



SUCCESS STORY

Fuel-Efficient Stoves Lessen Women's Search for Firewood in Darfur



Women walking home with their “rocket” stoves after a training session. USAID/OTI funds innovative projects in Darfur to decrease the need for firewood and reduce the risks faced by the women who collect it.

USAID/OTI supported the introduction of fuel-efficient stoves to 5,600 households in the Al Salaam camp.

July 2007 – With the Darfur conflict extending into its fourth year, more than two million internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to live in crowded camps, surrounded by increasingly deforested environs. Around the Al Salaam camp in North Darfur, firewood needed for cooking has become so scarce that women often have to walk three hours to find it, and many have resorted to digging roots from the ground. Venturing from the relative safety of the camp increases a woman's chance of harassment and abuse, yet those who decide not to leave the confines of the camps have little choice but to spend a portion of their family's income or food rations on firewood at the local markets.

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) recently funded the introduction of fuel-efficient stoves to every household in the Al Salaam camp. The “rocket” stove, designed by the International Lifeline Fund, has an insulated combustion chamber built from lightweight bricks that are made out of a mixture of clay and other organic materials, like rice, nutshells, and donkey dung. In collaboration with a Sudanese nongovernmental organization (NGO), 5,600 women were trained in stove construction and proper use. Once the women returned home with the stoves, changes in household firewood needs were monitored.

The rocket stove costs just \$3 to make and can reduce firewood consumption by up to 75 percent. Although women continue to collect firewood to sell at markets, demand is expected to decrease. In light of acute firewood shortages in many areas, aid agencies are urging the widespread distribution of fuel-efficient stoves. NGOs have requested technical assistance to utilize the rocket stove, and USAID is supporting its adoption in other areas of North and West Darfur.

Support for innovative alternatives that reduce women's exposure to violence and promote sustainable livelihoods is one way USAID/OTI seeks to protect vulnerable populations in Darfur.