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SUCCESS STORY

Supporting Higher Learning through Upper Nile University Rehabilitation



USAID/OTI rehabilitated the medical clinic, student center, water system, and toilet blocks at Upper Nile University in Malakal in southern Sudan. The student center (above) now serves as a venue for lively debates on the peace process.

The overarching goal of the USAID/OTI Sudan program is to strengthen Sudanese confidence and capacity to address the causes and consequences of the political marginalization, violence, and instability that has consumed the country for nearly 50 years.

Working within the context of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the OTI Sudan program focuses on promoting the emergence of responsive and effective civil authorities, establishing peaceful dialogue within and among communities, fostering the emergence of an active civil society, increasing the availability of independent information, and protecting vulnerable populations from grave human rights violations and related abuses.

USAID/OTI/SUDAN

November 2006 – During Sudan's 22-year civil war, Upper Nile University in Malakal, the capital of Upper Nile State in southern Sudan, rarely received the funding necessary to maintain its existing infrastructure, to purchase new equipment, or to hire adequate staff. Many key academic programs, such as medicine and nursing, were relocated to Khartoum in northern Sudan, where facilities were more suitable and qualified professors were available. The relocation and financial neglect deprived the people of Upper Nile State of a viable institution of higher learning.

In response to the region's need for a reliable source of health specialists and other educated workers, USAID/OTI recently administered four in-kind grants to the university. Through these grants, USAID/OTI rehabilitated and expanded the school's medical clinic and the student center, provided eight toilet blocks, and supplied a water pump and reagents for water purification.

Two thousand students and faculty members will benefit directly from the rehabilitation work. In addition, the improved facilities will benefit the community as a whole. The medical clinic will provide basic health services to the local population and will facilitate the training of a new generation of doctors and nurses. The student center will serve as a space for seminars, political rallies, and exhibitions and, according to the Secretary General of the University Student Union, has already become a venue for lively debates on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the Darfur peace process. And finally, the water and sanitation improvements will ensure a healthy and hygienic environment that is conducive to higher learning.

USAID/OTI's work with Upper Nile University exemplifies the highly visible and tangible peace dividends accruing to the people of southern Sudan under the CPA. Improvements to the university also foster hope for sustained peace, as the school serves as a symbol of stability for the community.