Meeting with community based reconciliation group in Masteriha, West Darfur

Community based reconciliation mechanisms (CBRMs) are at the core of all DCPSF projects. Implementing partners create new CBRMs or rehabilitate existing groups while remaining sensitive to local culture and context. The groups handle community disputes related to crop destruction, natural resources, small crimes, and more. They function based on the concept of judiya, a mediation where both sides agree to the outcome. Support to CBRMs, when combined with targeted livelihoods input and improved natural resource management practices, contribute to community stability. (DCPSF/Ahmed)
ANOTHER CHANCE TO LEARN, ANOTHER CHANCE FOR PEACE

Habila, West Darfur: Zainab Abdalla Abaker, 17, from a village outside Habila town, never finished primary school. This was for many reasons, including insecurity in Darfur from 2003, her family’s displacement from home, and her need to work to help support her family. By 2008, Zainab and her family returned to their village, but still she was unable to go to school. She joined many young people from both pastoral and farming communities in her area of Darfur who had not finished their education.

In November 2015, Catholic Relief Services, along with their local partner West Darfur Youth Organization for Development (WDYOD), launched informal Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) classes in Zainab’s village, Rejelnabak, to give young people like her the opportunity to complete their schooling. Zainab and her husband agreed she should seize the opportunity to enrol.

Working alongside the state Ministry of Education, the Sharing Our Assets and Resources (SOAR) higher project operated in 7 villages of Habila and brought together 435 (233 girls) pastoralist and farmer children and young people through informal education.

The classes were flexible, allowing Zainab to balance her family responsibilities with learning, and she successfully passed her primary certificate exam. She planned to continue on to second year classes:

“The ALP provided me an opportunity to complete my basic education and helped me to resume school. I will continue my second year classes due to flexible class timings …”

Providing ALP programming and basic school infrastructure as part of a peace project equips youth with the skills necessary to be community members and leaders.

The classes themselves also serve as a forum to bring together diverse communities to learn and socialize, whilst introducing CRS’s Ministry of Education adopted peacebuilding curriculum to the older students. The curriculum includes readings on peace and social cohesion.

The young people had the chance to put these skills into action. Eighty five people from the ALP programmes (32 women) participated in community based conflict resolution mechanisms, helping to resolve issues related to crop destruction and other sources of tension in the community.

The state Ministry of Education worked with CRS to plan for the sustainability of ALP classes after the project’s closure. CRS trained 7 ALP teachers and handed over responsibilities to community-led support structures, so that young people like Zainab, and others who may have missed their first opportunity for education, have another chance not only to learn but also to support their communities in new ways.
RESOLVING TENSIONS BEFORE THEY ESCALATE

Sirba and Jebel Moon, West Darfur: DCPSF partner Rural Community Development Organisation (RCDO) is supporting a community-based reconciliation mechanism (CBRM) in Tanjekie village.

During the recent dry season, access to water became contentious, as farmers were planting while pastoralists needed water for their animals.

Overall, 34% of matters dealt with by DCPSF CBRMs have to do with crop destruction. A recent case tackled by the Tanjekie village group shows how they prevented crop destruction before it happened.

A farmer had enlarged his farm to such an extent that pastoralists could not access a crucial water point.

The pastoralists raised this issue with their leadership, and their Omda brought the issue to the farmers’ Omda.

The farmers’ Omda called the CBRM committee to a meeting, inviting both the aggrieved pastoralists and the farmer himself to discuss the matter and reach an agreement.

Together, the committee visited the field, and they agreed that the farmer had moved out of bounds.

The farmer agreed to re-open the pathway leading to the well, allowing animals to water there and resolving the potential point of conflict before it escalated.
COOPERATION ON RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN UM TAJOK, WEST DARFUR

West Darfur: DCPSF partner ADRA Sudan has been working in West Darfur since 2004.

In June 2016, the area was affected by tension between communities over the use of grazing land, which led to significant population displacement from surrounding villages (including one of the villages targeted by the project) to nearby Um Tajok town.

Nafeer for those displaced

The farmer field schools ADRA and their partners Future for Community Development (FCD) and Voluntary Organisation for Rural Communities (VORC), had established in Um Tajok East and West to train communities on improved farming techniques took initiative and collected contributions from the community to buy seeds and plants for displaced families, and conducted a day of nafeer (volunteering) to help plant them.

Creating more diverse reconciliation and resource management groups

Tensions over use of natural resources, are a frequent concern in Um Tajok, where local communities depend on water and grazing land for their livelihoods.

Since the end of July, Um Tajok has remained fairly stable after a peace agreement was reached. CBRMs supported by the project were part of the reconciliation meeting over grazing land.

A diversity of membership in CBRMs and resource management groups supports community cohesion. In close cooperation with traditional leaders and community members, the project has expanded eight existing CBRMs to include more nomadic members from different tribes.

In addition, seven Community-Based Management Mechanisms (CBMMs) (mainly water and environmental hygiene committees) were established, charged specifically with working out agreements over the sharing and management of natural resources.
Further reading: “Risk Resilience and Pastoralist Mobility”

A recent paper from the Feinstein International Center, “Risk, Resilience, and Pastoralist Mobility,” (August 2016, available here as pdf) looks at pastoralism in Darfur, as well as tension over resources between pastoralists and settled farmers.

The paper notes the importance of livestock corridors “to improve relations as pastoralist herds are able to pass through farming areas unhindered and make stops at specific rest places. Therefore, herds are less likely to trespass on fields and damage crops.”

The authors also note that “Herder-farmer conflicts are usually disputes between individual land users whose livelihoods are equally threatened. In practice, the disputes are best dealt with locally, involving local tribal leadership as needed.”