With a smile, Aseya, a 38 year-old woman said, “Before I had this training, I was afraid to deal with money. Now I am ready to deal with it and use it wisely to create and manage my business.”

Earning 30 SDG (equivalent of USD 3) a day may not seem like a lot of money for many people. But for Aseya, Maryam and Safia, this small income is the difference between complete reliance on food distribution and independence. The three women are internally displaced persons (IDPs) and currently beneficiaries of the food aid distribution in Otash camp, which is located in the suburbs of Nyala - the capital of South Darfur.

Otash camp has a population of almost 75,000, many of whom are long term residents due to the ongoing conflict in South Darfur. In recent months, the ongoing insecurity has forced many more to flee from their homes and seek refuge and safety in camps run by humanitarian aid agencies. Since January this year, it is estimated that over 6,000 IDPs have arrived into Otash camps. Many of these IDPs fled their homes, leaving behind their possessions and often losing their lands, jobs and incomes.

Under the Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (DCPSF), Aseya, Maryam and Safia alongside nine other women camp residents were brought together to be trained to use simple equipment to make juice from local fruits as part of an income generating activity introduced into the camp by Mubadiroon – a local Sudanese NGO and implementing partner under the DCPSF. Juice making for these women represents an opportunity to slowly break free from their all too familiar cycle of poverty.

Following the completion of the first round of training, the trio was selected to attend training on business creation organised by the UNDP Youth Volunteers Rebuilding Darfur Project (YVRDP). The YVRDP is a youth volunteer-led scheme to promote environmentally sustainable poverty reduction and private sector development in Darfur.

Together with the help of the youth volunteers, they prepared and submitted a proposal to set up a small juice-making and handicraft business. They also wanted to bring the other women already trained into business with them. Their hard work paid off and they were awarded a small grant. With the grant, they bought raw materials such as sugar, tamarind, baobab and tools such as stoves, cans and pots. They started selling their juice in the camp and Nyala town. With a new found confidence, the trio also made agreements to sell their juice in the bigger markets in the local nearby town twice a week.
Not far from Habila town in West Darfur is Sala village—a small village comprising of four different tribes living next to each other. It is also home to almost 500 farmers and pastoralists. In a place like this, competition over limited natural resources is often a source of conflict and tension and when not addressed can easily escalate into major fighting between the different tribes.

Guma Yagoub, a young 30 year old man from the village has been responsible for supporting the peacebuilding efforts in the village, where he helps mitigate conflicts between the different tribes. Most importantly, he has been responsible for uniting the two youth union groups, which for many years have been divided along ethnic lines. Given that Sala village is home to a number of different ethnic tribes confronted with long-standing grievances over land and water, such grievances have further strained and divided relations between the two youth groups within the community.

Following a comprehensive training on conflict resolution, mediation techniques and community dialogues provided by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) under its Sharing Our Assets and Resources (SOAR) project, Guma was determined to put the skills he gained into good use. He decided that he would bring and unite the two youth groups into one. He feels reuniting these groups would help improve community cohesion and hopefully reduce future tension.

Through various dialogues, Guma met and patiently listened to both sides. With help from the local leaders and after a month of rigorous dialogues, the two youth groups finally came together and become one. Guma is now the Youth Committee Chairman, a role he is proud to uphold. “It took me a month, holding several meetings with the two youth groups for them to accept forming one youth group for the village and I was really happy on the day we formed this main youth committee and elected me Chairman.”

One of their main achievements as a unified youth committee has been the establishment of a Savings and Lending Communities (SILC) scheme. Each member of the committee contributes a small amount of money into a pool and when needed, they can borrow from it to fund their income generating activity of their choosing. They then pay back the loan with a small interest.

Further to this achievement and under Guma’s leadership, the committee also successfully secured a piece of land from a local farmer—a 50 year old Sheikh Abdurrahman Ahmed. They are presently preparing the land to cultivate sesame seeds which they hope will generate income in the very near future. A happy Guma said, “Last month we shared the money and a lot of youths from farmer households assisted by buying seeds for this season.”
“For me this mobile technology introduced by SUDIA has been very helpful. I am a small time trader and the mass media is only interested in big cities, not a village like mine,” said Yousef from Sabra village in Niqudiya in North Darfur.

In 2012, Yousef was forced to leave his home together with his three wives and children because of the heavy fighting between the Rezeigat tribe and Beni Hussein in the mines of the Amir Mountain. He lost his house, farming lands and cattle. Eventually he and his family ended up in a camp for displaced people in Kebkabiya in North Darfur. Yousef was concerned about keeping his family healthy and safe.

While living in Kebkabiya, Yousef managed to set up a small shop selling basic household items. Shortly after, he was selected to join SUDIA’S Community Communication System pilot program as a community source of information. As a trusted source, he is required to send messages to Khartoum operators in SUDIA on a weekly basis with information relating to livelihoods, farming, herding and disputes and peace activity covering ten areas in and around Kebkabiya. With this information, SUDIA’s systems analyzes and resends a weekly bulletin of the information received for the week with mobile phone credit.

For Yousef who also commutes regularly to Kebkabiya market as a roaming trader, having such information ready on the palm of his hand is extremely important. According to Yousef, “I can use the information from the system to find out prices and market situations in others areas that I am not covering but included in the system. When I need to travel, the system can tell me which roads and places are not safe. It has help me a lot.”

Learning New Skills to Solve Old Issues: The work of DCPSF Community-Based Resolution Mechanisms

“Water shortage in our areas is the main cause of tension between farmers and pastoralists. I believe the situation can be improved, if we give more attention to resolve this issue.”

Meet 51-year old Mohamed Ibrahim Bakheit, the Sheikh of Gobi village area in Habila locality in West Darfur, where he lives with his two wives and nine children. In Habila locality and particularly in the area surrounding Gobi village, Arab and non-Arab tribes have lived together for a long time. It is also an area where many farmers and pastoralists congregate together and a number of times, because of competition of land and resources, these two groups often clashed.

Mohammed Ibrahim is a member of the local Crops Protection and Conflict Resolution Committee. Ibrahim’s role as a member is to help resolve grievances and tension between the farming members and the pastoralists.

To be able to do so, Ibrahim attended two trainings to learn specific knowledge and skills in conflict mitigation. The trainings which were facilitated by the Save the Children Sweden also included follow up meetings to provide guidance when needed and for members to provide feedback to the team. According to Ibrahim, “The conflict resolution is not something new to us, but learning new techniques has helped improve our skills. For example, before the last rainy season started, as a precaution, the committee set clear rules on which lands belongs to whom”. Even then, it was not so easy for the committee.

“There will always be an issue. This, time, one farmer wanted to have a land that was originally meant for the pastoralists and he refused to listen to us at the beginning and referred the issue to the police. The police referred him back to us. We had to negotiate with him until he was satisfied and agreed to leave,” added Ibrahim.
Thematic focus on inter-tribal conflict, migratory routes conflict and conflict between IDPs and hosts

DCPSF works closely with 34 implementing partners, including seven national NGOs

Geographical coverage: 34 localities in all five states of Darfur

194 community-based resolution mechanism established and functioning, exceeding annual target of 30

85% of community members where DCPSF is operating feels trust and confidence restored in the areas

115 water facilities rehabilitated and constructed, exceeding annual target of 70

79% of community members sat they now have access to resolutions committees and 74%satisfied with their work

41 joint committees on natural resource management were established

9 markets established to promote trade and interaction amongst different ethnic groups

Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (DCPSF)

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