



## SUCCESS STORY

# Improving Access to Health Information

### USAID funds Juba Teaching Hospital Health Information Resource Center



Photo: The Capacity Project

Hospital staff participate in computer skills training at the Juba Teaching Hospital Health Information Resource Center

***“Before the resource center was established, there was nothing like this, except maybe at the University of Juba. Most of their materials are for academic purposes. Most of our materials are on medical subjects,” said Francis Tombe, Manager of the Juba Teaching Hospital Health Information Resource Center.***

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As a public health officer at the Southern Sudan Ministry of Health, Abdullah Rahman needed up-to-date information to support his work. Even in the capital city of Juba, it wasn't easy to find what he was looking for. “We used to look in our other books and the libraries at the ministries, or friends' books—but it is difficult, because some information you cannot find there,” he said.

Reliable Internet access was another complication. “It's important for us to connect with other people,” Rahman said, and for “any news from our partners, we connect by Internet.”

Opened in 2008, the USAID-supported Juba Teaching Hospital Health Information Resource Center provides hospital staff, medical students and Ministry of Health personnel with print and electronic materials, library services, Internet access and computer training. The resource center has seven computers, all of which are connected to a wireless Internet network. The current collection of 653 items includes medical textbooks, journals, magazines, novels, videos, DVDs and CDs.

Francis Tombe is the center's manager and librarian. “Before the resource center was established,” he remembers, “there was nothing.” Even at the University of Juba, “most of their materials are for academic purposes,” he points out, while “most of our materials are on medical subjects.”

The center also provides free computer training to hospital staff to enable them to access health information through various websites, obtain updates and enter patient and hospital data into databases. The training sessions cover an introduction to computers, Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint, as well as Internet and e-mail skills to a wide range of participants selected by hospital administrators. “So far the center has trained about 20 medical staff in basic computer knowledge,” says Tombe.

Due to the resource center's success, a second site is now in the works. The state hospital in Wau, capital of the state of Western Bahr el-Ghazal, will host a new resource center that is scheduled to open in July. The center will be staffed by local hospital personnel, with support and training from Francis Tombe. As in Juba, the resource center will help reinforce the staff's medical training, provide a means for continuing education and professional development and offer free Internet access.