



About the Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (DCPSF)

Background

The Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (DCPSF)'s core mission is to provide peacebuilding, conflict mediation and resolution support to communities in the Darfur region of Sudan. The rationale for the fund is grounded in the belief that If communities are supported to address their differences in a peaceful manner, trust and confidence amongst them will be restored. This is based on the two principles of; "no development without peace" and "no lasting peace without development".

Over the years, DCPSF's support has contributed to building peace and trust between and within communities in the region. In 2019, DCPSF work with 14 implementing partners to support communities.

Output Framework

Darfur still has a long way to go to achieve sustainable peace but a strategic, well-funded DCPSF can play a key role in building peace in the region. Its theory of change predicts that;

If Darfuri men, women and youth have access to as access to conflict resolution and reconciliation mechanisms they trust at a community level as well as skills development, learning and training as well as livelihood opportunities; then they will be able to maintain community cohesion leading to sustainable peace in the region."

DCPSF's theory of change therefore aims to support the achievement of sustainable peace by putting in place more inclusive peacebuilding mechanisms that promote trust and confidence amongst the communities as well as the communities and State institutions. The Fund's work is implemented through four key outputs, these are;

Output 1: Community-based conflict resolution and reconciliation mechanisms are in use and working effectively to resolve conflict.

Output 2: Peace dividends for community interdependence and coexistence are delivered.

Output 3: Women's organizations, including those representing pastoralist women, empowered to meaningfully participate in local and state-level peacebuilding platforms.

Output 4: Improved networking, coordination and learning between local and state-level peacebuilding institutions.

Linkage to the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

The UNDAF is the overarching framework guiding UN's work in a Country. DCPSF's work is linked to UNDAF Outcome 5 which states that:

“By 2021, security and stabilization of communities affected by conflict are improved through utilization of effective conflict management mechanisms, peace dividends and support to peace infrastructures and durable solutions that augment peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.”

Linkage to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals are the global fine print for sustainable development. DCPSF’s work aims to support the achievement of the SDGs, with a particular focus on;

- **SDG 16** on peace, justice and strong institutions is at the heart of the DCPSF’s work with communities in the Darfur region. Its goal is to ensure that sustainable development is achieved through various peacebuilding efforts.
- **SDG 5** on Gender equality, DCPSF’s work aims to ensure that both men and women, young boys and girls are a part of all their activities. This ensures that ‘no one is left behind’ on the journey to lasting peace and development.
- **SDG 17** on Partnership for the Goals, ensuring that beneficiaries from the community, the State and Civil Society among others are involved in all peacebuilding efforts.
- The Fund also supports the strengthening of natural resource management (**SDG 13 and 15**), economic growth (**SDG 8**) and infrastructure development (**SDG 9**).

Understanding an evolving Darfur

In 2018, the situation in Darfur was improving. There was acceptance of the returnees in their homelands and a noticeable collaboration between Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), host communities and nomads. The signing of pre-Doha negotiation agreement in early December 2018 was a promising step towards the long-awaited peace. However, a few days after, the wave of protests triggered vehement changes in Sudan which had a direct impact on the work done in Darfur.

With the protests came **Political instability** in Sudan which inevitably took its toll on Darfur and the response to this transition across the region was not the same as in the rest of the country. While the Sudanese capital saw killings, rapes, torture, burning sit-ins and tires for a few weeks, Darfur has witnessed massacres, crime, human rights violations, sexual violence and enforced disappearances at a mass scale, accompanied by images of entire villages vanishing among the flames and of many innocent people suffering from violent conflict since 2004. Steps are yet to be taken to address accountability for the atrocities committed. Impunity for the alleged perpetrators, namely the former government and affiliated security forces (including the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces) has resulted in **mistrust of law enforcement authorities**.

The transition also affected Darfur’s native administration – a traditional system which historically played a vital role in resource management, mediation and resolution of intercommunal conflict. It was key in preserving security and stability in the region however it was seen as aligned to the Government of President Omar Al Bashir. According to the Darfur Bar Association (DBA), “the native administration system under the former regime did not represent the real local leaders. It was only a tool used by ousted

President Omar Al Bashir until his last days in power to prevent the escalation of the uprising.” In addition, most leaders, members of the National Congress Party (NCP), were aligned to the former government at the highest level but, after a change in ruling communities, people have rejected them, especially women and youth.

The revolution also setback the peace processes in Darfur. On December 6, 2018, the armed opposition groups, Justice and Equality Movement (JEM/Gibril) and Sudan Liberation Movement/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM), signed a pre-negotiation agreement with the Government of Sudan to resume peace talks on the 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) framework. However, in solidarity with the uprising, the armed groups suspended negotiations with the Government. While a lack of political determination has held back the implementation of specific provisions of the DDPD, the review of the Darfur Development Strategy (DDS) will align its objectives to address the DDPD’s outstanding provisions for the 2020-2025 period.

The DCPSF Monitoring and Evaluation team observed that after April 11, 2019. The situation in Darfur was unstable and moving backward adding complex dynamics to the conflict. The pastoralists and nomads of Arab origins led by RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (aka “Hemeti”) were feeling powerful once more. Several locations in Darfur were experiencing violence and allegedly had confrontations with the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS). Darfur armed movements did not have a coherent position on their role during the uprising and community members, eager to regain their rights, misunderstood the goals of the revolution.

The revolution polarized people, leading to an escalation of **disputes over land** between nomads and farmers, mainly in the occupied areas. People advocating for counter-revolution took advantage of the tense situation between disputing parties, namely nomads, IDPs and host communities, by mobilizing farmers and preventing them from engaging in seasonal activities, while nomads prevented farmers from accessing their farmlands and destroyed the crops while moving from south to north. A further escalation of the conflict over land is foreseen as gold-mining areas were recently discovered in the Falata, Salamat and Habaniya tribes, in Songo locality. Mines in the area may lead to a potential conflict at the federal level given the land allocation (*hakura*).

Access to land and resources also affects IDPs, preventing their return to their areas of origin and increasing tensions between pastoralist and farming communities. Men and women experience access to resources differently. For instance, women and children are usually responsible for collecting water, and continue to travel long distances exposing themselves to crime, harassment or sexual assault. These factors force many people to move from their homes, becoming displaced persons and losing access to their land. Communities that have been driven from their lands find it difficult to formally prove customary ownership of those areas and are consequently unable to receive compensation. Several practical solutions have emerged at the Darfur state level, where local governments have decided to transform some of the internally displaced persons settlements into urban dwellings.”

The ongoing **economic crisis** in Sudan, exacerbated by bread, fuel, cash, electricity and water shortages as well as high rates of inflation, could also undermine the progress achieved in Darfur.

Sudan remains heavily indebted with limited international reserves. While sanctions on the Country have been lifted, they have brought little relief. The recent pledge of \$3 billion by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates is expected to ease the immediate crisis, but the economy needs structural adjustments in order to keep up with the demand for livelihood opportunities. This situation is having a particular impact on those who are already living in poverty, with one in four people already living below the poverty line

and one in three (36 per cent of the population) living in poverty. This crisis has hit vulnerable groups in Darfur particularly the IDPs, returnees, refugees, young people and women. Although women play an important role in supporting their family and in keeping their community structures safe, their socio-economic standing remains low¹.

Climate change and desertification have had a huge impact on the people of Darfur.

It has led to a high cost of agricultural production, increased cost of food leading to food insecurity, dislocation and displacement with the population competing for the meagre natural resources including land. According to the UNAMID; “researchers forecast that a new dry period will result in more people losing their livelihoods and migrating to cities or across borders, which, alongside the fragile state of local governance and of traditional conflict resolution and mediation systems, could contribute to a relapse into conflict”

Regional and cross border dynamics also play an important factor in the region. The Chad Basin, which places Darfur under a larger economic scheme, dominates the border areas of Sudan, Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad, Central Africa and Libya. The evolving contacts across boundaries not only determines how nations and states interact, and how pastoralist groups interact, but also how boundaries are established in terms of ethnicity, race and economic benefits. In this vein, there is a widespread displacement of refugees internally and across borders. According to the Humanitarian Country Team,² around 1.6 million people are living in IDP camps in Darfur and have reported protection threats such as harassment, rape and killings in and outside camps and settlements. Moreover, IDPs with suspected links to armed groups continue to be victims of arbitrary arrest by security forces and IDPs’ forced military recruitment has also been reported. On the other hand, IDPs in Darfur are reluctant to go back to their areas of origin due to a lack of security and protection. The recruitment of fighters to the RSF at high rates also remains an alarming issue. Young men between 14-16 years old are recruited from all tribes across Sudan. It is suspected that that they are deployed to fight in the ongoing conflict in Yemen and Libya. This is a threat to the stability of the peacebuilding efforts in Darfur.

Key project results

➤ **Engaging Communities in Conflict resolution and reconciliation**

Output 1: Community-Based Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation Mechanisms are in use and working effectively to resolve conflict

Ensuring communities are actively engaged in conflict resolution and reconciliation is important for achieving long term peace in the Darfur region. Output one of DCPSF therefore aims to promote community engagement in peace processes; it is built on the understanding that the conflict in Darfur can only be resolved through a comprehensive process that builds on local reconciliation and the finding of common solutions.

¹ United Nations Security Council, “Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic assessment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur”, par. 25, May 30, 2019.

² The Humanitarian Country Team Strategy for Protection in Sudan 2019-2021, April 25, 2019. (<http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/HCT-Protection-Strategy-Sudan-2019.pdf>)

The output supports the establishment and strengthening of existing Community Based Resolution Mechanisms (CBRMs) – composed of traditional community groups - which play an important role in mitigating and resolving inter and intra communal disputes. They include diverse ethnicities who are co-existing in the same community, represent them and promote the participation of its members, including women and youth. These groups/committees foster the respect of inter-ethnic diversity and support peace agreements, which are essential steps towards a better dialogue and inclusive discussions in Darfur.

CBRMs usually resolve conflicts through community led mediation of disputes as well as financial or in-kind compensation that is agreed upon between the the disputing parties. For the CBRMs to intervene in a conflict or a dispute, both parties involved must agree to accept the judgement of the CBRM members. If one party declines the involvement of the CBRM, the mechanism will then refer the case to the Rule of Law institutions for a formal settlement of the conflict. However, recent political developments destabilized the formal justice systems making the role of CBRMs more important than ever.

During the 2019 reporting period, CBRMs not only contributed to decreasing the number of cases submitted to the court but were also effective in restoring community-level trust and confidence. For this reporting period, 83% of the number of cases submitted to CBRMs were successfully addressed, while 67% of the community members stated an increase in the number of cases submitted and successfully addressed by CBRMs.

The primary conflicts resolved relate to criminal activities, including animal looting, family disputes and disputes between farmers and pastoralists (mainly from Arab, Fur, Maaleet, Tama and Dajo tribes) over farmland, land tenure and land acquisition, crop destruction and water resources.

The success of CBRM conflict resolution relies on the mediation skills of CBRM members which enable them to resolve disputes before they escalate into conflict. One of DCPSF's key activities focused on promoting skills development and a culture of peace and nonviolence. Some of the key activities carried out in this area include:

- In Northern Darfur; 18 CBRMs were formed in 18 villages targeted by the DCPSF implementing partners Peace initiative and development organization (DPI) and Welthungerhilfe (WHH). Over 90 members of these CBRM members have been trained in mediation and conflict resolution. Skills acquired in the training are used to address different issues raised in the community. WHH reported that 340 cases (77%) were resolved locally by the CBRMs without being referred to any higher judicial institutions. The other remaining cases (23%) were still being resolved by the CBRMs. The cases resolved were mostly related to animal attack to farm fields, individual or family cases.
- In East Darfur, at least 9 new CBRMs are in operation in 9 villages. These were established DCPSF partners Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency (DDRA) and Global Aid Hand (GAH). The CBRMs addressed over 60 cases in which various cases on concerning land, water use and farm destruction were resolved. Other cases addressed include those on social disputes, theft, banditry and bribery as well as sexual harassment were also taken to the CBRMs. DDRA reports that members of their CBRMS benefitted from capacity building, advocacy and training in gender, some CBRM communities requested adding more members to the CBRM committees to become more inclusive. As a result, 71 members were added of which 14 were female youth, 29 male youth and the remaining were men.

- In South Darfur: Emergency, Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Agency (ERRADA) established 8 CBRMS in 8 villages with one in Kalgo village headed by a woman and has been one of the best performing CBRMS. Mercy Corps another partner worked with existing 13 CBRMS to establish four umbrella committees with who it worked to expand an Early Warning System (EWS). Mercy Corps, in collaboration with Nyala State University's Development and Peace Centre, trained 270 (52 women and 218 men) on implementation of the EWS. The harmonization of efforts to establish and train new EWS units, as well as the integration of local communities and vulnerable groups in all processes related to EWS, contributed to disaster risk reduction in the State. The EWS units have been instrumental in reporting incidents to both CBRMs and the local authorities, enabling them to resolve them in time.
- In West Darfur, DCPSF partner Rural Community Development Organisation (RCDO) established 4 new CBRMs and provided their members with training. With this training, CBRMS have played a key role in settling many disputes in the various project areas by performing the mediating role between in the community and providing satisfactory solutions to the two parties on various issues. Their presence as voluntary committees that work without financial compensation, has reduced the cost of resolving disputes for community members, as they work side by side with Official authorities in the project areas and provide them with assistance. They are also close to the community and understand its complexities and interactions, and this gives them an added advantage in resolving disputes and addressing their causes. The project encouraged the participation of youth and women in conflict resolution by absorbing youth and women in the CBRMs.
- In Central Darfur, Catholic Relief Services successful establishment of eight functioning CBRMS, which all included members from a diverse range of tribes and minority groups ensured increased participation of women and youth; increasing the frequency of meetings and improving community access to CBRMs; and improving the capacity of CBRMs to resolve cases successfully. CBRM membership comprised of 53 women (including 21 youth) and 123 men (including 50 youth). As there were initially no women and few (male) youth in any of the existing RCs, the project was successful in improving women and youth participation rates across all target villages. All members received trainings on conflict resolution, gender equity, Do No Harm principles, and CRS' approach to social cohesion. The training enabled them to resolve more complicated cases without having to refer them to courts, saving community members time and finances. Of the 55 cases that were reported to the CBRMs during the course of the project, 49 were resolved peacefully at CBRM level, thereby helping reduce conflict within the communities. The remaining six cases were referred to the courts.

➤ **Building peaceful interdependent communities**

Output 2: Peace dividends for community interdependence and co-existence are delivered

Providing Communities with access to much needed services not only improves livelihoods but is a major catalyst in ensuring long term peace in the Darfur region. Under Output 2, DCPSF and its implementing partners therefore aim to bring about peace dividends that can strengthen cooperation and collaboration between communities – particularly between pastoralists and farmers in the context of natural-resource driven conflicts. These dividends are also intended to bring services to the communities and reduce inequalities that may lead to inter-tribal violence and build more inclusive and accountable institutions.

The peace dividends include (but are not limited to): the management and demarcation of migratory routes, the management and demarcation of pastureland, the construction and community management of water resources or the provision of essential basic services such as schools or a water points from which all groups benefit. Activities under this output also include the development of natural resource management committees that manage conflict-prone shared resources and the construction of community centres that foster interaction and connectedness among community members. These mechanisms consider the needs and preferences of both pastoralists and farmers and are viewed as commonly-owned resources that provide space for peaceful co-existence and dispute management.

In 2019, the DCPSF projects delivered peace dividends through three main activities:

- 1. Provided support towards initiatives to improve the livelihood status and wellbeing of communities** hence contributing to a reduction in poverty. The goal was to help communities to generate income and be able to meet their basic needs in a sustainable manner.
For instance; In East Darfur, 300 heads of goats were distributed to women in six villages; start-up packages (soap making materials and tools) distributed for 30 youth (15 males and 15 females) in six villages; 15,000 of animal heads vaccinated; six days of vocational training in soap and juice industry to 30 youth (15 males and 15 females) were delivered; six days of training was also given to 36 CAHWs (34 males and 2 females); Training in business management for four days was delivered to 72 participants (45 males and 27 males) in the six villages. These activities provided these community members and start up packages to enable them Income Generating Activities (IGAs). While in Central Darfur, 50 Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) were formed and provided with training. There 544 women engaged in SILCs which have proved to be key helping women to pay their children's school fees.
- 2. Supported the construction and restoration of social service infrastructures** to provide essential basic services and, at the same time, a space to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between communities. Some of the new infrastructure that was set up includes Peace centres which doubled as meeting halls for various community activities. School classrooms were also constructed through DCPSF support with Ministry of Education providing standards for construction and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) serving as agents of change, helping to diversify the school management and set a good environment for children to learn. Markets and slaughter-houses were also constructed in the communities. In East Darfur, the Community selected to have a slaughter-house instead of a market shelter in Ubujabra village.
The projects also rehabilitated handpumps availing water supplies to communities and reducing the distance that women and children walk to fetch water, which is a security concern. In South Darfur, one open hand-dug well was constructed in Judul village and another rehabilitated in Kadad village as to provide water to the residents of the surrounding villages and the pastoralists who move seasonally with their cattle from south to north and vice versa in search of pasture and water. The improved access to water reduced tension and hostilities between community members.
- 3. Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) mechanisms** helped to raise awareness on resource sharing and contributed to reduction in competition over limited natural resources through: Water management committees to ensure equal access to water resources and to prevent water pollution. Migratory route committees to encourage the use of the routes to avoid destruction of crops while nomads move northwards/ southwards, which is one of the major conflicts in Darfur. Joint management committees to coordinate the use of other assets created.

➤ Mainstreaming Gender in peacebuilding processes

Output 3: Women's Organizations, including those representing pastoralist women, empowered to meaningfully participate in local and state level peacebuilding platforms

Although Women and girls have a positive role to play in conflict resolution, they are often left on the sidelines in peace efforts, this is despite the fact that they are adversely affected by various forms of gender discrimination including; Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), structural inequality and a lack of access to diverse livelihood opportunities. It is therefore of fundamental importance for sustainable peacebuilding efforts to engage and empower women in the peacebuilding process. To achieve this, DCPSF ensures that both women and men are involved in all its project activities. Continuous gender advocacy by the Fund has led to several gender-inclusive and women oriented programme initiatives such as:

- Gender awareness campaigns through peacebuilding forums, which received good acceptance by the local communities. Women's voices are increasingly heard during meetings, especially at CBRM sessions and focus group discussions where both men and women participated, including youth. Inclusion is one of DCPSF initiatives to bridge the gender gap by also eliminating the common perception that women should not participate in daily decisions. In South Darfur, one of the seven CBRMs in Kalgo village was headed by a woman and was one of the best performing CBRMs in the area.
- Building women's capacity through intensive training on topics such as gender concepts and roles of women in the community; the importance of women's participation in peacebuilding; sustainable development and women's issues; and sexual gender- based violence. Huge steps have been taken towards women's training which paves the way for women to access education. Women are therefore more aware of their needs, having a space to share their problems and explore solutions with women from other communities through exchange visits. These training sessions have also contributed to improve literacy levels and empowered women to make their own informed decisions.
- Creation of spaces for women such as women's fora for peace and Women Issues Committees (WICs), which are sub-committees for CBRMs. WICs allow communities to resolve conflicts that in the past were only settled in court. Moreover, the engagement of Community Participation Officers (CPOs) ensure the equal participation of women in monthly CBRM/ WIC meetings and in decision-making processes.
- Formation of savings-led microfinance approaches, including Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILCs) to encourage saving and inter-lending activities across project locations and enhance social cohesion and tolerance amongst different ethnic groups. VSLAs are one of the most popular forms of economic empowerment for community members, especially for women. Any disputes arising from the VSLA groups are referred to WICs and CBRMs for resolution. In Central Darfur, 544 women were engaged in SILCs where 50 of them had been formed.
- Small- scale business management and Income Generating Activities (IGAs) contribute to gender equality as different IGA models target both men and women. One example are communal farms which not only generate income but promote collaboration between both genders.
- Increase awareness and change behaviour among hakamas (war singers) who have a strong influence over members of their tribes and may incite men to fight wars. A DCPSF partner

conducted a training on peace and human rights to exert the influence of these women on advocating for peace and stability and become hakimas (peaceful wise women) instead

➤ **Linking Communities to Government institutions to promote peacebuilding**

Output 4: Improved networking, coordination and learning between local and state-level peacebuilding institutions

The main goal of output 4 is linking the community and the state to improved peacebuilding programming and policy, while increasing trust between the stakeholders through a coordinated network. The output seeks to cultivate partnerships with potential new partners and to strengthen existing ones.

One of the Fund's key partners are Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), whose increasing role in peacebuilding them has seen them play a key role in reducing violent conflict and pave way for building sustainable peace. CSOs allow for the inclusion of diverse community groups, including women, youth and traditional leaders and they represent a great majority of the population that can be engaged through different peacebuilding approaches. DCPSF partners supported CSOs to build their capacity through:

Peacebuilding forums: To discuss the situation following the political unrest and its overall impact on peace at the state level (East Darfur), as well as the potential challenges for the implementing project and the ways to move forward. To discuss peacebuilding in Kutum, El Fasher and Al Waha localities (North Darfur). The forum was organized between CBRMs from different DCPSF partners' projects, including the State Peacebuilding Council and local authorities.

Vocational training: One partner conducted three Training of Trainees (ToT) which covered various topics on peacebuilding, conflict management, conflict sensitivity and do no harm approaches. A total of 40 CSOs participated, including 10 CBRMs, 10 youth committees, 10 women unions and 10 farm protection committees. The awareness training ensured community participation and contributions in conflict resolution processes.

In Biliel locality (South Darfur), in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, one DCPSF partner conducted orientation sessions in five villages to raise awareness among women and youth groups, CBRMs and Village Development Committees members on the importance of community organizations and networking in peace processes.

Design and implementation of small business initiatives leading to equitable and sustainable growth including peacebuilding, livelihoods and vocational training for six CSOs. The selection criteria were based upon CSO capacity assessment conducted by the State Ministry of Finance and Planning.

During the reporting period, other state authorities played a key role in building the capacity of CBOs: Officers from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the Ministry of Animal Resources (MoAR) and the police participated with community members in the reformation of a Higher Farm Protection Committee. The MoA also contributed in providing training on EWS to CBRM members. The Ministry of Social Welfare facilitated the establishment and registration of six women CBOs.

The Ministry of Production and Economic Resources provided technical training for the implementation of agricultural components in a DCPSF project, including block farms, pastoralist and farmer field schools training, veterinary and forest conservation training, and helped to plant 4,000 seedlings in the project

areas. The State Water Corporation provided technical expertise by supervising the rehabilitation of handpumps and trained water management committees.

NGOs and CBOs like Sudanese Organization for Relief and Recovery (SORR), Trust Rehabilitation and Development Organization (TDO,) Alshrooq, Generations for Social Development and Voluntary Organization for Rural Communities were engaged in DCPSF implementing projects given their experience on the ground. These organizations participated in the supervision of CBRM training, field-based workshops and community mobilization through traditional and government systems, including the locality commissioner, locality Nazir, Omdas and Sheiks.

Partnerships between academia and DCPSF took place through the collaboration of the University of El Fasher to find facilitators for CBRM trainings, Nyala State University's Development and Peace Centre to train community members on EWS awareness and University of Zalingei's Peace and Development Institute to conduct a two-day training on gender equality as part of DCPSF projects.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN DCPSF ACTIVITIES

The Gender and Peacebuilding Initiative (GPI)

One of the DCPSF's key goals is to support inclusive peacebuilding efforts where no one is left behind. This means that all the Fund's activities should include men, women and the youth (girls and boys) among others. Activities such as the establishment of the Community Based Resolution Mechanisms (CBRMs) are intended to include representatives of all these groups and improve their ability to manage conflict. However due to long standing cultural practices, women tend to be excluded from traditional reconciliation mechanisms in Darfur. The Gender and Peacebuilding Initiative (GPI) was designed as part of the DCPSF's effort to empower women's meaningful participation in both local and state level peacebuilding platforms. These efforts contribute to DCPSF's output 3 and add value to all the other outputs which are designed to promote gender equality and youth inclusion.

Working with DCPSF partners, CARE International Switzerland (CIS), Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency (DDRA) and Global Aid Hand (GAH) an extensive research - 'Sawatha (Her Voice)' was carried out as part of the GPI. The research highlights the role of women in CBRMs, the existing barriers to meaningful participation within these community mechanisms. In addition, the research also looked at the role of CBRMs in addressing Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)/ Gender Based Violence (GBV) and what role women have in leading these efforts. The research feeds directly into the DCPSF Gender Strategy which aims to; "change the prevailing perception that women are passive beneficiaries of development initiatives in Darfur to women as active agents in decision-making of conflict resolution committees as well as interventions on access and control of resources.

The research focused on 20 CBRMs operating in Darfur's five states and some of its finding include;

- **Women Participation in CBRMs:** Findings showed that across all the States and as an average across all the CBRMs identified for the research, there was only a 1% increase (27% to 28%) in the participation of women in the CBRMs. Of all the States, positive findings were seen in East Darfur, which had the highest female representation in CBRMs (38%), with one CBRM having 66% female representation. It is positive that women were now being represented (even if the proportional representation remains less than that of men), compared to the traditional mechanisms where

women were not allowed to be present. Being allowed to be present in these spaces by those who have the social power to grant such access, is an important step in the process of change, which gradually helps strengthen women's participation in the public domain. However, even with higher participation of women in some areas, there remain a number of challenges raised with regards to their meaningful participation e.g. having roles within the CBRMs, being respected by other members of the CBRM, feeling like they were able to speak during meetings.

- **Female representation in leadership of CBRMS;** this was extremely low (6%) across the CBRMs. Traditional gender roles, and the large responsibilities women have both in the household and working in the farms, have an impact on women and young women's ability to access CBRM activities. This is due to their workloads in the household, timing and restrictions from male family members. This was even more difficult for female-headed households. There were also restrictions, particularly for young, unmarried women, who could not spend time together with men in public spaces and the potential shame associated with this if they did do so. Youth committees (male and female) are another key space similar to the CBRMs, young women have low representation in these Committees (29%) and low representation in leadership positions (13%) as well.
- **The effect of traditional and social norms on Women's participation:** Women's meaningful participation and representation in leadership in CBRMs and youth committees has been compromised by the largely traditional structures that exist in Darfur. Many CBRMs and committees follow the same structure as traditional mechanisms such as the *Judiya* whose patriarchal attitudes and systems have created barriers for the participation of women in CBRMs. The findings revealed that men did not allow female CBRM members to attend the meetings, which ran over the course of many hours. Men also did not allow women to be outdoors late in the day, or if it meant they had to neglect their household responsibilities which was considered a priority over attending public meetings. 33% of the female CBRM members perceived that their quality participation was hindered by their household responsibilities which left them with little spare time to commit to other activities. Compounding this barrier, male members of the CBRMs scheduled meetings without consulting women to identify the appropriate time for them and ensure their participation in the meetings. For young unmarried women, participation was hampered by the fact that they were not able to move freely and to access these meetings as it involved being in the same space as men.
- **CBRMs role in dealing with SGBV/GBV cases:** At least 80% of the CBRMs which participated in the research deal with SGBV/GBV cases. The cases are usually brought up by the female members of the CBRMs. Some of the SGBV cases they deal with include; rape and sexual harassment, while the GBV cases include: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), early marriage and domestic violence. Hard labour for women and injustice to women farmers were also listed as another type of GBV that is rarely spoken about. Members of some CBRMs revealed that this was because women carry out the bulk of work in the home including building houses and farm work. Study findings also revealed that CBRMs member's responses to SGBV/GBV cases varied according to the social context of the area. This consequently affected the type of advice, support or referral pathway they provided to the victims who came to them. CBRM members support includes directing victims/survivors to health centres for treatment, providing emotional support as well as legal support. The CBRMs in some areas played double roles, offering both psychological and emotional support as well as the legal role in an informal capacity. This was appreciated in the communities which rely heavily on the informal and native legal systems. However, a huge stigma

around discussions of SGBV/GBV remains and this may be impacting the ways in which it is responded to. It is also still seen as a problem for women in the CBRMs to deal with, this is highlighted by a comment by a male CBRM member in Abujabara, East Darfur, who explained that women were useful in the CBRMs because; “if an [SGBV] issue happened and the girl did not agree with her family about the solution, the women in the CBRM could convince her to.”

- **CBRMs and raising awareness on SGBV/GBV:** The CBRMs were leading efforts in raising awareness on SGBV/GBV issues in the community. While CBRM members are keen to raise awareness, most of their efforts in this area remained one sided. Targeting only the female members of the communities and encouraging them to manage their safety by avoiding certain activities. For instance, CBRM members in Abusorooj, West Darfur mentioned that; “before 2015, there were a lot of SGBV cases, which reduced significantly when guns were collected.” They added that they are now dealing with the cases they get by raising awareness among the women to avoid going alone to the field. This is an indicator that the issues of gender inequality and its role in SGBV/GBV have not yet been well understood in the CBRMs. Going forward therefore, it will be important for the CBRMs to increase awareness raising in the community from the perspective of gender inequality and abuse of power as the key root causes for SGBV/GBV.
- **Enabling Environment:** There is potential for engaging key community actors to be agents of change. For instance, 78% of religious leaders believe that women can hold leadership positions in CBRMs if they have the right education and skills. However, national NGOs and CSOs lack of capacity to address gender issues and women’s empowerment, face a gap in gender, peacebuilding and women’s rights trainings as well as limited engagement with CBRMs which hinders the full effectiveness of the CBRMs. Agencies and government bodies engaged in peacebuilding and women’s rights also lack coordination and experience barriers in achieving their peacebuilding goals.
- **Economic empowerment can lead to improved social empowerment:** Voluntary Savings and Lending Associations (VSLAs) have been set up specifically for women to help empower them economically, with the theory being that economic empowerment engenders social empowerment. VSLAs are positive vehicles which have helped women gain a level of economic independence, changed power dynamics within the home, and given women a greater social standing within their communities and a stronger voice. These VSLAs have afforded women the opportunity to create and finance socially transformative initiatives, whether through setting up small businesses or building classrooms to enable more children to go to school. Many of the women in the VSLAs displayed greater confidence and ability to express themselves within their communities in different areas of public life, including within the CBRMs.

Opportunities and Recommendations:

- **Increase training on the survivor-centered approach for CBRM members:** CBRMs have generally not received training on how to deal with SGBV/GBV cases hence continue to use traditional methods to address cases. One of the recommendations of this research is to ensure mandatory and comprehensive training on SGBV (and GBV) is provided to CBRMs, ensuring they are aware of all the services and pathways available to survivors and encouraging a more survivor-centred approach
- **Increase awareness on national policy and legislation:** Most respondents were not aware of national Sudanese policy and legislation on SGBV, stating that cases were dealt with via local customs and practices. DCPSF and partners should therefore provide training on laws and policies

related to SGBV/GBV, targeting CBRMs and other key partners including local authorities and Civil Society Organisations. I

- **Training on SGBV/GBV:** This should be provided to all female and male CBRM members so that they can understand the root causes of SGBV/GBV, why and how it should be addressed, and which referral pathways can be used. They can also be trained on psychological first aid, counselling skills to support survivors of SGBV and GBV. Training should also be provided to midwives and other key female leaders on issues of FGM/C in the communities. In addition, the GBV unit in the Ministry of Social Affairs, as well as NGOs and CBRMs should also be trained on how to respond to emergency SGBV/GBV cases to improve response time for victims.
- **Inclusion of female law enforcement officers in addressing SGBV:** Advocate to legal authorities to recruit and create more gender-balanced teams ensuring that there are more female police officers to address cases of SGBV/GV. Female police officer should also be trained on the survivor centred approach to SGBV/GBV, as well as the onward referral mechanisms for survivors.

THE DCPSF TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

The DCPSF Technical Secretariat facilitates the day-to-day operations of the DCPSF and supports the Steering Committee in setting the DCPSF's strategic direction and priorities. During the reporting period, the Technical Secretariat engaged in several key activities which are outlined below:

Field Monitoring and Risk Management: DCPSF TS conducts regular field visits to monitor the progress of the implementing projects and to identify partners' performance issues. For the reporting period, 15 field monitoring visits were conducted covering the five states. Our Monitoring and Evaluation Team assisted in good practice guidance for the provision of trainings, workshop group meetings and other project related activities, highlighted implementation issues and reviewed the partners' annual reports.

Conflict Analysis: DCPSF TS is currently tracking conflict incidents to understand the trends and patterns of conflict through the monthly Darfur Conflict Tracker. The Fund also collects contextual information from implementing partners in their biannual and annual reports highlighting both success and challenges. The DCPSF needs nonetheless a more in-depth understanding of conflict dynamics in Darfur and recognizes the need for conflict sensitivity at both the level of the Fund and the projects.

Perception Survey: The perception survey 2019 was conducted among direct and indirect beneficiaries of projects supported by DCPSF in 2018. The goals were to receive their feedback and to monitor DCPSF-supported initiatives. The perception survey also serves to provide DCPSF partners with baseline data and an annual situation update to monitor changes in the targeted communities and to review the adequacy of the data for DCPSF purposes, indicators and outputs.

Peace Hub: The Peace Hub meetings were held in different states and localities with implementing partners and other stakeholders. During the meetings, a conflict sensitivity tool was reviewed and filled out by all partners to evaluate its consistency with Do No Harm principles. DCPSF also shared the peacebuilding training manual with the PBWG members and plans for future trainings. The final version of conflict sensitivity tool would also be shared after its finalised. The overall purpose of these meetings was to pave the way to the creation of State-Wide Peacebuilding Mechanisms (SPBMs). The first SPBM meeting was held by late June in El Fasher town, North Darfur, where some of the new participants including FAO, UNDP, UN Women, UNAMID and UNICEF gave updates about their interventions.

DCPSF Technical Secretariat Staffing: A process to recruit a new DCPSF Communications and Reporting Officer is ongoing after the current one finalized her duties by May 2019.

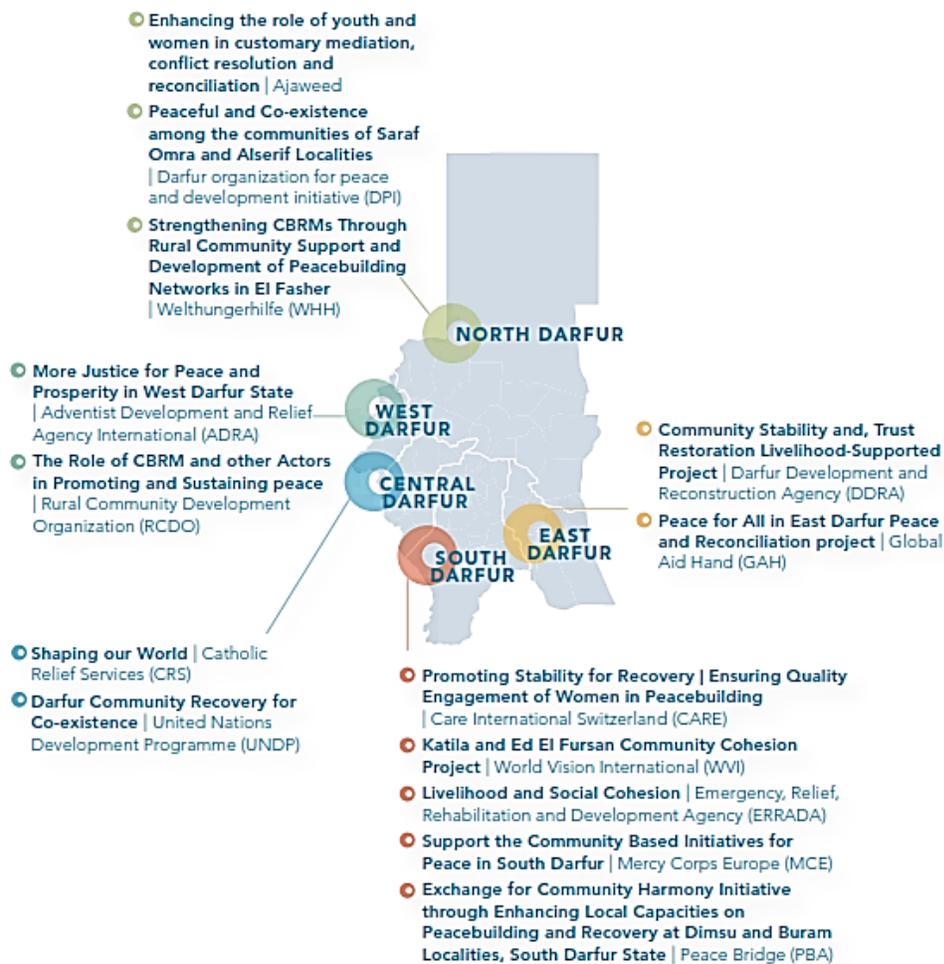
Key challenges in 2019

The political instability during the reporting period had a direct impact on implementing projects. DCPSF faced a series of challenges related to:

- Security clearances and complications to perform field visits. Given the constant demonstrations in project-supported communities, activities were suspended as a precautionary measure for staff which led to implementation and monitoring delays. International staff were evacuated during the uprising and this issue also complicated the interim communications and reporting officer's hiring process. In addition, this affected field staff who could not carry out their work due to the deterioration of security in the country as movements were limited as per UN Security advisories.
- Fuel shortage for both vehicles and generators, hampering the access to project locations. Field visits heavily rely on hired vehicles which were unavailable, while long queues at fuel stations would last for days.
- Nationwide liquidity issues delayed the implementing activities. Partners had wait over 10 days to receive petty cash for activity use given cash withdrawal limitations. Service providers would only accept hard currency which delayed the provision of project materials.
- High inflation rates made the purchase of commodities and services increasingly difficult. The repetition of tender processes and lengthy procurement procedures led to a disruption of timely project implementation and a delay in actualizing the expenditure forecast.
- A limited network connectivity restricted DCPSF project logistics and reduced operational activities at the field level. Activities at the country office level were also hindered by a limited network and the several protests in Khartoum restrained access to the compound. This issue had an impact on overall deadlines.
- UNAMID's departure: The UNAMID made progress towards supporting capacity-building in the areas of rule of law and human rights, as well as in finding lasting solutions for internally displaced people and host communities in Darfur. The mission was responsible for patrolling, reporting cases, organizing peace conferences, and raising awareness between communities, but the end of these activities during the reporting period opened the door to crime and conflict. Increased crime and conflict will require more commitment from DCPSF to support all efforts for smooth transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding especially in the remote areas where UNAMID has withdrawn from. The departure of UNAMID will also affect some of DCPSF's work particularly the community security tracker which was compiled using UNAMID's reports. Joint efforts with other organizations will be needed to keep an accurate record of the inter-tribal conflicts in Darfur.

DCPSF Implementing Partners

The DCPSF worked with fourteen (14) partners to promote peacebuilding efforts in the five state of Darfur. Our partners and projects are mapped out below;



DCPSF Funding Partners

DCPSF's work would not have been possible without the contributions of our funding partners. Below are some of our partners and their contributions;

