



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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#Musharaka4Tanmiya

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Message from the Representative

Our Esteemed readers and partners.

We are pleased to present UNFPA South Sudan's third quarter newsletter for 2023. This edition showcases our ongoing efforts in the key areas of gender equality, sexual reproductive health and rights, and the empowerment of women and girls.

UNFPA remains committed to intensifying efforts and partnerships to challenge negative social norms. This was evident in the "Rujalbi Akder" (Men Can) challenge, a pioneering event organized in collaboration with Men4Women. With participation from over 30 men, the initiative was aimed at redefining the societal narrative that cooking is solely a woman's role.

July was a momentous month on our calendar. We commemorated International Youth Day by mobilizing young people to lead the way in climate action and sustainability. Furthermore, the "Men Talk" Conference, held in Lobonok, under the auspices of the Vice President for Economic Cluster, H.E Dr. James Wani Igga, focused on addressing the gender stereotypes that negatively impact women.

Drawing inspiration from the traditional African context, families gather around fires in the evening to share stories and brainstorm together, UNFPA supported the Government of South Sudan to a second season of



"TUKUL TALKS." This platform encourages Inter-generational dialogue and provides an opportunity to interrogate and forge a collective vision for national development and peace-building. The event brought together young people from a cross-section of society.

we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our partners for their relentless efforts in providing reproductive health services and addressing gender-based violence. A special thanks go to the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, our donors, partners, and the entire UNFPA staff for their dedication toward delivering our mandate.

Together, we remain committed to creating a world - and a South Sudan - where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

We hope you find this edition enlightening and engaging.

Dr. Ademola Olajide
Country Representative

South Sudanese youth rallied to embrace patriotism



The UNFPA country Representative Ademola Olajide. Facilitating a session during the Tukul Talks

Juba-South Sudan, The Youth of South Sudan have been rallied to be patriotic, this call was made by the undersecretary at the Ministry of Peace-building, Hon. Pia Philip at the recently concluded Tukul Talks in Juba.

Hon. Philip Pia also used the occasion to call for youth empowerment saying that the young people lack the requisite skills to turn the resources of South Sudan into fortunes. “If we address the issues of the youth, we will have total peace. The youth must have something to lose, their jobs, wives, kids, plots, businesses, and sustainability; livelihood skills is what the youth of South Sudan need” he stressed,

He also noted that the young people must participate in the youth peace and security of South Sudan, stressing that peace is cultivated, nurtured, and harvested.



Hon. Philip Pia, the Undersecretary Ministry of Peace Building Speaking during the Tukul Talks

This has been the second edition of the Tukul Talks organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to sensitize the youth on their role in nation-building. The UNFPA country Representative Ademola Olajide said during the session that the youth have a greater role to play in nation-building. “It is important for us to be able to build the sustainable peace that will bring those elderly people in government to be able to talk to young people and reinvigorate that vision,” he said during the event held in Juba.

Amb. Lumumba Makelele, who spoke during the event advised the youth to focus on education and fight hunger, illiteracy which he termed as an enemy of the nation, he also asked them to prioritize their interventions in areas such as empowerment of women and girls, food security (agriculture) saying it is a collective responsibility of everyone in the society and to ensure the environment is protected to mitigate challenges,

“The youth need to unite against hunger, and illiteracy as these two are the enemies of the state, as well as make deliberate efforts to mitigate environmental challenges” he advised.



Youth delegates from different states listening to deliberations during the Tukul Talks



Amb. Lumumba Makelele delivering closing remarks during the Tukul Talks

The UNRCO - Ai Peter Van der Auweraert, called the attention of the government to provide services to its citizens, he disclosed that there were close to three million children in South Sudan who do not have an opportunity to go to school, “There are three million kids who need access to an education, the youth also need to be given

the space to participate in the constitutional-making process of this country, it is important to bring the youth together, the young people in South Sudan must also step up and discuss their vision for the nation to serve as a foundation for nation building” he noted Mangar Maker one of the participants hailed the talks as a possible platform for sensitizing young people to denounce conflict. “Youth can prevent themselves from taking part in conflict that is how youth can take part in conflicts. they should give us a forum and then we as

youth can talk about issues and how we can bring peace,” Managar stressed that youth should be given platforms where their voices can be heard rather than always hearing from the government.

The event attracted the attendance of youth from all the states and administrative areas with the hope of imparting knowledge for productivity.



UNRCO -Ai Peter Van der Auweraert, Speaking to the Young people during

Challenging negative social norms through “Rujal Bi Akder -Cooking



Minister of Gender Child and Social Welfare Hon. Benjamin Warrielle. Launching the cooking challenge

Juba-South Sudan, changing negative social gender stereotypes can never be achieved overnight. Over the years, society has always defined Kitchen as a woman's place, pitting women, and girls as objects of enslavement. Women experience inequality in their day-to-day lives, these traditional /cultural biases make it difficult for girls and women to fully utilize their potential. Society constantly tries to define what a woman should or should not do, what her roles are, and how she should carry out those roles which extend to cooking with phrases like “**the way to a man's heart is through his stomach**”; so that women feel compelled to be good

cooks not necessarily for themselves, but for their men to the extent that it has become criteria for getting married.

South Sudan is a patriarchal society its gender norms sustain a hierarchy of power and privilege that typically favors male superiority, hence a systemic inequality that undermines the rights of women and girls and restricts opportunities for women, girls, and gender minorities to express their authentic selves.

In a bid to address these biases, on Friday 18th August 2023, through Men4Women with support from UNFPA South Sudan and

the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare through Smile Again Africa Development Organization, organized a “Men-Led Cooking Competition” dubbed “Rujal Bi Ader” loosely translated as “Men Can”, bringing together 27 South Sudanese men to challenge the societal expectations of gendered roles by cooking twenty-seven (27) South Sudanese delicacies that represented the different beautiful cultures of South Sudan.

Gender Equality is 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. Men4Women with support from UNFPA is continuously engaging men as allies in gender transformative approaches that seek to interrogate and understand men and masculinities, as well as to analyze the experiences, attitudes, roles, and responsibilities of men and boys and how these influence behavior, social norms, policymaking, and gender equality overall. Positive masculinity has been found to be critical to ending all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls. At the same time, positive masculinities provide a

critical lens through which to reshape masculinities in ways that promote healthy, peaceful, and individual social well-being for all.

“The cooking challenge is a simple yet deep activity of social engineering that will begin to reset gender norms and one key gender norm we are trying to set is that of household chores”. Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Country Representative. UNFPA South Sudan Country’s vision is that every woman, girl, and youth in South Sudan is empowered and enjoys quality sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality while addressing discriminatory and health-damaging norms and this can be achieved by collecting women’s voices to shape interventions that target men and boys in behavioral change.



Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Country Representative. Delivering his remarks during the cooking challenge.

The minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, Hon. Ayaa Benjamin Warrille, called on mothers to encourage the boy-child to actively participate in household chores, ***“Mama’s let your boys cook.”*** Said Hon. Aya Warille Benjamin.

Rujal Bi Akder- Cooking challenge attracted over 150 persons, including members of diplomatic missions from the embassies of Norway and, India, media personalities, and bloggers as well as musicians to create conversations about positive masculinity and gendered roles.

“You don’t have to wait for your wife to come back from work to cook for you, you too can cook”, said Daniel Friday, of VOA

Women, girls, men, and boys who attended the one-day cooking competition were impressed by the level of competency test exhibited by the men who cooked mostly traditional and local foods. The cooking challenge proved that men can cook and be involved in any of the domestic



Dr. Ademola Olajide, and Hon. Aya Warille Benjamin. admiring participants

chores but are mostly influenced by societal expectations to be less involved in domestic chores. The one-day event attracted and contributed to informative dialogue sessions on gender roles, Family Planning, and gender-based violence which of the contributing factors is gender roles specifically house/ domestic chores.

Men4Women believes that transformation might not be affected at that instant but creating that atmosphere for dialogues will create a change in the way people perceive different roles hence leading to attitude and behavioral change.



Rewarding efforts for men who participated in the
Rujal Bi Akder (Men can)

Men converge to talk about sexual reproductive health rights at Lobonok Men Talk conference



The UNFPA country Representative Dr. Ademola Olajide. Addressing the Mens' Talk conference in Lobonok

Juba, South Sudan- Male involvement in family planning activities has the potential to increase its uptake. The latest data from the State of the World Population Report 2023 reveal that South Sudan has an unmet need for family planning at 29.7 percent. Additionally, despite a total fertility rate of 4.4 children per woman, the contraceptive prevalence rate is at a mere 6 percent for all methods

In a patriarchal society like South Sudan, men traditionally take the lead in making significant family decisions, spanning health, education, and finance.

This setup often leads to a neglect or misunderstanding of women's SRHR. Engaging men in discussions about HIV prevention and reproductive health has been shown to enhance health outcomes and advance gender equality, as evidenced by a 2007 WHO study.

The MenTalk and SRHR Camp in Lobonok, a collaboration between Men 4 Women and UNFPA, aimed to deepen men's understanding of these issues, particularly focusing on aspects such as pregnancy, childbirth, maternal and neonatal health.

The MenTalk and SRHR camp provided an opportunity for men to understand the effect of their decisions regarding SRH matters on the female/spouse and the entire family. The inclusion of men in SRH would increase the number of people seeking STI and HIV services. Males/husbands generally do not participate in screening programs and other health services due to stigma. It is necessary for men to know about the transmission of STIs HIV and other sexual and reproductive health-related diseases. Females seek and receive STI and HIV-related services while seeking FP services or ANC checkups but there is no such provision for males/husbands. So, the involvement of males (husbands) would increase the number of service seekers for these services. Husband inclusion in addressing SRH problems would help in making informed decisions in the family and would lower the burden from the female's shoulder.



The Vice President of the Economic Cluster, H.E Dr James Wani Igga together with Dr. Ademola Olajide during the Mens' talk conference

"As men we must make the effort to interrogate our cultural and religious beliefs/practices, deploying the courage to root out those which violate human rights and negatively impact SRHR", said UNFPA Country Representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide

Without the strategic engagement of men and boys to question stereotypical gender roles, national efforts to address HIV/ AIDS, SRH, and gender inequalities will be less effective.



Participants attentively listening to deliberations during the Mens' talk conference



The Vice President of the Economic Cluster, H.E Dr James Wani Igga in following the deliberations.

Explicit acknowledgment of the gendered roles of men and boys in existing policies refers to gender being framed as something that benefits every South Sudanese. Hence, identifying men's/ husband's involvement in discussing family planning activities with their spouses and their association with socioeconomic characteristics plays an influential role in women's access to health care, such as family planning services. Men 4 Women's mission is to advocate for young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV/STIs, and Sexual Gender-based Violence and for their meaningful participation in the decisions made about their lives.

For any national strategy targeting HIV/AIDS, SRH, or gender disparities to be genuinely impactful, it must actively involve men and boys and address traditional gender roles. Men 4 Women's central objective is to champion the SRHR of young individuals, combatting HIV/

STIs, and addressing Sexual Gender-Based Violence. They aim to establish an open platform, like MenTalk, for them to discuss, learn, and advocate for more inclusive family planning practices.

While addressing the conference, the Vice President of the Economic Cluster, H.E Dr Wani Igga observed that **“Strategic partnerships such as between Africa Zeal University, and men4womenss and UNFPA are important in preparing young people for leadership; to understand the needs of society and work together to fulfil them.”**



The Vice President of the Economic Cluster, H.E Dr James Wani Igga addressing the Mens' Talk conference

Wani Lokulang premiered “Temporary” a film on Gender-based violence triggering conversations amongst the participants on the stigma in reporting and the victim blaming by the community and close relatives that affects the mental health of the persons affected.

The participants were told of the available organizations working in GBV, the services they offer, the national toll-free hotlines for GBV 623 and 662 were shared widely during the sessions, referral pathways, and more services.

Throughout the sessions, facilitators realized the participants were opening up more and more, sharing, learning, and unlearning. The participants were able to find solutions amongst themselves on a range of issues that arise in the community. “Family planning has always been seen as a barrier by women to avoid childbearing by most of the societies and the men take offense to it as they feel they own the women,” said Paul Ojek. Another participant, Evans Johns had this reflection to make about the conference also, “Today I learned how to count my wife's menstrual cycle to determine safe days as a family planning method as we plan to space our children,”

The three-day MenTalk and SRHR conference garnered the attention of 195 young men and women. In groups of 15, they delved into diverse subjects, from rape, child marriage, and GBV, to mental health, feminism, and leadership. Following these intensive sessions, participants shared their key learnings, ensuring that the knowledge gained permeates their communities.



Cultural diversity - A pillar of unity and respect

“Embracing cultural diversity for peaceful coexistence”



Dances from the Otuho tribe showcasing their cultural dance

Juba, South Sudan- Hon. Rita Dominic Jada, the Minister of Youth, Culture, and Sports, emphasized the importance of cultural diversity in uniting South Sudanese communities. Speaking, during the youth cultural festival held in Juba in August, she urged young people to embrace and capitalize on the nation's rich heritage to foster cohesion and build bridges.

“Young people should emulate the church, which brings different people together, our rich diversity should not be a reason for division in

our nation rather it should be a reason for unity and togetherness” she advised. Hon. Rita also expressed concern over the involvement of youth in conflicts in the country, underscoring the pivotal role they can play in lasting peace-building. The Cultural Festival was organized by the United Nations Population Fund Youth Advisory Panel (UNFPA-YAP) on August 4, 2023, under the theme “Embracing cultural diversity for peaceful coexistence” to celebrate the rich heritage of South Sudan.



Our cultures are very beautiful, but let's use them positively -Anna Maneno

The Youth Advisory Panel's Chairperson, Anna Maneno acknowledged that South Sudan is a rich country gifted with a lot of resources. "For so long people talk about only the negative things happening in our country they see the war, inter-communal violence, suffering, and poverty yet ignore the positive things; We young people are not poor, we are rich in cultures, 64 tribes with different beautiful things, our physical features, we have minerals beyond the oil and talents that can attract the world to this country," she said.

The UNFPA Representative Dr. Ademola Olajide who joined the young people in the pomp and dance noted that it's important to support the Youth Advisory panel to interrogate cultures, to root out the negative aspects, and to understand and celebrate the positive aspects.

"We celebrate a diversity where our strength lies, a culture that must be sustained and promoted as a vehicle for equitable and sustainable development; a tree with deep roots laughs at the storm just as a society firmly rooted in positive and progressive cultural practices will be more resilient," Dr. Demola said.

The Cultural Festival was a convergence of different groups of young people with unique ethnicities, languages, religions, and traditions within South Sudan and beyond to acknowledge and celebrate their diversity. It is noteworthy that South Sudan is home to 64 ethnic communities, each contributing to the nation's rich heritage.



A tree with deep roots laughs at the storm. Dr. Ademola Olajide



“Embracing cultural diversity for peaceful coexistence”

SSFA Embarks on concrete affirmative action and reforms To strengthen female football



The UNFPA Representative Dr. Ademola Olajide, SSFA VP, SSFA President, Mr. Augustino Maduot, The Governor of Northern Bahr el Ghazal state, Hon. Tong Aken Ngor.

The president of the South Sudan Football Association -SSFA, General Augustino Maduot Parek has revealed concrete and affirmative action as well as reforms to strengthen female football in the country. Speaking to over 70 local member associations of SSFA –on 29th July 2023 during the 8th Ordinary General Assembly Northern Barh el-Ghaazal-Aweil, General Augustino Maduot Parek said, the federation will continue to focus on grassroots football to provide opportunities for young people to develop their talent.

“We have embarked upon concrete affirmative action and reforms to strengthen female football, development of infrastructures,

enhancement of the quality of competitions, encouragement of good governance at the grassroots level, and youth football development including establishment of football academies.”



SSFA, president General Augustino Maduot Parek Speaking during the official opening of the general assembly

He reassured that the association is dedicated to promoting football in the country urging, investors to work hand in hand with the association to develop sports, especially football in the country, “I urge all the stakeholders to join hands in our collective pursuit of excellence in South Sudan football. Together, we can build a strong foundation for the sport, foster talent development, and create a footballing culture in our great nation.”



Governor of Northern Bahr El Ghazal State, H.E Tong Aken Ngor addressing the official opening of the general assembly

During the official opening of the general assembly officiated by the Governor of Northern Bahr El Ghazal State, H.E Tong Aken Ngor, lauded SSFA's decision to organize the occasion in Aweil, saying that the state has immensely contributed to the development of football in the country and produced some of the most successful and talented players, therefore, it deserves to host the event.

He acknowledged the tireless effort of SSFA towards football development in the country, assuring his administration's readiness to work closely with the SSFA to promote football. He

also urges his counterparts in other states and administrative areas to support sports in their states. On his part.

The United Nations Population Fund -UNFPA Representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide noted that “A system cannot be said to fail people it was not designed to serve”. Promotion of Gender Equality in sports, such as football, requires a gender-sensitive review and restructuring of systems, protocols, and practices, including attitudes. It is important to create a safer and inclusive world (including football) where no girl is held back because they menstruate”.

The partnership of the UNFPA and SSFF has continued to promote Gender Equality in football through interventions such as support for Menstrual Health Management (MHM). We believe that no girl should be excluded due to their gender or monthly periods. The high-level convening also included dinner and side meetings to discuss not only



Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative giving remarks during the ordinary general assembly

Menstrual Health Management (MHM) but also leveraging sports for peace, and the role of sports in Youth Peace and Security.

On the sidelines of the event, the UNFPA,

conducted a focus group discussion with female footballers in the state to understand the situation, needs, challenges, and strategies to enhance women and girls.



UNFPA's Taban Kwaje, with the Bright Starlets after the focus group discussion.



The UNFPA Representative Dr. Ademola Olajide together with the SSFA President, Mr. Augustino Maduot

Juba youth go-green during the international youth month 2023



Youth ready with trees seedlings for planting

Juba, South Sudan annually, International Youth Month is set aside to bring to the fore issues around the youth globally. In South Sudan, the youth under the Umbrella of Shabab Le Shabab Health Alliance together with different stakeholders, The National Ministry of Youth and Sport, National Ministries of Environment, Gender, Health, the University of Juba, the National Youth Union, young Parliamentarians, United Nations including UN Resident Coordinator office, UNFPA, UN-WOMEN, UNESCO, engaged the youth in different activities to mark the day.

Under the theme, “Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World” the youth in and

around South Sudan conducted Youth Green campaigns by planting trees. Various campaigns revolved around the STEM Power Center University of Juba, Road drives, Radio and TV Talk Shows, dialogue on Youth4SDGs related to the upcoming UN Youth



Youth planting trees seedlings at the University of Juba

Summit and looking deep Green skills, conducting Youth Enterprise Revolving funds panel discussions with stakeholders and young people which later culminated to major celebration of International Youth Day which brought together young people and the community with a focus on climate change and particularly enhancing Green Skills for the Youth

The youth together with the Government and UN Agencies with the support of UNFPA demonstrated efforts to fight climate change

by planting trees at the Steam Power in the University of Juba. The Youth were given skills on planting and management of young trees until they can mature. The challenge was to go green by all after the exercise.

On 17 December 1999, in its resolution 54/120, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Lisbon, 8-12 August 1998) that 12 August be declared International Youth Day.



UN Resident Coordinator, Ai Peter Van der Auweraert, planting a tree during the Go Green Campaign at the University of Juba

South Sudan Parliamentary Network on Population and Development commits to championing reduction in Maternal Mortality



Members of the South Sudan Parliamentary Network on Population and Development under the Revitalized National Transitional Legislative Assembly (RNTLA) in a group photo before the meeting.

Juba, South Sudan- Members of the South Sudan Parliamentary Network on Population and Development under the Revitalized National Transitional Legislative Assembly (RNTLA) have pledged to support strengthening national efforts to improve maternal health outcomes in the country.

This commitment was arrived at in a series of meetings held on 17-18 August 2023 in Juba, Established in 2018 with support from UNFPA, the South Sudan Network on Population and Development launched its first strategic plan (2023-2028).

The goal of the plan is to contribute towards

the National Effort of responding to Sexual Reproductive Health and other population needs and supplement government efforts in fulfillment of the commitments made towards enriching the lives of the people.



The members Parliamentarian taking notes during deliberations



We are ready to support - Deputy Speaker RNTLA, Hon Nathaniel Oyet Peri

Graced by the deputy Speaker RNTLA, Hon Nathaniel Oyet Peri, and the government chief whip, Hon. Rebecca Joshua Okwac, the two senior government officials assured UNFPA of the government's commitment to ensuring the enactment of the Nursing and Midwives Act, as well as organizing a high-level meeting with the President of the Republic of South Sudan on addressing maternal mortality with the objective of establishing a Maternal Mortality Reduction Fund.

Globally, UNFPA recognizes that sustainable development requires dynamic and inclusive strategic partnerships that involve a variety of stakeholders. To this end UNFPA South Sudan Country Office partnership with the South Sudan Parliamentary Network on

Population and Development to , enact and improve relevant laws and policies, parliamentarians help to create an enabling environment for the achievement of the ICPD goals and the SDGs; advocate for the rights and needs of the people and playing a critical role in safeguarding the health, rights and well-being of women and girls as well as play a critical role in mobilizing necessary resources and ensuring resources appropriately used and through appropriation and oversight functions.

Other objectives of the strategic plan are to among others is to advocate for the enacting of laws and policies that will facilitate better implementation of Sexual Reproductive Health and other population programs, and advocate for increased budget allocation for health in a bid to speed up the move for Universal Access to Health Services.

Working with religious Groups to break barriers on menstrual health



A lead sister in the convent distribution reusable sanitary pads to her team in the convent

Multiple factors including religious and cultural barriers, social stigma, and limited access to the right information on Menstrual Health Management have contributed to poor Menstrual Health Management and ultimately limited access to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services to young girls and women in South Sudan. To achieve results from isolation to accepting the use of reusable pads and empowering every woman and girl of reproductive age with the right knowledge and tools to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), recently, Shabab Le Shabab Health Alliance reached out to the young Catholic Sisters convent from the Catholic Diocese of Juba with Menstrual;

Hygiene Management -MHM services, providing reusable pads and MHM information. Religious and Social behavior change, and positive norm building are critical components of building a healthy and safe society with the aim of Leaving No One Behind. Working with religious women groups Increases their wealth of knowledge and promotes positive development in providing right-based information, values, and attitudes.



Young Convent girls after receiving dignity kits and MHM Informations

Creating a conducive space for girls discussion on SRHR: A girls' talk program



Girls attending the Sexual reproductive Health and Family planning discussion

Maridi, Western Equatoria, South Sudan-Empowering girls with correct information knowledge, and tools is crucial in helping them make informed decisions regarding their bodies on Sexual Reproductive Health. Through Shabab Le Shabab member Organization, Mission for Sustainable Advancement (MSA) in Maridi, a “Girls Talk program”; an innovative approach to engaging school girls to come together and discuss Sexual reproductive Health and Family planning issues and share experiences

together is breaking the silence among girls on the Reproductive Health issues that affect them.

The Girls Talk program brings together in-school girls from Secondary Schools every two weeks, twice a month from their respective Schools to have 3 to 4 hours of discussions on specific SRH and Comprehensive Sexuality Education-CSE topics that they decide. The girls lead the process to dialogue and discuss during the sessions guided by a trained female Mentor

who plays the role of moderating the discussions and providing a summary with key correct messages to the girls. This quarter, the “Girls Talk’ engaged with the girls through discussions on menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), Safe sex, Abortion, and Early and Unintended Pregnancies (EUP)

Catherine one of the students from Bright Future Secondary School in Maridi who participated in the Girls Talk under a topic had this to say, “I have learned a lot today from my fellow ladies and from our mentor about how to keep good hygiene during my period, how to manage my period, how to keep safe from infections during my period, and how to be prepared to receive my periods normally without stress and have no fear of my menstruation. This knowledge I got today will help me throughout my life to take good care of my body and make mature decisions about

my body, and I am going to help my sisters who have not been here so that they can also get the same knowledge. I am excited that I have received my dignity kit! Now I will not miss my classes because of my periods! I am proud to be a Girl! And proud to be a menstruating!” She said.

The power of knowledge gives girls the ability to challenge all the negative cultures and norms that promote forced marriages, gender discrimination, stereotypes, and stigma on Menstruation! Empower Girls and give them more power over their Body! After the program, the girls are given dignity kits, as support for menstrual hygiene management and keep them in school even during their menstrual periods, thanks to Shabab Le Shabab Health Alliance with support from UNFPA.



Girls in a group discussion on Sexual reproductive Health and Family planning

Empowering female sex workers on HIV awareness

Juba, South Sudan- In the Republic of South Sudan, HIV continues to be a public health priority with an estimated prevalence of 2.5% among adults aged 15-49 years (2020 UNAIDS estimate) with 18% of the estimated PLHIV (190,000) on treatment, with an overall goal to reduce the incidence of HIV infections among the sexually active population by 60%, Shabab Le Shabab Health Alliance recently conducted mentorship and coaching for FSWs.

With funding support for UNFPA South Sudan through the Global fund project, Shabab Le Shabab Health Alliance in the last three months reached 560 Junior and senior FSWs (80 in each location) through mentorship and coaching on safer sex, creation of alternative means of income generation instead of indulging sex for money, Menstrual Health Management as a means of reducing the risk of contracting

STIs and other infections, HIV/AIDS prevention and services, other sexual reproductive health issues and Family Planning.

Shabab Le Shabab Health Alliance works with member organizations in collaboration with the South Sudan Network of people living with HIV-SSNEP and the Network of Women Positive United -NEWPU to enhance positive sexual behavior change among Junior and Senior Female Sex Workers in Kapoeta, Malakal, Maban, Nzara Tombura, Torit and Yei.



FSW during mentorship and coaching session on reducing risky sexual behaviors

Energy-Efficient briquette stoves lights up the lives of displaced women in Bentiu camps



A member of the group lighting the biomass briquettes stove

Bentiu-Unity State- Hope Restoration South Sudan, in collaboration with UNFPA, is taking significant strides to enhance the lives of vulnerable women and girls in Bentiu. The objective is clear: improve access to Integrated SRH and GBV services by Strengthening humanitarian preparedness and response mechanisms in Bentiu, Unity State. The focus is on economically empowering women and girls through training in various income-generating activities and providing livelihood support at the Women and Girls Friendly spaces. These efforts primarily aim to combat gender-based violence (GBV).

Traditionally, women and girls would risk assaults while collecting firewood from distant locations. Hope Restoration

recognized this peril and the environmental toll such practices took. As a solution, they introduced wood briquettes, an efficient alternative to coal and firewood. These biomass briquettes, besides being eco-friendly, are cost-effective. They burn hotter, produce minimal ash, and are more affordable than other energy sources like fuel oil, propane, and natural gas.

Women at the Bentiu Girls and Friendly Space have confided in the staff that they have had skills improved as opposed to what the situation was before the crisis. Nyagoa Chut, a local resident of the IDP camp, testifies to the transformative power of this initiative. Before the project, she depended on collecting firewood as her sole means of subsistence.

“I had no knowledge of how to make fuel briquette stoves, and I used to go to the forest to fetch firewood for cooking for it was the only way to make a living, but currently, I have acquired enough skills from the training, especially on the fuel briquettes stove making as a source of saving the energy; I no longer go to the forest to fetch firewood, I can train other women and girls on how to make the fuel stove, briquettes and I can now send and pay the school fee of my kids through the same, because, I make and sell some to earn money to buy food for the house and school fees” says Nyagoa Chut Another beneficiary, Monica Nyika, recounts her journey from displacement due to the 2021 floods to empowerment.

“I was displaced by the floods in 2021 from Nhaildue payam, I came to Site A block 8, and I had nowhere to go and what to do until the establishment of this WGFS, UNFPA, and HRSS has transformed me, I got enrolled when the Hope Restoration South Sudan was conducting awareness raising on GBV,

information sessions and availability of services at the WGFs Centre, I decided to visit the center and try my luck when asked to choose what I could try, I went for the fuel briquettes stove making and I was trained on it” she reveals

Monica is grateful to HRSS and UNFPA for the work they are doing to empower women with skills and capacity building, noting.

“I can now make my own fuel stoves and sell them to the market, am no longer spending much money to buy charcoal, secondly I no longer go to the water and far distances to fetched firewood, this has reduced our chances of exposure to being raped and also we are able to protect our environment”.



Women in Bentiu moulding biomass briquettes stove

Journey to dignity: Addressing reproductive health needs for women and young girls in South Sudan.



Yeno's sharing her story

Juba, South Sudan - Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of women and girls continue to be a pressing issue demanding attention. This fundamental entitlement comes alive through human rights-based approaches, a beacon of hope empowering women and girls to claim their rights in a challenging context. Behind this charge, duty-bearers need to fulfill their obligations, echoing the voices and stories of countless women and girls seeking to claim their sexual and reproductive health and

rights. This is demonstrated by the Government of South Sudan's recent ratification of the African Union's Maputo Protocol, a key treaty dedicated to ensuring the rights and welfare of African women and girls, marking a significant stride forward in championing their rights and well-being.

With support from UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, AfriYAN South Sudan aims to identify the underlying factors influencing the realization of sexual and reproductive health and rights for adolescent girls and

young women living in South Sudan by exploring the role of relevant service providers and stakeholders; as well as uncovering knowledge and gaps in protecting adolescent girls and young women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

During its engagement with Adolescent girls and young women, AfriYAN is bridging the information gap on sexual health, services available, and mechanisms for rights violations. Formal sources of information are frequently inaccessible, family members are said to be sometimes the source of rights violations, and informal methods of redressing rights were often sought. Stigma and fear are common features both in healthcare and in the pursuit of formal justice, with duty-bearers habitually breaking confidentiality whereas education and training are the predominant suggestions offered for change.

Meet Yeno Said, a young girl whose life transformed through her encounters with AfriYAN. During a one-on-one session on Menstrual Hygiene and other information on sexuality, she reported being no longer ashamed to discuss matters on menstruation and health education, "I am happy that I am equipped with a dignity kit that replaces the old rags I once used. With pads, soap, and other essentials, I can now face each day with confidence," she shares while expressing appreciation to UNFPA, AfriYAN, and other

donors who made this possible. But Yeno's journey hasn't been without its struggles. She reminisces about the days when her period was a source of shame, a symbol of adulthood, and a precursor to marriage.

"I got my period when I was 12 years old. I was shocked, I had no clue what it was and didn't expect it, I asked my sister and she explained to me that it is normal and only girls get it. I was also told that now I am a grown-up woman and ready to be married." She narrates.

Having to deal with period shame which is deeply rooted in gender inequality, driven by cultural and religious traditions, Yeno felt discriminated, and bullied by the boys and unsafe school environment. "She was so embarrassed that she had to miss school as she didn't have anything to clean or manage her period with dignity, she used rags to pad up, and the toilet facilities at her school had no doors on them so she didn't feel safe using them" recounts Yeno's sister Araba

With this intervention from AfriYAN, the situation is now changing. "I am so happy that I got a dignity kit that I can use now instead of clothes, now we have a separate toilet facility for girls, and it's not close to the boys and it is safe and secure. We can freely, with no fear, use the toilet in school. I'm so happy for this." Says Yeno With the stigma associated

with Menstruation, girls and women are often expected to refrain from normal activities, such as bathing or cooking, and may even be banished from the home during their period. These restrictions and negative attitudes towards menstruation affect girls' self-esteem." Still, challenges persist. Deep-rooted cultural beliefs, often shrouded in stigma, force many girls to retreat from daily activities, diminishing their self-worth. Such beliefs impact their self-

esteem, pushing them to the sidelines of society.

Yet, there's hope on the horizon. Targeted efforts like those of AfriYAN with support from UNFPA and partners are pivotal in addressing the root causes of these issues, reshaping mindsets, and building a brighter future where every adolescent girl and young woman can realize her sexual and reproductive health and rights, unapologetically.

Internal displaced Women of Leer craft a way out of poverty with the support of UNFPA and HRSS



A beneficiary of the training sewing a material at the center.

Leer, Unity State- The Sudan crisis continues to displace and drive people away from Khartoum, leaving returning residents with little to no resources. The reality of facing day-to-day challenges has made many lose hope for life. Yet, in Leer, a glimmer of hope emerges for a group of women, all thanks to Hope Restoration South Sudan (HRSS) with support from UNFPA and partners. Engaging in income-generating activities such as beading, bed sheet making, crocheting, and basket weaving as well as knitting tablecloths, these women are not

only keeping busy but also working towards financial independence. This initiative has been made possible through the Leer Women, Girls, and Friendly Space established by HRSS with support from UNFPA and funding from donors.

This program currently supports 85 women and girls, offering them essential services and information on maternal health, family planning, gender-based violence, and HIV prevention, tailored for emergency and fragile contexts. Moreover, participants are introduced to various business skills, including baking, pastry-making, and more.

Nyataba Malual, who received training in tailoring at the center, is a testament to its impact. With the knowledge and skills, she acquired, Nyataba is now crafting school uniforms and other apparel, generating an income that supports her three children.

“I used to hire a sewing machine from someone, but thanks to Hope Restoration and UNFPA, I managed to secure my own machine, my other peers have learned other skills such as making mandazi and chapati, and knitting, and these have greatly improved our lives,” she said Despite all these strides, accessibility to materials seems to paint a gloomy picture of what appears to be a promising future. A lack of access to essential materials casts a shadow over their progress. Nyamal Mary, a beneficiary of the program, expressed her concern, “Due to inaccessible roads in Adok, we're struggling with material shortages at the center. For instance, we've been without basket-making

materials since last year, even though it's a pivotal craft for women's and girls' empowerment here.”



A case worker talking to mothers

Torit youth centre: A catalyst for youth empowerment on SRHR

Torit-Eastern Equatoria State- The urge by young people to know their SRHR is always high, but they are many at times restrained by a lack of access to information and services within the community. Recognizing this, the Torit Youth-Friendly Centre has innovatively woven recreation activities into its program, effectively boosting the availability of crucial SRHR information and services for adolescents and young people. With the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the guidance of Impact Health Organization (IHO), the Torit Youth-Friendly Center stands as a sanctuary for young people.

As a part of the activities at the youth center, dance sessions have been integrated into the program, scheduled every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. These sessions are more than mere entertainment. They serve as magnets, drawing youths from diverse parts of Torit County, and uniting them under a shared ambition: to co-create a robust youth movement that addresses their urgent adolescent and youth SRH needs. Dance here is not just an art; it is a medium of communication, fostering dialogue, collaboration, and the free exchange of ideas

concerning issues affecting young people. Through dance, a wave of socio-cultural change is set in motion.

The young people have embarked on a journey of collective thinking and collaboration, fostering an inclusive space for dialogue about ASRH through dance and fun. The primary focus of the dance training at youth youth-friendly center serves as a dynamic platform where young voices merge and ideas flourish.

Atari John is one of the dancers at Torit Youth Friendly Center, he says he joined this dance group 3 months ago and feels excited.

“I have benefited from the dance group, for the first time I got engaged in such a space and a youth group, under a professional trainer, I interact with various young people, learning about sexual reproductive health issues,” he said.



Young men in music session

Atari says the IHO staff at Torit Youth Friendly Center have been so helpful in making him a better person,

“I wish to continue to be in this center for various integrated activities like volleyball, playing cards, and other games to keep me busy and aware of my health and behaviors, being in this center has changed me from getting involved in idle sitting and aimless activities of other young people groups” he added.

Impact Health Organization supports and offers mentorship to young people at the youth center,

The tangible positive changes seen in young individuals like Atari underline the value of the Torit Youth Center. Consequently, many are urging the Impact Health Organization to further invest in the center, adding more recreational activities. Such enhancements, they believe, would attract even more youth, simultaneously expanding their horizons and educating them about pivotal issues like sexual reproductive health, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and HIV/STIs, all of which significantly impact their communities.

Empowering young mothers and adolescent girls on green skills: Production of handicraft and reusable sanitary pads



Girls being taught how to make re-usable sanitary pads

Juba, South Sudan -One of the major issues faced by women in South Sudan is the lack of access to menstrual hygiene products, many women cannot afford to buy sanitary pads, and as a result, resort to using unhygienic materials such as rags, and on extreme situations, even leaves, thus putting them at risk of developing infections and other health issues. Addressing this issue, AfriYAN South Sudan with support from UNFPA, has introduced training sessions for women and adolescent girls. These sessions teach participants how to design and stitch

reusable cloth sanitary pads. Additionally, they educate them on the proper use, hygienic disposal, and safe menstrual hygiene management using these cloth pads.

Relatedly, the lack of education and awareness about menstrual health among many women in South Sudan continues to increase hygiene or other risks associated with using unhygienic materials, AfriYAN through its flagship program of “Green Skills Program” is aiming at educating women on the importance of proper menstrual hygiene and

the risks of using unhygienic materials and to provide a sustainable livelihood option to the Gudele Community women in the suburbs of Juba.

Initiated in September, the reusable sanitary pad training complements the Community Voices project. The inaugural three-day program, attended by 20 enthusiastic participants, not only imparted skills but also opened avenues for income generation. By teaching them to produce reusable sanitary pads using local resources, the initiative equips women to better their financial standing.

Behind this transformative project are

“AfriYAN have been instrumental in providing the South Sudan” and “Shabab Le Mujtama”. They necessary resources and materials for the women in the Gudele area. Their efforts aim to empower these women, allowing them to reclaim control over their lives, foster sustainability, and champion menstrual hygiene.

By providing access to the necessary resources and education for maintaining good menstrual health in the remote areas of Gudele, AfriYAN South and Shabab Le Mujtama, is empowering women and improving their overall health and well-being.



Girls in a group photo with their trainers in reusable sanitary pads by AfriYAN

Meeting rural demand for modern short-term contraceptives through community-based distribution initiatives in northern barh el ghazal state



Group leader presenting CBFP training session

Maluakon Aweil, East County NBGS- Increasing access to short-term contraceptive methods by the integration of the Boma Health Initiative Activities with last mile community-based distribution of modern short-term contraceptive methods in rural areas of Aweil East County is yielding results, this is according to Boma Health Workers. Aweil East County, of Northern Bahr Ghazal State Southern Sudan, is where most women and people have little access to healthcare services,

With the current influx of refugees and returnees, Aweil East is the most populated county in Northern Bahr Ghazal State with an estimated population of 344,921(200,049

returnees, 13,946 IDPs and 130,926 Residents), the settlements in Aweil East is sparse which poses the greatest risk of accessing healthcare facilities by the vulnerable population (Pregnant Women, Children, PWD, and Elderly people. The South Sudan Ministry of Health (MoH) adopted Modern Contraception as a strategy to reduce the number of maternal and newborn deaths. Studies have shown that the use of contraception can have important effects on maternal and child survival. An increase in contraceptive use leads to a reduction in the number of births which, all other things being equal, means fewer maternal deaths, fewer stillbirths, and fewer children exposed to the risk of mortality. Northern Bahr El Ghazal State is one the States in South Sudan reporting a high number of maternal mortalities, this is evident by the report from MSF, with 12 maternal deaths reported from January to August 2023 during the State level RHTWG Coordination Meeting held on 7th September 2023 To reach the sparsely distributed rural population with short-term modern contraception through the existing community

structures the Boma Health Workers in four payams of Malualbaai, Yargot, Baach and Madhol, the International Rescue Committee is Implementing a community-based family planning with funding from the UNFPA.

Albeit the community-based family planning (CBFP) activity implementation started within Q3 after receiving funding from the UNFPA, IRC in South Sudan organized and conducted a four-day training for 82 (18 female: 64 female) Boma Health Workers in Aweil East County. The boma health workers were drawn from different four payams (Malualbaai 21(4M: 17F), Madhol21 (7M: 14F), Yargot 21(4M:17F) & Beach 19(3M:16F)) in Aweil East County. The training which took place on the 20th , 21st , 24th, and 25th of July 2023 aimed to build the capacity of the boma health workers to provide quality

community distribution of self-injectable SC-Sayana Press, community mobilization and awareness, Reporting Adverse Events following Injection and provide referrals for the clients in need of long-acting contraception. The training utilized a more practical interactive and participatory approach that covered different technical areas including priority needs for self-injectable Sayana press.

Yom Maduok Kuol, a Male BHW from Yargot Payam had this to say, “This training is the best training I have ever attended because it is practical and made me see the Family Planning methods physically”

Results, the outcome of the training was noticeable through the interest and willingness exhibited by the participants to integrate the CBFP with the pre-existing BHI activities from the knowledge and skills acquired from the training (Counseling skills, administration of self-injectable Sayana press, and eligibility criteria for the short-term methods).

The training also provided an in-depth understanding of the Short-term FP methods (Condom use, OCPs, and Sayana Press), the participants also appreciated the sessions on demand generation for FP methods and supply chain management of RH commodities during the project Implementation period.



A mother getting instructions on the use of contraception

Thank you for your feedback

Akech Deng Khon
I'm glad to hear that, we must address cultural issues about child marriage. Maternal death occurs due to delays, accessibility of road, home delivery and lack of skills health personnel. The average teenagers pregnancy have obstetric fistula after delivery is still higher.

Clara Duoth Riek
Weldone HRSS and IRC thanks to our Donor UNFPA for the WPE programs in the country.

Gisma Tut Pathel Pathel
Very good work for UNFPA
22 hrs Like Reply 1

Zinash Ayalneh Lakew
Dr. Gillian We still proud of you keeping this program, all the members well done. Remain strong and blessed

Sagani Nakeyo
Am so grateful of the work done by UNFPA South Sudan

Isaac Roba Taban
Wow
Thanks so much UNFPA for the step taken.
Indeed the future belongs to our youth.
Remember growth and development is never an accidental.
Looking forward to Share with them through this great platform.

Florence Joggo @Florence... · 29 Aug
Replying to @UNFPASouthSudan @UNFPA others
True thanks 🙌 UNFPA South Sudan for standing with Young people of my country SSD, "Together with build the Bridge"

Clara Duoth Riek
Weldone HRSS and IRC thanks to our Donor UNFPA for the WPE

Justin Biida Kangi
great work done keep up the spirit, God bless you all

Brenda Alinda
Well done UNFPA and u had good selection of representatives like Brig. James and Gender Officer from the protection unit Mr. Amule. Thank you very much

Chol Malou Kuol
That's wonderful, Keep up the great Humanitarian work UNFPA team

United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)
Wow... this is awesome and uplifting. The future is bright

Cde Bigoah Kuong
This is a great contribution to our peoples lives

Rebecca Abraham MK
This actually great achievement to our people lives

Akech Deng Khon
I'm glad to hear that, we must address cultural issues about child marriage. Maternal death occurs due to delays, accessibility of road, home delivery and lack of skills health personnel. The average teenagers pregnancy have obstetric fistula after delivery is still higher.

Resilience Organization -RO
It was great being joining colleagues from other Organization. We appreciate UNFPA South Sudan for the support.

Adam Ibrahim
I love all that you guz are doing, well done UNFPA

← UNFPA South Sudan's post

Congratulations 🎉🎉🎉

Sagani Nakeyo
Great work towards peace building of our beloved Country

UNFPA South Sudan

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