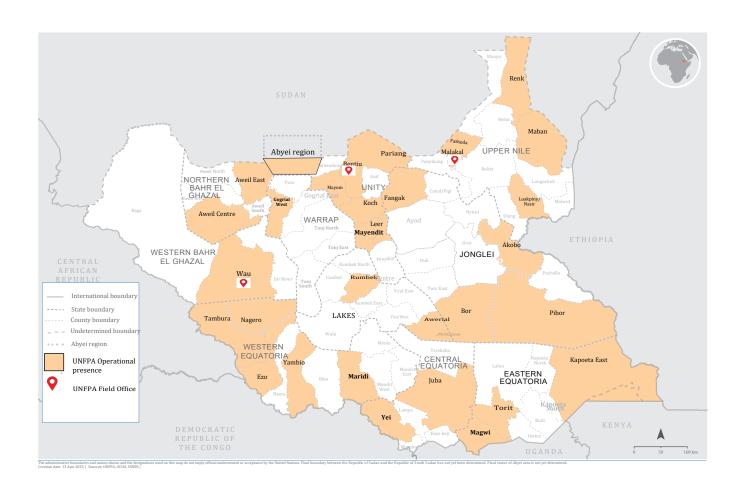


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## UNFPA operational presence in 31 counties across the ten states and three administrative areas





UNFPA – the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency in South Sudan, brings to you our Annual Report for 2024 that captures highlights of key achievements in empowering and saving lives.

As we reflect on the journey, we are inspired by the resilience, partnership, and progress that mark our collective efforts towards advancing sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, and youth

empowerment in the country including lifesaving and empowering people and communities with humanitarian responses in multiple crises.

The strides we have made together with the Government of South Sudan, our committed donors, Partners, and the communities we serve, underscore a shared commitment to improving the lives of women, girls, and young people across the Country, leaving no one behind.

**UNFPA South Sudan Management and Staff** 

#### **COUNTRY CONTEXT**



**13** Million Total Population of South Sudan



9.4% Contraceptive Prevalence Rates



**9.3 Million** people need humanitarian assistance



2.5% HIV Prevalence



71% prevalence of gender-based violence



Maternal Mortality Ratio estimated to be 1,223 per 100,000 live births



5.7 million in need of health including maternal, sexual and reproductive health



2.8 million in need of GBV prevention and response assistance.



40% prevalence of child marriage



UNFPA South Sudan contributed to national achievements of the family planning programme realized during the year 2024. UNFPA continued to be the most procurer of both short-term and long-acting reversible contraceptives to support the South Sudan Government.



The number of women using Family Planning increased by 90% (an increase from 100,000 to 190,000).



2.7 million worth commodities were procured and donated to the Government of South Sudan.



The mCPR for married women has almost doubled from 4.8% to 9.4% while the unmet need for married women has marginally dropped from 30% to 29%



**59,000** unintended pregnancies were prevented, 19,000 unsafe abortions were averted, and 640 maternal deaths were averted



UNFPA supported the training of trainers for Family Planning service provision, and this incorporated training for DMPA SC. **57** service providers from selected States were trained.



**255** community-based health workers received capacity building in provision of rights-based family planning including counselling on DMPA SC self-injection.



**22,107** clients were reached with information and services.



The country expanded access to quality FP services through the private health facilities by providing capacity building to 32 private health facilities with a total of 11,230 clients reached with information and services.



150,284 visits recorded for modern FP services.



## Empowering communities through male champions to embrace family planning.



Under the scorching sun of about 44 degrees Celsius, an outreach campaign with transformative dialogue and learning on family planning was held in Shirikate Rajaf Payam.

The outreach was a communal journey of discovery and enlightenment with participation from 144 local residents, 23 men and 121 women aged between 19 and 60. The significance of the gathering lay not just in the numbers, but in the diversity and unity it showcased - boys and girls, women and men, and community leaders all congregated, standing shoulder -to- shoulder to engage in vital conversations about sexual and reproductive health. The discussions led by the male champions were enlightening dialogue that shone a light on the myriad aspects of family planning - the benefits, accessibility, and the common misconceptions/myths

surrounding Family Planning that have long shrouded the topic in mystery. The commitment shown by the community members, volunteers, and supporting organizations illustrates a collective step forward in breaking down barriers and building a foundation for a healthier, more informed society.

"I have always been concerned about the side effects of contraceptives and thought that it can make you sick, inactive in daily domestic activities and barren, but I learned a lot today on various methods to choose from to space birth" explained 24-year-old Alice Achiro, not her real name

With a lot of enthusiasm and engagement of the community members, the outreach transformed into a lively forum, a safe space where myths were dismantled, community members eagerly sought clarity on lingering doubts and expressed their thirst for knowledge and embraced Family Planning.

"This engagement is a significant shift in our community's approach to family planning, transforming what was once shrouded in secrecy and skepticism into a subject of communal interest and importance." male champions said.

It was a testament to the power of collaboration, education, and the relentless pursuit of a better future for all, underpinned by the universal right to sexual and reproductive health.



## deaths

UNFPA South Sudan provided support to strengthen direct provision of MH/SRH services targeting 32 Health Facilities including in crisis affected areas. The support included provision of MH supplies and equipment, training and deployment of service providers including in Minimum Initial Services Package and payment of incentives to critical midwifery professionals and essential health workers in the wake of extremely low and delayed salaries. Ensuring availability of emergency obstetric services and building a system for maternal and peri-natal death surveillance and response were also critical interventions implemented.

665, 693 people were reached with SRH/GBV/HIV services.

#### Maternal and Newborn Health (MNH) Services

- 203,167 visits for Antenatal Care (ANC) at targeted facilities.
- 61,512 deliveries conducted by skilled birth attendants.
- 102 fistula repair surgeries completed at targeted facilities

#### Training and Capacity Building

- 12 Health Science Institutes (HSIs) met at least 8 of the 12 minimum standards for pre-service training
- 1,800 health professionals, including nursing and midwifery students, successfully completed their course
- 80% of tutors at HSIs are now qualified with a Health Personnel Education Certificate
- 533 health workers received competency-based training on Family Planning (FP), Emergency Obstetric
  and Newborn Care (EmONC), Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), and Adolescent and Youth-Friendly
  Services (AYFS)
- 307 supported health professionals are now actively providing Maternal and Newborn Health (MNH)
   services at targeted health facilities.
- 11 health facilities have established provider-centred Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs focused on FP, SRH, MNH, HIV, and GBV service provision.

#### Strengthening Professional Associations and Advocacy

- The South Sudan Nurses and Midwives Association (SSNAMA) and the Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of South Sudan (AGOSS) jointly implemented four advocacy and programmatic initiatives to promote SRH, MNH, FP, and GBV services.
- 18 SSNAMA state chapters were actively supported to engage in state-level SRH initiatives,
- 4 research initiatives were conducted by SSNAMA members on SRH, contributing to evidence-based decision-making and policy development.
- 1,046 nurses and midwives were successfully registered and licensed to practice
   STORY on MH

## From a curious clerk to a dedicated midwife committed to Safe Motherhood



In Yambio, where maternal health challenges are constant and resources are scarce, one-woman shines —Mongoye Victoria, a midwife and supervisor of the maternity unit at Yambio Hospital. Her dedication to ensuring safe motherhood has transformed the lives of countless women in her community but her path to becoming a midwife was anything but conventional.

Victoria's journey began in a place she never expected—working as a clerk at the hospital. Watching the doctors and midwives work tirelessly to save her sister's life left a deep impression,

"I was so moved by their dedication. That was when I knew—I wanted to save lives too," she says, her voice thick with emotion.

For two years, she trained on the job, assisting with deliveries even before formally entering school.

Later Victoria enrolled in Yambio Health Science Institute and earned her diploma in midwifery, finally formalizing the skills. "Getting my diploma was a proud moment—it felt like everything finally came together," she says with a smile.

Today, Victoria oversees all the midwives at Yambio Hospital, manages supplies, mentors new midwives, and handles complex delivery cases. Her work is a blend of challenges and fulfilment.

Crediting organizations like UNFPA for the ongoing support with incentives, capacity building, and supplies has kept midwives going which she greatly acknowledges.

Looking ahead, Victoria is determined to expand the services offered at the hospital. "We have started holding weekend sessions for young, first-time mothers to teach them how to care for themselves and their babies," she says with passion. Her vision also includes integrating youth-friendly services into the maternity ward, ensuring that young mothers receive the care and support they need.

Victoria's journey embodies hope, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to safe motherhood particularly in South Sudan where so many women face life-threatening risks during pregnancy and childbirth.





#### **GBV Prevention and Response**

- 5148 GBV survivors received services at One-Stop Centers (OSC), with data disaggregated by age, gender, and type of service.
- 791 GBV cases taken to court through OSC, demonstrating progress in legal accountability for GBV.
- Male engagement strategy implemented to enhance male participation in FP/SRH/GBV programs.
- 2056 women were supported for economic empowerment through the Women and Girls Friendly Spaces, and a concerted support to 200 survivors of conflict-related sexual violence
- All the 10 states were supported to have functional mechanisms to coordinate for the GBV prevention and response planning and implementation
- Sustained community Action: Communities' declaration of elimination of GBV and child marriage with support from UNFPA
- 141 Community Action Groups (CAGs) functional and supporting the community led actions against GBV
- 38 communities declared commitment to ending child marriage and GBV in their communities
- 679 male champions were reached in Central Equatoria and Western Equatoria through the Engaging Men in Accountable Practices initiatives.
- 772 traditional leaders were engaged through the State level Chiefs' Council across the country.
- 103 legislators and government (national and state) authorities were reached for sensitization and awareness raising for elimination of GBV and promote positive social norms.
- A Community by-law to end child marriage in Western Equatoria was enacted which will pave way for the other States to follow the precedence set.

## Discovering hope at the Safe Shelter – the journey of Amina, a young survivor

Marked by resilience amidst challenges, a 17-yearold girl's journey to find sanctuary unfolds, casting a light on the profound impact of dedicated support systems for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Amina\* not her real name, represents both the struggles faced by countless women and girls but finds hope at the Family Protection Centres or One-Stop Centres.

Amina's story began in a setting all too familiar in countries grappling with conflict and instability, where the shadows of GBV loom large, often leaving deep emotional and physical scars on survivors. She faced challenges that no person, let alone a child, should endure. The violence that shadowed her community eventually found its way into her own life, leaving her desperate for help and healing. For Amina, the ordeal of experiencing sexual violence and being ostracized by her family and community seemed insurmountable until she discovered the one-stop centre in Wau, a safe place designed to offer comprehensive support to GBV survivors.

At the centre, Amina was not just a statistic; she was a person deserving of care and respect. Medical professionals provided the essential healthcare she had long been denied. But the healing didn't stop there. Legal officers offered her guidance, ensuring she understood her rights and the steps available to seek justice. Most importantly, Amina found a space where her voice was heard and val-

ued—a stark contrast to the oppressive silence she had been forced into.

"Speaking with counsellors, I began the arduous process of unpacking my trauma, learning to navigate the storm of emotions that had threatened to overwhelm me. I received so much support and counseling that I don't know what I would have done without this." she stated in appreciation.

Unable to go back to her home and community, Amina was taken to the safe shelter.

Surrounded by others who had walked similar paths, she discovered a community of resilience, a sisterhood that empowered her to reclaim her strength and agency. The psychological support she received was transformative.

The safe shelter in Wau, where Amina found refuge, serves as more than just a place of temporary safety; but it is a community of survivors and advocates, a place where stories of resilience and courage are woven into the very fabric of its existence. For Amina, the shelter became a turning point, a place where the isolation and fear that once defined her experience gave way to solidarity and hope.

Amina's journey is a testament to the strength found in the face of adversity, and the crucial role that comprehensive support services play in enabling survivors of GBV to reclaim their lives.

# 4

## **Humanitarian Response**





**20,175** Women assisted to deliver babies safely in UNFPA-supported facilities



**143,309** People reached with SRH services



**40,985** Adolescents and youth (10-24) reached with SRH services



**14** Safe Spaces for women and girls, supported by UNFPA



**29,789** People reached with Family Planning Services in UNFPA supported facilities



**2,000** People reached with Humanitarian Cash & Voucher Assistance (CVA) for GBV case management and/or other GBV response and GBV risk mitigation



**116,956** People reached with SRH information and awareness2 activities in person



**77,971** People reached with GBV prevention, mitigation and response activities



**9** SRH mobile clinics supported by UNFPA and run by UNFPA Implementing Partners



**40,668** Dignity kits and/or other Non-Food Items distributed



**302** Personnel trained on the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for SRH



**175** Non-specialized GBV humanitarian workers / frontline workers who were trained /oriented on GBV core concepts and guidelines

## Cash assistance: a way to restore hope and transform lives for integrated returnees



Fleeing from war, Angelina Yowin Abwol Deng took a perilous journey to South Sudan. The 55-year-old left her home in Fit-Hab-Khartoum in Sudan and escaped empty-handed through Kordofan to get to safety. With psychosocial support, she has been working towards healing this experience with the help from a UNFPA-funded gender-based violence response center.

"I was exhausted due to many days of walking, hunger and trauma of violent acts from armed groups as we flee for safety. I left everything in my house in Khartoum. A mere mention of Khartoum sends shivers in my spine, but I am healing, thanks to the group members here at the GBV response center. We laugh, learn a skill on beading, baking, and joke counsel ourselves." Says Angelina

In Renk, the gender-based violence response center supports women and girls like Angelina who have fled Khartoum because of Sudan war. Through income-generating activities such as knitting of table clothes, bead making, and weaving, returnees are creating new lives for themselves, their families, and building a supportive community of women.

"We have Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk, but we do not view each other through a tribal lens. We all share the same trials and tribulations. When we gather here at the center, we discuss issues affecting us, talk about how to prevent and report violence, and importance of family planning, and look for common solutions together." Tereza John, another returnee explains.

Nyuon Biel Chunky Kor, the gender-based violence response site manager in Renk, explains that cash assistance has helped improve the lives of women and girls. The money is given to GBV survivors and vulnerable groups like those living with disabilities. This initiative has seen immediate results on transforming lives of women. "We had anger and with no hope but when this center, I and fellow women enrolled for cash assistance and have now financial independence to support our families, just like Armeniya who bakes mandazi", Nyuon Biel shares.

A total of 2,000 women and girls have benefited from humanitarian Cash and Voucher Assistance program, changing their lives for their well-being, their families and that of the community.

# Population Data for Development

UNFPA continues to support national efforts to ensure generation and access to population data and demographic intelligence and their use to advocate for integration of ICPD issues into national sector plans. It will also assure the availability of high-quality data and evidence to accelerate and measure progress towards the SDGs. The support focuses on building the capacity of statistical system to generate, analyse, produce and disseminate statistical reports on key population, SRH, GBV indicators for evidence-based planning; support the production of studies on the demographic dividend and other population-based themes related to sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence, to measure progress in achieving the transformative results and contribute to peacebuilding; strengthen health and GBV information management systems and support preparations for the Population and Housing Census in South Sudan.

- 7 projects and initiatives were developed incorporating findings and recommendations from Costed Investment cases for the Three Transformative Results.
- Demographic dividend Analysis Report for South Sudan was developed. The report highlights prospects for harnessing the demographic dividend
- 350 policy makers at national and state level reached with awareness raising messages
- 250 national and state level planners were trained on integration of population issues in planning and budgetary frameworks
- UNFPA supported the Government of South Sudan to participate in regional and international ICPD related fora. This enabled inclusion of South Sudan inputs into the regional and global networks.
- Population Estimation Survey (PES) thematic report was finalized
- UNFPA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and National Bureau of Statistics conducted a GBV KAP Survey. The recommendations will be used to strengthen GBV prevention and response in humanitarian settings.
- With support from UNFPA, NBS developed 5 bulletins/policy briefs from the routine SRH data.
- The National database of trainers and trainees on FP, SRH, GBV, and HIV has been established, strengthening the monitoring and planning of workforce capacity-building efforts.





In 2024, UNFPA South Sudan made significant strides in addressing the unique needs and challenges of young people, particularly through targeted interventions that fostered youth engagement and access to sexual and reproductive health services. Our efforts centred on empowering young individuals, especially those in marginalized communities, to improve their health outcomes and participate actively in peace-building and societal transformation. These initiatives were crucial in a context where young people face numerous obstacles to accessing information and services critical to their development and well-being.

Recognizing the pivotal role of youth in shaping the future of South Sudan, our programs were designed and implemented to bridge gaps in knowledge and services. Through innovative platforms facilitating critical dialogues on peace and security, while also ensuring that young people received comprehensive sexuality education and gender-based violence prevention information. Our integrated approach not only enhanced the availability of youth-friendly health services but also supported the development of social and economic assets for young individuals, contributing to a more inclusive and resilient community.

- **200,811** adolescents and young people accessed SRH services through both standalone and integrated AYSRH services and health facilities across the country.
- 34 health facilities reported providing adolescent and youth SRH services, reflecting an improvement from previous years
- Existence of digital platforms enabling young people to engage in private, anonymous conversations with qualified FP providers.
- 124,288 adolescents and youth reached with FP/SRH demand-generation messages through youth-specific dialogues



## Menstruate with dignity- Building a period-friendly South Sudan



In South Sudan, the price of sanitary pads remains high, hence unaffordable to many households due to widespread poverty. Out of a total population of 13 million, about 10.6 million (82.3%) people live below USD 1.9 daily in South Sudan. The taxation on disposable pads has added another burden to an already difficult situation for poorer households.

Due to taboos and lack of menstrual health facilities and supplies, girls often drop out of school, and this disrupts their education and limits their prospects and opportunities for a better life. In a bid to address this challenge, UNFPA with partners initiated an integrated Menstrual Hygiene Management Program through the Comprehensive Sexuality Education. This approach is transforming the lives of schoolgirls by improving access to menstrual pads

and building their capacity to make reusable menstrual pads.

Poor Menstrual Hygiene Management leads to discomfort, missed school days, and a sense of shame and stigma.

"Training girls and teachers on making reusable pads, fostering self-reliance and dignity have tack-led this issue head-on by equipping us with the resources to produce reusable pads" a teacher said

The program also provides vital education on menstrual hygiene management, breaking down taboos, and promoting healthy practices paving the way for a "period-friendly South Sudan" where girls are empowered with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to manage their periods with dignity and stay in school.



**36,506** individuals provided with an integrated HIV prevention package of services.

**12,210** sex workers tested for HIV and received their results.

**27,317** sex workers reached with HIV prevention programs, including a defined package of services.

**11,641** clients of sex workers tested for HIV and received their results.

## Finding strength and resilience in positive living through community solidarity

For over 30 years, a 36-year-old mother of 5, Rena (not her real name) has lived a fulfilling life with her family. Despite numerous advocacy efforts, workshops, and radio shows aimed at encouraging people to get tested and know their HIV status, Rena remained hesitant.

Everything changed for her when Rena interfaced with peer counselors from the National Non-Governmental Organization, National Empowerment of Positive Women United (NEPWU) during a community outreach program. That day, she mustered the courage to undergo HIV screening and testing. When her results came back positive, Rena was engulfed in shock and devastation. However, counselors from NEPWU stepped in, providing immediate counseling, and referred her to County Hospital for further support.

"The counseling sessions at the hospital paved transformation. With newfound knowledge and courage, I began to embrace life positively. Determined to overcome stigma and with the support of

the peer counselors, I have initiated a subsistence farm to supplement my diet." Says Rena

Rena started a small vegetable shop to improve her livelihood and that of her family. In a remarkable turn of events, she gave birth to a healthy, HIV-negative child with assistance of midwives.

Empowered by the unwavering support from NEP-WU, Rena now plays a crucial role in her community. She actively participates in peer-to-peer support groups, helping new members embrace a positive but productive life.

"More community councilors across South Sudan would save more lives and restore hope of those affected." Rena shares enthusiastically.

With the support of UNFPA, NEPWU continues its vital work, reaching out to sex workers with HIV, STI, and TB prevention programs, offering GBV prevention, family planning referrals, Hepatitis screening, and distributing condoms.



Engaging youth in innovation is critical to addressing social challenges and promoting economic transformation, in order to achieve inclusive growth & reduce poverty, youth should have access to skills training, education, and employment opportunities.

UNFPA South Sudan partners with various organizations to harness the power of female in Sports, engaging youth and senior government officials in intergenerational dialogues, creative events with young people to reach a wider audience, and innovations to scale-up family planning, improve menstrual hygiene management, promote gender equality, promote positive masculinity, prevent Gender Based Violence (GBV) and end child marriage.

#### **Key Initiatives**

- "Let's Hack Climate Change" initiative by Young people 0n climate action and SRHR
- Using female sports and art to promote positive social norms, gender legality, SRH/GBV information and services especially girls, and Menstrual Health Management. 82,787 community members were reached using sports, arts and other creative mediums of engagement.
- Creative events such as Valentine's Day celebrations "Let Love Lead" events to engage young people on ending child marriage, SRH and GBV information.

## Sparking Change: South Sudan's Youth Innovate for Climate Resilience and Health

South Sudan faces significant challenges as the escalating climate crisis increasingly impacts the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of its communities, particularly women and girls. In response, UNFPA South Sudan, with crucial funding from the African Development Bank and technical support from the UNFPA Regional Office, initiated the "Let's Hack Climate Change" Innovation Challenge in late 2024. This vital program aimed to harness the ingenuity of young South Sudanese innovators to develop practical, youth-led solutions addressing these interconnected challenges. Over four weeks (September 23rd - October 22nd), the challenge brought together young minds in an intensive bootcamp facilitated by UNFPA's partners. Participants received training and mentorship focused on problem-solving, solution design, business modeling, and integrating gender-transformative approaches, empowering them to become agents of change in climate action and SRHR.

#### **Key Results**

The "Let's Hack Climate Change" initiative yielded significant achievements:

- **Empowered Innovators:** 39 young participants, including 12 young women heading teams, were equipped with innovation and entrepreneurial skills.
- Innovative Solutions: 12 distinct solutions addressing climate change impacts on SRHR were developed, demonstrating the creative potential of South Sudan's youth.
- Winning Projects: Two outstanding solutions were selected for further development: mReport: this USSD/SMS platform facilitates real-time reporting of climate disaster impacts and SRHR needs.
  - She Knows: this mobile app provides crucial SRHR information linked to climate adaptation strategies in local languages.
- Seed Funding & Recognition: Both winning teams received USD 5,000 each in seed funding to advance their projects.
  - Regional Showcase: Grace and Patricia represented South Sudan, presenting their innovations
- at the regional pitch event during the Youth Connekt Africa Summit in Kigali, Rwanda, gaining valuable exposure.

The "Let's Hack Climate Change" challenge successfully fostered youth-led innovation and demonstrated a powerful model for addressing critical development challenges in South Sudan. UNFPA remains committed to supporting these young innovators and scaling up impactful solutions for a more resilient future.

# Together with donors sexual and reproductive health and rights

South Sudan faces numerous challenges including the spill of Sudan crisis, prolonged communal conflicts, natural shocks of climate like extreme heatwaves and flooding, South Sudan's population has long needed aid and assistance. The joint efforts of UNFPA and its donors have made impacts in 2024, providing vital support for restoring hope, protection and health to women, girls and young people in both development and humanitarian settings.

- End of year Donors' meeting to present achievements, evaluate progress and advocate for unfinished business to ensure rights and choices for all.
- Joint field visit with donors to project sides.
   Norway signed with UNFPA a contribution to ending Fistula.
- Norway's continued commitment to gender equality and SRHR has been the hallmark of global and in country long-term partnership with UNFPA.
- Joint Donors visit to Juba One Stop Center to assess the integrated services provided to survivors of GBV, Juba Teaching Hospital and JACON-AM.
- Periodic joint program meeting with key donors to review progress and achievements of sexual and reproductive health and rights for the women and girls of South Sudan.

## **Appreciation to our Donors**

UNFPA South Sudan appreciates our continued contribution to implementation of the Country Program of support to the Government of South Sudan, especially the transformation and saving lives of women, girls and young people leaving no one behind.

UNFPA funding in addition to that of donors enables to scale-up sexual and reproductive health services which encompasses crucial issues such as health, rights, gender equality and equity, humanitarian response, development and peace nexus.





























DELIVERING A WORLD WHER EVERY
PREGNANCY IS WANTED EVERY CHILD
BIRTH IS SAFE AND EVERY YOUNG
PERSON'S POTENTIAL IS FULFILLED





