

QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER
Jan-March 2024



QUARTER ONE
ISSUE 8

#Musharaka4Tanmiya
southsudan.unfpa.org

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Message from the Country Representative



Dr. Ademola Olajide

Esteemed readers and partners.

I am pleased to present UNFPA South Sudan's first quarter Newsletter for 2024.

This edition reflects on a few highlights of the past few months' work (January to March) that we have accomplished in the key areas of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and sexual reproductive health and rights, in both development and humanitarian contexts.

We started this quarter on a good note where the country witnessed the graduation of the first batch of self-sponsored nurses and midwives, a milestone collectively arrived at with our partners. Self-sponsorship is a journey towards building a self-reliant and sustainable health sector.

Our support for women's participation in male-dominated sports has been a key initiative for us, as we strongly believe that sports including rugby has the power to break gender stereotypes, promote gender equality, and to empower women and girls by providing equal opportunities. We have seen the incredible potential of girls in sports, as

sports has also been a tool for empowerment and leadership.

The intergenerational dialogue with key female personalities within the government was another unique way to celebrate Valentine's Day. UNFPA created a platform for high-profile government female leaders and the young generation to share their perspectives on key issues as the older generation lent an ear, shared their wisdom, and showed love and support towards the younger ones. The wisdom from Right Hon. Nunu Kumba, the Speaker of the Revitalized National Legislative Assembly, Hon. Angelina Teny, Minister of Interior, Hon. Deborah Akech, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and Hon. Yar Telar Ring Deng representing the Youth in Parliament and other dignitaries empowered the young people about the wider concept of Love.

The humanitarian needs in South Sudan still call for action. UNFPA has continued to deliver life-saving services, ensuring safe births amidst multiple challenges. Women and girls affected by crisis live in despair but UNFPA and partners are restoring their hopes through life skills offered at the Women and Girls Friendly Spaces (WGFS) and One Stop Centers that offer services to survivors of sexual/gender-based violence.

I thank the government of the Republic of South Sudan, our donors, and partners for their efforts and collaboration for the well-being of women, girls, and young people, as well as the wider society.

“Love empowers” Senior leaders in an intergenerational dialogue with young people.



Group photo session during the intergenerational dialogue

A unique and innovative learning opportunity was organized on Valentine's Day for the young people to tap wisdom from senior leaders of South Sudan. The spirit of love and empowerment was in the air as Right Honorable Speaker Nunu Kumba and Interior Minister Honorable Angelina Ateny celebrated Valentine's Day, engaging in a dialogue with young people. The event aimed to empower young people to promote healthy relationships and marriages.

During the gathering, Rt. Hon. Jemma Nunu Kumba emphasized the importance of compromise in relationships and marriages, urging young people to seek comprehensive love that encompasses not only physical attraction but also mutual well-being and future success.

Meanwhile, Hon. Angelina Ateny South Sudan Minister of Interior emphasized the significance of love beyond personal relationships, stressing the need to love and sacrifice for the development and prosperity of the country.



Right Honorable Speaker Nunu Kumba speaking during the event



Minister of Interior Hon. Angelina Ateny delivering her remarks

“We love you so much young people, you should also love yourselves and this Country – South Sudan” Says Hon. Angelina Teny. She expressed the responsibility of leaders to engage with the young people and impart valuable lessons to them.

The senior government officials commended the UNFPA South Sudan for providing platforms to engage and empower young people, highlighting the opportunities available for youth to build their future and realize their dreams.

Dr. Demola Olajide, the Representative of UNFPA to South Sudan highlighted the importance of intergenerational dialogue on “Love that Empowers,” aiming to empower young people to build functional and beneficial relationships that enable them to contribute to the development of the country.



Dr. Demola Olajide, the Representative of UNFPA speaking

In an afternoon session “Let Love Lead” characterized by fun, laughs and learnings, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Deborah Akech emphasized the need for partnership to build the capacity of men to support and empower women.



“Women are good managers when empowered, entrusted with resources and positions in decision making in public offices. They balance the well-being of their families and developmental projects” A good man encourages a lady to complete her education and creates an enabling environment for her to work” Hon. Akech shares her personal experience.



Hon. Deborah Akech sharing her experiences with the young people

Hon. Yar Telar Deng, a Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, emphasized the importance of empowering each other, creating a peaceful environment for women and girls, and building healthy relationships. “Healthy marriages mostly start with respectful courtships where common goals and values are discussed for the benefit of the intending couples” Hon Yar said.

The dialogue brought together a diverse group of participants, including the speaker of the national assembly, interior minister, young parliamentarians, and various young people including people with disabilities. They shared experiences and insights on fostering healthy marriages and relationships, contributing to the overall message of love and empowerment.

The event served as a platform for leaders to engage with young people, imparting wisdom and encouragement to build healthy relationships and contribute to the development of the country.



First batch of self-sponsored midwives graduate – a turning point for self-reliant healthcare in South Sudan



Graduates in a group photo with Hon Dr. Ader Machar Aciek, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health

In the heart of South Sudan, a beacon of hope and progress emerges from Juba College of Nursing and Midwifery (JCONAM), as it celebrated the graduation of its newest healthcare workers: 39 nurses and 27 midwives. This significant moment unfolded at the Nyakuron Cultural Centre, marking a turning point for healthcare in a nation striving towards improvement and self-sufficiency. This is the first batch of self-sponsored students to graduate from the College since the introduction of user fees, transitioning away from fully-funded scholarships financed by donors in an effort for sustainability.

The ceremony was graced by Hon Dr. Ader Machar Aciek, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, who emphasized the importance of prioritizing healthcare and the need to improve health indicators in South Sudan. He praised the

graduates for their commitment to the healthcare sector and urged donors and developmental partners to continue supporting the country's health sector.

Dr. Aciek also advocated for an increase in the national budget allocation for health from 2 percent to ensure better outcomes. He called on the private sector, the community, and other stakeholders to actively participate in the development of the health sector in South Sudan.



Hon Dr. Ader Machar Aciek, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health delivering his speech to the graduates



Dr. Demola Olajide, the Representative of UNFPA speaking during the graduation ceremony

Echoing similar sentiments, Dr. Ademola Olajide, the Country Representative of UNFPA South Sudan, highlighted the crucial role of midwives in saving lives and providing essential sexual and reproductive health services. He emphasized the importance of a well-trained and well-supported midwifery workforce in achieving sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development.

“Nurses and midwives are central to health outcomes, a quality health care delivery system, indispensable to accelerating sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development,” he said.

Amid the challenges that South Sudan faces, the unwavering spirit of its people shines brightly, as illustrated by the inspiring journey of Ms. Nyabol Dorcus Magot, the ceremony’s standout graduate. Her story of resilience—overcoming personal tragedy and financial hurdles embodies the strength and determination that characterize this new generation of healthcare professionals. Nyabol’s

triumph, supported by the kindness of community well-wishers, is a testament to the collective effort required to build a healthier future.

“I am grateful to well-wishers who held my hand and brought me thus far, I lost my brother during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, he used to sponsor my studies but people of good-will came to my rescue and here I am, I dedicate this achievement to them,” said Nyabol.

The Canadian Ambassador to South Sudan, HE Aly-Khan Rajani congratulated the graduates upon the successful completion of their studies, and said, *“The government and people of Canada have a decade of history in supporting the nursing and midwifery cause in South Sudan.”*



The Canadian Ambassador to South Sudan, HE Aly-Khan Rajani congratulating the graduates

The Ministry of Health plans to collaborate with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other partners to improve health training in remote areas and establish functional health science institutes. Rev. Janet Michael, the Director General for Nursing and Midwifery at the Ministry of Health - South Sudan, thanked UNFPA South Sudan, Amref South Sudan, other partners, and donors

for their support towards the college. She urged the graduates to use the skills gained to serve humanity.

“As you step out into their communities as graduates, you carry not just the knowledge and skills you have acquired but also the hopes and aspirations of an entire nation.”

Training of health workers is supported by the tireless efforts of organizations like UNFPA,

AMREF Health Africa, and many other partners, reflecting a broader commitment to improving healthcare accessibility and quality in even the most remote areas of South Sudan. The graduation ceremony stood out as a milestone, but also as a reminder of the ongoing journey towards healthcare excellence and equity in South Sudan. The dedication of these new nurses and midwives, alongside the support of the global community, heralds a brighter, healthier future for all South Sudanese.



Dr. Demola Olajide, the Representative of UNFPA an award to one of the best students



Front row, from left to the right, members of JCONAM teaching staff

Promoting positive gender norms through sports – UNFPA supports Female rugby team with sports equipment.



Dr. Demola Olajide, UNFPA Representative hands over Rugby kits to Tag Rugby member at Dr. Biar Sport complex.

South Sudan has talent and it's important to leverage the talents in young people especially young girls.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) donated sports- equipment - a full rugby kit from which consisted of headgear, boots, rugby balls, attire, skin tights, and socks to support female rugby players in Juba to Tag Rugby Trust South Sudan, that oversees the Female Rugby Team in Juba. Ademola Olajide, the Representative of UNFPA said that the donation is part of their effort to promote gender and positive social norms among female athletes in South Sudan.

Dr Demola Olajide, the Representative of UNFPA said that the support to the female team is part of their effort to promote gender and positive social norms in South Sudan for the girls to achieve their potential. The female athletes are one of the groups considered as examples to change

perception in society that girls too can play male dominated sports and excel.

“We will continue to leverage the platform of sports to challenge social and gender biases and also promote gender equality and women empowerment,” Olajide said during the donation at Dr. Biar Sport complex.

Rugby is beyond sports in South Sudan, it promotes discipline, hard-working, unity amongst different tribes and keep the girls in school to complete their education as they grow in to responsible citizens.

Edward Settimo Yubu, the Director General for Sports at the National Ministry of Youth and Sports said that there is a need to support and strengthen the game of rugby from grassroots to pave the way for local players to participate at international level. Yubu pledged the Ministry's support to the Trust to advocate for recognition and funding.

Lobjja Ceasor Ronald, the President of Tag Rugby Trust South Sudan said that they have opened three grassroots training camps for rugby, adding that they are working to raise grassroots rugby.

“Rugby attracts young people in our training camps and we give them more than just rugby, teaching them about other aspects of life such as hygiene, drugs, prevention of gang activities, and sanitary hygiene for girls. We also want to take South Sudan to an International level in rugby. In future, we hope to bring the medals home “ Ronald said.

Yubu further urged UNFPA to continue with the support they always render to the youths in South Sudan, acknowledging their work.

He urged that any form of sports, as long as it is about building peace, unifying and bringing communities together, should be embraced in the country. The recent wins of the basketball federation has shown us how far sports can take us as a country.

UNFPA assured support to the girls especially in sports because of the bias that boys and girls can't do according to gender roles described by society.

UNFPA has taken up the initiative of empowering girls' sports; established the first ever well-equipped female boxing Centre in Jebel, self-care facilities at Buluk ground for Bright Starlets female football team, and now with the Tag Rugby Trust female team in South Sudan.



Assortment of Rugby gear equipments



Tag Rugby members posed for a picture at Dr. Biar Sport complex

Restoring hope to the integrated returnees in Renk: How income generation activities and cash assistance change lives



Women and girls knitting and making bedsheets at Hope Restoration South Sudan GBV response site- Renk

Renk-Upper Nile- Fleeing from war, Angelina Yowin Abwol Deng took a dangerous journey to South Sudan. The 55-year-old left her home in Fit-Hab-Khartoum and escaped empty-handed through Kordofan to get to safety. Now, she is working to heal from this experience with the help from a UNFPA-funded gender-based violence response center.

“I was exhausted the entire trip, I left everything in my house in Khartoum, I came in April, I was traumatized, a mere mention of Khartoum sends shivers in my spine, but I am healing, thanks to the group members here at the GBV response center, we laugh and joke counsel ourselves’.

In Renk, the gender-based violence response center supports women and girls like Angelina who have fled Khartoum because of war. Through

income-generating activities such as the knitting of tablecloths, bead making, and bedsheet weaving, they are creating new lives for themselves and building a supportive community of women.

“We have Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk, but we do not view each other through a tribal lens, we all share the same trials and tribulations, when we gather here at the center, we discuss issues affecting us, talk about violence and family planning, and look for a common solution. Thanks to Hope Restoration for providing us with this space, when we return to our respective homes, we are at ease”
Tereza John, another returnee explains.

With support from the United Nations Population Fund-UNFPA and funding from CERF, GBV response center has become a space where women and girls are allowed to heal and become empowered.

Cash assistance: a way to restore and rebuild.



Armeniya John a cash assistance beneficiary making mandazi

Nywon Biel Chunky Kor, the gender-based violence response site manager in Renk, explains that cash assistance has helped improve the lives of women and girls. The money is given to GBV survivors and vulnerable groups like those living with disabilities and the ill. This initiative has seen immediate results, *“We had Anger, who had turbulent times in her marriage. The husband abandoned her, but when she came to the center, she enrolled for cash assistance. As I speak now, she is doing well, and has even reconciled with her husband, meaning there is harmony at home because she has now financial independence, just like Armeniya who bakes mandazi”*. A total of 250 women and girls have benefited from the program, a gesture the Renk County Commissioner,

Hon. Kak Padiet Kak, said, is changing their lives.

UNFPA, through its partners like HRSS and IMC, continues its dedicated response to the returnees affected by the Sudan crisis. Supported by funding from CERF and European Union Humanitarian Aid, UNFPA remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing the rights of women and girls.



woman weaving bedsheet at IMC Women & Girls Friendly Space Renk

Delivering as One for the betterment of the people of South Sudan



UN/RCO Ms. Kiki Ggeho attentively listening to Dr. Ademola Olajide

Following the departure of Ms. Sarah Beysolow Nyanti, the UN Secretary-General appointed Ms. Kiki Ggeho, as the UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) for South Sudan who hit the ground running. During the meeting between UNFPA Representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide and Ms. Kiki Ggeho at the UNFPA Office, the two Principals engaged to explore strengthening strategic collaboration to deliver within the One-UN South Sudan system to accelerate people centered and sustainable development.

UNFPA contributes to the UN development system support to national development priorities through the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in the areas of

sexual and reproductive health and rights, empowering women and the youth as well as responding to Gender-based Violence through a survivor-centered approach, support data generation and humanitarian response.

Ms. Kiki Gbeho lauded UNFPA for the great work it is doing for the people of South Sudan, especially women, girls and young people.



Dr. Ademola Olajide seeing off Ms. Kiki Ggeho from UNFPA Office

Taking gender-based violence prevention and response services closer to the most vulnerable



Beneficiaries after receiving dignity kits

South Sudan has high prevalence cases of gender-based violence according to findings of a nationwide GBV prevalence survey. The alarming level of GBV is due to several causes such as prolonged and escalating conflicts coupled with negative social/cultural norms.

Exposure of young people especially girls to GBV comes with negative consequences on their development and can have devastating effects throughout their lives. Engaging men and boys in all their diversity as short and long-term partners in GBV prevention is essential to tackling the determinants of violent attitudes and behavior, for a future where everyone can live and thrive without the threat of violence.

Unlike women and girls, men and boys may face barriers to accessing much-needed support services due to the stigma of male victimization and strong disbelief that men and boys can be survivors of violence.

With support from the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Operations department (DG-ECHO), UNFPA runs an integrated program for prevention and response to GBV including knowledge, availability, and accessibility of GBV services and support groups and access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. These integrated programs elevate the voices of women and girls who are GBV survivors, advocates, and leaders of GBV by addressing social norms and fully engaging with men and boys in

their roles as community leaders, support partners, caregivers, perpetrators, and/or survivors. This engagement includes trauma-informed restorative justice responses to reduce recidivism and break cycles of violence.

“Fleeing the conflict in Sudan, I was brutalized and distressed. Due to my weak condition, I hardly crossed the border via Joda. When I finally arrived in Malakal town, I was directed to a friendly space for women and girls where UNFPA’s partners provides psychosocial support and access to economic empowerment opportunities. I was then referred to a one-stop center supported by UNFPA where I accesses medical, psychosocial, and legal support. The service providers never abandoned me until the last minute.” Rose (not real name), a South Sudanese returnee from Sudan.

UNFPA works with all stakeholders to change attitudes and behaviors that make GBV acceptable in the community by supporting women and girls’ friendly spaces and one-stop centers across the country that provide GBV prevention and response services.

In women and girls’ friendly spaces, women and girls feel emotionally and physically safer and enjoy an environment where they can feel trauma-free; excessive stress; violence, or abuse and have access to information, education, and economic empowerment.

“Despite the threats GBV poses to the protection of women and girls, in most cases, it is rarely discussed within communities.

Many survivors therefore prefer not to report incidents of GBV out of fear or taboo. With continuous community sensitization and awareness of services, those affected including survivors have reported cases and taken prevention initiatives within communities” Ms. Norin Nyanjang, Project officer-Mayom.



UNFPA strengthens the capacities of service providers in GBV case management, clinical case management of rape (CMR), and provision of quality psychosocial services. Similarly, UNFPA works with partners from different sectors to conduct assessments through GBV safety audits whose recommendations are used to plan a multi-sectoral response that will provide access to services and improve reporting of GBV.

“UNFPA is grateful for the contribution of DG-ECHO which has enabled us to expand provision of much needed GBV prevention and response interventions. We are committed to scaling up, engaging men and boys to promote positive masculinity and build capacity of service providers

Our localization strategy and partnership with the Government of South Sudan gives us the opportunity to achieve impact with limited resources.”

Dr Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Representative in South Sudan.



Dr. Ademola Olajide, stressing a point on localization and partnership

case management and Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) services to remote areas.

“Our strategy is to approach men and boys as stakeholders, survivors, perpetrators, allies, and agents of change and to prioritize early intervention programs and social norm change activities that promote relationships and healthy masculinities. Through this engagement, we plan and implement multi-sectoral projects that strengthen the skills and capacities of women, girls, men, and boys to engage in healthy forms of masculinity while bringing services closer to the community in remote areas.” Dr Hussein Hassan, Emergency Coordinator for UNFPA South Sudan.

The project covers Upper Nile, Jonglei, and Unity States as well as the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA). The support strengthens the capacity of service providers to prioritize the far-to-reach areas and areas with critical humanitarian needs.

The Support has enabled UNFPA to strengthen its partnership with the community and expand GBV



Join community awareness session on GBV

Strategic partnerships to position reproductive health for the returnees.



Hon. Peter Gatwech Kulang & Dr. Ademola Olajide shake hands after the meeting

“A year of Hope,” says Hon. Peter Gatwech Kulang, the chairperson of the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission-SS RRC, during a meeting with Dr. Demola, the UNFPA Representative. They discussed ways to strengthen partnerships and position Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights for vulnerable people, particularly internally displaced persons, and returnees.

In a meeting with the new commission chairperson, Dr. Ademola Olajide, the UNFPA Country Representative, emphasized the importance of the two institutions working collaboratively with other partners and establishing strategic engagement. He stated that this collaboration and engagement are central to achieving programmatic success for the women and girls of South Sudan.

“The strategic engagement with Hon. Gatwech Kulang Chairperson, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), enables us to effectively explore important synergies between the agenda of the Commission and UNFPA Programmes, especially strengthening the humanitarian-development interface,” said UNFPA Country Representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide.

The appointment of Hon. Peter Gatwech Kulang as the chairperson of the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission is significant. It is worth noting that UNFPA which has had a longstanding working relationship with Hon. Peter, who has been engaged in addressing societal issues such as ending child marriage through the participation of females in sports.

UNFPA and its partners work to address Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights including in emergency-affected communities of South Sudan.

Hon. Peter Gatwech Kulang emphasized the importance of taking collective responsibility to improve the lives of people affected by humanitarian conditions by facilitating lasting solutions.



SS RRC and UNFPA team in a group picture

Empowering communities to embrace family planning.



Community members keenly listening to facilitator during an outreach session

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

The outreach was a communal journey of discovery and enlightenment with participation from 144 local residents, 23 men and 121 women aged between 19 and 60. The significance of this gathering lay not just in the numbers, but in the diversity and unity it showcased - boys and girls, women and men, and community leaders all congregated, standing shoulder to shoulder to engage in vital conversations about sexual and reproductive health.

The discussions led by the male champions were enlightening dialogues that shone a light on the myriad aspects of family planning - the benefits, the accessibility, and the common misconceptions. Gatherings shared FP practices,

knowledge and experiences, breaking down barriers of misinformation and dispelling the myths and misconceptions that have long shrouded the topic in mystery. The commitment shown by the community members, volunteers, and supporting organizations illustrates a collective step forward in breaking down barriers and building a foundation for a healthier, more informed society.



ED, Resilience organisation with male champions

"I have always been concerned about the side effects of contraceptives and thought that it can make you sick, inactive in daily domestic activities"

and barren, but I learned a lot today on various methods to choose from to space birth” explained 24-year-old woman from Gumbo community.

With palpable eagerness and engagement of the community members, the outreach transformed into a lively forum, a safe space where myths were dismantled, community members eagerly sought clarity on lingering doubts, expressed their thirst for knowledge and embraced FP. This engagement highlighted a significant shift in the community’s approach to family planning, transforming what was once a topic shrouded in secrecy and skepticism into a subject of communal interest and importance.

It was a testament to the power of collaboration,

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

“The campaign stood as an example bringing information and services closer to people can transform communities, shaping a future where every individual is informed, empowered, and in control of their reproductive health” Kevin Abala, Director of Resilient Organisation

With the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and generous contributions from Sweden, Canada, and Norway, the Resilience Organization and the Reproductive Health Association of South Sudan spearheaded this community outreach initiative.



A medical worker attends to a woman.

Discovering hope at the Safe Shelter: The journey of Amina, a young survivor



A survivor sharing her story

In Wau, a city marked by its resilience amidst challenges, a 17-year-old girl's journey to find sanctuary unfolds, casting a light on the profound impact of dedicated support systems for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Amina* not her real name, represents both the struggles faced by countless individuals and the beacon of hope that the one-stop centres provide.

Amina's story began in a setting all too familiar in countries grappling with conflict and instability, where the shadows of GBV loom large, often leaving deep emotional and physical scars on survivors. She faced challenges that no person, let alone a child, should endure. The violence that shadowed her community eventually found its way into her own life, leaving her desperate for help

and healing. For Amina, the ordeal of experiencing sexual violence and being ostracized by her family and community seemed insurmountable until she discovered the one-stop centre in Wau, a safe place designed to offer comprehensive support to GBV survivors..

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

“I received so much support, counselling and help that I don’t know what I would have done without this” she stated.

The psychological support Amina received was transformative. Speaking with counsellors, she began the arduous process of unpacking her trauma, learning to navigate the storm of emotions that had threatened to overwhelm her. Unable to go back to her home and community, Amina was taken to the safe shelter, surrounded by others who had walked similar paths, she discovered a community of resilience, a sisterhood that empowered her to reclaim her strength and agency.



Wau teaching hospital provides services to Women & Girls including GBV survivors

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

Amina’s journey is a testament to the strength found in the face of adversity, and the crucial role that comprehensive support services play in enabling survivors of GBV to reclaim their lives. It underscores the importance of such centres in conflict-affected countries like South Sudan, where the path to healing is often obstructed by myriad challenges. Through her story, Amina not only highlights the struggles faced by many but also illuminates the potential for recovery and empowerment that specialized centres offer.

The one-stop centre and safe shelter in Wau stand as beacons of hope, not just for Amina, but for all survivors seeking a way forward in the aftermath of violence. They exemplify the power of holistic support systems in transforming lives, advocating for a world where survivors are met with the care, dignity, and respect they deserve. Amina’s story, marked by resilience and the transformative impact of compassionate support, serves as a powerful reminder of the indomitable human spirit and the importance of standing in solidarity with those seeking to overcome the shadows of violence.

The One Stop Centre in Wau operated with funding from UNFPA and donors such as SWISS, Sweden, and Norway. This centre, part of a broader initiative to combat and address the consequences of violence, offers medical, legal, and psychosocial services under one roof, ensuring that survivors like Amina can access the holistic care they desperately need.

Joint donors (Norway, Canada and Sweden) visit to Wau



Taking reproductive health services to marginalised people in hard-to-reach communities of Mangalla



Medical camp outreach session in progress in Mangalla

In the remote and underserved communities of Mangalla, Central Equatorial State there exists a camp of internally displaced persons (IDP) and host community numbering about forty thousand (40,000) people with limited access to health services.

Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health services has long been a challenge in a country like South Sudan which mostly relies on the services of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide health care services. In a bid to bridge this health gap, Amref Health Africa in partnership with the State Ministry of Health coordinated a health camp to reach mothers and girls in Mangalla.

This coordination and actualization did not come easy as it involved quite a heavy logistical burden to move the supplies from Juba to Mangalla. With thanks to the public-private partnerships, Amref

Health Africa identified Buckey Clinic operating on the ground made it easy for both Amref and the State Ministry to Health to quickly ascertain the SRHR needs of displaced people and the host community.

Amref recognized the urgent needs and vulnerabilities this marginalized population in the IDP and the host community and realized the dire need for family planning services at Mangalla, Primary Health Care Centre and Buckey clinic. In addition, there is no existence of the Adolescents and Youth friendly space and only two midwives are serving the entire population in the community.

In response to this need, Amref with support from UNFPA embarked on a 2- day-targeted high-level Integrated SRHR outreach initiative aimed at reaching marginalized populations and ensuring

that no one was left behind with the mindset of bridging gaps, empowering individuals, and promoting inclusivity.

Under that, an outreach team, comprising two (2) midwives, (2) nurses, a lab technician, a clinical officer, and social mobilizers, were supervised by Amref, CHD, Juba Teaching Hospital, and the Ministry of Health set sail to Mangalla as echoed by Keji, a new mother who benefited from the camp.

“We now feel cared for. I hope they continue organizing these sessions in other places too, especially for young mothers like me. There are so many misconceptions about family planning in our community, and everyone needs to know the truth.” – Keji, a young mother.

Central to the success was the integration of culturally sensitive approaches that respected the beliefs, customs, and values of the communities. We engaged community leaders, opinion leaders, administrators, and traditional healers to gain their trust and ensure that our interventions were culturally appropriate and acceptable.

“Today has been such a blessing for me, being a young mother. I have often felt overwhelmed and unsure of how to navigate everything. But after hearing about family planning, I see things in a whole new light. It’s not just about preventing pregnancies; it’s about giving us, young mothers, the tools to manage our choices better. Having these services available right here in our community means the world to us” said Nyoka through a translator.

An estimated total of 6, 519 people were reached with SRHR information mainly on safe motherhood, family planning, adolescents youth friendly services, sexual transmitted diseases, Men involvement in SRHR, and GBV prevention.

“You know, when I first walked into that group session, I didn’t know what to expect. They spoke about staying in school, understanding our bodies and making smart informed decisions about my body. When they talked about sexual reproductive health, it was like a light bulb went off in my head. Learning how to stay safe, taking care of myself, and making choices... I felt empowered. I’m grateful for what I learned today, and I can’t wait to share it with my friends.” - Mary, 17 years old.

The impact of the outreach was profound, empowering individuals, strengthening communities, and advancing health equity. By reaching marginalized populations with tailored interventions, we not only improved health outcomes but also fostered resilience and self-determination as seen in the two testimonials during the outreach.

With support from UNFPA, Amref is committed to leaving no one behind in the journey towards universal access to SRHR services. By continuing to prioritize marginalized populations, adapt to evolving needs, and advocate for inclusive policies, we can build a future where everyone can realize their sexual and reproductive health rights.

A healing touch of community health outreaches to markets, thanks to the Nurses and Midwives



Midwife conduct awareness on family planning/HIV to market vendors.

In the heart of Juba, South Sudan, amidst the bustling life of Kuburi Haboba and Sherikat Markets, a remarkable story unfolds. The South Sudan Nurses and Midwives Association has embarked on a noble journey, bringing not just medical services but hope and education to the communities.

These nurses and midwives, armed with their medical kits and an unwavering commitment to their community, pitched camp right in the heart of the market. They transformed these spaces, usually reserved for trade and chatter, into hubs of healing and education. For many locals, this was more than a medical camp; it was a beacon of hope and a source of much-needed support.

The services offered were comprehensive, catering to the diverse needs of the community, ranging

from family planning to HIV counseling and testing., menstrual health management, and sexual and reproductive health; an initiative that wasn't just about treating illnesses; but also empowering individuals with knowledge and choices.

All these services were offered in a One-Stop Shop manner, ensuring that the people in these localities had access to essential health services without having to leave their places of trade and work.

"I was happy to receive oral pills right here in the market as I do not have the time to go to the clinic. We need more clinics like this because we lose a lot of money going to the health center and waiting for services" a young food vendor explained.

The impact of this initiative was profound as over 18,000 persons were reached with information and services during the outreach sessions. This wasn't just a number; it represented individuals, families, and communities whose lives were touched and improved by the dedication of these healthcare professionals.

“We are getting a lot of requests for services closer to the people. This outreach has really transformed lives and improved the health and well-being of our people, especially women and young girls. We must continue to reach out to them everywhere they are. We appreciate

the support provided by UNFPA and donors' initiatives such as these” stated Agnes Juan Silver, Executive Director of the South Sudan Nurses and Midwives Association.

This approach is a testament to the power of community healthcare and the difference that committed individuals can make.

The South Sudan Nurses and Midwives Association's outreach in Kuburi Haboba and Sherikat Markets stands as a shining example of how compassion, coupled with expertise, can transform communities, and foster a healthier future for all, thanks to support from UNFPA with funding from Canada.



Counselling session in progress in Gumbo market

Catalyzing Change for Present and Future Generations

The East and Southern Africa Regional Leadership Meeting



Participants from the Regional Leadership Meeting

The ESA Regional Leadership Meeting strengthened the regional leadership's commitment to defend and protect the gains already made, and vigorously challenge the persistent areas of stagnation in East and Southern Africa.

Under the theme, Catalyzing Change for Present and Future Generations, the adopted 'Triple A' approach of Being Astute, Agile, and Adaptive framed the discussions at the three-day event in Johannesburg from 20–22 March.

The regional leadership renewed its dedication towards meeting the aspirations of the women, adolescents, and young people we serve while delivering excellence in 2024 and beyond.

"I left energized for the task ahead this year, and resolved and convinced that it is possible in the East and Southern Africa region to achieve the three-plus-one zeros, that are the bedrock of UNFPA's current Strategic Plan," said Lydia Zigomo, Regional Director.





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