



SUCCESS STORY

Shangil Tobay Youth Unite To Form Human Rights Club



Youth from Shangil Tobay gather at the club to celebrate International Human Rights Day.

A USAID/OTI-funded workshop to engage grassroots leaders in the promotion of human rights inspired youth from the village of Shangil Tobay in North Darfur to form their own human rights club.

May 2008 – Despite the deployment of the joint United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) on January 1, 2008, grave human rights violations persist in western Sudan. Darfuri youth – particularly those who have witnessed death and experienced displacement and the destruction of homes and social networks – are susceptible to recruitment by armed factions. Armed youth help perpetuate the cycle of violence that has ravaged Darfur for the past six years. In Shangil Tobay, however, youth are raising their voices to denounce ongoing abuses and the culture of violence that has permeated the region.

Six youth from the North Darfur village recently founded the Shangil Tobay Human Rights Club following participation in a

workshop funded by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). The club hosts meetings twice a week that bring youth from the village together with internally displaced youth living in the nearby camp of Shaddat.

The four-day training workshop, which took place in 2007 and was conducted by the U.N. Mission in Sudan and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, focused on engaging grassroots leaders in the protection and promotion of human rights in order to create local networks for combating sexual and gender-based violence and other abuses.

Initially intended as a small forum for discussions on human rights, the club now has 38 regular members from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Members organize discussions and debates as well as community workshops, art exhibitions, and drama presentations to raise awareness of human rights abuses. Although the USAID/OTI-funded workshop provided the impetus for the club, founding members developed the initiative independently, collecting donations from members and the community to construct a shelter for the club's office and meeting space.

USAID/OTI strives to protect vulnerable populations in Darfur by raising awareness of human rights, strengthening the rule of law, and challenging the current culture of impunity.