



## SUCCESS STORY

### Water Is Life: New Pumps Revive Water System in Kitgum



USAID/Uganda Mission Director David Eckerson tests a water distribution tap in Kitgum.

**August 2009** – Two years ago, pumps critical to Kitgum’s water distribution system broke down. Severe water shortages soon followed in this northern Ugandan town to which people were only starting to return after years of armed rebellion.

Tensions run high in the region when water is scarce, and the town was also experiencing increased demand for water from a new source: people who had lived in rural areas prior to the violence were moving into the region. These migrants were leaving camps for internally displaced people and settling near urban areas, like Kitgum, to be closer to social services that are not readily available in rural settings.

In the absence of piped water, the residents of Kitgum were forced to rely on a few overused boreholes. And to make matters worse, an outbreak of Hepatitis E, a disease directly related to water and sanitation issues, was plaguing the town.

Now, thanks to a \$140,000 grant from USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives, two new pumps have been installed and new pump houses are standing. The new pumps have had an immediate effect on the town, as the reservoirs that feed tap water to the area are filling up after years of being dry.

At a ceremony to inaugurate the new pumps, ownership was handed over to the Kitgum Town Council, which will maintain the pumps while also modernizing and expanding the town’s water distribution system.

Speaking at the ceremony, USAID/Uganda Mission Director David Eckerson reiterated the U.S. Government’s support for northern Uganda and its efforts to restore the capacity of local governments to provide services.

The Kitgum Resident District Commissioner said, “Water is life,” and he told Kitgum residents that recovery was at hand and that development was returning to northern Uganda.