



SNAPSHOT

Countering Misinformation

Centers provide accurate, current information on ICC process and deliberations.



Television sets provided under a USAID grant are allowing Rift Valley residents to evaluate ICC proceedings for themselves.

September 2011 – Engage anyone in Kenya’s Rift Valley in a discussion of the International Criminal Court (ICC) deliberations on the violence that racked the country following the 2007 election and you’re likely to elicit a strong opinion.

According to some, if the court finds the accused guilty, it will be a major blow against the country’s deeply entrenched culture of impunity. Others argue that the Ocampo Six, as the suspects are known, are scapegoats and that the government is using the process to remove opposition candidates from the field prior to the 2012 elections.

However, because the infrastructure supporting information dissemination in the region is underdeveloped, many of these opinions are founded on an incomplete understanding of the ICC process and objectives, or on misinformation distributed to further political agendas.

To give Kenyans an opportunity to form opinions based on actual testimony, the Centre for Community Dialogue and Development (CCDD) has established 14 centers where citizens can watch the court’s proceedings. With USAID support, CCDD has equipped the centers with televisions and provided training to staff and other interested parties to distribute information on the ICC and facilitate discussions.

The initiative aims to provide communities with accurate and current information about the ICC process and thereby counter misinformation used to manipulate public sentiment and stir up discord.

Although more than three years have passed since Kenya erupted in post-election violence, tensions persist and opportunists willing to stoke these tensions are ever-present. Recently, prominent leaders within the Kalenjin community have been promoting the idea that the ICC process is biased.

The majority of Kenyans, however, are eager to form their own opinions. As a visitor to one of the centers put it, “seeing is believing.”

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