



**South Sudan**

Quarterly Newsletter  
**Oct - Dec 2022**

#Musharaka4Tanmiya

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## Message from the Representative

Dear esteemed readers and partners,

I welcome you to read our Newsletter for the fourth quarter which covers the months of October, November, and December 2022.

In this Newsletter, you will read stories of transforming lives of women, empowering young people through innovations, advocacy for the girls to end child marriage by engaging boys and traditional Chiefs, humanitarian response through skills training at the Women and Girls Friendly Spaces, prevention and response to Gender Based Violence, and support to the One Stop Centers. With small victories, UNFPA's interventions have brought back hope and smiles to those we are privileged to serve, and we were able to register results collectively.

Considering the prolonged crises, climate change particularly floods, and other shocks, the effects are being felt in all households across the nation which severely affect women and girls, which robs them their dignity, and make them vulnerable even after crisis. UNFPA is on ground to engage with communities, men and women, for better well-being and the rights.

As always, I commend the Government of South Sudan for its leadership to support Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for all, together with our all partners, including donors for the fruitful collaboration and partnership for the concluded Country Program in this ending year.

As we move to the new year, I call for continuous support for the new country program that the country office is set to implement for the next three years 2023 – 2025. We look forward to continued collaboration and partnership to deliver more and better in the years ahead for the women and girls, and young people in South Sudan, reaching the farthest to ensure no one is left behind.

Our pledge is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. We are committed to ending preventable maternal deaths, addressing the unmet need for family planning and ending Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and harmful practices.

I wish you a Happy festive season and Healthy 2023.

**Dr. Ademola Olajide**  
UNFPA Representative



## Wealthy and healthy young people - reduce poverty among the youth through innovation



Photo: Nelson Mandela the winner of the Innovation challenge 2022 holds his prize during the award ceremony

Take responsibility to create and develop, get the courage and confidence, roll up your sleeves and let's get to work" those were words of encouragement to fellow youth from Nelson Mandela of Equip Africa International, after emerging winner of the #InnovationChallenge2022.

South Sudan boasts of over 70% of young people. In order to build a safe and secure future for them, their access to education, health, and economic empowerment is critical. The young people face prolonged challenges imposed by COVID-19 pandemic and other factors which place them in a disadvantaged position, leading to many being left behind in social and economic aspects of life.

Although not all young people were affected in the same way, the crisis created life-long consequences of unemployment and health challenges. To get the young people engaged in finding solutions to emerging health and other disasters, Impact Health Organisation together with BEATec through funding from UNFPA organized a youth innovation challenge aimed at transforming the potential of future change makers into real action.

Young South Sudanese aged 18- 25 were invited to innovative, tangible, and youth-centered solutions to support communities in recovery from conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic as well as identify the intersection between human health, the circular economy, and livelihood. This challenge, under the theme "Innovation towards both conflict and COVID-19", gave young people an opportunity to submit innovative proposals, 16 entries were received from both males and females, but only 5 were shortlisted to compete on the final day.

***"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," said Francis Tukwasibwe from UNFPA***



The 16 contenders including the winner will be supported with innovative ideas by IHO to improve and to opportunities to network and get new business connections.

“I am very thankful for the great opportunity for me to be a part of this experience and I will forever be grateful, this event gave me a platform for new connections which will be useful for my carrier and the funds will help me fully start my business and also be able to employ other young people to work with. When economically empowered, young people can make right choices for their healthy lifestyle; My win is a win for all young people in this country” said Nelson Emmanuel the winner of 2022 IHO innovation challenge

Nelson bagged 1500\$, in a rigorous and thrilling award ceremony to an audience of young that featured a panel discussion on the African Continental Free Trade Area, the funds will help the winner kick-start his innovation idea.

***“As Impact Health Organisation, we believe involving young people in innovation is key to solving some of the world’s biggest issues. And that’s why we organized this challenge to gather inspired young people to bring out their ideas and be able to nurture and support them.” Said Jolem Mwanje IHO Executive Director.***



Photo: a female contestant defending her work in front of panel of judges during the innovation challenge

## Perspectives from young people on the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda: Working together for the South Sudan We Want



*Photo: Members from the Youth Advisory Panel, (L) Anna Maneno and (R) Prescious Ankangelo during the Intergenerational Dialogue*

Peace and stability are essential for South Sudan to prosper and develop. Despite considerable progress towards peace with a reduction in direct conflict between parties, sub-national and localized violence continue to occur in many parts of the country which continues to severely affect the country's progress.

It is noted that securing a lasting peace is the responsibility of all generations in the country particularly with participation of the young people who under the age of 30 constitute 73.6 percent of the population according to UNFPA State of the World Population Report 2022 estimates.

Like in most countries, young people in South Sudan are faced with many challenges including lack of employment, education, and limited participation in decision making as they are systematically excluded due to their age and assumptions that they are inexperienced. Such a situation has led to frustration among youth and has contributed to youth engaging in violence including armed conflict.

In 2015, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2250, the first resolution that specifically addresses the role of young people on matters of peace and security. This ground-breaking resolution on Youth, Peace and Security recognizes the positive role young people can play in conflict prevention, the prevention of violence, and the promotion and consolidation of peace. In this regard, the government of South Sudan has committed to advance the Youth Peace and Security agenda in the country.

UNFPA together with the University of Juba organized a series of intergenerational dialogues with the youth, bringing together officials from government, private sector, activists, and people with disability in the spirit of leaving no one behind. The discussion centred around the role of young people in youth, peace, and security while tackling issues of reproductive health and rights.

This follow up dialogue was held to specifically discuss openly the role of young people on mat-



ters of youth, peace, and security and explore solutions to address the challenges.

Hon. Pia Philip, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Peacebuilding, in recognizing the positive role young people play in conflict prevention, the prevention of violence, and the promotion and consolidation of peace, stated that “The vibrant discussions and contributions by young people in peacebuilding presents hope, together with the joint efforts of youth organizations, the UN, and government working together. The young people have a big role to play, they are the biggest percentage of this country’s population, and the solution lies in their hands. The Government with its limited resources will do the best it can”.

The Under Secretary commended the initiative by UNFPA and efforts by the young people as it is critical to have dialogue with youth and adults to foster greater understanding on the Youth Peace and Security agenda of South Sudan.

***“More of such dialogues are an opportunity for the young people to voice their perspectives wit adults and hear from them on how youth***

***could be engaged in the youth, peace, and security agenda to attain and sustain lasting peace and stability and to move South Sudan from insecurity and conflict to development and prosperity”- Prof. Robert Deng Mayom, the Vice Chancellor of University of Juba.***

The panel was made up of Precious Ankangelo who is living with disability from the Youth Advisory Panel, Anna Maneno a Youth gender advocate, Achai Kuol representing the Private Sector, representative from the Ministry of Youth, Hon. Pia Philip Michel, Under Secretary, in the Ministry of Peacebuilding and moderated by Dr. Ademola Olajide, the UNFPA Resident Representative.

The intergenerational dialogue brought together around 250 students from the University of Juba, University of Upper Nile and other universities. They discussed perspectives, challenges, and priorities to support the active participation of men, women and young people, considering their diversity in conflict prevention, social cohesion, conflict transformation, local and national peacebuilding, and reproductive health and rights touching on cultural practices that hinder access.



Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide UNFPA Representative in South Sudan moderating the intergenerational dialogue with the the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University fo Juba



## Child Marriage, a chronic cultural practice that traditional Chiefs vow to end



*Photo: Chiefs present during the National Chiefs Conference to end Child marriage.*

Different chiefs converged to discuss on the implementation of the strategic national action plan on ending child marriage and to commit their individual responsibility to see child marriage end starting with their communities.

The traditional Chiefs conference was part of the initiatives to end Child marriage by engaging the duty bearers and men to change the negative social norms and cultural practices that are harmful. The gathering offered an opportunity for learning and sharing among the chiefs and commitments to support the rights of women and girls through ending child marriage and supporting girls to fulfill their full potential.

During the opening of the three-day event, the national Minister of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare, Hon. Aya Benjamin Warille said, "I appreciate the support and effort in putting this conference and gathering traditional Chiefs together with other stakeholders because only with the commitment by all stakeholders can we end child marriage in South Sudan. Our girls and daughters are suffering in various communities and we are all seeing this happen yet we should protect and support them. We ALL have a role to play in Ending Child marriage" Minister Warille urges the Chiefs.

Dr. Kidane Abraha, the head of Integrated Sexual Reproductive Health said that various states had reviewed and made significant progress on the implementation of the Strategic National Action Plan on ending child marriage. emphasizing that collectively child Marriage can be ended in South Sudan.

The first conference held four years ago was a key milestone in history which brought together all the paramount chiefs from all the former thirty-two states of South Sudan and the Abyei administrative area that started a journey to raise awareness on short term and long terms effects of child marriage and set a stage to create strategies on protecting young girls against child marriage and other harmful practices. The conference also brought representatives of Chiefs from Malawi who shared experience with their South Sudanese chiefs.

The National champion to end child marriage, Hon. George Echom noted that the effects of child marriage and early childbearing are enormous which included dangers of fistula, vicious cycle of poverty, increased percentage of illiterate citizens as girls are married off without attending school. He challenged the Chiefs, Civil Society Organizations, and the Government to swiftly act.

"We have denied access to education to our women and girls, without bringing women on board, we won't go forward, and for us to make huge strides, we need to take girls to school, we also need to break the negative norms and attributes of our cultures which have become enemies to our prosperity" Hon Ochom noted. He also cautioned men and Chiefs for marrying young girls whom he said end up becoming burdensome, "Chiefs, when u marry a child as a wife, you will have stress throughout your life, trust me, you will have a baby, not a wife, marrying children as wives is stressful, this must stop, and to move this country forward, we need to move away from harmful traditional practices" he added

plans. Different states resolved individually to end child marriage and other harmful traditional practices in their respective states.

***"Child marriage is a contributing factor to why girls don't finish their education. We should allow girls to be girls and not make them brides. We remain committed to ending child marriage and ensuring girls attain their full potential" said Amb. Ms. Linken Berryman, of Norway.***

This year's Conference was a follow-up event with traditional leaders and the State Ministries of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare to review the implementation of SNAP on ending child marriage, and in line with, The Palm Africa Declaration of 2019, 2020, and 2021 action



Photo:(L-R) Hon. Ayaa Benjamin Warille, the Minister for Gender Child and Social Welfare gives her remarks during the National Chiefs Conference organised by UNFPA South Sudan and various stakeholders



## Football with a cause – Girls tournament on ending child marriage



*Photo: Girls engaging in a match of football during the girls tournament on ending child marriage*

One girl, one school, One village, at a time to end child marriage – a commitment that everyone should make to create a difference for the girls in communities in South Sudan. It will not be easy, it will not be quick but let no mistake be made because everyone can put an effort to support girls and end child marriage.

Creating innovative ways to engage decision makers, community leaders, and young people to raise awareness on dangers of child marriage, football was found to be fun but also targeting hundreds of people at the same time. It is an opportunity to show the community that girls are able to do what boys can do if given an opportunity.

UNFPA in South Sudan took lead to support the first-ever campaign to end early child marriage in the state dubbed “Act Now to End Child Marriage” organized by Kulang Foundation through a football match by the girls. The event attended by the Governor of Lakes State, government officials, community leaders, young boys and girls.

Hon. Lt. Gen. Rin Tueny Mabor, the Governor of Lakes State has been at the forefront in ending child marriage by passing a law in the state that outlaws child and forced marriage. During the launch, the Governor directed state residents to strongly stand up against early and forced child marriage.

***“Ending child marriage in our state is very important and the responsibility of everyone in the country, especially here. Each and every one should stand up to fight such practice, especially the parents,” said Mabor at Rumbek Freedom Square.***

The Governor added that public awareness of the provisions of the Act came at the right time when the State parliament passed a Bill to protect the rights of children, including prohibiting child marriage.





Photo: Winning team of the Kulang foundation end child marriage tournament



Photo: Governor of Lake States Hon. Lt. Gen. Rin Tueny Mabor kicking off the end child marriage girls tournament.



## Inauguration of Women and Girls Friendly Spaces in Bentiu



*Photo: Minister for Gender Child and Social Welfare, Hon.Aya Benjamin Warille, Swedish Ambassador, H.E Tomas, Brundin, UNFPA Representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide and Unity state government officials, officially commissioning the WGFS in Bentiu*

South Sudan is a Country that is affected by both conflicts and natural disasters such as floods. Coupled with traditional harmful practices, this puts women and girls at risk of gender-based violence and other sufferings based on their gender. With the flooding in Bentiu which affected an estimate of 220,000 people, women and girls had become more isolated and their movement is limited due to fear of sexual violence, harassment and indiscriminate attacks. With a patriarchal type of society, public spaces are largely occupied by men and women responsibilities are confined to the household. Crisis has changed these roles where women find themselves working and becoming breadwinners, they nevertheless, remain responsible of the household.

UNFPA in collaboration with the State Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, and partners established the Women and Girls Friendly Spaces (WGFS). The WGFS have important skills-building and livelihood components that facilitate women's meaningful participation in public life.

"We must remain committed in combatting harmful practices and norms that subordinate women

and girls and keep them away from fulfilling their potential and growth as individuals alongside their male counterpart. Skills-based, formal vocational trainings and other income generating activities are critical to support the Women's access to the labor market" said Hon. Aya Benjamin Warrille, Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare

***"Sweden will continue to stand firms with the people of South Sudan in promoting their safety, health, and well-being especially for those who are most vulnerable. With what we have witnessed here, the establishment of WGFS helps reduce and prevents risks by providing safe entry point for services and access information. Safe spaces can be a keyway of building women and girls social assets. I reiterate Sweden's support"***  
***Mr. Tomas Brundin, Head of Embassy of Sweden in South Sudan***



***“I appreciate the leadership of the Minister and every partner for the steady hand in providing support and protection to the women and girls of South Sudan. Safe gatherings give them an opportunity to engage with each other, rebuild community networks and support. UNFPA will continue to equip and expand WGFS to benefit more people” Dr Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative***

The women and girls have also received training on diverse income generating activities, including baking bread, liquid soap production, and knitting, among others, and provided with start-up kits.

The WGFS have further provided a platform for engagement with duty bearers such as police officers, paramount chiefs, community chiefs, women leaders, youth leaders and the block leaders on their roles in GBV prevention and response.

UNFPA will continue to ensure that safe spaces are available, accessible and provide information, quality services, and contribute to the healing, well-being and empowerment of women and girls



*Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide UNFPA representative being welcomed to the Women and Girl Friendly Space by traditional dancers*





*Photo: Minister for Gender Child and Social Welfare, Hon Aya Benjamin Warille, with Unity state government officials, admiring beads the women have produced at the WGFS*



*Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide UNFPA representative displays ID holder made out beads at the WGFS*



## I found hope at the Women and Girls Friendly Space, the story of an amputee- Dio Nial Gai



*Photo: Dio, serving tea at the tea shop constructed by IMA with support from UNFPA*

Mingkaman-Awerial-Lakes State -Dio Nial Gai makes a living from selling tea at the busy and bustling Mingkaman town. Originally from Jonglei State, Nial was displaced by the 2013 war. She had to flee across the river to the neighboring Awerial-Mingka-man Lakes State to seek refuge. The journey was not easy. Along the way, she was shot in the arm and developed complications. She had to be taken to Bor and later to Juba, to treat these complications and her right arm had to be amputated to save her life. Having lost an arm made her already difficult life, much more complex. According to her, this incident also marked a turning point for her life.

***“I lost my father in the war; lost an arm; but my mother is alive. Life has not been easy, but thank God I am alive” she said.***

Dio, the firstborn in a family of three is the sole breadwinner. A teacher by profession earned her SSP 10,000 about \$ 9 a month, not even sufficient to feed her family. To top it, she had her paternal uncle’s chil-

dren also dependent on her, making it even more difficult to make ends meet.

It is during that period that a golden opportunity knocked. Inter-Church Medical Assistance (IMA) with support from UNFPA and funding from ECHO announced a call to train women in different income-generating activities such as tailoring, saloon, bead making, and tea making at the Women Girls Friendly Space. Dio seized the opportunity and enrolled. Together with a group of 200 women and girls, she underwent one-year intensive training and graduated last year. IMA provided each group with start-up capital (constructed shelter, bought furniture, and all other necessary requirements for the business). At the women and girls friendly space, Dio said she got information and support, participated in activities, networked and strengthened relationships with her peers.



## How Comprehensive Sexuality Education is helping school dropouts gain hope



*Photo: Group photo with joint UNFPA, CANADA, SWEDEN, MoH, and AMREF visiting delegation to the school*

Menstruation, sexuality, puberty – the things that parents and elder people won't talk about especially educating the young ones as they grow to teenage. "It is hard for a parent to sit her daughter down and talk to her about sexual education, but through AMREF, who are implementing CSE here at King's College, the situation is changing" these were the words of Mr. Paul Zimo Bamongoyo, the headteacher of Kings College in Western Equatoria State (WES) where AMREF with funding from UNFPA in implementing CSE.

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being, and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others, and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives,

Anipai Jenifer (not her real name) is a senior two student, her dream has always been to become a doctor. She dropped out of school at 17 years of age after conceiving, now at 18 she is back to school to resume her studies which she attributes to sessions on sexuality education that built her confidence and made a decision to return to school. The 11 months she spent out of school struggling with pregnancy was an eye opener and shared her experience to educate fellow girls Her 3-months old baby is being supported by a nanny as she goes to school.

***"My fellow girls learn from my experience; I wasted eleven months out of school due to pregnancy. Prioritize your studies first and always make the right decisions for your life to earn a better future. I also urge parents to have an open conversation with their children***



## **about sexuality and body changes” Anipai advises**

Jacinta Justin is in senior four student and a member of the CSE club, just like Anipai, she became pregnant at 14 while in primary 8 and with complications at her age she had to undergo C-Section for delivery and life became full of challenges for her after delivery.

I did my primary one to seven in Uganda. My father died and life became difficult, we returned to Yambio while in Primary eight. I became pregnant, the boy responsible denied the pregnancy., I went to Juba to hustle where I vended water, passion fruit juice, and doughnuts to put food on the table. I later enrolled in school and went to senior two, but things did not work out, I returned to my village in Yambio, did senior three and now in senior 4, The man who inherited my mother has

also disowned me, but through well-wishers am pushing on, the CSE Club has taught me a lot I have learned how to approach life differently, how to conduct myself among boys and girls”

Zimo is appealing for more community sensitization on Comprehensive Sexuality Education as the benefits are tangible in making difference in the lives of the girls and their parents. He acknowledges the support from AMREF with funding from UNFPA in implementation of CSE club

“The cases of school dropouts among girls are reducing as a result of CSE clubs and I request partners to support school dropouts with scholastic materials. The results are visible as teenage pregnancy and school dropouts have reduced. Those who had dropped out of now school have courage to return however need to continuously be support”. Zimo notes



*Photo: Engagement of school going girls on menstrual management during a sensitization by UNFPA and various partners.*



## Breaking the silence: 50 -Year-old nurse shares her 20-year-long battle with AIDS



Photo: Suzie Enoka dispensing drugs at the ART

Juba-South Sudan-Suzie Enoka is professional nurse based at Juba Teaching hospital, trained in the early 90's at the then Juba Nursing School, now Juba College of Nursing and Midwifery, she trades at the nation's only referral hospital's ART (Anti-Retroviral Therapy) clinic. Mondays are a typical busy /hectic day on her schedule as she serves clients who visit the ART clinic to replenish their stock of ARVs.

Then their world started crumbling I lost my husband in 2004, that time I worked in Yei Civil hospital in the pediatric ward, doing the daily routine of blood transfusion among other tasks. When I lost my husband in unclear circumstances, I became suspicious and myself instincts told he passed on due to HIV/AIDS, the same year my six-year-old son passed on, I was devastated but strong" Enoka recounts

Enoka said when she got back to work her then supervisor, told her from the signs she present-

ed, she could be carrying the virus that causes HIV if tested would help her to know her status

***"I had become so frail, I lost weight, as I could not eat following loss of appetite, but my colleague's male and females were all supportive to, and that time a mere mention of the word AIDS was like taboo" she revealed***

Following all the nightmare her family decided to rush her to hospital from where she was tested, and the results came out positive.

"I could barely support myself when I was taken to hospital, I was frail, but I got enrolled on ARVs, shortly after I regained my strength, threw down the walking stick and supported myself with my movements, although weak" she narrates. Enoka said following her return from treatment, her supervisor welcomed



her back to work and was very supportive.

Tragically, Enoka's story is not all that uncommon anymore. Throughout South Sudan and beyond, there are many people living with HIV/AIDS but continue to live a productive lifestyle. Enoka has worked diligently and effectively behind the scenes for AIDS education through counselling clients who go the clinic take their medicines, she has gone public about her status and says the family has since accepted her.

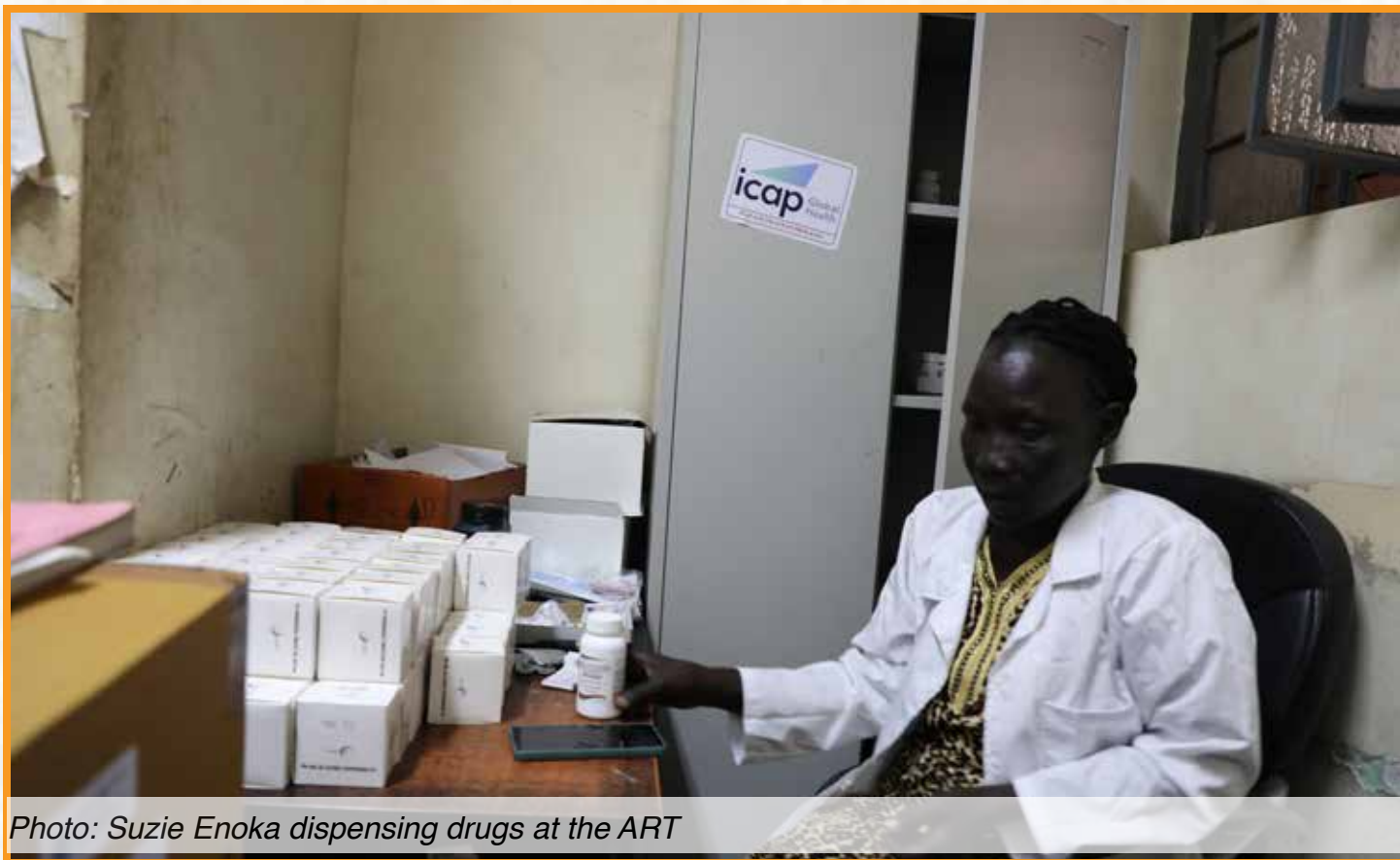
On daily basis, I interface with people of all walks of life, others come here when they have given up with life, but I put hope in them, telling them that I have lived on with the virus, and I still continue to be productive, others come here basically with their will, I tell them HIV/AIDS is not a death sentence" she counsels

For four years, her and team of others at the facility are creating a safe and positive living among those living with the virus to the public eye, saying they occasionally gather the young

positives and encourage them to network among themselves. She adds that the disease is more prevalent among the young aged between 18-20 above, attributing it to reckless lifestyle the youth are leading.

Suzie continues to support her clients by offering to deliver their supplies of ARVs through the Community Based Distribution, a network of community distributors who deliver the drugs to the last mile.

Suzie is a member of the South Sudan Nurses and Midwives Association which was established with support from UNFPA, the Ministry of Health, and Global Affairs Canada. This association has also been working closely and has benefited from capacity building from the Canadian Association of Midwives"



*Photo: Suzie Enoka dispensing drugs at the ART*



## UNFPA Ramps Up Efforts to Eliminate Sexual Exploitation and Abuse



Despite the UN's zero tolerance policy, sexual exploitation and abuse has cast a grim shadow on the experiences of women and girls in South Sudan.

Severe bouts of internecine conflicts, climate change related shocks like the abnormal levels of flooding, and the unprecedented effects of covid-19 have exposed the country to dependence on humanitarian assistance.

South Sudan is in the league of countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Haiti, Ethiopia and Ukraine where the humanitarian operation is enormous and complex, deploying thousands of aid workers.

While this has been a boon in mitigating the multifaceted consequences of a protracted humanitarian crisis, the legion of relief workers has also been a bane for South Sudanese women and girls.

Sexual abuse committed by aid workers at a camp in South Sudan first surfaced in 2015. The eruption of civil strife in 2013 and 2016 height-

ened experiences of abuse and violence directed against women and girls in South Sudan.

Even after the country's major post-independence conflict simmered down in 2018, gender based violence including sexual exploitation and abuse against women and girls in South Sudan remains unabated. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) says UN agencies and all providers of relief and humanitarian assistance should commit to end the vice of sexual exploitation and abuse in the country.

***“Sexual exploitation and abuse violates the sanctity of life and paramountcy of human rights. It blemishes the noble aim of humanitarian assistance. UNFPA will go beyond zero levels in striving to eliminate this blight that profanes the duty to save lives in emergencies,” says Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative, South Sudan.***

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UN-



MISS) says sexual related violence and exploitation in South Sudan remains a concern. UNMISS leadership in the country has committed to prevent, respond and secure justice for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

While acknowledging the malignant vagaries of conflict, climate change and covid-19 as drivers of exacerbated vulnerability especially for women, girls and children in South Sudan, the UN sternly cautions that sexual exploitation and abuse is unacceptable and remains prohibited without exception.

All aid workers, regardless of affiliation and cadre, are required to observe the policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. “The responsibility to protect the affected populations against all forms of abuse rests on every individual aid worker and the collective conscience of all humanitarian actors,” stresses Dr. Ademola.

to strengthen institutional mechanisms and community capacities to prevent and respond to the occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse cases.

In Wau, the capital of the Western Bahr El Ghazal State, UNFPA has trained more than 20 members of the State level PSEA Task Force and close to 30 members of the Community Based Complaint Mechanisms on PSEA prevention, response and assistance to victims.

Ms. Catherine Baga, the UNFPA PSEA Focal Point staff, explains that the training is a part of UNFPA’s commitments to ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered in an environment that dignity and rights of the affected population.

***“We cannot down play the occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse in situations of relief aid whether it has been reported or not. As UNFPA, we prioritize the responsibility to ensure strong prevention mechanisms and effective response***

***measures are in place,” Ms. Baga stated.***

Santino Dimo Ungen, an Advocacy Officer for the Women Training and Promotion (WOTAP) organization says sexual exploitation and abuse is a betrayal of the trust that vulnerable populations bestow upon the humanitarian community.

***“Emergencies affect women and girls disproportionately. Taking advantage of their suffering to subject them to the indignity of sexual exploitation and abuse is inhuman,” said Dimo, adding that they are working to address abuse, exploitation and harassment of women and girls in the Western Bahr el Ghazal State.***

Wide spread pockets of inter-ethnic violence and cultural norms that perpetuate inequality and discrimination are equally cited as drivers of the pronounced violence against women and girls, and other vulnerable populations in South Sudan.

UNFPA is collaborating with other stakeholders, including Government and non-State actors to curb and eliminate gender based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse in the private and public domains.

***“Strategic collaboration and inclusive and participatory practices, evidence informed strategies, watertight legal reforms, and empowerment of vulnerable populations are vital to winning the war against sexual exploitations and abuse,” observes Dr. Ademola Olajide of UNFPA.***



## Using football as a vehicle for positive change



*Photo:- Bright Starlets (Womens National Team) faces off against the South Sudan Media Football team. during the International Mens day Novelty Match*

For the first time in the history of South Sudan, International Men's Day was this year celebrated. The event centered around meaningful conversations to address negative social norms that heavily burden men and breed toxic masculinity, it aimed at promoting the well-being of men and boys bringing out the positive value as a pathway to gender equality. A pre-cursor to D-day, a match between the national female football team, the Bright Starlets, and the Union of Journalists in South Sudan (UJOSS) was played in the presence of hundreds of spectators being the first time to see the girls team play against a male team at Buluk football ground in South Sudan.

The South Sudan Football Association President Gen. Augustino Maduot Parek as he addressed the public said;

***“It's personally my first time celebrating Men's Day and we thank UNFPA for making sure nobody is left behind.***

***Together we can promote gender equality and positive masculinity in South Sudan”***

In recent years, sports has demonstrated an enormous capacity to propel women's and girls' empowerment. It mobilizes the global community and speaks to youth. It unites across national barriers and cultural differences. Sports is a powerful tool to convey important messages in a positive and celebratory environment – often to mass audiences. In addition, it teaches women and girls the values of teamwork, self-reliance, and resilience; has a multiplier effect on their health, education and leadership development; contributes to self-esteem, builds social connections, and challenges harmful gender norms, the head coach for the Bright Starlets expressed happiness that the event provided a platform for both men and boys to play together, “I have had many good days in SSD but this has to count as one of the best. Thank you UNFPA



South Sudan for giving us, the Bright Starlets girl's team the challenge to raise our game by playing against the male journalist's team. We need to be better to challenge the norms in society"

Through sports UNFPA is working with various stakeholders, such as South Sudan Football Federation, to ensure female athletes maintain their dignity and have access to their sexual reproductive rights. UNFPA has been instrumental in providing dignity kits to various federations, giving women access to reusable pads, hygiene products, and, items to ensure they can manage their menstrual health.

As a curtain raiser for International Men's day that is commemorated on the 18th of November annually. UNFPA has organized a football match between the Union of Journalists South Sudan and the Bright Starlets the National football team to promote positive masculinity and gender equality through Sports "This novelty match is beyond football. We consider it as one way of empowering our girls in South Sudan and challenging social norms around gender that hinder their progress. The Bright Starlets' commitment to football raises the South Sudan flag as strong women which is contributing to a positive narrative about the country. UNFPA will continue to work with Government, partners, and all of you to ensure the girls are safe and empowered to be great in all forms including male dominated activities

such as football," said Ms. Sarah Masale - Deputy Representative.

Another football match organized between Male champions FC and condomize FC played on November 18 at Zain football ground graced by the Minister of Gender, Child Social Welfare, ended in favor of Condomize FC. In her remarks, the Minister she used the occasion to advocate for the well-being of men and boys but for the good of women and girls in the society as football is a unifying tool.

***"The wellbeing of men is critical to the overall wellbeing of society as a whole; the Ministry of Gender Child and Social Welfare will step up collaboration with UNFPA to address the peculiar issues of men", said, Hon Minister Ayaa Benjamin Warille***

Men's day is important as it reminds us of the dream of an equal world, a world that is fair for all genders. It was an important occasion to underpin that when people and institutions work on the rights and opportunities for women and girls, they are not about taking away those opportunities and rights from men and boys but promoting equality.



Photo:- Bright Starlets (Womens National Team) faces off against the South Sudan Media Football team. during the International Mens day Novelty Match



## The horror of forced marriage to gaining hope through Bedsheet making



Photo:- Women in the Women and girl friendly spaces learning social economic skills such as weaving,

I am an orphan as I lost my parents when still young and the only surviving child of my late parents. At an early age, my community gave me up into forced marriage and when I refused, I was handed over to the youth to teach me a lesson which was torture to almost losing my life. In the process of torture to accept marriage to the person I had never met, I was badly beaten and survived with severe injuries on my body.

Due to pain and fear that one day that I would be beaten to death, I accepted to the marriage arrangement and was brought to my husband's house. Not long into the marriage, my husband died and was left a widow with nothing to hold on to. Powerless with no awareness of my rights as a young woman, life was ending in my eyes.

With thanks to the empowered women from the friendly spaces, a friend advised me to come learn skills and get psychological support at the Women and Girls Friendly Space (WGFS) where I met other transformed women. I was enrolled straight away into the programme and it was just the right place!

Breathing with relief as I looked forward to interacting with other women and to learning a skill to be able to have the autonomy to manage my life and earn a living.

When asked if there is any change, she experienced in her life from the time she joined the centre? She had this to say,

***“I was about to commit suicide because I felt the world had rejected me, little did I know that I could still be loved and accepted by other people. Here I have sisters, some of them are now like mothers to me – pointing at one elderly woman”.***

At the centre with other women who learnt other skills, I have learnt how to make bedsheets, each time I complete a pair, I sell at 60,000SSP and I use the money to buy food. I even managed to buy some clothes for myself which I never had before. I have learnt more about my rights as a



woman which helps me make better choices.

***“This WGFS has given me a home, a family, peace, knowledge and joy that I never had before, thanks to this project and I hope that UNFPA can continue to support and assist many more women and girls who are facing the same challenges in life like me...my life has changed, i can now smile”.***

More women and girls who have benefited from the friendly space, Simon is also one of them and is happy that from the sale of bedsheets she made, she is able to support her children who she left for safety back in Uganda. She said that in a period of two months she was able to sell two pairs of bedsheets at 120,000SSP. I am now self-reliant and hope that I can make connections in Juba city for a bigger market for my

products.

The center supports GBV survivors, women and girls at risk of GBV including sexual exploitation and abuse as well as work with men and boys on GBV prevention through awareness raising.



*Photo:- Women in the Women and girl friendly spaces learning social economic skills*



*Photo:- Women in the Women and girl friendly spaces learning social economic skills*



*Photo:- Women in the Women and girl friendly spaces learning social economic skills*



## Mingkaman Reproductive Health Clinic, a beacon of hope!



*Photo: Mary Robert with her newborn baby at the Mingkaman R/H maternity ward*

Mingkaman - Inadequate health facilities across South Sudan have pushed the country's population to largely depend on services provided by development partners. The many years of civil strife, aggravated by hazardous climatic changes and the devastating impact of the covid-19 pandemic continue to slow the realization of health as a right for all, everywhere.

Mingkaman hosts over 200,000 people, among them 100,00 internally displaced persons who fled to the area following the 2013 conflict. Another 53,000 people arrived from the neighboring counties following flood displacement in 2021 in addition to over 50,000 host community members. The vulnerabilities and shocks across these populations are multiple and intersecting.

The Mingkaman Reproductive Health Clinic established by UNFPA at the height of the 2013 political crisis is the only reliable health facility in the area. A Primary Health Care Center-PHCC operated by the Government is

overstretched by the enormous needs of the staggering population. Many NGO partners have since pulled out of the area due to funding gaps. The Mingkaman Reproductive Health Clinic is run by IMA World Health.

Ayak Kongor Kuay is 22 years old, and one of the many women who frequent this clinic for skilled services. Currently, in her first pregnancy, Ayak visits the facility for ante-natal services. She says seeking the services of qualified health professionals is the best thing women should do to avoid preventable risks. adding that gone are the days when mothers would be attended to by Traditional Birth Attendants.

***“You get the tetanus injection. You are given vitamins. The nurses and midwives advise you on so many health and pregnancy-related issues. I have no problem coming here and I advise all women to fully attend their ANC sessions and give birth in the hospital,” Ayak says.***



In the Maternity Ward is 28-year-old Mary Robert who has just given birth to her fourth baby, following the trend of her two other children who were also born in a hospital. Like Ayak, Mary vouches for skilled delivery in the hospital to avoid the risk of complicated pregnancy and childbirth.

***‘I am originally from Eastern Equatoria, but I’m now based in Mingkaman. This is the second child I’m having in this health facility. The services here are good. As you can see, the ward is clean, and the nurses and midwives are friendly. I urge all women to give birth in a hospital,’ Mary advises.***



Photo: Women at Mingkaman Reproductive Health Facility waiting to be attended to



Photo: Ayak, far right waiting to be attended to at the Mingkaman RH clinic



## Condomize! The moonlight approach in targeted bars



*Photo: Condomize campaign taking place in bars and night clubs in South Sudan to create awareness on HIV/AIDS prevention*

Using the moonlight approach to engage key population with HIV prevention messages and condom distribution in Juba city in South Sudan has yielded some results towards reduction on new HIV infections.

The national HIV prevalence for adults is estimated at 2.1% (2021) translated into 173,000 people living with HIV. The epidemic is continuing to expand with an estimated 17,000 new infections in 2021 and number of annual deaths reported at 8,000 which is a considerable burden for a fragile health system.

Among the key issues highlighted behind the increase in HIV infections include Lack of information on preventive measures among the population, limited access to quality condoms, non-adherence to treatment among and others. In efforts to combat new infections of HIV, CONDOMIZE campaign is among the several preventive interventions have been put in place.

CONDOMIZE! South Sudan campaign to-

gether with South Sudan Aids Commission and other members through the leadership of Ministry of Health with funding from UNFPA, IHO coordinates CONDOMIZE! It is an innovative and effective approach that engages communities focusing on attraction rather than promotion to draw its audience. It focuses on demand generation and promotion of condoms in the country and enable the country to harness the full potential of the condom as an effective and a cost-effective option and to maximize their contribution in averting HIV infections, improving maternal and reproductive health outcomes.

The CONDOMIZE! Campaign uses information that is grounded in evidence and attracts and captivates its audience using intense color, creative performances and engaging in entertainment activities. The aim is to reduce stigma associated with condoms and enhance access to quality condoms, when people need them and in places where they feel the most comfortable gaining that access.

Following a burn to the conventional condom distribution and promotion outreaches by the Ministry of Health due to covid19 outbreak, IHO adopted the



MOONLIGHT approach to continue distribution of condoms and create awareness among the key population. The approach targeted busy bars and entertainment spots since they were allowed to operate. The bars bring together different individuals including young people for leisure and activities ran from 7pm to 10pm.

*“During this activity we ensure that entertainment is prioritised to keep the congregation happy and in vibe and in between HIV preventive messages and condom use demonstration is done. The approach was a success that even after the covid19 restrictions were lifted IHO continued using the approach up to date” says IHO staff*



Photo: Condomize campaign taking place in bars and night clubs in South Sudan to create awareness on HIV/AIDS prevention



Photo: Condomize campaign taking place in bars and night clubs in South Sudan to create awareness on HIV/AIDS prevention



## “Made in South Sudan” Comedy – Reconstructing our cultures and Identities

UNFPA South Sudan in collaboration with Akau Jambo, a multi-award-winning Stand-Up Comedian organized “Made in South Sudan comedy show. A creative and innovative way to reconstruct cultures and identities to tackle cultural norms that hinder girls and women in society to access RH services and information.

It was a civic engagement event that brought together all walks of life and mostly youths to be part of nation-building by using their art as a medium to address issues of concern such as beliefs towards Gender inequality and access to Sexual and Reproductive Health.

***“Young people constitute the highest percentage of South Sudan population. Doing things differently in the language that they understand and engage them easily like comedy, poetry, art, with the young people enhances knowledge about their rights and promote their well-being and ensure everybody thrives in the society” said Dr Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative***

The event was a platform that allowed people to reflect on how their cultures has impacted them and what they need to unlearn or re-imagine under the theme of “Reconstructing our cultures & Identities”. The event featured performances from other prominent artists.



*Photo: Akau Jambo, comedian, during the made in South Sudan concert in Juba on Positive masculinity*



*Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative and Hon. Aya Benjamin Warille Minister for Gender Child and Social Welfare during the made in South Sudan Concert*



*Photo: Participants at the Made in South Sudan comedy show*



## Media and security professionals commit to promote an environment free of violence for women and girls and a safe South Sudan for all



*Photo: Discussions between Dr. Ademola Olajide UNFPA Representative media personnel and security officers.*

The Union of Journalists of South Sudan (UJOSS) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) held a one-day workshop for journalists and security personnel on accurate reporting of gender-based violence, family planning, and accountability.

The training was attended by journalists from various media houses, members of the police, prisons service, National Security officers, SSPDF representatives, and the fire brigade.

UNFPA Country Representative Dr. Olajide Ademola said a partnership between the media and the security sector would go a long way in promoting and protecting the rights and security for the South Sudan we all want.

***“The role of journalists within the society is to remain a societal watchdog, accurately flag issues of concern within society and working hand in hand with the security organs to advance the national agenda. This partnership of security personnel and journalists is a unique one to collectively promote the rights of women and girls and for everyone to thrive in the communities,” he said.***

**Quotes:**

“We have created special desks and appointed female security officers to champion our response to Gender based violence. We are ready to partner with the media. Thanks to UNFPA for leading the efforts” – Brigadier Gen. James Karlo, National Police Services

***“We have a clear code of conduct be it during times of peace or conflict, perpetrators will be punished. Media are our eyes and ears, they have the responsibility to boldly report these violations” Major General Lul Ruai Koang, SSPDF Spokesperson***

“Time has come when the security personnel should join us journalists in what we call human security because for us journalists, we are always interested in human security. Human security is for everybody; that woman who has been raped and her case needs to be heard so that the perpetrator can be taken to a legal process. This is the security we are interested in,” said Oyet Patrick, the President Union of Journalists of South Sudan





*Photo: Major General Lul Ruai Koang SSPDF spokesperson giving remarks during the media/security personnel meeting*



*Photo: Brig Gen. James Karlo, National Police Service Deputy Spokesperson giving remarks during the media/security personnel meeting*



## Men to champion reproductive health



Photo: Participants engaging during the Men's conference

The effort to make women and girls access freely sexual reproductive health and society free from violence in South Sudan is everyone's responsibility including men. It's on this basis a men's conference was organized for men to lead in conversation, dialogues and awareness on positive masculinity, the role of men in promoting sexual and reproductive health services and information.

"We laughed, shared, opened up, listened to each other, counseled, learnt and unlearned a lot during the Men' Conference" – One of the men participant said.

***"Meaningful engagement with men and boys is increasingly recognized as critical to advancing gender equality and equity. It is necessary not only for women's empowerment, but also to transform the social and gender norms that reinforce patriarchy and inequality that harm both women and men. Men as allies can***

***be role models in uplifting women's access to employment, appropriate working conditions, control of economic resources and full participation in decision-making"*** Hon. Aya Benjamin Warrille, Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare



Photo: Hon. Aya Benjamin Warrille, Ministry of Gender Child and Social welfare giving remarks during the Men's conference in Juba



## Visually impaired learners supported with braille-compatible code materials



*Photo: Visually impaired learners using braille writer at Rajaf Education Centre for the blind*

Rajaf Education Center for the Blind received from UNFPA a variety of transcribed textbooks into braille-compatible code words which will aid in teaching and learning by the lower primary visually impaired pupils at the center.

***“We are very happy! The braille-compatible coded books will help us a lot because teachers are not going to find challenges in preparing lessons and delivering them to pupils like in the past. With these materials, more pupils that are visually impaired will enroll in school” Levi Sunday, the Deputy Head of Teachers said.***

The school administration expressed challenges of training teachers in braille system and other textbooks of higher classes not translated from print to braille for the visually impaired pupils and UNFPA pledged support that.

***“We will leverage their skills, their capacity, and ultimately aim is that***

***each of them even with disability is able to fulfill their potential. UNFPA will support translation of other curriculum from print to braille and to sign language to ensure no one is left behind” Dr. Olajide Ademola, UNFPA Representative.***





## Making youth entrepreneurship a viable path



Photo: Participants during the BEATEC entrepreneurship skills training supported by UNFPA South Sudan

Business and Entrepreneurship Anchor Technology (BEATec) with support from UNFPA South Sudan conducted a two week workshop for youth to tap into entrepreneurship skills. The workshop was an opportunity for young people in South Sudan to learn about behavior change, skills required, development and growth of business plans.

*“I am very grateful for this training opportunity which will help me develop further my entrepreneurial skills. I have been a volunteer but with a plan to establish my own business so that I be able to be economically independent and empower other younger girls. The society looks down to us girls as marriage properties and this should change starting with us*





## Launch of Reproductive Health policies



Photo: Minister of Health (centre) Hon. Yolanda Awel Deng Juac Launching the RH policy and documents

The Ministry of Health together with UNFPA and partners launched the Reproductive Health Policy 2019–2029, the Family Planning Implementation Plan 2021–2026, and the Family Planning 2030 Commitments. This was a strong commitment by the Government of South Sudan in supporting the vision towards ending the unmet need for family planning, ending the preventable maternal deaths and ending harmful practices such as child marriages in the country. The RH policy documents aim at elevating key health issues in South Sudan.

***one of the top priorities of the government of South Sudan, and it is well protected in our constitution” says Hon. Yolanda Awel Deng Juac, Minister of Health***

The national health policy is a commitment to ensure provision of quality and access to universal healthcare coverage for the people of South Sudan countrywide to live a dignified life.

***“South Sudan faces numerous challenges and continues to rank among the world’s lowest in the health sector due to high cases of preventable maternal deaths. The maternal mortality rate remains high, estimated at 1150 per 100,000 live births, a very high scale which require action immediately. However, since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, access to health services has been recognized as***

***“I commend the Government of South Sudan particularly the leadership of Minister of Health for such a great milestone. I reaffirm UNFPA’s commitment to ensure that the agenda for full realization of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, which are essential for sustainable development as well as peace building in South Sudan is fulfilled” Dr Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative.***





*Photo(Seated) Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative, Hon Aya Benjamin Warille, Minister for Gender Child and Social Welfare, Hon. Yolanda Awel Deng, Minister for Health, Ms.Kevina Abalo John , Executive director of Resilience Organisation and , Dr. Fot Santino HIV Specialist UNFPA with girls during the adolescent girls conference*

## Adolescent Girls Conference



*Photo: Hon. Yolanda Awel Deng, Minister for Health, admiring some of the products made by the girls at the adolescent girls conference*





Photo: Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative mentoring girls during the adolescent and girls conference



Photo: Adolescent girls making a presentation during the conference



Photo: Hon. Ayaa Benjamin Warille, Minister for Gender Child and Social Welfare delivering remarks during the conference





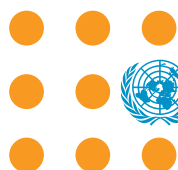
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