

Displaced but not passive: the story of Mr Abubaker Yahya

For several decades, Darfur has been the scene of disputes and competition between predominantly nomadic pastoralists and settled farming communities over land and dwindling natural resources. In 2003, the conflict escalated from small-scale disputes into a severe humanitarian crisis.

One night in September 2003, militias attacked Ardemi village in West Darfur, causing widespread destruction and death. Mr Abubaker Yahya was at home asleep with his family when the militias struck. Together with his family and surviving neighbours, he fled to nearby Agora village, which was larger and more secure. All of their livestock (donkeys, goats and sheep) were looted and they had with them only the personal belongings that they could carry.

In Agora village, they were given assistance in the form of shelter and blankets. They were registered as internally displaced persons and began to receive food aid. In 2004, Agora was also attacked and Mr Abubaker was once again forced to flee with his family, this time to Abugabina village, where they were taken in by a host family. As a result of this secondary movement, they did not receive food aid assistance for eight months. Their host family provided them with a piece of land, which they planted in the 2005 season. However, livestock destroyed their crops before harvest. This year, the family cultivated three *mukhamas* (2.25 ha) of land. They were registered by the non-governmental organization Triangle Generation Humanitaire and received sorghum, watermelon and groundnut seeds from FAO. With these seeds, provided by FAO through a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development, Mr Abubaker and his family were able to plant in the land provided by their host family, with a resulting good harvest. According to Mr Abubaker, he has sold watermelons for a total of SDD30 000 (equivalent to approximately US\$150), which has enabled his family to purchase essential household items, such as soap and sugar. He has also harvested four bags (50 kg each) of unshelled groundnuts and is expecting to harvest approximately 12 bags (100 kg each) of sorghum. This should sustain his family of six people for six months.



Mr Abubaker Yahya in his newly-productive sorghum field. His family was one of 300 000 households in Darfur who received crop and vegetable seeds by FAO in 2006.