



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

April - June 2023

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Message from the Representative

It is a great honor to bring to you our quarterly Newsletter highlighting what we have delivered with our partners in this beautiful Republic of South Sudan. Together we have contributed to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, restoring hope for the refugees and returnees, empowering adolescents, and young people including people with disabilities to make informed choices, for all citizens to thrive.

During this second quarter of 2023, UNFPA is proud to have launched and handed over two major facilities: the first-ever well-equipped female boxers' facility and the self-care facilities for the Bright starlets – the female national football team. This gives UNFPA an opportunity to leverage sports to challenge negative gender norms, promote girls' development and gender equality. We make these efforts because we believe that investing in South Sudan's girls is a critical pathway to sustainable development. Girls have dreams of a good life, in a better world where they can participate in athletics, complete their education without missing school due to menstruation, be married off early, or have children while they are still children themselves.

The other notable episode in the second quarter has been the refugee and returnee crisis as a result of the Sudan conflict, as the saying goes, "When your neighbor's house is on fire, you will not catch sleep". UNFPA is responding to the crisis with its frontline partners with SRHR and GBV services, including providing Dignity and RH Kits to assist young girls and women fleeing from the war zone.

The contribution from the Government of Sweden was another great milestone that provides an opportunity to enable us to continue delivering programs for improving the health and well-being of women, girls and young people in South Sudan.



We remain grateful for the partnership with other UN Agencies in supporting development of this country. UNFPA and UN-WOMEN launched a four-year project of \$70 million South Sudan Women's Social Economic Empowerment project. Another key milestone was the joint UNFPA and UNESCO launch of a two-year project which will empower young women and men to participate in and lead peacebuilding processes across the ten states and three administrative areas.

The conflict in Sudan which has resulted in a number of refugees and returnees crossing into South Sudan cannot pass without mention. As the saying goes, "When your neighbor's house is on fire, you will not catch sleep". UNFPA together with the other UN Agencies has/is responding to the crisis at the entry points with our frontline partners with GBV services, psycho-social support, case management of rape and pre-positioning Dignity Kits to young girls and women fleeing.

I take this opportunity to thank the Government of South Sudan, our Donors, Partners and the entire UNFPA staff for their dedication toward the delivering our mandate. We will always strive to deliver a world and a South Sudan where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

Enjoy reading!.

Dr. Ademola Olajide
UNFPA Representative

UNFPA/UN-WOMEN to implement, a \$70 million South Sudan Women's Social Economic Empowerment project



HE Mama Rebecca De Mabior in a group photo with other dignitaries

Juba, May 26, 2023 — A \$ 70 million World Bank-funded Economic Empowerment project dubbed, South Sudan Women and Social Economic Empowerment Project-SSWSEEP was launched in Juba.

The project implemented by UNFPA and UN-Women with South Sudan's Ministry of Gender is to support female entrepreneurs in formalizing and scaling up their business activities and help survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) access vital services that will enable them to recover and rebuild their lives.

The World Bank approved a \$70 million International Development Association grant to boost women's social and economic empowerment in South Sudan.

For generations, Hon. Aya Benjamin Warile noted, South Sudanese women have supported their families and communities by engaging in entrepreneurial

activities, however, their progress has often been constrained by a mixture of prevailing social norms, institutional impediments, and insufficient access to education, training, business services, and access to financing.



UNFPA Country Representative Dr. Demola Olajide being awarded for championing fight against GBV

“Empowering women to participate fully in civic and economic life will make South Sudan more prosperous and peaceful. With improved financial security, other areas of women's lives will also improve, as they can more easily

afford health services, send their children to school, and are more likely to serve in leadership roles in their communities and become agents of change,” said Aya Benjamin Warile, Minister of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare for South Sudan.

UNFPA Representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide said, “The project is a symbol of collective solidarity in the transformation of Gender-Based -Violence survivors to champions that can optimally contribute to socio-economic transformation.”

This project aligns with the World Bank’s Country Engagement Note for South Sudan for the financial year 2021-2023 and it includes a cross-cutting focus on women and youth to help reduce fragility, facilitate peacebuilding, and promote inclusive development in the country. The project takes a holistic approach aiming to also strengthen the public sector’s capacity to engage more actively around women’s empowerment to ensure long-term benefits for future generations of South Sudanese women and girls.

“Survivors of gender-based violence require substantial support to recover from the physical and psychological trauma that they have endured. This project will help expand their access to vital health services and psychosocial support,

and will work on strengthening the prevention of GBV,” said Firas Raad, World Bank Country Manager for South Sudan. “It will also help women to grow their businesses and improve their livelihoods by providing grants, training, and technical assistance.”

The Vice President of the Gender and Youth Cluster, Her Excellency Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior said, “This project is a commitment under the leadership of the Government of South Sudan to support and leverage the God-given strength of the woman”

The SSWSEEP comprises four components that aim at holistically addressing the specific challenges affecting the growth and development of women in South Sudan including: community-based socio-economic empowerment of women; establishing a women’s entrepreneurial opportunity facility; providing services for survivors of GBV; and supporting institutional strengthening and project management.

The SSWSEEP is a four-year project that will be implemented by South Sudan’s Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MGCSW) with the support of UN Women. It will target 91,000 women and 5,200 adolescent girls, while indirectly reaching 673,400 people.

Harnessing the power of sports for gender Equality and menstrual health management – UNFPA hands over Self-Care facility to female football team



Dr. Demola Olajide in a group photo with Starlets for change at Buluk

Juba- “In South Sudan, the legal frameworks are in place, but the real reason we want to have our girls play sports is to empower them; our daughters should play sports to benefit from unintended pregnancies, to have confidence, and be free from depression,” Those were the words of the Netherlands ambassador to South Sudan, Ambassador Linken Nymann Berryman recently while launching a Female Self-Care Facility, This is an initiative by UNFPA geared towards promoting the development of sports, especially female footballers in the Country to harness the power of sports to end gender-based violence and harmful practices and improve menstrual health management in South Sudan.

Ambassador Linken Nymann Berryman, added, that, through sports, girls and women learn teamwork to be successful in workplaces, and hoped that parents in South Sudan would see how good it is for girls to participate in sports, stressing that there is also a need for female leadership, in coaching, “Our support to every woman in South Sudan is to ensure that they get every space needed to empower them” she re-echoed

The SSFA president, General Agustino Maduot Parek expressed gratitude to the Netherlands embassy,

saying they only donated four containers but was rather quick to say they are the equivalent of “a tower”,

“Thanks to the Netherlands embassy for the generous contributions, I also thank UNFPA for continuous support to the female footballer’s health and well-being. For us at SSFA, this facility will help the Bright starlets and attract more girls to join football. We are forever thankful,” said General Augustino



Bright Starlets acting captain Esther Lewis giving a word of thanks to UNFPA & the Embassy of Netherlands

General Agustino noted that the female players were faced with a lack of rooms, adding that the containers have given females sports a new lease of life in the footballing sector in South Sudan.

‘Things will change, because previously they would change in the cars while here, thanks to UNFPA, we got this safe spaces. I would like to remind that FIFA and UNFPA also encouraged us in handling Menstrual hygiene Management, so to my daughters (footballers) be serious, keep discipline such that you don’t run into trouble with those who don’t wish you well’. he stressed.

UNFPA Representative Dr. Ademola Olajide said, “Women in sports become resilient, work harder, and are disciplined. Your presence on the pitch makes you champions to change stereotypes. We have provided you with SRH Manual and toolkits because champions speak with informed knowledge and confidence.”

Sports has the power to change the world. It is a powerful tool to strengthen social ties and promote sustainable development and peace, as well as solidarity and respect for all. Over the last 50 years, the participation rates of women and girls in sports have soared, challenging sports as a male preserve.



Ambassador Linken Nymann Berryman addressing the crowd

Throughout the years, sports have seen higher rates of participation from female athletes, especially in male-dominated sports such as boxing.

The National team the Bright Starlets, captain, Esther Lewis expressed gratitude to UNFPA and its partners for their generosity in aiding them with the containers.

“Your support to us is not in vain, this facility will make us comfortable, in most cases when the girls are in their menses, changing becomes difficult, thanks to UNFPA and other partners who made this possible,” she said.



Bright Starlets pose for a group photo with UNFPA Representative

The revolution and women's liberation go hand-in-hand – UNFPA launches the first-ever female boxing facility in South Sudan



UNFPA Representative, Dr. Demola Olajide together with the SSBXF President Mama Theraza Athian Abdel Bagi commissioning the first-ever female boxing facility.

Juba- "The revolution and women's liberation go together. We do not talk of women's emancipation as an act of charity or out of a surge of human compassion. It is a basic necessity for the revolution to triumph. Women hold up the other half of the sky." Capt. Thomas Sankara; 1949 – 1987. Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative quote alluding to the former Burkina-Faso President, the late Thomas Sankara, during the launch of the first-ever sports facility in South Sudan.

The first ever well-equipped facility will help in training women and girls in boxing skills to enable them to face the challenges that face in society as well as learn life skills such as sexual reproductive health and rights. Dr. Demola stated that the partnership with sports federations is meant to challenge social norms that women face in society, promote gender equality, and empower the girls to fulfill their potential beyond sports.

"Like any other developing nation, South Sudanese women are confronted with various challenges and those in societies continue to undermine the status of women. What we want to do as the United Nations Population Fund is to partner with organizations, institutions, women, and girls in uncommon fields such as boxing," Olajide stated.



Female boxers engaging in asparing

Martin Obonyo Akim, the Secretary General of South Sudan Boxing Federation (SSBXF), noted that the launch of the well-equipped hall equipment will not only train women boxers but also educate them on the dangers of gender-based violence and early marriages.

Cecelia Khamis Malesh, a student at the University of Juba and a female boxer, appreciated the support UNFPA has given them. She said that the facility is the best boxing facility in the country and will help enroll more girls who will realize their dreams. Mama Tereza Abdelbagi, the first female President of

South Sudan's Boxing Federation, challenged the South Sudan women to venture into boxing.

"It's like any other kind of sport. Today we are doing the launching and we are going to use this facility to change the negative thinking that boxing is only for men. Thank you UNFPA for supporting women and girls in sports. With this well-equipped facility, we are going to raise girls who will say 'I can do it - the medals will be brought home.'"

The launch of the facility for female boxers is an innovation to challenge negative social norms and to promote gender equality through sports.



Female boxers in a group photo at their new home

Shun revenge if we are to realize peace in the country – Minister Par Kuol advises during the launch of two-year Youth Leading Peace project

The Minister of Peacebuilding Hon. Steven Par Kuol said that 75% of the population of South Sudan comprises young people and that this youth constituency can be used as engineers to realize meaningful contribution towards sustainable development of South Sudan.

Addressing the youth representatives from all ten states and the three administrative areas in Juba recently at the launch of the Youth Leading Peace project in South Sudan aimed at promoting youth participation in peacebuilding processes, Minister Par also said that the youth of South Sudan must master their own destiny, forgive, and reconcile to embrace peace.

Minister Stephen Par Koul, said the project is timely because it will have a positive impact on the lives of young people who are always used as instruments of destruction.

“Today, the youth in South Sudan are used either in political or community conflicts yet they have potential to do better for peace and development of this country. This project is timely and central for the young people to step up and contribute meaningfully towards peacebuilding than being involved in conflict,” said Minister Koul.

The UNFPA Representative, Dr. Demola Olajide said that South Sudan’s population, is young and that their interest should be focused on peace, well-being and economic development for themselves and the country.

“Young people must be involved in every stage of every peace process and they must be given space for their voices to be heard. Their future starts now” Dr. Demola Olajide said.



Minister for peace building Stephen Par Koul giving key notes address at the launch of youth leading peace project

He added that the conflict background of South Sudan has always been the reason most people are engaging in conflict, pointing out that the 21-year war of the liberation struggle plus the 2013 and 2016 have all contributed to the current attitude.



UNFPA Representative, Dr. Demola Olajide addressing the youth at the launch of youth leading peace project

Minister Koul suggested that instead of elders alone leading the peace process, the peace process should be led by the youth. Youth need different skill sets. In this period of 10 years, we have lost much of our youth to illiteracy, and you know human talent can be channelled to anything,” he explained.

He also explained the fact that most youths across the country had involved themselves in harmful activities such as cattle raiding and killing innocent lives simply because they have learned to kill.

“This project will establish youth for conflict resolution in their communities as well as guarantee civic space for the youth, the project will develop a national strategy on youth peace and security”, said Hon. Philip Pia, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Peacebuilding.

Julius Banda, the Country Representative of UNESCO has said government and peace partners in South Sudan must find ways to engage young people in peace processes across the country and include youth in economic activities.



Female youth delegates during the launch of the youth leading peace project



Participants during the youth leading peace project launch

The journey from evidence to reality begins with a strong foundation in education.



Juba: “The world is going digital, our nurses and midwives need to be empowered with digital skills to be able to generate evidence, the roles of nurses and midwives are undeniable” These were the words of the undersecretary of the national ministry of Health, Dr. Victoria Anib Majur during the national event to mark the International Day of Nurses and Midwives 2023 in Al Sabah children’s hospital

Nurses and midwives in South Sudan under their umbrella body, South Sudan Nurses and Midwives Association (SSNAMA) through their president used the occasion to call for better pay and working conditions throughout the country.

They decried that they are overworked and underpaid, a sentiment the undersecretary lauded them for, saying that she is aware of the tough conditions the nursing and midwifery cadre is going through, “I know you are volunteering because you are paid little but still you have not given up, but I must emphasize, Nurses and midwives are an important asset of health professionals, without well-trained nurses and midwives, we won't reduce maternal morbidity, therefore you are the malaikatul Rahmah! Angels of blessings” she said amidst cheers and ululations from the crowd

UNFPA humanitarian coordinator Mr. Hussein Hassen who represented the UNFPA Deputy Representative at the event said that “the journey from evidence to reality begins with a strong foundation in education” He stressed that Investing in the education of nurses and midwives empowers these healthcare professionals and ensures that they are equipped with the most current, evidence-based knowledge and skills.



UNFPA humanitarian coordinator Mr. Hussein Hassen delivering remarks during IDM at Al sabah children’s hospital

Aber Evaline, a former UN Volunteer with UNFPA, who currently volunteers at the Juba Teaching Hospital, said, celebrating the International Day of Nurses and Midwives brings fond memories of her days while working with UNFPA, but again was quick to say that the nursing profession is a noble one for her and more reason she is still volunteering, “ From day one, I have been working at Juba Teaching Hospital, babies have been named after me, this is a profession I love and I will continue to serve” said Aber

This year’s theme for international nurses’ day, according to the International Council of Nurses (ICN), is, ‘Our nurses, our future’ and it is a global campaign that aims to address global health challenges and achieve better global health for all. The theme for international day of the midwife, according to the International Confederation of Midwives was “Together again: from evidence to reality.”

Reverend Janet observed that ambulances whirling with sirens in the streets of Juba are carrying dead bodies instead of carrying pregnant women to health facilities, “our ambulances are carrying dead people, there is no emergency in carrying a dead body, but there is an emergency in carrying a pregnant woman to a health facility, we need to reserve this trend,



Aber Evaline, a former UN Volunteer hands a child to the mother

ambulances need to be used for emergencies such that we can reduce maternal morbidity” she added

South Sudan at independence had only eight qualified midwives but with support from donors including Canada, Sweden, Norway, Japan, USAID, and ECHO, the country now boasts of over 2000 nurses and midwives. UNFPA continues to provide technical assistance and support for midwifery and nursing programmes and services across the country.



Nurses and midwives pose during IDM Celebrations

Up-to-date population data for South Sudan's progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is crucial.



Government Officials, UN delegates and Donors during the release of the 2021 Population Estimation Survey

JUBA, – "Population is not about numbers, it is about people. For everyone to count, everyone must be counted! The population estimation survey is a critical intervention to facilitate sustainable and equitable development" These were the words of Dr. Olajide Demola, UNFPA country representative, during the release of the 2021 Population Estimation survey report.

The survey, which was conducted in May 2021, was a hybrid census, it counted people in households in sample sites identified across the country, with the aim of providing up-to-date and reliable national data on the population; critical for evidence-based planning and decision-making for progress and sustainable development.

South Sudan has always relied on the previous population and housing census conducted in 2008 before it seceded from Sudan, and the result from the census put the country's estimated population at 8.26 million; with the 2021 report, South Sudan's population has peaked at 12.4 million, the population survey by gender stands at 52.9 percent females and 47.1 percent males, respectively, while the youth population stands at 77 percent.

The chairperson of the National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, Hon. Isaiah Chol, said, "The modeled population estimates will provide data and information that will be used in national & sector planning for decision-making on the provision of services among other users."

The report results will help partners doing development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian work in South Sudan to benefit from the survey as the information generated will support a more efficient use of limited resources and ensure that programs are responsive to the needs of the people.

Dier Tong Ngor, minister for finance and planning, on his part, said the survey will be an effective tool for coordination across government ministries and development partners. "The data will help us allocate available necessary resources in an efficient manner and ensure our much-needed intervention for the people of South Sudan."

NFPA, the United Nations Reproductive, Data and sexual health agency, and partners such as the Governments of Sweden and Ireland respectively financed the survey together with other UN agencies, such as IOM, WFP, UNAIDS, UNDP, UN Women and FAO, UNMISS, with additional support from the Geo-Referenced Infrastructure and Demographic Data for Development (GRID3), Columbia University, WorldPop, and Flow minder as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and UKAid.



GBV as one of the major concerns, journalists urged to report early and accurately.



UNFPA Deputy Representative Ms Sara Masale delivering opening remarks during the training for Journalists on responsible GBV reporting

The UNFPA country representative Ms. Sarah Masale has implored journalists in South Sudan not to sweep under the carpet gender-based violence (GBV) related stories they cover, saying that GBV is one of the major protection concerns, which is pervasive, widespread & worsens during emergencies and is often under-reported.

Speaking during a three-day training session on ethical and responsible GBV reporting, Ms. Sara Masale, told over 50 journalists to be sensitive when reporting issues of gender-based violence, arguing cases of misreporting could aggravate the vice. The training covered areas such as common mistakes journalists make when reporting on gender-based violence, the use of inaccurate terms or phrases when reporting on GBV, and use of appropriate images among others.

“Media are public influencers and you play an important role in engagement, advocacy on pressing issues, information sharing to a wider audience, and in shaping how people think, behave, socialize, and act. You have the capacity to challenge negative stereotypes, raise an alarm where needed and promote positive social norms in societies” Sara Masale added.

The President of the Union of Journalists in South Sudan (UJOSS), Patrick Oyet said, issues of GBV were prevalent in society and urged journalists not to underestimate them when reporting.



UJOSS President, Patrick Oyet & Colleagues during the training

“These are issues that affect our population – our people, and if we understand how to address them better, I think we will contribute and play a positive role in society which is what we should be doing as journalists” Oyet said.

He thanked UNFPA for organizing the training saying it has been one of the best, most engaging, informative,

and fruitful one the union has had so far.

He challenged his fellow journalists to improve on how they report on issues surrounding GBV, “If you put your interest in specific bits, then you will definitely learn more and report better.” Oyet said.

UNFPA Representative Dr Demola Olajide said journalists when ethical in their reporting, can positively contribute to reduction of gender-based violence if they take their duty of reporting and information sharing and become part of the solution itself.

Dr. Demola said Gender-Based Violence is quite prevalent in South Sudan, women and girls have continued to suffer affecting the entire communities. GBV is deeply rooted in society and he asked the journalists to understand the issues around, identify the problems early, become advocates, report timely and accurately.



Funded by
European Union
Humanitarian Aid

Training of Journalists on Ethical and Responsible GBV Reporting

Ma' Mara Sakit Village First Young South Sudanese Feminists' Conference



A facilitator engaging participants at Ma'mara sakit feminists' conference

Juba-May 22,2023- Liberation begins with the understanding of self beyond what girls and women are socialized to believe about who they are and their role in the world. To contribute to filling this gap, Ma' Mara Sakit Village conducted a series of 'Feminists' Talking Circles' in cohorts of 20-25 young women and girls per convening.

The five-day training program was designed for various groups of young women and girls within communities and learning institutions to discussion on self-awareness and social, cultural, political, and economic barriers that directly affect young women and girls in South Sudan, as well as to raise their consciousness, urgency/autonomy, and comprehensive understanding of patriarchy as a system, how it intersects with other systems of oppression and ways they can collectively use their voices to actively contribute to building an inclusive and just South Sudan.

Ma' Mar Sakit Village First Young South Sudanese Feminists' Conference under the theme:

"Reclaiming My Voice, Amplifying Echoes Of Our Resistance, And Building A South Sudan That Works For Us"

brought together 112 young women and girls (Ma' Mara Sakit Village community of young women and girls) who had participated in the Feminists' Talking Circles over the past nine months. This was the first time all the young women and girls from the different cohorts came together.

This two-day conference offered a platform and brought together all the cohort members to connect and build community across cohorts and, define their individual and collective strengths, actions, and how they can exercise their voices to contribute to the liberation of women and girls in South Sudan, it also gave them the chance to interface with prominent women leaders to draw inspiration and share experiences on leadership, ranging from politics, military, academia and business women.

"This was one of the most educative, inspirational, and practical convenings that have influenced my feelings, emotions, and thoughts toward the impactful contribution of South Sudanese women to society.

“I felt motivated and inspired meeting different women leaders that I will continue to emulate, and this brought the realization that the future of South Sudan is going to be great if women continue to unite and create spaces such as these that make us see opportunities around us and strength in ourselves,” said Abuk Christine.

Others described the conference as a mind-blowing and soul-searching space filled with love that helped them find their voice in fighting for gender equality.

“The conference has encouraged me not to turn a blind eye to some of the issues and abuses that women and girls go through in South Sudan.” Said Rachael Poni another participant.

The conference, just like the Feminists’ Talking Circles, unearthed the potentials and capabilities of the young women and girls; this is evidenced in the stories shared, poems recited, music and dance performances, paintings and artworks presented, and other different skills, talents, and knowledge shared during the two days of the conference.



A participant asking questions about women empowerment

No South Sudanese woman or girl is voiceless; we have voices that have been silenced and denied opportunities and platforms. South Sudanese women and girls fight on different fronts and ways daily; sometimes, all we need are platforms to reaffirm and amplify echoes of our resistance.



A Cross section of young girls during the Ma' mara sakit feminists' conference

Sweden and UNFPA partnership for improving the health and well-being of women, girls and young people in South Sudan



Mr. Tomas Brundin, Head of Office Embassy of Sweden & UNFPA Representative Signing the cooperation document

Juba, South Sudan – UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund and the Government of Sweden have signed a 90- million Swedish Krona approximately (USD 8.4 million) a contribution to implement the UNFPA's 4th Country Program of support to the Government of South Sudan.

UNFPA Representative, Dr Demola Olajide acknowledged the support of the Swedish Government towards the improvement of access to maternal and newborn care, family planning, and prevention and response to gender-based violence in South Sudan.

“This generous contribution from the Government and people of Sweden continues to support the implementation of interventions to provide integrated sexual and reproductive health services in the country, especially improving the well-being of women, girls and young people” said Dr Demola Olajide, UNFPA Representative



The funding is aimed at helping strengthen the reproductive health programmes and respond to gender-based violence.

“Our support aims to contribute to the vision that every woman, girl, and youth in South Sudan should be able to enjoy sexual and reproductive health and rights of high quality, increased equality between women and men and that gender-related violence, including child marriage, decreases” Mr. Tomas Brundin, Head of the Office

South Sudan continues to be confronted by myriads of development challenges necessitating a robust approach to prevention and response to GBV and other Sexual Reproductive Health needs.

“We thank UNFPA whose interventions are always inclusive for people with disability.

We have reproductive health needs, but our rights are not fully respected
We want services and information to help us navigate into life decently” Precious Akangelo, Youth Advisory member with a disability.

Sweden has been a key partner for UNFPA since 2013, with support which has impacted significantly the UNFPA transformative agenda in South Sudan to accelerate reductions in preventable maternal deaths, the unmet need for family planning, gender-based violence, and harmful practices such as child marriage.



Mr. Tomas Brundin, Head of Office Embassy of Sweden & UNFPA Representative in group photo with female boxers & Starlets

Celebrating Midwives – the Unseen Heroes of South Sudan

A birth is not just a family's joy; it is a community celebration. The number of women dying because of complications of pregnancy and childbirth in South Sudan, a war-torn nation remains among the highest in the world at 1,223 per 100,000 live births according to the UN 2020 estimates. A successful birth is, therefore, a celebration for everyone. Amidst the jubilant cheers and the dancing on the birth of a baby, there is one person whose smile shines the brightest – midwife Joice Abuni at Juba Teaching Hospital.

Joice's journey to becoming a midwife was not always easy and straight-forward. Born into a family of seven children, the idea of a woman receiving an education, let alone training to be a health professional, was not a common occurrence. However, Joice was anything but ordinary. The seed of her

ambition was sown early in her life when she had a passion to help others and started as a nurse. Later, her interest to become a midwife peeked when a pregnant woman who was with her sick child at hospital went into labor. With no midwife around to assist, Joice found herself having to help the mother. She was amazed at the birth process and right then decided that she must pursue studies to become a midwife.

With a steely determination, Joice joined the health training institute, the Juba College of Nursing and Midwifery which is supported by UNFPA with funding from Canada. The journey was tough, and the challenges were many for Joice who is married with 4 children. Living in at the hostel, studying late nights with a lamp, tackling a rigorous curriculum, and missing her family and children were all extremely difficult for Joice but she soldiered on, driven by her mission to bring about change in her country and improve maternal health.



Joice, a midwife handing a child to the mother

At last, Joice was able to complete her studies in 2019 and she is a proud midwife, having also served as a national UN Volunteer midwife with UNFPA Deploying Midwives Project, which was also funded by Canada. Joice works tirelessly, often handling several deliveries on a single shift at the hospital. She is a health educator, providing essential advice and information on antenatal care, nutrition, birth preparations, and hygiene to women and family members at the hospital. She also provides clinical mentoring and instruction to midwifery students undergoing their clinical practice at the hospital.

“I am passionate about saving the lives of our mothers in our country. I believe that no woman should die while giving birth.” Joice emphasized. “As midwives, we must continue to give our best. Quality midwifery care can contribute to preventing nearly two-thirds of maternal deaths so as midwives we have a big role to play in helping reduce maternal deaths,” she continued.

Joice and other midwives like her are out there doing what they do best - bringing new lives into the world and ensuring their mothers live to nurture them. Midwives embody the spirit of the international day - a celebration of the strength, bravery, and essential role of midwives.

Today, more girls in South Sudan are aspiring to become midwives. A midwife is a symbol of change, a beacon of hope, and a testament to the power of a woman's resolve. Let us celebrate midwives, the unseen heroes of South Sudan

UNFPA South Sudan is a key stakeholder investing in strengthening midwifery in South Sudan. UNFPA provides technical assistance and financial support from development partners such as Canada across all pillars – midwifery education and training, deployment and regulations, association strengthening, service delivery, and creating the enabling environment for practice through policy guidance and implementation.



Joice, a midwife pose for a photo with mother & her child

The spill-over of Sudan crisis worsens impacts on women and girls in South Sudan

As the situation in Sudan is getting worse every day, the impact has spilled over to the neighboring countries including South Sudan. With over 80,000 people including South Sudanese registered to have returned fleeing the conflict in Sudan where the biggest percentage are women and girls whose reproductive health needs worsens when crisis hit.

With already prolonged conflicts and climate shocks, many South Sudanese, been displaced people internally, and has additional heavier burden to the affected women and girls who face rape, gender-based violence and growing health concerns.

“No one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land.” Says Nyabol Duoth speaking in her local Nuer language in Leer County during the distribution of dignity kits by Hope Restoration in partnership with UNFPA to the refugees and returnees who fled the Sudan crisis.

In 2013 during the South Sudan crisis, Nyabol fled to Sudan where she has been a refugee and in 2023, she is fleeing the Sudan crisis back to South Sudan. She has been affected by wars and is always on the move in fear of losing her life and that of her family members. Nyabol walked so many miles from the Sudan to South Sudan border, passing through Kharasana with her family to Rotriah, from Rotriah to Rubkona and lastly, they arrived this week in Leer.

Sudan's war, like any other conflict, has threatened the reproductive health, and fueled GBV, and menstrual health management of women and girls putting additional misery on people and pressure on the challenged health infrastructure of Malakal, Bentiu, Renk and Rotriak.

After the inter-agency rapid needs assessment, UNFPA informed the different bodies on the readiness of the health facilities in Rotriak to provide the



Nyabol Duoth who fled South Sudan in 2013 Crises, is a returnee to South Sudan following the Sudan conflict

health services to survivors since they are equipped with the Post Rape Kits and staff were mentored on how to properly administer the medicines.



Niel supported with dignity kit

“Thank you for coming to our rescue. Being a refugee is not easy after losing my properties, faced sexual assaults during transit,

and having made a perilous journey from Sudan to South Sudan. I received medication, counseling services, and we have been given these Dignity Kits with basic things that most women need urgently” Says 26-year-old Nyaling Nial.

Currently, South Sudan has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality globally and additional threats to health care systems will negatively impact women the most, as gender imbalances in the country’s existing climate change challenges and hunger crises

As routine services, UNFPA, in coordination with the Gender Based Violence (GBV) Area of Responsibility (AoR), has reviewed and updated referral pathways to ensure that refugees and returnees have full access to coordinated services provided by partners.

However, with the continuous spillover of a protracted conflict, UNFPA in South Sudan is also concerned that the small gains in the provision of services and life-saving skills to women and girls, especially prevention against gender-based violence, will be retarded.



Alona Bermenjo, a UNFPA Field coordinator in Unity State together with implementing partners and returnees from Sudan

Mary, graduated from tea selling to small shop to improve livelihood.



Focus group discussion on dignity kits programing in Leer

“I am an internally displaced person from Padeah. When the armed youth come and attacked us from our home, I and my children run to Leer TPA without any cloths with us. But due to the incident (rape) that happened to me I was referred to Hope Restoration South Sudan at the Women and Girls Friendly Centre by the health facility nurse. At HRSS I was received with kind caseworkers who encouraged us and supported us with counselling, life skills, and different types of items including sleeping mats, blanket, and mosquito net and bucket”. Mary Nyamale, a survivor.

Mary Nyamale was also given a dignity kit which had several to help her manage hygiene. Now with the shoes, pants, soap and a nice dress, I am able to work with courage and participant in women activities without stigma or shyness. I thank HRSS and her partner UNFPA for dressing me and supporting my family with other items that are in the dignity kits.

Nyamale narrated that, buying the candles in the market is 5000 South Sudan Pounds, with the same cash, it helps her feed her children.

During the focus group discussion on dignity kit PDM, the women and girls said the smile their face is to show appreciation to HRSS/UNFPA for giving them the dignity kits. “We have been struggling to look for money to buy soap, sandals, and other items, but with the dignity kit we are able to save some money and buy food stuff for the family”.

Cecilia John, one of the girls who joined the women in dignity programming said, “The pad in the dignity kit has helped me a lot. This is the first time for me to use the pad, and I like it, unlike when I didn’t have it. I used to stay away from people during my menstrual period, but now I am able to participate in the activities that are being conducted in the women and girls centre without fear”.

She requested UNFPA to continue supporting to be able to reach more women and girls in need within the community.

HRSS made a visit in Leer TPA to assess how some of the items in the dignity kits are being used, one the house for Mama Malony Babanyi Gatluak, they found a 15 year girls who is in class 5, was doing here studies, the girl said, since she received the dignity kit with the torch she is now able to use it to do her homework and has even improved in school. I appreciate to HRSS for supporting the girls to get education and perform well. When I feel like going to urinate at night, the flashlight helps me to avoid stepping on harmful insects and object. It is easy to use because I just put on the sun and I can use for 3 hours.

During a focus group in Joung, the women said the items in the dignity kits like pants have contributed to their hygiene and comfortability when interacting with other women and during their movement.

Nyagai said “it was so disappointing one day when we were working during flooding season and one of my friend slide and fell in water, her cloths opened up and she didn’t have the panties the men who were following her started laughing and abusing her, the women become so disappointed, this led her to develop stigma which resulted to trauma and isolation from other community members, but when she received the dignity kit with panties in, now she is able to walk out and share her stories.



Dignity kit programing to minimize trauma in the community.

During a focus group in Joung, the women said the items in the dignity kits like pants have contributed to their hygiene and comfortability when interacting with other women and during their movement.



Use of flashlights for children who are willing to study and go out at night

During GBV programing, other partners were invited, stakeholders including women leaders and church leaders to provide information on hygiene, reproductive health and GBV related issues on prevention and response. The awareness conducted before the distribution of dignity kits and women and girls are given the opportunity to ask questions related to GBV/SGBV/ Hygiene and reproductive health.

Here the women leader of Leer TPA Nyalai Nyar, is advising girls to avoid going out at night alone and if by any bad luck the fall in the hand of criminals they should report to service providers who will refer them for assistance.

An empowered woman empowers others: the story of Mary Jebeen



Mary Jebeen in front of her hut



Mary Jebeen & HRSS staff at her coffee shop

Mary Jebeen, aged 44 years old and a single parent of 3 children, was born and raised in Malakal. Due to the war that broke out in 2013 that resulted in the internal displacement of people in Protection of Civilian Cites (POC), Jebeen and her children were forced to move to Malakal POC where she is currently residing and she is among the POC IGA Group leader.

Jebeen recalls her teenage life was characterized by many challenges. She says

“I have gone through difficult times since my teenage. As a Shiluk girl, our tradition does not allow girls to attend school. We are expected to help our my family towards me. He was an elderly man and the only man that assumed to have capacity to look after me. An impregnated girl is viewed as a disgrace, no one likes to get married to them.”, lamented Jebeen.

Without any other option available, she accepted and had two more children with him. When the conflict broke out in 2013, her husband was killed and she was forced to leave home and seek refuge in the PoC (Protection of Civilian) site.

Reflecting on the life at that time, Jebeen said that life was very difficult as she could not access basic needs for herself and her family.

Mary Jebeen was supported through psycho-social counselling, and was motivated to start up a small business, a tea shop. They have been saving in her Village Saving

“The various trainings especially the women’s rights training have been very beneficial to me in person as I am aware of my rights and I am advocating for the rights of other women and girls” reflects Jebeen.

She advises the girls to study hard and concentrate on achieving their dreams. Raising a baby at a young age is not easy and being a young mother/wife is very challenging. Jebeen says that she still live with the trauma from her first pregnancy and encourages other girls to talk if they face rape and other sexual violences to avoid endless suffering.

First-ever Comprehensive Sexuality Education Bus Outreach approach in Juba



Monica Kiden & Esther Wayo during the Bongo bus reproductive health out-reach

In an effort to create an enabling environment for youth comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), being innovative and creative is imperative to reach a wider audience in regards to sharing key messages on ending early and unintended teenage pregnancies, safe sex practices, healthy relationships, and ways to reduce the HIV prevalence rate in South Sudan.

“One of the innovative ways in which we have been successful in reaching out to youth is using the commercial transport Buses in various locations in Juba town. It is a mobile campaign platform to create awareness for people sitting in the bus from one point to another station in South Sudan” narrated Manuela Madong, Project Manager, AMREF South Sudan Staff.

AMREF with support from UNFPA use top influencers has enabled us to reach a wider audience and create awareness on the importance of comprehensive sexuality education through targeted messages on key issues on well-being of young people, women and entire community to thrive.



Comedian VIP Reagan & amref's Monica Kiden in the bus

During the Bus outreach, AMREF enlisted the help of comedian VIP as sexual reproductive health and rights influencer to engage with people.

“In the bus we engage in a fun, informative, and interactive way with people. This strategy has helped to reduce the stigma around discussions on sexuality and promote candid conversations on matters pertaining to sexual and reproductive health” the VIP Comedian said with so much fun.

AMREF with support from UNFPA use top influencers has enabled us to reach a wider audience and create awareness on the importance of comprehensive sexuality education through targeted messages on key issues on well-being of young people, women and entire community to thrive.

The use of the Mini-Bus and comedian VIP influencer has helped the campaign to resonate deeply with different people. The engaging and interactive nature of the sessions ensures that young people are always eager to learn more. During this outreach, people take videos of the session to go and share back with families and friends which is a clear indication that the message is appreciated. It has been a fruitful strategy in creating an enabling environment for youth and people to understand comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) to the extent that



Comedian VIP Reagan showing a brochure

many in the buses recommended for a continuous session in the buses though display of educative videos in the bus and also mobile massive campaigns.



Comedian VIP Reagan & Esther Wayo engaging a male passerby.

Young people unpacking Sexuality Education with focus on healthy relationships and safe sex



Sura Kenneth, peer educator at the university of juba

“We all believe that it is crucial to teach young people about responsible sexual behaviour from a young age. This will give us the necessary tools to make informed decisions and empower them to take control of their own sexual health”....name of a young person.

Amref South Sudan together with Youth Empowerment Organization (YEO) held sessions with young people aimed at unpacking topics on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) with a main focus on healthy relationships and sexual health living.

The session focused on empowering young people with knowledge and skills for healthy and responsible sexual behavior. The young people were taught the importance of engaging in healthy sexual relationships and the consequences of engaging in risky sexual behaviour including unprotected sex. They were also educated on topics such as contraceptive use and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

The success of this session highlights the importance of partnerships between NGOs and youth networks to tackle sensitive issues such as sexual health. The collaboration between Amref Health Africa South Sudan, YEO, and UNFPA South Sudan is an example of how such partnerships can be successful in providing young people with essential life skills.

The “3 Zeros” is a global advocacy campaign that aims to achieve zero preventable maternal deaths, Zero unmet need for family planning,



A male & female of peer educators during SRHR out-reach

and Zero Gender Based Violence and harmful practices against women and girls such as female genital mutilation and child marriage. The CSE session with young people is an essential step towards achieving the three Zeros as it empowers young people with knowledge and skills on safe sexual behaviour.

The interaction has developed into a longer-term engagement and more weekly sessions for CSE in Youth Empowerment hub so that so many young people can have access to CSE content.

Nyanchiew rebuilds life from GBV through the psycho-social assistance



Nyanchiew (name changed), a 20-year-old young woman with a 5-month-old baby, lost her husband and property in the floods in Nasir county. As she was walking with her baby to seek refuge from the floods and hoping to receive some relief services, a couple of men tricked her into following them on a different route, where she was raped and physically assaulted.

She managed to escape from the perpetrators and reached the support centre run by CHADO, a national women-led organization.

When she arrived at the center, she looked distressed, sad, and refused to breastfeed her baby. One of CHADO's team members trained in basic MHPSS and counseling quickly established rapport and conducted initial assessment, following which she was immediately referred for a medical check-up to ascertain if she needed any urgent SRH and other health needs.

With the individual psychosocial support as well as counseling, Nyanchiew's condition improved over time, and she eventually started to take care of herself, breastfed her baby, and showed interest in

social activities such as knitting, crocheting, fuel-efficient stoves making as well as singing in women's groups.

CHADO case workers referred her to shelter and NFI partners who provided her with temporary shelters and essential supplies, such as clothing and hygiene kits. They also connected her with a local organization that provided education and training programs for young people.

Through this support, Nyanchiew is now able to rebuild her life and was even able to start a small business selling local handicrafts.

Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery practice in South Sudan through their Council



Nurses and midwives in a group photo during IDM

Amidst the challenges faced by healthcare professionals in South Sudan, the Nursing and Midwifery Council of South Sudan (NAMCOSS) has taken significant strides to improve the quality of nursing and midwifery services. In partnership with the Ministry of Health and the United Nations Population Fund, the council has been working diligently to register and license nurses and midwives across the country.

By setting high standards for education, practice, and ethics, the council is working to empower a new generation of healthcare professionals capable of providing essential care in their communities. The collaboration between the Ministry of Health, NAMCOSS, and UNFPA has been instrumental in developing a robust system for registering and licensing nurses and midwives. While the system is still in its early stages, it is expected to enable the council to monitor and maintain high standards for education and practice, ensuring that healthcare professionals in South Sudan are competent to provide the best possible care.

With a well-equipped office established in the Ministry of Health complex, the council is poised to accelerate the registration of nurses and midwives and to set the standards for nursing and midwifery practice in the country.

"I am grateful for the support from the Ministry of Health and UNFPA to Nurses and Midwifery Council of South Sudan. This partnership and funding from Canada have made it possible for us to keep a close eye on the practice of nurses and midwives in the country, by registering them and developing standards for practice which in turn will contribute to reduction of high maternal deaths that the country is experiencing," said Polly Grace, Midwife and Assistant registrar at the council.

As more healthcare professionals are registered and licensed, the quality of healthcare services in South Sudan will improve, benefiting patients and communities across the country. By working together, the Ministry of Health, NAMCOSS, and UNFPA are not only strengthening nursing and midwifery practice but also fostering a more resilient healthcare system that can better serve the needs of the population.

Through their joint efforts, the future of healthcare in South Sudan is becoming increasingly promising with nurses and midwives playing a pivotal role in providing essential care and improving the well-being of their communities.

From housewife to decision Maker: the story of Diew Kier

Diew Kier, 28 years old with three children, is a resident of Mandeng payam of Nasir County, Upper Nile State. She is a beneficiary of PSS in Mandeng Women and Girls Friendly Space (WGFS) supported by CHADO under the project called Strengthening the Capacities of Women and Girls to Respond, prevent and Mitigate GBV in Mandeng.

With the objective of enhancing the most vulnerable populations by floods and COVID-affected communities have increased access to life-saving GBV response and prevention services, and risks of GBV are reduced through improved community-based GBV interventions.

“Before I knew CHADO, I was just a housewife and not exposed to any social changes. My husband had absolute power;

he was the final decision-maker. When I joined the PSS women’s group in December 2022 and learned about gender equality, gender roles, privileges, power, and status and transferred the knowledge to my family at home and my community, my husband understood it and allowed me to participate in any community discussion. Now, I am a local government staff, one of the important people in the Payam. Now I am also a decision-maker”, said Diew joyously.

In the past years Diew was restricted at home and went through mistreatment. This year through CHADO intervention, her husband allowed to talk to Diew and held discussions on how harmful behaviors can be reduced join efforts to support each other and advocate for gender equality at home and in the community



Groups of women and young girls at a community out-reach

← UNFPA South Sudan's post



Yar Manyok and 22 others

23 2 2

Most relevant ▾

Straight Act foundation
A great work there. Keep pushing for the sake of their health.
Go also and check on us, we mainly are concern with the rise of HIV/Aids among the young people, go like, follow and share anything you find significant and can be of help to others. Thanks once again.

1 hr Like Reply

Abwoyo Barbra
Wonderful UNFPA you made us proud of ourselves God bless you guys

Brenda Alinda
Strengthening nurses and midwifery education is very important coz it will improve the health services in the community..

UNFPA South Sudan Retweeted

Animu Athiei @animuat... · 06 Jun
This is probably one of the best things to wake up today 🙌🙌🙌 Thank you @UNFPASouthSudan @OlajideDemola for showing that we can change the narrative in 🇸🇩 one female boxer at a time 🙌🙌. Am just so excited about the possibilities for the future 🙌🙌
#womeninsport #SheBoxer 🇸🇩

Mahamud Duale @maham... · 23 May
Replying to @UNFPASouthSudan @OlajideDemola and 9 others
Child marriage is a grave concern that jeopardizes the lives and prospects of girls in South Sudan. It's heartening to see organizations like #UNFPA collaborating with partners to combat this issue.

10

Levi Lu'bang Edward
Sports gives girls and women resilience, courage and self-belief. I like UNFPA South Sudan efforts in challenging gender norms through sports.

← UNFPA South Sudan's post

JAKI CommunityHealth Initiative
Thanks for the great support you can as well support us if possible 🙏

2 wks Like Reply 1

Ghai Jool Anyieth
So greatful of UNFPA support to National NGOs across south Sudan.

2 wks Like Reply 1

← UNFPA South Sudan's post

Nathaniel Maral
We thank UNFPA South Sudan for its commitment to strengthening the capacity of national NGOs across South Sudan. This is a tremendous support that will facilitate day-to-day functions.

2 wks Like Reply 1

YSAT Uganda
Setting Localization in Motion, well done team UNFPA South Sudan 🇸🇩

2 wks Like Reply 1

Santa Lee
Thanks a lot for the support

2 wks Like Reply 1

JAKI CommunityHealth Initiative
Thanks for the great support you can as well support us if possible 🙏

Starlets For Change Org. @... · 07 Jun
Another milestone worth celebrating! 🙌
Well done @UNFPASouthSudan & South Sudan Boxing Federation. Congratulations to all, especially our fellow sisters; the female boxers.
#Musharaka4Tanmiya
#womenempowerment

UNFPA South Sudan · 06 Jun
"As female boxers, we appreciate this best boxing facility which will help us and more girls realise our dreams. Thanks @UNFPA for changing the narrative in #SouthSudan" ...

Beatrice. Othieno @BOthie... · 03 Jun
Replying to @UNFPASouthSudan
Great initiative giving girls more visibility and highlighting their abilities, and talents, dismantling gender barriers.
#LeaveNoOneBehind

2 1 62

← UNFPA South Sudan's post

The Refugee Voice
Thanks for the good work but we in the refugee settlements in Uganda are facing MHC challenges where girls have gone months with out support which affects their social activities and Education

1 mo Like Reply

The Great Commission Initiative Ministries
lack of menstrual hygiene kit is a reality for thousands of girls who are not attending schools. Not being able to afford or access clean and safe menstrual product is detrimental to one's wellbeing, education and physical health. Poor menstrual hygiene management can lead to reproductive infections and urinary tract disease.

As girls returned to schools every day, let's make sure they have access to the materials they need, to feel comfortable and confiden... See more

Kiir Sylvester
UNFPA is doing better than most other organizations 🙌
Health is Paramount!!

3 mos Like Reply

CHIEF South Sudan
Great move indeed 🙌🙌

3 mos Like Reply

queen Manuela @manu... · 02 Jun
More spaces and opportunities for women to reach their maximum potential.
#so proud of the work @UNFPASouthSudan is doing in South Sudan
@UNFPASouthSudan

← UNFPA South Sudan's post

Smile Again Africa Development Organization - SAADO
SAADO is so grateful for the support as it speaks clearly to what a meaningful partnership means.

2 wks Like Reply 1

I change you initiative
great work

18 hrs Like Reply

Food and Agriculture Agency
Great commitment on the localization from UNFPA South Sudan Country Team.

Thank you for your feedback!



www.southsudan.unfpa.org



UNFPASouthSudan



UNFPASouthSudan



South Sudan