

Report of Solar Cooker Workshop
Nyala, Darfur, May 2007

During the month of May 2007, I spent 3 weeks in Sudan with *Darfur Peace and Development Org.* to promote solar cooking among the IDP (Internally Displaced People). Nine of those days I spent in the town of Nyala, Darfur where I had 23 students participating in the training from 6 NGO groups. **Darfur Peace and Development Org** (the sponsoring agency), **Samaritan's Purse**, **World Vision**, **Action Contre le Faim**, **SIHA**, **Jebel Mara Association**, and **Child Development Fund** were among those participating in this effort.



The teacher and some students



The students try their hand at teaching each other



The large IDP camp of Kalma is located near Nyala where many thousands of Darfurians live in makeshift shelters. Throughout all of Darfur deforestation is a serious issue, but more pressing is the threat of attack and rape to the women and girls living in the many camps. As the women wander far afield in search for firewood they are increasingly subject to attacks and rape by local militia called Janjaweed.

Instead of trying to deliver large quantities of solar cookers to the people our intention was to make them locally out of material available in Sudan. I contracted cardboard from a local box company in Khartoum and bought local glue and paint. Aluminum foil was readily available in the market from United Arab Emirates. Although we found clear cooking bags from Egypt in the market that worked fine, we noted that there still is a need for larger sizes.

The students needed to learn how to make the solar cookers called "Cookits" (from **Solar Cookers International**) and learn how to promote the program in their respective areas. They also needed to adjust how to cook the local food using this new change in methodology. The social hurdle of promoting this is much greater than the technological one. It is working successfully among the Darfur refugees in Iridimi camp in Chad and I feel confident will take hold in Darfur as well. Many thanks to Derk and the Kozon group for their encouragement during this time. One of our students from North Darfur has called 4 times since my return to the States and she says she has yet to light a fire in her home for cooking since using the solar cookers. That kind of attitude is exciting to see and definitely will be contagious for future efforts.



The students painted pots black to absorb heat



Making a cookit out of cardboard and aluminum foil.

The students I had were exceptional and very quickly caught on to the principles of solar cooking. In a few days they had learned to cook all the local foods including the staple food *asida* and went so far as to even cook cakes with frosting!



The IDPs living around Khartoum also are in need of this sort of technology. I did a one day workshop in North Amdurman (Khartoum) with a group of 6 Sudanese mostly from the Nuba mountains. They had been displaced many years prior and currently face a large financial burden of buying charcoal each day for cooking. Although their issues are not the same as those faced by the women in Darfur the need is just as great. I taught them the same material, made Cookkits with them and left them pots and supplies to make more. Since my return they have reported that they have trained 17 more people. UNIDO working in Sudan has expressed interest in promoting solar cooking and we have begun collaborative discussions with them.



At left is of the solar cooker group in N. Amdurman.

At the right is the class of social welfare students in the University of Khartoum following a solar cooker demonstration.

I hope to return in October to follow up on the progress of these two groups of trainees and perhaps train some more students. I also taught the concept of solar cooking in the Khartoum University to a class of Social Welfare students and found them extremely responsive. That approach of working through the local university has great potential.

I am still seeking to collaborate with any interested group for logistics and dissemination of this program in a culturally sustainable fashion in both Darfur and Khartoum.

Sincerely,
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The graduating class of solar cookers in Darfur, May 2007