

RESEARCHING ATTITUDES TOWARDS PEACE AND CONFLICT AND DARFUR: AN ANALYSIS OF A RESEARCH INITIATIVE FROM FEBRUARY 2007 — OCTOBER 2008

PREPARED BY THE CENTRE FOR GLOBAL COMMUNICATION STUDIES AT THE ANNEBERG SCHOOL
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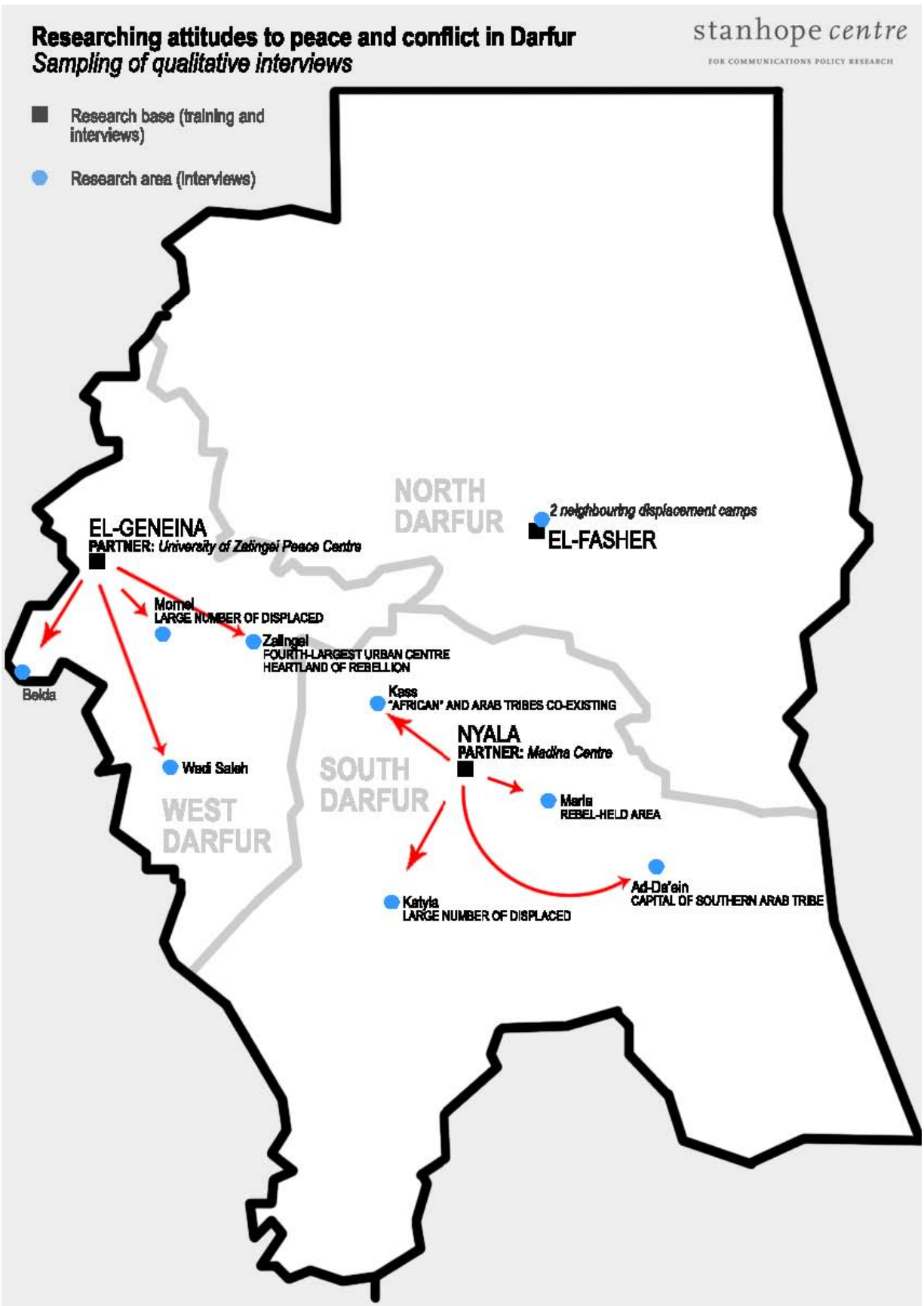


*Researching Attitudes towards Peace and Conflict in Darfur:
An analysis of a research initiative from February 2007 – October 2008*

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Abbreviations

<i>CGCS</i>	<i>Annenberg Center for Global Communication Studies</i>
<i>CPA</i>	<i>Comprehensive Peace Agreement (signed with SPLA in 2005)</i>
<i>DDDC</i>	<i>Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation</i>
<i>DFID</i>	<i>UK Department for International Development</i>
<i>DPA</i>	<i>Darfur Peace Agreement (signed in 2006)</i>
<i>GoS</i>	<i>Government of Sudan</i>
<i>IDP</i>	<i>Internally Displaced Person</i>
<i>JEM</i>	<i>Justice and Equality Movement</i>
<i>NCP</i>	<i>National Congress Party</i>
<i>NGO</i>	<i>Non-governmental Organization</i>
<i>SPLA/M</i>	<i>Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement</i>
<i>UNAMID</i>	<i>United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur</i>
<i>USAID</i>	<i>United States Agency for International Development</i>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Researching Attitudes towards Peace and Conflict in Darfur project seeks to inform the ongoing peace process in Darfur by providing the various institutions involved in the mediation efforts with a deeper understanding of Darfurians' perspectives on the causes of the conflict, its impact on their lives, and the role of the international community in its resolution.

The project was initiated at the request of Albany Associates (www.albanyassociates.com), which was contracted by the UK's Department for International Development in 2006 to engage in communication about the Darfur peace process among the population of Darfur and other key stakeholders on behalf of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and later United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

The project is a partnership of the Center for Global Communication Studies (Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania) and the Stanhope Centre for Communications Policy Research, and is funded by contributions from the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The guiding premise of the project is that complex, seemingly intractable conflicts cannot be effectively resolved without taking into account the positions and opinions of those most directly affected.

Methods employed

To overcome the challenges of conducting public opinion research in a conflict environment, where physical danger was combined with governmental obstacles, the CGCS-Stanhope team employed a multi-methodological approach, consisting of both direct and indirect methods.

Direct methods:

- Oral histories
- Focused semi-structured interviews

Indirect methods:

- Monitoring of online forums
- Content analysis of opinion pieces relating to Darfur in Sudanese and international newspapers

Findings

To assess Darfurians' public opinions regarding the conflict and the peace process and provide information to the negotiators, the project asked four guiding questions. The findings are summarized below.

1. How do Darfurians understand the historical roots of the conflict?
The roots of the conflict are perceived to be discrimination and marginalization of Darfurians, particularly in economic and educational development. Any resolution must include specific programs in wealth sharing, economic and educational development, and political empowerment, and will need to include measurable and enforceable benchmarks to ensure Government of Sudan (GoS) compliance.
2. How do different Darfurian groups and constituencies understand the current peace initiatives?
The Darfurians have little faith in the current peace initiatives because they do not feel that the GoS or the rebel movements represent their interests. Public opinion research will provide peace negotiators with the information necessary to best advocate for the population's priorities and ensure that those who are at the negotiations are accountable.
3. How do Darfurian groups and constituencies think the violence can be stopped?
Darfurians have little faith in the GoS and do not feel that the rebel movements represent their interests. Darfur has a history of successful local conflict negotiations, and there is a widespread belief that resolution of the violence lies on the local level. However, the international community, and particularly the UN, will be an important player in providing security. Any peace agreement must specify steps towards transparent disarmament of all combatants.
4. How do Darfurians think the society can be reconciled?
Darfurians want three things: *individual compensation, collective/community compensation, and punishment for those who perpetrated crimes against their community*. While Darfurians believe their society can be reconciled, the restoration of security must be a first priority. There is little interest in secession from Sudan, but there is a consistent call for shifting power to the states. Reconciliation could take the form of a civil administration that will govern the region on behalf of Darfurians' interests.

Lessons Learned

1. Public opinion research in a conflict environment requires alternative approaches. In this project, the integration of unobtrusive and interview methodologies allowed for a rich understanding of the environment. In addition, it allowed the CGCS-Stanhope team to continue to conduct research even when the security situation made it difficult for researchers to be out in the field.

2. Research findings need to be packaged and widely disseminated to stakeholders. Gathering public opinion is only the first step to supporting the institutions participating in the peace process. It will be essential to develop a strategic plan for summarizing and disseminating the public information widely, so that it can inform stakeholders. In addition, data collection needs to be better tied to communication strategy.
3. Coordination of research efforts will maximize resources. Many organizations are collecting research about the impact of the conflict. To minimize duplication and waste of resources, there needs to be better coordination with these other groups.

Recommendations for Future Research

- The CGCS-Stanhope team should build upon the current research streams, particularly the oral histories and semi-structured interviews, and seek further engagement with community-based civil society organizations, to explore ways to break the impasse the peace process has faced in past months.
- The CGCS-Stanhope team should seek additional funding to conduct a random survey to complement the existing methods of public opinion research. A social network analysis methodology (SNA) may provide additional insight into the relations within and among communities affected by the conflict.
- The findings of the content analysis and the online discussions of the Diaspora suggest that the Sudanese and international media are not focusing on meaningful discussion of solutions to the conflict. The CGCS-Stanhope team should seek to stimulate the media agenda and increase the quantity and quality of media coverage.
- The CGCS-Stanhope team should further develop the capacity of local universities and individuals in public opinion research.
- Public opinion data will be valuable to the upcoming elections in Sudan. The CGCS-Stanhope Centre team should seek to identify ways to make its research relevant to public discussions about the issues that will be decided in the election.

RESEARCHING ATTITUDES TOWARDS PEACE AND CONFLICT IN DARFUR: FULL REPORT

1) Background on the Project

The project *Researching attitudes towards peace and conflict in Darfur* (herein after referred to as Researching Attitudes), seeks to provide the different institutions involved in the mediation efforts with a deeper understanding of Darfurians' perspectives of the causes of the conflict, its impact on their lives, and the role of the international community in its resolution. The project collects these opinions in a sensitive and transparent manner. Its guiding assumption is that all parties in the peace process would benefit from credible and independent information to better understand the needs of their constituents. For this reason, among the different organizations involved in the mediation efforts, Researching Attitudes is linked in particular to the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC), an autonomous and non-politicized forum seeking to engage Darfurians to find with them ways out of the crisis. The DDDC involves various stakeholders including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in small camps, IDPs living outside camps, Arab tribes, Darfurians in areas controlled by armed movements, Darfurians living outside major population centers, Darfurians in the Diaspora, civil society, Native Administration, women and youth.

Researching Attitudes is a partnership of the Center for Global Communication Studies, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania and the Stanhope Centre for Communications Policy Research, a London-based NGO (herein after referred to as the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team). It began with two international conferences. In April 2007, the team organized a conference at the Annenberg School for Communication in Philadelphia to discuss innovative ways to measure public opinion in a conflict situation. The CGCS-Stanhope Centre team then held a follow-up conference in July 2007 in Oxford bringing together American, British, Sudanese and Italian researchers, members of the international NGO community, and media for a stakeholder and methodology workshop.

During the course of the project, there have been several failed attempts to broker a peace agreement for Darfur. The breakdown of the peace talks did not stop the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team's public opinion research. Throughout 2007 and 2008, the team worked to expand and strengthen its network of NGOs, media organizations, and local opinion leaders. It continued to gather public opinion data in preparation for the peace talks. Today, the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team has completed nearly 135 oral histories and interviews with Darfurians. These interviews occurred in the three states of Darfur (see map on p. 2) and included discussions with Darfurians ranging from civil society leaders, members of the movements, members of political parties, Arab tribes, farmers, housewives, students, traders, teachers, and *omdas* (local leaders). A significant portion of the interviewees live in refugee camps.

2) Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings of the project, draw conclusions based on the data, make recommendations for future research on attitudes toward the conflict, and identify

lessons learned that will provide strategic direction for future public opinion research in Darfur and other conflict environments.

3) Findings

In an effort to overcome the challenges posed by collecting data in a crisis environment, the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team employed a multi-methodological approach to create layers of understanding of this complex conflict. Techniques employed included a literature review, analysis of online Diaspora forums, content analysis of Sudanese and international editorials about the conflict, oral histories, and semi-structured interviews. With additional funding, the team seeks to conduct a survey to complement the existing methods of public opinion research. Additionally, the team believes that a social network analysis methodology (SNA) may provide insight into the relations within and among communities affected by the conflict.

This analysis used a deductive approach to review the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team's research findings for four specific questions that directly inform the DDDC's mediation in the peace process. The answers to these four questions provide insight into public opinion about the causes and solutions to the conflict.

- How do Darfurians understand the historical roots of the conflict?
- How do different Darfurian groups and constituencies understand the current peace initiatives?
- How do Darfurian groups and constituencies think the violence can be stopped?
- How do Darfurians think the society can be reconciled?

3.1 Online Research Shows Minimal Diaspora Interest In the Conflict

To create an unobtrusive picture of public opinion, the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team began monitoring online forums where people both inside and outside Sudan participated in mediated discussions about the conflict. A total of five forums were analyzed in early 2008. These forums represented the voices of Sudanese citizens and members of the Sudanese Diaspora.

Major findings include:

- Anger toward the Western and international presence in Darfur has increased as a result of events such as the l'Arche de Zoé and the behavior of UN forces.
- There is increased criticism of rebel movements and accusations that they merely serve their own narrow interests. There was general agreement that the movements are not serving the people they claim to be representing.
- The 2008 census is perceived to be one more attempt by the

GoS to further marginalize the people in Darfur.

One assumption guiding the content analysis of the forum discussions was that the Diaspora might be fueling the conflict. The research suggests that the online Diaspora forums are not devoting significant time to discussions about the conflict.

3.2 Content Analysis Shows that Most Local and International Media Attention Focuses on Assigning Blame, Rather than on Finding Solutions to the Conflict

Opinion pieces provide insight into the arguments that frame local and international understanding of the conflict. The team conducted daily monitoring of opinion pieces relating to Darfur in Sudanese and international newspapers (in the United Kingdom, the United States and a number of Anglophone African countries). More than 100 editorials were analyzed over the three-month period. The focus on opinion pieces allowed the team to evaluate discourse relating to the Sudanese and international political classes.

Again, the research team found that the topic of Darfur was not as frequent a topic in the media as expected. The percentage of Sudanese newspaper editorials discussing the conflict in Darfur ranged from 4 percent to 11 percent of all editorials.

Main findings of the content analysis:

- Blame is a dominant theme. The Sudanese editorials often criticize the movements and the UN forces. The Sudanese press portrays the conflict as being hijacked by the interests of foreign powers.
- The international newspapers criticized the GoS for its role in the conflict. The international press also criticized China for not doing more to end the violence in Darfur.
- Most editorials and opinion pieces (in both the Sudanese and international press) criticized UNAMID for its lack of capacity in deployment.

Local and international media attention about Darfur is disconnected to the daily lives of Darfurians. Most of the space is spent identifying those who are to blame rather than identifying solutions to the conflict. This is little or no substantial discussion in the Sudanese or international press about ways to end the conflict. There needs to be a renewed effort to engage media coverage of the solutions to the conflict. The CGCS - Stanhope Centre team's commitment is to facilitate this media engagement.

3.3 Oral Histories Provide Community Perspectives on the Conflict

Darfurians have high levels of mistrust and suspicion of outsiders. To ascertain their attitudes about the conflict and their priorities for its resolution, the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team conducted oral histories. This method asks people to recollect their life experiences as well as their family's history. The benefit of the oral history methodology is in providing one or two decades of background about a community. *Any peace negotiations will be understood in relation to Darfuran worldviews. The oral histories access this worldview and help contextualize the outcomes of the peace process within these worldviews.*

This highly personalized stage of the research will allowed the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team to move to more generalizable ways of measuring public opinion in future projects. The sample was comprised of people in the three states of Darfur. The map of interviews on page 2 identifies the locations where the oral histories were collected. Interviewees included both males and females (although there were more males in the sample due to cultural and access issues). Interviewees included religious leaders, members of political parties, members of armed movements, educators, Omdas (sheriffs), older women, and local administrators. Tribes included: Brno, Rezeigat, Falaowe, Mallea, Zaghawa, Tama, Fur, Terjum, Dajo, and Gamrawee. *The sampling method allowed as many voices as possible to be heard and shared with the Darfur Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC). This far-reaching and inclusive sample is a major strength of the Researching Attitudes project.*

Major findings include:

- Darfurians have positive memories of international assistance during the famine of 1984. They remember that the international community (esp. USAID), not their government, provided assistance. *However, their faith in foreigners is diminishing due to recent events*

including the adoption scandal and the behavior of some of the foreign peacekeeping forces. The hybrid peacekeeping force must be made aware how their actions may offend Darfurian values.

- The participants' stories about land ownership, tribalism, marginalization, and neglect provide insight into the issues facing any peace and reconciliation agreement. The mistrust that Darfurians feel is rooted in the strained relationship with the NCP and leaders in Khartoum. *There is little faith that Khartoum is willing to work toward a solution to the conflict.*
- Darfurian marginalization in education, development, and wealth sharing is crucial to their interpretation of events. *Any peace agreement must specifically address these issues.*
- There is a history of local conflict resolution in Darfur, although external forces have diminished the capacity of local areas to resolve their own conflicts. The crisis has weakened traditional structures and processes that have helped to keep balance in Darfur. This breakdown will have significant effects on any effort at reconciliation.
- While the peace process is stalled, the international NGO community should work to engage the traditional structures. Local conflict resolution should be facilitated and encouraged. *The CGCS-Stanhope Centre team's public opinion data can inform and shape this engagement.*

3.4 Semi-Structured Interviews Complement Oral Histories and Add Depth Through Targeted Responses

Concurrent to the oral histories, the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team also began conducting more focused semi-structured interviews in the three states. This field research allowed the team to pose specific questions in an open-ended format. The questions addressed broad topics that helped to pinpoint specific issues about the conflict, peace initiatives, and priorities. The interview findings complement and extend the findings of the oral histories.¹

¹ The analysis applied Strauss and Corbin's qualitative methodology for interpreting both the oral histories and semi-structured interviews. Following Strauss and Corbin's (1990) procedures for qualitative analysis, the answers of the interviewees were broken down into discrete parts, examined closely, and compared for similarities and differences. This analysis creates conceptual labels that can be categorized/grouped to reduce the number of units of analysis. These categories pull together the subcategories and groups subsumed in it. Similar conceptual events and incidents are labeled and grouped together to form categories that are thematically representative of the experiences of the interviewees. The team would like to thank Erich Sommerfeldt, University of Oklahoma, for his assistance in the data analysis of the oral histories and semi-structured interviews.

Tribes included: Massaleit, Bargo, Fallata, Irenga, Gimir, Awlad Jalul, Fur, Beni Hussein, Beni Halba, Ta'Alib, Hutiya, Arab, Misseriya (Arab), Rezeigat (Arab), and Zaghawa. The broad range of the sample ensured that as many perspectives as possible are heard.

Roots of the Conflict

- Darfurians understand the historical roots of the conflict in several ways. Many noted that the social fabric of their communities began to unravel in the famine of 1984 and that Darfurians have yet to regain the sense of community and order from that time.
- Interviewees are quick to note Khartoum's long-standing discrimination against the region. Related to this discrimination is marginalization in economic and educational development.
- Darfurians also note that the government has attempted to destabilize the region. Specifically, they fault the GoS for allowing three situations to go unaddressed:
 - 1) Arabs are allowed to take land;
 - 2) Robbery goes unpunished;
 - 3) Tribal conflict (fueled by GoS policies) destroys the fabric of Darfurian society from within.

Representation

- The different Darfurian groups believe that the people of Darfur, including women and the armed factions that came to the defense of the oppressed, should have the most representation in negotiations.
- Darfurians want the representatives at the peace negotiations to honor the interests of all tribes. Many noted that they wanted the representatives to be educated and cultured. These representatives will need to be able to empathize with the pain of the Darfuri people and speak for their rights within the future of Sudan (not just Darfur). *Many interviewees still want to be a part of Sudan and there is very little mention of secession. This is a key finding for the DDDC and those mediating the negotiations.*
- It is clear from the interviews that the Darfurians do not believe that the Sudanese Government represents the Darfur people. Indeed, many identify the National Congress Party (NCP) as part of the problem: they noted that some of the rebel movements responsible for robbery and murder were created and fostered by the NCP. In addition, there is deep suspicion of some movements because people believe that those that have been invited to the negotiations are government puppets.
- A common suggestion on the issue of representation is to gather all leaders of parties/tribes together to discuss the conflict. There is widespread belief that the resolution lies with the tribes. If tribes are united then local issues can be resolved.

Many interviewees recommended putting tribal leaders in the negotiations with movement leaders.

Reconciliation

- Darfurians think their society can be reconciled, but the restoration of security must be the first priority. Interviewees repeatedly noted that development cannot occur without security. No one will return to their homelands without security. *Concrete steps to ensure security must be a priority in any peace agreement.*
- The Darfurians want to disarm the Janjaweed. They believe that the international community must be involved as a guarantor of peace. Since the GoS cannot provide security, they want the UN to step in. They are especially eager for the regulation of weapons. *Any peace agreement must specify steps towards transparent disarmament of all combatants.*
- Reparations and rehabilitation are key factors in the reconciliation process. *Darfurians want individual and collective compensation.* There is a tradition of compensation for harm in Darfur and they believe that the GoS should give money to each individual affected. More importantly, the GoS should give back farmlands and redistribute the wealth of Khartoum to all Sudan. At the heart of most interviews is a belief that balanced development that includes work opportunities, education, and access to essential services will help repair the destruction of their communities.
- There must be some resolution for those without land rights.
- The interviewees have faith that some type of rehabilitation of combatants can occur. *They want the UN hybrid force to supervise this rehabilitation. At the same time, they want the UN to set up a process to punish those who committed crimes against humanity.*

Decentralization of Power

- There is little or no trust in the GoS yet many believe that because the government was part of the problem, it should also be part of the solution. Many have identified the initial and major problem to be between the government and rebels. Darfurians want the GoS to make concessions to the movements.
- The treatment of the SPLA's Minni Minawi by the GoS provides a powerful frame for understanding the risks involved in any promise of power sharing.
- Darfurians want the GoS to become more transparent. *There is a consistent call for shifting power to the states. Many call for a civil administration to play a larger role in governance of the states.*

4) *Conclusions*

The multi-methodological approach has provided diverse perspectives (individual, tribal, community, political, and movement) of the conflict and its resolution. The following conclusions answer the four guiding questions of the Researching Attitudes project.

4.1 Dominant Darfurian Perspectives Emerged That Negotiators Need to Address

The *roots of the conflict* are perceived to be discrimination and marginalization of Darfurians in economic and educational development. Any resolution must include specific programs in wealth sharing, economic and educational development, and political empowerment. Darfurians have little faith in the GoS. Any agreement will need to include measurable and enforceable benchmarks to ensure GoS compliance.

Community structures that have long served to mediate conflict have been weakened. *The lack of trust in the GoS and the movements makes a strong case for the location of conflict resolution to be at the community/regional level.*

The interviews showed that there is a rise in tribalism in Darfur. The salience of exclusive and sometimes radicalized tribal identities may have a negative impact on people's lives during and after the peace process. Radicalization has implications for intervention and reconciliation efforts. However, this *heightened identity could be mobilized* in the resolution of the conflict if traditional leaders are given some role in the peace agreement.

The Darfurians *have little faith in the current peace initiatives* because they do not feel that the movements represent their interests. The peace negotiators need to find a way to engage the population so that they can advocate for their priorities and keep those who are at the negotiations accountable. *The public opinion research by the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team is the tool to identify those priorities.*

Darfurians are interested in local conflict resolution and *local security measures* as the means to end the violence. They seek disarmament of those who use weapons against civilians. They believe that re-empowering traditional leaders can stop the violence.

Darfurians believe that reconciliation is possible. The oral histories show very clearly that there is a long history of successful local conflict negotiations. Darfurians want three things: *individual compensation, collective/community compensation, and punishment for those who perpetrated crimes against their community.* This reconciliation would take the form of a civil administration that will govern the region on behalf of Darfurians' interests.

4.2 The Project's Experience and Relationships Will Inform Future Peace Negotiations

The peace process will begin again. When it does, the negotiating team will need reliable, credible, and transparent information about Darfurian public opinion. The CGCS-Stanhope Centre team has established relationships with local and regional administrators in the three

states of Darfur. The team also has established relationships with NGOs (both local and international) that will provide continuing access to resources and information.

The team has a valid research permit that will allow it to continue to conduct public opinion research and training in the future.

The reach of the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team extends to all three regions of Darfur [See the map at the beginning of this report for a visual representation of the locations of interviews and contacts]. Few NGOs or international agencies have this ability to work in all three states.

The team has shown that it can manage the project on the ground and remotely when necessary. This dual capacity allows flexibility in the changing environment.

The project has helped to build the capacity of local researchers in the three states in public opinion research. The workshops and trainings have developed a group of students and faculty who now have the ability to conduct public opinion research. This will have long-term impact even after the project is completed. Future projects should continue to develop the capacity of local universities.

4.3 Future Research Should Inform Civil Society Efforts that Work to Break the Impasse

The level of analysis for this project has focused on individual perspectives of the causes and desired solutions of the conflict. The next logical step is to use the current data from the oral histories and interviews to search for a way forward that can convey additional perspectives by relying on the findings emerging from the previous streams of research. This path will include engaging community-based civil society organizations and searching for ways to break the impasse.

4.4 Strategic Communication May Engage Greater Media Coverage of Solutions to the Conflict

The findings of the content analysis and the online discussions of the Diaspora suggest that the Sudanese and international media are not focusing on meaningful discussion of solutions to the conflict. The CGCS-Stanhope Centre team has the capacity to stimulate the media agenda and increase the quantity and quality of media coverage.

5) Lessons Learned

Over the last 18 months, the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team has developed and extended its capacity to collect public opinion data in a difficult environment. The team has identified the following lessons learned.

5.1 Public Opinion Research in a Conflict Environment Requires Alternative Approaches

The integration of unobtrusive and interview methodologies allowed for a rich understanding of the environment.

Future methodologies should complement the existing content analysis and qualitative methods and include some type of survey research as well as social network analysis (SNA).

- James Fishkin's (1991) deliberative polling process may be able to provide the next step: a scientific poll of informed public opinion.²
- Inter-organizational network analysis of traditional, existing, and potential relationships among civil society and traditional organizations will allow the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team to identify those groups with the most capacity and willingness to take leadership roles in community based-conflict resolution.³

5.2 Research Findings Need to Be Packaged and Widely Disseminated to Stakeholders

Gathering public opinion is only the first step to supporting the institutions participating in the peace process. International government agencies (e.g., DFID, USAID) and INGOs advocate for data-driven decision-making in conflict situations. The CGCS-Stanhope Centre team needs to create a strategic plan for summarizing and disseminating the public opinion information widely so that it can inform stakeholders. Data collection needs to be better tied to communication strategy. Deliverables (reports and research summaries) need to be scheduled with clear dates and rationale. The data needs to inform, not only reflect, what the organization is doing on the ground.

Public opinion data will be valuable to the upcoming elections in Sudan. The CGCS-Stanhope Centre team needs to identify ways to make its research relevant to public discussions about the issues that will be decided in the election.

5.3 The CGCS-Stanhope Centre Team Can Enact Multiple Roles in the Darfur Peace Process

Many organizations are collecting research about the impact of the conflict. There needs to be better coordination with these other groups to minimize duplication and waste of resources. The reach of the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team positions it as a logical leader in the coordination of research about the conflict. The CGCS-Stanhope Centre team needs to develop a strategy to enact this leadership role. Possible engagement activities to solidify this role include:

- Become a clearinghouse for information about public opinion and NGOs in Darfur.
- Coordinate and align the activities of other organizations in the civil society sector. This will maximize donor resources.

² Fishkin, J. (1991). *Democracy and deliberation: New directions for democratic reform*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

³ Bender-deMoll, S. (2008). *Potential human rights uses of network analysis and mapping*. A report to the Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

- Serve as a liaison to guide civil society relationships to move from the local level to higher levels.
- Emerge as a voice for civil society by using the research to promote community debate. A strategic communication plan that improves the quality and quantity of media coverage of solutions would be invaluable.

6) Concluding Remarks

The CGCS-Stanhope Centre team has a team in place that knows what it takes to accomplish public opinion research in a conflict situation. The current findings provide insight into the “back door” position of those involved and affected by the conflict. In dynamic, fast moving situations such as Darfur, the CGCS-Stanhope Centre team has proven that it can collect multiple perspectives about the conflict and peace process in a objective and transparent manner. These alternative and complementary perspectives provide credible information about the people whose lives will be influenced by the peace negotiations.

7) Methodology

The first part of the analysis reviewed the existing documentation of the project including the literature review, oral histories, semi structured interviews, content analysis findings, and research reports based on data collection.

The second part of the analysis conducted interviews with the key personnel of the project. This helped to identify the project’s guiding assumptions of the project, key findings, recommendations for future research about public opinion in Darfur, and lessons learned. Interviewees included:

Susan Abbott	Associate Director, Center for Global Communication Studies, Annenberg
Anthony Foreman	Project Manager, Researching Attitudes Project
Iginio Gagliardone	Doctoral Candidate, London School of Economics
Simon Haselock	Co-founder and Director of Albany Associates
Monroe Price	Director, Center for Global Communication Studies, Annenberg
Mark Simmons	Fellowship for African Relief (Concordis International)

Author Bios

Susan Abbott is an Associate Director at the Center for Global Communication Studies, Annenberg School for Communication. In this role, she helps manage major CGCS initiatives including helping to identify and develop capacity with international partners, coordinate fundraising efforts, and serves as a liaison for CGCS partners around the world. Susan is the project manager for Annenberg's media law and policy efforts as part of the USAID-funded Jordan Media Strengthening Program, and Researching Attitudes to Conflict and Peace in Darfur. She is currently working with CGCS staff and the Center for International Media Assistance on developing a media law assistance website aimed at lawyers, regulators and civil society in developing and transitioning countries. Abbott played an active role in coordinating CGCS partnership on publications with the World Bank Institute and the Global Forum for Media Development.

Susan has previously worked as a consultant for Central European University in Budapest, where she helped establish the CEU Center for Media and Communications Studies. Prior to this, she was a program officer in the Media Development Division at the International Research & Exchanges Board, in Washington, DC, on the USAID-funded Serbia Professional Media Program. As an editor for Central Europe Review, she commissioned stories and worked with a variety of journalists on an award-winning online journal. Earlier in her career, she was a communications officer at The Media Institute in Washington, DC, and worked as a legal intern at the International Federation of Phonographic Industry in Brussels. She received her BA from American University in Washington, DC, and MA from Central European University in Budapest.

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Anthony Foreman served as the Sudan-based Stanhope Centre Project Manager for the Researching the Attitudes Towards Peace and Conflict in Darfur Project from fall 2007 until fall 2008. Prior to this, Forman was a reporting officer for the World Food Programme's oversight division and as head of logistics for Justice Africa in Sudan for a project to support civil society engagement in the Sudan peace processes.

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