

Jewish World Watch suspends Solar Cooker Project in Chad

September 2015

Solar Cookers International (SCI) learned this week that Jewish World Watch (JWW) made the decision to temporarily suspend its well-known Solar Cooker Project.

This project, begun in 2006, protected Darfuri women and girls—survivors of the Darfur genocide living as refugees at Iridimi camp in Eastern Chad—by reducing their dangerous trips outside of the camp in search of firewood for cooking. Over the years, Jewish World Watch modified and adapted the program as the situation on the ground changed.

SCI lauds Jewish World Watch for operating the longest-running solar cooking refugee camp project in the world and for teaching refugees a new way of cooking that has the potential of preserving their safety and transforming their futures.

"JWW conducted several evaluations of the SCP over the years. We reviewed the evaluations thoughtfully and adjusted the Solar Cooker Project as needed. Previous evaluations all pointed to one overall conclusion: the project was working....The current conditions in Chad have presented us with new challenges... . Due to cuts in rations provided by the World Food Program (WFP) and the United Nations Refugee Agency, UNHCR, refugees are receiving less than 850 calories per person/per day, and some refugees report receiving closer to 250-500 calories per person/per day. In response, we must overhaul how we serve the refugees," Jewish World Watch explained.

Based on recent feedback from Iridimi refugee women, Jewish World Watch decided to turn its attention to increasing food rations and developing new strategies to keep women and girls safe from sexual violence, which is the focus of the JWW mission.

"I cannot say enough to praise the work of Jewish World Watch in caring for people whose needs are so great and for their part in the global movement to adopt solar thermal energy for cooking," said Julie Greene, SCI executive director. "Their work with Kozon at Iridimi to promote solar cooking will impact generations to come as women continue to embrace solutions to the dilemma of spending limited funds on food or fuel."

Jewish World Watch plans to invest the remaining funds raised for the Solar Cooker Project on new pilot programs designed to help refugees be more self-sufficient, safe, and secure, and, "in keeping with the very purpose of the Solar Cooker Project," incorporate new strategies to keep women and girls healthier and safe.