



SUCCESS STORY

Health Facilities Increase Marginalized Population's Confidence in Peace Agreement



A new building has allowed Keili's health center to be upgraded to a Primary Health Care Clinic.

USAID/OTI recently supported the expansion of health facilities in the towns of Yabus and Keili in southern Blue Nile.

September 2007 – Government neglect and marginalization of peripheral communities has been one of the primary feeders of Sudan's past north-south conflict, and the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) set up a framework to address these inequities. However, evidence that incomplete implementation of the CPA could provoke a return to conflict was seen recently when the army commander from southern Blue Nile State threatened to return to war if the state government continued neglecting the least developed and most war-affected areas in the southernmost regions of the state. His views are widely shared by the local population, which has in the past taken up arms to secure the region's right to equitable development.

To support CPA implementation and peace, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)

recently financed the construction of buildings for two health-care facilities in southern Blue Nile State. The Yabus Primary Health Care Unit received a permanent structure to replace its provisional one, and the community of Keili has benefited from an additional building, which has allowed its facility to be upgraded from a health-care unit to a full-fledged clinic.

Today, residents of Yabus express relief that it is no longer necessary to travel long distances (up to 50 miles) to receive health care. The new facility provides a space for medical personnel to perform select surgeries and to stabilize patients that need to be transferred to the main hospital for more extensive treatment. In Keili, the new building provides space for a second diagnostician, a laboratory, and a maternity unit.

The state Minister of Health met with the communities to announce the Ministry's plans to extend health services and to assign new health officers to the area. The additional services are expected to reduce infant mortality rates, which have risen with an influx of returnees to the area.

Increasing the local government's capacity to provide key services to marginalized communities is a key component of the peace process. Tangible peace dividends, such as the health facilities in Yabus and Keili, restore confidence in the CPA and engender hope for lasting peace in Sudan.