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Supporting female-headed households through business grants in Sudan



Ashol Akwai, receives a grant for her business as part of the activity to support women-headed households through business grants.

In the recent years and due to many political challenges including dethroning a 30 years old repressing regime, Sudan has been going through a macroeconomic crisis that lead to a decrease level of income against increased levels of inflation. This hyperinflation led to a difficulty in accessing goods and services, worsening the food security and nutrition situation. According to Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) in 2019 there were 5.7 million people in Sudan who are suffering from food insecurity, and the number has been climbing since reaching a 7.3 million in 2021.

DRC funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (Danida) has been running a one-year programme in Sudan; *Responding to conflict-induced emergencies, protecting human rights, promoting sustainable livelihoods and fostering social cohesion for displacement affected communities in Sudan*, to provide emergency assistance as well as protection activities for the vulnerable communities. In Khartoum state, one of the activities implemented was providing a business grants to refugees as well as members of the host community to support them achieving sustainable income for their families.

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The Danish Refugee Council is a leading, international humanitarian displacement organisation, supporting refugees and internally displaced persons during displacement, in exile, when settling and integrating in a new place, or upon return. We provide protection and life-saving humanitarian assistance. We support displaced persons in becoming self-reliant and included into hosting societies - and we work with communities, civil society and responsible authorities to promote protection of rights and peaceful coexistence. Founded in Denmark in 1956, 9,000 staff, 7,500 volunteers.

Ashol Akwai is a 37-year-old mother of three children. She is South Sudanese who came to Sudan in 2013 seeking better life for her and her children. When joining the programme, Ashol was working as a tea lady, selling tea in her cousin's business place as part-time job because she didn't own the equipment or tools necessary to work on her own. This situation was not a stable way to provide for her family. Thus her kids were not able to go to school. Ashol applied for DRC's business grants and passed the assessment phase in September 2021, which meant that she can now buy her utensils and start working for herself. Indeed, Ashol rented a place near her house and started selling tea, to the point where she grew a customer base and even moved to a more prominent location. Soon enough, Ashol was able to get her three kids back to school and now she is planning on owning her own place instead of renting.



Hana with one of her kids

I can now pay for my kid's school fees and my kids don't have to work anymore.

Ashol Akwai, 37 yrs. old mother

DRC business grant gave me hope and life again and I am not going to stop at this point as I have a dream that I want to achieve which is to open a bakery and hire people to create job opportunities for others.

Hana Eltahir, 36 yrs. old mother

This programme also supported host community members like Hana. She is a 36-years-old mother of two sons, she works as a baker. However, due to her limited abilities using her old tools, Hanna was forced to decline several opportunities which made her struggle with sustainable income. After joining DRC's programme and obtaining the business grants, Hana was able to buy the necessary equipment to fulfil any orders coming her way and even hire someone to deliver remote orders. She hopes that one day she will be able to open her own bakery and hire people like her.

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