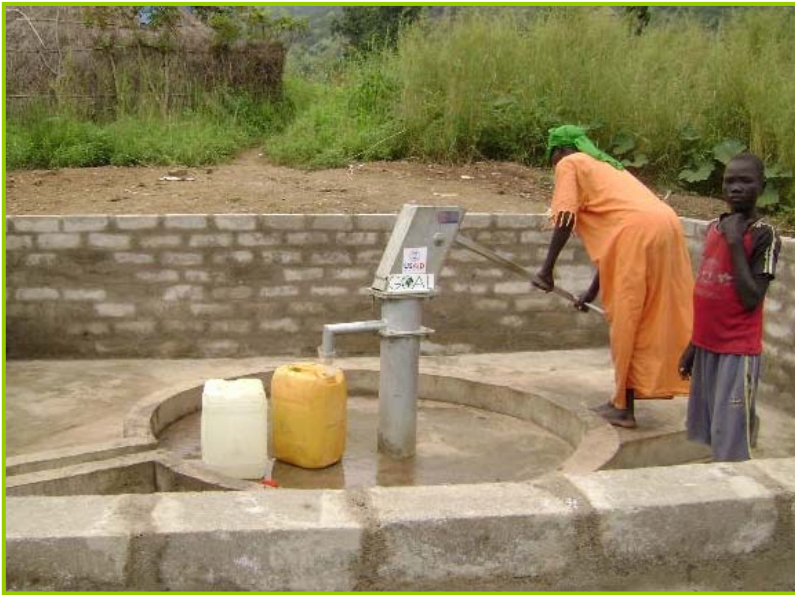




SUCCESS STORY

Drilling Down Builds Up Marginalized Community



A woman pumps clean water from a well drilled in Kurmuk County with the USAID-funded rig.

In conjunction with an international NGO, Kurmuk authorities have drilled 11 boreholes with the USAID-funded rig, demonstrating tangible peace dividends to county citizens.

April 2008 – In an effort to bolster confidence in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and prevent a return to armed conflict, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) is strengthening the capacity of government authorities to address the needs and priorities of Sudan's most marginalized communities. In 2007, USAID/OTI provided Kurmuk County with a drilling rig to tap aquifers and help counter the local sentiment that the county continues to be overlooked in the post-conflict transition.

Kurmuk, located in southern Blue Nile State, straddles the political, economic, and cultural border between north and south Sudan. Historically neglected by the central government, the county has seen its infrastructure and basic service systems devastated by decades of civil war. Most

Kurmuk citizens express deep dissatisfaction with the CPA's endorsement of the region as part of the north – a move that excludes southern Blue Nile from participating in Southern Sudan's 2011 referendum on self-determination. Furthermore, the slow arrival of peace dividends following the signing of the CPA has compounded skepticism about the peace process.

Leveraging support from other international agencies, Kurmuk authorities, in conjunction with an international nongovernmental organization, have drilled 11 boreholes with the USAID/OTI-funded rig. Experts provided on-the-job training to address the county's lack of technical and institutional capacity to operate and service the well-drilling equipment, ensuring that the county will be able to effectively run and maintain the rig for years to come. This year, the county is on schedule to sink 15 boreholes to help ease severe water shortages.

Support for Kurmuk's authorities comes during an important period in the region's history. In accord with a rotational plan to give historically marginalized areas a stake in the management of state affairs, the government of Blue Nile State in February shifted its capital southwards, from Damazin to Kurmuk. USAID/OTI promotes and applauds the efforts of civil authorities to address the causes and consequences of decades of political neglect, violence, and instability, thereby mitigating the potential for renewed conflict in one of Sudan's most contentious regions.