



WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY 2020

WE PAY SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO THE REAL-LIFE HEROES WHO HAVE COMMITTED THEIR LIVES TO HELPING OTHERS IN THE MOST EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES AROUND THE WORLD

On 19 August, World Humanitarian Day (WHD), we commemorate humanitarian workers killed and injured in the course of their work, and we honor all aid workers who provide life-saving support and protection to the women, men and children most in need, despite the odds. This year we pay a special tribute to health workers battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year's theme is Real-life Heroes, a global campaign that celebrates humanitarians - a "thank you" to the people who have committed their lives to helping others. The stories of fictional heroes, myths and legends have been with us since the dawn of time. Their fictional fantastic feats, embodied enemies, and arduous journeys teach us how to dream big and summon the courage needed to do what's right. The heroes of our world, here and now, are just as worthy of admiration and celebration, because they're real: choosing to help in the most extreme circumstances, when others do not. Their enemies are famine and flood, displacement and disease, war and injustice. Many are from the very communities that they serve.

This year WHD comes as South Sudan continues to fight the COVID-19 pandemic when armed violence is on the rise and humanitarians are fighting against the odds like never before. Violence has intensified in parts of the country, threatening the safety and security of civilians and aid workers. Humanitarian workers are taking significant risks and overcoming access hurdles to assist people in some of the remotest parts of the country and as affected by ongoing violence and are doing so with needs rising and funds declining.

There are many inspiring stories of humanitarian heroism from those on the front lines, overcoming movement restrictions, informing communities on how to stay safe from the virus, taking critical safety risk to reach the most vulnerable and bringing much-needed assistance. As part of the WHD campaign, we present the personal stories of some of the inspiring humanitarians and #RealLifeHeroes who are stepping up to meet these challenges.

Humanitarians like Rebecca who works for Hope Restoration, Dr. Jockjio with International Medical Corps, Peter with the Humanitarian and Development Consortium and Yak, a Community Hygiene Promoter in Juba, are the Real-life Heroes of today. In overcoming challenges and helping others, they represent the best of humanity. Despite countless adversities and personal risk, they are often the first to step up to provide support.

On 19 August, we will hear their stories. Listen back on Radio Miraya ([unmiss.unmissions.org/audio](https://unmissions.org/audio)), look out for a hero story in the Dawn newspaper and scroll through the twitter accounts of the South Sudan NGO Forum @SSNGOF and OCHA South Sudan @OCHASouthSudan to be inspired. #RealLifeHeroes #WorldHumanitarianDay #NotATarget

HIGHLIGHTS

- IOM supports the disabled to be self-reliant
- Stakeholders committed to promoting peace and reconciliation
- #WorldBreastingWeek2020

NEWS FROM UN AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

IOM SUPPORTS THE DISABLED TO BE SELF RELIANT



Mary ready to take the new pot to the nearby market to sell.

Photo Credit: IOM

Meeting basic needs such as food and shelter is often an everyday struggle for the more than 111,000 internally displaced persons – many of them women and children - living in Bentiu Protection of Civilian (PoC) site located in the northern part of South Sudan.

It can be worse for those living with disability like Mary Nyakuon Gai, who lost her leg as a result of a snake bite years ago. Mary is taking part in IOM's Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support programme teaching handcraft skills, like making clay pots used for cooling water to her fellow IDPs.

"As young girls, we were playing in the water and I stepped on something cold and suddenly I felt a pinch on my foot, that is when I realized something had bitten my leg and that it could only be a snake. I immediately removed my foot from the water and realized it was indeed a snake bite," says Mary as she pulls her prosthesis leg forward.

Bentiu is home to the largest UN PoC in South Sudan where years of civil strife have seen millions of people uprooted from their homes. "My country was in civil war and getting access to health facilities was a challenge, no proper treatment was done and therefore, resulted in losing this part of my leg."

Today, humanitarian organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are working with the IDPs to make them self-reliant by providing them with different skill sets and knowledge such as sewing, artistry and many more.

"Supporting such initiatives is not only beneficial to the overall community but also supports the development of individuals we work with to become self-reliant by meeting their basic needs and thus regaining self-worth", says Nino Shushania, IOM South Sudan's Mental Health and Psycho-social Support Programme Officer.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/2C7pijy>

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS COMMITTED TO PROMOTING PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

UNESCO in partnership with Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative (WPDI) conducted two community dialogue forums for peace and reconciliation in Yei and Torit under the theme "Strengthening dialogue for peace and reconciliation in South Sudan." The forum was attended by over 90 participants drawn from the media, government, the organized forces, CSOs, NGOs, women, youth and chiefs.

The peace forums aimed at strengthening the capacity of local peace actors to identify best practices, proven initiatives and scaling up on those processes to detect, prevent and mitigate communal conflicts. Attention was also placed on the media and its potential to offer alternative platforms for non-violent dialogue and reconciliation and building trust in the media and promoting professionalism and ethics in conflict sensitive reporting.

Establishing a culture of peace and sustainable development are at the heart of UNESCO's mandate in South Sudan. Peace facilitates achievement of sustainable development, democracy and the realization of fundamental rights and freedoms such as freedom of expression and access to information for everyone is made possible.



Participants attending a peace forum in Yei. Photo Credit: UNESCO

UNMAS CONTINUES PROVIDING CRITICAL SUPPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC



An UNMAS Community Liaison Officer provided explosive ordnance risk education to a farmer cultivating proximate to the site.

Photo Credit: UNMAS

Throughout July, UNMAS maintained its operational capacity across the country to respond to explosive hazards and emergency callouts.

In Malakal, Upper Nile, UNMAS assessed the proposed site of an expansion of a cemetery for potential COVID-19 casualties, in support of the COVID-19 National Task Force and UNMISS.

A total of 356,000 m² of land and an access road were surveyed and released to the Malakal state authorities, which has enabled the local community to carry out their work at the site without further worrying about unexploded ordnance.

“The existence of COVID-19 did not stop this team from doing a great job for the community; we will always remember this team for having confirmed the burial site is free from explosive devices. Thank you, UNMAS,” stated Andrew Nyok Deng, a community member.

“COVID-19 didn’t stop the UNMAS team from doing a great job for the community”

#WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2020

During #WorldBreastfeedingWeek2020, UNICEF and partners armed mothers with a simple tool to give children the best start in life - exclusive breastfeeding.

Infant and young child feeding (IYCF) classes teach mummies that breast milk provides all the nutrients that an infant need for the first six months. That’s it - just breastmilk, no other liquids or foods, gives baby a 6 times greater chance of surviving the early months and gives a good foundation for when transiting to solid food.

UNICEF reached over 450,000 people on social media, engaging with some who did not know this important fact. Awareness for Breastfeeding Week was also generated through our press-release in national and international news, and radio listeners heard UNICEF staff interviewed on local stations.

In 2020, 1.3 million children under five will suffer from acute malnutrition. Increasing awareness of how this can be prevented is paramount.



Two is better than one for this mommy breastfeeding her twins in a hospital located in Juba. Breast milk carries antibodies from the mother that help combat diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhoea, and it also lowers the risk of chronic conditions, such as obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes later in life.

Photo Credit: UNICEF

RETURNING TO SOUTH SUDAN TO HELP BUILD A BETTER FUTURE FOR HER COUNTRY

Having once fled civil war, #RealLifeHero and returnee Ritah Alfred is working for FAO to support livelihoods for her fellow citizens.

Ritah Alfred was born near Juba when South Sudan was still the southern region of Sudan. In 1993, she escaped the civil war that eventually led to the creation of the world's newest country. Travelling with her family to Uganda at the age of 4, Ritah was then raised by her uncle and secured a good education, finally enjoying a safe and comfortable life.

Ritah could have stayed in Uganda. Instead, as soon as she graduated from university, she returned to South Sudan to help build her new country.

"I wanted to return because I love my country, and I am proud to be South Sudanese. I strongly believed that I have a role to play to bring peace and development, so I also returned to make a difference and change in my community," she says.

Ritah first encountered FAO when working for a local custodial company hired to keep the agency's offices in Juba clean and orderly. She was impressed by the work she saw taking place. When a staff opportunity opened on the team that manages the delivery of agricultural supplies to families in need, Ritah went for it and got it. South Sudan is not always an easy place to work, in any sector, and humanitarian work is notoriously tough – safety concerns, cultural constraints, poor infrastructure. These are just some of the hurdles that humanitarian workers, female humanitarian workers, face. Read more: <http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1303732/>



Having moved to Uganda to escape the civil war, Ritah decided to return to South Sudan to help her new country and fellow citizens. Working in logistics with FAO, she now helps provide livelihood support to those in need.

Photo Credit: FAO

HUMANITARIANS SHOULD NEVER BE A TARGET BUT UNFORTUNATELY, THEY ARE

For ten years Benjamin Nicholas Vuni, a senior security staffer with the World Food Programme (WFP) in South Sudan, has trained colleagues in how to remain safe and survive attacks in the field while on mission.

Little did he know that one day his decades of expertise would help save his own life when the seasoned security officer was captured in an ambush along with his team.

"It was a sunny but wet morning on 23 July when myself and three colleagues set out from our base in Kapoeta," he says.

The team was on a mission to assess inspect a new road as a route for future deliveries of WFP's food assistance to vulnerable communities. Less than an hour into their journey, the team came face to face with gunmen.

The gunmen ordered them to step out of the vehicle with their hands over their heads and then to lay flat on their stomachs on the ground. They then got into the vehicle and rummaged around for any belongings, stealing all personal equipment including phones, laptops and both radios.

Vuni survived but he suffered a deep cut to his head after the gunmen beat him hard with a heavy stone and the butt of their guns. Read more here <https://bit.ly/3j08Mev>



Benjamin showing part of his head which was hit by the butt of a gun during the attack. Photo Credit: WFP

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS: A PORTRAIT OF OUR LATE COLLEAGUES JOHN AND KASHIF

World Humanitarian Day is a heartfelt occasion to acknowledge the professional and personal commitment of people dedicating their lives to serve the most vulnerable. People like John Chol Deng and Kashif Saleem.

John, who served as a driver with UNHCR in Bor, was a true humanitarian, selfless and dedicated. In 2016, when the fighting broke out, he was daring and came to the office to rescue staff. When on boat missions, when other drivers ran into trouble in rainy and stormy weather, John - a skilled driver, would take the helm to navigate them out of trouble. Most recently, he was part of the COVID-19 Task Force and took a leadership role to support and deliver needed supplies to colleagues.

Kashif was also extremely dedicated as a humanitarian, always ready to go the extra mile and thinking of others first. He was among the colleagues who sheltered in the office for days when hostilities resumed in Juba in 2016. After many years in South Sudan he then served in Ethiopia but only to come back to South Sudan in 2020 as a protection officer to serve the displaced and host communities of the country he loved so dearly.



SOUTH SUDAN SAFETY NET PROJECT TO UPLIFT THE POOR AND VULNERABLE IN TIMES OF COVID-19



The Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, Hon. Ayaa Benjamin Warille (L), Under Secretary Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, John Kulang, Minister of Finance and Planning, Hon Salvatore Garang Mabiordit, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Hon. Josephine Joseph Lagu and Deputy Chief Executive, Gasim Niconara, pose for a group photo at the project launch in Juba. Photo Credit: UNOPS

The South Sudan Safety Net Project (SSSNP) was officially launched 28 July 2020 in Juba.

Funded by the World Bank with a \$US40 million grant from the International Development Association (IDA) and implemented by UNOPS in collaboration with the Government of South Sudan and humanitarian

and development partners, this project seeks to expand access to safety net and provide income security for low income South Sudanese, while strengthening delivery tools and local level capacities.

The Project was launched through a high-level virtual event bringing together a cross section of stakeholders including representatives from the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, development partners, policy experts, civil society and media participated and enriched the discussion.

In her speech, the Hon. Josephine Joseph Lagu, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security reinforced the transformative role of social safety nets, particularly the SSSNP, can play in the economic upliftment of poor and vulnerable South Sudanese communities suffering from poverty and deprivation.

The Country Manager of the World Bank, Husam Abudagga, highlighted the SSSNP as a timely intervention in the provision of cash transfers to the poorest and most vulnerable people in a conflict-sensitive and COVID-sensitive manner.

Peter Mutoredzanwa, Country Director and Representative of UNOPS shared lessons from the earlier Safety Nets Skills Development Project (SNSDP) and how the new project builds on them to further enhance its delivery mechanisms.