

Diversity, Mediation and Peace Building

1325 Learning Event for Women Leaders

2015



In April 2015 the 16 Darfur Women's organisations for Peace met in El Fashir for a week to participate in a learning event designed with them by the Dutch Stichting Vond. The purpose of the learning meetings is to strengthen the cooperation between Womens' organisations to lobby for the implementation of the resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council. This resolution commits governments and non-state actors to cooperate for action plans that include women in the peace making process. The learning event is the first in a series of five. In this first event, the diversity of social actors in Darfur was explored and the role of mediation was elaborated from the experience of the women themselves. After the training, a delegation of participants went to nearby villages that suffered violent attacks and who reacted with violence. They invited the women of each village to a religious mourning gathering, sharing feelings of despair for the losses on both sides. Women everywhere in the world seek for alternatives to violent armed clashes. Through this project they will, from now on, not be left alone. We search together.

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REPORT 1st LEARNING EVENT

Women Leaders as Mediators and Peace Builders

1 Introduction

Stichting VOND was initiated in 2005 by Darfurian women living in the Netherlands, to relieve the war situation in their region. VOND aims at creating a platform for progress and change, peace and reconciliation. VOND supports the efforts of women organizations in Darfur that work for the empowerment of women leaders and youth, enhancing progress and change through peace and reconciliation among the different populations in this part of Sudan. VOND is a non-profit, non-governmental and non-political civil organization. In the Netherlands. VOND is an active member of the Dutch National Action Plan for the UN Resolution 1325.

The resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council commits governments and non-state actors to cooperate for action plans that include women in the peace making process. It offers a framework for the action of women leaders in Darfur and legitimates their aspirations for a peaceful world in which young people can develop their abilities without recurring to weapons and violence.

The most important current Sudanese partner of VOND is the Women's Alliance for Peace in Darfur (WAP-Darfur). The Alliance consists of 16 Darfurian Women's organisations operating in all 5 regions of Darfur. It was created in November 2013, as an outcome of two trainings organized by VOND in Khartoum with support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on women leadership for Resolution 1325. The Alliance and VOND came to the conclusion that there was still a lot to learn and to improve for the Women's organisations in Darfur, to enable them to form a united strong movement for peace in the region¹. VOND presented a request for funding at the Dutch Foreign Office, which was rewarded².

2 Preparations

The ability to lobby doesn't depend only on the personal development of women leaders but also on the cooperation between women's' organisations, and their capacity to connect with government authorities in Darfur, with committed organisations in Khartoum and with society at large. The possibility to mediate depends not only on the personal capacity to understand a conflict, but also on being accepted and trusted both by security authorities and by communities. For that reason, it was decided that the intended learning should concentrate on:

- u Increased awareness on post-war vulnerability.
- u Strengthened management capacity to handle diversity.

¹ See the Report on LEAP 2013, to be downloaded from the website www.stvond.nl

² The project is implemented under the umbrella of the Dutch development organisation ICCO, with headquarters in Uganda.

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- Exchange of experiences in mediation techniques and how these are rooted in religion and tradition.

Before the start of the programme, we were able to organize a kick-off meeting with some representatives in The Hague in February and another one in Khartoum in March to consult the participants on the proposed learning programme and mechanisms during the next two years. The members of WAP-Darfur were asked to develop actions after the 1st learning event that would concentrate on assessing needs and strengths for peace building, with special attention to (1) mental health, (2) tribal diversity and (3) religious grounding of women leadership in peace building.

The logistic preparation and organisation of the 1st learning event was done by Foundation El-Tagana in El Fashir, including invitations for aligned organisations, civil society and government in this province. Then, the 16 Darfurian members of the Alliance met from 5 to 10 April 2015 in El Fashir. It is the first learning event in a series of 5 to be developed in 2015 and 2016 with the purpose to enable WAP-Darfur and its affiliates to successfully lobby and mediate for peace in Darfur.

3 Participants

The participants that attended at the event were the 16 women of member organisations of WAP-Darfur

Participant	Member Organization	City - Region
Mahjouba Hassan Musa	Massai for Human service	Diean - East
Zamzam Ali Abdalla	Tasamuh for women dev	Zalengei Middle
Ibtisam Adoma Shomain	El-Tagana for Women	Fashir - North
Zahra Ibrahim Zareba	Al-Arjoon for Devel.	Kuma - North
Aziza Mohmed Kinean	Ass. For Dar-essalam Dev.	Dar-essalam - North
Thuria Ibrahim Salih	Kebkabya for women dev.	Kebkabya - North
Fatima Tahir Kanjom	El-Wathba for peace Dev.	Nyala - South
Asma Abakar Taha	Riaheen Esalaml	Nyala - South
Mariam Moh. Adam	El-Ruhama for Development.	Nyala - South
Mahasin Abelgadir	El-Ruhal & Rural Development	Nyala - South
Amna Daif-Allah	Ghaya for Development	Nyala - South
Sabrin Adam	El-Shorooq	Nyala - South
Salwa Haroun Imam	Al-amal for community	Nyala - South
Fatima Fadul Abdulla	El-Bir-Wa-El-Tawasul	Gineana - West
Somia Mohamed Abdalla	Gloup El-Rahma	Gineana - West
Nawal Moh. Eldirdiri	Al-Badreen	Gineana - West

Along with them, representatives from civil society and government in Fashir also participated.

- Four representatives from affiliated women organisations from North Darfur
- Two Journalists from Fashir

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- υ Three Parliamentarians from Fashir
- υ Two Imams - religion leaders from Fashir
- υ Five Leaders from the civil administration (larger tribes)
- υ Two personalities / opinion leaders (Hakamat)
- υ Three Youth from Youth associations in Fashir.

Most of them attended only on the first day, but some of them on other days as well (the affiliates). The 5th day was only for members.

The learning event was facilitated by the following crew:

- υ Mekka Abdelgabar, LEAP director and coach.
- υ Asha AlKarib Abdallah, trainer.
- υ Amira Beshir Brair, secretariat and financial administration.
- υ Isra Abdelgabar, intern: translations and base line inquiry.
- υ Mohamed El-Hassan Sadig, Guest speaker.

4 Learning on diversity and mediation

4.1 Diversity

The afternoon of the first day was for representatives of member-organisations and affiliate organisations. After the opening session, Asha Alkarib invited the participants to find a method to facilitate the role of women in the making and building of peace. She showed that even if we have various roles/hats in life, the essential role is that we are women. Hats such as political, tribal, ethnic and geographical are important but what binds us together is that we are women, we have our personal/specific things as women, such as , menstruation, pregnancy, child birth, and we have our concerns like grief for husbands, and more for our sons in times of war.

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The participants were asked to go back with their memories to one year, grouped into groups of three persons and asked to tell each other about the important events at the level of their personal life, organization and community level and the national/Darfur level. Then they presented the findings; one presented the personal level, the second the org. level and the third the national level. Amazing stories came out. Most of the participants work in humanitarian aid development work such as building of schools, i.e. the work that should be done by the government.

Then the second part of the session was about perceptions, asha, the trainer, drew an iceberg and recalled the story of the Titanic and how it sank. What is visible is the appearance and impression and a little knowledge. Inside however, the hill is much larger – there are feelings, pains, dreams, emotions, aspirations, wounds and ambitions. We put curtains in front of us when we classify others. People focus on the public and conceal the private. This affects us as women even though the private constructs everything that is seen publicly. Therefore, we should never forget the private situation of people. We should understand that others have a private story and we should be open about our private situation even when we participate in the public work.



Then, an exercise was done about a story that people find themselves in an isolated island they should choose 8 people with different professions to stay in that island. The participants saw that decisions made by a group are more informed, but personal decisions are still guiding. To show the complexity of decision making when information is not complete, Asha drew a diagram with different dimensions, individuals and institutions (formal and informal). To fill in the gap of information people use their own assumptions, biases, stereotyping, impressions. When these ideas are negative people develop a negative frame of mind. Negative frame of mind can be on the level of individuals or institutions (official, tribal, family) levels. The position of decision-maker can be discriminative. Discrimination is the deprivation of rights; rights are opportunities and resources such as promotion in work, attendance of training, skills, services promotion of skills, etc. Sometimes denial of rights is visible and direct, other times indirect. There is also the silent discrimination, or inaction.

The ladies are asked to tell in one word their impression on the day. These are the words: Wonderful, fantastic, fun, distinct, beautiful, pass, enjoyable, connecting, different than other days, happiness, distinctive, featured, excellent, affinity, successful, happy, impression, unique.

4.2 Human rights and women's rights

After a recapitulation of the first day, the programme continued on the second day.

It was discovered how negative mind sets, hidden in individuals, lead to discrimination that deprive others from their rights. The effect of negative minds gets stronger when it is crystallized in institutions, especially when these institutions are government institutions or tribal institutions. Exclusion, injustice, and deprivation from rights as a result of discrimination leads to violence when groups start to claim their rights and meet resistance.

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Examples of the negative mind sets towards women are many, such as: women are weak, women are less talented than men, and women waive their right easily, women are psychologically less resilient. Some of the community statements against women are: "Even if she studies law, her fate is in the kitchen", "Even if the woman is an axe she will not break heads", "The lady is for home, the man is for work", "The man has the right to slash a donkey, a drum and a woman", "The woman and servant don't take decisions", "The woman is the daughter of her parents", etc.

When such a negative mind-set is institutionalized it will affect the laws. For example, the law in Sudan demarcates the minimum marriage age to be ten years.

The universal human rights declaration was developed after the World War of May 1945. The United Nations Charter on Human Rights came out in 1948. Countries can ratify it or include articles in their own constitution. The principle of the Charter is that each individual has basic rights by virtue of his/her humanity regardless of the country, education, ethnicity, sex, age etc. Human rights are included in the Sudanese constitution. The local constitutions are part of the national constitution; they cannot go against it, but they can develop some details in the local situation.



Unfortunately the Sudanese constitution does not include laws on women rights, but the transitional constitution emphasizes the bill of rights on positive discrimination of women, that helped women to achieve the constitutional quota on the election laws of 2008. Women must see this quota as a right that women have and not as a favour. From 2005 to this date there is no repair or change in the laws or the Constitution except for the Rights of the Child which was further developed.

4.3 Rape and impunity

The constitution failed to outlaw circumcision and the early marriage. One and half months ago a drastic change in Article 194 was made in the Criminal Code of Sudan referring to adultery and rape. The description of rape became aligned to the international definition of it, and it was separated from adultery. This was the result of more than ten years of lobby by the women's movement in Sudan against the 49 Code, and after production of research, evidence and advocacy on public level.

One of the participants told that she took 5 women who were raped, to the officials in January of this year to report the crime, yet the officials failed to find the perpetrator. Girls' education was introduced very late to North Darfur. Even when women know their rights, we need to press for justice as sometimes even the doctors do not cooperate with the women who are raped.

Another participant emphasized that such topics empower the women, she said there is ignorance in the knowledge of social laws, women do not know their rights, and therefore we should increase their awareness. Especially the lawyers should participate at the level of the judiciary council at state level. Moreover, the women are excluded from the national budget, this is a big mistake during the planning of the national budget; the budget is allocated to institutions with nothing for the women and when women have any project they apply to get little donations and that is considered as a favour and not as a right. 6

This raised discussion among the participants; a staff member from the foundation Tasamuh from Zalingei was abducted together with a group of women and men on 19-4-2009. The women were put in a separate place and the perpetrators tried to rape them. They were set free when the police arrived. Rebels warned the women not to report the rape attempt. Later they put letters in their homes threatening them that they would be raped if they reported the attempts to the police. The women did not report the incidents of rape out of fear. The participant assured the group that fear is the major reason that women refrain from reporting rape incidents.

Another participant argued that the government does not allow the reporting of rape cases because rape is a weapon of war. Although there is a clause in the law to punish the rape criminals, this law is never implemented. Although the victim knows the rapist, she reports the case as an unknown person in case she dares to report it. The police cooperates in obscuring rape cases; although the law of punishment was imposed in 2005, the police tends to ignore it.

The conclusion is that a change of laws is not enough, the education of women and girls is essential, it is a strategic requirement. A lobby for girls' education on the level of the



grassroots is important to change the negative mind set. Women can also work together to lobby for gendering the nations' budget because there are issues unique to women, such as reproductive health which needs a separate budget. There are zero budgets for reproductive health in some of the states; these issues depend completely on international organizations.

4.4 Tribalism and discrimination

The participants were divided into three working groups to analyse discrimination in their environment, concerning:

1. Women and girls;
2. Tribalism and ethnicity;
3. Internally displaced people.

Each group should fill in a rectangular with the negative mind set which is worded in songs, popular expressions, etc.

GROUP 1: WOMEN AND GIRLS

It starts with the perception of inferiority of women, e.g. *"if the woman is an axe she never breaks a head"*. People say that a woman is good for hard work, for farming and cooking, and has no further value. The undervaluing of women is ground to exploit and misuse them.

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The group reported some concrete cases:

- υ A mother who refused FGM for her daughter was forced by the father on doing it. He just ordered the midwife to perform the third grade of mutilation (Pharaohnic) on his daughter, even if this is against the law. The mother was unable to sue him out of fear.
- υ Another case of early marriage is about a girl called Ashjan. Ashjan was five-years old when her father fulfilled her Nikah (un-executed marriage) to his nephew/ her cousin, in order to be reserved for him until she would reach the age of marriage. Suddenly her cousin asked to have his eight-year old wife, which was against the agreement. The parents refused, but he insisted and threatened to kidnap his wife. Her mother made a criminal case against him, many lawyers volunteered to defend her case. As the girl did not yet reach ten years of age (the official age of marriage), her mother won the case and the girl was allowed to go to school and follow up her education.
- υ Even during the distribution of humanitarian aid and shelter women suffer degradation, slashing, and are denied rights such as food. The men are used to be given first before the women, and the quantity for women could be reduced to half of the quantity allocated to the men. This happens especially when the distribution is done by older men.
- υ One of the bad cultural practices is what's called a "bed leg"; this means that the wife gives the best of the food to her husband (put under his bed), even if it takes her to leave the children out of it.
- υ There are 800 women teachers while there are only 200 male teachers, yet most of the higher positions are filled by men. After a long lobby the teachers succeeded to put

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women as headmasters in boy's schools because the majority of teachers in boy's schools are women too. During the war, teachers from both sexes are put in stand-by in Nyala but when they give incentives for this situation they only give it to men.

- u The Judia (mediation between married couples) is currently not in favour of the women. It is a tool that spreads the problems of the couple around in the neighbourhood, and it is the women who are object of gossip.

Women are normally denied the positions of decision making; promotions are given to men and denied to women whereas sometimes the argument is that men are taking care of their families, when in reality they sell their share in the market while women use their share to feed their families. The women concluded that we as women used to make big mistakes in raising our sons to act like that, this is a cultural mistake. Men are selfish by nature??; we should correct these wrong cultural practices and re-consider better ways to raise our sons. Even some women bear these negative mind sets towards women.

GROUP 2: ETHNICITY AND TRIBALISM

The group started by reciting a verse from the Qur'an:

"O people, we created you male and female, we make you nations and tribes just for you to know each other, but the best of you are those who worship God best"

The people in Darfur are diverse in terms of languages and dialectics; yet Darfuri people also share the same cultures and social customs. The highly respected local (tribal) customary administration system is weakened and politicized by the government, which makes tribalism become problematic. This leads to security problems, starting in Darfur as armed robberies. Originally, the bandits were not ascribed to their tribes and problems of robberies were solved by the native administrators through traditional agreements called the Rakouba (traditional courts).

One of these courts includes two women; a participant from Diean is one of them. In her opinion the participation of women in such courts is essential; she hopes they can include more women within them. Another participant argues that women have no voice in the customary administration system. Women should insist to have women voices in the traditional administration system, because the negative discrimination prevents women from obtaining their natural position, even if they participate actively in the social life.

People in Darfur are divided into three categories: first class tribes, second class and recent comers, i.e. the IDPs. These are subject to direct and indirect discrimination and denial of rights. Because of weakening of the respected native administration, militarization becomes the norm for all tribes of Darfur, everybody is required to having an identity card from specific group, and the native administrator has no power to control them. The educated Darfurians are fuelling the problems, as they have hidden agendas and Darfur is flooded with weapons and ammunition among the tribes. Young people join armed groups without knowing the hidden agenda of the people who pay them.

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During the discussion it was announced that 44000 people from the Barti tribe were displaced on that same day fleeing from armed rebels, and entered Milleit to seek refuge.

The group proposes a number of proposals to be put on the peace agenda:

- υ Disarmament of the various criminal groups
- υ Re-consideration of the *Judia* system³
- υ Nominating women in the *Judia* committees
- υ Allowing mixed marriage among the different tribes

Dar-El-Naiem is a displaced woman, faced by the negative image from the community. Her children were refused to go to the normal schools because they are bullied as IDP's. Being a teacher herself, she opened a school in the camp for the children of the displaced and that is successful.

A participant from foundation Al-amal is a member of the *Judia* committee. Dr. Asha reported on her work to unite Darfurian Women in 2003, which failed because of tribal affiliation.

The conclusion of the second day was: We should take off our political and tribal hats we should only wear our women hat, it is the most essential one and then we can look for support from others to reach to our goals.

GROUP 3: INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

The violent raids come mostly at early dawn. Therefore the villagers are not adverted and run in hurry leaving their belongings behind. They arrive at the camps with empty hands, and for that reason IDPs are looked at as inferior. Villages in Darfur are disintegrated and the inhabitants moved to the camps which become cities in terms of the number of inhabitants such Kalma Camp in South Darfur which is considered the largest in the world. The camps are inhabited by women, elderly people and children; these are a burden on the society and are not contributing to economic growth. The (young) men on the other hand join the armed groups, either the government army or rebel groups such as the Janjaweed. The rest of the youth tends to be unemployed and sometimes addicted to drugs and alcohol. Children, growing up in the IDP camps, will be unemployed and spend their time playing cards or using drugs out of frustration, they have nothing to do. When a displaced person works hard and improves his/her economic situation while living in the camp his/her right in the rations of humanitarian aid fall. This system obviously discourages the IDPs from working.

In many places, the IDPs are seen through a negative mind set. They are treated as inferior, for example in public meetings they are placed behind in the worst places and they are the last to access the meals. When one isn't wearing decent clothes it is said that you are dressed as an IDP. There is discrimination also in housing; "*your home is full of rubbish just like that of the IDPs*". IDPs refrain from mixing with the society in fear of attitude & language; when it comes to children, they are asked: "*Are you an IDP child?*" when they are dirty or because their skin colour and cloths are different.

³ Local courts of justice and mediation

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The IDPs are denied senior positions in work on the ground of being displaced. The general thought is that they are not settlers and they will return to their home land. This is not the case however, until now, only 1% is returning.

There are also positive examples of settlement of IDP's. For example, when the areas around Gabal (Mountain) Siywa and Kebkabiya were hit hard by violence, it resulted in a large number of displaced people. Kekenbiya, a small village inhabited by around 18000 citizens, was overflowed with immigrants. But the IDPs lived in the city side by side the original inhabitants, and no camps were established to accommodate them. When international organizations arrived to help them they insisted that the whole community of

A positive story on IDPs during the war of South Sudan: 16 Dinka Sultans immigrated to Diean and are living decently beside the community of East Darfur. Their neighbourhood is given the name of Neem instead of IDP camp and they are participating in the elections of this year.

Kebkabiya should benefit from the humanitarian aid, and up to this moment the aid is distributed to every person in the city. The displaced people are the ones who provided Kebkabiya with vegetables and other agricultural products, working hard. Their children joined the normal schools, and the new schools that open to accommodate them are called Ass-salam schools.

Most IDP's are women with children, for that reason the women's organisations are organizing women to help the IDP communities. For example, Al-Arjoon provides the IDP women with building material and the group built houses for themselves, then provides them micro finance facilities through a method called food in exchange for work. Al-Kuma Mayer gives the women salaries for working in the market, and the needy ones are given more. All member organisations of WAP Darfur have experience with IDP's. For example: IDP's refused by the community because of fear that they bring in their own armed ad-hoc defense unit, i.e. the Janjaweed. And IDP camps having their own laws and regulations, including courts with judges and lawyers; one of such courts is called The Hague Court in Hassahiesa camp in Zallengei.

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Conclusion of the group: there are many conflicts with IDP's especially because of ethnicity. As women we need to be aware of that, but we have to continue to support the women's agenda.

4.5 Conflict and Mental Health

INSTITUTIONALIZED CONFLICT

On day three the participants started analysing how personal conflicts can become cultural conflicts, becoming institutionalized. A matrix showing the spreading of conflict was designed:

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Personal	Relational	Cultural	Institutional
Person	Arrogance	Tribalism	Exclusion
Gender	Violence against women	inequality	Discrimination
Social	Tribalism	Exclusion	Marginalization
Political	Obliviousness	Resistance	Injustice
Constitutional	inequality	Denial	Deprivation of rights
Economical	inequality	mistrust	Marginalization
Environmental			

An example of a personal conflict is a story of an educated man who gave very nice presentation of human rights and equal rights of women, his wife was amazed by his good ideas, when they returned home his wife asked him to help her prepare the dinner; he was surprised and said no. She reminded him on his speech and the nice ideas on equality. He answered: but do you really believe about what I said?

Relational conflicts are mostly based on a power relation, when communication becomes problematic such as the conflict between the seniors and subordinates or within the executive board in an organization. When people are unable to reach to the roots and reasons of the problem mistrust arises. If the conflict is not solved, it may lead to chronic mistrust. Women are experienced in reaching solutions at the level of the family. They can extend their approach (comfort, dialogues, nice words) to small *judia* (mediation) sessions where one person takes the role of mediator to prevent worsening of the problems in hand.

Cultural conflicts include emphasizing the differences: each group thinks that its culture is better than the other such as the own family, the own tribe, etc. This can lead to strong collective negative mind sets towards strangers, and in ethnic differences. Women can use the women's mind set to bridge deeply rooted differences.

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When a cultural conflict is translated into official laws and regulations it becomes an institutional conflict. This is even harder to amend or to change, it feeds up to the constant cultural conflict due to the cultural and institutional interrelationships.

A terrible example of displacement is what happened in two areas called Birka and Sharafaya in March 2014. The IDPs were denied entering El-Fashir, some women from different national foundations including Tagana for Development received them in the wood outside El-Fashir. They found some women delivered their babies on the ground under the trees. These women activists contacted national organizations in Khartoum to help, but the reaction did not arrive on time, therefore they contacted international organizations in EL-Fashir to help the IDPs. Luckily then, these organizations sent humanitarian help to these IDPs.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF CONFLICT UPON WOMEN OF DARFUR

Displacement is always compulsory and sudden, a person is not ready to move therefore it has different effects not only on health and physical but also psychological. When a woman is displaced she arrives exhausted and distorted, she is mentally and psychically uprooted from her home and her belongings. The participants mentioned various examples of health effects:

1. Miscarriages among young women
2. Exclusion as a result of rape during and after war and especially inside the IDP camps. The rape perpetrator is unknown because the victim is terrified during

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displacement and in the camp, and doesn't know where to get support. She becomes a social pariah afraid not to find a person to marry her.

3. Silencing as a result of rape: one participant interviewed hundred women in the IDP camps in Zalingei: although some showed her pictures from their rapists but refused to tell their names.
4. Newly born babies in the IDP camps born with blood infections unknown to the doctors. Between 10 to 20 babies die every day in Annas maternity hospital in El-Fashir.
5. Many young women who were pregnant as a result of rape die while delivering due to their young age.
6. Rape is new culture in Darfur that humiliates both women and men profoundly.
7. Reproduction among young girls increased and it is not clear whether the reason is rape, bad behaviour or unemployment. The repercussion of this phenomenon is that women become terrified from men. Before the war the women farmed their lands and took care of their families after the war they were unable to do their work and that affected them psychologically and had repercussion on their health too.
8. The men who live in IDP camps are unable to go out for work, they have nothing to do and their minds are filled with destructive thoughts. Some men use to dress in women's dress and go inside the houses and rape girls.
9. The IDP women have to cut trees for fire wood and coal nearby. This causes an increase of desertification

A positive example is about an educated woman who was raped by armed men with uniform, her fiancé supported her and married her, he told her that she is the same girl that he is engaged to and the one he wanted to marry. He followed the case with determination until he found the rapists; they were sentenced to five years of prison.

A woman lost her seven children during the war near El-Sireif. This woman prepared food and water and went to search her family within the injured but found them all dead. She said what can I do now? She went to the open air and got lost, she was found dead after three days from thirst.

10 There are many cases of psychological diseases among the women who lost their children, husbands, fathers and brothers. There was a young lady who was silent all the time. Aid organisations tried to get to know her case; they found out that her house was burned down and inside were her husband and children who burned with the house. She was treated and only started to talk after six months of treatment but she cries every time she hears about war.

11. Infertility: armed people raided the Mayer's house, they ordered the Mayer's wife who was 7-months pregnant to give them the weapons of the locality or she will die, she refused and then was hit hard and pushed to the ground. She got abortion because the child was dead. She continued bleeding and the doctor found that her womb was damaged so she will never get children again.
- 9 Insanity: in 2006, filling forms in one of the IDP camps, aid workers found a young woman chained because she was insane. When they investigated the cause they were told that her husband was killed and her three daughters were raped in front of her eyes.
- 10 Lack of water and cleaning: people who were beaten and expelled from their homes, sometimes forsake their personal hygiene, giving room to spread of diseases.

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- 11 There is the phenomenon of children of unknown identity in the camps. Due to the tightness of the houses, composed of one room, some kids just go out and disappear and the parents have no energy to look after them.
- 12 There are also symptoms of new diseases such STD, Hepatitis, HIV/Aids, Klazar, and the yellow fever which was eradicated but appeared again.

The conclusion of this learning day is that Darfur is exposed to systematic violence that inflicts health problems upon women and children, the psychological consequences are long term, affecting society. Darfur now witnessed diseases which are not known before such as STD which has long term repercussions and may change the demography of the region. The confusion, created by war on family life, leaves children and youth without guidance which affects the community's resilience adversely. Health effects upon women affect the community at large and civil society organizations have to be alerted to deal with this serious matter.

5 Religion and peace building

Mohamed El-Hassan Sadig was the guest speaker on the third day. He was invited by VOND to give a lecture on Islam, women and peace building.

Sheik Sadig started saying that peace is promoted simply by communicating and asking for peace, as it happens normally between two persons. In a larger context the role of women is essential for communities at large, especially in mediation and promotion of peace. Women play a leading role on shaping people's life. They are the pioneers in love, education, building belief and faith in a larger purpose than only the interest of the own group. In Islam, the role of women was made clear from the beginning of the Revelation and even from the message of God to the first men, Adam.

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At the beginning of the Revelation to our Prophet Muhammad - peace be upon him - in Cave Hiraa, the women were not seen in isolation; they played similar roles as men. Over the history of Islam, women were either participating or taking initiatives in the march of the nation in all events. For example Khadija, the prophet's first wife, had a magnificent task in consoling and comforting the Prophet - peace be upon him - at the start of the Revelation. Khadija helped her husband emotionally and financially until he passed through the initial problems and obstacles of Revelation, such as the strong opposition and disbelieve of his own people. Also during the emigration of Muslims to Ethiopia, at the beginning of Revelation, to escape the torture of the disbelievers and atheists and to arrange their affairs, their wives accompanied them and bore all the difficulties as well. Women also escaped with their husbands to Medina in displacement. Strong women such as Umsalama El-Makhzoumi who protected her husband and Rawia Um-Ma-abad who hosted Mohammed - peace upon him - in Medina. She was the first woman in Medina to become a Muslim.

Sheikh Sadig recited many names of strong women who struggled for Islam during the early days. Strong women such as Siti Aisha, the prophet's wife, a great leader, She was a teacher and a fought for awareness of the word of Islam. Other examples are the strong political roles played by Queen of Sheba. Her wisdom in ruling her people was



immortalized in the holy Quran. Sadig ended the list with a poem praising the political influence of women and encouraging them to continue playing that role.

The participants commented that the religious leaders are not doing enough to deter the Darfuri war lords from fuelling the conflict. They should dedicate attention in promoting peace, which is more fundamental than going back to history. Sheik Sadig admitted bitterly that the religious leaders fail in playing their role to build peace as they are supposed to do. He said that religious leaders could give strong leadership in mediation. They should continuously remind all parties in the conflict that murdering people is considered to be bad in Islam, and make clear that Islam does not justify their atrocities. Instead religious leaders, including himself, he admits, remain silent; or else they are doing less than what they are supposed to do. The reason of this shameful situation, according to him, is that Sudanese religious leaders are politicized; they are following their political parties, they are keeping silence, turning blind eyes and thus are not ready to function as mediators as they are supposed to.

Sheikh Sadig concluded that this learning meeting is of great value to him because it gives him the courage and enthusiasm to start acting differently. He promised the participants that he will talk to his colleagues about playing their leading roles as religious leaders and follow the example of the women peace builders.

6 Portraits of women peace builders in Darfur

On the fourth day, the participants told each other on their experience in mediation and resolving disputes (*Judia*), both as individuals and representing their organizations. Their stories reflect personal, relational, cultural and political aspects of peace building. See Annex 1 for the full stories.

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The conclusion on comparing the experiences was that there are various entry points for conflict resolution:

- υ The religious entry point, see the experience related by Majouba
- υ The service entry point, see the experience of ..
- υ The entry point of shared interest, see the experience of ..
- υ The history and culture entry point, see the experience related by Amira and Ibtisan
- υ The family entry point, see the experience related by ..
- υ The emotional and human rights entry point, see the story of Thuria

In the coming learning events, further lessons can be taken from these experiences as building stones for a true WAP Darfur methodology of mediation.

7 Action: mediation between the Berti and Zalaya tribes

In each LEAP learning event, the participants decide on an action to be taken after the event, to apply what has been learned. In each next learning event, the action experiences in between the events will be analysed for strong and weak points. The learning events are to be organized in the 5 sub-regions of Darfur: East Darfur, Middle Darfur, South Darfur, North Darfur and West Darfur. The 1st LEAP learning event was in El-Fashir, North Darfur.



It was organized by Ibtisam El-Douma Showmain and her colleagues. She is chair of the foundation El-Tagana for Women, one of the four members of WAP Darfur in the North.

7.1 The Preparations

At the end of the 1st event, it was decided by the participants to start a concrete mediation effort for the tribes that were involved in violent clashes just at the time of the LEAP event in the same region. It was a clash between two tribes; the Barti and the Zayadia. They recently attacked each other each other, causing dead, injury and displacement of many people. A cease fire was called on as a fragile, temporary agreement to stop the aggression.

The LEAP participants analysed in 5 small groups what they could do. The decision was taken to implement the plan presented by one of the groups: to organize three workshops for mediation; the first in Milliet, exclusively for the Barti tribe, the second in Kuma, exclusively for the Zayadia tribe and the third in El-Fashir for the two tribes and other participants from El-Fashir. The proposed title of the workshops was "Mending the social fabric and calming the tempers". It was felt not to be appropriate to talk about reconciliation, because the timing of the mediation was to soon after the armed clashes and the fragile cease-fire. It was also agreed that only Barti women from the participants would go to visit Milliet, and only Zayadia women to visit Kuma. The best feasible moment for this action was directly after the learning event, and this coincided with the elections. For that reason it was expected to be quite complicated to get permission from Security Services for such an initiative.

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The first step then, was to visit the local *Ajaweed* leader. Through a relative of the LEAP director the group was introduced to him. He is an old man in his eighties, a retired police officer. His name is Boosh El-Zarief Abu-Kalaam. His actual function is Head of the "Committee of Dignified Nation for Tribal Reconciliations" which is composed of high ranking, retired officials and officers, they are appointed by the local government as Ajaweed or reconciliation committee. The Ajaweed are normally the first to go to conflict areas whenever a violent clash occurs. Mr Boosh told the LEAP participants about how the war between Barti and Zayaida was triggered and how it escalated. See the full story in Annex 2.

Then, before starting any activity, the members of WAP Darfur needed to get official permissions. These are complex and normally very long procedures. The first permission is from the security office, second is from the Humanitarian Aid Committee. Letters of agreement are needed to organise workshops if they wanted to include the Mayors of the two municipalities. The participants also needed permission beforehand for anything they would wish to say. And of course, they needed a vehicle and permission to transport the group to these two counties, handing over names and signatures of the drivers. These documents would go to HAC's high commissioner, and then he would issue. an official letter of agreement. This agreement would have to be sent to the HAC's procedure department (security officers), legalized with their stamps and signatures, and then sent to the head of the Security office, to other departments and finally we would have the required go-ahead.

But the group was lucky. The head of the procedure department of HAC was from the same tribe as the LEAP Director, and he was determined to cooperate with the ladies. He just pushed the legalization of the documents through and gave his advice on any further procedure, promising to interfere in case of any difficulties.

The group started to work. They wrote letters to the governor office, the security office, and the regional government office to explain the planned activity. Mrs. Ibtisam Aldouma and the LEAP director went for a visit on the same day to the governor of Darfur (the regional authority), Dr. Tigani Cessei, in his house, knowing that he would be leaving for Khartoum the next day. They report: *"The house was surrounded with a battalion of military. We proposed to ask somebody from inside the house to come out and allow us to get through. The only name we had was from the governor himself, however. Ibitsam then called a relative, who came immediately and escorted us to get in. Dr. Tigani was friendly. The delegation offered condolences for his recently deceased wife, and then we informed him about our program and mediating intentions. His reaction was surprisingly positive. He explained his strategy is to gradually disarm both the militias and the rebels and that the State really needs the involvement of peace loving citizens to be able to safeguard peace. He gave WAP Darfur his blessing, wishing us good luck with our mission and asking to keep him informed on further steps."*

7.2 Visit to Milliet (Barti town)

By the end of the elections and finalizing the preparation for the workshops, WAP-Darfur started to plan their travel to both towns, as the roads between El-Fashir and Milliet and El-Fashir and Kuma were cleared and open for one week. Some armed bandits were still active in these areas, such as Musab's group which is active along the road between El-Fashir and Milliet. Despite this risk the group went ahead and organized, through their contacts, by telephone a first workshop in Milliet, the Barti "capital", foreseen for April 19, for a group of around inhabitants. The invitation was meant for women, but a

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The municipality of Milliet



representation from men and youth would have to be included in it. After informing the officials in El-Fashir and obtaining the necessary permissions from them, the authorities in the town were informed (Milliet's Mayor Mr. Kamal Yahia and the head of the Barti civil administration Mr. Adam Amarra). At the same time, the group contacted the representative of the Zayadia tribe in Milliet (Mr. Rabih Mohamed Rabih), to invite him for a workshop in Kuma but he urged the ladies to meet him right there in Milliet.

The Barti administration was consulted. Mr. Amarra opposed the idea, arguing that it is too soon after the war and because they are still busy with the injured and the displaced who arrived in thousands to the IDP camps. After the group explained that the program is a

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consolation meant for soothing the souls and weaving the social fabric targeting the women in the first place, he finally agreed. He recommended Mrs. Maimouna Yahya from the SWU (Sudanese Women Union) in Milliet to organize the meeting and to invite the participants. WAP Darfur asked to meet both leaders in private before proceeding to the meeting place, and that was agreed. On the 19th of April 10 members of WAP Darfur and a religious person from El Fashir (Mawlana Eisa) travelled to Milliet. When the group arrived, they didn't find the authorities, neither at home nor at the office. They left just on that day to submit the results of the elections to the governor in El-Fashir.

The workshop started with a long and profound prayer and condolences ceremony led by Mawlana Eisa. After that the WAP-Darfur group recalled some knowledge on the role of women in building peace, advocacy and promotion of the principles of peace; on the role of customs and traditions in conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence in Darfur; and on the role of religion in making peace. The participants were given the chance to discuss and argue. According to them the atrocities by the Zayadia left them with a great number of dead and injured and thousands of displaced people, looting and huge destruction of properties. The sadness, sorrow and grievances of the women came out strongly: most of the women present had lost a dear person and they were longing to hear words of consolation.



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The participants thanked for the workshop and for the solidarity of this group of women leaders from the civil society. They were given the chance to express their feelings and talk their minds in their comfort zone. They are eager to see both parties in war signing a strong and lasting peace agreement. They told WAP-Darfur that they are the first people to visit them after the atrocities, and that it came at the right time, just when they were needed. According to them, war is evil and it affects everyone. The 14-days of closure of their city were the worst days imposed upon them, as even birds can abandon their nests if they need to. People should listen to them and give them a chance to send a strong message to the other party asking for peace. Women are the most affected by the war, and as women they want to participate in negotiating, making and building of the peace. It is unacceptable that there is not a single woman in the Ajaweed committees.

At the end, 40 women and representatives of men were registered to travel to El-Fashir to attend the joined workshop with the Zayadia and four Land Cruisers were reserved to transport them to El-Fashir and back to Milliet.

The plan was to visit the Zayadia representative in Milliet on the same day, and to visit the home of the Sheikh who was killed by the Barti criminal, for condolences and calming of the souls. The segregation in Milliet's neighbourhoods was impressive however: recent neighbours and good friends were enemies now: the group couldn't find transportation, the only three cars available were unable to drive the group to the Gharrouna neighbourhood (where they live). The drivers said that they cannot go there, because they are Barti. Finally, when the Cruiser to drive the group back to El Fashir arrived, it was already too late to visit Gharrouna. It was then decided to at least visit the Zayadia's vice civil administrator, Mr. Mohamed Rabih, who lives in the centre of Milliet. The driver hesitated however. The LEAP director called Rabih by telephone, asking a laissez passer for the driver, and the administrator assured that the driver that he would be safe. So the group left. Near the centre, suddenly 4 armed men jumped on the car – the ladies got very scared, but it turned out that they were guards from Rabih, who were sent to protect them.

In Rabih's home the group met a group of Zayadia; around 8 men and 10 women. They welcomed the group and the driver warmly. When the group reported on the workshop and the recommendation to restore peace, asking the Hakkamat to sing for peace instead of war, the Zayadia men and women were touched. Rabih said: *"We are 200% for peace, we are so eager to solve the dispute with the Barti and return to living together peacefully, we have no intention to start any atrocity."*

7.3 Visit to Kuma (Zayadia town)

On the 20th of April 2015 another group of members from WAP Darfur drove to Kuma to perform the same task. The workshop was organized by Mrs. Zahara Zareba, whose organization Al-Arjoon is a member from WAP-Darfur. In Kuma, although we instructed Mrs. Zareba to invite more women and only a representation of men from the different institutions, the whole government insisted to attend the meeting, The Nazir Mr. Abdalla Adam Jouzo insisted to invite most of the native administrators; 6 of the Omad (Native Mayors), the Kuma Mayor, many representatives from the different institutions, such as the state council, the head of the Legislative Council, the chairman of the National Union of Youth, the head of Welfare and Social Development; 32 men in total. 30 women from the different organizations also attended the meeting.

The same program was followed in the workshop in Kuma. There was a prayer for the wounded and deceased, and after the condolences the participants were given the chance to express their ideas frankly. They spoke at length, that they expressed their conviction of being a peaceful tribe somehow forced to enter this war through continuous provocations. They claimed that there are hidden hands behind this war; some people apparently see war as an opportunity for trade in weapons, ammunition

Alongside the road to Kuma



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and for political gains. *"We lived with Barti for hundreds of years, we used to fight and come to peace and fight again and come to peace, but now it becomes larger and larger. We must live together in a lasting peace and harmony, a quick and lasting solution is badly needed. The roots of the causes of the problems should be dealt with in order to reach to a final solution. We have had enough of half-way solutions that do not hold for a long time. We tried to hold peace so many times. The last period was twenty-one years and up to this moment there is no real solution. Even if we gave up some of our rights we failed in reaching sustainable peace"*. According to the Zayadia, the killing in Darfur is often triggered by the violation of three things: the land, the wealth and the women

The disputed territories are Milliet, Tofay, and Gozain; according to them Gozain is recognized as territory of Zayadia but the authorities gave it to the Barti, and they declined

The government insisted for the administration to attend the meeting



to disclose the result of the solution to that dispute. The ladies remarked that they don't see the need to kill each other for a piece of empty land. *"When you travel across Darfur all you see is empty landscape, but the Darfuri cannot use that land, otherwise one Hakura would be enough to accommodate the whole population of Darfur,"* they said. Then the Zayadia group answered that they know this fact but all they want is their rights to be acknowledged. They continued that they have no intention to displace or evict any citizen from their territories when these would be demarcated for them, because citizenship is a general right and not bound to land demarcation. *"We only do demand the administrative recognition of our property rights"* they argue. The Zayadia people do not fully trust the government of Sudan. They suspect that the government fuels the problem for their own benefit. They argue that *"the crisis is in the ruling party, there is a lack of transparency, lack of equality and lack of justice by the government because there is only one tribe ruling the government apparatus in North Darfur, and the governor is siding with the Barti, he is not honest and bias, all the jobs are given to Barti"*. For that reason, all former reconciliations have gone unheeded. Lack of sincerity, integrity and true intention are the problem. *"If the governor is serious in his endeavour to solve the problem, he could have brought the criminal who triggered this war to justice"*.

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For a long lasting peace with Barti, the Zayadia suggest to form a mechanism composed of representatives from each region to pursue solutions for the land issue. The documents on land ownership made one and a half year ago, based on the British regulations of 1956, should now be disclosed to the Zayadia to make room for fair negotiations.

At the end, Mrs. Zareba registered 40 participants to attend the joined meeting in El-Fashir and reserved transportation means.

Diner in Kuma



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7.4 A workshop in common

The plan was to hold a third workshop on the 21st of April 2015 in El-Fashir for the two groups together with neutral participants from El-Fashir; we targeted 150 participants. Mrs. Aziza Mohamed Kinean, the director of Dar-assalam Women Association, a member of WAP-Darfur arranged the venue, the catering and invited the participants from El-Fashir. Unfortunately during the course of the workshop in Kuma, Mrs. Maimouna Yahyia from Milliet called and told us that the group of Milliet would not come to El-Fashir to attend the joined workshop because their administration forbid them to go. There was no option but to halt the workshop of El-Fashir and apologize to the invitees.

The two delegations of WAP Darfur met to exchange what they had learned from the visits to Milliet and Kuma. Their conclusions:

- u The initiative of WAP-Darfur leads to peace of minds and confidence. This is a badly needed medicine to restore the social fabric.
- u There is willingness and sincere desire for peace among women; it is not true that this opinion is based on weakness and sheer emotions.
- u Safety is essential for human beings, when there is fighting there is a feeling of strife and betrayal, distemper and bitterness. Life then seems worthless.



- υ The women can convince tribal leaders that the damage of war hits both parties in conflict, especially innocent people who are driven outside the communities to IDP camps. Many women and Hakkamat are still pushing men to the war, they should be stopped through awareness raising and training. The Hakkamat should change their mindset to sing for peace instead of singing for war.
- υ The State can be strengthened to implement a strict and effective disarmament program. They need support from civil society and more respect for the rule of law.
- υ We can stimulate actions from the grassroots and key figures in society for a ceasefire
- υ We can unite to stop banditism with whatever label through investigation and holding perpetrators accountable.
- υ The local administration can play an essential role in de-escalation, because governments alternate while local administration does not. The interventions from national government are opportunistic and often not in the interest of the people.
- υ The major cause of the problem is the land issue; the land is fire under the ashes which rages whenever there is a storm. The civil society organizations can pressure to stick to the land demarcation done by the English since 1942 and restore property rights.
- υ Women should be included in the Ajaweed committees for Jawdiat and Rawakeeb mediation efforts
- υ Ajaweed from other tribes can help to mediate and solve problems of tribes in conflict.
- υ Any solution should involve all stakeholders: the Zayadia, the Miedoub and both branches of the Barti, i.e. the Barti of the north and the Barti of south. Also it should include the areas of Milliet, Kuma, Saiyah, Al-Malha, East Tiwaisha, and El-Liyat

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8 Evaluation

8.1 Participants' opinion

The participants were asked to formulate one sentence to characterize the learning event.

- υ This workshop is successful and effective; it is completely contrary to other workshops in the sense that it does not follow a method of written papers and presentations nor introduces specific topics, it follows an advanced and transformative method which is very successful, just like the trainer who is indeed very successful and nice person.
- υ Our shared feeling as women who can bring peace on the ground is wonderful
- υ We have the right to learn from you, and you have the right to feed us the coolness of peace, we learned a lot from you and benefited from that ocean of knowledge, it seems that we are like fishes escaping from the sharks of the ocean – (Zamzam)
- υ Very useful workshop, that puts the point on the letter i, in such a difficult time. It opens a challenge to us as women to become pioneers taking the initiative of building peace. The only set back is that the workshop coincided with the election. For that reason some of the sisters were unable to finish the whole workshop.
- υ It is an enjoyable workshop, it is transparent and clear, it plays on sensitive chords; it is excellent by all means.



- υ The workshop is valuable and the material discussed is very useful. I did benefit a lot from it.
- υ A beautiful workshop, I hope we get more workshops like this to disseminate the culture of peace especially among the remote villages.
- υ Very useful workshop, it opened our eyes on the sufferings of the Darfuri women. The suffering can encourage women to work for and bring peace to Darfur by Allah's willing.
- υ The purpose of the work is achieved, it increased our skills and knowledge and it improved our relationship with each other within the great Darfur in Fashir El-Sultan.
- υ Very useful workshop indeed especially in the sense of exchanging experiences and skills at both state and national levels. It helped to increase my knowledge on women rights and women role in the society and the woman's ability to influence decisions. (Eiman Hassan Mahmoud)
- υ This workshop is valuable especially because it brought the women from the five states of Darfur together and discussed the importance of peace and the role of women in building peace in the context of the social peace. This workshop will be a permanent pillar in the future. (Fatima Fadul – West Darfur)
- υ Excellent workshop with experienced women leaders of the organizations, we hope to reach to peace through these women.
- υ The workshop is excellent and the issues discussed are very useful but the group needs to get more in harmony through more trainings.
- υ Poem: (Fatima El-Hadi Mahmoud – HAC – North Darfur 0915019893)

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*The world gives you goodness one day and takes it away from you the other day
People should live in harmony and grow beautiful deeds
When the day light disappears and the whole world becomes dark
Then all the good deeds you have grown will come back to guide you*

8.2 Outcomes

For this learning event, three outcomes were expected.

INCREASED AWARENESS ON POST-WAR VULNERABILITY

We have to acknowledge that the women leaders from all the regions of Darfur who participated in the learning event were already quite aware of the effects that war has on the personal, relational, social, cultural and institutional level. They are well acquainted with women's problems in the IDP camps. The sharing of experiences about rape and abuse among each other was a heart breaking exercise – the outcome was that together they could identify the pattern behind a series of individual cases. The determination to stay together and to join efforts for peace building from a women's perspective was deepened and strengthened.

STRENGTHENED MANAGEMENT CAPACITY TO HANDLE DIVERSITY

Most of the participants are experienced managers; the learning goal was to extend this management capacity to handling issues outside their own group. Most of them did have experience in mediation. They got the opportunity to exchange the methods that they use in their work, as we can see in Annex 1. The action organized after the learning event is a



proof that they understand diversity and that they can deal with different perspectives in a conciliatory way, exploring the background of the conflict. It was a deep and exiting joint experience.

What remains to be learned is continuous critical reflexion on their own handling, improving and empowering their interventions and working out a secure and transferable methodology. And, of course, a strategy has to be elaborated on how to include the women in the mediation committees (Ajaweed). Furthermore, the women's perspective on the roots of the conflicts (land, economic development and the role of women) has to be better articulated.

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES IN MEDIATION TECHNIQUES AND HOW THESE ARE ROOTED IN RELIGION AND TRADITION

As we said, the women have experiences in working as mediators. In the learning event these experiences were placed in the context of their own beliefs and traditions. The effect was quite interesting. They respectfully inverted the roles between themselves and the Imam. The Imam came to teach and encourage them, but he left encouraged by their teaching to use his influence for peace building. We are convinced that an alliance between religious leaders and women peace builders is imminent and will be pursued. This will certainly increase their safety and their capacity to influence social transformation.

8.3 Lessons for the next training

From all possible lessons learnt, we highlight only a few.

In the first place, the learning event was organized by the participants of El Fashir themselves and this was quite successful. A good representation from the society was invited at crucial moments, and all logistic aspects were carefully treated, making the event a joyful happening.

The participants felt ownership for the process and all the sessions were a shared responsibility. The learning purpose was prepared in advance, and the trainers were selected to guide the participants to that purpose, but they did invite the participants to do the work. They were the ones to find out how to grow and develop and learn. This is a sustainable and irreversible process for change, even if it passes through moments of uncertainty. VOND is aware that it has to protect this freedom of learning by carefully monitoring the balance between structure/instructions and creativity/self-reliance.

Unfortunately, the choice for the dates of the training coincided with the national elections, which lowered the level of tolerance of the security services. For that reason, the international trainer could not participate.

9 Financial Report

The financial report is in a separate file.