

# SUDAN

## Protracted Emergency Shelter Programming



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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Country:** Sudan

**Project location:** West Darfur

**Conflict:** Protracted conflict

**Conflict date:** 2003

**Project timescale:** 2005–2012

**Affected population:** Over 2.4 million

**CRS target population:** 72,600 people, 12,000 households (between 2008–2012)

**Material cost per shelter:** Wooden frame: \$200/shelter; metal frame: \$245/shelter

**Project cost per shelter/household:** Approximately \$385/shelter (material, other direct, indirect and support costs)

**Project budget:** Approximately \$40–45 million: USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, CRS private funds, Catholic Aid for England and Wales (CAFOD), Caritas Australia, American Red Cross, Firstgreen Foundation



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## What did CRS do?

- Provided materials for construction of 6,043 wooden frame shelters.
- Provided materials for construction of 6,057 metal frame shelters.
- Conducted assessments and verifications of IDPs in 14 camps, and provided them with NFI kits for the rainy and winter seasons, supported by the United Nations Joint Logistics Cluster (UNJLC).
- Trained 30 shelter committees (2010–2012).

**"I can now sleep comfortably without worry of the rains or scorching sun, I enjoy a good environment and more freedom on my own plot."**

– Mariam Abdalla Bakir, 32, recipient of a CRS-supported home

## Background

The Darfur conflict broke out in 2003, involving government forces, warring tribes, rebels and militias. At the time of this programming, the conflict had affected 4.7 million people, including families who fled to Chad as refugees and at least 2.4 million people internally displaced and living in camps close to urban centers in Darfur's western region. According to the UN, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed in the conflict, and cities and towns saw absolute destruction of their infrastructure, including schools, home and markets. Due to the displacement, most lost their main sources of income: trading, farming and livestock rearing. Furthermore, as they settled in camps, they became dependent on humanitarian aid.

Following the signing of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) in 2011, the security situation in some parts of Darfur improved, leading to an increase in spontaneous returns of families to their homes: Approximately 46,000 people who had been displaced within Darfur and 15,000 refugees from the border areas of Chad voluntarily returned to their areas of origin. With the trend having been expected to continue, humanitarian actors, including CRS, expanded its support to providing permanent, safe homes to the most vulnerable families making their return.

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## Protracted Shelter Programming

CRS first began emergency shelter programming in the Darfur region of Sudan soon after the outbreak of the conflict in 2005 and has continued providing uninterrupted support ever since, due to the complex nature of the protracted conflict. While CRS and other humanitarian actors have supported ongoing emergency shelter to families uprooted and internally displaced by the conflict, the approaches to providing a safe living environment have progressed over time given the evolving local context and security situation. However, what remained constant was the need for a safe home for the most vulnerable families caught up in this devastating conflict.

## Emergency Shelter Programming in Darfur

CRS has supported Emergency Shelter (ES) and Non-Food Items (NFI) relief efforts without interruption in West Darfur, beginning in 2004 with urgent distributions of NFI items. The scope of activities expanded in 2005 to include shelter construction. CRS was an active partner of the ES/NFI cluster in responding to emergency shelter needs until 2012.

CRS conducted assessments in Mukjar, Habila, Forobaranga, Geneina, Kulbus, Sirba and Jebel Moon localities of West Darfur and, based on these results, priorities shelter and NFI programming for the most vulnerable people. Priority needs included plastic sheeting for shelters, given their deterioration over time and need for seasonal replacement. CRS provided safe shelters to newly displaced families, those affected by flooding or fire, and, more recently (beginning in 2012), meeting the needs of returnees.

From 2008 to 2012, CRS constructed 12,100 emergency shelters. In addition, CRS distributed and replenished critical NFIs for the rainy and winter seasons in camps in targeted locations. Activities were carried out in partnership with the World Food Program (WFP) Logistic Coordination Unit (LCU), which served as the cluster lead.

## Project Principles

The aim of the CRS shelter program in Darfur is to contribute to improving the quality of life for communities and families devastated by conflict, while increasing their resilience to future disasters. A safe home is a basic need, and critical for families to have protection from the elements, good health, and alleviated threats to family members and the security of their belongings.

### The CRS Shelter Programming Approach focuses on three components:

- 1. Provision of shelter construction materials** to the most vulnerable and disaster-affected families. CRS provided fabricated metal frames while the community provided local materials like grass mats and bamboo panels, as well as the labor for construction.
- 2. Training for shelter committees on construction and hazard mitigation.** The need to train shelter committees came because of an observation that some shelters were unsuitable for living and/ or offered little safety and protection from the elements. CRS had recognized the need to address the risks of fire and flooding, inhalation of smoke from cooking, dusty internal conditions, and weak ventilation. Thus, the shelter committees benefited from trainings that helped them support families to incorporate improved safety measures into their shelter construction.
- 3. Building capacity of national implementing partners.** In 2012, CRS was partnering with two national organizations in Darfur: Trust Rehabilitation and Development Organization and Rural Community Development Organization. CRS staff worked closely with its partners at field level to strengthen and build their capacity for assessments, verifications and distributions.

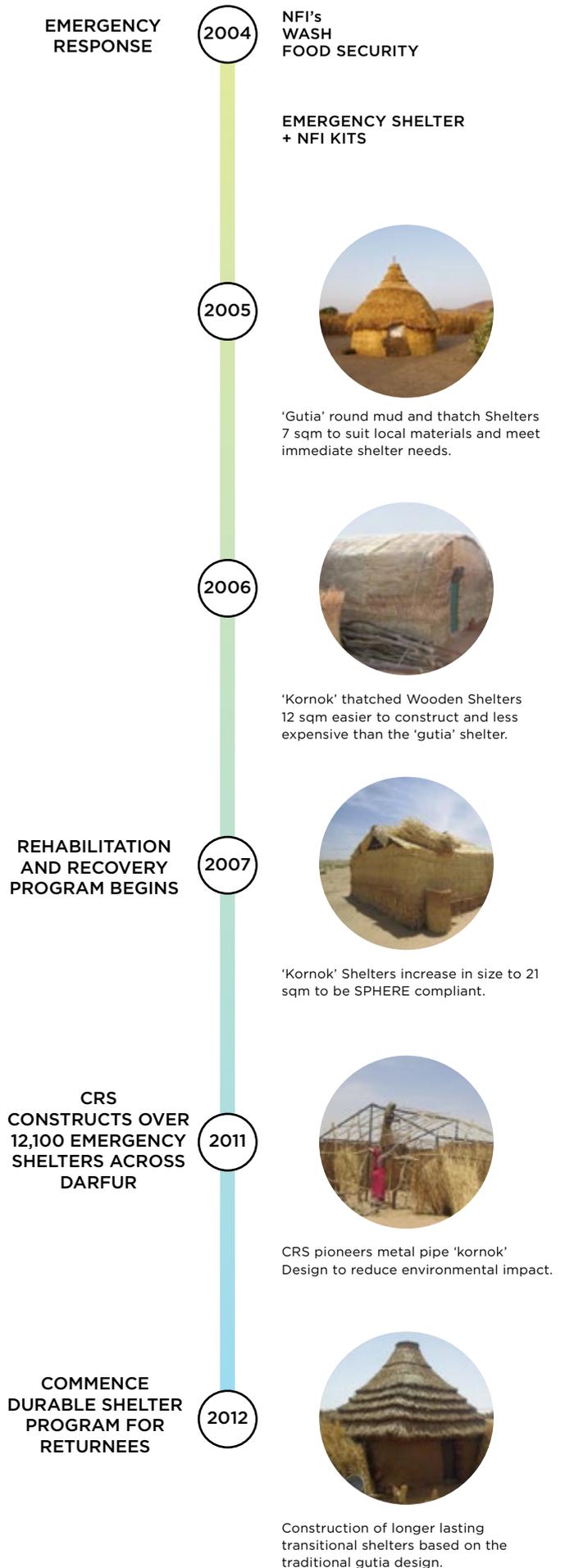
*"[The houses] are spacious and decent and have given my community members the opportunity to live a decent life despite our situation. Because of CRS, we now have a house. I feel human again. Me and my family rose from ashes to hope."*

- says Abdel-Mausa Daud, recipient of a CRS-supported home

## Technical Design Changes

Initially, CRS implemented emergency shelters featuring a wooden frame composed entirely of local materials. At the time, this was necessary due to the urgency of humanitarian support. In 2011, CRS pioneered the metal frame shelter. This design replaced the wooden frame shelters, which—because of the heavy use of local wood—had a negative impact on the environment. The metal frame shelters were collapsible for ease of mobility, if it became necessary. The shelter design was comprised of 2-inch iron pipes, bamboo sticks and grass-mats. The iron pipes were sourced and fabricated locally by CRS, while the other materials were sourced by the community locally.

The dimensions of a kornok structure shelter is 4m x 5.25m (21m<sup>2</sup>). According to the families CRS served, the main benefit was the adaptability of the design to local climatic conditions, especially given the region's extreme weather patterns of torrential rains, hot and dry spells, windy periods and cold seasons. Additionally, the shelters offered privacy and a degree of protection from crime—vital in a conflict situation.



Timeline showing CRS strategies and changes to shelter models over time. West Darfur 2003-2012. Credit: CRS

## Development of Shelter Design

CRS continued to adapt and improve the Darfur shelter design to meet the changing needs of the community, as well as make use of local material availability and construction skills.

The initial round gutia shelter in 2005 replicated vernacular building types and was made of mud, thatch and wood. This design met an immediate need for shelter, was durable and could be made from locally available materials. However, the size of the shelter (7m<sup>2</sup>) was not adequate for most families. Additionally, the construction process of the gutia was quite labor-intensive. Given that the nature of the emergency necessitated quick access to shelter for internally displaced families, the original shelter design construction was too time consuming and not easily relocatable in the volatile environment.

This prompted CRS to offer a simpler, larger prototype shelter: The kornok shelter was slightly larger (12m<sup>2</sup>), with a rectangular footprint of 3m x 4m. Like the gutia, it was made of local materials—shargania grass mats and wood—but it was easier to construct, could be dismantled and transported by participants if necessary, and cost less. This shelter was implemented at a number of sites.

In 2007, it was felt that the kornok shelter should be enlarged. A larger kornok of 4m x 5.25m would provide 21m<sup>2</sup> area, meeting Sphere recommendations of 3.5 m<sup>2</sup> per person for a family of six. The cost of an enlarged kornok shelter increased from \$108 to between \$160–180 per shelter. However, material and transport costs increased between 2006–2007.

In 2011, CRS felt that the use of timber was no longer sustainable, and pioneered a metal pipe kornok structure that was later adopted by the cluster as the most suitable for emergencies in Darfur.

In 2012, in areas where people were returning home, CRS was able to work with families to provide more durable, longer lasting transitional shelters. These designs meet SPHERE requirements, were constructed of mud and thatch, and were similar to the original round 'Gutia' design.

## Program Participants

CRS shelter staff regularly conducted field assessments and verifications to determine which families would receive shelter and NFI support. These exercises were conducted in close collaboration with local authorities and community leaders (sheikhs). For emergency shelter, CRS gave priority to newly displaced families, disaster affected families (affected by fire or floods) and extremely vulnerable groups in targeted returnee communities. Shelter materials were issued only upon verification that construction would be done on officially demarcated land. For NFIs, CRS provided winter and rainy season replenishments to the most vulnerable families who meet the sector vulnerability criteria.

## Learnings & Recommendations

### Challenges

- Poor infrastructure restricted CRS staff's access to program participants, especially in deep field locations during rainy season. This affected timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to the most affected communities.
- The security situation in Darfur was fluid and dynamic. Insecurity in some locations limited humanitarian access.
- There were ongoing challenges regarding beneficiary selection in some communities because of sheikhs trying to manipulate or influence the process. At times, this led to delays in implementation while further consultations were held.



Project participants outside original smaller 12sqm wood 'Kornok' shelter.

Photo: Debbie de Voe / CRS



Project participants family outside completed new 'Kornok' shelter.

Photo: CRS

## Acknowledgements

CRS Sudan country office and regional offices. Andrew Lokong. Special thanks to our donors USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), CAFOD, Caritas Australia, American Red Cross, Firstgreen Foundation and several our private donors and our partners WFP and the Joint Logistics Cluster.

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