



Aerial views of Nuba mountains, east of Kadugli, Southern Kordofan State.



Drinking from a well.

Crude wells and boreholes

The rocky mountains of Southern Kordofan State offer little access to water during the dry season from November to May.

Small dams and watershed management projects have provided some relief by conserving rainwater, but these resources quickly dry up.

A limited number of boreholes are sporadically spread throughout the mountains. Crude wells, some up to five metres deep, have been carved into the stone beneath dry riverbeds.



Collecting well water.



Climbing down well for water.

Left: Heading back home after long working day.

Top left, below and right: Collecting well water.



Lacking other water sources, women may climb down into the wells and slowly collect water in calabashes. At some wells, it can take hours to fill a 20-litre jerry can.

Following significant fighting during the country's 22-year civil war, the state was left with serious development challenges, especially in the water, sanitation, health and education fields.

A 2009 International Organization for Migration (IOM) assessment of Southern Kordofan villages, highlighted insufficient access to water, especially improved drinking water, as a "major concern".

An average of 714 people shared each improved water source, which included hand pumps, tankers or bladders, the report stated. While hand pumps existed in 59 per cent of villages, 41 per cent of them were dysfunctional at the time of the assessment.

Many villagers said they were charged maintenance fees to use water from hand pumps, but spare parts and know-how to maintain and repair water sources was largely unavailable.

Alternative sources of water included unprotected wells, found in 17 per cent of villages, river water and hafirs, traditional ponds dug in the ground and mostly left uncovered. ■

Photos by Tim McKulka



One of limited number of boreholes.