



UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM NEWSLETTER



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UNITED NATIONS COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

The UNSDCF 2023–2025 for South Sudan is built around four strategic priorities:

- the consolidation of peace and promotion of transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance;
- sustainable economic growth and diversification;
- social development with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable;
- the empowerment of women and youth for sustainable development.

These priorities aim to foster lasting peace, inclusive institutions, resilient livelihoods, and equitable access to services, while ensuring active participation and leadership of marginalized groups in the country's development.





Partnerships Power Progress: UNCT Releases 2024 South Sudan Results Report

Written By: Poni Allen/UNRCO

The United Nations has released its 2024 annual results report under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), underscoring measurable progress in peacebuilding, governance, essential services, economic opportunity, and climate resilience in South Sudan.

The UNSDCF is the strategic blueprint for UN support in South Sudan from 2023 to 2026. It is built around four key pillars: Peace and Inclusive Governance, Sustainable Economic Growth, Social Development, and Women and Youth Empowerment.

The 2024 report demonstrates the impact of growing collaboration between the UN, the Government of South Sudan, and local communities.

Supporting Peace and Institutions

In a critical election year, the UN provided technical assistance to the National Elections Commission to strengthen institutional preparedness. It also supported inclusive political dialogue, ensuring the participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities. At the community level, peacebuilding programs promoted social cohesion and improved access to justice through both traditional and formal legal systems.

Expanding Access to Basic Services

Significant improvements were recorded in health and education. Over 4 million women and children accessed essential health services, and 225,000 children were treated for severe acute malnutrition. Nearly 1 million children, including 52% girls, benefited from improved access to education, supported by rehabilitated schools, trained teachers, and learning materials.

Child protection services reached more than 640,000 children and caregivers, while over 45,000 women and girls accessed gender-based violence (GBV) prevention services, economic empowerment initiatives, and legal support.

Advancing Economic Self-Reliance

To promote inclusive economic growth, more than 260,000 individuals participated in vocational training, start-up support, or cash-for-work programs. These initiatives stimulated local economies and built pathways to self-reliance.

In areas such as Yei and Aweil, integrated development programs connected communities with essential services and strengthened local governance, promoting locally driven, sustainable progress.

Support for smallholder farmers through climate-smart agriculture and value chain development also improved food security and agricultural productivity.

Strengthening Climate Resilience

More than 35,000 households adopted climate-resilient livelihood practices, while early warning systems and disaster preparedness efforts were scaled up to help communities better manage environmental risks.

Environmental sustainability was mainstreamed across all UN-supported programs to address displacement drivers and support long-term resilience.



Follow this link to access the full report
<https://southsudan.un.org/en/293464-south-sudan-country-annual-results-2024>

SDGs were adopted by the UN in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, & ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace & prosperity





QUARTER 1 JANUARY–APRIL, 2025

Empowering Adolescent Girls & Young women in South Sudan: A model for Inclusive Development

Written By: Mathew Komba/UNAIDS

In a landmark effort to address the intersecting challenges of gender inequality, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health rights, UNAIDS South Sudan has supported the establishment of the Adolescent Girls and Young Women Network in South Sudan (AGYWN-SS). This network, which will operate across all ten states and three administrative areas of South Sudan, provides a platform for adolescent girls and young women to amplify their voices and drive meaningful change.

South Sudan's prolonged crises have disproportionately affected adolescent girls and young women, who bear the large burden of HIV infections in South Sudan. Additionally, the number of new infections among women aged 15 and above was twice as high as that among men in the same age group.

Deep-rooted harmful cultural norms, economic insecurity, and restricted access to education and healthcare have further marginalized women and girls in the country. The newly established AGYWN-SS aims to tackle these challenges through peer mentorship, advocacy, and community engagement activities.

By working directly with adolescent girls and young women, the network will push for policy reforms that ensure access to youth-friendly HIV and health services—free from stigma and discrimination. Its overarching goal is to promote gender equality and empower young people to take control of their health rights, enabling them to make informed decisions and improve their access to health services.

UNAIDS country office has supported the formal registration of the network in South Sudan and facilitated consultations with adolescent girls, young women, religious and community leaders, and other key stakeholders in five states.

These efforts aimed to identify social barriers and ways of addressing harmful norms that hinder progress in social and economic development among women in the country.

Looking ahead, AGYWN-SS plans to expand economic empowerment programs and strengthen partnerships with UN agencies and local NGOs. As South Sudan moves toward the 2030 Agenda, AGYWN-SS stands as a model for inclusive, youth-led development and a powerful force for change.



Participants during the workshop on meaningful engagement of adolescent girls & young women on HIV, GBV & Reproductive health related issues. This workshop was part of the consultative process aimed at establishing a network

Women & Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development





UN delegation concludes a high-level mission to Abyei to Strengthen peace & Development

Written By: Poni Allen/UNRCO

A high-level United Nations (UN) delegation, led by the Resident Coordinators of South Sudan and Sudan, accompanied by 8 representatives of UN Agencies from both countries, concluded a 3-day mission to Abyei with the aim of assessing ongoing humanitarian and development efforts in the region.

The mission, which took place from March 2–4, 2025, enabled UN officials to gain a first-hand understanding of the situation in Abyei through interaction with UN agencies, partners, local authorities, and the peacekeeping mission undertaken by the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

Currently, more than ten UN agencies from both Sudan and South Sudan are working closely with the UN Mission and local communities to address challenges and contribute to lasting peace.

Abyei remains one of the most volatile and vulnerable regions in the Sudan-South Sudan border area, with its disputed status leading to continued inter-communal tensions, security challenges, and limited access to essential services.



The RC /HC of Sudan & South Sudan interact with beneficiaries at the Women space at Amet Market in Abyei

The visiting UN team interacted with communities and local administration to understand the status of food security, healthcare among other needs and challenges.

"Our visit has provided us an opportunity to understand the realities on the ground and reinforce UN support for affected communities" said RC/HC Anita Gbeho. She emphasized the urgent need to prioritize livelihood opportunities, essential services including health care, education, among others, as critical components to address both humanitarian and long-term development needs in Abyei.

"Ensuring peace and stability in Abyei requires a multi-sectoral approach," noted Clementine Nkweta-Salami, the UN Resident /Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan. Adding that the mission allowed them to explore ways to transition from emergency humanitarian aid to long-term development solutions that would foster lasting peace.

During the visit, RCs and the delegation visited some of the UN supported activities and facilities including the PHCC and Transit Center, which receives refugees and returnees who have fled ongoing violence in Sudan. They also visited the Al Daire health center, the only center providing health services in Diffra.

The visit reaffirmed the commitment of the two Resident Coordinators and their respective UN Country Teams, to support communities in Abyei in collaboration with the wider UN family including the UN Mission in Abyei

Since 2023, both UN Country Teams, under the RC/HCs leadership, have worked closely with UNISFA to implement the Abyei Joint Program, an innovative program established with the support of the UN Secretary General and the UN Security Council, to address critical development challenges through basic services, livelihood and food security, and peacebuilding and rule of law.



How Nyagai Overcame Discrimination in Mangaten Camp

Written By: Stella Tushabe/PBF

In the North-West of Juba, South Sudan's capital, lies Mangaten camp, home to thousands of Internally Displaced People (IDP) that were forced out of their homes a result of the series of conflicts in the world's youngest country.

In this camp, you will find people of all nature; youth, women, children, men, and even Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). Even though, naturally, an IDP may be enveloped with hopelessness and despair, this is not the story for Mangaten camp, thanks to the Transitional Justice project, a brainchild of the United Nations Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). To implement the project, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with Vision for Humanity and the Kingdom of Netherlands, selected 33 women to form a Victim Support Group (VSG). The selected women received life skills and psycho-social training.

The project has equipped Elizabeth and her peers with marketable skills including basket weaving and production of personal care items - shampoo, bar soap, liquid soap, and moisturizing jelly. Their high-quality products sell quickly within the camp, saving residents long journeys to distant markets.



Nyagai participates in soap making

For each sale, half is reinvested into the group while the remainder is distributed among participants, directly contributing to their families' wellbeing. But perhaps more valuable than the income are the psychosocial trauma healing services the women receive; knowledge they then share with others in their community, creating a healing ripple effect throughout the camp.

Elizabeth Nyagai Bol is one of the participants in the VSG. Born with limited leg function, she navigates her world using her hands for mobility. The widowed mother of two describes how her life had become a journey of hopelessness due to her disability and how she faced severe discrimination. She was considered "worthless" by some and nearly abandoned during displacement due to her disability.

"Before this project, I faced constant discrimination and was told I had nothing to offer society," Elizabeth reveals, her voice steady. "Now, the same people who discriminated against me come to me for advice."

The air in their modest workspace is fragrant with essential oils as Elizabeth demonstrates the perfect stirring technique for soap production. Her hands, once her only means of movement, now create products that support her family and empower her community. She proudly recollects how she is now able to pay school fees for her two children, which previously, was only a dream.

Through this project, I've helped break the chain of discrimination in our community," she says. "I can now advocate for other Persons with Disabilities with confidence."

Elizabeth's newfound ability to support her family has created memorable moments of triumph. Judith Agang, Executive Director at Vision for Humanity, remembers the poignant milestone in Elizabeth's journey: the day she earned enough to pay her children's school fees for the first time.

"She invited me to accompany her to the school, wanting me to witness firsthand the project's impact on her family's life," Agang recalls, emotion evident in her voice. "Watching her proudly pay those fees, something she had never been able to do before, brought me to tears. These are the transformative moments that give meaning to our work."

Elizabeth's story powerfully illustrates how dignity can be restored in unexpected ways.

The United Nations in South Sudan demonstrates through initiatives like the Peacebuilding Fund that lasting peace requires more than political solutions - it demands restoring dignity by providing opportunities to conflict survivors.



QUARTER 1
JANUARY–APRIL, 2025

Climate change deepens Gender Inequality and violence in South Sudan

Written By: Hassan Hussein/UNFPA

South Sudan faces multiple climate change crises including floods, droughts, and extreme heatwaves which exacerbate sexual exploitation and gender-based vulnerabilities affecting the quality of life, putting women and girls at constant threat to lose lives especially in poor resourced or absence of infrastructures.

In South Sudan, climate change is not just an environmental crisis; it is a gender crisis which worsens the health and wellbeing of women and girls. A newly released Vulnerability Study conducted by UNFPA, in partnership with the Sudd Institute and the National Bureau of Statistics, has revealed the devastating impact of climate change on women and girls in South Sudan, particularly in Malakal, Kapoeta South, and Rubkona. The three study locations were prioritized due to their high exposure to climate-induced disasters, large, displaced populations, and pre-existing vulnerabilities that make women and girls particularly at risk. The findings were validated in a high-level workshop attended by government officials, humanitarian actors, and development partners.

The study underscores that flooding (98% in Malakal, 92% in Rubkona) and drought (affecting 68% in Kapoeta South) are driving displacement, food insecurity, and livelihood losses. Heatwaves are also an emerging threat, with school closures and severe health risks reported in early 2025. These climate stressors disproportionately affect women and girls, increasing gender-based violence (GBV), restricting access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, and deepening gender inequalities. The study also revealed that climate-induced disruptions are worsening maternal mortality (1,223 deaths per 100,000 live births), limiting contraceptive access (below 5%), and increasing child marriages. Flooded health facilities and extreme heat events have further strained healthcare access.

"Climate change is a profound humanitarian and development challenge particularly in this youngest nation. Women and girls are bearing the brunt, facing increased GBV risks, restricted healthcare access, and heightened economic insecurity. We must act urgently." said Suzanne Mandong, UNFPA South Sudan Country Officer in Charge.



A mother & her baby crossing a flooded road in Malualkon

Women & girls at risk: A climate – induced Crisis

The study finds that 49.9% of respondents reported an increase in GBV in climate-affected areas. Drought and economic hardships are intensifying intimate partner violence (IPV), early marriages associated with high bride price considered as a source of income to families, and survival-driven exploitation. Displacement due to floods has left many women and girls in unsafe shelters, exposing them to heightened risks such as rape

"We cannot separate climate resilience from gender justice," stated Honourable James Hoth Mai, the National Minister of Labour. "Women must be empowered to lead climate adaptation efforts, and we must integrate GBV prevention into climate policies."



Participants during the validation workshop



Empowering Climate change deepens gender inequality & violence in South Sudan

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In Rubkona, Tutchar aged 39, is a widow and mother of five children are among displaced people who have had to live a nomadic life due to natural disasters – floods. More than half of the displaced population are women and girls who continue to be subjected to violence especially during firewood collection, including sexual abuse, rape, and forced and child marriage.

"Most often, girls not attending school are expected and forced to marry. Child or Forced Marriage is seen as the solution to alleviate the family's poverty, especially during flooding," says Tutchar.

Beyond floods, extreme heat waves in South Sudan exacerbates existing educational inequalities for girls in South Sudan significantly impacting girls' education by forcing school closures, which disrupts their learning and lead to increased vulnerability to issues like early marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse and child labor, as girls are already disproportionately affected by lack of education in the country due to existing societal factors.

Call to Action: Gender-Responsive Climate Adaptation

The report highlights urgent recommendations, including expanding GBV response services in displacement settings, strengthening women's economic empowerment through financial inclusion, integrating gender-responsive climate policies into national development plans and investing in climate-resilient healthcare systems to safeguard SRH services.

"Without targeted interventions such as climate-resilient health infrastructure like mobile clinics and heat adaptive policies, climate change will continue to exacerbate gender inequalities and violence," concluded Ms. Mandong. "This report provides the evidence we need to advocate for policies that empower societies and protect women and girls in the face of climate change" she added.

As South Sudan grapples with climate change, this study serves as a wake-up call for urgent, gender-sensitive action and improved SRH services that are crucial. UNFPA remains committed to working with partners to ensure that no one is left behind.

Rebuilding life as a Returnee, Story of Mary Kak

Written By: Juma Delu/UNFPA



55-year old Mary Kak, a returnee at the Renk WGFS

Close to two years since the outbreak of Sudan crisis, Sudanese refugees and South Sudanese returnees continue to flock in South Sudan through Renk and other border points of South Sudan.

Mary Kak is a mother of 7, she fled the Sudan crisis mid last year following heightened fighting there, her journey to Renk was that of perseverance as she had to endure many days of travel by foot for safety. The mother of 7 who first fled South Sudan in 2013 crisis to Khartoum said she and her family encountered numerous roadblocks manned by armed men enroute to South Sudan.

Mary 55 originally from Kodok, Fashoda County in Upper Nile said upon return from Khartoum, life was not easy as she was traumatized but through information from her peers and also through awareness, she was convinced to visit the Women and Girls Friendly Space (WGFS).

While at the WGFS she received psychosocial counseling, awareness sessions on how to report cases of gender-based Violence and enrolled for skills training where she was taught how to make beads, weaving and baking.



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Rebuilding life as a Returnee, Story of Mary Kak

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“We are in a safe place all together as one family; we sing, dance, laugh and cry together. No tribal differences – no Dinka, no Shiluk and no Nuer” Mary says. “The beads we make from here are sold and we make money out of it, but the most important thing is information and knowledge sharing on GBV and other ailments” Mary added.

Refugees and returnees rebuilding their lives and restoring hope at the WGFS

Just like Mary, Salma Osman Ibrahim, a 28 –year old mother of three is a refugee that fled to South Sudan towards the end of last year. Salma bakes Zalabia (doughnuts) at the Renk Transit Center and is able to make a living by selling in the small market of the transit center.

With thanks to UNFPA funding to the WGFS in Renk, Salma was trained and provided with start-up package to aid her baking business. Salama can now breathe as her financial woes are easing and beyond baking, she has been psychologically supported and aware of services available for survivors of rape that she shares with fellow women and girls. Thanks to the empowerment and awareness sessions she received from UNFPA.

“Since I fled my home in Jebel Aulia in Khartoum due to the war, establishing myself with nothing at hand has not been easy, but with the baking skills and support, all I can say is Alhamdulillah. I can now smile, I make 50,000 - 60,000 SSP (10\$) in a day. This is really contributing to my life, and I can now support my family”, Said Salma

About four thousand (4,000) women and girls receive services at the WGFS ranging from psychosocial support, skills training and financial empowerment to overcome daily challenges.

UNFPA has also supported distribution of 1,500 Dignity Kits women and girls fleeing the crisis including those from the host community in Chemedi, Bobonis and the Transit centers.

Crisis after Crisis on the bodies of Women & Girls

In addition to the effect of the war, climate shocks also contribute to take a heavy toll on the lives of these women and girls exacerbating sexual exploitation and gender-based vulnerabilities affecting the quality of life, putting women and girls at constant threat to lose lives especially in poor resourced or absence of infrastructure.

Renk which is the major transit site has borne the brunt of this all as in times of dry spell and rainy season. The situation of women and girls in the transit center becomes so harsh with poor hygiene which makes one wonder management of menstrual hygiene, protection of women and girls against sexual violence, and access to critical life saving health services during complications.

It is worth noting that in times of disasters, women, girls, and children are the most affected and their needs are normally not catered for. Gender-based and sexual violence remain a threat to crisis-affected populations; especially for women and girls exposed to risks when conducting their routine activities for a living like firewood collection to feed the family.

As women and girls pay an unacceptable price in crises and live in fear for losing their life, the dire situation in South Sudan in a wake-up call for urgent action to provide protection and life saving services that are crucial. UNFPA remains committed to working with partners to ensure that their sexual and reproductive health needs are not overlooked which leads to devastating consequences.



Salma Osman, a Sudanese Refugee baking Doughnuts with help from UNFPA



QUARTER 1
JANUARY–APRIL, 2025

Ring the Bell for all Women & Girls: Rights, Equality, Empowerment

Written By: Sarah & Shadia/UNWOMEN

On March 18, 2025, a powerful alliance between UN Women, the World Food Program (WFP), and Alpha Bank marked a pivotal moment in the journey toward gender equality and economic empowerment. For the second time, these partners came together to host the landmark event “Ring the Bell for All Women & Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.”—a bold initiative driving forward a global movement to unlock the potential of women-led enterprises and champion the economic inclusion of women and girls.

Held under the banner of a global campaign, the event resonated with purpose and energy, drawing over 150 participants from civil society, the private sector, media, and government institutions. With powerful opening remarks from Delphine Serumaga (Country Representative, UN Women), Antony Onyango (Business Support Manager, Alpha Bank), Dr. Christine Oyenak (Director General for Trade Fair and Exhibition, Ministry of Trade), and Charles Undeland (Country Manager, World Bank), the tone was set for a day of inspiration and action. Each speaker emphasized the critical contributions of women to economic growth and the urgent need for continued investment and policy reform.



Panelist Ring the Bell for all Women & Girls: Rights, Equality, Empowerment



Delphine Serumaga, UN Women Country Rep, Charles Undeland Mangar World Bank, Antony Onyango Business Support Manager and Dr Rukaya Mohammed UN Women Deputy Rep and Dr Christine Oyenak Director Trade and Exhibition together with the Panellist.

At the heart of the event was a vibrant trade exhibition, spotlighting the talent and innovation of women entrepreneurs. These trailblazers had the opportunity to showcase their diverse products and services, connect with financial institutions, and build strategic partnerships with development actors. It was more than just an exhibition spotlighting the talent and innovation of women entrepreneurs. These trailblazers had the opportunity to showcase their diverse products and services, connect with financial institutions, and build strategic partnerships with development actors. It was more than just an exhibition—it was a launchpad for opportunity, visibility and growth.

The event’s high point was the engaging panel discussion on “Promoting Financing for Private Sector Investment in Women-led Businesses and Advocating for Economic Inclusion.” Bringing together voices from MTN, Da Hakim’s Empire Ltd, Beleng Hair Conture, the Association of South Sudanese Entrepreneurs (ASSE), the Central Bank, Alpha Bank, Green Farmers’ Cooperative, and Rufi Microfinance, the panel offered a candid exploration of the financial barriers and breakthroughs shaping the future of women in business. Panellists shared actionable insights and real-world experiences that reinforced the importance of inclusive financing strategies and gender-responsive economic planning.

The success of “Ring the Bell for All Women & Girls” lies not only in its powerful convening but in the momentum, it continues to build. It celebrated the resilience and entrepreneurial spirit of women while laying the foundation for a more inclusive economy—one where every woman and girl has the opportunity to thrive. This event was not just a milestone—it was a movement, and the bell has been rung louder than never before.



UNOPS Receives Additional Financing of more than US\$10 Million to expand the Shabaka Maisha Project in nine Counties of South Sudan

Written By: Aidah Khamis /UNOPS

UNOPS is excited to announce that more than US\$10 million has been signed as additional financing for the SNSOP, commonly called the Shabaka Maisha project in South Sudan. The extra funding will expand the Shabaka Maisha project to four current 15 counties and five new counties, bringing the targeted coverage to 20 counties nationwide.

The project initially covers 15 counties with a beneficiary reach of 96,000 households, and the extra funding from the World Bank through the Government of South Sudan will increase the targeted beneficiary support to more than 157,000 households in the 20 counties.

The additional funding will provide direct cash transfers to the most vulnerable people (30% of the caseload) and access to income-generating opportunities through community labor-intensive work for households with able-bodied members (70% of the caseload).



Community Mobilisation for cash payments in Pibor County



Community Mobilisation & Engagements in the field

At the same time, it will strengthen South Sudan's National Safety Net Delivery System. Refugees and host communities in the two counties of Pariang and Maban will be among the beneficiaries of this project, accounting for 17,000 of the total 61,500 HHs to be targeted under the additional financing.

The South Sudan Productive Safety Net for Socioeconomic Opportunities Project (SNSOP), also known as Shabaka Meisha, meaning "livelihoods net," is a five-year, US\$ 199 million World Bank-financed initiative led by the Government of the Republic of South Sudan through the Technical Ministries of Agriculture and Food Security and Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare.

UNOPS directly implements component one of this project on behalf of the Government of South Sudan. The project is derived from the successes and lessons learned from the South Sudan Safety Net Project (SSSNP) and the Safety Net and Skills Development Project (SNSDP) to ensure more significant results for beneficiaries and further investment in human capital development and resilience from shocks in South Sudan.

Sustainable Economic Growth & Diversification





QUARTER 1 JANUARY–APRIL, 2025

From Seed to Success: Sylvia's Journey of Resilience & Hope

Written By: Maureen Omwanda /UNDP

At just 21 years old, Sylvia Laku's story is a testament to the power of opportunity and determination. After completing high school in 2023, she faced an uncertain future. With limited resources and the responsibility of supporting her two younger siblings, Sylvia's path seemed daunting.

On hearing about the free skills training at the Juba Training Centre supported by UNDP and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, she borrowed bus fare from a neighbor and went to enrol from the program. A decision she describes as life-changing because through the Seed 4 Youth program, her life took a transformative turn.

Trained in catering and hospitality at Juba MTC, Sylvia secured a three-month internship at a popular local restaurant. Her dedication and passion quickly earned her a permanent position, marking the first step toward financial independence. But Sylvia's ambition did not stop there.

With a seed capital of USD.300, she ventured into entrepreneurship, opening a small juice and fruit business that has now flourished for five months. Despite the inevitable challenges of running a startup in South Sudan, Sylvia's business generates an impressive 60,000 SSP per day, enabling her to cover her siblings' education, housing, and daily needs.

Reflecting on her journey, Sylvia expresses deep gratitude "The entrepreneurship training I received, taught me how to manage my finances, which I now apply in my own fruit and juice business that I opened 5 months ago after completing my training in catering and hospitality and 3-month internship. I am truly grateful to the Ministry of Labour, UNDP, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for believing in the youth" says Silvia

Her impact extends beyond her immediate family. By employing 20-year-old Viola James to manage the shop during her work hours, Sylvia has given another young woman the chance to rebuild her future. Viola, who had to drop out of school in Senior 4 due to financial hardships, is now saving her earnings with the hope of continuing her education.



**Sylvia Laku at her fruits & Juice stall
preparing an order for a customer**

"I am now able to take care of my siblings by providing for their basic needs, including their education. I have employed one young woman who is saving money from her salary to return to school after dropping out due to financial constraints." she adds.

Looking ahead, Sylvia dreams of Her journey is a journey of resilience, inspiring countless other youth to believe that with the right support and determination, success is within reach. To date, the Seed4Youth initiative has trained 30,162 youth in 22 vocational trades. Among those trained, 23,903 are now earning an income.

In addition, 2,399 Micro and Small enterprises (MSEs) have been supported, creating 4,491 jobs for other youth and women in South Sudan.



**Sylvia & Viola at the shop in Libya Market
where they sell fruits & juice**



How Cooperatives are transforming the Lives of Farmers in Lakes State

Written By: Mary Mading/FAO

Since 2018, FAO has partnered with local government officials in Lakes State to establish cooperatives in four counties: Cueibet, Wulu, Yirol East, and Yirol West. Each cooperative consists of 30 members that have engaged in shea butter oil production, honey processing, and crop cultivation.

Before the formation of the cooperatives, farmers lacked access to modern post-harvest equipment and processing machinery, knowledge of climate-smart farming methods, and skills in value addition through the "Building Resilient Livelihoods to Threats and Crises in South Sudan" project, FAO addressed these challenges through targeted interventions.

In Wulu County, a group of 30 women formed the Lulu Works Cooperative, in which they process honey and shea butter oil. They collect shea nuts from the forest and then process the shea nuts to produce soap, body lotion, and hair oil.

The group also has a team that harvests honey and processes it using modern machines. Since its formation, Lulu Works Cooperative has transformed the lives of its members.

"Before joining Lulu works, I used to sell tea in the local market, but the money I was making was not sufficient to cater for my needs. It was difficult to afford school fees for my kids and provide nutritious foods for my family," said Mary Philip Abdallah, who is the Head of the cooperative.

During peak season, Mary and her group spend weeks gathering, drying, and preparing shea nuts for processing. After processing the nuts, the group produces up to 10 jerrycans with a capacity of 20 liters each and 15 jerrycans of 5 liters capacity each.

A 20-liter jerrycan of shea oil sells for SSP 500 000 (USD 100), while a 5-liter jerrycan sells for SSP 170 000 (USD 34).



Shea Butter & Honey producers

In addition to selling the shea oil, typically used for consumption, the group has added value by expanding production to include soap, lotion, and other products from the shea oil. Members distribute surplus from the sales and save some money for repairing machines when they break down.

Honey production has also been profitable for the cooperative members, as it is more expensive than shea butter. A jerrycan of 5-litre capacity of honey costs SSP 200 000 (USD 40). With the county's proximity to the state capital, Rumbek, honey production has been a thriving venture for the group.

This expansion has enabled the group to earn extra money and be self-reliant.

Since joining Lulu Works, young women have experienced significant improvements in their living standards. "When I joined Lulu Works, I was expecting my first child and worried about affording hospital bills. But the money I earned through selling shea butter oil and honey helped me to pay hospital bills and new clothes for the baby," said Assunta Sebit.

In Cueibet County, cooperative members who received crop seeds from FAO have experienced transformative changes in their lives. "Farming has given me financial independence. I no longer rely on my husband for my daily needs. I can sell one sack of groundnuts or sorghum whenever I need something from the market," narrated Mary Agum Mading, who is the Head of the cooperative.



How Cooperatives are transforming the Lives of Farmers in Lakes States

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"Some members in our cooperative are widows, but through FAO training and the seeds given to us, these widows are not relying on relatives for survival.

The widows are selling the surplus to pay school fees, buy clothes for their kids, build local grass thatched houses and pay medical bills."

In Yirol East County, Pagarau payam, Wunabiei Farmers' Cooperative produces maize, groundnuts, and sorghum. Yirol's proximity to Juba allows farmers to sell their produce in larger markets, boosting their income. "When we transport our produce to Juba, a sack of groundnuts cost SSP 250 000 (USD 50)". We use this money to cater for our family's needs and save some for emergencies," said Ajak Khaar, the Women's Group Leader of Wunabiei Farmers' Cooperative.

FAO has been supporting farmers in Lakes States to build their capacity and resilience. In Wulu County, honey producers received value addition training and access to high-value processing equipment.

In 2024, FAO invited some of the honey and shea butter producers to participate in a market exhibition that was organized by the European Union in Juba. It was an opportunity for the farmers to showcase their products and tap into the wider market.

In addition, last month, FAO inaugurated a Small Business Collection Center, equipped with post-harvest and value addition equipment for quality honey and shea nut processing, where honey and shea butter producers can process, package and store their produce.

The center includes a store for raw and value-added products, processing rooms, water points/washing space, and small office for cooperative members. With the construction of the center, FAO hopes to provide a place where buyers can easily find the products.

Digital Learning Lights up Refugee Future in South Sudan

Written By: Gift Friday /UNHCR



Soba Secondary School student participating in the instant Network Schools Program

The Instant Network Schools (INS) program, an initiative by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and Vodafone Foundation is rewriting the stories of refugee children in South Sudan.

By bringing digital learning tools and internet connectivity to schools located in refugee camps in Jamjang, the program is opening digital doors and opportunities for students who have known little about the world around them but displacement. Among them is 19-year-old Sudanese refugee Makbula Musa Ibrahim.

In 2014, Makbula and her family were forced to flee deadly conflict in their home area in the Nuba Mountains, seeking safety in the Ajuong Thok refugee camp in Jamjang. While in the camp, she faced immense challenges in accessing quality education. However, her schooling took a positive turn when she was introduced to the INS program at Soba Secondary School, where she had access to an online learning platform that allowed her to explore topics of her choice, dive into research, and to learn about countries and cultures far beyond the borders of the camp.

"The tablets have been a game-changer for me and my classmates," Makbula shared. "They've opened up a world of knowledge and helped us keep up with the rapid changes in technology. I'm so grateful to be part of this program."



Digital Learning Lights up Refugees Future in South Sudan

Continued from page 13

Before the INS program, Makbula was struggling academically. However, her performance improved dramatically with the support of digital tools and enhanced teaching methods. The interactive learning modules made complex subjects easier to understand, sparking a newfound passion for education.

Today, Makbula consistently ranks among the top three students in her class, earning recognition from her teachers and peers.

The program didn't just transform Makbula's academic life—it also helped her grow as a leader. Through INS, she participated in a leadership training program, which equipped her with the skills and confidence to take on the role of school prefect.

"The training helped me achieve some of my goals and showed me that I can be a leader," she said. "I owe so much of my growth to the INS programme."



Makbula fled the conflict in Sudan in 2016 & now participating in the Instant Network Schools Program at her School

"Education is a lifeline for refugee children, offering them hope, protection, and the chance to build a better future," said Abraham Ngor Achiek Riak, UNHCR Assistant Education Officer in Jamjang. "Through initiatives like the Instant Network Schools, we are not only providing access to quality education but also empowering young refugees and teachers to realize their full potential and contribute to their communities."

For Makbula, the INS program is more than just an educational initiative—it's a foundation for her dreams. Access to technology and quality education has given her the tools to pursue her aspirations and advocate for the education of refugee communities in South Sudan.

"This programme has shown me that even in the most challenging circumstances, we can achieve greatness," she said. "I want to continue learning and use my voice to inspire others to value education."

Background information on the INS Program

UNHCR, with funding from the Vodafone Foundation and other private sector donors brought the INS program to life in South Sudan by facilitating the setup of digital classrooms and training teachers and ensured that refugee children have access to innovative educational tools and resources.

Through the Instant Network Schools program, refugees in South Sudan are gaining access to education and reclaiming their future. In a world where displacement often means losing hope, initiatives like INS prove that even the most marginalized communities can thrive with the right tools and support.

Since its launch in 2015, more than 30,000 refugee students in South Sudan have benefited from the INS program.

Social Development with Protection of the Most Vulnerable





QUARTER 1 JANUARY–APRIL, 2025

South Sudan secured over 4.1 million doses of oral cholera vaccine to protect communities in 15 Counties

Written by John Atem/WHO



Achol Ajak, a 35-year-old resident of Bor is grateful that her family is now vaccinated and protected from cholera. Ajak stated that she was one of the first individuals to receive the cholera vaccine on the inaugural day of the cholera vaccination campaign launch in Bor South County, South Sudan. “We feel safer now, the threat of cholera has diminished. My family and I are deeply grateful for the care we have received and extend our thank the health workers for their dedication to our community.” said Ajak

In response to the cholera outbreak in South Sudan, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO, UNICEF, and other partners, launched reactive oral cholera vaccination campaigns in Renk, Malakal, Rubkona, Juba, Bor South, Mayom, and Aweil West counties, targeting over 2.13 million individuals. Similar campaigns are planned for other counties experiencing outbreaks.

Given the current overcrowding in displacement sites and the limited access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene, the risk of cholera transmission remains high. South Sudan is currently facing a cholera outbreak, making action imperative.

“To protect our communities, prevent further transmission, and control this outbreak, we are implementing every aspect of the national cholera prevention and control plan,”

emphasized Hon. Dr Harriet Pasquale Akello, Undersecretary, Ministry of Health, South Sudan. “This urgent response requires a collaborative effort that prioritizes coordination and swift action to avert widespread outbreaks while also seeking sustainable solutions to combat cholera. We are immensely grateful to our partners, particularly WHO, UNICEF, and other partners, for their crucial support in providing vaccines to ensure our population is protected against cholera.” said Dr Pasquale.

Dr Pasquale further urged all stakeholders in the health sector to rally necessary support, especially financial resources, to establish robust preventive measures and ensure that cholera does not take hold in the country.

Dr Humphrey Karamagi, WHO Representative for South Sudan, echoed these sentiments, stating, “amidst the ongoing humanitarian crises and cholera outbreaks in South Sudan, these mass oral cholera vaccination campaigns serve as a protective measure for vulnerable populations while paving the way for sustainable, long-term health interventions.”

With support from the International Coordination Group (ICG), 4.1 million doses are secured for use in areas with confirmed cases to tackle the cholera outbreak in hotspots nationwide.

The vaccination sites have witnessed a significant turnout of individuals eager to get vaccinated, representing a crucial step toward their health and safety. Recently, an OCV request was approved for an additional 1.1 million doses and vaccines are in the process of arriving in the country.

Social Development with Protection of the Most Vulnerable





Striving to Keep her family safe amidst a Cholera outbreak: Nyaron Riak's story

Written by Nilima Raut/UNICEF

Life in Delmet: Unsafe Water, Poor Sanitation and a battle with Cholera

In November 2024, Nyaruon Riak, a 28-year-old single mother of three, moved to Delmet, an area within Bentiu's internally displaced persons (IDP) community. Upon arriving in Delmet, Nyaruon relied on unsafe floodwater for drinking, cooking, and daily household chores. She even cooked and ate food found in the bushes near by the flood water.

Unfortunately, as cholera spread in the area, she fell ill.

"I was badly ill, couldn't do any household chores and take care of my children". For two days, she suffered from severe illness before her brother and Neighbours took her to the cholera treatment centre in Bentiu State Hospital, where she was cared for and received life-saving treatment over the next three days. During her hospitalization, despite not knowing her well, her community stepped in to care for her children.

Nyaruon's situation is made more difficult by the absence of her husband, who left the family years ago and stopped supporting them. She struggles to care for her children, depending on monthly food rations from the World Food Program (WFP) to feed herself and her two youngest children. Her eldest child, an eight-year-old boy, now lives with his grandfather so he can attend school, as the nearest school from Delmet is at least an hour's walk away. Her four-year-old daughter attends an informal school under a tree in the IDP camp.

Improved Access to Clean Water and Hygiene Practices

In December 2024 after recognizing the problems in Delmet, a new water point, was established by UNICEF and Concern Worldwide with funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). This system now provides clean water to over 5,000 people in Delmet. The water, pumped from the flood waters, is treated with aluminum sulphate and chlorine before being distributed through communal taps.

"With access to clean water, Nyaruon has been able to improve hygiene practices in her household. "I only use water from the water point for drinking and cooking. I clean utensils, water containers and clean my house time to time. I wash my children with the clean water. But I am still worried as people are still openly defecating in the open areas and children play in the open areas", Nyaruon is concerned about the continued health risks, "I don't allow my children to play in the open areas anymore".

Despite the challenges, initiatives like the new water point in Delmet offers a hope for Nyaruon and many others. However, sustained efforts are needed to ensure safe water access, improved sanitation, and stronger cholera prevention measures to protect vulnerable communities across South Sudan.

South Sudan's Worst Cholera Outbreak in its history

South Sudan is experiencing its worst cholera outbreak in its history. Since September 2024, there have been 39,932 suspected cases and 691 reported deaths across 41 counties across 9 states up to mid-March 2025. Alarming, 52% of cases involve children under 14. Malnutrition, lack of access to safe drinking water, and inadequate sanitation further increases the risk, particularly for children under five.



Nyaruon walks home carrying clean water from the water point set up by UNICEF and Concern Worldwide in Delmet.

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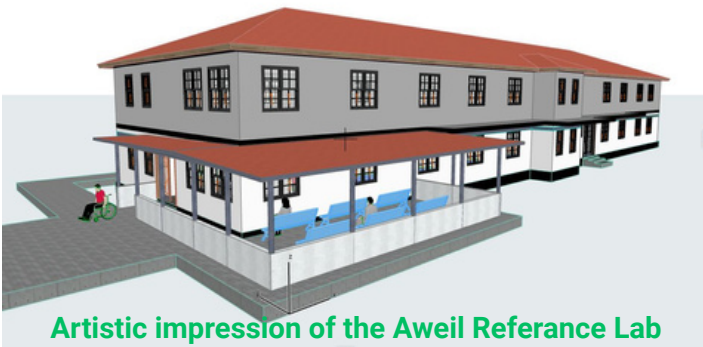




QUARTER 1 JANUARY–APRIL, 2025

Construction of Aweil state Laboratory to end referral of Samples to Juba

Written by Mubangizi Michael /UNDP



Artistic impression of the Aweil Reference Lab

A major transformation is taking place at Aweil State Hospital. This is because of the ongoing construction of the Aweil State Reference Laboratory designed to serve as a test centre for the estimated one million people of Northern Bahr El Ghazal – one of the ten states in South Sudan.

This construction started in January 2025 and is expected to be completed in May 2025 upon which the laboratory will bring services closer, improve disease diagnosis and treatment. It will also end delays and costs associated with the transportation of samples to the national reference lab in Juba – about 765 kilometres away, needing about 13 hours if one moves by road.

About 530 people, mainly patients with complex health conditions that cannot be handled at lower-level health facilities, seek medical care at Aweil State Hospital every day. This project is one of the legacy investments supported under the Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health (RSSH) grant being implemented by the Ministry of Health, UNDP and partners, with funding from the Global Fund.

According to Dr. Gregory Wani, the Director, National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL), this will be a modern lab capable of testing all diseases.

“This lab will help us do a lot of tests here at the state level. We will not be taking the samples again to the national lab in the capital Juba. This will bring the services closer to the people in need at the state and county levels,” William Deng, the Director General of the Northern Bahr el Ghazal State Ministry of Health, said. Mr. Deng added that Northern Bahr el Ghazal is one of the most populated states in the country with many refugees and returnees mainly from Sudan.

“Similarly, Dr. Wani, the Director, NPHL, said the lab is going to bring efficiency in the provision of health services,

“All the modern technology is going to be deployed in this place in Aweil and it is our hope that the completion of this project will bring a very fast response to diseases and treatment.” Dr. Wani said.

Given the long distance from Aweil to Juba, Dr. Wani says that the specimens are only transported by flights which are irregular and expensive to be able to maintain the cold chain requirements and maintain the quality of the samples.

“That’s why sometimes we have received results that don’t match what is on the ground. That is one problem that we are going to solve. There will be no doubt of whatever results that are going to be produced, and there will be no doubt of the drug that is going to be used,” Dr. Wani said.

Dorcas Amule, the TB/HIV Programme Officer for the Archangelo Ali Association (AAA), said the reference laboratory which will support the Northern Bahr el Ghazal and the neighbouring states.

Deng Piol, the Director, Aweil State Hospital, said the lab will not just be a building in their premises; rather, “it will provide us with capacity building to the laboratory technicians and also provide opportunities to our people.”



The Current main entrance of Aweil state Hospital is also given a facelift

Social Development with Protection of the Most Vulnerable





UNOPS & European Union sign Global Gateway project in South Sudan

Written by Aidah Khamis /UNOPS



One of the feeder roads constructed by UNOPS, easing access to markets

The project will enhance regional trade in East Africa and drive economic intergration

The border post at Nimule, South Sudan – located near the Ugandan border – is not currently fully operational. This makes it difficult for customs and immigration procedures to be conducted jointly between South Sudan and Uganda, hampering trade between the two countries.

With €10 million in funding from the European Union (EU), UNOPS and TradeMark Africa are working together to improve infrastructure at the border post and reduce trade barriers.

The four-year Nimule One-Stop Border Post Project, effective in January 2025, will facilitate cross-border trade by streamlining customs and immigration procedures between South Sudan and Uganda.

The project is being implemented under the EU Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package.

The EU Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package supports the creation of strategic, sustainable, and secure transport corridors, value chains, services and jobs that can benefit growing economies like South Sudan.

This is the first project in South Sudan benefiting from this investment package.

As part of the project, UNOPS will lead infrastructure work to make the Nimule border post-operational, including constructing a climate-resilient administration building and a women's and youth market to support small-scale cross-border traders.

"By facilitating trade between South Sudan and Uganda, the Nimule One-Stop Border Post will help bolster overall economic growth in South Sudan," said Petronella Halwiindi, UNOPS Country Manager in South Sudan.

"UNOPS is proud to continue building on a strong, decade-long partnership with the EU implementing projects focused on peace, security and sustainable infrastructure," she added.

Trademark Africa, a non-profit organization that promotes regional trade and economic integration across Africa, will focus on national capacity building, automating trade processing procedures, and integrating technical inspections for product quality and safety at the border point.

Social Development with Protection of the Most Vulnerable





INVESTING in critical Infrastructure for improved Health delivery

Written by John Atem /WHO



Chief Amet Mabior Yel, a 72-year-old traditional leader in Madhol Payam, Aweil East County, could not hold back his excitement. Dressed in his traditional chieftaincy attire and singing at the top of his voice while performing his favorite traditional dance, Yel was witnessing a historic moment in his lifetime –the grand opening of Madhol hospital - located just meters away from his house.

Mr. Yel, accompanied by five of his family members, reached the venue at the crack of dawn, arriving four hours ahead of everyone else, for the official opening ceremony of the Madhol medical facility, in an event attended by senior government officials, UN agencies, donors and other partners. "Look, this is my home village, where I was born. Now, at the age of seventy, a hospital has finally been built right at our doorstep. It's truly a blessing. For years, we've had to endure walking long distance in search of healthcare, but now we are finally free from walking long distance."

South Sudan's health system is fragile, with limited facilities and recurrent disease outbreaks and other public health challenges. The situation is exacerbated by the ongoing conflict in Sudan, particularly affecting the country's northern states that border Sudan.

Madhol will function as the primary referral hospital for the densely populated state of Northern Bahr el Ghazal and its catchment areas, thereby providing health services to those in need. Located in Madhol Payam, Aweil East County, approximately 64 kilometers south of the Sudan border, Madhol Field Hospital has been established with funding from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to strengthen the provision of much-needed essential healthcare services.

In his keynote remarks, His Excellency Simon Ober Mawut, Governor of Northern Bahr el Ghazal State noted,

"The establishment of this state-of-the art medical facility could not have come at a better time when our people face immense challenges in light of the influx of refugees and returnees fleeing the conflict in the Sudan. "Currently, the State hosts over 300,000 returnees, including 13, 000 IDP and 20, 000 refugees, for this reason we must celebrate the construction of this modern field hospital, this hospital will reduce pressure from the only referral hospital that we have. With the construction of this Hospital, the UAE government has made a great stride towards addressing pressing health issues." said Governor Mawut.

Meanwhile, His Excellency, Sheikh Shakhboot Nahyan Al Nahyan, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, reaffirmed his country's commitment to collaborate with the government and international partners in the Republic of South Sudan to improve provision of essential healthcare services. "We surely affirm the UAE commitment to making a positive impact in the lives of millions of people by implementing projects here in cooperation with our international organization partners and development authorities to provide health services at the highest international standards."

Dr Humphrey Karamagi, WHO Representative for South Sudan noted the inauguration of Madhol Hospital is a huge boost to South Sudan health system and marks a substantive step forward in the partnership between South Sudan and the UAE towards advancing healthcare. "We appreciate the robust partnership between the government of South Sudan and UAE for the efforts in establishing this facility, which will cater for the healthcare needs of the local population as well as the refugees and returnees from Sudan. This facility is a valuable addition to our collaborative efforts to strengthen the country's health system," said Dr Karamagi. "WHO will continue to work with the Ministry of Health, UAE, and all actors in the health sector to improve the health outcome in the country by supporting investment in infrastructure, human resources for health and response to health emergencies."

Social Development with Protection of the Most Vulnerable





The Flickering Hope for Peace in South Sudan

Written by Musa Mohammed /IOM

"The past is already the past. We need to open a new chapter" says Lunia, a Youth Peace Ambassador in Malakal, South Sudan. "During the war, I lost family members. But for me, I know that it has happened, and it is already gone." For a generation that has experienced so much conflict, the challenge is not just survival but reconciliation—a collective effort to reshape the future of the world's youngest nation.

Peace in South Sudan has always been fragile, marked by cycles of violence and eroded trust. From the eruption of civil war in 2013 to the revitalized peace agreement in 2018, each step toward stability has been hard-fought. Today, the main obstacles to sustainable peace have become more localized with sporadic cattle raiding and gang violence among youth groups.

"If I had a job, I wouldn't be in a gang," says Akol*, a 22-year-old who has been part of a local gang since he was 17. "We have no jobs, no money, no support to go to school," he explains. His journey began after dropping out of school due to lack of opportunities, a common story for many young men in South Sudan. "If you don't have backup, people will take everything from you," he says.

The gangs in Malakal, according to Akol, are comprised of different ethnicities, united not by ethnicity but by the shared struggles of poverty and displacement. "We don't fight because of tribes. We fight to survive."

For many young people, gang life is both a symptom and a cause of South Sudan's instability. Yet, it is also among the youth where hope for a peaceful future lies. Youth leaders like Lunia work tirelessly to bridge divides, fostering understanding in communities still scarred by ethnic violence.

The burden of rebuilding extends beyond the youth. Women like Nyawar Monykuany, a women representative for 13 counties in Upper Nile State, are stepping into leadership roles to mend fractured communities. "Women can be peace ambassadors," she says, describing her work uniting Malakal's multiple tribes. Fluent in multiple local languages, she uses dialogue to foster trust among groups that once viewed each other with suspicion and hostility.

This push for unity comes after a long journey of insecurity. In the community of Yei, Reverend Levi, Bishop of The Episcopal Church of South Sudan's (ECSS) Diocese of Yei, recalls the mistrust that once defined relations between civilians and the military. "Civilians looked at soldiers as enemies, and soldiers saw civilians as rebel collaborators," he explains. Through a series of community dialogues initiated by the church, these groups now sit at the same table, sharing grievances and building trust."

"We achieve peace through dialogue," says Customary Judge Joseph Brown in Yei. For years, Judge Joseph has been at the forefront of resolving disputes in a region marked by conflict and displacement. His court has been instrumental in fostering reconciliation between civilians and the military, as well as reviewing customary laws, traditional rules and norms enforced by local community leaders.

"Through dialogue and reconciliation, even those who were enemies are now sitting together, eating together. That is the power of peace," he says.

Economic recovery is another critical piece of the puzzle. Joel John, a builder in Yei, credits vocational training programs for giving him a chance to provide for his family after years of displacement in Uganda. "I chose this work because I can use it to rebuild my life," he says. But like many others, he worries that insecurity in rural areas could undermine the progress made in towns.

Read More: <https://southsudan.un.org/en/291953-flickering-hope-peace-south-sudan>



Cattle herders lead thier livestock across the vast plains of South Sudan

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