



## SUCCESS STORY

# Mitigating conflict through peace dividends

### Common need for maternity ward fosters negotiations between Kenyans and Somalis



Photo: PEACE II/USAID  
Diff Maternity Ward -- built by the community of Diff brought together cross-border clans along the Kenya/Somalia border.

*USAID's PEACE II project engaged a divided community which found common ground in its need for a maternity ward.*

For years, banditry, arms smuggling, and a crisis of national identity have prevented members of the same Ogaden clan from reaching peace along the Kenya/Somalia border, but residents on both sides are now taking the first steps towards collaboration.

Thanks to USAID, the divided clan members have found mutual interests in their desire for a maternity wing, a much needed addition to their community's dispensary.

"My wife lost our baby after the long trip to the closest hospital when she was in labor," Abdinur Dakane said, speaking on behalf of those living on both sides of the border.

The Peace in East and Central Africa (PEACE II) project seeks to reduce conflict among pastoralist communities living in the remote, arid, dry lands of northern East Africa.

A novel transparent contracting process allowed for participation from engineers, contractors and local administrators. While this process was more time consuming, the community embraced its fairness.

"I have never seen such a transparent process in my entire civil service life," a top government border official said.

A local councilor echoed this sentiment: "What a wonderful process...I wish our local county council could introduce it in our tendering systems."

Community members' election of a committee from both the Kenyan and the Somali side ensures support for long-term monitoring and management of the project.

Today, many people speak proudly of the solid construction of their maternity ward, the first of its kind in the area. Similar USAID projects along the Kenya/Somalia border have already assisted 14,200 people. With these kinds of numbers, a critical mass develops with a stake in maintaining community peace to insure their assets stay operational and productive.

Through one successful venture, communities can learn to work together and devise means to prevent or settle disputes. Today, Diff community is better positioned to resolve tension and violence, which all too easily erupts in this region.

#### Telling Our Story

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