TANGO International, October 2020.

<sup>3</sup> 2017 Taadoud I final evaluation report, Taadoud, Transition to Development, TANGO International.

<sup>4 & 5 & 6</sup> 2020 Taadoud II mid-term evaluation, TANGO International, October 2020.