



SUCCESS STORY

Bor Dinka Begin Journey Home

Negotiations and logistics support enable displaced Dinkas to return home

After years of displacement, many southern Sudanese began returning home when the North-South peace agreement was signed in January 2005. However, conflicts over cattle and property between displaced people and their host communities have been a hurdle to the returnees' safe passage home.



Photo: PACT

Bor Dinka herders and their cattle prepare to cross the Juba bridge on their journey home in January 2006.

By March 2006, 30 of 32 cattle camps had crossed the bridge, several cattle camps had safely reached Bor County, and an estimated 3,000 vulnerable returnees were set to begin the barge trip back to their homes.

For over two years, USAID has supported efforts to facilitate the return of displaced Bor Dinka ethnic groups to their homes in Bor County. Amidst increasing violence and cattle looting among the Bor, Moro, and Mundari communities, USAID supported negotiations involving civil society leaders, ministers, local officials, and representatives of affected ethnic groups. Participants agreed that cattle camps would pass unhindered through the town of Juba and over the town's bridge, and continue onward along the east bank of the Nile back to their homes in Bor County.

The first and many subsequent cattle camps to move into Juba received a full police escort that blocked all vehicular traffic and opened the road to the bridge to the cattle and their keepers. Focusing assistance on vulnerable people, the United Nations, nongovernmental organizations, and the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission constructed a transit camp near Juba to host pregnant women, new mothers, young children, and the elderly and disabled while river transport was arranged for their direct return to Bor County. This enabled the cattle camps to move more quickly along the east bank and reduced the exposure to risks along the return route, including landmines and attacks from the Lord's Resistance Army or other groups.

Additional efforts were made to reintegrate the returnees when they reached Bor County, including assessments and planning activities with authorities in Bor. By March 2006, 30 of 32 cattle camps had crossed the bridge, several cattle camps had safely reached Bor County, and an estimated 3,000 vulnerable returnees were set to begin the barge trip back home.