



SUCCESS STORY

Community Forums Resolve Conflict in Khartoum's IDP Camps



Participants receive training on negotiation and peace building at a Khartoum-area IDP camp. The training also serves as a platform for raising awareness of the CPA.

USAID/OTI works with Khartoum's multiethnic IDP communities to enhance negotiation skills and facilitate constructive dialogue between them.

July 2007 – The violence that periodically erupts in Khartoum's Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps reveals a need for enhanced negotiation and peace-building skills. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) recently collaborated with a local NGO to train key community members in four camps and the surrounding area in methods for diffusing tension and effectively spreading messages of peaceful coexistence. Following a workshop on how to engage communities in constructive dialogue, participants formed networks to organize 15 public forums, bringing together more than 500 community members, including women and youth, religious leaders, and teachers.

Forums were characterized by frank discussions and served as a platform for dialogue between the different ethnic groups. Ongoing conflicts were analyzed, prioritized, and then linked to the wider peace process. Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in 2005, paved the way for a culture of peace and increased opportunities for broad-based political participation at the grassroots level. Yet most Sudanese are unaware of the rights granted to them under the CPA. This is especially true of Khartoum's ethnically and religiously diverse IDP communities. In these communities, limited access to social services and employment has fueled anger and resentment among the different groups.

Several initiatives emerged as a result of the forums. For example, the Wad Albashir and Jebel Aulia camps formed committees to resolve camp conflicts. In Wad Albashir, mediation efforts helped resolve a longstanding dispute between a group of citizens and the water pump management committee, as a facilitated discussion dissipated fear and mistrust and provided clarification on how water fees were spent.

Local peace forums serve as a vehicle for structuring dialogue and building trust among Sudan's diverse communities – a key element to the success of the peace process.