



MONTHLY UPDATE

October 2009

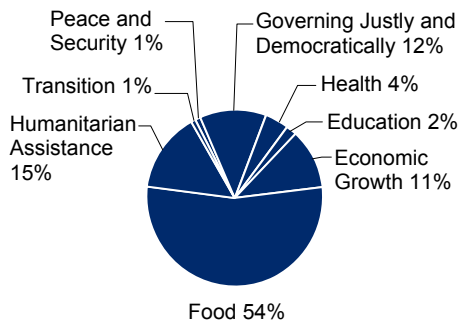
Improving Food Security in Eastern Sudan

In areas of Eastern Sudan characterized by successive droughts, flash floods, and high displacement due to conflict, USAID and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are working to improve food security and support livelihoods.

Eastern Sudan hosts substantial displaced populations, including approximately 116,000 refugees and an estimated 77,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs). With USAID support, FAO and its implementing partners have targeted assistance to vulnerable groups, including IDPs, Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees, host communities, and drought- and flood-affected communities.



**USAID Assistance to Sudan
FY 2008, Estimated**



Peace and Security	\$9.4*
Governing Justly and Democratically	\$118.3*
Health	\$40.8
Education	\$20.4
Economic Growth	\$103.8
Food Aid	\$512.9
Humanitarian Assistance	\$140.6
Transition	\$8.9
TOTAL	\$955.1

Note: Amounts in millions

* Funds managed jointly with U.S. Department of State



Beja children in Kassala state, Eastern Sudan. Photo: Abdelgadir Hamid/USAID.

USAID support enabled FAO to distribute seeds and tools during the 2009 planting season in collaboration with the Kassala State Ministry of Agriculture and other partners. FAO and its partners distributed 140 metric tons of sorghum and millet seeds to approximately 40,000 households, and 1,760 kilograms of assorted vegetable seeds to 22,000 households. FAO also provided agricultural tools produced by local blacksmiths to 7,500 households, contributing to the local economy as well as agricultural production, and implementing partners established demonstration blocks of home gardens in four IDP camps.



USAID also contributed to the rehabilitation of five water reservoirs for animal use, in collaboration with the Kassala State Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries (MOARF). Two of the reservoirs allowed pastoralists to access areas of wide pasture that were previously underutilized due to the lack of nearby water sources. According to FAO staff, environmental degradation has led to increased incidents of conflict between farmers and pastoralists over resources. USAID programs that improve pastoralist access could decrease tensions between land users by enabling grazing or cultivation in additional land areas.

Through USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, FAO and MOARF have increased the

level of animal immunization in Kassala state to 77 percent.

FAO and counterparts also implemented animal restocking activities targeting 100 pastoralist families, particularly women-headed households. Female beneficiaries told USAID staff that they are now able to give milk, a critical commodity in pastoralist communities, to their children. The women further noted that the new assets have changed their status in a society where women do not typically possess assets.

Field reports indicate that nutritional status of children under five years of age in the targeted communities has improved since project implementation began. ♦

Darfur Community Theater Stages Dramas on Peaceful Conflict Resolution

Forum Theater, part of the Darfur Community Strengthening Program funded by USAID and implemented by the Academy for Educational Development, is spreading messages of peaceful conflict resolution in Darfur through plays and radio broadcasts.

In the town of Kubbum, young actors performed a series of plays for an audience of 300. One of the most popular skits encouraged warring tribes to avoid revenge killings and instead accept a traditional compensation, known as *dia*. The young actors depicted how *dia* has broken down in recent years, while revenge has escalated inter-tribal conflict. "The play shows that revenge cannot raise the dead, it just creates hate and hostility for generations," said Mohamed, a Forum Theater trainer.

In Nyala, another skit portrayed the different perspectives of leaders from nomadic and farming communities as they tried to settle a land dispute. They eventually resolved the conflict through meetings, discussions, and traditional methods of peaceful conflict resolution.

Local radio broadcast several of the performances and, equipped with props and costumes, each troupe planned to stage four more productions in the near future. ♦



At a makeshift theater in South Darfur, actors set the stage for a discussion with their audience on peaceful conflict resolution. Photo: Academy for Educational Development



Rebuilt Bridge Links Southern Sudan to Essential Services

The Bandame Bridge—a key transportation link connecting Southern Sudan, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo—has been rebuilt with USAID assistance, giving people in the region better access to vital goods, services and humanitarian aid.

The bridge was officially handed over to the Government of Southern Sudan’s Ministry of Transport and Roads in July.

The bridge, on the Yei-Maridi Road, collapsed three times during the rainy season in 2007, cutting off thousands of vulnerable people’s access to important goods and services. It has been rebuilt as part of the Sudan Accelerated Infrastructure Program, a partnership between USAID and the Government of Southern Sudan. The program provides employment opportunities to displaced, returning and other disadvantaged people in the region. It also facilitates the return and reintegration of people affected by the country’s two-decade civil war, which ended in 2005.



The refurbished Bandame Bridge, on the Yei-Maridi Road in Central Equatoria state. Photo: UNOPS

USAID provided \$1 million for the 31-meter long bridge, including a new realignment of the gravel road, construction of bridge foundations and abutments, and the assembly and erection of the steel bridge. The bridge superstructure, valued at approximately US \$300,000, was supplied by the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). The bridge will restore uninterrupted traffic flow and remove a significant bottleneck to transportation in the area. The previous stone structure was replaced by a new steel bailey bridge structure to ensure increased resistance to flood damage in future rainy seasons.

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) was selected by USAID as the project’s implementing partner. UNOPS contracted a local firm to rebuild the bridge.

This project is part of USAID’s larger infrastructure program in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas that includes a total of 450 kilometers of roads in Western, Central, and Eastern Equatoria. USAID is financing a project to pave the 190-kilometer road between Juba and Nimule in Eastern and Central Equatoria, as well as to improve gravel roads in Western Equatoria state—including a 185-kilometer road between Yambio and Tambura, and a 75-kilometer road between Dabio and Ezzo. These projects are planned for completion in December 2010.

In addition to roads, USAID is funding the construction of seven key bridges along the Juba-Nimule road. In Kurmuk, USAID is financing another significant transportation project to upgrade an airstrip.

USAID’s infrastructure initiatives, including road rehabilitation, seek to link isolated communities, develop markets, and facilitate relief, resettlement, and good governance in the wake of two decades of civil war that devastated Southern Sudan’s infrastructure and crippled the local economy. This fiscal year alone, USAID has provided more than US \$76 million for infrastructure projects in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas. These projects demonstrate the U.S. Government’s commitment to implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and improving the lives of the Sudanese people. ♦



Staff of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Southern Sudan's Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism collar an adult male elephant with a GPS satellite tag in Nimule Park. Photo: Paul Elkan/WCS

Conserving Southern Sudan's Wildlife

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and a team of Southern Sudanese park rangers tagged animals in the Boma Jonglei Landscape in August to map the migration of the area's diverse wildlife. This global positioning system (GPS) and satellite data tagging activity is the first step in an effort to develop protected areas and eco-tourism in Southern Sudan.

The team, which included a South African veterinarian, mobilized to track and "dart" elephants and antelope. Using a helicopter and a small aircraft, the team found and anesthetized more than 30 animals, affixing collars with satellite tracking devices that will provide data to accurately identify important wildlife corridors and areas.

The team tagged nine elephants, as well as 12 tiang and 12 white-eared kob (tiang and kob are species of antelope). This action marks the first time in Southern Sudan that such critical data will be gathered using GPS technology. Since the herds are

migratory, it has been impossible to track their movements throughout the year with any level of precision. When the data is analyzed and mapped, the WCS will develop a land-use plan with the Southern Sudanese government to preserve important wildlife areas.

The operation was part of a three-year, USAID-funded program to protect biodiversity in the area. The program covers Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria and Central Equatoria states, including Badingalo, Boma, and Nimule National Parks, Jonglei plains, and the Sudd wetlands.

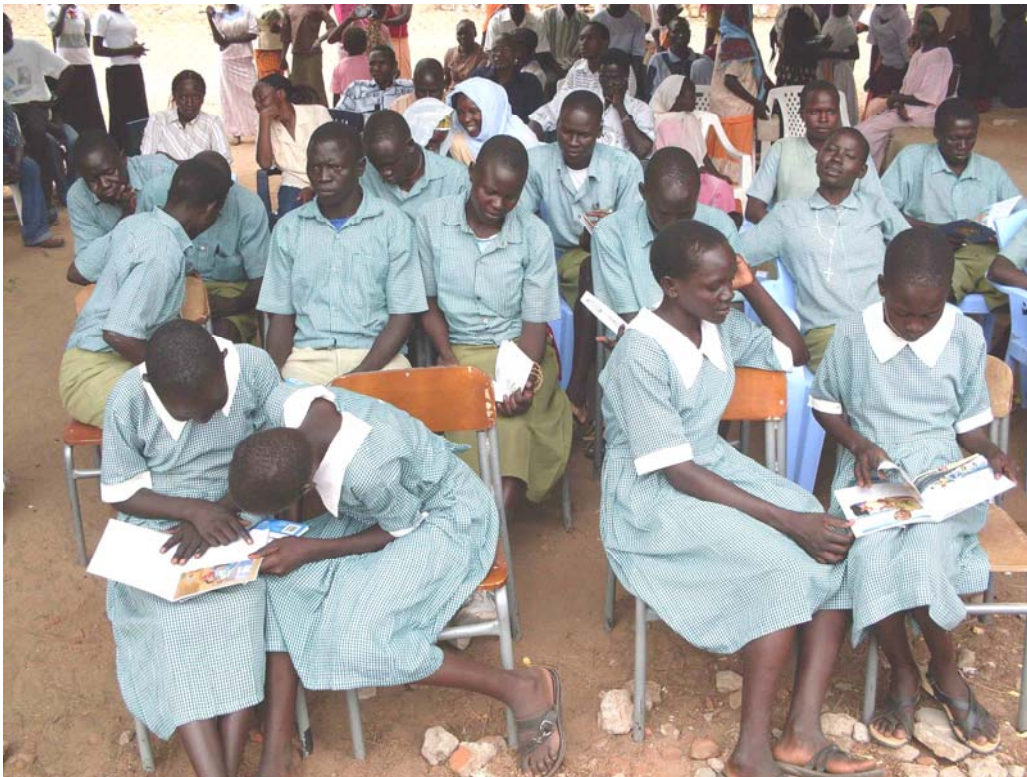
"This is another key step for us in building our understanding of wildlife migrations in the region," said Agnes Lukudo, Government of Southern

Sudan's Minister for Wildlife Conservation and Tourism. "This information will help my ministry and its partners manage the landscape and develop tourism."

According to the ministry and the WCS, the tracking devices are already generating useful information. Additional collaring of animals will be done in the next dry season to expand data collection.

The GPS-satellite tracking will provide concerned authorities with information on the animals' migratory patterns, help identify corridors necessary for sustaining the migrations long-term, inform land-use planning and protected area management, and reveal areas that will be prioritized for eco-friendly tourism and development.

"By knowing where the animals are moving, we can better orient our anti-poaching efforts to protect them and also identify key habitat areas requiring conservation management," said Frazer Tong, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism. ♦



Students read books received as prizes during the opening of the Educational Resource Center in Kauda, Southern Kordofan state, June 2009. Photo: Creative Associates International.

All were delighted by the range of opportunities the center afforded.

The visiting students celebrated with songs, dances, and a poem entitled “The Plight of the Girl Child,” about an adolescent girl forced to marry and leave school at a very young age. The poetry moved some at the launch to want to redress this plight and a spontaneous fundraiser to support girls’ education began. More than 300 Sudanese pounds (\$150) was raised, and the money was handed over to the school headmaster in the presence of over 300 teachers, learners and other community members.

New Resource Center Brings Information to the Nuba Mountains

In the remote Nuba Mountains, information from the outside world has always come at a premium. But in June, the Internet came to a group of teachers, students and community members in Kauda, Southern Kordofan, and its introduction changed the way some people thought about girls’ education.

The USAID-sponsored Educational Resource Center is part of the Health Education and Reconciliation (HEAR Sudan) project, implemented by Creative Associates International. The center is the first of its kind in Kauda, and is available to teachers, student teachers and students in the community and its environs. The center has a well-stocked library as well as electronic resources, including state-of-the-art Internet facilities.

The launch of the center attracted political leaders, government officials from the regional education and health offices and students from the nearby St. Vincent Primary School and Kauda Model School.

The money paid off outstanding school fees for one of the girls who helped recite the poem so that she could finish out the school year. She was understandably thrilled.

Teachers, pupils, staff from the Education and Health Ministries, and members of the general public area now doing research and other tasks at the new Educational Resource Center.

The students who attended the launch were given school books. For one of the Kauda students, Najua, it was her first book. She wrote carefully on the inside cover, “It was on the 17th of June, 2009 when I went to Kauda for the opening of the ERC by HEAR Sudan that I got this book.” ♦

A Radio Exchange Program Fosters Peace through Journalists

The eight reporters jammed into the studio of Nhomlaau FM were dancing, laughing, singing, and the community in this remote corner of Northern



USAID | SUDAN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Bahr el Ghazal in Southern Sudan heard a dynamic radio program—unusual not because of the music played, but the collaboration of reporters in a unique exchange program. Four of the reporters are from the Nuer tribe and live in Unity state, and four are Dinka from Northern Bahr el Ghazal.

These two groups were in conflict during Sudan's long-running civil war. They have many similar customs, but speak different languages, hold different opinions, eat different foods.

As part of the Mercy Corps-led Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan civil society program, Internews supports four community radio stations in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas to provide news and information and give voice to thousands of Sudanese. When Internews journalists heard about other Internews stations spread out over thousands of kilometers, they wanted to know about them. They wanted to share ideas and learn from each other. So Internews started a simple radio station exchange programs that fosters new friendships and opens pathways to peace in Sudan.

"The field exchange visit is important in the sense that it can show how people do things on the other side," said reporter Hou Akot Hou, who hosted the Nuer reporters in his studio in Maluakon in May.

"What seems like a very soft and benign cultural exchange has a profound impact on hundreds of thousands of people," said Internews Sudan Program Director Deborah Ensor.

"What the staff sees and learns about each other is turned into great radio. When journalists better understand what has happened historically in each other's communities, and when they are able to share that through radio, amazing things can happen."

In June, members of a station located in the Three Areas—Radio al Mujtama Fi Kurmuk in Blue Nile state near the Ethiopian border—traveled the hundreds of kilometers to visit their sister station, Swajt al Mujtama, in Kauda, in the Nuba Mountains.

Many of the radio station staff spent years during the war in refugee camps in Kenya, where they forged friendships while waiting to return home. When they did, they were scattered thousands of kilometers apart. "It

is so fantastic to have our colleagues from Kurmuk here," said Kauda radio station manager Walid Ali Abaker. "They have come here and found their friends here, friends they made back in the camps whom they have not seen in so many years."

Such meetings provide peace dividends that stretch far beyond one-to-one reunions. Exchanges of culture, ideas, friendships and memories are turned into radio stories about culture, music, and experiences. They are shared on the airwaves, reaching hundreds of thousands of people.

"We talked about our traditions of early marriage, and of religion," said Hou. "We had many things the same. It was the knowledge of knowing one another that was so good."

"When you take nascent reporters that have never really had any kind of exchange other than one based on conflict, and you provide an exchange based on friendship, and add access to broadcasting, the results are stunning," said Ensor. "So, what seems like an ordinary training turns out to reach a huge population. People are able to explore topics and identify common ground that both ethnic groups experience. It is an opportunity for people to talk about their experiences, to understand accurately what is happening in different parts of the country, and to lend their voices to national discourse about the future." ♦



Internews reporter Hou Akot Hou interviews a woman in Maluakon. Photo: Eleanor Dobing