



Empowering Women for a Brighter Future: UN Celebrates International Women’s Day in Mundri

By Sarah Nyibak Chaat and Sadia Shah/UNWOMEN

In a transformative celebration of International Women’s Day 2024, UN Women South Sudan in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare, UN agencies and stakeholders orchestrated a monumental event that brought together women from every corner of the nation at Mundri Stadium on March 8, 2024. Under this year’s National theme “Empowering Women: Accelerating Progress in South Sudan.” The gathering served as a catalyst for change, advocating for gender equality and honoring the remarkable achievements of women nationwide.

The event, graced by distinguished guests including Governor Alfred Futiyo Karaba of Western Equatoria, Undersecretaries, Directors, Gender Focal Persons, and representatives from national line ministries, UN agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO and UNESCO headed by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, Ms. Anita Kiki Gbeho, and various civil society organizations, the gathering exemplified a collective commitment to advancing the rights and opportunities of women.

Minister of Gender Child, and Social Welfare Aya Benjamin Warile, delivered an impassioned address, urging women to embrace their inherent strength and resilience. She emphasized the urgency of empowering girls and women to break free from the shackles of discrimination, declaring, “it is time for women to rise, assert their rights, and shatter the barriers that hold them back.”

Governor Afred Futiyo Karaba echoed Minister Warile’s sentiments, applauding the indomitable spirit of South Sudanese women and acknowledging the challenges they face, declared, “Today, we honor and celebrate the invaluable contributions of women to our society. Let us stand together in solidarity and commit to dismantling the patriarchal structures that seek to diminish their voices.”

Deputy Special Representative and UN Resident Coordinator, Anita Kiki Gbeho underscored the importance of accelerating gender Inclusion and providing women with access to resources and opportunities. She emphasized, “Empowering women is not just a moral imperative; it is an economic necessity. By harnessing the potential of women, we unlock the key to sustainable development and prosperity for all.”

HIGHLIGHTS



Empowering Women for a Brighter future: UN Celebrates International Women Day



Celebrating female drivers delivering healthcare services in South Sudan



Five New Counties in South Sudan to benefit from the productive safety project, Shabak



Women IDPS in South Sudan, challenge social norms



South Sudanese Women successfully grows her food processing business



First South Sudan VNR takes shape



UN in South Sudan hosts peacebuilding fund donor delegation





Empowering Women for a Brighter Future: UN Celebrates International Women’s Day in Mundri

INTERNATIONALWOMEN DAY CELEBRATION IN PICTURES



Governor and Minister for Gender, Child and Social Welfare along with other participants in Mundari for the celebration of IWD 2024. Photo Credit: UNWOMEN



Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, Aya Benjamin Warille addressing during the IED celebrations in Mundari Photo Credit: UN WOMEN



Deputy Special Representative and UN Resident Coordinator, Anita Kiki Gbeho during the IWD celebrations in Mundari. Photo Credit: UNFPA

The Deputy Country Representative, Rukaya Mohammed of UN Women South Sudan expressed, 'Today, as we stand in Mundri to celebrate International Women's Day, we are reminded of the strength and resilience that women of South Sudan embody. Their courage in the face of adversity is not just inspiring—it's a beacon of hope for a future where equality isn't just aspired to but lived. Let's commit to making that future a reality, for every woman and girl in South Sudan and beyond.'

Christine Sitty, the Chairperson of a Women's group in Mundri, voiced the collective sentiments of the women, urging them with the reminder, "It is the right of everyone to move freely without fear."

As the event concluded, participants left inspired and invigorated, with a renewed sense of purpose and determination. Through collaborative efforts and unwavering dedication, UN Women South Sudan continue to champion the cause of women's empowerment, creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

International Women's Day 2024 served as a powerful reminder of the collective commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, propelling South Sudan towards a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

As Minister Warille eloquently stated, "when women are empowered, entire communities thrive. Let us continue to march forward together, united in our pursuit of a world where every woman and girl realize her full potential."

International Women Day

International Women day is an occasions to educate the general public on issues of Women rights, to mobilize political will and resources to address global problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity.

Invest in women: Accelerate progress

Achieving gender equality and women's well-being in all aspects of life is more crucial than ever if we want to create prosperous economies and a healthy planet. However, we are facing a key challenge: the alarming \$360 billion annual deficit in gender-equality measures by 2030.





Celebrating female drivers delivering healthcare services in South Sudan

By Jamila Mohammad/ WHO



In South Sudan, driving has traditionally been perceived as a male-only profession. However, this stereotype has been challenged by three inspirational female drivers; Lucia Khamis, Jokudu Rejoice and Inna Medina - who are passionately dedicated to serving underserved communities by delivering healthcare nationwide.

Lucia Khamis, the first female driver at WHO South Sudan, said, "Women can accomplish anything that men can do." Despite the challenges she faces, Lucia takes great pride in contributing to the welfare of her community.

Recently, Jokudu returned to her duty station in Juba after completing a month-long deployment to support WHO's response efforts in addressing the health needs of people fleeing armed conflict from Sudan to South Sudan. Jokudu's unwavering commitment to her work is truly inspirational. Jokudu said, "I missed my children and family while in the field, but my compassion for the vulnerable children and families I served gave me the strength to persevere.

"In a fleet of over 40 drivers, WHO is blessed to have these amazingly talented female drivers in our team," said Dr Humphrey Karamagi, WHO Representative for South Sudan.

WHO's 13th General Program of Work (2019-23) recognizes the importance of promoting gender equality and mainstreaming gender in the organization's work. WHO South Sudan's recruitment of the three women drivers between 2022 and 2023 is a testament

to its commitment to empowering women and promoting gender diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

WHO is committed to promoting gender equality and equity at all levels of its work and looks forward to recruiting more female drivers.



WHO's female drivers delivering healthcare services in South Sudan. Photo Credit: WHO





Five New Counties in South Sudan to Benefit from the productive safety net project,

'Shabaka Meisha'

By Aidah Khamis Woja/UNOPS



Fourth Shabaka Meisha project Launch in Mundri. Photo Credit: UNOPS

The Government of the Republic of South Sudan through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare extends the World Bank-funded Productive Safety Net for Socio-economic Opportunities Project (SNSOP), which has been popularly named as '**Shabaka Meisha**', to five new counties across South Sudan. These include Mundri West, Pochalla, Aweil West, Maban, and Pariang, which increases the outreach of Shabaka Meisha to 15 selected counties.

The former 10 counties where the project has already been launched are Juba, Kapoeta East, Tonj South, Torit, Bor, Pibor, Gogrial West, Raja, Melut, and Yei.

Shabaka Meisha is a US\$129 million World Bank-funded four-year project implemented by the Government of the Republic of South Sudan through the Ministry of Agriculture and

Food Security (MAFS) the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MGCSW), with the implementation support of United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The project will benefit more than 96,000 vulnerable households, including refugees and host communities, in target counties through cash transfers and income-generating livelihood opportunities, while also strengthening the effectiveness of the national safety net delivery system.

The official launch of the project in Mundri West, Western Equatoria - which is one of the five new counties - is being presided over today i.e. 7 March 2024 by National Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare Honorable Aya Benjamin Libo Warille.

This will be the first Government-led social safety net project in Mundri West County and Western Equatoria State.

Honorable Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, Aya Benjamin Warille, was joined from Juba by high-level dignitaries from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security along with two members of the Transitional National parliament representing Mundri West County in Western Equatoria State as well as the Program Coordinator from UNOPS.





First Shabaka Meisha Project Launch in Mundri. Photo Credit: UNOPS

"I am excited to inaugurate Shabaka Meisha in Mundri West. The project will have a strong gender focus in an effort to tackle gender gaps and enhance women's empowerment by ensuring that 65% of the targeted project beneficiaries are women. Activities under the complementary social measures targeted at mothers and female caregivers will also equip female beneficiaries with necessary knowledge and capacity to make better decisions on WASH, nutrition practices and early childhood support. The project will also contribute to achieving gender parity by ensuring meaningful female participation in local community structures established by the project promoting women's voices and agency in the community" Said Honorable Aya Benjamin Warille, Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare.

The project was officially launched in August 2023 at the national level in Juba and builds on the successes and lessons of World Bank-supported predecessor projects, including the Safety Net and Skills Development Project (SNSDP) and South Sudan Safety Net Project (SSSNP). Since the national launch, the project focused on setting up the structures, systems and implementation arrangements that are necessary for the project's implementation.

Shabaka Meisha will provide cash assistance to poor and vulnerable households to meet immediate consumption gaps and build resilience to withstand future shocks. Targeted beneficiaries will participate in climate smart Labor-Intensive Public Works (LIPW) or in behavioral change communications training that aim to promote human capital development. The project will also sensitize and train households on Financial Literacy, Water Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), Early Childhood Development (ECD) helping to improve their overall well-being.

Women IDPs in South Sudan, challenge social norms

By Loyce Nabie/IOM

Malakal, South Sudan – In many parts of South Sudan women are forbidden or its considered taboo to perform certain types of work.

Doing physical work, including construction, is particularly frowned upon, and considered to be against the culture. In many communities a woman's place is believed to be in kitchen, cooking, or looking after children and other family members, or working in the garden.

Julia James, an Internally Displaced Person in Malakal, South Sudan, is challenging these norms. Julia lives in a Protection of Civilian (PoC) site with 42,000 thousand other IDPs.

Despite her knowledge of traditional and cultural beliefs about the place of women in her society, in 2022 Julia decided to challenge the status quo.

IOM's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Department in the PoC where Julia lives advertised for trainees in construction and masonry work. Julia's PoC is one of the largest of five Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in South Sudan. The need for hygiene, water, and sanitation for IDPs is immense. When Julia saw the advert, she decided to apply. The desire and need to provide for herself and her family meant Julia needed to try for this opportunity.

Initially she was very anxious about what people in her community would say. She knew this type of work was considered to be for men only. But she decided to give it a go. She vividly remembers being laughed at by her community, the first time they saw her wearing overalls to head to the training.

"I didn't know anything about construction or masonry work. I grew up in a traditional and typical South Sudanese family, being told this type of work was only for men. When I decided to join the training, at first, I got a lot of criticism from my community members. "How can a woman learn how to construct toilets? That's a man's job", people would say.





But Julia desperately wanted to learn new skills that would help her gain an income working in the camp, rather than doing nothing.

Today, the skills and knowledge she acquired are being put to good use. Julia works full-time with IOM fixing toilets, bathrooms, sinks and other similar work.

“The training has enabled me to gain an income, which is helping me to provide and support my family. Most of the women now look up to me as an example to women and girls. My job is a lifesaver. I can pay my children’s school fees and still save money that can help me start a new one day if I decide to leave the PoC” says Julia, as she hammers a nail into an iron sheet finish repairing a bathroom stance.

Julia’s story shows that investing in women and girls today lays the foundation for the feminist change-makers of tomorrow and her achievements show us what becomes possible when we ensure equal access to opportunities and services as said by IOM’s Director General Amy Pope in her message on International Women’s Day.

IOM’s WASH activities in Malakal are supported by USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, South Sudan Humanitarian Fund and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.



Julia replaces a damaged bathroom door with a new one. Photo: IOM/Nabie Loyce





A South Sudanese Woman successfully grows her food processing business



Photo credit: ITC

On International Women's Day 2024, the European Union (EU) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) organized a mini fruit and vegetable trade fair at the EU compound in Juba. Under the theme of Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress, the fair focused on inspiring inclusion and empowering women from diverse backgrounds.

Abuk Deng, a 52-year-old entrepreneur and mother of seven, joined the trade fair as a beneficiary of ITC's South Sudan Jobs Creation and Trade Development Project. In 2015, she founded Abuk Enterprise Limited to supply food items such as peanut butter, dried vegetables, and processed fruits. Her business nearly fell apart during the country's 2016 conflict, but here she tells how she persevered so her family could thrive.

Question: What are your challenges as a woman in business?

Answer: Society sometimes expects too much from me. So many responsibilities are piled on me, it's difficult to expand my business. Whatever little money that I generate is often taken up by family needs. And it's always a challenge to meet the demand of customers. This is one of the reasons businesses run by most women don't flourish. Many can't withstand the pressure, or produce enough to meet the demand from big buyers. In addition, the cost of production is high. Packaging containers, branding and other supplies come with significant costs that are always hard to meet. And finally, the community doesn't give enough moral, social, and economic support. Sometimes, we try to work hard but due to lack of support, our businesses break down.

Question: What do you need to improve your business?

Answer: I want to produce and process in big quantities, and to sell good quality products. That's the way to meet consumer demand and bring a good image to my business. That means I need processing machines and equipment. I also need more training on food processing so I can make high-quality products. And as the world is growing rapidly towards technology and digital marketing, it would be great to get training in these areas. Then I can market my business with less expense.

Question: What are some of your successes?

Answer: Through my small business, my daughter was able to graduate from one of the best universities in Uganda (Makerere University). All my other children have access to good education, good health care, and live a good life. I have learned how to promote my business, improve my packaging and branding, and improve the quality of products through the ITC project. Through the processing activities, I can connect more easily with potential buyers. That's greatly increased my production.

Question: What is your message to fellow women?

Answer: My request to the women of South Sudan is to not give up despite the challenges. Let's all join hands regardless of our differences and stand together to end all the injustice happening in this country. Let's fight poverty to ensure a better life for our children. It is up to us to bring the positive change that we all yearn for. I am very thankful to ITC for supporting the women of South Sudan, and hope that this continues in the future as well.

About the Project

The International Trade Centre's [South Sudan Jobs Creation and Trade Development project](#) aims to increase the competitiveness of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and employment opportunities for the South Sudanese population engaged in the fruit and vegetable subsector. The European Union-funded project contributes to addressing the value addition, competitiveness, job creation and trade development challenges of South Sudan. Specifically, the interventions of the project are expected to improve productive capacities and compliance to standards for MSMEs, increase market linkages for MSMEs and enhance employability and entrepreneurship capacity for the South Sudanese labor force, focusing on youth and women.





First Voluntary National Review of SDGs Takes shape in South Sudan

By Poni Allen Ladu



“As the UN supports South Sudan to embark on its Voluntary National Review process, we recognize the significance of assessing our collective efforts towards achieving the SDGs and identifying areas for improvement. This review will not only showcase achievements but also shed light on the challenges that lie ahead” the DSRSG/RC/HC said reaffirming UN in South Sudan’s commitment to working with the government of South Sudan to expedite the SDGs implementation.

The VNR launch offered an opportunity for stakeholders to join efforts, share ideas in support of the preparation of

Senior Officials at the launch of South Sudan’s First Voluntary National Review. Photo Credit: RCO

The government of South Sudan in partnership with United Nations Country Team, launched discussions on the 2024 Voluntary National Review of the Sustainable Development Goals in March.

Speaking at the launch occasion, the Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning Agok Makur Kur highlighted that South Sudan’s first VNR will focus on SDGs: 2. Zero Hunger, 3: Good Health and wellbeing, 4: Quality Education, 13: Climate Action, and 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. He called on all partners and stakeholders to support the realization of peace in the country. “Peace will enable our people to return home and participate in national development through agriculture, facilitating the achievement of SDGs 1 and 2.

On her part, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Anita Kiki Gbeho, emphasized that the SDGs represent a blue print for transformative change, offering a roadmap towards a world free from poverty, inequality, and injustice.

the first VNR. “ The journey towards sustainable development requires a vision and clear strategic direction. As we stand at this critical juncture in our nation’s history, it is imperative that we chart a course forward that not only addresses the immediate needs of our people but also ensures the long –term prosperity and well– being of future generations” said the Minister of Peace Building, Hon. Stephen Par Kuol.

The launched was followed by a VNR workshop facilitated by the Economic Commission for Africa. The workshop which took place in Addis Ababa was attended by Six representatives from South Sudan, including focal points from some of the selected SDGs that the South Sudan VNR will focus on.

The workshop provided a forum for exchange of ideas and learning from other countries that have completed the VNR process.

The next step in the VNR review process will be consultations with various stakeholders including youth, academia, civil society organization, women groups among others.





UN in South Sudan hosts Peace Building Fund Donor Delegation

By Ravikash Prasad /RCO



In Malakal, the delegation was welcomed by the Governor of Upper Nile State and held multi-stakeholder consultations.

The delegation witnessed the concrete positive impact of PBF investments on the people of South Sudan.

“I have seen people who are eager to build peace and sustain peace...I have been extremely impressed by the resilience of the people. I have even seen a desire to come to closure with the atrocities of the past, and all these

From April 14th to 19th, 2024, the United Nation Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) concluded its first partner visit to South Sudan hosted by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC).

The delegation included PBF partners from across the world: eight representatives from PBF contributing partners’ capitals, including European Union, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, and United Kingdom; one representative of the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Brazil; two high-level members of the PBF Advisory Group. They were led by the Chief of the Financing for Peacebuilding Branch, UN DPPA/PBSO, and the PBF program officer at the UN Secretariat in New York.

During the week, the delegation interacted with PBF partners in government, civil society, the UN, the region and international partners. They were co-hosted by the Minister of Peacebuilding, a strategic partner to the PBF, and invited by the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs to an inter-ministerial consultation. In addition, they visited the Ministry of Housing, Land and Urban Development.

examples are constitutive of sustaining peace. We need to continue to support such efforts because the situation is extremely fragile, and I would urge all decision makers to do their utmost to help sustain that peace,” said Stephan Rey, Ambassador of Switzerland to Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi and Member of the 7th PBF Advisory Group to the UN Secretary –General, one of the members of the delegation.

The delegation visited projects supported by the PBF in Juba and Malakal. The interventions visited showcased the PBF’s support to the constitution-making and transitional justice processes; women in the security sector; promotion of Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights; women’s economic empowerment and climate-resilient livelihoods; youth participation in peacebuilding, and media development.

Reflecting on the support provided by PBF to conduct local consultations, the Secretary-General of the National Constitutional Review Commission said “We want the Constitution Making Process (CMP) to be people driven, not a product of elites. We have to go to the people to collect their views. We must engage women and youth. Their views will form the basis of the first draft of the constitution text.”





UNESCO Facilitates a Seminar for Journalists and Government to deliberate on access to information issues

By Doreen Loboka Gunne/ UNESCO



Participants pose for a group photo with the Dignitaries during the opening session at Palm Africa Hotel. Photo Credit: UNESCO

UNESCO in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Access to Information Commission, kicked off a two-day seminar on access to information in Juba.

The aim of the seminar was to enhance access to information, promote information sharing among the members of the press and the National Electoral Commission in preparation for the upcoming elections in December 2024. Participants included members of the media, civil society, the National Electoral Commission, and representatives from various government and electoral bodies.

Mr. Tanaka Hiroyuki, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) noted that “JICA recognizes the crucial role access to information plays in achieving sustainable development and fostering good governance. We are committed to supporting South Sudan in its efforts to strengthen its democratic institutions”.

Mr. Julius Banda, Head of Office, UNESCO’s Country Representative to South Sudan emphasized the importance of the right of access to information as an invaluable component of democracy, as it goes a long way in facilitating participation in public affairs and is a cross cutting right that is necessary for the realization of other human rights.

gender gaps and use of local languages to ensure that no one is left behind.

Proactive information disclosure, creation, preservation, and maintenance of information was also emphasized to ensure realization of the right of access to information.

Hon. George Lemi Stans Yata, Spokesperson, National Elections Commission in his remarks said that the mandate of the commission is to avail accurate and reliable information for the public about elections related work, and the commission is committed to ensuring citizens have access to reliable, and accurate information in this regard.

Mr. Lemi echoed the importance of Access to information in this critical time as the Country gears towards its first election since her independence from Sudan in 2011.

Hon. Yath Awan Yath, Undersecretary Ministry of Information and Telecommunication stated that the government together with its partners need to work hand in hand to make election’s related information available to the citizens. We have over 80 radio stations nationwide, when we use them right, all the citizens will have accurate information about the elections Dr. Yath said.





South Sudan Starts Using Artificial Intelligence-Aided X-ray Machines in TB Detection

By Micheal Mubangizi/UNDP



If for some reason someone cannot come to the ward, you can pick it, pack it and go and take the picture from the ward and come back,” he added. Given their portability, they can also be used in community outreaches to conduct X-rays, which reduces the cost of travelling to health centres for rural patients, who may otherwise delay TB testing until their condition deteriorates.

One can also charge a battery and use it multiple times on a single charge. In a country faced with an acute shortage of power supply, this will help to elevate

Innovation is helping to accelerate progress in the fight against diseases while preparing the world for future pandemics. In South Sudan, we are beginning to use artificial intelligence-aided digital X-ray machines to scale up TB screening and treatment.

In December 2023, the Ministry of Health, with funding from the Global Fund and in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), installed two X-ray machines in Torit and Rumbek State Hospitals while four more machines will soon be installed.

The portable X-ray machines are credited for increasing the accuracy of diagnosis, leading to improved treatment outcomes. Ofere Ohide, a radiologist at Torit State Hospital, said before the installation of the machine, people had to go to the capital Juba, about 136 kilometres away, to get screened for TB and many people would choose death, owing to the distance and costs associated with the travel.

“Our people here are quite poor, if you tell them to go to Juba, someone will choose death over going to Juba because they know that they are going to spend a lot of money and probably they wouldn’t come back. So, they usually just live with it. They will not even bother going for an X-ray,” Ofere said of the journey that takes between eight and 10 hours to drive by road from Torit to Juba.

“This is the smallest X-ray. It’s more portable.

the diagnosis and treatment of TB in the country.

AI-assisted X-ray machines can also detect other health conditions and complement other interventions such as the use of the multi-disease-testing GeneXpert machines. In [2022](#), TB was ranked as the second leading infectious disease killer worldwide, after COVID-19.

It was also the leading cause of death for people living with HIV. According to the [2023 Global Tuberculosis report](#), 10.6 million people fell ill with TB in 2022 while 1.3 million people died of TB-related causes, including 167,000 deaths among people living with HIV. Drug-resistant TB also remains a major public health concern with an estimated 410,000 people developing multi-drug-resistant forms of TB in 2022 alone! Fortunately, globally, 75 million lives have been saved since 2000 due to our collective efforts to combat TB.

About [25,000](#) people are diagnosed and treated with TB annually in South Sudan.

UNDP has been a valuable partner and a principal recipient for the Global Fund grant in the fight against TB and HIV since 2003 along with the MOH and the rest of the partners such as Cordaid International and the Arkangelo Ali Association to support the provision of TB services in over 200 locations across the country.





South Sudan commemorates World Zero Discrimination Day

By Mathew Komba /UNAIDS



In the recent Stigma Index survey among people living with HIV in the country, 63.1% of the participants reported that they were unemployed while 56.9% reported that they had no formal education.

Also, more than half (52.0%) of them were unable to meet their basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing due to HIV-related Stigma and discrimination. Unemployment and lack of basic needs attributed to the HIV status remain a challenge for people living with HIV in South Sudan

Over the last ten years, the people of South Sudan have joined the rest of the world in observing March 1st as World Zero Discrimination Day, to address the country's prevalent burden of HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination. The theme of the day for this year was **“To Protect Everyone’s Health, Protect Everyone’s Rights.”**

To commemorate the day, UNAIDS joined forces with the South Sudan AIDS Commission (SSAC) and National Empowerment of Positive Women United (NEPWU) to launch a Zero Discrimination Day campaign on March 1st.

The guest of honor for the event was His Excellence, Hussein Abdelbagi Akol, the Vice President, and chairperson of the services cluster. In his speech, the vice president urged the community to respect and support people living with HIV in the country.

His excellency also underscored the need to extend awareness messaging about HIV disease to other areas outside towns in efforts to reduce the high level of stigma and discrimination in the country.

In his closing remarks, H.E. reassured the government’s commitment to end stigma and discrimination in the country by protecting the rights to health of the people of South Sudan by enacting a law that will prohibit events of HIV-related stigma and discrimination, particularly in healthcare settings.

HIV-related stigma and discrimination and its manifestations continue to slow down the efforts to achieve the national targets and the goal to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 in South Sudan. In addition, the South Sudanese laws, policies, and practices that punish, stigmatize, and discriminate against key and vulnerable populations have continued to obstruct these populations from seeking HIV services (HIV knowledge, HIV testing, HIV treatment, and care).

We can end AIDS – if everyone’s rights are protected.





Don Bosco Vocational Training Center to host life changing training programs for Youth and Ex-combatants from Wau and Jur River Counties

By Sarah Abraham /UNDP



The Government of France, UNDP, UNMISS and the South Sudan DDR Commission have recently facilitated the induction ceremony of 50 ex-combatants, and 50 community youth set to receive life skills training and start-up kits as part of the pilot implementation of the French funded Community Violence Reduction Project in Western Bahr El Ghazal

From 14 – 16 March 2024, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), France CVR Specialist, the South Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (DDRC), and Solidarity Ministries Africa for Reconciliation and Development engaged 33 ex-combatants and 60 community youth from Wau and Jur River Counties on a three day induction session to prepare them for a three month (March-June 2024) life skills training on computer skills, art and graphic design, catering services, masonry, electrical engineering, welding, general automobile serving, tailoring, carpentry and driving at Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre in Wau Town.

The aim of the CVR project in Western Bahr El Gazal is to directly work with target communities that receives returning ex-combatants and find solutions to armed violence.

At the end of the vocational life skills training, 100 CVR beneficiaries 50 ex-combatants and 50 community youth at risk will be provided with start-up kits, to aid their reintegration so far, the group has registered 32 females out of 100 beneficiaries ensuring gender equity in these trainings.

In the context of South Sudan, the R-ARCSS specifies the need for “Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration of persons with special needs that are ineligible, or not willing to serve in the proposed unified army (R-ARCISS Article 2.4.10). Whilst this process has been delayed, some training and unification of forces have been conducted in Western Bahr El Ghazal State.

In order to foster effective transition of these ex-combatants, and to bridge the gap between demobilization and re-integration; the DDRC, UNDP, UNMISS, Communities, CSOs and partners with support from France, proposed a one year 6months Pilot CVR Project in Western Bahr el Ghazal State intended to bridge DDR response gap within the transitional period, in support of peace consolidation, and to further anchor DDR efforts into the prevention of cycle of violence, and sub-national conflict mitigation efforts. Read more: [Don Bosco Vocational Training Center to host life changing training programs for Youth and Ex-combatants from Wau and Jur River Counties | United Nations Development](#)





A healing touch of community health outreach stretches to markets, thanks to the Nurses

and Midwives

By Juma Delu/UNFPA

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.





Accelerating Gender Equality through addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective

By AMOS AGIRO/UNDP



UNDP South Country office is delighted to join the UN family, partners, the citizens of South Sudan, and the entire globe in marking International Women's Day. UNDP acknowledges the significance of the day, which calls for action to 'increase investment in women,' as well as celebrating the progress made towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

In acknowledgment of the need for accountability and action, we appreciate the Government of South Sudan for selecting a highly relevant theme this year: Accelerate Gender Equality through Inclusion and Access to productive resources for women and girls. This theme is in line with the global theme: 'Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress.' This year's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) is similarly themed as **"Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective."**

UNDP recognizes and commends the progress made by the government of South Sudan and other actors in advancing the gender agenda through policy formulation and increasing women's representation in decision-making positions. We join the women in celebrating the advancements made in women's representation in decision-making positions. Significantly, women have secured positions such as the Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly and the first deputy of the Council of States, and they also hold top positions in key executive offices.

It is our hope to witness further progress, especially in the implementation of the gender quota enshrined in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and the roadmap.

We also recognize the enormous obstacles women face – from structural injustices, marginalization, and violence, to cascading crises worsened by weak rule of law and impunity for GBV perpetrators; patriarchal and harmful socio-cultural norms; poor existence and implementation of national legal frameworks. We appreciate the collective efforts of development partners and national counterparts in addressing these challenges and advocating for an end to this brutal violence as a human rights concern.

Through this call to action, we are joining the globe in raising voices to increase investment in women and advance gender equality in South Sudan. This includes efforts to prioritize the delivery of key services for women, as well as prioritizing women's economic and political inclusion and participation. We also call for strengthening partnerships to work together for the transformation of the lives of women and girls, leaving no one behind.





From Fruit Vendor to CEO: Maka's inspiring Journey

By Maureen Omwanda/UNDP



Amaka transformed her small fruit stand into a thriving enterprise that now has a sitting capacity of 30 customers and employs six individuals, including four young women and two boda boda riders for deliveries across Juba. Speaking to one of Maka's employees, Arich Faisal's journey is a testament to the transformative power of opportunity.

In the bustling streets of Juba, South Sudan, Amaka's story shines as an example of resilience and determination. At 27, she embodies the spirit of youth empowerment through entrepreneurship, thanks to the Youth Enterprise Development and Capacity Building (YEDCB) project.

Amaka's entrepreneurial journey began 3 years ago with a humble fruit and juice business, where she rented a shop that had a sitting capacity of 10 customers. Despite her passion and hard work, she faced the familiar barriers that many young entrepreneurs encounter: limited access to capital, inflation, market challenges, and the constant struggle to balance business ambitions with household responsibilities.

"To the Youth focused, set goals, and strive to achieve them. Empowerment comes from within, and entrepreneurship offers a pathway to self-sufficiency and prosperity." says Maka Scovia

The YEDCB project is a lifeline for aspiring youth entrepreneurs like Amaka. The Youth Enterprise Development and Capacity Building (YEDCB) project aims to enhance employability and job creation for young women and men aged 18-35 years in South Sudan through strengthening the private sector, building entrepreneurship skills, and improving the enabling environment for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Through the project, she received a substantial interest-free loan of SSP 4,000,000 to expand her business. With newfound resources and unwavering determination,

At 24, as a single mother and an orphanage resident, Arich discovered a job opening at Amaka Fruits and Juice Shop. After successfully passing her interview, she secured employment that now enables her to independently support herself her child and her sick brother. From her salary, she was able to start a shoes business in Yei. Her desire was to return to school and through her savings, she will be joining university to start a course in Human Resources. Her story highlights not just personal triumph but also the positive impact of the project impact YEDCB. of on society.

Amaka's success extends beyond financial gains; it is a testament to the holistic support provided by the YEDCB project. Equipped with financial literacy training from UNDP, she learned essential skills in budgeting and bookkeeping, enabling her to manage her business finances effectively and repay her loan without difficulty within the stipulated loan period.

The financial infrastructure of YEDCB is supported by Stanbic Bank and M-gurush.

Amaka's aspirations do not end with her current achievements. With a vision as vast as the African horizon, she dreams of expanding her business empire further. Plans for new branches in Juba and a local food restaurant are already in motion, with ambitious dreams of establishing a juice processing plant that will supply markets across East Africa.

Grateful for the support she received, Amaka extends her heartfelt appreciation to UNDP and the African Development Bank for believing in the potential of young entrepreneurs like herself. With their continued support, she envisions a future where the youth and women of South Sudan can thrive as active participants in the country's economic growth and development.





Launch of the National Coordination and Operations Center in Juba, South Sudan

By Maureen Omwanda/UNDP



In a significant stride towards enhancing disaster management and community resilience, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in South Sudan has partnered with the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and the Ministry of Humanitarian and Disaster Management to launch the National Coordination and Operations Center (NCOC) in Juba.

This initiative is a cornerstone of the Stabilization, Recovery, and Resilience project aimed at ushering in a new era of preparedness and response in the face of dual threats from climate change and man-made crises.

The NCOC, situated within the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission Compound, serves as a central hub for information dissemination, early warnings, and coordinated response efforts across the country. Its establishment marks a significant milestone in South Sudan's commitment to building a resilient nation, equipped to handle disasters proactively and efficiently.

The launch event held on the 8th of April 2024 was honoured by the presence of key figures, including the Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan - Gender and Youth cluster, H.E. Mama Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior, as well as the Minister of Humanitarian and Disaster Management, Hon. Albino Akol Atak, and the Chairperson of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, Hon. Gatwech Peter Kulang.

Their participation underscores the high-level commitment to disaster resilience in South Sudan. During the ceremony, Mr. Dominic Sam, the UNDP South Sudan Resident Representative, demonstrated continued support for the NCOC

by handing over essential equipment and five motorbikes to enhance the operational capabilities of the centre.

The NCOC is dedicated to empowering communities throughout South Sudan by promoting sustainable recovery and reintegration. By focusing on a risk-informed approach, the center aims to safeguard populations and ensure that South Sudan can thrive in the face of challenges, reinforce both immediate responses and long-term recovery efforts.

As South Sudan continues to navigate the complexities of both natural and human-induced challenges, the establishment of the NCOC is a sign of hope and resilience. Through ongoing collaboration and support, the UNDP and its partners are committed to strengthening the capacities of this new institution, making it a cornerstone of national resilience strategy and a model for disaster management in the region.

The involvement of existing and new partners will not only enhance the operational capabilities of the NCOC but also extend its impact across South Sudan.

Through the support of different stakeholders. We are calling on potential partners from all sectors to join us in this crucial initiative. UN agencies, non-governmental organization, a private sector, your contribution can make a significant difference.





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