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PROMOTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACHES TO NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR PEACE IN NORTH KORDOFAN, SUDAN

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**PROMOTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE
APPROACHES TO NATURAL
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR PEACE
IN NORTH KORDOFAN, SUDAN**

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEAP	Community Environmental Action Planning
CMC	Community Management Committee (C2SP)
C2SP	Community Security and Stabilization Programme
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
JP	Joint Project
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PBSO	United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN Environment	United Nations Environment Programme
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Table of Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
CONTEXT	15
Increasing conflict over natural resources	17
Shifting gender roles and increasingly female communities	18
THE PROJECT	21
Objectives	23
Approach	24
Activities	25
Livelihoods component	25
Governance component	26
Conflict prevention and resolution component	29
Documentation and knowledge management component	31
Overview of Project Activities	33
RESULTS	35
Project outcomes	35
Livelihoods	37
Governance	39
Conflict Prevention and Resolution	42
Documentation and Knowledge Management	44
Uptake and Sustainability of Results	45
CASE STUDIES	49
I. The gender dynamics of shifting migratory patterns among pastoralist groups	49
II. The ripple security impacts of climate change: from traditional livelihoods to artisanal mining	52
GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED	55
Thematic/Programmatic	55
Operational	57
Monitoring and Evaluation	58

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Photo credit: UN Environment

The Joint Project “Promoting Gender-Responsive Approaches to Natural Resource Management for Peace” was the first pilot project established by the global Joint Programme on Women, Natural Resources and Peace, which aims to promote natural resource-based interventions as a tool for women’s political and economic empowerment in peacebuilding contexts.

The pilot project, which built on interventions conducted under the UNDP’s Community Security and Stabilization Programme (C2SP), started in October 2016 and ended in October 2018. It was supported with a USD 300,000 grant* from the Government of Finland, and jointly managed and implemented by the Sudan country offices of UNDP, UN Environment and UN Women.

Climate change, conflict and increasingly female communities

The Joint Project of UNDP, UN Environment and UN Women on Promoting Gender-Responsive Approaches to Natural Resource Management for Peace was implemented in the locality of Al Rahad in North Kordofan State, Sudan, a community beset by climate-related environmental degradation and increasing conflicts over natural resources.

The effects of climate change have generally been reflected in increasing temperatures, significant variability and uneven distribution of rainfall, wind storms and localized drought, which have contributed to crop failure, soil degradation and water scarcity. In addition to undermining agricultural productivity, these factors have impacted pastoralist movements. Along with the closure of cattle routes in South Kordofan due to conflict and the expansion of mechanized agriculture, resource depletion has concentrated cattle in Al Rahad and increased the length of time that pastoralist groups stay in the area.

While other drivers of conflict play an important role as well, escalating tensions between different groups of resource users making demands on an increasingly degraded environment have contributed to the outbreak of violent conflict in the area with increasing frequency and worsening outcomes. According to Al Rahad's Conflict Mediation and Peacebuilding Center, the area witnessed 9 violent conflicts between July 2016 and April 2018, resulting in 24 deaths. Five of those events and 15 of those deaths took place in a single month, between 11 March and 13 April 2018.

In addition to violent conflict, the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are contributing to important shifts in the social composition of Al Rahad, which are manifested in a marked feminization of local communities.

As a result of the economic hardships caused by faltering traditional livelihoods, 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 gold mining operations in other parts of the country. Originally lasting only for the fallow months, the period of

migration can now extend far longer, especially for young and unmarried men. This has resulted in a significant increase in female-headed households, a phenomenon largely recognized by traditional leaders and elders as the "new normal".

This feminization of the resident population is further compounded by the increasing sedentarization of some of the pastoralist groups, which are not only staying in the area for longer periods of time, but often also splitting, leaving women and children behind in Al Rahad while men continue along their migration route. Sedentarized pastoralist groups – largely women – typically turn to the land to generate income, renting fields from the local community to graze their sheep and goats or to produce small crops.

Despite their significant roles in natural resource management, women (across all socio-economic and ethnic grounds) have generally been marginalized economically and politically, and have not been engaged in the existing conflict resolution mechanisms that address disputes and grievances over natural resources. Community-level structures that are typically involved in the management of natural resources and resolution of conflicts, such as the traditional native administration and the popular committees have either not included women at all (native administration) or included them to some degree (popular committees), but not on matters related to conflict resolution. For example, women have traditionally not been part of the *Jodeya* or mediation mechanisms set up by communities to address conflicts and tensions at their level. The roles of nomadic women in formal decision-making or community management processes are particularly limited due to cultural taboos and high rates of illiteracy.

*This grant was supplemented with in-kind contributions from the three partners, as well as the Implementing Partner, Vet-Care Organization. UNDP also made significant efforts to capitalize on synergies with the C2SP programme activities in the area.

The Project

Recognizing the prevailing situation linked to conflict, environmental degradation and related social shifts in Al Rahad, the project undertook targeted interventions to ensure that women from all groups were supported to exercise their agency in local planning and decision-making processes governing the use of natural resources and to strengthen their role in the prevention and resolution of natural resource-based conflicts. Building on and complementing the C2SP's interventions, the project sought to achieve three specific outcomes:

- ➔ **STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH NATURAL RESOURCE-BASED LIVELIHOODS;**
- ➔ **STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN RESOURCE GOVERNANCE THROUGH COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING; AND**
- ➔ **INCREASE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN NATURAL RESOURCE CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION.**

An additional objective of the project was to demonstrate the benefits of even relatively minor investments in targeted action for gender equality and women's empowerment within peacebuilding programming, and their potential for transformative results within existing programmes and projects.

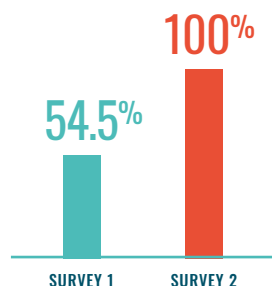
While ultimately targeting gains in women's engagement in governance and conflict resolution over natural resources, the project adopted a strategic sequenced approach that aimed at meeting immediate needs first. Complementing alternative livelihood interventions conducted in Al Rahad by the C2SP, the pilot project focused on improving women's livelihoods through technical training, establishment of cooperatives and access to markets (Component 1). This first component on livelihoods was critical not only in addressing women's economic needs, but also functioned as a trust- and confidence-building measure for the other project components.

In order to strengthen community governance and management of natural resources in ways that contribute to conflict prevention, the project supported communities in Al Rahad – as represented by an expanded Community Management Committee comprised of 50% of women – to undertake a collective Community Environmental Action Planning process (Component 2). During this process, representatives from different groups jointly analyzed natural resource challenges, developed an action plan, and implemented concrete solutions to prioritized problems. The process was key not only to building women's skills for sound governance of natural resources, but also to demonstrating their leadership and conflict resolution potential.

In addition, the pilot project specifically sought to strengthen women's capacities for conflict mediation and resolution, and to expand their spaces of influence within the community and its conflict resolution mechanisms (Component 3). Taken together with Component 2, the activities of this Component aimed at changing community perceptions of women's roles and capacities, and at increasing opportunities for women to exercise leadership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, particularly in relation to natural resource conflicts. The joint project also sought to fill key information gaps by undertaking research on women pastoralists in relation to natural resources and conflict, with the aim of improving understanding of how best to include women pastoralists in natural resource governance bodies and conflict resolution mechanisms in the future.

Key Results

INCREASE IN THE PERCEPTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S ROLES IN NATURAL RESOURCE CONFLICT RESOLUTION



20% INCREASE IN FEMALE CMPBC MEMBERS



3 OUT OF 4

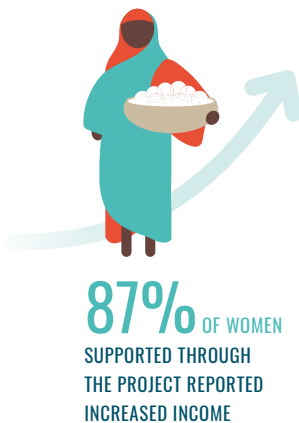
MEDIATION PROCESSES WOMEN WERE INVOLVED IN AS MEDIATORS CONCERNED DISPUTES OVER NATURAL RESOURCES

At the outcome level, the project sought to measure the extent to which the various natural resource-related activities on livelihoods, governance and conflict resolution had actually resulted in shifting perceptions of women's capacities and leadership, and strengthened their active engagement in conflict resolution mechanisms and processes at the local level. Results at this level are highly positive:

- ➔ **Perceptions of women's capacities, roles and contributions underwent a radical shift thanks to the project, both among women beneficiaries themselves, and within the broader community, as 100% of individuals surveyed¹ in both groups agreed that women had important roles and contributions with respect to conflict over natural resources.** The influence of the project – and in particular the outcomes of the CEAP process – in this respect was measurable, as community perceptions of women's roles and contributions with respect to conflict resolution over natural resources **increased significantly between the first and the second rounds of perception surveys**, from 54.5% to 100%.
- ➔ **The number of women affiliated to the local Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Center, the main conflict resolution mechanism in the area, doubled during the project lifespan (from 10 to 20 out of 50 members).** An additional 10 women joined the Center as mediators, eight of whom were directly trained by the project. Among other roles, these women now lead the Dialogue Forums bringing pastoralist, farming and IDP communities together in each of the target villages to discuss various factors of tension, including access to land and water.
- ➔ Trends are also positive with respect to women's active involvement in the formal conflict mediation processes conducted through the Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Center. The Center has reported that women have been actively involved as mediators in 4 out of 22 conflict mediation processes conducted since the start of the project, noting that this represents an increase as compared to prior years, as **women were until recently virtually absent from meetings and discussions – or only present as observers.** Crucially, the Center has reported that **three out of four mediation processes women were involved in as mediators concerned disputes over natural resources**, whereas prior to the project, women's opinions would generally only be sought on social issues, particularly domestic disputes. Moreover, the Center has noted that since the end of the project, **at least two women are systematically included as part of all mediation processes and Jodeya meetings**, both within the Center and within the communities, irrespective of the type of conflict under discussion.

1 - The final perception survey collected data from 61 representative individuals among the 400 project beneficiaries, the broader community and the native administration.

Continued monitoring of the outcome-level indicators will be key to determining the level of sustained impact of the project on gender equality gains, and therefore the value of focusing on natural resource-based interventions as a means of strengthening women's empowerment in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as social cohesion and the overall reduction of violent conflict in the area. Another round of data collection, including questionnaires and surveys of targeted communities, will be conducted one year after the end of the project's activities, in the fall of 2019. The findings of the final survey will be used to validate key lessons and good practices derived from this pilot project.



At the activity level, key results for the three main project components can be summarized as follows:

- ➔ **87% of the diverse group of women who received support for vegetable production through the project reported increased income by the end of the project.** Women indicated that the income from their home gardens was sufficient to cover daily basic needs, whereas the crops that they cultivated at the farms, such as sesame and sorghum, were considered cash crops that greatly boosted their income. This not only had an immediate positive impact on women's ability to meet their immediate needs (and that of their families), but also had important effects on women's sense of empowerment and self-esteem.



Photo credit: UNDP

- ➔ **Two women’s associations were supported to establish cooperative farms, which were then linked to markets locally in Al Rahad, or to the Central Crop Market of El Obeid, the state capital of North Kordofan.** Importantly, interventions in this component – which targeted women of different ethnic backgrounds from both farming and nomadic groups – also increased social cohesion.
- ➔ A full **100% of participating women surveyed reported increased knowledge and capacity on natural resource management**, and women in both communities were particularly active at each stage of the process, showing organizational skills and a commitment to achieving consensus that were appreciated by the community as a whole. This notably contributed to shifting men’s perceptions of women’s capacities, as **100% of the men participating in the CEAP process that were surveyed noted women’s roles in conflict mediation and resolution had increased since the inception phase of the project.** While only 56% of participants agreed that they could replicate the CEAP as a conflict resolution tool, the relatively low number is most likely a result of how the question was asked, though it points to the need for replications or adaptations of this exercise to further emphasize the function of the CEAP as a conflict resolution tool for natural resource disputes.
- ➔ The project supported the formation of **new bodies and mechanisms that constitute platforms for women to exercise leadership in preventing and resolving conflicts in the area.** These include the establishment of a new body dedicated to preventing and resolving natural resource conflicts, known as the Natural Resource Management Sub-Committee, and the creation of two “dialogue forums” bringing together pastoralist, IDP and farming communities to discuss natural resource-related issues and other factors of disputes, which are facilitated by women who were trained in natural resource conflict resolution by the project.
- ➔ The various capacity-building interventions on conflict prevention and mediation were highly successful in increasing women’s knowledge and skills, as **100% of women surveyed reported increased knowledge and capacity for conflict mediation and resolution.**
- ➔ The project successfully contributed to **increasing the understanding of the situation of pastoralist women in and around Al Rahad**, and in particular of how the environmental degradation and climate change are contributing to shifts in migratory patterns and livelihoods that affect women in particular ways.



Main Lessons Learned

The project was successful in testing and validating good programming practices that can be replicated, adapted and expanded to other contexts in Sudan and globally. As the first pilot project of the Joint Programme on Women, Natural Resources and Peace, the project also generated a number of important lessons learned. Key programmatic lessons are as follows:²

1 NATURAL RESOURCES ARE A STRONG ENTRY POINT FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN PEACEBUILDING, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF A CHANGING CLIMATE: The project's results demonstrate that natural resource governance and management interventions are a strong entry point for women's empowerment at several levels:

- ➔ First, natural resource governance – including decision-making over access to land, water sources and other resources, resource-sharing and sustainable livelihood options – provides women with opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership skills in conflict prevention and resolution, which are not only critical in a context in which there are an increasing number of conflicts over natural resources, but can also be applied to other issues. In situations where women are typically excluded from decision-making, natural resources can provide a “neutral” entry point for engaging in political dialogue and mediation of conflicts, as women typically derive legitimacy from their traditional resource-related roles that is not conferred to them on other issues.
- ➔ Second, sustainable natural resource management represents a key opportunity for women's economic empowerment in a context where sustainable alternative livelihoods are needed due to the impacts of a changing climate. Specifically targeting women in the development of alternative natural resource-based livelihoods – and supporting them to organize economically, for example through the establishment of cooperatives – ensures not only income gains for women, but the stability of entire communities, especially where the impacts of a changing climate are resulting in more and more majority-female communities.
- ➔ Third, natural resource interventions can provide important platforms for cooperation for women from opposing groups that contribute to strengthening social cohesion. Bringing women from sedentary and pastoralist communities together in cooperative farming schemes, and including pastoralist women in dialogue and decision-making structures has resulted in building trust and collaboration that can extend into other areas. Women thus represent a channel for dialogue and cooperation between the two communities.

2 EMPOWERING WOMEN AT THE LOCAL LEVEL CAN HAVE HIGHLY POSITIVE IMPACTS ON CONFLICT PREVENTION AND SUSTAINING PEACE: The implementation of key policies for gender equality and women's empowerment in peacebuilding has tended to focus interventions at the national level or on high-level (Track 1) mediation processes. This project has shown that there are important dynamics at the local level – such as those linked to the social impacts of climate change and environmental degradation – that present significant opportunities for strengthening women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution. However, targeted support is needed from the international community to overcome the structural barriers that often prevent the experience women have brokering disputes over natural resources at the community and local levels from being used and capitalized upon in higher-level dialogue processes.

2 - Please refer to the full report for additional lessons on programmatic, operational and monitoring and evaluation issues.

- 3 SEQUENCED INTERVENTIONS ADDRESSING LIVELIHOODS NEEDS FIRST INCREASE CHANCES OF SUCCESS OF GOVERNANCE AND CONFLICT PREVENTION EFFORTS:** The project was designed to deliver livelihood gains prior to engaging the communities in natural resource governance or conflict prevention efforts. Based on feedback from beneficiaries, seeking to address immediate economic needs first was a key success factor of the project, as it built trust and buy-in and laid the groundwork for “softer” interventions. Increasing women’s income, and thereby their economic independence, also contributed to legitimizing their roles as representatives and spokespersons within their communities.
- 4 BUILDING A RESEARCH COMPONENT INTO THE PROJECT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUED LEARNING THAT HELPS IMPROVE RESULTS:** While a baseline assessment was conducted by the project in its inception phase, such exercises are rarely exhaustive, especially with a limited budget. Building a research component into the project, as was done here with research on women pastoralists and their natural resource conflict resolution and management roles, allows not only for in-depth analysis of the findings of the original baseline study, but also for additional questions raised at later stages to be answered. This in turn helps sharpen or re-direct interventions to ensure better results. In this case, understanding the phenomenon of increasing sedentarization of pastoralist women helped the project better target relevant groups and individuals who were likely to stay in the area and benefit from interventions in the long term.
- 5 MEASURING STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE REQUIRES A LONGER-TERM COMMITMENT TO MONITORING AND EVALUATION:** The project had excellent outcomes, not only in terms of increasing women’s participation and shifting the community’s perception of women’s peacebuilding potential, but also in moving the needle on women’s actual engagement in formal conflict resolution processes. While absolute numbers are still low, positive trends are clearly visible: the number of women affiliated to the Center has doubled, they have recently been involved in the mediation of four disputes (including three over natural resources) as compared to zero in previous years, and the participation of at least two women is now the norm for all conflict resolution efforts conducted through the Center. These trends are encouraging, but will require close monitoring to confirm over the medium term. Moreover, the project timeframe did not allow for adequate evaluation of upstream impacts in terms of influence on local, state-level or national authorities and policy frameworks. Contending with the pace of institutional change in assessing the results of short-term projects is always challenging, and calls for additional monitoring to be conducted after the end of the project, as will be done in this case one year from the end of project activities in the fall of 2019.
- 6 UNDERSTANDING GENDER EQUALITY GAINS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING REQUIRES A MIX OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF DATA:** As the goal of the pilot project was to test new approaches to emerging nexus issues, there were no “ready-made” indicators that could be used to measure results. An important contribution of this pilot was therefore to develop and test indicators that would capture various aspects of achievements in gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The indicators developed for this project relied on a mix of sex-disaggregated quantitative data, questionnaires and surveys that proved very effective in measuring not only participation but also shifts in attitudes, perceptions and confidence. As such, these indicators can be adapted to other projects and contexts.
- 7 INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO COMPLEX MULTIDIMENSIONAL ISSUES ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN DIFFERENT AGENCIES WORK AS ONE UN:** The successful outcomes of the project demonstrate that integrated approaches predicated on the distinct, yet complementary, expertise and mandates of different UN partners can be highly effective at tackling complex multidimensional issues such as the nexus of peace and security, gender equality and women’s empowerment, and environment and climate change. The pilot thus represents a positive example of the type of UN programming – and the partnerships underlying it – that can help achieve the 2030 Agenda and other international commitments around sustaining peace. Documenting and sharing results and lessons learned is crucial to ensuring such experiences can be built upon and expanded.

CONTEXT

LOCATION OF AL RAHAD, NORTH KORDOFAN STATE, SUDAN



The Joint Project of UNDP, UN Environment and UN Women on Promoting Gender-Responsive Approaches to Natural Resource Management for Peace was implemented in the locality of Al Rahad in North Kordofan State, Sudan, a community beset by climate-related environmental degradation and increasing conflicts over natural resources.

The state of North Kordofan 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. Some 39% of the population live below the poverty line, slightly above the Sudanese average of 36%.³

Al Rahad, which has a population of approximately 180,000 inhabitants, is one of 8 “localities” in North Kordofan. It is comprised of five administrative units, one city, four towns and 285 villages.

The locality is characterized by significant ethnic diversity, which has resulted from frequent waves of migration to the area caused by armed conflict in Darfur and South Kordofan, as well as environmental factors, such as drought. Members of the Gawama’a tribe make up an estimated 70% of the local sedentary population, followed by members of the Baggara group’s various branches, and the Nuba, Flata and Ghadim tribes.

Some 76% of the locality’s population practices agriculture and grazing, with the remainder engaged in various forms of trade, as well as work in local government. Although unable to support heavy agriculture, the region’s climate allows for small-scale farming, which produces a mix of livestock and cash crops, such as hibiscus, gum arabic and peanuts.⁴ The area used to be one of the largest gum arabic producers in the country, but drought and deforestation have damaged and destroyed many acacia trees, undermining production.



Photo credit: UN Environment

3 - UNDP Sudan Household Budget and Poverty Survey, 2017.

4 - National Adaptation Plan 2016, Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Physical Development, Sudan, p.16.

Due to its location near the border with South Kordofan, Al Rahad has long been a significant gathering point for nomads in North Kordofan. Pastoral groups passing through the eastern and central corridors from South Kordofan state typically settle in Al Rahad between July and November to trade with local populations. Nomadic herder groups that traverse the area include the Baggara tribes with their various branches, the Shanabla and the Kababish.

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 Movement-North (SPLM-N) since 2011, Al Rahad continues to provide a safe haven for 42,000 IDPs.



Photo credit: UN Environment

Increasing conflict over natural resources

A harsh climate and an agriculture-dependent economy make Northern Kordofan one of Sudan's most vulnerable states to the impacts of climate change⁵, and the locality of Al Rahad is in many ways emblematic of the prevailing challenges faced by the region.

The effects of climate change have generally been reflected in increasing temperatures, significant variability and uneven distribution of rainfall, wind storms and localized drought, which have contributed to crop failure, soil degradation and water scarcity. In addition to undermining agricultural productivity, these factors have impacted pastoralist movements. Along with the closure of cattle routes in South Kordofan due to conflict, resource depletion has concentrated cattle in Al Rahad and increased the length of time that pastoralist groups stay in the area.

While other drivers of conflict play an important role as well, escalating tensions between different groups of resource users making demands on an increasingly degraded environment have contributed to the outbreak of violent conflict in the area with increasing frequency and worsening outcomes. According to Al Rahad's Conflict Mediation and Peacebuilding Center, the area witnessed 9

violent conflicts between July 2016 and April 2018, which caused 24 deaths. Five of those events and 15 of those deaths took place in a single month, between 11 March and 13 April 2018.

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. The lack of clear demarcation of the cattle corridors or of identified places for pastoralist settlements is also an important grievance.

Conflicts over natural resources are not new in the region, and communities have long used traditional mechanisms to resolve them, relying on traditional leaders and respected elders. For centuries, conflicts in the region were mitigated through a mechanism known as the *Jodeya* mediation – a network of local mediators who are trusted within their community to resolve disputes – as well as committees for agriculture estimation, which exist in every village, native administrative courts, conflict resolution centers and government courts. For political and historical reasons, however, these mechanisms have become less efficient at resolving conflict.



Photo credit: UN Environment

5 - National Adaptation Plan 2016, Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Physical Development, Sudan, p. 16.



Photo credit: UNDP

Shifting gender roles and increasingly female communities

In addition to violent conflict, the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are resulting in important shifts in the social composition of Al Rahad, which are manifested in a marked feminization of local communities.

While both men and women in sedentary communities engage in agricultural activities as a key source of livelihoods, women⁷ (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. 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, as a result of the economic hardships caused by faltering traditional livelihoods, 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 gold mining operations in other parts of the country (see Case Study 2). The migration period itself has increased. Originally lasting only for the fallow months, it can now extend far longer, especially for young and unmarried men. This has resulted in a significant increase in female-headed households, a phenomenon fully recognized by traditional leaders and elders as the “new normal”. In consultations held during the inception mission for this project, women in the locality and other community members acknowledged this increase in responsibilities, stating that “women [had] become both men and women.”⁸

7 - Baseline Assessment for the Joint Project on Promoting Responsive Approaches to Natural Resource Management and Peacebuilding (December 2016).

8 - Ibid.

This feminization of the resident population is further compounded by the increasing sedentarization of some of the pastoralist groups, which are not only staying in the area for longer periods of time, but often also splitting, leaving women and children behind in Al Rahad while men continue on the migration (see Case Study 1). Sedentarized pastoralist groups – largely women – typically turn to the land to generate income, renting fields from the local community to graze their sheep and goats or to produce small crops. Pastoral women take part in local markets, selling dairy products and in some cases, handmade crafts, while sedentary community women sell vegetables and other harvested products such as sorghum and okra.

Generally speaking, the modalities of access to arable land and thereby access to farming and gum arabic trees, are different and depend on whether the men and women concerned belong to a *Dar*-holding⁹ tribe or are new settlers. Most men and women from *Dar*-holding tribes own arable land through inheritance. Women who own land are in the minority, and typically grow cash crops or lease the land out. Poorer women seek local labor, mainly in agriculture, though selling tea and food in small shops along the main road connecting Obeid to Khartoum, which crosses Al Rahad, is also a common activity.

Despite their significant roles in natural resource management, women (across all socio-economic and ethnic grounds) have generally not been engaged in the existing conflict resolution mechanisms that address disputes and grievances over natural resources. Community-level structures that are typically involved in the management of natural resources and resolution of conflicts, such as the traditional native administration and the popular committees have either not included women at all (native administration) or included them to some degree (popular committees), but not on matters related to conflict resolution. For example, women have traditionally not been part of the *Jodeya* or mediation mechanisms set up by communities to address conflicts and tensions at their level.

In addition to the popular committees, women's participation has generally been limited to women's community-based organizations, which deal mainly with livelihood issues and have not linked up to decision-making and conflict resolution structures for natural resources. While the Conflict Mediation and Peacebuilding Center established in Al Rahad by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in 2011 has included some women into its structures, it has readily recognized that more capacity-building is needed to ensure their full participation in matters related to natural resource disputes.

Pastoralist groups have traditionally been poorly included in these structures, either due to the nature of their movement or due to the fact that they are not allowed lay claim to land. However, the increasing number of violent conflicts over shared resources makes evident that additional conflict prevention and mediation efforts are needed. While leading to new sources of tension, the partial or full sedentarization of some pastoralists – especially women – also creates new opportunities to involve them and build on relationships that are formed in common spaces, such as markets.



WOMEN FROM ALL GROUPS ARE SHOULDERING MORE ECONOMIC RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THEIR HOUSEHOLDS AND COMMUNITIES

⁹ - Tribes with historical claim to the land (*Dar* means home).



Photo credit: UNDP

THE PROJECT

The Joint Project “Promoting Gender-Responsive Approaches to Natural Resource Management for Peace” was the first pilot project established by the global Joint Programme on Women, Natural Resources and Peace, which aims to promote natural resource-based interventions as a tool for women’s political and economic empowerment in peacebuilding contexts.

The pilot project, which built on interventions conducted under the UNDP’s Community Security and Stabilization Programme (C2SP), started in October 2016 and ended in October 2018. It was supported with a USD 300,000 grant* from the Government of Finland, and jointly managed and implemented by the Sudan country offices of UNDP, UN Environment and UN Women.

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 2018, the programme has intervened in over 30 communities. The C2SP’s objectives are achieved in several ways:

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

At the core of C2SP interventions is the establishment of a Community Management Committee (CMC), an inclusive body whose membership is drawn from all ethnic tribes, traditional leaders/ native administration, youth and 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 grant was supplemented with in-kind contributions from the three partners, as well as the Implementing Partner, Vet-Care Organization. UNDP also made significant efforts to capitalize on synergies with the C2SP programme activities in the area.

Project implementing partners

PARTNER	EXPERTISE AND VALUE-ADDED	AGREED ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES
UNDP	Livelihood and peacebuilding interventions, community stabilization, strong field presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Acted as the main linkage between C2SP and Joint Pilot Project, ensuring maximal synergy between the 2 initiatives; ➔ Provided logistical and operational support for field missions of JP staff and experts; ➔ Led on livelihoods-related activities; ➔ Led on perception surveys and participant questionnaires, as well as data analysis; and ➔ Managed documentary film production.
UN Women	Engaging women and men to balance gender and social relations; addressing norms, behaviours and attitudes; organizing women's empowerment awareness sessions; offering civic education; life skills development; and working with local women's networks and associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Led on all gender and peacebuilding-related activities; ➔ Provided gender expertise and technical support on the livelihoods component of the C2SP project; and ➔ Guided the implementing partner for gender and women's empowerment activities, including training; and participated in assessment missions and data collection exercises
UN Environment	Environmental governance, community-based natural resources management and livelihoods programming in the context of post-conflict reconstruction and local peacebuilding efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Led on natural resource management and environmental peacebuilding-related activities; ➔ Trained the facilitators, guided and oversaw the implementation of CEAP process while providing technical direction and advice; ➔ Led on the research study on pastoralist women, recruiting and guiding the research team; ➔ Participated in assessment missions, data collection exercises and filming in the field; and ➔ Coordinated the production of all reporting.
Vet-Care Organization	Sudanese NGO with expertise in rural development projects; aim at empowering rural communities to achieve food security, improved livelihoods and peace; have implemented over a dozen projects in the Kordofan region and created strong networks and contacts with local authorities and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Recruited by all three partner agencies as the main implementing partner for JP activities in Al Rahad, building on their role in the C2SP ➔ With guidance and oversight from the three partners, conducted training and consultations; implemented livelihood activities, convened CEAP sessions; ➔ With guidance and oversight from the three partners, collected data, conducted interviews etc.

Objectives



Photo credit: UNDP

Recognizing the prevailing situation linked to conflict, environmental degradation and related social shifts in Al Rahad, the project undertook targeted interventions to ensure that women from all groups were supported to exercise their agency in local planning and decision-making processes governing the use of natural resources and to strengthen their role in the prevention and resolution of natural resource-based conflicts.

Building on and complementing the C2SP's interventions, the project sought to achieve three specific outcomes:

- ➔ **STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH NATURAL RESOURCE-BASED LIVELIHOODS;**
- ➔ **STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN RESOURCE GOVERNANCE THROUGH COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING; AND**
- ➔ **INCREASE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN NATURAL RESOURCE CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION.**

An additional objective of the project was to demonstrate the benefits of even relatively minor investments in targeted action for gender equality and women's empowerment within peacebuilding programming, and their potential for transformative results within existing programmes and projects.

Approach

The different components brought to the C2SP project by the joint pilot project were designed to both influence the C2SP, ensuring its planned interventions were gender-responsive, and to add new elements that would strengthen women's peacebuilding potential in Al Rahad locality. The pilot project thus built on the structures created by the C2SP – such as the Community Management Committee – and ensured that the women benefitting from the C2SP's interventions were also the main beneficiaries of the joint project interventions.

While ultimately targeting gains in women's engagement in governance and conflict resolution over natural resources, the project adopted a strategic sequenced approach that aimed at meeting immediate needs first. Complementing alternative livelihood interventions conducted in Al Rahad by the C2SP, the pilot project focused on improving women's livelihoods through technical training, establishment of cooperatives and access to markets (Component 1). This first component on livelihoods was critical not only in addressing women's economic needs, but also functioned as a trust- and confidence-building measure for the other project components.

In order to strengthen community governance and management of natural resources in ways that contribute to conflict prevention, the project supported communities in Al Rahad – as represented by an expanded Community Management Committee comprised of 50% of women – to undertake a collective Community Environmental Action Planning process (Component 2). During this process, representatives from different groups jointly analyzed natural resource challenges, developed an action plan, and implemented concrete solutions to prioritized problems. The process was key not only to building women's skills for sound governance of natural resources, but also to demonstrating their leadership and conflict resolution potential.

In addition, the pilot project specifically sought to strengthen women's capacities for conflict mediation and resolution, and to expand their spaces of influence within the community and its conflict resolution mechanisms (Component 3). Taken together with Component 2, the activities of this Component aimed at changing community perceptions of women's roles and capacities, and at increasing opportunities for women to exercise leadership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, particularly in relation to natural resource conflicts. The joint project also sought to fill key information gaps by undertaking research on women pastoralists in relation to natural resources and conflict, with the aim of improving understanding of how best to include women pastoralists in natural resource governance bodies and conflict resolution mechanisms in the future.

The sustainability of the project was enhanced by the fact that communities lay at the core of the structures and processes that were put in place. The Community Management Committee was established as a long-term structure that would support inclusive and participatory decision-making well beyond the end of the project, while skills developed through the Community Environmental Action Planning exercise would not only be used again in regular iterations of this process, but also transferred to other structures and mechanisms. The connections made between women's associations, community governance structures and local government, financial institutions and markets are also key in sustaining the gains in women's economic and political empowerment in Al Rahad.

Activities

The activities conducted by the project within each of the components are described below and summarized in Table 1. While implementation challenges are discussed in this section, a more detailed discussion of lessons learned and adaptive management is provided in Section III of this report.

Prior to carrying out planned activities, 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 ability to take up alternative livelihoods through availing micro-finance and increasing their participation and representation in existing natural resource management mechanisms and conflict resolution structures.

Livelihoods component

The Livelihoods component of the pilot project built directly on the interventions of the C2SP in Al Rahad, which aimed at strengthening resilience in the community by providing training and inputs for alternative livelihoods – in this case vegetable and gum arabic production. Against this background, the Joint Project implemented the following set of activities:

➔ TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN BENEFICIARIES OF C2SP LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS:

The Joint Project provided financial support to **increase the number of women beneficiaries of vegetable and gum arabic production interventions from 15 to 30** (out of a total of 100 beneficiaries of the C2SP interventions). Through the project, **15 women received practical training on land preparation**, selecting fruit and vegetable varieties, seed germination, fertilizer application, vegetable and fruit growth patterns, integrated pest management and control, use of organic manure and composting, nutrient management, harvesting, storage, seedling production, seed bank systems, season extension, irrigation, and business planning and marketing.

WOMEN

RECEIVED PRACTICAL TRAINING ON LAND PREPARATION



WOMEN

RECEIVED TRAINING ON ACACIA TREE PLANTING

After the training, they were provided with assorted vegetable seeds and tools to enable them to establish backyard gardens as well as to participate in communal farming at the integrated farm site supported by C2SP.

Another **15 women received training on Acacia tree planting**, maintenance, transplanting and replacement; pest management and control; tapping equipment and techniques; harvesting, yield and packing; storage; forest management; access to credit and financial management; marketing; business skills; and value chain entry points. Beneficiaries were then supported to establish an Acacia nursery in the integrated farm.

The JP ensured that the C2SP's livelihood interventions benefited women as effectively as they did men, for example by ensuring that women's specific needs and priorities were taken into account, that the proposed activities responded to these needs, and they were implemented in such a way as to allow women to fully benefit (e.g. in terms of timing, venue, burden etc.). Technical support was also provided to include more women in the Community Management Committee (CMC) established by the C2SP as a central community governance mechanism; thanks to the JP, the number of women involved in decision-making and benefitting from capacity-building efforts increased from 3 to 8.

➔ TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COOPERATIVE FARMS AND SECURING THEIR ACCESS TO MARKET:

Although women in North Kordofan typically have equal access to land, very few have land ownership rights, and thus lack the collateral funding needed for membership in existing cooperatives. Women also lack access to extension and production technology. While government-owned land is rented or leased to farmers irrespective of gender, few women have the economic resources required to access this land. Privately-owned lands are usually registered in the name of the

head of household, and in those cases in which women do own land, women usually transfer the title to male members of the household, due to custom and tradition. As a result, women are often unable to access credit.

Against this background, the project linked its beneficiaries to two women's associations and supported them to establish cooperative farms, ensure access to credit and improve their access to markets. The women's associations – the Althorya and Halima Alsadia associations, located in Nawa and Al Sawani villages (Al Rahad locality) respectively – were identified and selected through a gender mapping exercise.

Members of the associations received both theoretical and practical training in rain-fed crop production and establishing model farms. The project then worked with the Native Administration and Ministry of Agriculture to allocate land – 8 feddans or approximately 3.36 hectares – to each association and provide sesame and sorghum seeds. The project also linked the associations with the agricultural Bank of Sudan's initiatives (*Absumi*) for financial support to alternative livelihoods and socioeconomic infrastructure.

In addition to access to finance, the project ensured that women had the means of accessing markets to sell their products, both through local traders in Al Rahad locality and directly in the regional crop market in North Kordofan's state capital, El Obeid, including by providing means of transportation (tricycles) by which to move produce from farm sites to markets.

Governance component

The Governance component of the project consisted of supporting communities in Al Rahad – as represented by an expanded Community Management Committee comprised of 50% of women – to undertake a collective Community Environmental Action Planning (CEAP) process. CEAP (see Box) is a participatory bottom-up process that brings communities together to analyze 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 contributes to increasing community resilience and long-term stability. In this project, the CEAP process was conducted for the first time as a gender-equal exercise. The process was key not only to building women's skills for sound governance of natural resources, but also to demonstrating their leadership and conflict resolution potential.

The process, which was conducted in parallel in two villages of Al Rahad locality – Nawa and Al Sawani – consisted of the following:

➤ 11 SESSIONS OF COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING CONDUCTED IN NAWA AND AL SAWANI:

The CEAP process was implemented through 11 sessions in Nawa and Al Sawani villages over a period of two months. Prior to the sessions, and in close coordination with the local Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Center, the project trained teams to facilitate the CEAP process in each village. Facilitator teams were composed of two men and two women, as well as a number of alternates who could substitute for a team member or otherwise step in and support the process whenever needed.

Each community started by selecting 20 members for the committee that would lead the process in its village, ensuring gender parity, as well as the most balanced representation possible of youth, traditional leaders, nomads, and sedentary communities. Through the CEAP committees, the communities then worked to identify environmental challenges in their villages and agree on a list of key issues. The identified challenges were then ranked and prioritized.

In both communities, it was eventually agreed that the most important environment-related priority was to address the broken and dysfunctional water pumps, in order to increase water availability for all resource user groups and reduce tensions over water use. Action plans were developed to map out implementation of the identified priorities and the division of the roles and responsibilities between the community members and the project partners, as shown below.

Action plan for Nawa Village

ACTION	STRATEGIC PURPOSE	IMMEDIATE PURPOSE	REQUIREMENTS
Rehabilitation and maintenance of the existing hand water pumps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Improve water availability to reduce dependence on the availability of fuel to bring water ➔ Strengthen the social fabric between different user groups and reduce the tension over water availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Easy access to clean water for humans and animals ➔ Opportunity to train community members on water pump rehabilitation and maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Technical support/ consultant to lead process ➔ Human labor ➔ Maintenance equipment and spare parts
Fencing of the hafir (rainwater reservoir)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Sustainability of water source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Easy access to clean water for humans and animals ➔ Safety of children and animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Technical support/ consultant to lead process ➔ Building supplies (iron, cement, sand) ➔ Contractor

Action plan for Sawani Village

ACTION	STRATEGIC PURPOSE	IMMEDIATE PURPOSE	REQUIREMENTS
Rehabilitation of hand pump and water yard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Decreasing over-crowding of water sources and related tensions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Increasing the availability of sustainable clean drinking water for both humans and animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Technical support/ consultant to lead process ➔ Skilled laborers ➔ Spare parts



Photo credit: UNDP

THE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING (CEAP) PROCESS

The Community Environmental Action Planning (CEAP) Process was developed by the UN Environment Programme in Sudan as a participatory process that brings communities together to analyze environmental challenges and opportunities, evaluate options and develop, implement and monitor activities that contribute to the long-term sustainable management of natural resources.

In a CEAP, communities engage in a thorough and participatory analysis of their environment, looking at assets, patterns and dynamics of natural resource use and the way these are linked to their livelihoods. Through this consultation and assessment process, people learn from each other and have a chance to discuss and negotiate controversial matters.

In summary, CEAP:

1. PROVIDES A FORUM FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS (ALL COMMUNITY GROUPS/MEMBERS AND OTHER ACTORS) TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROCESS;
2. HELPS STAKEHOLDERS SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE;
3. HELPS REACH CONSENSUS ON KEY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES;
4. ESTABLISHES OWNERSHIP BY COMMUNITY; AND
5. HELPS PREVENT, CONTAIN OR OVERCOME CONFLICTS OVER NATURAL RESOURCE USE.

While CEAP has been used and applied in many different contexts and projects in Sudan, the Joint Pilot Project provided an important opportunity to improve the CEAP process by fully integrating gender considerations, and, for the first time, to use CEAP to promote gender equality in decision-making and to develop women's leadership capacity for environmental governance and natural resource conflict prevention and resolution. development affairs, and participate in decision-making processes on community development, among other mandates.

Communities in Al Rahad locality have a history of tensions over natural resources, including conflict between farmers and pastoralists over land and water resources. Beyond identifying key environmental challenges in the two villages, the CEAP process provided the communities with an inclusive platform for different groups to discuss common challenges and agree on joint solutions. While tensions appeared between different community members early on in the process, representatives of the different groups were able to use the tools provided in the process to enter into a constructive dialogue and emerge with a joint vision.

➔ REHABILITATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER SOURCES IN NAWA AND AL SAWANI:

In order to support the implementation of the main prioritized activities, the project linked the two communities with the North Kordofan State Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining, as well as a technical expert and engineer, to rehabilitate water pumps and fence the rainwater reservoir in Nawa, and rehabilitate the water yards in Al Sawani.

Communities demonstrated significant commitment towards the implementation of the action plans, contributing both funds and volunteer labor. The project's implementing partner Vet-Care also provided a financial contribution in its own name, covering the gap between estimated and actual cost of the materials, which had increased during the purchasing period due to high inflation in the market.

Having demonstrated deep understanding of the environmental situation in their region, women members of CEAP committees took on a particularly strong leadership role in the implementation of the prioritized actions, mobilizing their communities to contribute human and financial resources to address as many priorities as possible. In addition to implementing agreed actions, for example, women in Nawa leveraged their environmental leadership skills to allow for 6,000 trees to be planted in the area to decrease soil erosion.

Conflict prevention and resolution component

Through the Conflict Prevention and Resolution component, the pilot project sought to strengthen women's capacities for conflict mediation and resolution, and to expand their spaces of influence within the community and its conflict resolution mechanisms. Based on need, dedicated platforms/forums were created and linked to these mechanisms where women's groups convened, articulated priorities and exercised influence. This was achieved through the following activities:

➔ GENDER SENSITIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY IN AL RAHAD:

Early on in the implementation, the project conducted gender "sensitization" sessions with 180 community members, including youth groups and traditional leaders, with the aim of demystifying the concept of gender and better understanding 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. These activities sought to contribute to fostering long-term change in attitudes and perceptions.

➔ TRAINING FOR WOMEN IN NATURAL RESOURCE CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS:

Training on natural resource conflict resolution was provided to a total of 53 women in Al Rahad. Trainees included women from the Althorya and Alsadia associations, women from the Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Center and the CMC, and other community members. Training workshops provided participants with tools for reducing armed violence and promoting peace and reconciliation through improved natural resource management. In addition, the workshop provided women with knowledge of alternatives livelihoods opportunities that contribute to enhancing and promoting peaceful co-existence.

➔ ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES AS A CONFLICT RESOLUTION BODY:

The project supported women members of the Community Management Committee (CMC) to link up to the Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Centre to form a new body dedicated to preventing and resolving natural resource conflicts: the

Natural Resource Management Sub-Committee, comprised of 12 members, including 8 women (5 from the CMC and 3 from the Center). The objective of the Sub-Committee is to prevent conflict in Al Rahad locality by strengthening and sustaining community ownership, management, benefits and control of natural resources. Its workplan includes such initiatives as codifying the legal and institutional framework for natural resource management in Al Rahad; engaging local communities in planning and implementation of adaptive natural resource management processes; investing in research for adaptive management, including through experience-sharing across different states in Sudan and Arabic countries, and using traditional or indigenous knowledge while dealing with conflict over natural resource management. The sub-committee meets monthly, or more frequently if it is called to address a particular issue, and is particularly significant as a channel of communication between women representatives of the community that have received training on natural resource conflict mediation and women members of the Center who are in more formal mediation roles.

➔ WOMEN-LED DIALOGUE FORUMS BRINGING PASTORALIST, FARMING AND IDP COMMUNITIES TOGETHER:

Through the project, women were supported to design and lead "dialogue forums" bringing pastoralists, farming communities and internally displaced persons (IDPs) together in each of the target villages, Nawa and Al Sawani, to discuss natural resource-related issues and other factors of disputes. The forums included both men and women participants, but for the first time in these communities, leadership and facilitation of the dialogue were carried out by eight women from the local Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Center who had previously been trained in conflict resolution through the project. Both dialogues were attended by local leaders from the native administration, which was considered highly significant as a marker of an important shift in social norms, as it was reported that they would previously not have accepted women's leadership in such discussions. The forums will continue to be convened after the close of the project, at the request of the CMC or its sub-committees, to address any issue of concern.

➔ **NEW RESEARCH ON WOMEN PASTORALISTS IN RELATION TO NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONFLICT:**

The project also sought to fill key information gaps by undertaking research on women pastoralists in relation to natural resources and conflict, with the aim of improving understanding of how best to include women pastoralists in natural resource governance bodies and conflict resolution mechanisms in the future. Following a secondary literature review, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with a broad range of stakeholders, including three different pastoralists groups, members of the native administration, government officials and civil society organizations in the area to determine (i) how women, men, boys and girls are affected by changes in the availability of resources, environmental degradation, migratory patterns,

livelihoods and the rise of tensions and conflicts around shared natural resources; (ii) how gendered roles and responsibilities are determined and organized within the communities, especially as related to livelihoods and access and control of natural resources; (iii) what roles women and men play in influencing conflict dynamics around natural resources, either to prevent, defuse or resolve conflict, or on the contrary to encourage it; and (iv) what entry points and opportunities exist to support and empower women and girls within the pastoralist communities with respect to livelihoods and conflict prevention/resolution capacities. The resulting research report is summarized in Case Study 1 on this final project report; the full research report is available as a separate document.

Photo credit: UN Environment



Documentation and knowledge management component

A key function of the project was to test, validate and document good practices on gender-responsive natural resources management for peace-building, in order to 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 was therefore given to documenting results and lessons learned throughout the implementation cycle of the project. Acknowledging that much of the data in this context would be qualitative rather than quantitative in nature, activities in this component consisted of the following:

➔ MONITORING, DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS:

A baseline assessment was conducted as part of the inception phase of the project, which not only allowed for key baseline data to be collected but also led to important modifications and improvements to the project design. This included refining the project's results framework with improved indicators.

During the implementation phase, in addition to the collection of quantitative data on participation in project activities and income generation, among other issues, two rounds of questionnaires and perception surveys were conducted to assess not only the impacts of the project on women's capacities and opportunities to engage in natural resource governance and conflict resolution, but also the community's perception of women's roles and leadership potential. Moreover, interviews with project beneficiaries and other community members, including traditional leaders, were conducted and documented throughout the project.

It is important to note that some challenges were experienced with data collection, including scheduling perception surveys and questionnaires sufficiently apart from each other as to be able to measure progress. Indeed, fuel shortages and other logistical challenges prevented the first round of data collection from being conducted according to schedule, instead taking place over a year into the implementation phase and only three months prior to the final round. During the surveys themselves, issues such as heavy rainfall preventing access to some areas, harvest season and pastoralist migratory seasons also influenced who could be surveyed in each round.

In addition, data generated through the baseline survey was only partially useful, due to changes in the project design and changes to the indicators following the inception phase.

Despite these challenges, the project succeeded in collecting sufficient valuable data to allow for evaluation of results. Interviews conducted with project beneficiaries at different times throughout the implementation, including for the preparation of the documentary film, contributed to filling any data collection gaps. Moreover, a final round of data collection will be conducted one year after the end of project activities to validate results and ensure that lessons and good practices derived from the project are accurately recorded in the guidance developed by the global Joint Programme on the basis of the pilot projects.

➔ KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS AND DOCUMENTATION OF GOOD PRACTICES:

The present report documents lessons learned from this first pilot project of the Joint Programme and ensures that good practices are captured, with a view to being disseminated widely, and adapted and replicated in other contexts. All the data collected through two rounds of perception surveys and questionnaires has been systematically organized, and is available for study and consultation, along with all the programming documents, studies and other relevant materials. Together with that of other pilots, the experience from this project will serve to build the programming guidance produced by the Joint Programme to ensure systematization of this approach within UN and other international peace and development programming more broadly.

In addition, a documentary film was produced and released as supporting material to this final project report. The footage was also used to produce short “vignettes” highlighting individual stories illustrating particular issues or aspects of the projects. The footage was collected through two field missions to Al Rahad comprised of project staff, the film producer and his team. The mission met and interviewed the different target groups for the different project components, such as the

CEAP committees, members of the Community Management Committee and project beneficiaries. The interviews aimed at documenting the impact of the project on the people’s lives, to what extent the project goals were met and the way forward after the finalization of the project. The mission also documented photos from some of the project’s activities, including the CEAP activities, the use of the solar system in the collaborative farm and the development of the vegetable farms.



Photo credit: UNDP

Overview of Project Activities

C2SP ACTIVITIES	JOINT PROJECT ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION	PERIOD	LEAD
Livelihoods component				
Establishment of the Community Management Committee (CMC) Vegetable production: land acquisition, water source and accessories for irrigation of vegetable farms; vegetable seeds and tools; improved market access for vegetables Gum arabic production: tools distribution, training on tapping, collection, handling, storage; market and private sector linkages for gum arabic producers	Technical advice and financial support to increase number of women beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Inclusion of 5 more women representing their community in the CMC (increasing number of women from 3 to 8) ➔ Training, inputs and tools for vegetable production for 15 additional women (doubling number of women beneficiaries from 15 to 30) 	Q2 2017	UNDP
	Gender analysis to refine project design and implementation and ensure interventions fully benefit women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Comprehensive gender analysis and study of the factors influencing gender equality and women's empowerment in Al Rahad locality ➔ Recommendations about entry points to promote women's economic and political empowerment 	Q2-Q3 2017	UN Women
	Technical support to women's associations for the establishment of cooperative farms and securing their access to market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Training for women's associations on rain-fed farming and irrigation ➔ Allocation of land by the Native Administration and Ministry of Agriculture – 8 feddans or approximately 3.36 hectares – to each association ➔ Provision of sesame and sorghum seeds by the Ministry of Agriculture ➔ Women's associations linked to local financial institutions to ensure access to credit ➔ Provision of means of transportation to move products from farms to local and regional markets 	Q3 2017	UNDP/ UN Women
Governance component				
	Community Environmental Action Planning (CEAP) process in two villages of Al Rahad (Nawa and Al Sawani)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Training of CEAP facilitators (50% women) ➔ 11 community CEAP sessions (50% women) in each target village (Nawa and Al Sawani) for the joint analysis of environmental challenges and development of community action plans based on joint prioritization and solutions development 	Q2-Q3 2018	UN Environment
	Technical and financial support to communities for the implementation of priority actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Rehabilitated two water pumps and fenced rainwater reservoir in Nawa ➔ Rehabilitated water yards in Al Sawani 	Q3 2018	UN Environment

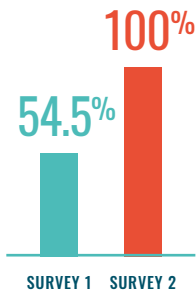
C2SP ACTIVITIES	JOINT PROJECT ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION	PERIOD	LEAD
Mediation and conflict resolution component				
Training conducted on peaceful coexistence and conflict mitigation skills targeting the CMC, native administration and key community members	Gender sensitization of the community in Al Rahad (youth, men, traditional elders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Gender sensitivity training sessions for 180 community members in Al Rahad, including on women's roles and potential with respect to conflict resolution 	Q4 2017	UN Women
Training for CMC members on project management	Creation of linkages between CMC and local Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Centre, and establishment of platforms for discussion on women, NRM and conflict resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Establishment of the Natural Resource Management Sub-Committee (8 women; 4 men) comprised of members of the CMC and the Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Center as a new body to prevent and resolve natural resource conflicts 	Q4 2017	UN Women
	Facilitation of women's engagement in conflict resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Women-led discussion forums including men and women from the various groups (sedentary populations, pastoralists, IDPs) to discuss challenges and opportunities for peace, and enhance social cohesion 	Q1 2018	UN Women
	Research study on the status of women pastoralists, their natural resource management roles and their roles in conflict prevention and resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Secondary literature review ➔ Interviews and focus group discussions with a broad range of stakeholders, including 3 different pastoralists groups, members of the native administration, government officials and civil society organizations in the area 	Q2-Q3 2018	UN Environment
Documentation and knowledge management component				
	Monitoring, data collection and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Data collection and analysis ➔ Perception surveys and questionnaires (2x) ➔ Interviews & storytelling 	Continuous	UNDP
	Documentary film, video interviews and photo evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ 2 field trips for filming and interviews ➔ Film production ➔ Photography 	Q2-Q3 2018	UNDP
	Knowledge products and good practices on strengthening women's participation in peacebuilding over natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Final report including lessons and good practices ➔ Case studies 	Q3 2018	UN Environment

RESULTS

Project outcomes

At the outcome level, the project sought to measure the extent to which the various natural resource-related activities on livelihoods, governance and conflict resolution had actually resulted in shifting perceptions of women's capacities and leadership, and strengthened their engagement in formal conflict resolution mechanisms and processes at the local level.

Results at this level are highly positive. First, perceptions of women's capacities, roles and contributions underwent a radical shift thanks to the project, both among women beneficiaries themselves, and within the broader community, as 100% of individuals surveyed in both groups agreed that women had important roles and contributions with respect to conflict over natural resources. The influence of the project – and in particular the outcomes of the CEAP process – in this respect was measurable, as community perceptions of women's roles and contributions with respect to conflict resolution over natural resources **increased significantly between the first and the second rounds of perception surveys, from 54.5% to 100%.**



INCREASE IN THE PERCEPTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S ROLES IN NATURAL RESOURCE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Second, the number of women in the local Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Center, the main conflict resolution mechanism in the area, doubled during the project lifespan (2017-2018). **An additional 10 women joined the Center as mediators**, 8 of whom were directly trained by the project. Among other roles, these women now lead the Dialogue Forums bringing pastoralist, farming and IDP communities together in each of the target villages to discuss various factors of tension, including access to land and water.

Trends are also positive with respect to women's active involvement in the formal conflict mediation processes conducted through the Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Center, though lack of data on women's prior engagement complicates the precise calculation of the degree to which their active participation has increased since the start of the project.

The Center has reported that **women have been actively involved as mediators in 4 out of 22 conflict mediation processes** conducted since the start of the project, noting that this represents an increase as compared to prior years, as women were until recently virtually absent from meetings and discussions – or only present as observers. It is important to note that the four mediation processes women were engaged in are among the most recent conducted by the Center, which indicates that women's engagement increased alongside project implementation. Crucially, the Center has reported that three out of four mediation processes women were involved in as mediators concerned disputes over natural resources, whereas prior to the project, women's opinions would generally only be sought on social issues, particularly domestic disputes.

Moreover, the Center has noted that since the end of the project, at least two women are systematically included as part of all mediation processes and *Jodeya* meetings, both within the Center and within the communities, irrespective of the type of conflict under discussion. Although absolute numbers remain low at the time of reporting, trends indicate an overall increase, not only in active engagement but also in levels of influence. For example, while some community members continue to show resistance about women's roles, women members of the Center have noted that male members are more accepting of them joining discussions and voicing their opinions and guidance, which they attribute to the capacities and legitimacy they have gained from the project.

3 OUT OF 4

MEDIATION PROCESSES

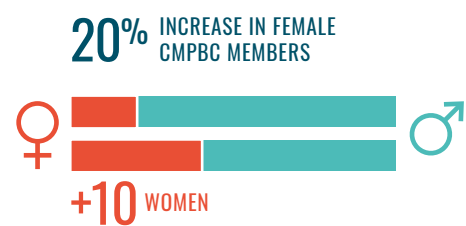
WOMEN WERE INVOLVED IN AS MEDIATORS CONCERNED DISPUTES OVER NAURAL RESOURCES



Finally, more women are reportedly approaching the Center to file complaints, indicating not only that they have more knowledge of available dispute resolution avenues, but also more trust in the legitimacy of those mechanisms when they become more inclusive.

data collection, including questionnaires and surveys of targeted communities, will be conducted one year after the end of the project's activities, in September 2019. The findings of the final survey will be used to validate key lessons and good practices derived from this pilot project.

Continued monitoring of the outcome-level indicators will be key to determining the level of sustained impact of the project on gender equality gains, and therefore the value of focusing on natural resource-based interventions as a means of strengthening women's empowerment in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as social cohesion and the overall reduction of violent conflict in the area. As detailed further in the report, another round of



Project Outcomes

PROJECT OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	BASELINE	TARGETS	RESULTS
Women's voices, capacities and agency are effectively used in prevention and resolution efforts for natural resource-related conflicts in Al Rahad, North Kordofan	Increase in the number of women or women's groups in existing conflict resolution mechanisms	20% (10 women out of 50 members in the CMPBC)	20% increase	20% increase (20 women out of 50 members)
	Increase in women's perceptions of their own capacity and influence in conflict resolution over natural resources	0*	75% increase	100% of women report increased awareness and capacity for conflict resolution
	Increase in the community's perception of women's roles and contributions with respect to conflict resolution over natural resources	0*	50% increase	100% of community members surveyed indicate increased awareness and contributions of women with respect to conflict resolution
	Increase in the number of conflict mediation processes in which women's voices, capacities and agency are effectively used	0**	50% increase	4 conflict mediation processes in which women's voices, capacities and agency were used since 2017 2 women systematically included in every mediation process conducted through the center since the close of the project

*Indicator developed after the baseline survey.

** Though women were part of the CMPBC prior to the start of the project (representing 20% of its members), their participation in conflict mediation processes was not systematically tracked. It is generally thought that they typically were not able to engage actively, and that the range of issues on which their views were sought were limited. However, the number of conflicts they would have played a role in mediating is not known.

Livelihoods

Interventions in the Livelihoods component of the project yielded highly positive results, as targets for both indicators were achieved.

First, **87% of the diverse group of women who received livelihoods support reported increased income by the close of the project**, either from home-based gardens or from the cooperative farms that were established in the villages of Nawa and Al Sawani. Women indicated that the income from their home gardens was adequate to cover daily basic needs, whereas the crops that they cultivated at the farms, such as sesame and sorghum, were considered cash crops that greatly boosted their income. This not only had an immediate positive impact on women's ability to meet their immediate needs (and that of their families), but also had important effects on women's sense of empowerment and self-esteem.

Second, two women's associations were supported to establish cooperative farms, which were then linked to markets locally in Al Rahad, or to the regional crop market of El Obeid, the state capital of North Kordofan. The women's associations were supported to access credit (through micro-finance grants) and provided with means of transportation to access local and regional markets.

One significant objective of the Livelihoods component was to address women's immediate needs in such a way that they could leverage their economic role in the community to enhance their participation in decision-making and conflict mitigation around natural resources. The project was particularly successful in this respect, as women's increased economic role led to noticeable shifts in power balances within their households and the broader community.

Importantly, interventions in this component also promoted social cohesion. For example, one woman expressed that she had become too busy to engage in any quarrels in the area because she had her cooperative farm to focus on. Moreover, most of the women, pastoralists included, mentioned that their relationships with their neighbors had strengthened as they began to exchange goods and tips related to their new cooperative.

87% OF WOMEN
SUPPORTED THROUGH
THE PROJECT REPORTED
INCREASED INCOME



Livelihoods

OUTPUT	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	BASELINE	TARGETS	RESULTS
C2SP livelihood interventions address women's specific needs	Number of women who report increased income	0 (prior to intervention)	75% of those targeted by interventions	87% of women report increased income thanks to project interventions
	Increase in the number of women's cooperatives/ associations accessing markets	No women's cooperatives accessing markets	2 women's cooperatives accessing markets	2 women's cooperatives accessing markets thanks to project interventions



IN THE PAST I HAD NO SOURCE OF INCOME, BUT NOW THAT I HAVE MY BACKYARD GARDEN, I CULTIVATE A VARIETY OF VEGETABLES. I USE SOME OF THE PRODUCT FOR FAMILY CONSUMPTION, AND I SELL THE REST FOR 40 SDG A BUNDLE. MY MONTHLY INCOME IS NOW 3,600 SDG. WITH THIS MONEY, I HAVE MANAGED TO PAY MY DAUGHTER'S UNIVERSITY FEES AND I HAVE BOUGHT NEW FURNITURE FOR MY HOUSE.

AMNA MINALLAH ABU EL HASAN, VEGETABLE FARMER
(PROJECT BENEFICIARY), AL RAHAD



Photo credit: UNDP

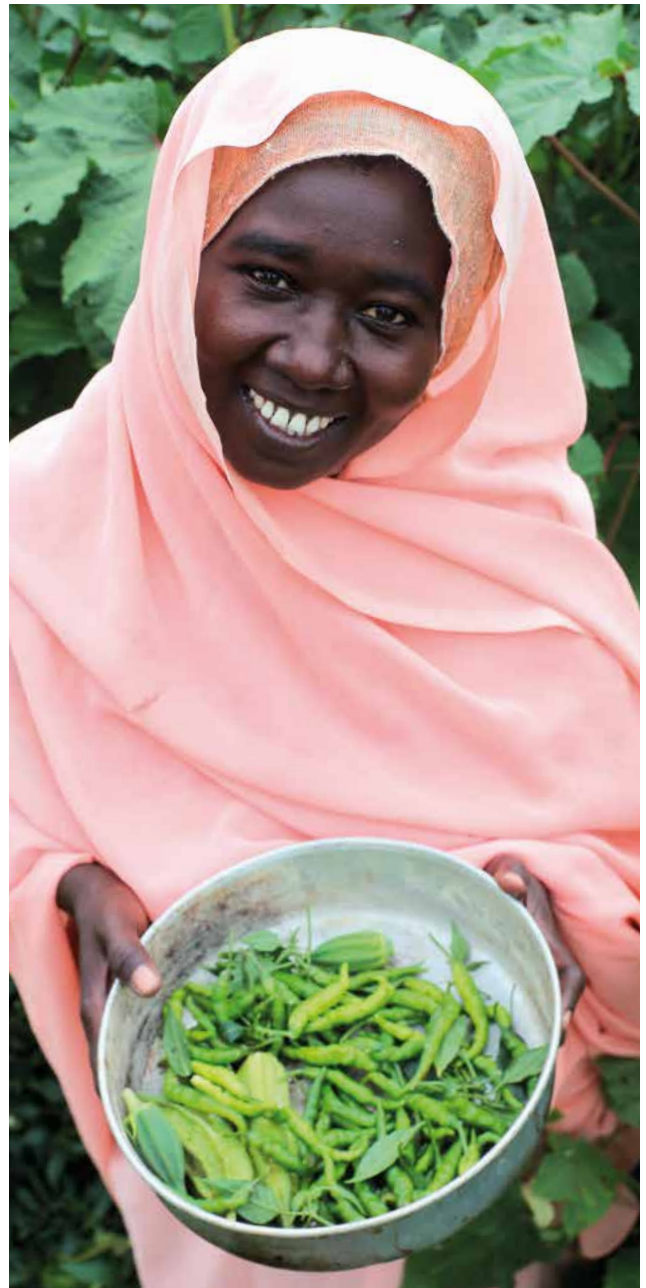


Photo credit: UNDP

Governance

The Governance component of the project achieved its key objectives: the Community Environmental Action Planning (CEAP) exercises conducted in Nawa and Al Sawani villages were not only successful in providing a platform for women from both the farming and the pastoralist groups to engage and exercise leadership on natural resource-related issues, but also in providing the community with a tool for the prevention and resolution of natural resource-based conflicts.



NOW THAT WOMEN HAVE THE TOOLS TO ANALYSE AND DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES AND THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, THEY ARE TAKING ACTIONS TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS.

SARIA EISA ABDULLAH, HALIMA ALSADIA WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION, AL SAWANI VILLAGE

First, the outcomes of both CEAP exercises fully reflected women's stated priorities. The project had originally planned for women engaged in each process to organize into a separate group and develop their own "agenda" or list of priorities. In fact, a parallel process was not necessary: women in the CEAP committees engaged actively from the start and were key actors in the formulation of the action plans. In total, 84% of participants in the CEAP (male and female) confirmed that women's priorities were reflected in the final plans, which prioritized rehabilitation and protection of water sources in the villages.

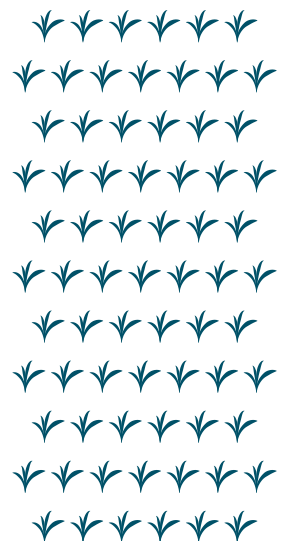
It is important to note that women played a crucial role in the implementation of the CEAP, particularly focusing on garnering support and investment from their community to engage and mobilize resources to address as many of the identified priorities as possible. As mentioned in the previous section, this extended to taking the initiative to implement additional actions outside of the framework of the project, for example by negotiating with state Ministry of Agriculture and the Forests National Corporation of Sudan's Al Rahad Branch to provide 6,000 seedlings to the village for reforestation.

Second, participating in the CEAP process was instrumental to increasing women's knowledge and capacity on natural resource management. While participants came to the process with significant knowledge of environmental conditions and changes in their region, the CEAP provided them with a framework of analysis and prioritization which supported the development of joint solutions. As a result, 100% of women participating reported increased knowledge and capacity on natural resource management.

Importantly, the CEAP process was an opportunity for women to exercise and demonstrate leadership. As noted above, women in both communities were particularly active at each stage the process, showing organizational skills and a commitment to achieving consensus that were appreciated by the community as a whole. This notably contributed to shifting men's perceptions of women's capacities, as 100% of the men participating in the CEAP process noted women's roles in conflict mediation and resolution had increased since the inception phase of the project. This was particularly noticeable towards the end of the project, during the final round of questionnaires and surveys conducted by project staff, when men suggested that women represent their communities to give answers.



WOMEN IN NAWA MOBILIZED THEIR COMMUNITY TO PLANT **6,000** SEEDLINGS FOR SOIL CONSERVATION



Governance

OUTPUT	INDICATORS	BASELINE	TARGETS	RESULTS
Increased knowledge, opportunity and capacity of women to participate in decision-making on natural resource management at the community level	Degree/level to which women's priorities, solutions and concerns are reflected in the final action plan produced through the CEAP	No planning/ documents in place	75% of women's stated priorities and proposed solutions are reflected in action plan	→ 84% of women's stated priorities and proposed solutions are reflected in the final action plan
	Number of women who report increased knowledge and capacity on natural resource management	0	90% of women involved in the CEAP process report increased understanding of natural resource management and capacity to replicate exercise	→ 100% of women indicated that as a community they could replicate the CEAP exercise on their own to identify their priorities and actions
	Number of community members reporting ability to use CEAP as a conflict resolution tool	0	90%	→ 56% of total respondents report ability to use CEAP as a conflict resolution tool



I REALIZED DURING THE CEAP DISCUSSIONS THAT THE MEN WERE ACCEPTING THE OPINIONS OF WOMEN MORE. THE CEAP CONTRIBUTED TO THAT BECAUSE OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION FROM THE BEGINNING ENSURING THAT THE WOMEN WERE PART OF ALL THE COMMITTEES AND THAT THEIR IDEAS MATTERED EQUALLY.

EL AMIN SULAIMAN, CEAP COMMITTEE MEMBER, NAWA VILLAGE

Finally, the CEAP process provided communities with a tool for conflict prevention and resolution that can be replicated. At the end of the project, 56% of participants agreed that they could replicate the CEAP as a conflict resolution tool. This is lower than the stated target of 90%, which is somewhat surprising not only given the very positive views of the CEAP expressed overall, but also given that the priority actions identified in both cases were prioritized specifically because of their strategic value in preventing conflict over water.

In interviews, participants in both communities lauded the CEAP process for bringing different groups together for the first time. One woman participant suggested for example that the CEAP could be an effective tool to help pastoralist and sedentary community members resolve conflicts over land, notably by providing a tool to discuss demarcation of pasture and agricultural land. The relatively low number is thus most likely a result of how the question was asked (e.g. choice of vocabulary), though it points to the need for replications or adaptations of this exercise to further emphasize the function of the CEAP as a conflict resolution tool for natural resource disputes.



Photo credit: UNDP



Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Interventions in this component of the project, which aimed to strengthen women’s roles in natural resource conflict prevention and resolution processes at the community level, achieved the stated targets and had very positive results.

First, new channels of communication and influence were created through the project, most notably through the establishment and formal registration of a new body dedicated to preventing and resolving natural resource conflicts, known as the Natural Resource Management Sub-Committee, comprised of 8 women (and 4 men) from the Community Management Committee and the local Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding

Center. In addition, 2 “dialogue forums” bringing together pastoralist, IDP and farming communities to discuss natural resource-related issues and other factors of disputes were convened and facilitated by women from the Center who were trained in natural resource conflict resolution by the project. Both the Sub-Committee and the Dialogue Forums constitute new platforms for women to exercise leadership in preventing and resolving conflicts in the area, and will continue beyond the end of the project.



100% OF WOMEN
SURVEYED REPORTED INCREASED
KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY
FOR CONFLICT MEDIATION AND
RESOLUTION

Conflict Prevention and Resolution

OUTPUT	INDICATORS	BASELINE	TARGETS	RESULTS
Increased knowledge, opportunity and capacity of women to participate in mediation and conflict resolution processes at the community level	Existence of open lines of communication between women’s groups and existing conflict resolution mechanisms	No lines of communication open	At least one forum/ platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Natural Resource Management Sub-Committee established as a joint body between women community decision-makers and the Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Center ➔ Women-led Dialogue Forums established by women from the Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Center
	Number of women who report increased knowledge and capacity for conflict resolution and mediation	0	75%	➔ 100% of women report increased knowledge and capacity for conflict mediation and resolution at the end of the project
	Women’s priorities in relation to conflict over natural resources articulated	No women’s agenda exists	One women’s agenda completed	➔ 84% of women respondents agree that women’s priorities were articulated as per the CEAP Action Plan
	Increased understanding of pastoralist women’s roles with respect to natural resource management and conflict mediation	No study available	One study produced	➔ One research study produced

In interviews conducted by the project team, women participating the dialogue forums repeatedly highlighted the importance of creating such a platform where women from different groups and backgrounds could give their input and feedback on conflict resolution and peacebuilding. They highlighted the importance of their own roles, of building their capacity and of increasing the overall acceptance and understanding of stakeholders as to why women's participation in conflict resolution over natural resource management is fundamental to the community's overall stability.

WOMEN ARE NOW ACTIVELY ENGAGED WHEN IT COMES TO CONFLICT ISSUES IN THE COMMUNITY. TOGETHER WITH THE MEN, THEY ANALYZE THE SITUATION, PARTICIPATE AND INTERVENE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION.

COMMUNITY MEMBER, AL RAHAD

The various capacity-building interventions on conflict prevention and mediation – which were conducted under both this and the Governance component – were highly successful in increasing women's knowledge and skills. At the end of the project 100% of women surveyed reported increased knowledge and capacity for conflict mediation and resolution. This result was reflected in the fact that community perceptions of women's roles and contributions with respect to conflict resolution over natural resources increased significantly within the lifespan of the project, from 54.5% to 100%.

WOMEN-LED DIALOGUE FORUMS
ESTABLISHED BY WOMEN FROM
THE CONFLICT MITIGATION AND
PEACEBUILDING CENTER



With respect to the articulation of women's priorities in relation to conflict over natural resources, the result is also highly satisfactory as 84% of community members interviewed agreed that women's priorities had been fully integrated into the CEAP action plans. As explained for the Governance component above, the increase in the recognition of women's leadership on issues related to natural resource management and conflict arguably rendered the stated target ("one women's agenda completed") superfluous, as a parallel process to ensure women were able to articulate their priorities and ensure they were reflected in the final outcome was in the end unnecessary.

Finally, the project successfully contributed to increasing the understanding of the situation of pastoralist women in and around Al Rahad, and in particular of how the environmental degradation and climate change are contributing to shifts in migratory patterns and livelihoods that affect women in particular ways. The study commissioned through the project reviewed key issues for several groups of pastoralists and was able to gain important insights into understudied linkages. Key findings are summarized in Case Study 1 in this report, and the full study will be made available online. It is important to note, however, that while the study produced highly relevant and interesting information on the shifting gender dynamics within different pastoralist groups coming through Al Rahad, the findings concerning pastoralist women's specific roles with respect to natural resource conflicts were limited. This is thought to be largely the result of prevailing cultural norms regarding what is appropriate to discuss with women, coupled with the lack of a shared vocabulary to define roles and processes around conflict prevention and peacebuilding, particularly within a short time period. Further study of these roles, and in particular of the peacebuilding potential of newly sedentarized pastoralist women integrating within the community in Al Rahad is warranted.

Documentation and Knowledge Management

The Documentation and Knowledge Management Component was key to ensuring that the pilot project would contribute to the overall objectives of the global Joint Programme of which it forms part by supporting the development of programming guidance and tools that will allow for replication of such approaches in other areas of the country, continent and globe. Targets under this component were fully achieved.

First, the present report documents lessons learned from this first pilot project of the Joint Programme and ensures that good practices are captured, with a view to being disseminated widely, and adapted and replicated in other contexts. All the data collected through two rounds of perception surveys and questionnaires has been systematically organized, and is available for study and consultation, along with all the programming documents, studies and other relevant materials. Together with that of other pilots, the experience from this project will serve to build the programming guidance produced by the Joint Programme to ensure systematization of this approach within UN and other international peace and development programming more broadly.

Second, a short documentary film (and other audiovisual materials) was produced to tell the story of the women of Al Rahad and illustrate the contributions of the project on peoples' lives. The documentary focuses on women as agents of change and documents their increasing feelings of empowerment throughout the different components of the project, along with the shifting perceptions of their roles and leadership within the community. The film will contribute not only to dissemination and advocacy efforts on the nexus of women, natural resources, climate and peace, but also serve as an invaluable tool within the training developed by the global Joint Programme.

A SHORT DOCUMENTARY TELLS THE STORY OF THE WOMEN OF AL RAHAD



Documentation and Knowledge Management

OUTPUT	INDICATORS	BASELINE	TARGETS	RESULTS
Lessons learned and best practices on the peacebuilding impact of gender-responsive natural resource management documented	Number of knowledge products on best practices for gender-responsive natural resource management for peacebuilding	0 knowledge products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ One report capturing best practices and lessons learned developed ➔ Documentary developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Final report documenting lessons learned and good practices ➔ Photo archive available

Uptake and Sustainability of Results

Sustainability of project results in Al Rahad

While the results discussed in previous sections demonstrate that the immediate impacts of the project's interventions are highly visible within the targeted communities, it is critical that the project continues to benefit the communities over time, including through appropriation of the tools, skills and approaches that were imparted through the various activities.

At the time of final reporting, there are several early indications that project beneficiaries are using and appropriating their new skills to build on project results. For example, one of the women's associations supported by the project – the Alsadia Association – has increased its membership from 15 to 40 women since the end of the intervention. Sesame was successfully harvested in October 2018, with a percentage of the proceeds reinvested into the farm to plant the next crop and maintain the cooperative as a self-sustaining enterprise.

In Nawa, the Althorya Association not only had a successful harvest of sesame and sorghum from its cooperative farm and reinvested proceeds to ensure sustainability, but also built on the skills developed through the CEAP to mobilize their community, obtain government support and raise resources – both financial and community labor – to implement another priority activity, which resulted in 6,000 trees being planted in the area to decrease soil erosion.

One of the key sustainability strategies of the joint project, based on that of activities under the C2SP, was to foster a system by which proceeds from the economic ventures established through the project (cooperative farms, tree nurseries etc) be divided, allocating a certain percentage for reinvestment into the economic ventures, another towards the maintenance of CMCs and its sub-structures, and another towards the maintenance of other basic services within the community.

Moreover, the community-based institutional entities that were created through the project – the Community Management Committee (CMC) and its various subcommittees – continue to serve as a core local governance mechanism, ensuring the maintenance and development of mechanisms and processes started under the project, such as the Dialogue Forums. Members of the CMC meet fortnightly to discuss implementation status and challenges, and to find practical solutions to issues that arise.

Finally, strong linkages were created between the project – and in particular its governance mechanism, the CMC – and locality and state authorities. Authorities were highly supportive of the project, not only through facilitating access, but also through concrete contributions, such as the allocation of land for cooperative farms, and the provision of seeds, and support to women's enterprises through access to finance. The CMC and its various subcommittees, as well as the women's associations, will be able to count on the support of local and state government moving forward. Moreover, state authorities will be able to use this positive example to increase support to women in natural resource management and governance. Though it was too early to identify at the time of reporting, policy and institutional change within local government resulting or correlated to the project will be assessed in the final round of monitoring in 2019.

Influence and uptake within programming in Sudan

As a pilot project aiming to test innovative approaches to gender and natural resources with a view to eventually influencing and improving peace and development programming worldwide, it was critical for the Joint Project to track even early replications of its approaches within existing programming in Sudan, and in particular within the programming of its partner agencies.

Especially key to this analysis was the degree to which the Joint Project was able to influence UNDP's Community Stabilization and Security Programme (C2SP), ensuring its new projects were more gender-responsive, capitalizing upon opportunities to build women's leadership and peacebuilding potential through interventions linked to natural resource governance and livelihoods, as well as more effective in incorporating sustainable natural resource management and peacebuilding approaches.

In 2018, C2SP projects were implemented in the following communities: Lufo, Abu Kashola and Tillow in South Kordofan State, and in Hai Almak, Elgarry and Dindro in Blue Nile State. Results in terms of uptake of Joint Project approaches in C2SP programming are as follows:

- ➔ In 2018, the percentage of women benefitting from C2SP livelihood interventions increased to 40% for all project locations, in comparison to 30% in the previous years. Implementation of livelihood activities is ongoing and impact assessments will be carried out via client satisfaction surveys in 2019.
- ➔ In all interventions in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, C2SP teams ensured that women were members of both the Community Management Committees (CMCs) and the peacebuilding sub-committees that were established in each project location, based on good practices developed through the Joint Project. As part of these structures, women were provided with training on peacebuilding, conflict resolution, dialogue and mediation, natural resource management and gender equality.
- ➔ Following the example of the Joint Project, in which the peacebuilding sub-committee of the CMC was linked to the Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding Center in Al Rahad, the peace-

building sub-committees of the CMCs established in each community were linked with South Kordofan's Higher Council for Peace and the Blue Nile State Peace Council, with which they jointly carried out peacebuilding activities, such as mediation between farmers and pastoralists over land ownership and use, water and pasture, as well as dialogue between internally displaced persons (IDPs). This has given women within these sub-committees the opportunity to work with members of state-level peacebuilding mechanisms in carrying out mediation processes.

- ➔ While the CEAP was not been replicated in any of the C2SP project locations in 2018, plans are being made to incorporate it into C2SP interventions in 2019, which are currently under development.

The Joint Project was also instrumental in strengthening UN Environment's country programming with respect to gender issues. One immediate impact was to improve the Community Environmental Action Planning (CEAP) approach, which is broadly used in UN Environment's projects in Sudan. The example of the CEAP exercise implemented through the Joint Project provides a case of best practice on gender inclusion that will be replicated in other projects, starting in 2019. Guidance documents and training methodologies will be updated to emphasize gender equality and women's empowerment opportunities, using concrete examples from the project. Moreover, the successes, practical evidence and lessons learned of the Joint Project have influenced the design and framework of analysis of several new UN Environment initiatives in Sudan, including the Wadi El Ku Phase 2 project – a major new project on integrated water resource management financed by the EU in Darfur – and the pilot project of the EU-UN Environment Climate Change and Security programme in Sudan. More generally, the positive experience of the Joint Project is also indirectly influencing other projects to increase attention for gender-responsive approaches, including in more policy-focused efforts, such as the ADAPT! Project on climate change.

UN Women has been able to replicate alternative livelihoods support to women using the Absumi microfinance institution, and has to date developed two project proposals using the Joint Project's approach.

Commitment to further monitoring of long-term impact and uptake

As noted above, a key function of the project was to test, validate and document good practices on using natural resource-based interventions to strengthen women's capacities and opportunities to contribute to conflict prevention and sustaining peace. The good practices and lessons learned through this pilot project 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. It is therefore critical that monitoring of the impacts of the pilot project continue beyond final project reporting to determine whether early indications of gains in gender equality and

women's empowerment in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as social cohesion and the overall reduction of violent conflict in the area, are sustainable.

The partners have therefore committed to conducting another round of data collection, including questionnaires and surveys of targeted communities, one year after the end of the project's activities, in the fall of 2019. The findings will be used by the Joint Programme in the development of its programming tools, and shared with partners, stakeholders and the broader peace and development community in Sudan.



Photo credit: UNDP

Opportunities for replication and expansion in Sudan and beyond

It is crucial that this pilot project not only yield good practices to strengthen global programming, but also that it lead to increased investment in natural resource-based interventions for women's empowerment in peacebuilding in Sudan and the Sahel region. A number of opportunities have already been identified to influence and improve existing programming by the three partners, as discussed above. Beyond these, the partners will engage systematically with national and international stakeholders in the country and region to discuss the following opportunities for replicating and upscaling the approach within peace and development programming in Sudan:

➔ Sudan is one of the countries of implementation of the joint UN-World Bank Humanitarian Development-Peacebuilding Initiative. The initiative is rooted in the growing recognition that humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts are complementary and need to reinforce each other to respond to volatile situations around the world. Several stakeholders in country have remarked that the joint pilot project represents a good model for the operationalization of the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding nexus, and that replicating or expanding the approach – with a particular focus on populations affected by forced displacement – would be highly complementary to the Initiative's initial efforts in country.

➔ The drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which is expected to be completed by June 2020, is focusing political and programming attention on transitional measures to ensure that peacebuilding and development gains are sustained in Darfur, and that all activities are integrated in support of the Darfur peace process and Darfur Development Strategy. Funds for such purposes will be mobilized, among other sources, through the Peacebuilding Fund. Given the natural resource and climate challenges faced by Darfur, including the continuing potential for violent conflict over such issues as access to water and grazing and agricultural lands, the approach tested through the pilot project could be highly valuable to capitalize on women's conflict prevention and peacebuilding potential in the area. In addition to Darfur, several other Sudanese states, including the Eastern states, are experiencing a situation similar to that of North Kordofan and could benefit from replication of the Joint Project's approach.

➔ Discussions have also been ongoing for some time between the Government of Sudan and the UN on granting eligibility to Sudan (as a whole) for resources from the Peacebuilding Fund, after a number of years in which the country has not been eligible. Given the Fund's commitment to inclusive peacebuilding, and its stated focus on strengthening women's roles in conflict prevention and peacebuilding – through the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, for example – leveraging the Fund to replicate and upscale the approach and results of the pilot project in other regions of Sudan would be highly strategic. Adopting the approach in other eligible countries in the region, such as Mali or Niger, also constitutes a valuable opportunity.

➔ Several partner and donor countries have a keen interest in addressing the linkages between climate change and security. Many of these same partners have strong commitments to support gender equality and women's empowerment – including the Women, Peace and Security agenda – throughout their programming. The pilot project represents an early and somewhat unique example of a holistic and integrated approach to this nexus of issues in a region where climate change is having socio-economic and security impacts that are not well understood. Scaling the approach to other regions of Sudan, or indeed the Sahel, would be an opportunity to demonstrate the value of investing in women's empowerment as a conflict prevention and peacebuilding imperative.

➔ The high influx of South Sudanese refugees into Sudan has three implicit effects on host communities. Firstly, it is leading to growing tension between refugees and host communities over limited livelihoods and economic opportunities. Secondly, it is exerting pressure on basic services; and thirdly, it is resulting in heavy dependence on forest resources as coping mechanism for refugees, which poses significant environmental risks. Tension over natural resources, economic opportunities and basic services have the propensity to trigger violent conflict between refugees and host communities. The Joint Programme's approach could be highly relevant in areas with a high number of refugee settlements, especially in out-of-camp settings.

CASE STUDIES

I. The gender dynamics of shifting migratory patterns among pastoralist groups¹⁰



Photo credit: UN Environment

Due to its location near the border with South Kordofan, Al Rahad has long been a significant gathering point for nomads in North Kordofan, including the Baggara, Shanabla, Kababish and their various clans. Pastoral groups passing through the eastern and central corridors from South Kordofan state have typically settled in Al Rahad between July and November to trade with local populations.

In the past decades, the lives of pastoralists have been increasingly affected by a combination of factors including climate change, environmental degradation and conflict. These factors have led to the emergence of new seasonal migration patterns, livelihood systems and social changes in and around Al Rahad locality.

The degradation of pastures linked to highly variable climatic conditions has resulted in a significant decrease in land and water resources available along traditional migratory routes in Al Rahad. The situation has been compounded by a significant expansion of mechanized farming; according to local authorities in North Kordofan state, 90% of the land allocated for grazing in the State is now cultivated. Animal corridors have been narrowed in some areas and completely blocked in others, severely impeding the movement of animals, especially large animals such as camels and bulls.

Conflict in South Kordofan, which has opposed the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North since 2011, has also

forced many pastoralist groups to shorten, change or virtually cease their traditional migration patterns. Today, only 10% of the total number of pastoralists using Al Rahad's resources still use traditional routes between South and North Kordofan, coming through Al Rahad during the rainy season. Due to the insecurity, these groups now often split when it is time to return to South Kordofan, leaving women and young children in Al Rahad, while men and older boys continue on with the animals. The great majority of pastoralists now remain and roam within Al Rahad locality throughout the year, some with women and children, others leaving women and younger children in one community while they roam further afield.

The changes in the patterns of seasonal migration have led to important social shifts within pastoralist communities and transformed the lives of pastoralist women, impacting both positively and negatively on their livelihoods, roles and access to education and healthcare. In the increasing absence of men, many women – especially older women – have also taken on new roles in decision-making and conflict resolution.

Within the groups of pastoralists that roam within Al Rahad locality yearlong, which include members of the Baggara, Shanabla and Kababish tribes, the changes in seasonal migration patterns have caused a clear shift in women's livelihoods systems. Though producing and selling milk and its derivatives in local markets remains a key source of income, the reduction in the number of animals due to lack of pasture and the frequent splitting of groups have meant that women have had to resort to alternatives to support their

families. These have included making and selling charcoal, collecting and selling firewood and performing farm work as daily labourers. These groups also rent small plots of land from villagers next to their area of residence for cultivation, including providing feed for herds during the dry season.

The close proximity of these villages to the actual town of Al Rahad has helped raise awareness of the importance of healthcare among this group, especially in terms of reproductive health and child immunization. Marriage traditions in this category are also shifting according to ethnic affiliations. Marriage in the Baggara and Kababish group is increasingly only taking place at maturity, while the Shanabla are still practising early and arranged marriages. All groups favour the marriage of relatives, but they are now taking girls' opinions into account – something that was not considered in the past.

For Baggara and Shanabla pastoralist women whose groups still practice traditional transhumance between North and South Kordofan, remaining in Al Rahad while men continue on has increased their burden and economic responsibilities. Women in this category have experienced important changes to their livelihoods, similarly turning to selling and producing charcoal and firewood, as well as working as farm hands on nearby land. In the past, women from this category used to sell dairy products and derivatives produced during the long journey from South to North Kordofan. The women controlled the income generated by the sale and could spend it on their own needs and those of their families.



Photo credit: UN Environment



Photo credit: UNDP

Remaining in Al Rahad as the herds migrate back south has meant that women have had to forfeit this source of income. Moreover, even when the herds return to Al Rahad, women are not able to move with them because blockages along animal corridors mean that pastoralists have to use trucks to transport their animals to grazing areas, once again forcing a split in families by which women stay settled while men move within Al Rahad. This has deprived women of the advantage of producing and selling milk and dairy products along the route.

Women from this category also report better access to healthcare. Indeed, the long stay of this group of women during the dry season is an opportunity for them to pay regular visits to healthcare units for children's vaccinations and reproductive health follow-up. However, changes in migration patterns have had a detrimental effect on girls' education, due to cultural interdictions for girls to be educated away from home and a contradiction between their families' migration pattern and the local school holiday calendar – local schools open in the rainy season, when their families reunite and migrate to Abu-gor grazing area, north of Al Rahad.

Overall, the increasing sedentarization of pastoralist groups in and around Al Rahad – especially the sedentarization of women – has led to new economic and social roles for pastoralist women from all groups. Through their engagement in local market activities in particular, but also their work as day-laborers on farms in the locality, pastoralist women are gradually being more integrated into the community as a whole, and fostering social cohesion between different resource user groups. Though little data is available on their exact roles, all pastoralist groups report greater involvement of women – especially elder women – in conflict resolution (in the absence of men).

More research is needed to determine how women's decision-making and peacebuilding roles are shifting, and how some of the social shifts caused by changes in migration patterns can be leveraged to better support pastoralist women's economic and political empowerment at a time where they are on the frontlines of conflict, environmental degradation and climate change. In the meantime, however, it is imperative that peace and development programmes in contexts such as North Kordofan, Sudan or the broader Sahel region take into account the new social dynamics at play and endeavour to more systematically include pastoralist women in governance and conflict management mechanisms for natural resource access, use and benefit-sharing.

II. The ripple security impacts of climate change: from traditional livelihoods to artisanal mining

In Al Rahad and in other parts of North Kordofan, climate change, soil degradation and increasing competition for land have had significant impacts on the traditional livelihoods of men, such as the production of gum arabic.

Indeed, the area used to be a major producer of gum arabic, a natural gum used mainly as a sugar additive, of which Sudan is one of the main exporters worldwide. The gum arabic tree (*Acacia senegal*) is known for its particular adaptation to the regional ecology, contributing to soil fertility, supplying fodder for livestock and income-generation opportunities from the sale of gum. However, cycles of drought and the introduction of maladaptive farming methods and tools (such as tilling land with a chisel plough, which destroys acacia seedlings and damages and exposes the roots of mature acacias to the sun) have led to a reduction in the productivity of indigenous Acacia stands.

Losses in productivity, combined with soil fertility and land scarcity, have undermined gum Arabic

production as a livelihood, leading many men to seek alternative economic opportunities elsewhere. Economic migration is not new to communities like Al Rahad: seeking fortunes elsewhere during fallow times in farming has long taken place. However, migratory periods have increased significantly over the last decade. In Al Rahad today, it is typical for married men to be away for 5-6 months from January to May/June, while unmarried men – especially young men – are often away for much longer. This phenomenon leaves women not only with greater economic responsibilities towards their families and communities, but also at the forefront of violent conflicts that erupt regularly in Al Rahad, including over resources shared by different user groups.

One of the economic alternatives sought out by men is artisanal and small-scale gold mining – a sector that has significant socio-economic and environmental impacts, and is increasingly linked to insecurity in North Kordofan and other parts of Sudan, such as South Kordofan and Blue Nile States.



Photo credit: UN Environment

According to the Central Bank of Sudan's latest statistics, the country produced 73,300 kg of gold in 2014 compared with 70,000 kg in 2013, an upward trend the Government has projected will continue, as the country is set to become the second-largest producer of gold in Africa.¹¹ Some 85% of the total production is carried out by artisanal miners¹², which represent between 1 and 1.5 million people in Sudan.¹³

Most of the artisanal miners coming into states such as South Kordofan and Blue Nile are relatively young, and socially and economically marginalized. They have traded their agro-pastoralist livelihoods for high-risk and low-paying work, and are exposed to significant risks, including violence.

Artisanal gold mining is heavily dependent on the use of harmful chemicals, such as mercury, cyanide and sulphuric acid. In unregulated operations, the release of these substances into the environment leads to significant and long-term contamination of water, soil and air. These contaminants are known to have long-lasting health effects on those exposed to them. Mercury exposure, for example, has highly harmful effects on the nervous, digestive and immune systems, lungs and kidneys, and may be fatal.¹⁴

Moreover, most miners live on or around mining sites, most of which are over capacity, leading to low levels of hygiene, sanitation and occupational health problems. Due to lack of regulation and enforcement, there is insufficient implementation of safety and emergency procedures that could mitigate this harmful working environment for miners.

Artisanal gold mines have increasingly been correlated with protests and violence.¹⁵ For example, based on reports from local media, citizens in the localities surrounding mining sites in South Kordofan – such as Abu Jubeiha and Kologi – have protested against the use of cyanide in mining operations and its potential risks for human and environmental health. In 2017, Kologi witnessed mass protests against gold mining operations due to the environmental and health risks posed by cyanide use, leading to the declaration of a state of emergency by state authorities and the burning of a gold processing factory.¹⁶

The impacts of climate change on the traditional livelihoods are leading an increasing number of men in Al Rahad and elsewhere in Sudan to adopt highly risky adaptive strategies that are having ripple effects on the security and stability of other areas. In working to support and empower the women who are left to face the livelihood challenges posed by an increasingly resource-scarce environment, as well as the violent conflicts this situation contributes to, it will be important to also address the multi-faceted risks faced by men in gold mining operations, and the conflicts that the mines bring with them.

11 - US Geological Survey (2017). 2014 Minerals Yearbook: Sudan.

12 - US Geological Survey (2017). 2014 Minerals Yearbook: Sudan.

13 - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA): <http://knowledge.uneca.org/ASM/Sudan/>

14 - World Health Organization (2007). Exposure to Mercury: a major public health concern. <https://www.who.int/phe/news/Mercury-flyer.pdf>

15 - <https://www.france24.com/en/20181204-focus-sudan-unregulated-gold-rush-high-risk-artisanal-mining-africa>

16 - <https://www.altareeq.info/ar/mp-warns-of-explosion-of-the/>



Photo credit: UN Environment

GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The project was successful in testing and validating good programming practices that can be replicated, adapted and expanded to other contexts in Sudan and globally. As the first pilot project of the Joint Programme on Women, Natural Resources and Peace, the project also generated a number of important lessons learned. These are documented below.

Thematic/programmatic

1 NATURAL RESOURCES ARE A STRONG ENTRY POINT FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN PEACEBUILDING, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF A CHANGING CLIMATE: The project's results demonstrate that natural resource governance and management interventions are a strong entry point for women's empowerment at several levels:

- ➔ First, natural resource governance – including decision-making over access to land, water sources and other resources, resource-sharing and sustainable livelihood options – provides women with opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership skills in conflict prevention and resolution, which are not only critical in a context in which there are an increasing number of conflicts over natural resources, but can also be applied to other issues. In situations where women are typically excluded from decision-making, natural resources can provide a “neutral” entry point for engaging in political dialogue and mediation of conflicts, as women typically derive legitimacy from their traditional resource-related roles that is not conferred to them on other issues.
- ➔ Second, sustainable natural resource management represents a key opportunity for women's economic empowerment in a context where sustainable alternative livelihoods are needed due to the impacts of a changing climate. Specifically targeting women in the development of alternative natural resource-based livelihoods – and supporting them to organize economically, for example through the establishment of cooperatives – ensures not only income gains for women, but the stability of entire communities, especially where the impacts of a changing climate are resulting in more and more majority-female communities.
- ➔ Third, natural resource interventions can provide important platforms for cooperation for women from opposing groups that contribute to strengthening social cohesion. Bringing women from sedentary and pastoralist communities together in cooperative farming schemes, and including pastoralist women in dialogue and decision-making structures has resulted in building trust and collaboration that can extend into other areas. Women thus represent a channel for dialogue and cooperation between the two communities.

2 EMPOWERING WOMEN AT THE LOCAL LEVEL CAN HAVE HIGHLY POSITIVE IMPACTS ON CONFLICT PREVENTION AND SUSTAINING PEACE: The implementation of key policies for gender equality and women's empowerment in peacebuilding has tended to focus interventions at the national level or on high-level (Track 1) mediation processes. This project has shown that there are important dynamics at the local level – such as those linked to the social impacts of climate change and environmental degradation – that present significant opportunities for strengthening women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution. However, targeted support is needed from the international community to overcome the structural barriers that often prevent the experience women have brokering disputes over natural resources at the community and local levels from being used and capitalized upon in higher-level dialogue processes.

- 3 SEQUENCED INTERVENTIONS ADDRESSING LIVELIHOODS NEEDS FIRST INCREASE CHANCES OF SUCCESS OF GOVERNANCE AND CONFLICT PREVENTION EFFORTS:** The project was designed to deliver livelihood gains prior to engaging the communities in natural resource governance or conflict prevention efforts. Based on feedback from beneficiaries, seeking to address immediate economic needs first was a key success factor of the project, as it built trust and buy-in and laid the groundwork for “softer” interventions. Increasing women’s income, and thereby their economic independence, also contributed to legitimizing their roles as representatives and spokespersons within their communities. While logistical challenges (fuel shortages and other obstacles) prevented the governance component (CEAP) and the conflict prevention and resolution component from being fully implemented in the intended sequence, the impact was not particularly significant as the two sets of activities complemented and reinforced each other. Addressing core economic needs as a matter of priority, however, was essential.

- 4 BUILDING A RESEARCH COMPONENT INTO THE PROJECT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUED LEARNING THAT HELPS IMPROVE RESULTS:** While a baseline assessment was conducted by the project in its inception phase, such exercises are rarely exhaustive, especially with a limited budget. Building in a research component to the project, as was done here with research on women pastoralists and their natural resource conflict resolution and management roles, allows not only for in-depth analysis of the findings of the original baseline study, but also for additional questions raised at later stages to be answered. This in turn helps sharpen or re-direct interventions to ensure better results. In this case, understanding the phenomenon of increasing sedentarization of pastoralist women helped the project better target relevant groups and individuals who were likely to stay in the area and benefit from interventions in the long term.

- 5 INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO COMPLEX MULTIDIMENSIONAL ISSUES ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN DIFFERENT AGENCIES WORK AS ONE UN:** The successful outcomes of the project demonstrate that integrated approaches predicated on the distinct, yet complementary, expertise and mandates of different UN partners can be highly effective at tackling complex multidimensional issues such as the nexus of peace and security, gender equality and women’s empowerment, and environment and climate change. The pilot thus represents a positive example of the type of UN programming – and the partnerships underlying it – that can help achieve the 2030 Agenda and other international commitments around sustaining peace. Documenting and sharing results and lessons learned is crucial to ensuring such experiences can be built upon and expanded.

- 6 MEANINGFUL RESULTS ARE ACHIEVABLE WITH SMALL BUDGETS:** The pilot project, which was both focused and ambitious, demonstrated that by pooling resources and expertise, it is possible to design and implement a valuable intervention with a relatively small budget. Though available funds were supplemented with in-kind contributions and leveraged synergies with the C2SP’s intervention, the partners were able to achieve remarkable results with a USD 300’000 grant. This shows that relatively small investments – particularly when used to strengthen existing programming – can yield highly positive results for women’s empowerment, environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation, and conflict prevention.

Operational

- 7 INTRODUCING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES AND DESIGNING NEW INTERVENTIONS TAKES TIME:** This type of joint programming and joint delivery adopted for this pilot projects was 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 – also took time to work through. Though it extended the project timeline by 6 months, investing the necessary time and resources in developing truly joint mechanisms for project design and delivery was paramount to the success of the project.
- 8 THE PHYSICAL PRESENCE OF PARTNER AGENCIES ON THE GROUND IS EXTREMELY VALUABLE:** Although the size and capacity of the three agencies’ offices in Sudan was different, the physical presence of all three partners in country, which allowed for regular in-person meetings and consultations – was key to the success of the project. Though the good practices and lessons learned from this experience will help speed up and simplify project design and delivery in other contexts, 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, by harnessing the different and complementary expertise of the agencies involved and maximize the use of available resources and capacities.
- 9 INFLEXIBLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS ARE A CHALLENGE, BUT NOT AN INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE:** The lack of flexibility to transfer funds between the participating agencies made it difficult for the three agencies to engage implementing partner(s) or consultants without fragmented contracts – in most cases, each agency had to issue a separate contract to implement its outcome activities of the project. This could be easily avoided if flexibility existed for one agency to take lead in certain activities and then get reimbursed by the others, but current systems do not allow for this (in direct contradiction to the One UN imperative!). Lessons learned from this pilot project have already been applied to other projects in the Joint Programme, such as the pilot in Colombia, where all funding was allocated to a single agency, which administers the project on behalf of the partners.
- 10 TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION ARE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT WHEN BUILDING ON EXISTING PROGRAMMING:** 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 on one project will have a direct impact on the other. Team members working on both projects should therefore work closely together, 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 was the case here – is a means of fostering open and timely communication in this respect.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 11 MEASURING STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE REQUIRES A LONGER-TERM COMMITMENT TO MONITORING AND EVALUATION:** Achieving lasting gains in terms of women’s engagement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, especially in terms of institutional and structural change, takes a long time, as does assessing any impacts on conflict reduction. There is an inherent disconnect between the brief nature of a pilot project, and the length of time needed to measure results at the outcome level. However, measuring whether or not the natural resource-based interventions used in 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. As mentioned above, additional data collection and analysis will therefore be conducted in the fall of 2019, one year after the end of the project’s activities..
- 12 UNDERSTANDING GENDER EQUALITY GAINS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING REQUIRES A MIX OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF DATA:** As the goal of the pilot project was to test new approaches to emerging nexus issues, there were no “ready-made” indicators that could be used to measure results. An important contribution of this pilot was therefore to develop and test indicators that would capture various aspects of achievements in gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The indicators developed for this project relied on a mix of sex-disaggregated quantitative data, questionnaires and surveys that proved very effective in measuring not only participation but also shifts in attitudes, perceptions and confidence. As such, these indicators can be adapted to other projects and contexts. One important gap – which will be addressed in the final round of data collection in the second half of 2019 – is one or more indicators measuring the degree of influence of the project on local, state-level, national and international institutions, policy frameworks, programmes and investments.
- 13 CAPTURING INDIVIDUAL VOICES AND STORIES IS KEY TO UNDERSTANDING IMPACT:** No results table or statistic will ever capture the success of an intervention as well as the voices and stories of those who have benefitted from it or observed it. Understanding that project reports, however accurate or thoughtful, could never provide the richness and nuance of context, or how the project affected individual people and families on the ground, the team interviewed men and women from various backgrounds throughout the duration of the project, collecting stories and invaluable anecdotal information. Some of these are captured in a documentary film produced alongside the project, others are woven through this report. Together they tell an important part of the story of the project.
- 14 INVESTING IN COLLECTING ACCURATE BASELINE DATA IS PARAMOUNT TO MEASURING SUCCESS:** For various reasons – including changes to the design of the project after the baseline assessment was completed – detailed baseline data was lacking for some of the indicators. This was compounded by the fact that the first round of data collection through questionnaires and surveys was conducted later than originally planned, due to logistical challenges. While these gaps were partially filled thanks to ex post facto research, investing both time and resources in the collection of accurate and complete baseline data is evidently critical to measuring results. Future projects will need to pay particular attention to this aspect.



For more information on the Joint Programme of UN Environment, UN Women, UNDP and PBSO on Women, Natural Resources and Peace, visit: www.gender-nr-peace.org





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