

Ghost Town
Becomes World's Newest
Capital City

Juba is a jumble of
the old and the new



the overall national population estimated at nine million.

Reclaiming the Land

JICA HAS BEEN INVOLVED SINCE 2009 IN ONE program—the Livelihood Improvement Project in Southern Sudan (LIPS)—which has been training community development and agricultural extension officers, improving community infrastructure, drilling village boreholes and establishing demonstration farms where local villagers can receive training and learn modern farm techniques.

“When I first came here all the local ministry em-

ployees were just sitting under a big tree drinking tea,” recalls JICA expert Makiko Tsurui. “They had no accommodations, no office, no transport. Nothing to do.”

Now, together with six Japanese experts, the employees are active in surrounding communities, teaching new land preparation, seeding and vegetable growing techniques.

One farmer who escaped his village during the war remembers: “it was so easy to be killed here, to be shot or blown up by landmines. All our homes and fields were destroyed.”

“We have had to start again from the very bottom,” he said. There is still a long way to go but some things are improving slowly. “Before we could only eat one meal a day,” the farmer said. “Now we have two meals.”

Reviving the land
after years of conflict



Honeymooners... and a Million Problems

The city of Kassala is known as the honeymoon center of Sudan. Couples come to drink the famous mountain spring water for luck and health and eat the bountiful fruits which grow along a narrow green strip of the Atbara River running through an otherwise harsh desert environment.

Downtown there is a busy shopping thoroughfare known by locals as The One Million Stupid Street because of the many traffic and pedestrian accidents which occur there and it is a reputation for crisis rather than the picture of happy honeymooners which infuses the region.

The Republic of Sudan, the northern section of what was formerly Africa's largest state until its division into two new countries in July, is a country of

Helping War-Afflicted Populations

KASSALA



sharp contrast—rich in history, culture and potential, but also facing those ‘one million problems’—from the Kassala region on its eastern borders to Darfur in the far west.

A harsh landscape; villagers ponder their future

Kassala state and the city of the same name is one of the poorest areas in the Republic, scarred by war, harsh landscapes battered alternatively by drought and flood, where 91% of households do not have enough food, only 39% have access to safe water and the maternal mortality rate has risen to 1,414 per 100,000 births compared with the prewar level of 500.

The region's problems are exacerbated by the presence of some 67,000 refugees from neighboring Eritrea, some of whom have been there for decades.





Making the desert bloom again. (Bottom) Midwife training

Hundreds more continue to arrive weekly.

Major Projects

IN LINE WITH ITS OVERALL POLICY OF HELPING vulnerable people, particularly in war affected areas and specific groups such as displaced persons and former combatants, achieve their needs in basic areas such as health, water, education, food and infrastructure, JICA is involved in major projects in the Kassala region, Darfur and other vital regions.

A team of 14 Japanese experts is conducting one of the agency's most ambitious technical cooperation projects in Kassala, a \$17 million, three-year fully integrated program which began in early 2011 covering five areas: planning, water supply, agriculture, health and vocational training.

Adopting an overall integrated approach will result in

increased synergy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In practical terms the project translates into helping to train village midwives; teaching administrators modern accounting procedures to help reduce devastating loss in the collection of water revenues; boosting agriculture; improving both the skills of ad-



One of JICA's most ambitious technical cooperation projects links five areas: planning, water supply, agriculture, health and vocational training



Learning new accounting skills



Planning a new water system for Kassala

ministrators and teachers and providing vocational training for new generations of auto mechanics, electricians and other needed skills.

JICA provides basic equipment and vehicles whenever necessary, has rehabilitated Kassala town's water supply facility and will help construct a second system to eventually reach an additional 80,000 people with running water.

Darfur Devastated

DARFUR HAS ALSO BEEN DEVASTATED SINCE 2003 by an ongoing civil conflict, some 200,000 persons having been killed and as many as two million displaced.

That conflict was partly the result of a struggle for scarce water and land sources—the background to many other wars across the globe—and JICA's projects are designed to immediately help the most needy at the grassroots level, reduce inequality and, more long-term, to address the problems which caused war in the first place.

These principles are also being applied in the so-called Three Protocol Areas, regions which suffered because of their proximity to north-south conflict areas.

Projects concentrate on such unglamorous bread-and-butter issues as training hundreds of officials, administrators and midwives—sometimes locally, on other occasions in Japan or other countries—to strengthening the structures which govern everyday life.

Access to Water

ACCESS TO WATER IS A PERENNIAL CHALLENGE and equipment has been provided, boreholes sunk and water experts trained.

Emphasis continues to be placed in all regions, including the capital, Khartoum, on the importance of both improving the skills of teachers—training the trainers—and turning out the plumbers, carpenters and electricians who keep the economy moving.

Going forward, Sudanese customs officers are being trained in Kenya, waste management techniques applied in the capital and, recognizing the importance of improving food production, there are plans to promote rice production, rehabilitate irrigation facilities in one area and upgrade food production infrastructure. ■

