



Joint Project in North Kordofan, Sudan

PROMOTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACHES TO NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR PEACE

INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT AT OCTOBER 2017

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The *Joint Project on Gender-Responsive Approaches to Natural Resource Management for Peace in Sudan* is the first pilot project established by the global programme of the same name. It is implemented through an organizational partnership between UN Environment, UN Women and UNDP.

Building on interventions conducted under UNDP's Community Security and Stabilization Programme (C2SP), the Project seeks to strengthen women's roles in local peacebuilding processes over natural resource-based conflicts by building women's capacity to participate more effectively in local planning and decision-making bodies that govern access to and use of natural resources in Al Rahad, North Kordofan, a community that is beset by climate-related environmental degradation and increasing conflicts over natural resources.

This report provides an update on the progress of implementation between the start of the project in March 2017 and end October 2017.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

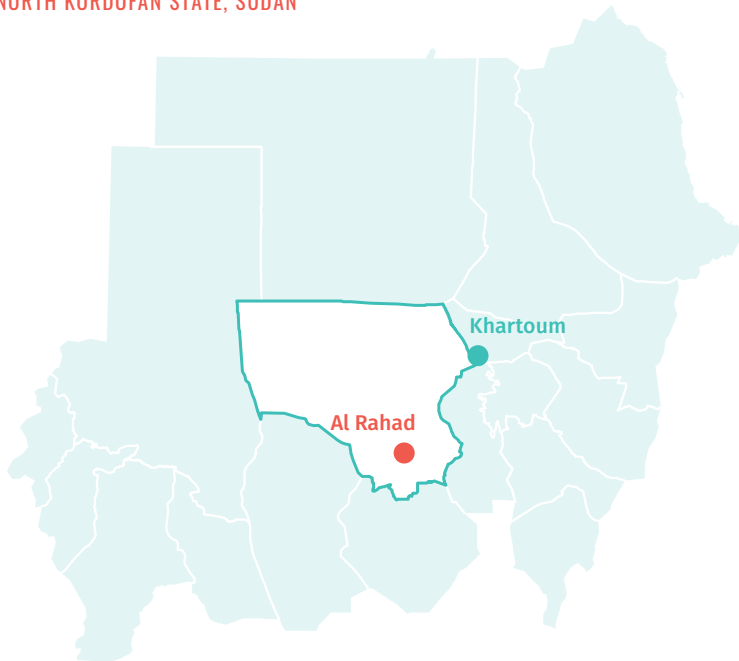
- ➔ **Women’s livelihood opportunities increased:** Activities under the Project’s first component were completed. Support provided through the Project resulted in a 35% overall increase in the number of women benefiting from the interventions of the C2SP, including doubling of the number of women benefiting from vegetable and gum arabic production activities.
- ➔ **Women’s participation strengthened:** The project was successful in increasing the number of women involved in decision-making through the Community Management Committee (CMC) of the C2SP from 12% to 32% (8 out of 25). These women have received training on conflict mitigation and resolution, as well a range of other skills, and constitute the core group of women leaders whose capacity and agency will continue to be fostered through the other Project components.
- ➔ **Solutions identified to overcome barriers to effective participation in conflict resolution:** A series of consultations, in the form of focus group discussions and interviews, was completed to increase the overall understanding of women’s representation, roles and levels of influence in mediation and dispute resolution processes around natural resources. The findings validated the Project’s strategy to go beyond training of women to support the creation of new platforms where women’s groups can convene, articulate priorities and formalize influence. An initial set of solutions was identified, including the creation of a “forum” linked to existing conflict resolution structures to organize women and increase their visibility and engagement.
- ➔ **Community sensitized to key gender issues with respect to natural resources and conflict resolution:** Gender “sensitization” sessions were conducted for 180 community members, including youth groups and traditional leaders, with the aim of helping to demystify the concept of gender and increasing awareness of women’s knowledge, agency and capacity for conflict resolution.
- ➔ **Project considered a model for the UN in Sudan:** Specific efforts were also made to ensure dissemination of early results within the UN system in Sudan, in order to raise awareness and catalyse uptake of the Project’s approach and strategy within broader peace and development programming in the country. Despite its relatively modest size, the Project has been received with significant interest in Sudan, where it is seen as an example of operationalization of the Humanitarian, Peacebuilding and Development (HPD) nexus.

NEXT STEPS (NOVEMBER 2017 – MARCH 2018)

COMPONENT	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE				
		NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
2	Community Environmental Action Planning Process		●	●		
3	Creation and facilitation of women’s conflict resolution forum		●	●	●	
3	Research on women pastoralists		●	●	●	
4	Finalization of documentation and knowledge products				●	●

CONTEXT

LOCATION OF AL RAHAD, NORTH KORDOFAN STATE, SUDAN



The state of North Kordofan, like many regions in Sudan, is characterized by local and regional conflicts, unemployment, displacement, poverty and under-development. It borders North Darfur to its west and South Kordofan to its south – two states that have endured violent armed conflict for several years. This has resulted in an influx of both weapons and internally displaced persons (IDPs) into North Kordofan, which, combined with limited local economic opportunities, has led to increasing instability.

The locality of Al Rahad in North Kordofan State is in many ways emblematic of the prevailing challenges faced by the region. Located on the southern fringes of the Al Baja desert, the area used to be one of the largest gum arabic producers in the country. However, deforestation and drought have damaged and destroyed acacia trees, with the result that production has been undermined. This has had significant negative impacts on the livelihoods of the sedentary population, a majority of which relies on farming. Local livelihoods have also been undermined by increasing seasonal conflicts with pastoralists. The El-Nino phase has exacerbated the problem by contributing to crop failure, water scarcity and inevitable overcrowding of water and pasture resources.

Among other factors, conflicts in Al Rahad can be attributed to the existence of different groups of resource users making demands on an increasingly degraded environment. Conflicts occur mainly when cattle nomads trespass on agricultural fields – including gum Arabic trees that are used as fodder for herds – or when farmers cultivate and grow crops on migratory routes, resulting in crop destruction, land degradation and disputes. For political and historical reasons, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms – such as the “Jodeya mediation” – have become less efficient at actually resolving conflicts.

In addition, due to its proximity to South Kordofan, which has been the scene of violent conflict between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N) since 2011, Al Rahad continues to provide a safe haven for 42,000 IDPs. This further stretches the limited basic services and natural resources available in the region, and creates tension between IDPs and host communities.



Photo credit: Grant Wroe-Street/UN Environment

Like most rural women in Sudan, women in the sedentary communities of Al Rahad play a central role in the agricultural sector and in the provision of water, food and energy at the household and community levels. They are therefore particularly susceptible to changes in the availability and quality of these resources due to environmental degradation and conflict, although are differently affected depending on their socio-economic class, tribe and the livelihood group they belong to.



THERE ARE VILLAGES WHERE THERE ARE ALMOST NO MEN. THEY HAVE MIGRATED TO MINE GOLD OR LEFT FOR THE CITIES. IN THESE VILLAGES, THE ADULTS LEFT ARE WOMEN AND OLD MEN. WOMEN ARE NOW DOING ALL THE WORK THAT THEIR MEN USED TO DO.

MAJDA MUTWAKIL, MEMBER OF THE CMC

While both men and women engage in agricultural activities as a key source of livelihood, women (especially poor women) are heavily involved in land preparation, planting, weeding and harvesting – in total, some 60% of the farming workload in the area is undertaken by women, in addition to water and fuel collection. The increased role played by women in the agricultural sector has been compounded in recent years by an increase in migration amongst men that has left more women in charge and meant they have had to shoulder more responsibilities within their households and communities. Indeed, men in the community, especially younger men, have increasingly been migrating to the capital Khartoum, to join agricultural schemes in White Nile State and Gezira State, or to participate in artisanal gold mining operations in other parts of the country.

Despite their significant and increasing roles in natural resource management, women (across all socio-economic and ethnic grounds) do not as a rule take part in existing resource governance and conflict resolution mechanisms that address disputes and grievances over natural resources. Structures at the community level that are involved in the management of natural resources and resolution of conflicts are usually the traditional native administration, which do not include women.



Photo credit: UN Environment

THE PROJECT

THE COMMUNITY SECURITY AND STABILIZATION PROGRAMME (C2SP)

The “Community Security and Stabilization Programme” (C2SP) was established by UNDP in 2015 to prevent conflict and strengthen peace by contributing to the stability and resilience of selected communities at risk of being drawn into conflict in five states bordering South Sudan: South Kordofan, West Kordofan, North Kordofan, Blue Nile and White Nile. As of 2017, the programme has intervened in 18 communities out of 93 targeted by the project on the basis of an initial context analysis. The C2SP’s objectives are achieved in several ways:

1. C2SP STRENGTHENS THE RESILIENCE OF TARGET COMMUNITIES BY PROVIDING DIVERSIFIED ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS FOR AT-RISK GROUPS;
2. C2SP SEEKS TO CREATE A CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR GRADUATED SMALL ARMS CONTROL AT THE SUB-REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEVELS;
3. C2SP PROVIDES SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY TO TARGET BENEFICIARIES IN AT-RISK COMMUNITIES;
4. C2SP STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO MANAGE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND OVERSEE SERVICE PROVIDERS; AND
5. C2SP PROMOTES CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AMONG THE COMMUNITIES AND AUTHORITIES FOR ENHANCING STABILITY WITHIN THE BORDERING COMMUNITIES.

At the core of C2SP interventions is the Community Management Committee (CMC), an inclusive body whose membership is drawn from all ethnic tribes, traditional leaders/native administration, youth, women and other groups within a particular community. The CMC is endorsed by local leaders and legally registered with relevant government departments to act as an authorized representative body of the community to engage external partners on development affairs, and participate in decision-making processes on community development, among other mandates.

This Joint Project seeks to strengthen the peace-building outcomes of UNDP’s Community Security and Stabilization Programme or C2SP (*see box*) in Al Rahad by empowering women to play a stronger role in the governance and management of natural resources, as well as the prevention and resolution of conflicts linked to them.

The Project aims to demonstrate that strengthening women’s participation in natural resource management and governance can result in more inclusive, effective and sustainable peacebuilding mechanisms.

This is achieved by focusing resources and interventions around three main areas that build on the interventions that the C2SP is implementing, in addition to a strong monitoring and evaluation component that will ensure that best practices and lessons learned are systematically documented. These three areas constitute the project components, as follows:

- ➔ ENSURING WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH GENDER-RESPONSIVE NATURAL RESOURCE-BASED LIVELIHOODS;
- ➔ STRENGTHENING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN RESOURCE GOVERNANCE THROUGH COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING; AND
- ➔ INCREASING WOMEN’S CAPACITY AND OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN NATURAL RESOURCE CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION.

VET-CARE ORGANIZATION (VCO)

Vet-Care is a Sudanese non-governmental organization founded in 2003 by Sudanese professionals with expertise in rural development projects. VCO aims at empowering rural communities to achieve food security, improved livelihoods and peace by helping them to develop their organizational and technical capabilities, support them with technical inputs and link them with relevant resources and markets. They have implemented more than a dozen in the Kordofan region, including in the El Obeid and Al Rahad area, and have strong networks and contacts with local authorities and communities. Vet-Care is a key implementing partner for UNDP's C2SP programme, as well as Finland, Switzerland, France, Japan, Canada and others.

The Joint Project is managed by a Joint Implementation Committee comprised of representatives of each agency, based in Khartoum. Members of the Committee travel regularly to the project location to provide technical support, oversee implementation of key activities, document lessons and monitor progress.

The key implementing partner on the ground is Vet-Care Organization (*see box*), a Sudanese non-governmental organization with significant experience in community projects in the region. C2SP staff based in North Kordofan provides key support and oversight.

The project's inception phase started in October 2016. The goal of the inception phase was to allow for in-depth background research, including a detailed fact-finding mission to North Kordofan during which consultations and interviews were conducted with a wide range of stakeholders. Based on the findings, the project design was partially revised and the implementation started in earnest in March 2017.

As of October 2017, activities in Component 1 have been completed and activities in Component 3 are partially completed. Component 2 is under preparation and will commence implementation before end 2017. The project is due to be completed by end March 2018.

UNDP, UN Women and UN Environment Country Representatives, together with the UN Resident Coordinator, at the project launch ceremony



Photo credit: Shaza Suleiman/UN Environment

PROGRESS AT OCTOBER 2017

Output 1: Livelihood interventions address women's specific needs and circumstances

C2SP ACTIVITIES TO DATE	JOINT PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO DATE	JOINT PROJECT RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➔ Vegetable production introduced: land acquired, water source and accessories provided for irrigation of vegetable farms; vegetable seeds and tools distributed; market access for vegetables improved➔ Gum arabic production: training provided on tapping, collection, handling and storage of gum arabic, and tools distributed; market and private sector linkages established for gum arabic producers➔ Gum acacia tree reforestation: nursery established and seedlings transplanted to fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➔ Gender assessment conducted to understand baseline situation with respect to women's roles and responsibilities, livelihood and economic opportunities➔ Support (including financial sponsorship) provided to increase number of women beneficiaries and number of women in management structures➔ Technical advice provided to ensure livelihood interventions fully benefit women as well as men➔ Partnership established with women's association to improve access to market	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➔ 35% overall increase in number of women beneficiaries of the interventions of the C2SP➔ Doubling of number of women benefiting from vegetable production interventions➔ Doubling of number of women benefiting from gum arabic production interventions➔ Increase in number of women involved in decision-making through the Community Management Committee (CMC)

Photo credit: Albert Gonzalez Farran



The “livelihood component” of the Joint Project seeks to increase the number of women beneficiaries of the livelihoods interventions of the C2SP, and to ensure that these interventions are more responsive to women’s specific needs and circumstances. Under this component of the Joint Project, which was jointly led by UNDP and UN Women with support from UN Environment, the following activities were completed:

➔ **GENDER ASSESSMENT COMPLETED:**

As an initial activity for this component, the Joint Project undertook a comprehensive gender analysis and study of the factors influencing gender equality and women’s empowerment in Al Rahad locality. The resulting report offered specific recommendations about entry points to promote women’s empowerment that were used to refine the design of Project interventions, including the need to invest in capacity development to increase women’s ability to take up alternative livelihoods through availing micro-finance and increasing their participation and representation in existing natural resource management mechanisms and conflict resolutions structures.

➔ **DOUBLING OF NUMBER OF WOMEN BENEFITING FROM VEGETABLE PRODUCTION INTERVENTIONS:**

By sponsoring their participation, the Project increased the number of women benefiting from this C2SP activity from 15 to 30. All 30 women received training on vegetable production and were provided with tools.

➔ **DOUBLING OF NUMBER OF WOMEN BENEFITING FROM GUM ARABIC PRODUCTION INTERVENTIONS:**

By sponsoring their participation, the Project increased from 15 to 30 the number of women benefitting from skills development for tapping, collecting, sorting, handling and storage of gum arabic. This will be complemented through linking them with markets and financial services.

➔ **INCREASE IN NUMBER OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING THROUGH THE COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CMC):**

The Project increased women’s membership in the CMC from 3 to 8 women. This means that a more representative group of women is able to participate in local decisions regarding community development, including those related to natural resources management. Moreover, the project has been successful in increasing women’s membership in the Water Management Committee, the arm of the CMC that is responsible for managing and maintaining the local water source. The ration of women to men now stands at 5:7. Water Management Committee members receive capacity-building in management, water equipment management and maintenance.

➔ **PARTNERING WITH LOCAL WOMEN’S ASSOCIATIONS TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY:**

In order to ensure that the training and inputs provided to women in Al Rahad lead to increased economic empowerment, the Project has established a partnership with the Althorya Women’s Association, a local civil society organization that was created to manage, lead and mobilize women at the grassroots to develop their economic activity by facilitating access to credit and loans from different lending institutions. The Association helps increase its members’ income and assets by providing savings services and facilitating small loans. The Project will work to develop the capacity of the Association through training of 15 selected members, provide technical support for the establishment of a cooperative, and foster linkages to financial institutions.

Number of women beneficiaries of livelihood interventions

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL C2SP BENEFICIARIES (MEN & WOMEN)	WOMEN BENEFICIARIES WITHIN THE C2SP	WOMEN BENEFICIARIES ADDED/SUPPORTED BY THE JOINT PROJECT	TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN BENEFICIARIES
CMC	25	3	5	8
Beneficiaries of horticulture interventions	65	15	15	30
Beneficiaries of vegetable production interventions	65	15	15	30
Althoraya Women's Association beneficiaries			15	15

Percentage of women beneficiaries in the C2SP and JP

C2SP/JP beneficiaries (M) **65%**
 JP (F) **35%**
 C2SP (F) **23%**

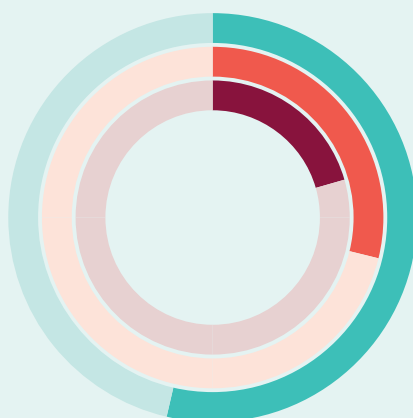


Photo credit: ProAct



Output 2: Knowledge, opportunity and capacity of women to participate in decision-making on natural resource management at the community level increased

C2SP ACTIVITIES TO DATE	JOINT PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO DATE	JOINT PROJECT RESULTS
N/A	Preparatory activities carried out for the Community environmental action planning (CEAP) process, including: selection of implementation partner, workplanning and preparation of the training-of-trainers package	None to date

As it the case for much of the region, Al Rahad has experienced desertification, environmental degradation and significant variability in rainfall over the last decades, leading to negative social and economic outcomes. Formerly the largest producer of gum arabic in the country, the area has seen productivity plummet due to drought and deforestation in the acacia tree stands. Unemployment, poverty and increasing overcrowding over water and pasture resources have further led to a deterioration of livelihood opportunities in an area where the majority of the population relies on farming and pastoralism, which in turn has led to increasing tensions between these livelihood groups.

Sudan and has been successfully implemented in 5 communities in Darfur – is a participatory bottom-up process that brings communities together to analyse their own environmental challenges and opportunities, evaluate options and develop, implement and monitor activities that contribute to the long-term sustainable management of natural resources. Going beyond livelihoods support to address broader natural resource-related challenges – including resource-based conflicts – in a holistic manner, the CEAP process will contribute to increasing community resilience and long-term stability.

In Al Rahad, the process will specifically be used to strengthen women’s participation in decision-making and action planning around natural resource management. The Project will not only ensure that the final action plan generated through the CEAP in Al Rahad reflects the priorities, perspectives and concerns of women belonging to the various groups present, but also that the process is used to strengthen women’s engagement in the management of natural resources. Instead of establishing a separate body for the CEAP, the Community Management Committee (CMC) of the C2SP (which includes representatives from all community groups, including farmers, pastoralists, women, youth, tribal leaders etc) will be in charge of managing CEAP activities and working with implementing partners and relevant line ministries at locality level. The women involved in the CMC, which have received training on a range of issues from the C2SP, including on conflict mitigation and resolution, will thus have the opportunity to apply and build on the skills already acquired while strengthening their capacity for dialogue, analysis and environmental action planning.

The CEAP, which constitutes the second component of the Project, will commence in December 2017 with training of the implementing partner, VetCare, who will be trained to facilitate the process and the consultation sessions with the community.



I WAS BORN AND RAISED HERE. I REMEMBER THAT IN EARLIER TIMES ANIMALS USED TO GRAZE SMALL AREAS AND STILL BENEFIT. NOW THEY NEED TO GRAZE LARGER AREAS AS THE PLANTS AND HERBS AVAILABLE ARE LESS DIVERSE AND THEREFORE LESS NUTRITIOUS.

AZZA, COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

Conflicts occur mainly when nomadic tribes herding cattle and camels trespass on agricultural fields – including gum arabic trees that are used as fodder for animals – or when farmers cultivate and grow crops on migratory routes, resulting in crop destruction, land degradation and disputes. Land quality degradation underlies both phenomena, as farmers have had to increase farming areas to maintain productivity, while pastoralists have had to graze their animals over larger areas to ensure sufficient nutrition. Conflicts in neighboring states have also caused an increase in the number of cattle to come through Al Rahad, as well as the duration of their stay, which has exacerbated tensions.

To address these issues, preparations are ongoing to carry out a Community Environmental Action Planning (CEAP) process in Al Rahad. The CEAP process – which was developed by UN Environment in

Output 3: Knowledge, opportunity and capacity of women to participate in mediation and conflict resolutions processes at the community level increased

C2SP ACTIVITIES TO DATE	JOINT PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO DATE	JOINT PROJECT RESULTS
<p>Training conducted on peaceful coexistence and conflict mitigation skills targeting the CMC, native administration and key community members</p> <p>Training for CMC members on project management</p>	<p>Consultations held with different groups of women to understand women's formal and informal representation and influence</p> <p>Gender "sensitization" sessions conducted for 180 community members, including youth groups and community leaders</p> <p>Focus group discussions held with women in the CRC</p> <p>Terms of reference developed for research on women pastoralists and their role in conflict management</p>	<p>Increase in number of women receiving training on conflict resolution (8 instead of 3) as part of the CMC</p> <p>Increased awareness within the community of key gender issues with respect to natural resources and conflict resolution</p> <p>Increased knowledge of women's challenges for participation in natural resource conflict mediation and resolution</p> <p>Specific needs and solutions to increase women's representation identified</p> <p>Linkages established between the CMC and the CRC</p>



WOMEN DO HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND ARE AGENTS OF INFLUENCE. IT'S JUST THAT THESE ROLES ARE USUALLY HIDDEN FROM PUBLIC SPACES THAT MEN OCCUPY. WOMEN GET TRAINED AND INFORMED; WE EQUIP THEM, BUT THEY GO OUT THERE AND ARE ASKED TO 'JOIN THE WOMEN.'

TARIG HAROON, HEAD OF THE CRC

The third component of the Project focuses on supporting women to advocate for increased influence and agency in conflict resolution, including by increasing their representation in such bodies as the Conflict Resolution Centre (CRC) in Al Rahad and other existing mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms for natural resource disputes. This includes creating forums and spaces to encourage discussions and exchanges between women and traditional authorities, pastoralists and farmers.



Photo credit: UN Environment

The following activities were completed under this Project component:

➔ **OVER 200 COMMUNITY MEMBERS SENSITIZED TO GENDER ISSUES:**

The Project provided gender training to 26 members of the central body of the C2SP, the Community Management Committee (CMC), and members of the local Conflict Resolution Center (CRC). In addition, the Project conducted gender “sensitization” sessions for an additional 180 community members, including youth groups and traditional leaders. Beneficiaries were trained using practical tailor-made tools, with the aim of helping to demystify the concept of gender and better understand key gender considerations related to their various functions, including women’s roles and potential with respect to conflict resolution, and increasing awareness of women’s knowledge and agency. Training sessions also provided the opportunity to better understand women’s specific needs and tailor project activities accordingly.

➔ **MORE WOMEN TRAINED ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION:**

Thanks to the Project, 8 women (instead of 3) received targeted training on conflict mitigation and resolution as part of the CMC.

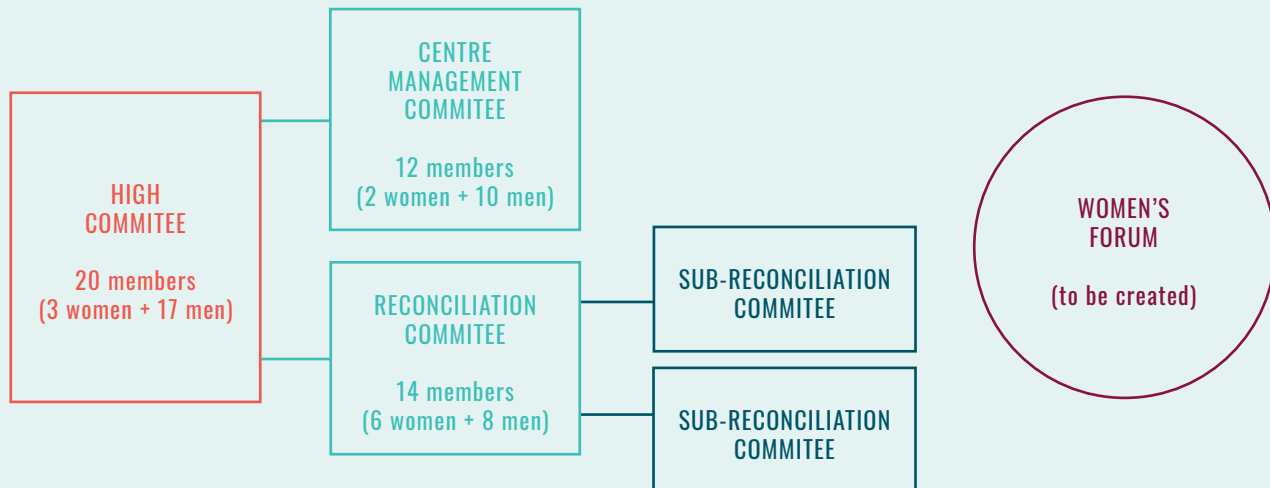
➔ **CONSULTATIONS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS COMPLETED:**

Building on these activities, consultations, in the form of focus group discussions and interviews, were organized with women from different groups, as well as community leaders, to increase the overall understanding of women’s representation, roles and levels of influence in mediation and dispute resolution processes around natural resources. In particular, members of the Project team held ‘women only’ discussions with female members of both the CMC and the CRC to identify and assess needs, and build trust. Key findings of the consultations were that both women and community leaders recognized that traditional customs and practices still largely prevented women from engaging in community-level conflict resolution processes. The training provided was helpful in developing skills, but women lacked the opportunity to apply their skills outside of their families or work environments, pointing to the fact that structural changes were needed to expand the spaces and channels available to women.

➔ **SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION:**

The findings of the consultations validated the Project’s strategy to go beyond training of women to support the creation of new platforms where women’s groups can convene, articulate priorities and formalize influence. An initial set of options was identified, including the creation of a “forum” linked to the CRC to organize women and increase their visibility and engagement.

Al Rahad Conflict Resolution Center (CRC) Structure



Finally, terms of reference were developed for a research peace on women within pastoralist groups and how they are affected by changes in availability of resources, migratory patterns, livelihoods and the rise in tensions and conflicts. Due to the change of migratory patterns, pastoralists are staying in the region longer. Some have resorted to dividing the family, leaving women, children and the elderly in North Kordofan, including in the Al Rahad area, along with some smaller animals such as goats and sheep, while the men continue the seasonal movements with their cattle. To date, little information is available about the roles of women pastoralists in natural resource management in the wider Kordofan region, and the impact of conflicts on them. The research will be carried out starting December 2017.

Photo credit: Ashan Abeywardana/UN Environment



Output 4: Knowledge products and best practices on strengthening women's participation in peacebuilding over natural resources developed

C2SP ACTIVITIES TO DATE	JOINT PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO DATE	JOINT PROJECT RESULTS
N/A	<p>Results framework and data collection protocols developed and agreed with local implementing partner</p> <p>Wide range of interviews conducted with stakeholders and systematically documented</p> <p>Photo documentation/archive initiated</p>	<p>Systems are in place to capture key lessons and best practices</p> <p>Results framework and data collection processes used as a model for pilot project in Colombia</p> <p>Project design and early results influencing UN thinking in Sudan as a concrete example of a "Humanitarian – Peacebuilding – Development Nexus project"</p>

A key function of this joint project is to test, validate and document best practices on gender-responsive natural resources management for peacebuilding, which will contribute to developing programming guidance and tools that will allow for replication of such approaches in other areas of the country, continent and globe. Particular attention is therefore given to documenting results and lessons learned throughout the implementation cycle of the project. Acknowledging that much of the data in this context will be qualitative rather than quantitative in nature, data collection includes extensive use of interviews, as well as such tools as perception surveys and storytelling through video and other media.

To achieve these objectives, data collection protocols were extensively discussed and agreed with the implementing partner. In addition, communication specialists joined in a field mission to conduct focus group discussions and interviews. The information and insights gathered during this and other missions were meticulously documented as they will contribute to the body of knowledge and lessons learned of the project.

Specific efforts were also made to ensure dissemination of early results within the UN system, in order to raise awareness and catalyse uptake of the Project's approach and strategy within broader peace and development programming in Sudan. As a first output, an article on the project was published and shared on social media platforms.¹ Furthermore, a presentation of the Project was held for senior management of the three agencies and the Resident Coordinator's office. The presentation generated significant interest, as it was seen to demonstrate the Humanitarian, Peacebuilding and Development (HPD) nexus model, which has been difficult to operationalize. As such, the Project was selected to meet with a UN Headquarters delegation tasked with examining how interventions by various actors in Sudan have contributed to this nexus.

As the project nears completion, activities under this component will intensify. Planned products documenting stories, best practices and lessons learned include a documentary film, a case study report and fact sheets, among others. A joint field mission with other UN Agencies will also be carried out to showcase the Project.

¹<http://www.unep.org/stories/story/women-agents-peace-natural-resource-conflict-sudan>

LESSONS LEARNED

Ensuring that operational lessons are continually learned from the experience of this project in Sudan is critical not only to addressing any challenges that arise, but also to identifying best practices that can be applied to other pilot projects of the global joint programme and eventually to any peace and development programme integrating these approaches.

- ➔ This type of joint programming and joint delivery is quite new to country teams in Sudan. While all three agencies were engaged and supportive from the start, it took time to establish the working modalities, and to build a joint “team spirit” among the participating organizations. Operational issues – from developing a common budget to joint contracting and expenditure – have also taken time to work through. Investing the necessary time and resources in developing truly joint mechanisms for project design and delivery has been paramount to the success of the Project to date, and will be for other pilots as well.
 - ➔ Although the size and capacity of the three agencies’ country offices is different, the physical presence of all three partners in country, which has allowed for regular in-person meetings and consultations – has been key to the success of the Project so far. It will be important to carefully adapt this model to contexts where one or the other partner may not have a physical presence, in order to ensure truly joint design, development and implementation, harnessing the different and complementary expertise of the agencies involved and maximizing the use of available resources and capacities.
 - ➔ The Project – which is both focused and ambitious – demonstrates that by pooling resources and expertise, it is possible to design and implement a valuable intervention with a relatively small budget.
 - ➔ While the approach has multiple benefits, ranging from sustainability gains to significant economies of scale, building on an existing project makes the success of the pilot largely dependent on the success of the original project. Delays and other implementation challenges in one have a direct impact on the other. It is key that team members working on both projects work closely together and maintain full transparency and open communication on any challenges that arise. Ensuring that representatives of the management team of the original/existing project are included in the management mechanism of the pilot project – as is the case here – is a means of fostering open and timely communication in this respect.
 - ➔ Achieving concrete gains in terms of women’s political empowerment, including their engagement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, takes a long time. There is an inherent disconnect between the brief nature of a pilot project, and the length of time needed to measure real results at the outcome level. However, measuring whether or not the pilot had any lasting impact on women’s contributions to peacebuilding is critical to determining the value of the approaches and practices promoted by the global Joint Programme. Systems will therefore need to be put in place (and resourced) through the global level to continue to periodically collect data beyond the pilot’s closure in 2018.
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LOOKING FORWARD

As the Project nears completion, it will be important not only to pay attention to the sustainability of results at the community level in Al Rahad, but also to identify and capitalize on opportunities for replicating and upscaling the approach within other peace and development programming in Sudan. As noted above, the Project has already attracted the attention of key stakeholders in the country. This can be leveraged in the following ways:

- ➔ There is significant potential for tools and best practices developed by the Project to influence peacebuilding programming by the UN system in the country. Such opportunities are already being explored within partner agency programmes, such as the EU-funded project “Promoting Peace over Natural Resources” implemented by UN Environment in West Kordofan and Darfur. A comprehensive inventory of relevant peacebuilding and development projects will be carried out to identify key entry points, and a strategy will be developed to support replication and uptake.
 - ➔ The Project’s approach and results can be leveraged to mobilize new resources at the country level to support replication and upscaling, including the expansion of the existing pilot to additional communities and localities in North Kordofan. Several donor countries have expressed interest in the Project, which they view not only as addressing an important programming gap, but also as representing a model for integrated programming and operationalization of the HPD nexus. Such opportunities will be systematically followed up based on a joint resource mobilization strategy and action plan.
 - ➔ In order to sustain any gains with respect to women’s political and economic empowerment, and ensure that local authorities are supportive of this type of programming, specific efforts will be made to disseminate and discuss the Project’s approach and results with local and state-level authorities, including members of the legislative assembly of North Kordofan state. Contact has already been made with the head of the assembly and some of its members, who have asked that specific recommendations be provided based on the results of the Project with respect to strengthening women’s participation in natural resource governance, management and conflict resolution.
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