

DevInfo in Action

South Sudan: Using DevInfo to Establish Foundations for Data Management

The world's newest nation – South Sudan – gained independence on 9 July 2011, becoming the 193rd member state of the United Nations. The country's excitement and jubilation over a long-awaited new beginning are tempered by the reality of significant challenges ahead in meeting the needs of more than 8 million citizens emerging from a season of historic destruction, displacement and neglect.

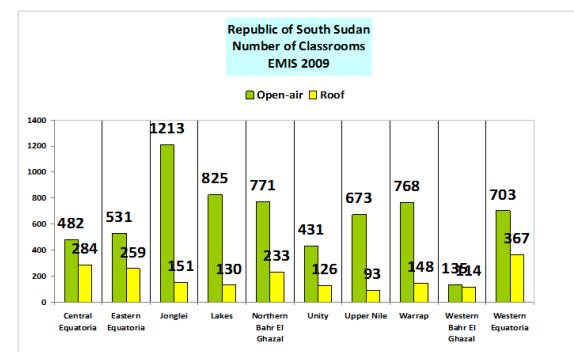
While South Sudan struggles with low human development indicators, it is also endowed with many natural resources such as oil and fertile agricultural land. Obviously, the challenge for the new government is determining how best to harness these resources to develop the country, achieve stabilization and growth, and provide peace dividends to the people of South Sudan.

Right from the very beginning, DevInfo is being positioned to bolster country efforts to monitor and track human development progress in South Sudan. According to Hughes Petrel, Senior Technical Advisor, DevInfo Support Group, "The Government of South Sudan is determined to develop the country by promoting education, health, nutrition, infrastructure and housing. As such, developing a national database to track data in these areas of national concern is one of its priorities."

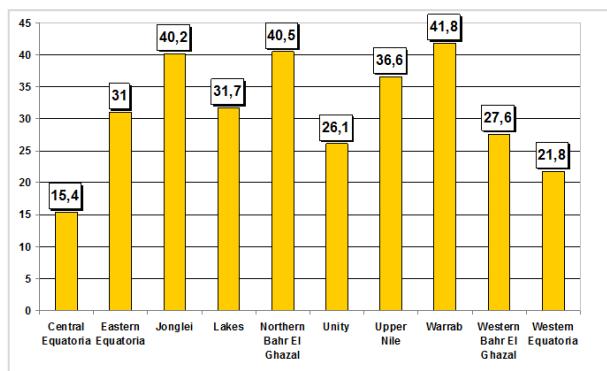
Since 2007, the DevInfo Support Group has been helping to lay the foundation for a data-driven decision-making approach in South Sudan. An initial DevInfo training workshop was conducted in 2007 for officials from various South Sudanese agencies, followed by additional cycles of trainings. Most recently, within a month of the country's independence in July 2011, the DevInfo Support Group arrived on site to assist the National Bureau of Statistics, with UNICEF support, in



Photo courtesy UN photo bank



Number of classrooms by state, 2009



Percent of food insecure households, by state, 2006

building national capacity in DevInfo use and in creating a customized country database to support the monitoring of national development.

The first thrust of this recent capacity building focused on teaching participants from various ministries how to use the UN-endorsed DevInfo database system to search for data and create tables, graphs and maps, with the objective of supporting future monitoring and evaluation efforts. The second thrust focused on training future database administrators how to develop a national database, using data drawn from existing databases as well as from other surveys and reports.

Work is ongoing within the National Bureau of Statistics to populate the database with relevant indicators, which will assist the Government and international development partners in tracking human development progress across the country. The Bureau is currently finalizing the process of uploading information from three surveys and one census conducted in South Sudan into DevInfo, to form the basis of a national database for the Republic of South Sudan. The Bureau is also working hard to integrate the Education Management Information System (EMIS) database of the Ministry of Education into the same DevInfo database. When complete, the final database will serve as a central data repository for planners and decision-makers.

With the introduction of DevInfo in South Sudan, the young country and nascent government are getting a head start in using cutting-edge IT tools to support nation-building efforts.

Data making a difference.

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