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Supporting Conflict-Affected Communities in Nigeria Through Moringa Tree Cultivation

Ongoing conflict between Government of Nigeria forces and armed opposition groups (AOGs) in northeastern Nigeria's Borno State has resulted in widespread population displacement and acute humanitarian needs. As of May 2019, nearly 1.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) sheltering in the state required emergency assistance, according to the International Organization for Migration. In response, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) is supporting non-governmental organization partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to implement integrated programs addressing a variety of humanitarian needs among conflict-affected populations in Borno.

After decommissioning approximately 700 unsafe latrines in an IDP camp in Borno's Muna Dalti town to reduce the risk of disease transmission, CRS planted three moringa trees at each decommissioned latrine site and trained local communities on moringa tree cultivation. The trees are a nutrient-rich food source and are used in traditional medicine to treat minor ailments and injuries. Moringa trees also grow



Photo courtesy of CRS

quickly, helping offset some deforestation caused by the high demand for firewood.

Kaltum—pictured above—fled to Muna Dalti's IDP camp following a January 2017 AOG attack, which led to the death of her eldest daughter. At the time, Kaltum recalled that she was “hopeless, homeless, and starving”. With CRS assistance in the camp, Kaltum has learned to cultivate moringa trees, protect them from pests and livestock, and harvest their leaves to use as food, medicine, and tea. Thanks to the leaves, Kaltum says she can now readily access a nutritious food source and provide primary care for those around her. Kaltum has also shared moringa seeds and related knowledge with others in her community, increasing planting and cultivation of the tree. Other assistance from CRS, including shelter support, has further helped Kaltum restore hope for herself and her family.

With USAID/OFDA support, CRS has assisted conflict-affected and other vulnerable people in Borno since 2016.