



SUCCESS STORY

Improved Water Access Reduces Conflict

More water wells and better pumps improve living standards



A child fetches water at an improved water source in Kimatong, Eastern Equatoria, Southern Sudan.

The closer proximity of water resources has enabled families to invest more time in food security and livelihoods.

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Throughout Southern Sudan, boreholes — small, drilled wells — are the primary source of water. They are scarce, however; these water pumps are in use nearly 24 hours a day, and people wait in long lines for their turn. Limited access to water resources has created tensions and led to conflict in Upper Nile and other areas of the South. To respond to these difficulties, USAID has funded a variety of initiatives designed to reduce the competition over water and increase access to nearby waterpoints.

A USAID-funded project has increased water availability for an estimated 720,000 Southern Sudanese, including more than 144,000 people who have returned to their homes after a peace agreement in 2005 ended 20 years of civil war. USAID focused on the southern states of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warab, Lakes, Unity, Jonglei, and Upper Nile, and in the Three Areas of Abyei, Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan. Between April and June 2006, the project drilled 132 new boreholes and rehabilitated 87 previously non-functioning hand pumps.

Additionally, USAID is funding several rainwater harvesting projects, including dam construction in at least six locations. To ensure that water initiatives have the greatest impact, the project works with rival ethnic groups, local authorities, and local organizations to select sites that facilitate peaceful coexistence among communities.

In communities participating in the USAID program, the average amount of water used per household has increased from 140 liters a week to 461 liters. Additionally, USAID partners in Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile report that people there — particularly women — have reported a reduction in household workloads associated with the collection of water. The closer proximity of water resources has enabled families to invest more time in food security and livelihoods — and allowed them to focus on the work of resettling and reintegrating in their home communities.

Photo: Pact