



USAID | SUDAN
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY

Water Cools Tensions in Kurmuk's Expanding Urban Center



The water committee responsible for managing the new water yard poses with project team members.

USAID/OTI's support has enabled local authorities in Kurmuk to upgrade a water source, easing water shortages and reducing tensions between returnees and internally displaced citizens in the town's rapidly expanding center.

September 2008 – USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) recently supported the efforts of local authorities in Kurmuk to ease tensions in the town's rapidly expanding urban center by funding improvements to a high-yield water borehole. Limited access to water has generated significant animosity between internally displaced Sudanese from the Mabaan tribe, who took refuge in Kurmuk during the country's north-south civil war, and members of the local Uduk tribe, who began returning to the region from neighboring Ethiopia following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005.

The borehole was sunk in 2007 with a USAID/OTI-funded drilling rig and fitted with a hand pump. Last month, however, it was upgraded to a water yard when it was

equipped with a generator-driven pump, an overhead storage tank, and a number of distribution points, increasing capacity from 500 daily users to more than 2,000.

The new water yard is managed by a dedicated and energetic water committee that is affiliated with the Kurmuk County Commissioner's Office. The committee is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the town's hand pumps and water yards and is also managing a cache of fuel provided by USAID/OTI to cover operational needs for the next six months.

Since the signing of the CPA, the new coalition government has worked to develop effective and legitimate governing bodies in Blue Nile State's historically marginalized areas, including Kurmuk. A land committee in Kurmuk is working to ensure the peaceful reintegration of thousands of returnees while remaining responsive to the needs of the internally displaced Mabaan that have long resided in the area. It is a colossal task, and the lack of essential services continues to generate frustration for citizens living in this isolated and war-affected region.

Increased access to water has come as a welcome development for Kurmuk's residents, especially the women who must queue for it, and provided a tangible sign of the benefits of peace. And by supporting local government's efforts to bring about positive change, USAID/OTI is ensuring that Blue Nile will continue to be a model for effective CPA implementation and a peaceful Sudan.