USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SERVICES UNDER PROGRAM AND PROJECT OFFICES FOR RESULT TRACKING (USAID/SUPPORT)

FINAL REPORT 2012

NOVEMBER 30, 2012

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development.
It was prepared by Management Systems International.

SERVICES UNDER PROGRAM AND PROJECT OFFICES FOR RESULT TRACKING (USAID/SUPPORT)

FINAL REPORT 2012

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL
A SUBSIDIARY OF COFFEY INTERNATIONAL, LTD

600 Water Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024, USA
Tel: +1.202.484.7170 | Fax: +1. 202.488.0754
www.msiworldwide.com

coffey international development

COVER PHOTO: © JENN WARREN

DISCLAIMER
The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

PHOTO: © JENN WARREN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS 7

PREFACE 9

INTRODUCTION 10

- BACKGROUND 10
- USAID'S COMMITMENT TO SOUTH SUDAN 12
- GENESIS AND ROLE OF THE SUPPORT PROJECT 12

RESULTS AND LEGACY OF THE SUPPORT PROJECT 14

- FACILITATING USAID'S MISSION IN SOUTHERN SUDAN 28
- AUGMENTING USAID'S WORKFORCE 30
- PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY EVIDENCE THROUGH MONITORING AND EVALUATION, ASSESSMENTS, AND SPECIAL STUDIES 23
- MEETING THE CHALLENGES 23
- SHOWCASING USAID/SOUTH SUDAN 31

LESSONS LEARNED 34

ACRONYMS

AMED	Agricultural Market & Enterprise Development
BRIDGE	Building Responsibility for the Delivery of Government Services
COR	Contracting Officer's Representatives
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DOC	Development Outreach and Communications
DQA	Data Quality Assessments
FARM	Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets
GEE	Gender Equity Through Education
GLAAS	Global Acquisition and Assistance System
GRSS	Government of the Republic of South Sudan
HEAR	Health, Education and Reconciliation
ICS	Institutionally Contracted Staff
LINCS	Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MSI	Management Systems International
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
SHAP	Sudan HIV and AIDS Program
SSIRI	Southern Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction
SSREP	Southern Sudan Rural Electrification Project
SSTAP	Southern Sudan Technical Advisors Program
STEP	Sudan Transitional Environment Program
SUPPORT	Services Under Program and Project Offices for Results Tracking
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

PREFACE

After five years of close collaboration and partnership, the MSI team would like to extend a sincere thank you to USAID/South Sudan and all the staff members with whom we worked over those years. The SUPPORT Project team has had the opportunity to work closely with numerous USAID staff and offices - from Mission Directors to the Executive Officer, to technical team leaders and their staff. The dedication and passion that these individuals have brought to their work and to South Sudan has been extremely impressive and we know it is widely appreciated.

The MSI team would especially like to thank our tireless Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs), who over the years have truly supported us in getting the job done: David Schroder, Kendra Schoenholz, Jim Parys, Peter Natiello and Marcia Musisi-Nkambwe.

In addition, SUPPORT could not have been what it was without the hard work of our own staff – local South Sudanese professionals and international, long-term and short term staff, all of whom responded to any and all requests we presented them, delivering quality products to the client, and going above and beyond our highest expectations to complete each and every activity to the best of their ability.

As the world's newest country, South Sudan covers 248,777 square miles and borders the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sudan. Regional relationships both aid development and complicate security. Of the country's population, estimated at roughly 8.3 million based on the 2008 census, 72 percent are under 30 years of age and 83 percent live in rural areas.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Through peaceful negotiations, Sudan gained its independence from joint British and Egyptian rule in 1956. Sharply divided ethnically, culturally, and geographically, however, relations between the Arab North and the African and predominantly Christian South deteriorated quickly, sparking the first civil war which lasted from 1955-1972. The following decade was largely non-violent; however, the southern part of the country, cut off from virtually all resources, continued to suffer. Starvation in these years led to the deaths of over two million people.

War reignited in 1985 and persisted for the next 20 years, only reaching a conclusion with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. This agreement included provisions for a general election in the South as well as a referendum on independence at the end of a six-year period of relative autonomy. In the referendum held in January 2011, the overwhelming majority, 98 percent of those who voted, chose secession. On July 9, 2011, the Republic of South Sudan declared its independence.

As the world's newest country, South Sudan covers 248,777 square miles and borders the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sudan. Regional relationships both aid development and complicate security.

Of the country's population, estimated at roughly 8.3 million based on the 2008 census, 72 percent are under 30 years of age and 83 percent live in rural areas.

Literacy in South Sudan is estimated at 27 percent. The percentage of literate men (40 percent) far outnumbers that of women (16 percent). Life expectancy is under 50 years and natural diseases, especially malaria, ravage this Sub-Saharan nation. The country has about 100 miles of paved road, and electricity is limited to the largest cities. The UN estimated GDP per capita was $90 in 2009 and wealth, to the degree it exists, is unevenly distributed.

South Sudan is home to multiple ethnic groups and a multitude of historically rooted conflicts. Continuing hostilities include physical combat in villages (payams), as well as political unrest in the new government. Disputes concerning borders and oil rights also persist with their northern neighbor, Sudan. Despite these challenges, the new Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) has made huge strides and is deeply committed to the country's development.

PHOTO © JENN WARREN

COMMENDATION FOR THE MSI SUPPORT PROJECT

" I write to commend your outstanding support to the US Presidential Delegation to the independence ceremony for the Republic of South Sudan on July 9, 2011. Your impressive efforts to coordinate media engagement and a series of press events for Ambassador Rice and other members of the delegation contributed greatly to the positive press coverage on a priority issue for President Obama and Secretary Clinton. Please know how deeply we appreciate your sustained efforts as we continue our intensive diplomatic and development work in South Sudan. Congratulations on a job well done!"

– **Ambassador Princeton N. Lyman**, US Special Envoy for Sudan

USAID'S COMMITMENT TO SOUTH SUDAN

Over the interim period from the signing of the CPA in 2005 to independence in 2011, the United States provided nearly $10 billion in humanitarian assistance to the South. The USAID Strategy Statement for 2006-2008 focused on the transition from war to peace and highlighted vulnerable areas in the South, as well as the states of Abyei, Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan.

USAID's approach in the early years was self-described as having "the flexibility to respond to flashpoints as they arise." Programmatically, the strategy embraced a crosscutting, multi-sector approach aimed at supporting the implementation of and reducing the threats to the CPA. This initial strategy, which anticipated the possibility of independence for the South, proposed that "every activity, whatever its source of funding, will look to build institutional and human capacity, increase access to accurate and reliable information, and develop systems for participatory governance, accountability, transparency, and infrastructure development."

In 2009, USAID opened a satellite office in Juba, the proposed capital for Southern Sudan, to better support its programming in this part of the country. As the majority of its aid efforts were focused in the South, USAID simultaneously began scaling down staff levels in the North. Following the 2011 referendum, USAID shifted to Juba in earnest, bringing in more staff, constructing and expanding offices and residential compounds, and increasing its assistance.

USAID officially designated its office in Juba as the USAID/South Sudan Mission to mark the independence of July 9, 2011. A new strategy for the USAID/South Sudan Mission was crafted in the months leading up to independence. This strategy committed USAID to a sustained focus on "strengthening core governance institutions and processes, making them more inclusive; and responding to the expectations of the population for essential services and improved livelihoods; as well as containing the conflicts that are likely to erupt and addressing the grievances behind them." Overall, the strategy aimed at the emergence of an "increasingly stable South Sudan."

GENESIS AND ROLE OF THE SUPPORT PROJECT

Following the CPA, USAID's workload quickly outstripped available resources due to personnel ceilings that limited USAID's ability to field direct hires, U.S. personal services contractors, third country nationals, and foreign service nationals. Working from Khartoum for most of the period before independence, USAID/Sudan found it increasingly difficult to manage its many project development and program office functions in the South, particularly those that supported the work of its technical offices in: overseeing the collection of baseline data, tracking performance and results, submitting periodic performance management reports, evaluating programs, responding to ad-hoc requests for information, undertaking budget analyses of various types, and carrying out other project development and program office functions.

Responding to this situation, USAID identified a number of functions that could be contracted out and sought the assistance of an institutional contractor to work closely with all USAID teams and staff as an adjunct to its program office.

Management Systems International (MSI) was the successful bidder for this complex, multi-year assignment. Start-up activities for the five-year $37 million project, known as the Services Under Program and Project Offices for Results Tracking or SUPPORT Project, were initiated in December of 2007. From December 2007 to October 2012, MSI partnered with USAID program and technical officers throughout the transition to an independent South Sudan, where USAID continues its development support today. Over the life of the SUPPORT Project, the MSI team's list of tasks evolved with USAID's view of its needs, opportunities, and future prospects for South Sudan. Across the five-year period, MSI worked on iterative task lists established through successive contract modifications on an "on-call" basis. It is noteworthy, in this regard, how closely USAID understood the broad outlines of the support it was seeking from this contract in 2007 when it wrote the original project Statement of Work.

From 2007-2009, the SUPPORT Project, like USAID, was based in Khartoum and worked from a distance to place and support teams that carried out studies in the South. Within two weeks of arriving in Sudan, MSI undertook the task of establishing offices and guesthouse hubs for USAID in Khartoum and Juba. To ensure operational capacity and to meet the needs of its client, the project team quickly developed an accessible USAID website and information portal as well as a comprehensive, multi-media communications plan. Over two years between 2009 and 2011, the SUPPORT Project along with a small group of USAID staff shifted to Juba, opening offices that better supported not only USAID projects and high-level visits to the South, but institutional capacity building within the nascent government.

By early 2009, the MSI SUPPORT Project had established a permanent presence in Juba, and assisted USAID with the establishment of its own office in Southern Sudan. At the request of USAID, the SUPPORT Khartoum office was closed in February 2010 and all operations were concentrated in Juba, where ongoing development assistance and support for the upcoming general election and referendum on independence were critical. Throughout this dramatic period, MSI's on-the-ground experience and strong relationships with USAID staff in both Juba and Khartoum made the SUPPORT Project essential for the effective and efficient implementation of programs. In SUPPORT's final year following independence, work continued with a special emphasis on expanding USAID's full-time staff capacity in order to meet requirements for implementing the 2011-2013 Transition Strategy.

Despite the constantly changing needs and complexities in South Sudan's evolving environment, MSI achieved concrete results and maintained a high level of customer satisfaction in this challenging setting. In October 2012, the SUPPORT Project closed after five years, with a number of its former staff and many of its functions absorbed into the fabric of the USAID/South Sudan Mission.

EXCERPT FROM USAID'S STATEMENT OF WORK FOR THE SUPPORT PROJECT (2007)

SUPPORT activities will include assessments to assist in program development and implementation; specialized research on how to … manage the transition from relief to recovery to reconstruction to development; provide quick, short-term technical assistance to support program implementation; monitoring and evaluation of relief and development programs; specialized training for new staff; and specialized cross-sectoral technical assistance;…[assist in] workshops and other events that facilitate coordination among implementers and donors…[and] other miscellaneous support to the Mission's programs, potentially including but not limited to: organizing and providing logistical support to retreats and other off-compound events; media products as requested; [and] providing logistical support for VIP visits.

RESULTS AND LEGACY OF THE SUPPORT PROJECT

In November 2009, the SUPPORT team facilitated USAID's internal Strategic Portfolio Review, which was held in Nairobi. While faced with significant obstacles that could have resulted in a chaotic situation, SUPPORT staff was able to navigate complex circumstances to make the event run smoothly.

FACILITATING USAID'S MISSION IN SOUTHERN SUDAN

Over the five-year life of the project, the SUPPORT Project provided a wide range of coordination, logistical, and staffing services to USAID, its partners, and other key stakeholders. This behind-the-scenes role helped USAID to implement its agenda in the South and respond systematically to a wide variety of requests under challenging conditions.

MEETING AND CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS AND FACILITIES

From 2008 to 2012, logistical support for USAID meetings, conferences, training programs, and other events was a regular activity both in Khartoum and Juba. From its initial base in Khartoum, the SUPPORT Project facilitated meetings and workshops in the North as well as the South. On some occasions, MSI's logistical assistance made working sessions possible between the Khartoum and Juba-based USAID staff teams, as illustrated below:

In November 2009, the SUPPORT team facilitated USAID's internal Strategic Portfolio Review, which was held in Nairobi. While faced with significant obstacles that could have resulted in a chaotic situation, SUPPORT staff was able to navigate complex circumstances to make the event run smoothly. Less than two weeks before the conference, the venue had to be changed due to shifting security concerns. The SUPPORT team reacted quickly, shifting arrangements from the original site of Mombasa to Nairobi. On the fourth day of the Portfolio Review, the hotel informed the SUPPORT team that the conference needed to be relocated due to a surprise visit from four African heads of state. There was some disruption, but the sessions continued and USAID completed its agenda on schedule. MSI was complimented for its ability to act with speed and efficiency. This off-site Portfolio Review allowed USAID/Sudan staff from Khartoum, Nairobi, Washington, D.C., and Juba to have valuable time together to develop plans and strategies without the stress of managing complex and changing logistical challenges.

With the influx of staff to Juba, USAID found it had limited physical space to hold meetings, particularly in the initial years. To address this constraint, MSI followed directions provided in its task order and built and equipped a professional office compound on the corner lot across from USAID's office. This compound, which became operational in 2009, was equipped with 32 offices to house the MSI team including Institutionally Contracted Staff (ICS) hired by SUPPORT to work directly with USAID's technical and program offices; multiple working

spaces, including a copying room, kitchen, and bathroom buildings; and spaces that could be assigned on a revolving basis for meetings, workshops, and seminars, including two conference rooms equipped with projection and sound systems for training workshops. USAID's need for this facility was driven not only by the limited space within the U.S. government compound where it was housed, but also by security and political considerations that made holding certain gatherings off-site both practical and desirable.

Between the opening of the compound and the end of the project in 2012, approximately 2,000 USAID meetings, conferences, and training programs were held on the SUPPORT site. In a city that is still very much developing and where appropriate professional space is not always available or accessible, facilitating coordination among implementers, donors, and the GRSS became far more feasible and convenient with the SUPPORT compound. The box below illustrates the range of purposes for which compound spaces were utilized under the project.

ILLUSTRATIVE USAID AND PARTNER USES OF THE SUPPORT PROJECT MEETING AND CONFERENCE FACILITIES

2010	2011
• Local Musician Workshop (DoS), RARE Training, one day July • Ministry of Education and Development Partners Strategy, seven days July and August • Preventing Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) Health Team Meeting, one day July • M&E training course, 10 days July and August • Women and Constitution Building Mini-Evaluation Team Meetings, six days July • Education Sector Strategic Plan, two days July • Referendum Assistance Assessment Team Planning, two days July • PEPFAR Strategic Planning, four days August • Family Planning Demand (GH Tech), 10 days August • FFP Food Security Briefing, two days August	• Consultation by the Commission on International Religious Freedoms • USAID Scoping Mission, six days in July and August • Health Team PEPFAR meetings, six days in July and September • Communications and Media trainings, July and September • Partner consultations (Winrock International), four days in August and September • Teacher Training, one day in August • Special Envoy meeting in August • Democracy and Governance Team Retreat where SUPPORT provided additional facilitation (one day in September)

COMMENDATION FOR THE MSI SUPPORT PROJECT

"I thought [the training binders] were done very well. During the training, the trainers commented about how well they were assembled so that everything was easy to find in them."

-**Diane Moore**, Executive Officer

USAID/South Sudan

In addition to meetings held at the SUPPORT compound, the team routinely organized meetings and workshops at other venues in Juba and other locations within South Sudan for USAID. Arrangements of this sort involved both USAID staff and other important program stakeholders. SUPPORT, for example:

- Assisted with logistics for a 2009 U.S. trade delegation trip to Eastern Equatoria State (July 13-15, 2009) and facilitated a half-day end of visit briefing for 40 people.
- Facilitated a two-day Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) conference in 2010 attended by the GRSS Minister of Agriculture and three State Ministers for Agriculture whom the SUPPORT team transported and hosted.
- Organized two off-site events in 2011 for the Education Team and its partners: an Education Partnership Launch and an Education Partners Portfolio Review.

MATERIAL PREPARATIONS

MSI logistical assistance under the SUPPORT Project included the regular preparation of briefing binders for VIPs and incoming USAID leadership, report printing and circulation, and the compilation of Portfolio Review documents. A typical printing and assembling task presented to SUPPORT is detailed GH Tech. Although seemingly mundane, in a country where securing a copier or a high–quality printer is a task unto itself, heavy load assembling duties were no easy task but necessary for day-to-day bureaucratic functioning. Illustrative support of this nature included:

- Assembling training manuals for the 2011 Mission staff training in USAID's Global Acquisition and Assistance System (GLAAS). This involved copying and assembling 78 training manuals totaling approximately 20,600 pages, the majority of which were double-sided and printed in color.
- Preparing background materials for former British Prime Minister Tony Blair during his 2011 visit to South Sudan, as well as supporting trips by U.S. officials to the region.
- Creating Phase I and Phase II customized evaluation training handbooks for a class of 24 South Sudan nationals in 2011. These handbooks included not only training slides but also sufficient supplementary reading material to form a basic evaluation library for each course participant.
- Providing support to USAID/South Sudan's first Mission Portfolio Review in mid-November 2012. This included undertaking the preparatory printing of various materials, provision of a note taker for the three-day meeting, and ensuring the provision of supplies and refreshments at a local Juba venue.

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

With a full-time Travel and Events Coordinator, MSI was able to have convenient, consistent, and current travel information and prices to coordinate, book, and secure travel plans from international routes to Juba to meet staffing needs or the more difficult assignment of reaching projects in remote locations, and included partnerships with other implementing partners with planes. Program quality improved as technical assistance was able to visit the field frequently with the logistical assistance and field support the SUPPORT Project provided. SUPPORT Project quarterly reports

Government of South Sudan Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Dr. Anne Itto (center) with USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa, Franklin Moore (left) and U.S. Consul General in Juba, Ambassador R. Barrie Walkey (right) at the Southern Sudan Agricultural Conference August 24-25 in Nairobi. Photo Credit: Tim Freccia

illustrate the intensity as well as the complexity of the project's travel and transportation focus:

- In May of 2011 alone, with only three full-time staff members holding down offices in Khartoum and Juba, the SUPPORT Project provided technical support and logistics for five evaluations and two assessments. With assistance from the SUPPORT Project, seven USAID teams traveled to14 different towns (some repeatedly) in five states and interviewed 50 individuals per activity, on average.

- In the third quarter of 2012, the SUPPORT Project arranged for logistics to, from, and within the eight states of South Sudan for ICS and consultants, including the booking of 77 flights on World Food Program/ UN Humanitarian Air Service, eight commercial flights within South Sudan, and 18 round trip flights from neighboring countries for short-term international consultants and staff.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SUPPORT

In addition to facilitating USAID meetings, conferences, and training programs for its staff and implementing partners, the SUPPORT Project played a critical role in organizing and facilitating important international, multi-donor, and multi-agency conferences that focused on South Sudan.

- In August 2010, USAID, the Office of the U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, and the GRSS hosted a three-day multinational, agro-economic conference in Nairobi, Kenya. The conference brought together approximately 200 officials to discuss solutions and innovations and included representatives from other international donors, agricultural research organizations, financial institutions, and multinational agribusinesses as well as key figures in the private donor community including Howard W. Buffett, son of Warren Buffett. Howard Buffet is a philanthropist and head of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation which supports projects, especially agricultural resource development for small-holder and subsistence farmers, in Africa. MSI handled all logistics for the conference through the SUPPORT Project, including invitations, flights, and hotel accommodations; the procurement of administrative and technical equipment, such as copiers, faxes, and audio/visual equipment; as well as arranging the speaker line-up and press packets. SUPPORT also arranged for a professional photographer for USAID to draw attention to the major partnerships the conference generated, as illustrated by the conference photo posted on USAID's blog at the time. Commenting on MSI's work on this conference, one participant summed it up this way:

> "I've been especially impressed by ...the outstanding [SUPPORT] team ...assembled to make this conference come off as a first-class event. The attention to detail, positive attitude in the face of some big (and last minute) challenges, and a creative approach has made everything work out as if it was easy. You can be very proud of your great team...I'd work with this group again in a heartbeat."

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
2011 WASHINGTON, DC

"I very much recognize that the heavy lift was done in Juba [MSI staff and Michelle Barrett, USAID/South Sudan Program Offices] working on visas and travel etc. for all the various USAID-funded travelers [to the International Engagement Conference] as well as for the others. It would not have been possible without your diligent work and willingness to help out with the most detailed of tasks."

– **Andrea K. Freeman**, Office of Sudan Programs Bureau for Africa (AFR/SP)

- In December 2011, in partnership with the U.S. government, MSI helped to organize and coordinate logistics for the two-day International Engagement Conference for South Sudan held in Washington, D.C. This event provided the new nation of South Sudan with a forum through which it could reach the international community as well as the South Sudanese diaspora. The conference was attended by more than 550 South Sudanese and donor participants. For the first time, GRSS ministers were able to present their development goals, challenges, and opportunities to major donors, creating a framework for international coordination in the country. Speakers at the conference included Republic of South Sudan President Salva Kiir, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, and USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, as well as the U.S. Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice, and U.S. Senator John Kerry, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Musicians and former Sudanese child soldier Emmanuel Jal was also present for this event. In his Annual Letter to USAID's senior staff, Administrator Shah described this event as having brought together "more than 20 countries and 100 corporations to help South Sudan expand business opportunities and diversify its economy." The SUPPORT Project worked closely in Juba with the Mission and the GRSS to arrange visas, flights, and hotel reservations for 29 South Sudanese civil society and government representatives to attend the conference.

VIP VISITS TO SOUTH SUDAN

With the signing of the CPA and the realization of benchmarks towards independence, Southern Sudan's priority on the U.S. foreign policy agenda rose and VIP visits to Juba increased in parallel, particularly during the period between the referendum in January 2011 and national independence in July 2011. Working closely with USAID in Juba, the SUPPORT Project produced briefing files and arranged high level meetings for the individual visits of Assistant Administrator Nancy Lindborg, Assistant Administrator Rajakumari Jandhyala, Deputy Administrator Donald Steinberg, and two visits by Administrator Rajiv Shah.

During his first visit in May 2010, Assistant Ben Hubbard, Assistant Nishant Roy, Press Director Lynne Weil,

"You did a fantastic job yesterday! Your preparation, professionalism, and substantive input really made me proud that I am part of the Sudan team. I think the Administrator and guests really appreciated the day and the meaning of our work. Thank you so much. Look forward to working with you in the coming months as we gear up of an independent South Sudan."

– **Rajakumari Jandhyala**, , Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Africa, USAID

Senior DAA/AFR Sharon Cromer, and Senior DAA/DCHA Susan Reichle accompanied Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah. USAID/Sudan Director William Hammink and Deputy Mission Director Doug Arbunkle hosted the delegation. Both visits by Administrator Rajiv Shah carried the theme of promoting economic growth in the upcoming new nation. The first visit launched the FARM project, and the second witnessed the signing of a communiqué for a "Partnership for Private Sector Growth" that took place on a local working farm near Juba.

LAUNCHES AND OPENINGS

USAID project launches and facility openings were common over the life of the SUPPORT Project, which was frequently called upon to provide both logistical and communications support. Typical of this type of activity was the December 2011 handover of the Yabongo Girls' Secondary School held in Yambio, Western Equatoria, roughly 500 km from Juba. Despite the challenge of getting to this venue over bad roads, the event was a clear success. Preparation for the event required enormous coordination with USAID and the State Ministry of Education, as well as contractors and suppliers, all within a short timeframe.

AUGMENTING USAID'S WORKFORCE

As its program grew for South Sudan, USAID was increasingly constrained by staffing limitations in the Mission in Khartoum and during its early years in Juba. Security, housing, and limited access to office space further exacerbated this situation. To address the gap between its direct hire, foreign service staff, and expanding workforce needs, USAID integrated a component into the SUPPORT contract that made it a mechanism for recruiting, hiring, and providing office spaces for individuals who, once on board, could provide

dedicated and direct assistance to USAID's program and technical offices. Two aspects of the SUPPORT Project played a critical role in this regard: (a) the ICS program, through which MSI brought in long term staff who worked directly with and for USAID offices, and (b) the SUPPORT Project's mandate to make technical experts available for short and long-term consultancies as needed.

INSTITUTIONALLY CONTRACTED STAFF (ICS)

Over the five years of the SUPPORT Project, 33 individuals were engaged on an ICS basis. SUPPORT recruited and trained both local and expat staff who have been able to work effectively with USAID staff, and five South Sudanese nationals who transitioned easily into permanent positions within USAID at the end of the project. One of these individuals, Richard Ojara, received a Special Act Award from USAID Administrator Shah, as described below. MSI's mandate and ability under the SUPPORT Project to take over this workforce expansion function and consistently provide USAID with high quality candidates has been especially crucial with the establishment of the new Mission in Juba.

A recent assessment of USAID/South Sudan's management systems and operations highlights the critical role played by ICS in providing important technical expertise and continuity in Mission operations over time. In the view of the report, MSI proved adept at recruiting and placing top quality staff to serve on an interim basis while USAID/South Sudan recruited permanent staff members. While the replacement of ICS with direct hires would enhance the Mission's ability to have staff in place capable of carrying out governmental functions, several offices expressed concerns that the loss of ICS would reduce the Mission's capability to carry out on-site program monitoring as they were often less constrained by security requirements and other demands in traveling to project sites than direct hires.

Nonetheless, USAID's Democracy and Governance Team, with which Richard Ojara works, is not the only office that has benefitted from the ICS program. The USAID/South Sudan Education Team has benefited significantly from the staffing component of the SUPPORT Project. Over the years, they have gained the expertise of four extremely qualified and talented South Sudanese ICS, three of whom have become full-time staff members with USAID. Collectively, these individuals provided strong support in the development of the USAID Education Portfolio and engaged daily with USAID staff members to ensure the successful completion of team assignments. MSI's technical expert in education, Kathryn Johnston, reflected insightfully on how the mechanism worked to the benefit of all, "Daily interaction on-site with USAID—along with their own efforts and excellent performance . . . was pivotal in getting them hired as USAID staff."

The transition stories of former SUPPORT staff members, Pia Phillip and Anyieth Ayuen, are consistent with the observations above:

PIA PHILLIP
SOURCE MSI

- Pia Phillip worked with MSI from June to August 2009 as an Education Program Manager. He soon transitioned to USAID and quickly began assuming leadership roles. He undertook USAID's training to become a Contracting Officer's Representatives (COR) and shouldered team leader and deputy team leader roles during the many transitions of USAID staff over the years. On March 3, 2012 he was appointed and sworn in as the State Minister of Education for Western Equatoria. In Pia's case, the SUPPORT Project was not only bolstered USAID, but more importantly, South Sudan in terms of building the capacity of its individuals and providing a channeling mechanism to bring talent into

"It would be a disaster to not have Teffera [Wondwossen] around. He provides a high level of expertise on technical issues pertaining to WASH and [the Mission] needs, level of oversight that Teffera gives – he often talks on behalf of USAID, goes to donor meetings, etc."

–Anna Hoffman
Deputy Health Team leader

leadership positions important to the long term development goals of the country.

- Anyeith Ayuen worked with MSI from January 2009 to January 2010 as an Education Specialist. He soon transitioned to USAID, began adopting leadership roles, and was trained to become a COR. Anyeith put his view of the merits of the ICS process this way: "I had never worked in development before [so] working with MSI was a great first step. It allowed me to learn about the USAID rules and regulations before being hired by the [M] ission… the space provided by MSI was crucial to getting the work done."

The importance of ICS has also been apparent in other subsectors. USAID's growing earmark for its Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) activities within the health portfolio, which was understaffed in 2009, posed a serious management burden. Unfortunately, the Mission was unable to include a full-time position for a manager in its staffing plan for this crucial program. Recognizing this significant gap, the Mission turned to SUPPORT and from January 2009 through the end of the project, SUPPORT employed Teffera Wondwossen as an ICS with the appropriate technical and managerial expertise to address the demands of this program. Just as the SUPPORT Project ended, USAID/South Sudan found a way to bring Teffera on board as a permanent hire.

LONG AND SHORT-TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONSULTANCIES

In addition to supporting USAID's staffing needs through ICS arrangements, the SUPPORT Project routinely recruited and placed expert staff in short and long-term positions in a variety of technical fields needed by the Mission. SUPPORT Project staff played an active role in drafting Scopes of Work, writing job advertisements, and mobilizing experts, often in a very short amount of time.

To fill USAID/South Sudan assignments, MSI's home office in Washington, D.C. utilized its Taleo database, which includes 84,800 interested candidates of whom roughly 400 are South Sudan nationals, to identify qualified individuals for consideration by the SUPPORT Project team and USAID/South Sudan. Through this process, the SUPPORT Project identified and successfully recruited top-notch technical experts who brought with them skilled reputations in their field, as well as experience in and knowledgeable of the particular issues facing South Sudan. Working interactively between Juba and Washington, D.C. with its already established candidate pool, SUPPORT was able to quickly fill junior, mid, and senior level positions identified by the Mission. Consultants placed in this manner have ranged from long-term and flexible staff working on USAID's infrastructure portfolio and short-term intensive technical assistance for a single project or task to Mission-wide support in GIS mapping.

For a Mission that was continuously out-growing its staffing plan, it was necessary to bring in technical assistance to fill specific roles and complete urgent tasks, especially those related to the development of USAID office procedures and staff training. One such example was the Participant Training Specialist, selected by the program office from a pool of talented candidates for her outstanding work with other Missions, who focused on developing/drafting Mission orders on participant training and unsolicited proposals crucial to running the Mission, and training USAID and implementing partner staff on participant training and the use of TraiNet. After working with the individual MSI recruited for this job,

As a result of MSI's technical assistance, the Mission's programs and reporting methods are more efficient, streamlined, comprehensive, and accurate.

Annet Giryang of USAID's program office contacted SUPPORT to let the MSI team know that "[her] work was greatly appreciated…the training [she] provided to implementing partner staff on Participant Training and TraiNet was very useful . . . [we] wished she could have stayed longer!"

KEYS TO SUCCESS

SUPPORT's "[ability] to get the best people in the market"

–George Wagwa,

USAID Infrastructure Advisor

PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY EVIDENCE THROUGH MONITORING AND EVALUATION, ASSESSMENTS, AND SPECIAL STUDIES

From its initial year onward, the SUPPORT Project was routinely called upon to provide technical assistance and outside experts to help USAID technical offices, as well as the program office, to conduct assessments in support of project designs, develop performance monitoring plans, undertake performance data quality assessments (DQAs), conduct mid-project and final evaluations, and carry out special studies needed to support USAID's work in Southern Sudan. Over the contract period, the SUPPORT Project organized teams that completed a total of 51 distinct analytic reports, of which 47 percent were evaluations, 24 percent were special studies, 22 percent were assessments, and eight percent (or four studies) supported USAID design activities. Highlights from these analytic studies are presented in this section.

SUPPORT also worked with USAID technical office teams to develop Performance Management Plans that included the identification of performance indicators in USAID programs in health, education, democracy/governance, and economic growth as well as the selection of appropriate frequency, timing, and data collection and analysis methods for each these indicators. In addition, in support of USAID requirements for quality assessments of data produced against performance reporting indicators, M&E staff on the SUPPORT Project have mentored and supported USAID staff members in conducting DQAs over the years, participating in or leading these activities for upwards of 150 performance indicators. In FY 2011 alone, SUPPORT conducted over 80 indicator-specific DQAs for 28 USAID-funded projects. In response to USAID requests, MSI's Project Monitor also visited project sites and submitted detailed reports to CORs on performance monitoring in the field. This individual also participated in data verification activities for one of USAID's implementing partners.

The SUPPORT Project faced an array of logistical and capacity challenges as it carried out these analytic studies in South Sudan. USAID Forward, an ambitious internal reform program introduced by USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, offered additional professional challenges—including a challenge to everyone working within and with USAID to improve the quality of its M&E practices.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES

The SUPPORT Project's responses to logistical impediments coupled with opportunities for strengthening local analytic capacity and strong encouragement in the form of new USAID policies for strengthening M&E define this project at its best.

SOUTHERN SUDAN LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES

In the five years during which the SUPPORT Project provided assistance to USAID's efforts in South Sudan, the nature of the logistical challenges changed, but never completely disappeared. During the initial period, MSI's team worked from Khartoum, recruiting external teams and sending its own staff to work on analytic studies in the South. When SUPPORT staff, along with a small USAID contingent, moved to Juba to set up a field office, there were significant trade-offs in terms of what remained difficult and what got easier. Over time, and particularly with the construction of the SUPPORT compound across from USAID's office, access to office facilities and equipment improved; however, demands for assistance rose concurrently as USAID's field office staff expanded and its plans for assisting Southern Sudan grew exponentially. Over the following year or two, as the SUPPORT staff and USAID's offices became more settled, the influx of teams and other visitors expanded, straining every advance the SUPPORT team made with respect to supplying equipment, transport, accommodations, and other necessities. Even as it began to engage in project close-out procedures, the SUPPORT team found itself fielding questions and helping new

M&E SUPPORT VALUED

MSI had been and is very instrumental in the support and success of the BRIDGE program especially in the areas of monitoring and evaluation assistance over the years. USAID is grateful for the support.

–Victor Lako, BRIDGE project COR

arrivals locate individuals and firms who might be able to help future teams navigate South Sudan's continuing logistical challenges.

Despite these obstacles, the SUPPORT Project consistently helped USAID to direct hire staff that often faced difficulties in getting out into the field to visit their projects on a regular basis owing to low numbers of staff, lack of time to travel to the field, and security restrictions on travel. To mitigate the constraints USAID staff faced, the SUPPORT Project's full-time M&E staff frequently engaged in project monitoring support ranging from individual meetings with USAID staff or implementing partners, DQAs, and indicator development to visiting project sites on the ground. The SUPPORT team also developed a streamlined process for publicizing opportunities for technical and M&E experts to participate in evaluations, assessments, and specials studies for USAID; recruited highly-qualified experts for positions on dozens of teams; solved visa problems in order to bring them to Southern Sudan in a timely manner; and organized reliable and safe transport to wherever they needed to go to carry out the analytic studies for which they were engaged.

ANALYTIC CAPACITY BUILDING IN AND FOR SOUTH SUDAN

Throughout the SUPPORT Project's five-year life, MSI placed a high priority on training its local staff and involving them in all aspects of its analytic support activities, particularly its M&E work. It also actively pursued opportunities to engage local and internationally-based South Sudanese nationals on study teams as technical experts in their fields, and other roles where their capacity to carry out M&E tasks would be enhanced. SUPPORT staff also engaged in capacity building efforts with USAID staff to transfer as much knowledge and as many skills as possible to USAID local staff in recognition of the important technical and M&E roles that USAID foreign service national staff play in Missions world-wide.

Soon after Sudan declared its independence in July 2011, the SUPPORT Project built on its already well-developed mentoring and training program for local SUPPORT Project and USAID staff to bring a unique evaluation training program to South Sudan. This program provides the equivalent of a graduate school semester of academic training combined with practical experience in planning, implementing, and the writing up of an evaluation of a small project or project component for which there was a real client to whom participants present their findings. Managed by the SUPPORT team's evaluation specialist, Ingrid Orvedal (pictured on next page), the MSI Certificate Program in Evaluation was offered in Juba for a class of 24 participants, almost all of whom were South Sudanese nationals including five representatives of the new GRSS and 12 local staff members of international and local non-governmental organizations. Working in teams, these participants completed eight meaningful mini-evaluations and produced reports that were revised with the instructor's input. These reports are listed below to illustrate the range of these participant learning experiences:

- Community Radio End Term Performance Mini-Evaluation
- The Torit-Katire Feeder Road Project – A Final Evaluation
- Sudan Health Transformation Project II: Leadership Development Program – Mid-term Evaluation
- Mini-Evaluation of the Civil Society Resource Centers – LINCS Program
- The Tanker Truck Filling Station Project Evaluation
- Final Evaluation of Women and Constitution Building Workshop
- Evaluation of Maridi Market Town Electrification Project

For the SUPPORT Project, the success of this program will leave a legacy within USAID and the larger development community of South Sudan.

"In fact the evaluation task seems to have been neglected by some institutions, but it is the main method of addressing issues affecting the progress in project implementation and its sustainability. Please continue providing guides for some from the government institutions to enable them do their own monitoring and evaluation of their projects."
– Government course participant

"As an M&E practitioner I am now better able to perform my evaluation responsibilities and to produce better and more usable evaluation reports."– Course participant

SYSTEMATICALLY STRENGTHENING USAID MONITORING AND EVALUATION

When the SUPPORT Project began its M&E work with USAID in 2007, performance monitoring was well engrained in the Agency. However, USAID evaluations had declined in terms of the portion of the portfolio they covered and their perceived

USAID FORWARD ON STRENGTHENING MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Learning by measuring progress is critical for high impact, sustainable development and therefore must be an integral part of USAID's thought process from the onset of its activities. That requires USAID to do a much better job of systematically monitoring its performance and evaluating its impact. USAID will be introducing an improved monitoring and evaluation process as part of these reform efforts, and it will link those efforts to its program design, budgeting and strategy work.

quality. At the same time, a report on evaluation produced in 2006 by the Center for Global Development called When Will We Ever Learn, and a related advocacy effort with a wide range of donor organizations as well as parliaments were laying the foundation for significant change. By 2009, USAID had begun to revitalize its Evaluation Office and in 2010 when Administrator Shah was sworn in, he immediately signaled his support for improvements in M&E:

"We have this unique opportunity to create massive improvement in the human condition - but to seize this opportunity, we have to do a better job establishing baseline data, measuring progress, being transparent about both our successes and our failures - learning from both and improving our approach as we go forward."

By 2011, Dr. Shah had followed up with a comprehensive reform program called USAID Forward that included a challenge to the Agency to strengthen its M&E. He subsequently issued a new Evaluation Policy that is tightly linked, through evidence-based learning and decision making, with the Agency's new Program Cycle Guidance, CDCS process, and Project Design guidance. This new guidance is expected, in Dr. Shah's view, to contribute to the renewal of USAID's internal capacity for planning, design, and learning to reestablish USAID as the premier agency in the development field.

Rising to these challenges, the SUPPORT Project expanded its mentoring for USAID staff as well as its own staff. The SUPPORT staff also developed an evaluation management manual, the Assessment, Evaluation and Special Study Guidelines. This manual has gone a long way towards systematizing evaluation practices in the USAID/South Sudan environment, and ensuring that USAID staff members are acquainted with key elements of USAID's Evaluation Policy. This document served as a tool for the SUPPORT team as well as for USAID staff and external consultants and has helped to enhance study quality and the reliability of findings, conclusions, and recommendations as well as promote transparency and accountability. The guidelines have evolved and been revised and streamlined over the life of the project to reflect evaluation policy changes and other developing USAID guidance. Topics covered in the manual include best practices for the preparation of evaluation Statements of Work (SOWs) and the selection

PMP management is an ongoing process of review, revision and implementation. The project worked closely with the Program and Project Development Office and Technical Offices on updating and revising PMP tables and documents, helping USAID staff reflect changes in strategies and activities. Monitoring and evaluation has been a major component of the project. Even in the final months, SUPPORT continued to train USAID staff in M&E techniques and update them on changing methodologies.

Mentoring and building skills within USAID, along with the SUPPORT staff, have been key components of the project from day one and most importantly, for the future of the Mission.

of appropriate methods and qualified teams. It also includes principles for keeping USAID and stakeholders involved and informed through an initial Team Planning Meeting and other periodic check-in meetings. The standardized process promoted by the manual allowed SUPPORT M&E staff to improve their management of external teams as well as mentor USAID staff involved in planning, supervising, and reviewing evaluations.

PRODUCING HIGH QUALITY EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

By building on its approach for managing logistics, acting on opportunities to enhance local analytic capacity, and strengthening M&E knowledge and skills, the SUPPORT team produced a steady flow of studies to support the work of USAID's technical offices, the Southern Sudan government, and non-governmental institutions. This section provides an overview of the range of analytic studies the project produced.

EVALUATIONS

Evaluations were by far the most frequent type of study the SUPPORT Project carried out for USAID under this project and included both mid-term and final evaluations, conducted by teams comprised of international and local technical experts and evaluators. A table in this section lists the 24 evaluations conducted by the SUPPORT Project over five years.

As USAID's Evaluation Policy states, "evaluation is useful only insofar as it provides evidence to inform real-world decision making." The SUPPORT Project shared this philosophy. As illustrative statements from evaluation users demonstrate, mid-term and final performance evaluations undertaken by SUPPORT have helped USAID to improve project implementation and make crucial decisions about programming:

- In the words of USAID Education Specialist, Jane Namadi, when discussing the mid-term evaluation of the South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction Project SUPPORT conducted in 2008, it "turned around the whole project, [had a] huge impact, [resulted in] contract modifications, reprogramming, [and an] expansion in scope."

- In September 2010, SUPPORT conducted a mid-term evaluation of the BRIDGE Project, where its findings and recommendations were instrumental in crucial decisions regarding changes to project implementation and potential extension. According to Victor Lako, COR for the BRIDGE Project, "The results of acting on the mid-term evaluation recommendations have been so great that local officials and beneficiaries of the program of various sectors became more effective, confident and demonstrated expertise in carrying out their work. There is evidence of performance on those who benefited from various trainings offered by Winrock/BRIDGE due to continuous follow up and on-the-job training that became a new approach after the evaluation report."

- The final report for the USAID/South Sudan SHTP II project provided "realistic assessment and solid recommendations and areas for the Mission to consider," according to Cliff Lubitz, USAID/Sudan Deputy Team Leader for Health. In the view of Anna Williams, Health Advisor to USAID/Sudan, this evaluation "will continue to be a core USAID Sudan assessing and learning document." Additionally, Anna Hoffman, USAID Deputy Health Team Leader, reported that "including USAID/Washington [in the field work] resulted in more buy-in and interest in South Sudan, they provided more support and had more buy-in for changes in the project down the road, provided hard data to the COR to be able to go back to the IP and say these are the things you need to do, that we're not seeing – the evaluation was the basis for these corrections."

- A final evaluation of the South Sudan Technical Assistance project, according to William Osafo, USAID Education Team Leader, "caused shifts in the education portfolio, highlighted the issues with training people who will go back to a job situation where they can't use their [newly acquired] skills and with the evidence from this evaluation the Education team was able to justify pilot[ing] the fixed obligation grants in order to give funds to improve work situations so that trainees can go back to work and utilize their new skills."

Evaluations Conducted by the SUPPORT Project		
Title	**Year**	**Focus**
USAID Support to Sudanese Political Parties and the Southern Sudanese Legislative Assembly Mid-Term Evaluation (IRI)	2008	Governance
Evaluation of the Sudan Agricultural Market & Enterprise Development (AMED) Program	2008	Agriculture
Southern Sudan Rural Electrification Project (SSREP) Evaluation	2008	Infrastructure
Sudan: Land O'Lakes Livestock Development and Dairy Cooperatives Program(LDDCP)	2008	Agriculture
Southern Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction (SSIRI) Program Mid-term Evaluation	2008	Education
Evaluation of the USAID/Sudan "Sudan Transitional Environment Program (STEP)" Implemented by IRG	2008	Environment
Management Review of Implementation of Southern Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction (SSIRI) Program Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendation & IG Education Audit Findings	2008	Education
Southern Sudan Technical Advisors program (SSTAP) Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) Mid-Term Evaluation (AED)	2009	Education and Capacity Building
Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID Support to Developing Core Institutional Structures Project: Core Institutions Program(DELOITTE)	2010	Democracy/Governance, Growth
Sudan Infrastructure Services Project Evaluation Report (WASH)	2010	Infrastructure
Health, Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) Project Mid-Term Evaluation	2010	Health
Gender Equity through Education Project (GEE) Mid-Term Evaluation Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MOEST)	2010	Education
Mid-Term Evaluation of Conservation of Biodiversity Across the Boma-Jonglei Landscape of Southern Sudan (WCS)	2010	Environment
The Sudan Infrastructure Capacity Building Program Mid-Term Evaluation Report (SICBP)	2010	Infrastructure
Strengthening Pharmaceuticals Systems Lessons Learned Evaluation Report (MOH)	2010	Health
Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan (LINCS) Mid-Term Evaluation (Mercy Corps)	2010	Capacity Building, Local Governance
Sudan Health Transformation Project Phase II (SHTP II) Mid-Term Evaluation Report	2011	Health
Building Responsibility for the Delivery of Government Services (BRIDGE) Project Mid-Term Evaluation	2011	Infrastructure
Southern Sudan Technical Assistance Project (SSTAP) End of Project Review	2011	Capacity Building
Mid-Term Evaluation of the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response Project	2011	Health
South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction Performance Evaluation Report	2012	Education
Gender Equity through Education Performance Evaluation Report	2012	Education
Sudan Health Transformation Project Phase II: End of Project Performance Evaluation Report	2012	Health
Sudan Health Transformation Project Phase II (SHTP II) Mid-Term Evaluation Report	2012	Health

GENDER EQUITY THROUGH EDUCATION (GEE) WAS THE FOCUS OF SUPPORT PROJECT MID-TERM AND FINAL EVALUATIONS

The Gender Equity through Education (GEE) Program is a five-year activity (2007-2012) implemented by Winrock International for USAID that aimed to contribute toward gender parity among students and teachers, as well as to facilitate gender equity in terms of student achievement, attitudes, and behaviors well beyond their educational experiences. GEE is active in all 10 states in South Sudan, as well as the transitional areas of Abyei and Nuba Mountains. The GEE Program is implemented through a central office in Juba, with field offices in Wau and Malakal.

(Photo: Annual Report 2011)

SPECIAL STUDIES

The SUPPORT Project carried out 12 special studies that addressed a wide range of issues as the table below indicates. Across this range, capacity building was a significant theme. Special studies in this set included both analytic studies focused on development issues in Southern Sudan, including one that examined the Sudan HIV and AIDS Program (SHAP), and ones that focused internally on USAID approaches and practices. Also included were reports on significant activities, including a summary report on the 2011 International Engagement Conference and a report on the graduate school level Certification Program in Evaluation which MSI provided for South Sudanese nationals described above.

Special Studies Conducted by the SUPPORT Project

Evaluation Title	Year	Evaluation Scope
Communications and Outreach Strategy	2008	Communication
Sudan Air Charter Study	2008	Transport
New Reporting Requirements	2008	Reporting
Initial Environmental Examinations	2008	Capacity Building
South Sudan: Post Conflict Economic Recovery and Growth: An Agenda for USAID Engagement	2009	Economic Growth
GOSS Functional Capacity Prioritization Study	2009	Democracy and Governance, Growth
USAID Capacity Building Strategy Assistance	2010	Capacity Building
MSI Certificate Program in Evaluation – Juba, South Sudan	2011	M&E
USAID/South Sudan Education Strategy Alignment Report (EDSAR)	2011	Education
International Engagement Conference Summary Report	2011	Conference
Strategic Capacity Building Guidelines: A Practical Guide for USAID/South Sudan	2012	Capacity Building
Assessment of Sudan HIV and AIDS Program (SHAP)	2012	Health

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments undertaken by the SUPPORT Project often focused on how well a planned activity was likely to work or how well an ongoing effort was working. In either case, the results were expected to inform forward-planning decisions. Assessments ranged from studies related to USAID's support for elections to efforts it was considering or undertaking with civil society organizations and political parties. Feasibility was also an assessment question, as when USAID asked the SUPPORT Project to undertake a study to determine whether a volunteer program could be established that would bring South Sudanese working as teachers in the United States to Sudan for a one or two year period. It was hoped that the returning teachers would bolster the quality of teaching and fill in for permanent staff in the South Sudanese educational system while they earned advanced certificates and degrees that would prepare them to raise education standards and levels on a long term basis.

Assessments Conducted by the SUPPORT Project

Title	Year	Focus
An Assessment of USAID Election Support Options in Sudan	2008	Governance
Feasibility Study for a Second- Phase Southern Sudanese Diaspora Program Focused on Education: Phase I Report	2009	Diaspora
Expanding Agriculture and Food Security Activities in Southern Sudan Assessment	2009	Agriculture
Media Study in Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Unity States, Sudan	2009	Media
Sudan Local Governance Assessment: South Sudan and in the Three Areas	2009	Governance
GOSS Strategic Capacity Building Study	2010	Capacity Building
Southern Sudan and the Three Areas: Civic Participation Assessment	2010	Governance

Assessments Conducted by the SUPPORT Project		
Title	**Year**	**Focus**
Assessment of Needs and Strategic Direction for Post 2011 Political Party Assistance	2010	Governance
Market Town Electrification Assessment Report: Assessment of Electric System Sustainability and Recommendations in Yei, Kapoeta, and Maridi	2011	Infrastructure
Assessment of USAID Support to the January 2011 South Sudan Referendum on Self-Determination	2011	Governance
Evaluation of Outreach Materials, USAID/South Sudan Recommendations: Next Steps, Communication, and Outreach	2011	Communications

DESIGN SUPPORT STUDIES

From the start, SUPPORT was tasked with assisting USAID in gathering data in various areas of interest (e.g., health, education, economic governance). These sector or area-of-interest design support studies, while fewer in number than other types of analytic studies, were carried out by the SUPPORT Project and have often laid the groundwork upon which strategies, projects, and engagement in these areas have been built.

Design Studies Conducted by the SUPPORT Project		
Title	**Year**	**Focus**
Southern Sudan Health Sector: An Analysis of Selective Health Financing and Management Issues Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Health (July-August 2008)	2008	Health
The Status of Teacher Professional Development in Southern Sudan	2009	Education
GOSS Economic Governance Design	2010	Democracy and Governance
Design of Assistance in Economic Governance to the Government of South Sudan 2011-2013/15	2010	Economic Growth

DESIGN SUPPORT STUDY – THE STATUS OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In late 2009, SUPPORT conducted a design support study on the status of teacher professional development in Southern Sudan. The study was and continues to be a reference document for USAID, other donors (such as the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education), and the GRSS Education Ministries. As a USAID Education Officer noted, "This is the only study that has focused on teacher training [to date] and it is still referenced today. . . [it] was used to inform the government's strategic planning as well."

–Anyeith Ayuen, USAID Education Officer

PHOTO: © JENN WARREN

SHOWCASING USAID/ SOUTH SUDAN

USAID's Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (USAID/LPA) fosters efforts to develop in-country communications outreach to local citizens about USAID's role in their country. Initiatives of this sort, USAID/LPA indicates, have strengthened U.S. relations with local entities by increasing their exposure of USAID's work in their countries to "create[e] the conditions to help countries move from poverty to prosperity." With great success, the SUPPORT Project established its ability to support USAID/South Sudan administratively and logistically while also working closely with USAID to recruit and contract with a qualified individual to serve as USAID/South Sudan's Development Outreach and Communications Officer (DOC).

COVERAGE AND REPRESENTATION

Once on board, the SUPPORT-contracted USAID DOC provided the Mission with professional communications and outreach assistance, including the opening of clinics and radio stations and ribbon cutting ceremonies that literally opened the road to better livelihoods for the South Sudanese. In doing so, the SUPPORT-contracted DOC effectively shared the message of USAID's development assistance in South Sudan in interviews with foreign and local journalists, through local press releases, and in "success stories" for USAID/Washington to be disseminated through Agency publications and congressional hearings. These activities helped USAID/South Sudan staff to "Tell Our Story" effectively to both the South Sudanese and international communities.

In Juba, the SUPPORT-contracted DOC worked inside the USAID Mission as much as possible and conferred frequently with Angela Stephens, the DC-based DOC in the USAID Office of Sudan and South Sudan Programs/ Africa Bureau. From South Sudan, the DOC coordinated press packets and briefing books and aided in other ongoing SUPPORT objectives by

US Ambassador to South Sudan Susan Page with the Minister of Roads and Bridges, the Honorable Gier Chuang Aluong, Republic of South Sudan.

Photo: MSI

PHOTO: © JENN WARREN

documenting discussions in Mission Portfolio Reviews.

Work with USAID on communications preceded the hiring of the SUPPORT-contracted DOC. As far back as May 2008, a team from SUPPORT was engaged to witness and produce material about the first community-built and operated electricity generation and distribution system in South Sudan for USAID's website. The electricity system on which they reported was constructed in Yei, South Sudan and is shown in the photo on this page. This pilot electrification project was a part of USAID's collaborative efforts to support the rehabilitation and operations of the Southern Sudan electric power supply system through construction projects, capacity building, and training.

Communications assistance through the SUPPORT Project was formalized with the hiring of the DOC, whose workload quickly increased. In February 2011, the SUPPORT DOC and video cameraman embarked on a journalistic tour, recording a series of activities funded by USAID during the time period between the referendum and the vote for independence. They documented the inauguration of two new power plants at Kapoeta in Eastern Equatoria and Maridi in Western Equatoria, both key market towns. Subsequently, they witnessed the initial stage of the application of tarmac to the Juba-Nimule road, the main trading artery for South Sudan. These events, which occurred quickly after the referendum for secession, exemplified the rich future of the soon-to-be sovereign nation and USAID's investment in its development. High quality videos produced with SUPPORT assistance proved to be exceptionally popular and were frequently aired on the Southern Sudan television network.

ELECTION SUPPORT

During the period leading up to the referendum and independence, many events garnered considerable international press coverage and were covered through print, broadcasts, and webcasts in The Guardian (UK), The Daily Beast, NPR, PBS, The Wall Street Journal, and the local Sudan Tribune. Other local events made headlines in the USAID Frontlines news publication (most often in Juba) where the DOC's main responsibility was to educate and promote a better understanding of USAID activities in-country. Over this period, the DOC coordinated very closely with the State Department's Public Affairs Officer to ensure that relevant and high quality press-related materials were developed and distributed. A key DOC responsibility at this time was working with international journalists covering events for the U.S.

SUPPORT REPORTING AND VIDEO HELP TO DELIVER NEWS NATIONALLY

To mark the inauguration of the USAID-supported Diabio-Tambura Road (105 km) and Diabio-Ezo Road (77 km) in South Sudan, MSI created a video for USAID to screen on South Sudanese TV. This effort aimed to educate local citizens and promote a better understanding of USAID activities among the South Sudanese population. The video highlighted clips from the inauguration, as well as conversations with beneficiaries to highlight the impact of the roads project.

including the New York Times, CNN, Reuters, and AP. The full MSI SUPPORT team assisted the Mission in the five days leading up to July 9, 2011.

BROADCASTING THE NEWS AND BUILDING AN UNDERSTANDING OF USAID'S WORK

USAID efforts to communicate with the South Sudanese population on newsworthy development topics and to build local understanding of USAID's role in stimulating economic growth, democratic processes, and improvements in health care and eduction did not end with national independence. This work is continuing and until the end of its contract, the SUPPORT team provided consistently high quality assistance towards this effort. Two examples provided below illustrate SUPPORT's post-independence assistance to USAID's communications inititives that include the use of new media as well as encouraging local press coverage of USAID organized events:

On June 13, 2011, U.S. Consul General in Juba Ambassador R. Barrie Walkley and USAID Mission Director William Hammink joined Western Equatoria State Governor Colonel Joseph Bangasi Bakosoro and other senior GRSS officials at Tambura to witness the completion of construction and official inauguration of the Diabio-Tambura Road (105 km) and Diabio-Ezo Road (77 km). Together with the Yambio-Diabio road section, these are the first all-weather engineered gravel roads in Western Equatoria State. This state, known as the bread basket of Southern Sudan, continues its efforts in rebuilding its agricultural capacity as Southern Sudan recovers from decades of war. These efforts are part of a broader array of nearly $300 million in U.S. government road infrastructure assistance, and its success was covered by SUPPORT for the South Sudanese press, USAID/Sudan Frontlines monthly newsletter, USAID's various social media outlets, and other internal and external government highlights.

The Yabongo Girls' Secondary School Handover event held in Yambio, South Sudan on December 4, 2011 was a large undertaking for the MSI SUPPORT Project, both in term of logistics and communications. SUPPORT's DOC coordinated press travel and ensured extensive coverage in written media and on South Sudanese television. The event was considered a huge success by all and was attended by the Governor of Western Equatoria, Minister of Education from Juba, and over 1,000 school children, civil society and community members from Western Equatoria State.

Positive response from USAID staff both immediately after this event and nearly a year later are illustrative of the impact of MSI's assistance to USAID on its participation in and communications about events that mark important results brought about by USAID-funded activities.

> "I just wanted to take a moment to say a big 'Thank you' for the show we put up in Yambio [this week]. [It was] spectacular! I hope we can do it again in another place in the future."
>
> - Jane Namadi, USAID Education Team Member email to MSI Support, December 8, 2011

Nearly a year later, USAID Education staff member Anyeith Ayuen told MSI "the event created a 'big impact for USAID' because 'the event enabled the full participation of the government, created a sense of ownership [of the] school.' [It] is operational because of this ownership." Additionally, MSI was told by Jane Namadi that "there was huge community participation in the event and this has led to community support and contribution to the school."

LESSONS LEARNED

For all the activities undertaken by SUPPORT over the years, the project's good outcomes were also influenced by a number of external factors and key decisions.

1. A STRATEGIC DECISION ON LOCATION PROVED INVALUABLE

A significant lesson learned, after an initial few months in which the SUPPORT Project valiantly tried to assist activities in South Sudan from an office in Khartoum, was that an office in Juba was essential. The opportunity presented by the availability of a piece of land in Juba—a former garbage dump—directly opposite the USAID and consulate offices was fortuitous. Acting on that opportunity was one of the smartest things the SUPPORT Project did. This site, where USAID went to work and constructed a compound large enough to not only house the contract staff hired for USAID but to also host workshops, training courses, and conferences proved to be advantageous for the SUPPORT team and a boon to USAID. It was within easy walking distance, resulting in consistent SUPPORT staff access to the Mission and ready access for USAID staff to the SUPPORT compound for daily meetings.

The completion of the SUPPORT office compound, including its two conference rooms, provided essential support to USAID and its partners as well as external evaluation and design teams brought in by SUPPORT, allowing everyone to work more efficiently and effectively than would have been possible from a different location. In addition, SUPPORT's close proximity to USAID allowed the project team to meet the urgent printing and copying needs of USAID staff who hosted meetings on-site, as well as evaluation teams who benefitted greatly from having an in-house professional facility from which to prepare for their field work and to return to in order to analyze their data, prepare reports, and provide their clients with oral presentations that were fully supported by audio and video aids as required.

An important and transferrable lesson from the SUPPORT experience was its ability to act quickly and decisively to procure the most advantageous physical location from which to support the high frequency and highly interactive work with USAID, and to fully equip it as a professional working space that was adequate in meeting all project needs. Having done this in Juba yielded an exceptionally high return in the SUPPORT Project's productivity, technical quality of the SUPPORT team's work, and USAID's sense of ownership of the processes and products of the project.

Over the course of the SUPPORT Project, the MSI team gathered a number of other lessons from its experience that it used to improve its performance. In the following paragraphs, the most salient of these lessons are summarized, highlighting their transferability to future projects in South Sudan and beyond.

2. ACCESS TO USAID FOR INSTITUTIONALLY CONTRACTED STAFF (ICS) ON LONG TERM ASSIGNMENTS

Recognizing that USAID/South Sudan's operating environment is somewhat unique, the SUPPORT team nonetheless notes for future projects

that granting ICS regular access to the USAID compound in-country improved their ability to perform their tasks. Conversely, when ICS are denied access to the USAID compound, their work suffered. Regular, in-person interaction between ICS and USAID staff and managers enable ICS to be more effective in their technical assistance functions and other project support. This was true for technical activities as well as the M&E and logistics assistance the SUPPORT Project provided through ICS. For the purposes of logistics specifically, allowing ICS and other SUPPORT Project staff increased access to pertinent information and guidance on specific requirements, as well as the timely approval of tasks to be carried out, led to smoother events.

3. COLLABORATE ON ADVANCE PLANNING FOR SHORT-TERM ASSIGNMENTS AND SPECIFIC ICS TASKS

Throughout the life of the project, the SUPPORT team was responsive to USAID's needs in a fast and flexible manner with advance planning, but this success was not one-sided. One of the major lessons learned on both sides is that more organized and significant USAID-SUPPORT collaboration and detailed advanced planning produced better results. Two examples highlight the importance of coordination and advance planning.

- Large field events, such as the Yabongo Girls' Secondary School Handover event in Yambio, Western Equatoria, required a great deal of advanced planning and several field visits. USAID's decision to include the SUPPORT team in early planning meetings and discussions, alongside ministry officials, ensured a smooth logistical plan and the event was a great success.

- In contrast, when USAID scheduled a relatively large number of evaluations and other types of studies within a two-month period and without detailed consultation on the logistical issues, as occurred in the first quarter of 2012, success depended on the separate implementation of multiple complex itineraries in the midst of the rainy season.

While these activities went well, efforts that did not go so well often stemmed from last minute and unrealistic requests; a lack of coordination, even when tasks were set well in advance; or the absence of broad communication with USAID stakeholders about planned activities and their roles in them. During the facilitation of some conferences and events, the SUPPORT Project noted that last minute travel requests for invited participants often resulted in negative views of USAID. In one event, participants (government officials) actually expressed insult over being asked to travel to a USAID-sponsored event with only a few days' notice. These experiences are not helpful to USAID or MSI, and for the most part they are avoidable. In the early meetings of new projects, it is appropriate and valuable to establish common ground procedures for adequate advance planning and making it one of the "rules of the road" for effective project management.

4. ENGAGE USAID STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS AND HIGH QUALITY, WELL-UTILIZED PRODUCTS

Working from the outside to successfully enhance USAID/South Sudan's ability to "get the Agency's job done" under near hardship conditions in the pre-independence period, and during crucial election times and beyond with funding and expectations rising dramatically, requires active two-way management. Client time and attention must be invested in the effort and the contractor must provide quality feedback and advice on the feasibility of client requests and alternatives to achieve the results to which both are committed.

- In analytic studies of all kinds, the involvement of the USAID activity manager in discussions concerning the Scope of Work, logistics plan, and methodologies to be used was invaluable, as was his or her dedicated engagement throughout the process. When they occurred, these types of conversations allowed MSI SUPPORT to fully understand the intentions and priorities of USAID in undertaking an activity and empowered SUPPORT to better communicate these ideas to external consultants, thus ensuring a product or deliverable that met USAID's needs and expectations and which, most importantly, was used. When Scopes of Work sent by USAID to the SUPPORT Project did not offer this kind of clarity, it resulted in last minute changes in approvals (usually additions to an activity's level of effort or sometimes, USAID dissatisfaction with a product).

- In the communications area, it became clear that more discussions with clients regarding project expectations made for better products and lessened the number of times a document needed to be edited. Having the SUPPORT-contracted DOC participate in team meetings allowed for the anticipation of upcoming projects. Further, early event planning in conjunction with the Embassy Public Awareness Officer, including on-site interactions, helped to delineate divisions of labor and ensure that events ran smoothly.

PHOTO: © JENN WARREN

5. FOR ANALYTIC STUDIES, INTEGRATE OTHER KEY ACTORS INTO PLANNING PROCESSES

For evaluations, assessments, and special studies, having support and buy-in from all key stakeholders such as USAID, implementing partner (if appropriate), and the government representative is essential. This was as important from a logistical planning perspective as it was from a technical perspective. USAID, government, and other key stakeholders can and should be encouraged to assist in making contacts and setting up meetings, as the efficient allocation of consultant time is in everyone's interest. Key actors can also provide invaluable assistance in the report drafting and presentation stage as they already have a sense of what will be discussed and whether study recommendations are feasible. The more engaged these actors are, the more likely it is that they will devote time and serious attention to reviewing consultancy planning documents and draft reports and provide their feedback in a timely manner.

6. A LARGE POOL OF "KNOWN" QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR SHORT-TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TASKS AND PROJECT INVOLVEMENT IN THE SELECTION PROCESS IS CRITICAL FOR SUCCESS

In any project that involves the provision of services on an "on-call" basis, even if the call comes well in advance of the need for a consultant or team, it is critical to have a sufficiently large pool of qualified and preferably "known" candidates whose likely availability (in terms of assignment duration, location, and seasonal or semester considerations) has already been established to meet project demands. Getting this right requires an understanding of demand as well as supply. Under a field project or an IQC, some types of tasks are undertaken more frequently than others. For the SUPPORT Project, evaluation teams were needed roughly twice as often as teams or individual consultants for any other type of analytic study in which the project engaged. Constructing rolling estimates of the types of tasks and sectors for which candidates will be needed is a critical first step; building sufficient depth in the skills sets and experience needed to respond is the second. While it is possible to meet demand by having large numbers of potential candidates for likely requests, the SUPPORT Project learned that repeatedly using individuals who worked comfortably with the project's processes and product requirements, and who were respected by the client, paid off. For much the same reasons, the SUPPORT Project learned that it is important for the project—and the party ultimately responsible for product quality and customer satisfaction—to have a significant, if not dominant, voice in the candidate screening and selection process. When, as occasionally occurred, the identification and selection of consultancy candidates was made by USAID (or strongly influenced by USAID) there were often problems with communication and consistency, or with consultants following SUPPORT Project analytic studies protocol or abiding by the project's product quality standards. These factors can cause teams to be disjointed and limit needed input by certain team members.

7. KEEP CONSULTANT LINES OF REPORTING CLEAR

Clearly-identified lines of reporting for consultants (i.e., to MSI or directly to USAID) as well as early discussions of how reports or deliverables should be dealt with, especially in the case of any sensitive or internal findings, conclusions, or recommendations, are also significant factors for success with external consultancies involving short-term staff. The SUPPORT Project learned that this lesson applies regardless of the technical task or sector involved.

8. STAYING SAFE MEANS BEING SECURITY AWARE 24/7

The speed with which tensions can build up on the border between South Sudan and the North is a lesson to all. Despite the seemingly peaceful existence enjoyed in Juba, there remain underlying issues that can dramatically change the working environment, both along the border and other parts of South Sudan. MSI had no staff working in the affected areas when hostilities last broke out, but the ensuing fighting served as a reminder to all that security systems of every type must be maintained at all times. Security is a project management responsibility, but it is also everyone's job in any volatile environment. MSI full-time staff, as well as every consultant MSI brings on board, needs to be alert to their surroundings both during and after office hours. We are at our best when we remind each other of this reality and when our in-briefings for MSI consultants, in every country, preach vigilant awareness.

U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523-6100
www.usaid.gov

PHOTO: © JENN WARREN