



Fatima Kanjom

Al-Wathba Organization for Development and Peace
South Darfur, Nyala

The Al-Wathba Organization for Development and Peace works in partnership with another organization called Al-Hussaini. Both organizations invited women from several tribes in the area which is dominated by Janjaweed (rebels), to come together in one location, the Al-Ekhlal women's centre in the Al-Riyad neighbourhood in the city of Nyala. This centre seeks to provide humanitarian aid through the activities of the women. Every time the women meet there, they debate solutions for peaceful co-existence.

Fatima's experience of peace building dates from 2004, when she was asked by the Mayor of the state of South Darfur for advice on the situation concerning the Bedouin in the Kaas region. She herself is from the Four

tribe. In collaboration with an organization called International Renaissance, Fatima organized forms of communication between people from 17 different tribes, all of whom were displaced people living together in the IDP camp called Outash. In order to avoid any potential conflicts, the team worked with the Sheikhs and the elders from each tribe in the camp, taking care to discuss and agree together different ways to preserve agricultural plots and water resources, and to distribute medication for the livestock. The outcome was a success and Outash is now considered the best example of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence in Darfur. Since then, Fatima is convinced that agriculture and grazing are interdependent activities and there should be no reason for enmity between the people who practise them.

With this message, she started to cooperate with an organization covering the area of Kaas, called Al-Ruhal for Rural Development. She persuaded women from her own tribe to join women from other tribes in the area and she set out to contact various Sheikhs, Heads of the Customary Courts and Community Leaders from all tribes. Fatima discussed her experience with the different methods of maintaining agricultural plots and water sources and she strongly advised the tribal leaders to reject violence and start working together as the best way to maximise economic potential. After several years of work, all parties agreed to cooperate in maintaining peace in the Kaas County.

When the farmers in the locality of Blail mistakenly used the traditional animal pathways for agricultural purposes, the animals destroyed the crops and this provoked serious clashes. The women from Al-Wathba had to meet with the displaced people and the nomads more than 10 times before they could be convinced not to use weapons. The women made a plea for farmers to start using farmland only after receiving permission from the Sheikhs and urged the Sheikhs to clearly demarcate the routes for the nomad's animals. At one of the camps, a Sheikh refused to see the women as mediators but he was forced to change his mind when conflict erupted inside the camp. Afterwards, he expressed his gratitude for their peaceful and effective intervention.

Due to the important progress in reconciliation issues in the region, Fatima Kanjom has been nominated as a member of the Darfur Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which consists of 44 members, 6 of whom are women.

