

## Diri Marmou: When solidarity-based agriculture defies climate change

In Logone and Chari, faced with a climate that no longer follows any rules, farmers refuse to accept the situation and are reinventing their practices to feed their families and their community.

In Ouloumsa, the **Diri Marmou** agricultural group – “*Let’s love each other*” in the local language – embodies this resilience. Composed of men and women united by the land, these collective functions as a Farmer Field School established within the framework of the cross-border project **Gender transformative climate adaptation**, funded by **Global Affairs Canada (GAC)** and implemented by the **Lutheran World Federation** in the **Lake Chad Basin**.

Having specialized in market gardening for several years, the members are now facing upheavals that call into question their traditional practices.



*10th chili harvest session on the community plot by members of the group in Ouloumsa.  
Photo: LWF/S. Youta*

## **A climate that is confusing**

The seasons are no longer following their usual rhythm. Where temperatures used to drop as early as October, creating ideal growing conditions, the heat now persists until December. This prolonged heatwave is severely disrupting agricultural cycles. Work is becoming more arduous, and crops are less productive. Plants, weakened by heat stress, struggle to develop. Peppers and tomatoes are deteriorating before they even reach maturity.

New pests—butterflies, ants, and other previously unknown insects are invading the fields, taking advantage of the high temperatures to proliferate. Traditional control methods are no longer sufficient.

Yields are collapsing: previously, one hectare of chili peppers produced up to 50 bags per season. Between 2020 and 2023, members of the group harvested a maximum of 30 bags, a drop of 40%, jeopardizing the economic stability of families.

Access to water is becoming a major challenge. With declining rainfall, manual irrigation is essential, but transporting water from the river to the fields requires considerable energy. Conflicts between farmers and herders are also intensifying, forcing producers to fence off their land, further increasing their expenses.

## **LWF's support: concrete solutions**

In 2024, the group was integrated into the project and benefits from a comprehensive capacity-building program. The training focuses on sustainable agricultural techniques: row planting, controlled density, and the production of biopesticides, an ecological alternative to chemical products.

Seeds adapted to the local context and agricultural tools were provided. The project also promotes equal opportunities in access to resources, ensuring that women and men participate fully in decision-making and benefit equitably from training and outcomes.



*Overview of chili production on the community plot. Photo: LWF/S. Youta*

In June 2025, the chili pepper seeds were sown in a nursery and then transplanted in July according to established protocols. Since September, weekly harvests have been in full swing: already 32 bags harvested in just a few weeks, compared to a maximum of 30 bags for an entire season between 2020 and 2023. The bags sell for between 10,000 and 17,500 FCFA (15 to 27 euros) each.

The use of biopesticides has significantly reduced pest pressure while preserving soil health and protecting farmers. The women in the group, now involved in all stages of production, demonstrate greater economic independence.

“Before, we worked hard but the harvests decreased every year. Today, thanks to the new techniques we have learned in the field, we see the difference. Our plants are more resistant, and we are already harvesting more than before. It is a real joy for all of us,” says Mrs. Haoua, a member of the group.

This experience proves that with appropriate support, it is possible to reconcile agriculture and climate. The members emphasize two recommendations: strict adherence to the agricultural calendar adapted to the new climatic conditions and the use of seeds selected according to the specific characteristics of each agro-ecological zone.



*Three women members of the group proudly harvest chili peppers on their plot. Photo: LWF/S. Youta*