



SUCCESS STORY

Nursing Blue Nile's War-Torn Infrastructure Back to Health



Nurses treat their first patient in a new ward at Kurmuk Rural Hospital.

New wards at Kurmuk Rural Hospital have been outfitted for pediatrics, obstetrics, and surgery and will significantly reduce overcrowding.

February 2009 – In January, the Blue Nile State Ministry of Health, with support from USAID's Office of transition Initiatives (OTI), completed work on and inaugurated more than \$1.5 million worth of health facility improvements in three historically marginalized and isolated towns. The improvements included new hospital wards in Kurmuk, two new training facilities in Bau and Kurmuk, and a rehabilitated and newly equipped primary health care center in Chali.

The improvements were undertaken to facilitate access to essential health care services along the country's war-torn north-south border and promote stability in the region.

The Minister of Health attended the opening ceremonies for the medical wards in Kurmuk,

which were broadcast on state television and radio. The wards have been outfitted for pediatrics, obstetrics, and surgery and, with a 40-patient capacity, will significantly reduce overcrowding. Residents spoke proudly about the improvements, saying that the new wards and medical equipment bested the facilities that can be found in the country's capital, Khartoum.

The state's Ministry of Health and local administrators are also responsible for hiring medical personnel, and recognizing the need for a qualified cadre of local health professionals to administer care, OTI provided assistance for the construction of the training facilities in Bau and Kurmuk. The facilities include dormitories and can accommodate up to 120 high school graduates in 3-year training courses for medical assistants, midwives, and nurses. In addition, the health center in Chali includes an adjacent furnished residence to facilitate recruitment and deployment of qualified medical staff to this remote location.

Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) four years ago, efforts to unify the formerly divided state of Blue Nile have been largely successful and have earned it a reputation as a model for a peaceful and united Sudan. Nevertheless, the lack of peace dividends in some areas of Blue Nile continues to generate discontent and threatens the fragile peace the state currently enjoys. By supporting efforts to extend essential services to previously underserved and administratively unintegrated regions of Blue Nile, OTI seeks to build citizen confidence in the Government of National Unity and mitigate a return to conflict.