



SUCCESS STORY

Combating Forced Marriage through FM Radio Programming in Eastern Chad



A reporter interviews a refugee woman in the Gaga Refugee Camp.

USAID/OTI supports FM radio broadcasts focusing on violence against women in eastern Chad.

October 2007 – “I had to obey the orders of my uncle who was providing for us. My uncle said that the man was one of us and I was to marry him. He used to tell me that I had no reason to refuse this marriage, and that it would happen whether I accepted it or not....”

These are the words of Halima, 26, a refugee woman from Gaga, a Darfuri refugee camp located east of Abéché, Chad, during an interview with an Internews gender-based-violence reporting team. Halima was forced to marry and live with a man she had never met. Her experience is similar to that of thousands of other refugee women in eastern Chad who do not have the chance to contemplate entering a consensual marriage or to leave one if they are treated in an abusive manner.

In an episode of “She Speaks, She Listens,” Houda Malloum and Halima Nassir, two female reporters for the radio station, broke the silence surrounding forced marriage and exposed the plight of women in eastern Chad – refugee and Chadian alike.

Through daring features, “She Speaks, She Listens” contributes to the improvement of women’s lives in the region. “She Speaks, She Listens,” on the air since 2005, is a weekly feature program created by Internews and funded by USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). The program is breaking new ground in eastern Chad by regularly addressing on air sensitive topics related to violence against women. The aim of the programming is to give a voice to women, stimulate community dialogue, and, eventually, effect positive behavior change toward women.

“She Speaks, She Listens” programs are aired on three radio stations, with a coverage area that includes the majority of refugee camps in eastern Chad. The stations are part of the Internews Humanitarian Information Service, a project designed to provide critical news and information to refugees from Darfur. The radio service is funded jointly by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; USAID/OTI; and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.