



MONTHLY UPDATE

February 2010

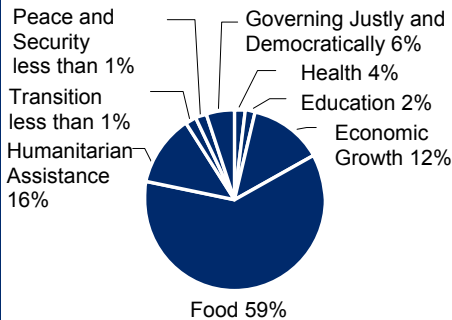
Youth in Jonglei State Confer on Peace and Justice Goals

A spike in inter-ethnic violence in the southern state of Jonglei in 2009 has had devastating consequences for the region's citizens and is jeopardizing preparations for national elections in April and a referendum on self-determination for Southern Sudan planned for next January.

Five years after the signing of Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the promise of peace and development remains largely unfulfilled for Nuer, Dinka, and Murle pastoralist communities in Jonglei. Disillusioned youth, many of whom live in remote cattle camps far from the reach of traditional and county authorities, are well armed and often involved in violent attacks and counterattacks on neighboring communities. To address this challenge and promote peace, USAID is reaching out to youth and local government in Jonglei to facilitate dialogue and constructive interaction.



**USAID Assistance to Sudan
FY 2009, Estimated**



Peace and Security	\$6.7
Governing Justly and Democratically	\$72.7
Health	\$47.1
Education	\$25.5
Economic Growth	\$140.8
Food Aid	\$679.7*
Humanitarian Assistance	\$179.7*
Transition	\$4.3
TOTAL	\$1,156.5

Note: Amounts in millions

* Includes eastern Chad



Lou Nuer youth participate in discussions on how to overcome inter-tribal violence. Photo: AECOM

USAID helped the Nuer Peace Council (NPC) organize a conference of some 3,000 Lou Nuer youth in the town of Waat in November to forge a plan for achieving peaceful collaboration in this increasingly volatile region. Through facilitated discussions, drama, and song,



youth agreed to a five-point resolution for contributing to development rather than spoiling peace efforts.

Most youth traveled on foot from distant settlements and cattle camps to reach Waat, while USAID provided flights to transport senior Lou Nuer leaders and NPC representatives to the event. Government of Southern Sudan officials appealed to the youth to respect local peace agreements and refrain from cattle raiding and violent confrontation over resources in the coming dry season migration. In turn, youth called on the government to deliver services equitably and address the challenges of rural communities.

While in Waat, three youth associations from Akobo, Uror, and Nyirol counties crafted a shared vision for peaceful change. As the forum drew to a close, they agreed to form a coalition to improve employment and recreational opportunities for youth in their communities. The network has since submitted a request for assistance to facilitate vocational training and income-generation activities. In the crucial months ahead, USAID will strive to reduce conflict in Jonglei by supporting opportunities for at-risk youth to engage in constructive social and economic activities. ♦

Clean Water Access Expanded in Southern Sudan

Few people appreciate the value of clean water more than Mary John Bero. Two members of her family died during the 2006 cholera outbreak in her village, Munuki, on the outskirts of Juba, Southern Sudan. Now, however, the USAID-funded Munuki pipeline project has improved Munuki's water facilities and reduced the incidence of waterborne diseases.

Mary, age 28 and a mother of two, lives in a small dwelling in Munuki block C. To prevent cholera, she used to purchase chlorinated water from tanker trucks, but it was expensive. "Half of my husband's salary would be used to pay for water from the tanker trucks," she said. Water from the tanker truck was not guaranteed to be treated, and during the rainy season, was sometimes very muddy.

The Munuki pipeline, part of the USAID Sudan Infrastructure Services Project's Urban Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Program, linked two



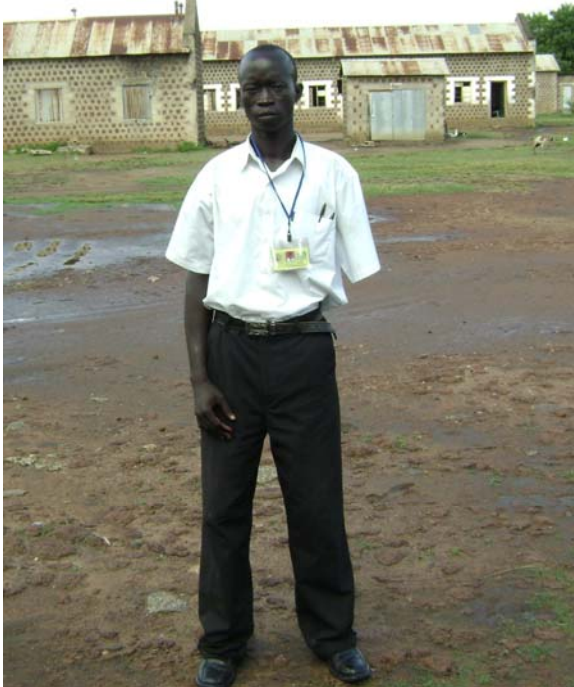
Mary John Bero, left, volunteers as a fee collector at the new water tap stand in Munuki, outside Juba, Southern Sudan. Photo: Louis Berger Group

stretches of pipe that connected approximately one kilometer of pipeline from the elevated tank in Munuki to the Juba city water system. Today, safe water is flowing at the rehabilitated tap stands throughout Munuki. Mary, her family, and 18,000 others now have access to clean running water.

As part of her commitment to contribute to a healthy future for her community, Mary volunteered to be one of the public tap stand tariff collectors. "I received training in fees collection and learned how to keep records of the money. This knowledge also serves my future as I can manage more efficiently the money of my family," she said.

Mary collects water twice a day in 20-liter jerry cans. One jerry can costs the equivalent of approximately 10 cents. "We are saving a lot of money because the water is cheaper and my family is not sick anymore. I can improve the diet of my kids and help invest more in their education," she said.

Now, Mary added, "Our life is getting much better. We suffered during 25 years of war, and now during peace, the USAID water program brings water to areas where we never had safe water before. We used to wash our kids, clothes, and dishes only from time to time. Now we can turn the tap, get safe water and enjoy the peace in South Sudan." ♦



Gilaso Odong, 18, lost an arm as a child soldier. He now receives USAID support to pursue studies at Torit Day Secondary School in Eastern Equatoria. Photo: Joseph Ayela, Winrock International

Scholarship Program Assists Former Child Soldiers

Sudan's 22-year civil war exacted a huge toll on Southern Sudan's education sector. Most young people – especially boys – were conscripted into the rebel army against their will and served simply to survive. Once the war ended, the lack of educated young men and women weakened the region's prospects for reconstruction and future growth.

Gilaso Odong, now 18, was one of these child soldiers. Abducted from his home in Sudan's Eastern Equatoria state at age 10 and compelled by Southern Sudanese rebels to serve as a soldier, Gilaso was forced to fight in the bush for three years. After a gunshot wound led to the amputation of his left arm, he was taken to Nairobi, Kenya, for treatment. In 2002, Gilaso enrolled in primary school at a refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya. He continued with his studies, and in 2008 received his Kenya Certificate for Primary Education. Gilaso was able to return home soon afterward with the help of the United Nations refugee agency.

Earlier this year, Gilaso enrolled in Torit Day Secondary School, but still faced more hardship. Gilaso's family is poor, his parents are aging and his father is blind. The prospect of his continued education appeared doubtful.

"My parents cannot afford to pay my school fees," Gilaso said. "I thought, 'I am back home, but still in a miserable life.' I lost my arm during the struggle and I thought, 'the peace has come, I will have free education,' but still I did not see any changes in my life." Then Gilaso received assistance from USAID's Gender Equity through Education (GEE) scholarship program, which has been supporting young women and men in their academic endeavors since 2008. With GEE funds, Torit Day was able to provide Gilaso with the scholarship support he needed.

"The school administration wanted to send me back home because of the school fees and uniform," Gilaso said. "Fortunately, the GEE program came in and paid (for these things). I also bought some books and pens from that money."

Ajou Deng Mareng was also a soldier by age 10. He lost his father in the war and saw his village in Northern Bahr el Ghazal severely ravaged. Conscripted by southern forces, he was sent into combat. Today, at 32, Ajou is putting his past behind him and pursuing the education he was deprived of during those years.



Former child soldier Ajou Deng Mareng, 32, is grateful for the support he receives from a USAID scholarship program. Photo: Abdul Hakim Jumason, Winrock International



But Ajou struggled to pay for his studies. He worried about how he could continue to attend school. Then he received a scholarship through the GEE program. Now Ajou is confidently working to earn his secondary school diploma.

“With this scholarship, I can now concentrate on my studies and not worry about school fees anymore,” said Ajou, now in his second year at Aweil Secondary School.

“I can perform better on class tests because I have now peace of mind,” says Ajou. “Even in the community, my life has changed. People did not like me because I used to beg them for money for school fees. But now I don’t beg for money because GEE is fulfilling most of my school needs. I thank the GEE program for coming in to rescue my life as a student. If GEE will continue with its program, I am sure I will enter university.”

Ajou dreams of attending university after finishing secondary school, and is motivated by the success of his former classmates. With his academic prospects more secure than ever, Ajou is grateful for the support he has received. “I am a poor child who was completely lost in life, but because of the support of [GEE] I feel a little more prepared for the challenges of life.”

The GEE scholarship program targets young women and marginalized boys – especially secondary school students – to help them complete their education. So far, GEE has assisted 3,739 young women and 531 young men through the provision of scholarships valued at nearly \$580,000.♦

Sudanese Bring Home Lessons from Indonesia on Popular Consultations

Sudan’s Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) has entered its sixth and final year – a year that will provide unique opportunities for citizens to have a say in the future makeup of their country. In addition to nationwide elections in April and referenda on self-determination for Southern Sudan and Abyei next January, the former frontline states of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan will participate in a process of popular consultations.



Sudanese government and civil society leaders discusses popular consultation processes with officials in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Photo: Humanitarian Dialogue Centre

USAID is engaged in a series of activities to support the CPA signatories’ preparations for the popular consultations. Most recently, USAID supported the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue in leading a Sudanese delegation on a study tour to Indonesia to learn from its recent experiences with popular consultation processes. The delegation, which consisted of 26 government and civil society representatives from both the state and national levels, was able to meet and discuss with well-known national figures in Jakarta, such as former Vice President Jusuf Kalla, and with local government and civil society leaders in Banda Aceh.

The Sudanese delegation brought home a myriad of lessons that will assist them in the coming months as they prepare for their own popular consultations. Two points of particular interest emerged during the trip. In Aceh, the delegates discovered the importance of civil society’s direct involvement in securing a sustainable consensus and acceptance of the outcome at the grassroots level. Over the course of the week, the delegation also recognized that a good autonomous arrangement can be more valuable than weak independence. The conflict-affected region of Aceh agreed to high-level autonomy within Indonesia in 2005; East Timor, which is still struggling to get on its feet, opted for independence in 1999.



In Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, the process should provide the states' citizens with an opportunity to evaluate CPA implementation to date and propose changes to arrive at a more durable peace. The study tour was an important first step in bringing key stakeholders together to build relations and create a common vision on the way forward with planning and implementing the popular consultations.

USAID aims to assist the CPA partners in reaching a consensus on the design of the institutions and processes that will guide the popular consultations, maximizing the likelihood that the process contributes to a final, binding, and peaceful solution to the protracted political conflicts in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. ♦

Local Government Representatives Share Ideas on Implementing Water and Sanitation Policy

More than 70 government representatives from Southern Sudan, Upper Nile state, Lakes state, and county governments, as well as representatives of civil society and USAID gathered in Malakal, Upper Nile state, January 21-22 to discuss the Government of Southern Sudan's (GOSS) Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) policy. The event was held as part of USAID's Building Responsibility for the Delivery of Government Services (BRIDGE) program.

Located in the northern part of Southern Sudan, Upper Nile state is rich in water resources, with the White Nile and Sobat rivers flowing through it. Yet less than 5 percent of the state's nearly 1 million residents have access to improved water sources, and less than 6 percent have access to sanitation services. Of the 13 counties that make up Upper Nile, only two have dedicated WASH personnel.

The WASH policy was developed over two years by the GOSS, with the support of various partners, and was officially launched during April 2009 World Water Day celebrations. Subsequent policy dissemination to the 10 states of Southern Sudan has been fraught with the same challenges in service delivery that the government faces daily – mobility, budgetary, security, communication, and staff capacity. At last month's conference, participants were able to

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discuss various aspects of the WASH policy, including rural water supply, sanitation and hygiene, urban water supply, WASH structure, and WASH service delivery.

One of the main successes of the conference was a peer-to-peer learning opportunity. A representative from Lakes state, which has made progress in shaping a WASH structure at state and county levels and in the provision of WASH services, gave a presentation on his state's experience in implementing the GOSS policy. The representative, Joseph Maker, spoke of the challenge of creating community ownership of various WASH service provisions, such as boreholes and hand pumps, which instigated discussion on the issue. He also urged participants to focus on planning and problem solving at the local level rather than wait for instruction from GOSS. "What I'm trying to tell my colleagues here is that it's better since we started off and we are continuing, and we have yet to get a strategic plan," Maker said.

As the event concluded, the participants commented on the timeliness, relevance, and eventual impact of the conference on their WASH activities and went home with ideas on how to implement the policy in their local communities. ♦



Conference participants discuss water and sanitation service delivery January 21-22 in Malakal, Upper Nile state. Photo: Mercy Corps



Community Action Group members in Abyei Village, Northern Bahr El Ghazal state, select candidates for leadership positions. Photo: Winrock International

For the First Time, Villagers Elect Their Chief

To build the leadership skills of community members in Southern Sudan's Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, and Unity states, and help them articulate community needs to their local government representatives, USAID's Building Responsibility for the Delivery of Government Services (BRIDGE) program is helping to create Community Action Groups comprised of local representatives.

In Abyei Village, a settlement of 700 citizens in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, BRIDGE helped create a Community Action Group to lead residents through the process of deciding which projects it will undertake, how to prioritize them, and how best to implement them.

This process became an exercise in local democracy as the community selected its Community Action Group representatives and leaders. Never before had any of the Abyei Village citizens participated in an election.

In September 2009, a general assembly of more than 200 community members nominated 20 people – 14 men and six women – to represent them as Community Action Group members. Elections for Community Action Group leadership positions were conducted immediately thereafter. One by one,

each new Community Action Group member left his or her seat to line up behind the person he or she wished to support for chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and information officer. It was a powerful moment for the men and women of this community who, for the first time, were able to actively participate in an election and see a peaceful outcome.

Following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, large numbers of displaced residents began to return to the area. The influx of people prompted the government to create new constituencies in Gomjuer Center Payam, including the allocation of an executive chief post for Abyei Village. In Sudanese culture, chiefdom is historically inherited and when the seat of executive chief was created in Abyei Village, the sons of two tribal chiefs – Tong Chol Lual and Deng Lual Akech – both expressed their desire for the post. It was the first time the community had encountered competition for a chief. After some discussion, Community Action Group members and community elders decided that the best way to resolve the issue would be to conduct an open election and have the entire village participate. They sought assistance from BRIDGE community liaison officers, who helped the community organize and prepare for the election last October 15.

On election day, BRIDGE staff gave the villagers a presentation on how to participate in an election, after which villagers lined up behind their chosen candidate. When the votes were tallied, John Akoon Lual, a schoolteacher in Aweil West County, was declared Abyei Village's newly elected chief. The announcement was met with cheers and celebration from the gathered villagers.

Joseph Akuei Yak, Payam Administrator for Gomjuer Center Payam, where Abyei Village is located, stressed the profound importance of the election process. "Elections are really appreciated, and they are also preparation for the democratic transition in South Sudan."

As news of the BRIDGE-facilitated election process reached the state level, Mr. Barnaba Nyok, Director General of the Ministry of Local Government, praised it as an important model that is easy to replicate and can be adapted in every county.

BRIDGE has facilitated the formation of 68 Community Action Groups so far. ♦