



MONTHLY UPDATE

May 2007



Building Food Security in Vulnerable Communities

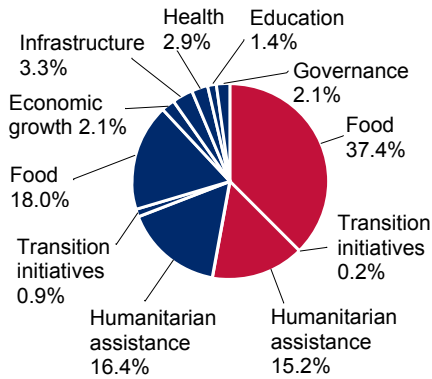
The end of Sudan’s two-decade civil war and the advent of a protracted conflict in Darfur has resulted in huge population shifts countrywide. Many long-displaced Southerners have begun to return to their homes, while violence has uprooted over 2 million Darfuris. These massive human movements strain resources and often result in food insecurity for returnees, displaced people, and host communities alike.

Southern Sudan

Over the next two years, as many as 50,000 people are expected to return to Lainya County, Central Equatoria. Building food security and livelihoods will be vital to improving the standard of living for the returnees, as well as the 200,000 current residents.

USAID partner Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) is implementing a program to do just that, using an integrated approach that aims to build a sustainable future for returnees and other vulnerable residents. To increase agricultural productivity while reducing dependence on relief, NPA supplements its distribution of food, seeds, and tools with extension training. Food security and agriculture training workshops are held at the Kenyi Farmer Training Center, one of 22 centers NPA has established in Southern Sudan since 1998.

**USAID ASSISTANCE TO SUDAN
FY2006, ESTIMATED**



Darfur 52.8%

Humanitarian assistance:	\$108.270 million
Transition initiatives:	\$1.400 million
Food:	\$266.110 million
Darfur:	\$375.780 million

South, East, and Three Areas 47.2%

Humanitarian assistance:	\$116.520 million
Transition initiatives:	\$6.660 million
Food:	\$127.807 million
Economic growth:	\$15.120 million
Governance:	\$14.850 million
Health:	\$22.692 million
Education:	\$10.250 million
Infrastructure:	\$23.350 million
South, East, and Three Areas:	\$335.249 million
Countrywide Total:	\$711.029 million

The Three Areas are Abyei, Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan.



Residents of Lainya County collect seeds and tools that will help increase agricultural yields. Photo: NPA



A nursery in Otash camp provides fruit tree seedlings for rural communities. Photo: USAID

Each of the centers has played an important role in the transfer of agricultural technology to rural areas and serve as demonstration plots for improved practices. Administration of 13 of the centers has been handed over to their local county agriculture departments, reflecting the areas that have attained a reasonable level of food security. However, because of the large number of returnees expected from camps in Uganda and Central Equatoria, USAID plans to continue to support the Kenyi center.

This year, the Kenyi center has already distributed seeds and tools to 1,204 returnee households in Lainya. These inputs will enable each household to increase its area of cultivation by up to 1.5 acres. Also, as a result of NPA's capacity-building efforts, the Lainya County Agriculture Department has supported the formation of six farmer groups with a total of 88 members.

Since it was formed in 1998, the Kenyi center has trained 1365 farmers, including 375 women. The

training enabled these farmers to significantly increase their maize and sorghum yields and has resulted in a considerable decrease in dependence on relief food in the county.

Darfur

In an effort to improve food security and livelihoods in Darfur, USAID partner CHF International is operating veterinary clinics and tree nurseries in Al Salaam camp in North Darfur, and in Otash camp, Kalma camp, and rural areas of South Darfur.

Animals like donkeys, mules, camels, goats, and horses are crucial to many families' livelihoods as they transport water and are used for small-scale economic activities. CHF International's veterinary clinics—staffed by students from the local university—provide vaccinations and treatment for common animal diseases. Every week, 1,300 animals are treated at each of the clinics in Al Salaam, Otash, and Kalma camps.

In Kalma and Otash camps, CHF International also collaborates with the Ministry of Agriculture to operate nurseries, which grow lemon, guava, and papaya trees for reforestation. The staff trains displaced people to cultivate the trees and then distributes them to surrounding rural communities—approximately 3,500 seedlings in the last year. ♦

Returning Home: Lakes State

After spending the last 20 years in Khartoum because of civil war, Georgie Thuc is returning to his village of Abrio in Southern Sudan. He says he will live with family members until he is able to build his own shelter, and will farm on communal land. There are a school and a clinic in Abrio, as well as an inadequate water supply.

Twenty-five years ago, Abraham Mabor was 15 when he fled violence in his village, Aluakluak. When he arrived in Khartoum he worked as a laborer, but when he returns to his village, he plans to farm, and he hopes to get married. While there is a clinic in a neighboring village, there is also a shortage of water in the area.

Georgie and Abraham were two of 99 returnees who arrived in Wau on April 30 on a bus ride from Khartoum organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In Wau, the group joined 52



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In Rumbek, 151 returnees from Khartoum and Ethiopia collected UN assistance packages before traveling onward to their home villages. Photo: USAID

refugees who had flown in from Gambela, Ethiopia, and the 151 rode on to Rumbek. Before traveling onward to their places of origin, the returnees received an assistance package from a group of international agencies, including food rations from the UN World Food Program, seeds and tools from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and relief commodities from the UN Children's Fund.

So far in 2007, IOM plans to assist the return has assisted 26,000 people, and expects to reach 83,000 by the end of the year. In Lakes State, IOM has returned 514 people in 2007, and 151 are currently in transit. Rains are expected to slow the organized returns program during June-November.

To support the communities that are receiving returning displaced people and refugees, USAID is working at key points of return to support programs in livelihood development, food security, agriculture, education, health, nutrition, and water. The initiatives aim to prepare these areas for an influx of new residents by improving facilities, building human and institutional capacity, and increasing access to services.

According to IOM, 450,000 displaced people have registered in Khartoum to participate in the organized returns program, implemented jointly by the United Nations, Government of South Sudan, and Government of National Unity. ♦

Civil Society Organizations Build Coalitions

Representatives from 61 grassroots civil society organizations gathered in Malual Kon, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, last month for one of the largest civil society conferences ever held in Southern Sudan. The event, which ran from March 30 to April 4 was organized by USAID partners Mercy Corps and International Rescue Committee (IRC), and was the third in a series of six civil society exchanges.

Building Coalitions through Civil Society Partnerships was the theme of the conference, which brought together more than 150 participants, including civil society actors and experts in education, HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, water and sanitation, vocational training, and peace building. The conference aimed to help civil society organizations understand how, by forming coalitions, they can increase their impact and improve their ability to advocate for the rights of marginalized groups.

Mercy Corps and IRC launched the event with training sessions that introduced participants to the concept of coalitions and strategies to initiate regional or sectoral coalitions. USAID partner the National Democratic Institute (NDI) then facilitated a dialogue on the role of coalitions in political processes, and participants talked about structures of government, explored decision-making processes, and considered political processes, such as elections, where coalitions might emerge. Participants stepped into the shoes of politicians and applied practical negotiation skills during a simulation of two minority-supported parties approaching elections. While civil society coalitions play a different function than political party coalitions, participants saw that many of the same strengths, challenges, and strategies apply.

NDI also facilitated a series of dialogues on the six protocols of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Anthony Thon Bol, from Mijuan Hope Aide Association appreciated the training both as a citizen and as a civic actor. "I really value the CPA training because peace needs to start from within all of us," he said. "We must understand peace individually first and then we can bring it to the whole society."

Participants from the Three Areas—Abyei, Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan—discussed the CPA long after the session had ended to voice their concerns.

Civil society members also heard presentations on a range of subjects from foreign experts and



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representatives from the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) Peace Commission, the HIV/AIDS Commission, the Ministry of Public Health, and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. During the dialogue that followed, government representatives and civil society members explored the ways in which they might collaborate to address the challenges faced in each sector.

“The presentations helped me understand how my organization fits into the government’s strategy,” said a representative from Leer Hygiene Promotion. “In the area of hygiene, the government must be responsible for building primary health care units, but civil society can support them by digging pit latrines and through community sensitization.”

Each group also made a brief presentation on their organizations, the impact they have made in their communities, and the government’s progress in that sector. Presentations were lively as some groups shared the plays and songs that are part of their outreach campaigns.

The conference welcomed 25 of USAID’s new civil society partner organizations, which participated in a workshop about the progress of the projects that have been running since May 2006. “The new partners have great ideas but they are not totally sure how to go about implementing them,” said Jeremiah Gatnor, who has attended each of the three civil society exchange conferences. “It’s a great chance for them to learn from our experiences, and it’s fantastic to see that we are growing and starting to reach every corner of Southern Sudan.”

With each event, the voice of civil society grows stronger—women’s voices in particular. The Malual Kon conference was attended by 41 percent more women than the previous conference in Yei, and they spoke passionately and openly about the issues affecting them.

“Because women have not had the same opportunities for education as men, they have often felt disadvantaged,” said a representative from Ajak-Kuac Women’s Association. “But through the civil society strengthening training, they are developing the skills and the confidence to speak out about women’s issues.”

The conference brought many new experiences for participants and organizers alike. For some, it was their first time on an airplane. For others, it was their first visit to a new climate. All participants, however, were exposed to traditional music and cultural dances unlike their own, as the event closed on a celebratory note with performances from each of the regions represented.

While the performances highlighted the many cultural traditions that exist in Sudan, participation in the civil society exchange reinforced a unified commitment to serve all constituencies and uphold the common objective of strengthening democracy for lasting peace.

“People died so that we could have this opportunity to sit and discuss,” noted Dr. Rondyang James, a representative of the Southern Sudan HIV/AIDS Commission.



Organizations from Southern Sudan and the Three Areas gathered for a conference in Malual Kon. Photos: IRC and Mercy Corps



“There have been conferences organized by government in the past, but civil society actors were not included for the most part. The USAID-sponsored civil society exchanges are the first of their kind.” ♦

Providing Health Care to Isolated Areas

Southern Kordofan was the frontline of Sudan’s 20-year civil war, resulting in massive displacement and devastating destruction. Residents of Kumo, an enclave of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army, were particularly isolated, and the community was cut off from most assistance. In 2001, Save the Children began providing health care in Kumo, and with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, more humanitarian organizations have been able to collaborate with local government to provide basic services statewide.

Today, with support from USAID, Save the Children is assisting in the transition to peace through a comprehensive health program that manages four primary health care centers and 23 primary health care clinics throughout the former rebel enclave. Each health center typically receives 3,000 patients every month while each clinic receives 200-500 patients monthly. Health services are free of charge and have expanded from basic health care to growth monitoring, HIV/AIDS counseling, obstetric care, neonatal care, health education, immunizations, malaria control, and laboratory services.

Umjima Ibrahim is one resident who felt Kumo’s



Umjima Ibrahim and her child (right) visit the Kumo community health clinic. Photo: Save the Children

devastation firsthand. “I lost six children in a span of ten years,” she said. “Two were twins who succumbed to diarrhea, and the others died of respiratory infections. If these health facilities had been here at that time, then maybe I would have a grown-up son today to marry and give me a daughter.”

But Umjima says that she, her infant child, and her community have all benefited from Save the Children’s clinic. “We used to fear the onset of long rains because it would mean the loss of many family members due to malaria and pneumonia,” she said. “This is no longer the case because now we can easily access medication and care from your health facilities.”

Save the Children is the largest provider of health care in Southern Kordofan, managing 81 facilities that serve the health needs of more than 350,000 people. ♦

Getting a Handle on Health

Currently, the Government of Southern Sudan and the humanitarian community lack the ability to capture the wide range of human conditions or development investments in Southern Sudan. But the need to understand these issues is urgent.

USAID’s Picture of Health Project provides support to the Ministry of Health and the Southern Sudan Commission of Census, Statistics, and Evaluation to help build the capacity to capture and visually represent current conditions. Recently, the project trained four government officials, including Director of Social and Demographic Statistics Eliaba Damundu, in global information system (GIS) software and remote sensed data.

“It’s not about just learning how to use GIS or to have the skills to make maps,” said Damundu. “They are simply tools. But they can be powerful tools. It can help us to use information for decisions at all levels of government. In our communities that have spent the last 20 years fighting a civil war, visual communications are much more effective than reports, charts, or databases. Maps can be an important tool to promote good planning and to help us measure change in the future.”

Since this training, the officials have begun to analyse recently acquired information on health and basic services and assessing the impact of USAID-supported health services in Southern Sudan. Their findings will allow both the government and USAID to

