



UNFPA KENYA

ANNUAL

REPORT

2023



**ENSURING
RIGHTS AND
CHOICES FOR
ALL**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AYSRHR - Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health

CMR - Clinical Management of Rape

CVRS - Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

EmONC - Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care

FCDO - Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

FGM - Female Genital Mutilation

GBV - Gender-Based Violence

IARH - Inter-Agency Reproductive Health

ICPD - International Conference on Population and Development

MISP - Minimum Initial Service Package

MPDSR - Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response

NYS - National Youth Service

SRH - Sexual and Reproductive Health

SRHR - Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

YEC - Youth Empowerment Centre



FOREWORD

2023 marks the second year of the 10th Country Programme of UNFPA support to the Government of Kenya. As reflected in this Annual Report, collective efforts by UNFPA, the Government of Kenya, partners in civil society, academia, the private sector, and our generous donors have propelled us closer to achieving the shared vision of a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

UNFPA worked with partners to improve family planning access to the last mile. Our efforts extended beyond the provision of commodities and services to investments in strengthening healthcare and supply chain systems, enhancing the capacity of healthcare workers both in the private and public sectors, and supporting innovative approaches such as the Total Market Approach (TMA) to ensure sustainable access to family planning methods for all, regardless of income level.

The Country Office also intensified its focus on maternal healthcare through initiatives like the training of healthcare workers in Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) and the prevention and management of unsafe abortion to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity. With support from partners including AMREF Health AFRICA, M-Pesa Foundation, Flying Doctors Society of Africa, and various county governments, UNFPA took significant strides towards ending fistula, a devastating childbirth injury by providing free reconstructive surgery to restore dignity to those living with the condition. As part of the campaign to end Fistula, UNFPA also supported livelihood skills training for women who have been marginalized due to the condition.

UNFPA's commitment to combating gender-based violence and harmful practices remained unwavering. By engaging grassroots organizations, mobilizing communities, and integrating sexual and reproductive health interventions into county development plans, the country office intensified efforts to transform harmful social norms and protect the rights of women and girls.

As Kenya navigated humanitarian crises, including prolonged drought and devastating floods brought on by the El-Nino weather phenomenon, UNFPA scaled up efforts to deliver life-saving sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services in the worst affected counties. UNFPA was able to move with speed and agility in responding to the urgent needs of affected populations, ensuring their access to essential services, including skilled birth attendance, family planning, and psychosocial support. This was made possible through the generous support of the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the Government of Japan, the Government of the Philippines, and the Government of Ireland, and implemented through the Government of Kenya and humanitarian response partners.

Our focus on adolescents and youth remained central to our agenda. Through targeted interventions, innovative partnerships, and capacity-building initiatives, UNFPA empowered young people with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Additionally, UNFPA supported the Ministry of Health in developing a digital tool for the assessment of health facilities on the attainment of 8 quality standards for the provision of adolescent and youth-friendly services. Once deployed, the tool is expected to provide real-time data on facilities providing youth-friendly services in the country.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the generous support of our donors and the dedication of our partners. To them, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for their unwavering commitment to advancing the rights and well-being of women, girls, and marginalized populations. As we look ahead, UNFPA remains resolute in our pursuit of a future where every individual can realize their full potential.



Anders Thomsen
UNFPA Representative, Kenya

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

As part of continued efforts to improve the quality of maternal healthcare, UNFPA conducted an EmONC functionality assessment in 51 health facilities and further supported the training of health workers on Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) and advanced obstetric care. The training was conducted in the counties of Bungoma, Nairobi, Kwale, and Garissa counties. The programme also supported the Ministry of Health in revising the Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) guidelines. The guidelines were developed alongside an MPDSR training package and data tools to facilitate the orientation of healthcare workers on quality data collection on perinatal and maternal deaths at facility and community levels.

Moreover, Abortion complications are among the major reasons why women seek emergency obstetric care in health facilities. In 2023, UNFPA supported the capacity building of healthcare workers in Baringo and Garissa counties to enhance their knowledge and skills in the prevention and management of unsafe abortions. Specifically, 55 healthcare workers were trained in post-abortion care to reduce post-abortion complications and improve maternal care.

UNFPA also supported three medical fistula camps in Bungoma, Garissa, and Homa Bay County to Homabay Counties to which provided treatment and care to 192 women and girls living with fistula. In 2023, the programme conducted fistula camps in Bungoma, Garissa, and Homa Bay Counties. Similarly, a total of 95 healthcare workers were trained in the prevention, screening, and management of female genital fistula. The training also incorporated mentorship for healthcare providers on skills in psychosocial support, reintegration of clients, and advocacy for improved sexual and reproductive health services at the health systems level.

UNFPA continues to advocate for inclusive access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In Bungoma County, 100 life skills facilitators, including 50 teachers and 50 community health promoters, were empowered with skills and competencies to understand, educate, and support adolescents and youth with intellectual disabilities. The facilitators, in turn, reached 1465 adolescents and youth with intellectual disabilities, empowering them on their sexual and reproductive health and rights, including menstrual hygiene, prevention of STIs and HIV/AIDS, and sexual and gender-based violence risks.

KEY RESULTS

-  **192 women and girls living with fistula received surgical repair**
-  **142 healthcare workers trained on MPDSR**
-  **7 nursing and midwifery training schools supported the revision of the training syllabi, incorporating competencies as prescribed by the International Confederation of Midwives.**
-  **143 community responders in Turkana and Garissa Counties are equipped with skills in the referral of sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence cases in emergencies.**



Feature Story:

Free Medical Camp Provides Hope and Healing for Fistula Survivors

35-year-old Damaris Nekesa's troubles began with the difficult birth of her first child, which took place at home with the support of a traditional birth attendant.

"I was 21 years old, unemployed, and unmarried. I felt that I had brought shame to my family and so could not ask them for money to go to the hospital," says Nekesa. Her labour lasted for four days, and each day the birth attendant would visit and reassure her that there was nothing to worry about. "I was in a lot of pain and bled profusely. It is a miracle that my child and I both survived the horrible experience," she says.

Nekesa developed obstetric fistula, a condition caused by prolonged, obstructed labour without access to timely medical treatment. It is estimated that for every 1,000 deliveries in Kenya, three or four will result in fistula cases. The condition leaves women and girls leaking urine, feces, or both, and often leads to chronic medical problems and social isolation. After more than a decade of living with incontinence, Nekesa has traveled more than 100 kilometers to the Webuye County Hospital, where she is scheduled to undergo surgery that will change her life for the better.



The medical camp is organized by UNFPA in partnership with the Ministry of Health, County Government of Bungoma, Mpesa Foundation, Amref Health Africa, and the Flying Doctors Society, in observance of the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula, which is marked annually on the 23rd of May. The camp offered a comprehensive range of services to address the specific needs of fistula survivors. Led by skilled surgeons, the camp provided free screening and treatment to 479 women, with 49 receiving life-changing reconstructive surgery. The initiative also aimed to raise awareness about fistula and eliminate the stigma surrounding the condition.



Governor of Bungoma County, Hon. Kenneth Lusaka, led celebrations to mark the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula, calling for greater efforts to safeguard maternal health and end harmful practices against women and girls. "The continued occurrence of fistula is a human rights tragedy that affects the most marginalized in our society," said Gov. Lusaka. "As a county, we are committed to eliminating harmful practices such as child marriage and gender-based violence, which contribute to cases of fistula," he added.

The transformational impact of the medical camp was evident in the powerful stories of the survivors, who now feel that their future has been transformed. "I have been living with a lot of shame because of this condition, and could not work, travel or socialize for fear of rejection by the community," says 40-year-old survivor Jackline Khaemba. "With the free surgery, I feel like I have been given a second chance at life and can now get back to work without the constant worry and shame," she says.

ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARDS ZERO UNMET NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING

In 2023, UNFPA supported Kenya's Ministry of Health in expanding access to family planning commodities and services by procuring a range of family planning methods valued at Kenya shilling 711,559,608. The commodities which included male and female condoms, oral and injectable contraceptives, implants, and intrauterine devices (IUDs), were distributed to over 6,000 health facilities across the 47 counties, to serve over 2.5 million women of reproductive age. With additional funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), UNFPA further procured 450,000 vials of subcutaneous DMPA. This easy-to-use injectable contraceptive will benefit over 400,000 women of reproductive age.

UNFPA also worked to strengthen the capacity of healthcare workers in both public and private sectors to increase access to modern Family Planning methods by training 78 healthcare workers on the effective administration of the hormonal intra-uterine device. A further 12 clinicians from Bungoma and Nairobi City counties on bilateral tubal ligation (BTL) and vasectomy surgical skills. The capacity building contributed to strengthening access to lesser-used and new methods including the scale-up of hormonal IUD and DMPA-SC. Through public-private partnerships with the United States International University (USIU) Africa and the Pharmaceutical Society of Kenya (PSK), 27 pharmacy graduates were trained in family planning.

The pharmacists will be able to dispense the commodities and counsel and provide services, especially to walk-in clients who seek family planning services in the pharmacies. As a lower middle-income country, Kenya is expected to have a sustainable financing mechanism that supports commodity security and better access to sexual and reproductive health services. In 2023, UNFPA supported the establishment of a Total Market Approach (TMA) task force aimed at improving access to and use of family planning services and products by coordinating all sectors of the market, including public, private, non-profit, and commercial players, to ensure that everyone, regardless of their income level, can access the family planning method of their choice. A draft TMA service delivery model was developed to guide the piloting of the TMA approach in 3 cities in 2024.

UNFPA supported the Ministry of Health and KEMSA in developing a national coordination framework to enhance resource mobilization towards the roll-out of the integrated Logistics Management Information System (LMIS) across counties. This collaborative effort extended the system to 10 counties with contributions from various supply chain management partners, enhancing data-driven decision-making. One hundred seventy-six (176) county teams were trained on the use of the iLMIS, further expanding the use of the system in eight more counties, including Mombasa, Kakamega, Busia, Kajiado, Kiambu, Turkana, Embu, and Nyandarua. This has facilitated better family planning stock visibility, accurate order placement, and reduced stock-outs.

KEY RESULTS



1,040,760 Couple-Years of Protection provided



207,311 unintended pregnancies averted



590 maternal deaths averted



59,698 unsafe abortions averted



\$15,461,500 saved in healthcare costs





Feature Story:

Meet the Doctor Bridging Gaps to Expand Access to Family Planning in Bungoma County

Dr. Boniface Odira is a family planning champion working to improve access to modern contraceptive methods in Bungoma County. "It's a well-established fact that most maternal deaths can be prevented through proper family planning, says 35-year-old Dr. Boniface Odira. With a career spanning over nine years, he has delivered more than 10,000 babies, averaging four a day.

On most days, you will find Dr. Odira in the maternity ward, helping bring new life into the world. But when UNFPA visited the hospital in mid-November, he was busy attending to members of the public at a free family planning camp organized by UNFPA and partners. "Children indeed bring joy to a family, but having multiple births without proper spacing exposes women to pregnancy-related complications, including post-partum bleeding, which is a leading cause of maternal deaths," he says.

As part of his work, Dr. Odira counsels women and couples on family planning to ensure they have the information to make the right choice regarding the number and spacing of their children. He educates clients on short and long-term contraceptives, as well as permanent family planning methods such as tubal ligation and vasectomy.

For a long time, these permanent methods were not available at the Bungoma County referral hospital, and patients had to travel two hours away to the neighboring Kisumu County to access services. Three years ago, Dr. Odira and several other doctors at the hospital underwent training offered by UNFPA partner Marie Stopes Kenya, to enhance their skills in performing tubal ligation and vasectomy procedures. They now attend to patients seeking permanent family planning every week, bringing the services closer to those who need them.

"Uptake of contraception can be increased if both men and women equally take up the burden of family planning, says Dr. Odira. He encourages men to support their partners in accessing family planning, including taking up male contraception. " When compared to tubal ligation, a vasectomy is a less invasive procedure with less downtime for recuperation," he says. Having recently had his first child, Dr. Odira says he is looking forward to achieving his desired family size of three children and would not hesitate to undergo a vasectomy if needed. "When the time comes, my wife and I will make the decision together, and I am ready to play my part to secure the health and well-being of our family," he says.

"Most patients who take up these methods feel that they have achieved the desired family size," says Dr. Odira. The uptake of permanent family planning is, however significantly lower as compared to short and long-term methods. Dr. Odira attributes this to a lack of public awareness, myths, misconceptions, and the costs associated with the services. "Many patients cannot afford the 1,000 shillings (\$6) fee," he says. A significant turnout was observed during the recent week-long family planning campaign sponsored by UNFPA, where services were provided free of charge. After comprehensive family planning counseling, twenty-eight women and three men opted for permanent procedures such as tubal ligation and vasectomy.

Through the UNFPA Supplies Partnership, delivery of family planning commodities such as oral contraceptives, IUDs, injectables, as well as vasectomy and tubal ligation kits has been enhanced to ensure access to family planning up to the last mile in counties such as Bungoma. UNFPA has also partnered with the Ministry of Health and Marie Stopes Kenya to conduct community forums in Bungoma County to raise awareness and tackle myths and misconceptions that hinder access to various family planning methods. The forums are led by healthcare workers, including community health promoters who conduct monthly learning sessions on sexual and reproductive health for men, women, and young people.

ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARDS ZERO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND OTHER HARMFUL PRACTICES







UNFPA is actively working to combat gender-based violence and harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage by transforming harmful social and gendered norms that proliferate these human rights violations. In 2023, UNFPA worked to enhance the capacity of grassroots organizations in prevention and response to gender-based violence, including through training of 300 boda-boda (motorcycle taxi) operators as champions against FGM and gender-based violence. In Baringo, Elgeyo Marakwet, Narok, West Pokot, and Samburu Counties, UNFPA worked with implementing partners under the Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation to conduct community mobilization, awareness, and sensitization on prevention and response to FGM and child marriage. As a result, 26 reformed circumcisers committed to becoming anti-FGM champions in their community, further strengthening community-driven behavior change efforts.

Additionally, progress was made in integrating sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence interventions into county development plans in Narok, Baringo, and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties. This led to improved mapping and activation of surveillance systems and community awareness initiatives to sensitize the public on gender-based violence, FGM, and child marriage in the three counties.

Advocacy sustained through support to county sector gender working groups resulted in commitments from the county governments of Narok and Elgeyo Marakwet towards the establishment of safe spaces for survivors of gender-based violence and harmful practices. The county government of Narok committed Kes 27 Million, while the county government of Elgeyo Marakwet committed Kes 4 million.

In 2023, UNFPA scaled up efforts to reduce women and girls' vulnerability to gender-based violence and harmful practices and to improve community resilience through life skills training and economic empowerment initiatives. 500 women were trained in bead-making skills, which enabled them to establish income-generating activities through making and selling beaded items, including jewelry. In Samburu and West Pokot counties, 1,545 pupils from various schools were reached with life skills information on the prevention of FGM and child marriage. The pupils were further provided with solar lanterns donated by UNFPA in partnership with Panasonic Company. The schools reported improved student performance due to increased study time, hence minimizing their exposure to harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage. In Nairobi's Kibera informal settlement, 400 adolescent boys and 1,125 adolescent girls were reached with life skills information and services on sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence, leading to positive behavior change and better decision-making skills.

KEY RESULTS

-  **1.3 Million people were reached through radio public service announcements on ending FGM, produced and disseminated in the Maasai, Kalenjin, and Somali languages**
-  **482,730 people were reached with information on the prevention of and response to GBV, FGM, and child marriage through community awareness dialogues**
-  **794 survivors of gender-based violence received tele-counseling and referral services through GBV Hotline HAK 1195**
-  **632 healthcare workers trained in the management of FGM cases as well as FGM prevention and response mechanisms**
-  **1,552 pre-service health professionals in 41 institutions trained on FGM prevention and response**
-  **833 emergency service providers and humanitarian actors trained in the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in humanitarian settings**



Feature Story:

UNFPA and Prada Group leverage power of fashion to boost women's empowerment

A new crop of empowered young designers has emerged in Kenya thanks to Fashion Expressions: The Story She Wears project, an initiative of UNFPA, the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, and Prada Group. Eleven young women selected from disadvantaged backgrounds underwent training and mentorship under leading fashion designers in Kenya, to build their skills in fashion design and production, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.

The "Fashion Expressions: The Stories She Wears" project brings together the Prada Group's leading role in the fashion industry, and UNFPA's expertise in promoting gender equality, in a unique and innovative partnership that is designed to empower young women from underprivileged backgrounds with the knowledge and skills required to establish a career in the fashion industry. In Kenya, the project was implemented in collaboration with the County Government of Kitui through the Kitui County Textile Centre (KICOTEC), and Kenya Red Cross Society.



"Despite some important progress made, women are yet to achieve economic equality with men," said UNFPA Representative Anders Thomsen. "At the heart of this project is our shared commitment to tackle poverty and gender inequalities that hold women and girls back from unlocking their full potential."

Addressing participants via video, Prada Group Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer Malika Savell congratulated the young women for the accomplishments achieved during the program. "Your unique talents, hard work, and dedication have inspired many. We are proud to see your evolution," she said.

The "Fashion Expressions: The Stories She Wears," project aims to leverage the social and economic power of fashion as a vehicle to promote women's empowerment and sexual and reproductive health in a 12-month training program for young women in Ghana and Kenya. In both countries, participants have overcome tremendous challenges including early and child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and school drop-outs due to a lack of fees.



Reflecting on her journey as a project trainee, 25-year-old Roselyn Mulewa noted that the experience has empowered her to embark on a new career and build a life for herself and her child. "I am not the same person I was when I started my training. I feel confident in my skills as a fashion designer and will use them to earn an income and empower at least 20 young women in my community," she said.

8 Billion Lives,

POPULATION AND DATA







The availability and accessibility of timely evidence to inform the population, sexual and reproductive health, and rights and humanitarian programmes, is key to sustainable development. In 2023, UNFPA supported the government of Kenya in the launch of the 2022 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, which provides up-to-date estimates of socio-economic, demographic, health, and nutrition indicators. UNFPA also provided Civil Registration Service Kenya with technical and financial support to undertake data collection, analysis, and dissemination of the 2022 Kenya Vital Statistics Report(KVSR). The report revealed that at the national level, birth registration has slightly improved from 79.9 percent in 2020 to 80.6 percent in 2022. Similarly, coverage in death registration improved from 42.3 percent to 47.6 percent in the same period.

UNFPA further supported the State Department for Youth Affairs and Creative Economy in developing a draft Kenya Youth Development Index (KYDI) manual, metadata, and resource mobilization proposal as a build-up to the formulation of the Youth Development Index.

This was achieved in partnership with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the Department of Economic Planning, the National Treasury, and partners in academia. The finalization of these drafts will pave the way for the Kenya Youth Development Survey(KYDS) and, ultimately, the Youth Development Index, which will provide evidence on youth development in Kenya.

Throughout 2023, UNFPA promoted training initiatives aimed at building the capacity of national and county government officers on the generation, analysis, dissemination, and utilization of administrative data, use of statistical software, as well as monitoring and evaluation systems, including the operationalization of the electronic County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (e- CIMES). The Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) training manual was also reviewed and validated to align training materials with the current CRVS standard operating procedures, business processes, and the CRVS handbook.

KEY RESULTS

-  **47 county profiles and two policy briefs developed from the Kenya Vital Statistics report for dissemination to policymakers, planners, and other key stakeholders**
-  **60 government officers from the Ministry of Health and Civil Registration Services trained on data analytics for government policy and decision-making.**
-  **Five Government Departments were trained in the generation, analysis, dissemination, and utilization of administrative data**
-  **30 journalists sensitized on reporting of key findings from the 2022 KDHS**
-  **Civil Registration Services 2023-2027 strategic plan developed and validated**
-  **8 counties (Bungoma, Nairobi, Narok, Isiolo, Baringo, Garissa, Kwale, and Kilifi) are equipped with the capacity to integrate population issues into 3rd generation CIDP**

ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

The overlapping challenge of sexual and gender-based violence, new HIV infections, and unintended pregnancies among adolescent girls and young people, also referred to as the “Triple Threat”, presents a malignant triad of sexual risk and vulnerabilities for Kenya’s youth population. In 2023, UNFPA, working in conjunction with the Government of Kenya and its partners, deployed several measures to empower young people and expand their access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services.

The Country Office, in collaboration with UN agencies and other partners, supported the Office of the President’s Advisor on Women’s Rights in conceptualizing a campaign on Teenage Pregnancy, Adolescent Wellbeing, and Child Protection (TAC). The campaign, which will be spearheaded by the Presidency, seeks to End Teenage Pregnancy and promote Adolescent health, and Child Protection (TAC). UNFPA was responsible for leading the technical team that designed the multi-sectoral framework that will anchor the campaign. The campaign will be launched in 2024 and is expected to add impetus to the fight against teenage pregnancy and other risks to the well-being of adolescents.

UNFPA in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the SDG Partnership Platform Kenya (SDGPP), and in collaboration with Triggerise, the Joint SDG Fund, the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, and the Government of Kenya launched the scale-up of Worlds’ first Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health Impact Bond in Kenya that is aimed at increasing access and uptake of sexual reproductive health and HIV services among vulnerable adolescent girls between the ages of 15-19 years in 10 Counties in Kenya. The \$ 10.2 million investment will reach at least 300,000 adolescent girls over two years.

To strengthen the delivery of SRHR information and life skills to adolescents and youth in and out of school, 58 school heads, 221 teachers, 54 National Youth Service (NYS) commanders and principals, 26 NYS tutors, 50 community health promoters, 18 Youth Empowerment Centre (YEC) managers, and 15 peer mentors were equipped with the capacity and relevant tools to deliver SRHR/HIV/GBV/FGM and life skills education. Through this engagement, the NYS tutors, YEC managers, peer mentors, community health promoters, and select teachers managed to equip 14,002 adolescents and young people with SRHR/HIV/GBV/FGM and life skills education.

Recognizing the role of innovations as an accelerator to the realization of the UNFPA transformative results, the country office ran an innovation challenge to map potential game-changing solutions on SRHR, GBV, and other harmful practices. Through the process, three innovations, namely *Diversity Africana*, a grassroots initiative that uses folk songs to sensitize communities on GBV and harmful practices; *GiPAD*, an initiative that uses comic books to pass SRHR information to youth; and *Niko informed* an initiative that translates laws and SRHR and GBV into simple youth friendly text; were selected and provided with seed funding and mentorship to develop their solutions further.

KEY RESULTS



387,976 adolescents and youth, including those with disabilities, were reached with information and services that promote their health and well-being



1,048, 436 people engaged through youth-led public awareness and advocacy campaigns on the implementation of Kenya’s ICPD25 commitments



National Adolescents and Young People’s Reproductive Health Policy revised with support from UNFPA and partners



UNFPA supported the technical review of the Kenya Youth Development Bill which aims to support young people’s growth and agency, active citizenship and empowerment, and enhanced livelihoods upon enactment.



279 teachers and heads of schools equipped with the capacity and relevant tools to deliver sexual and reproductive health, GBV, and life skills education.



Religious leaders from 10 mainstream Faith-based organizations signed a resolution in support of ending the triple threat of sexual and gender-based violence, new HIV infections, and unintended pregnancies among adolescent girls and young people.



Feature Story:

Youth bootcamp ignites smart budget advocacy for sexual and reproductive health, and ending FGM



Passionate youth advocates drawn from Samburu and Isiolo counties in Kenya attended a boot camp to hone their knowledge and skills on county budgeting processes and advocacy for increased funding for sexual and reproductive health and ending FGM. The “Jasiri” (champion) boot camp organized by Pathways Policy Institute with support from UNFPA brought together 24 participants drawn from youth-led organizations leading community sensitization and awareness efforts to address issues such as teenage pregnancy, child marriage and FGM in the counties.

Young people in Samburu and Isiolo, as in many parts of the country face knowledge gaps in understanding the advocacy strategies needed to effect lasting change. By increasing participants' understanding of the health financing landscape in Isiolo and Samburu, the boot camp equipped the youth champions with the advocacy knowledge to influence change in their communities. The participants engaged in sessions that delved into key indicators related to reproductive health in their counties, identifying issues that could be addressed through greater budgetary allocation.

“Using data from the Isiolo and Samburu County 2023/27 County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) as well as the 2022/23 Annual budgets for the two counties, the young champions were able to conduct an analysis aimed at examining the extent to which the county’s annual development plans allocate resources to implement sexual and reproductive health and FGM programs. Following the training, the young people were tasked with developing memoranda advocating for increased budget allocations for SRHR and FGM programs by their county assemblies. Samburu youth identified high teenage pregnancy rates to be of significant concern, leading to increased dropout rates, malnutrition, depression, and strain on the healthcare system. They recommended the implementation of sex education programs in schools, community dialogues, and the promotion of Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health (AYSRRH) through the provision of contraception.

Youth from Isiolo emphasized the need for budgetary allocation for maternal healthcare in Merti Level 3 Hospital, Cherab ward. They articulated their recommendations in a memo seeking an allocation of three million Kenyan Shillings (\$19,000) in the FY2024/25 budget for maternal healthcare improvements.

Armed with the knowledge and skills to effectively engage leaders through smart advocacy, the young people are ready to participate meaningfully in policy and budget processes in their counties. They committed to submit memos to county assemblies regularly to ensure youth voices are represented in the budget-making and county development planning processes.



HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Following a prolonged two-and-a-half years of drought in Kenya that exposed 5.4 million people to multifaceted impacts, the country experienced the El Nino phenomenon in the last quarter of 2023. The resulting flooding left a total of 545,515 people displaced, of which approximately 141,834 were women of reproductive age. Child marriage was also noted with 583 (555 girls, 28 boys) children being affected. Teenage pregnancies in the 23 counties totaled 32,416 with girls 15-19 years (29,992) being the most affected.

With support from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), a rapid response grant and funding from the Government of Japan, UNFPA and its partners worked to deliver integrated life-saving sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services to mitigate the effects of the drought and flood emergencies in Turkana, Wajir, Mandera, Tana River, Isiolo, Samburu, Garissa, and Marsabit counties in Kenya. This was achieved through integrated health outreaches to deliver quality reproductive, maternal, and newborn health services, that included family planning information and services. UNFPA also worked to strengthen the capacity of gender-based violence rescue centers and safe spaces to respond to the needs of survivors and at-risk women and girls whose vulnerability was heightened as a result of climate change-induced shocks.

The response also included the provision of mental health and psychosocial support, and dissemination of information on available sexual and gender-based violence services to affected populations. A total of 1,160 health care professionals and targeted frontline workers were trained in the clinical management of rape (CMR) and minimum initial service package (MISP) for reproductive health in emergencies. These included 27 county sexual and reproductive health coordinators who received Training of Trainers (ToTs) capacity building on MISP, and 23 service providers trained as CMR ToTs. .

UNFPA continued to address prevention and response to GBV in the Kakuma refugee camps using sports. The sport for protection project dubbed 'Play2Protect' has been instrumental in raising awareness among adolescents and youth on the risk of GBV in sport and measures such as life skills that build self-efficacy. In 2023, a total of 14,995 adolescent girls, young women and boys were directly reached through diverse interventions, including the distribution of sports kits and dignity kits. The project mid-term evaluation showed a significant reduction in GBV experiences among the target group. UNFPA collaborates with UNHCR, the Kenya Red Cross Society, the International Rescue Committee and FilmAid Kenya to implement the project that is jointly funded by the Olympic Refugee Foundation and UNFPA.

UNFPA also collaborated with the Kenya Red Cross Society to build the capacity of personnel from Baringo, Garissa, Isiolo, Kwale and Turkana counties on integration of sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence response in climate action and disaster risk reduction plans and strategies.

KEY RESULTS



343,000 people reached with SRH services



19,208 Adolescents and youth (10-24) reached with SRH services



118,710 women assisted to deliver babies safely in UNFPA-supported facilities



310,669 people reached with Family Planning Services in UNFPA-supported facilities



890,483 people reached with SRH and GBV information and awareness activities in person



64 Health Facilities supported by UNFPA



101,532 people reached with GBV prevention, mitigation and response activities



8,044 non-specialized GBV humanitarian workers / frontline workers trained /oriented on GBV core concepts and guidelines



61,079 dignity kits and hygiene items distributed



13 Safe Spaces for women and girls, supported by UNFPA



UNFPA Humanitarian Response Division Director, Ms. Shoko Arakaki speaks to young women at Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya Photo: UNFPA/Kenya



Feature Story:

Sports bring hope away from home for young women living in Kakuma Refugee Camp



Twenty-year-old Nelly Adeo has lived in the Kakuma refugee camp her whole life. “My parents fled South Sudan because of conflict, and I was born a refugee here in Northern Kenya,” she says. Having spent her adolescent years in the camp, she knows all too well the unique challenges faced by young girls and women in her community.

“Access to sanitary pads and other personal hygiene supplies like soap is a big issue for us. The burden of taking care of the family also mostly falls on women, and for those with large families, getting enough food for their children can be challenging,” she says.

After completing high school, Nelly was home with no prospects for a job or further education, until a neighbor told her about a women’s center nearby, where she could learn income-generating skills such as baking and knitting. It is at this center that she learned about Play2Protect, a project which uses sports to engage young people in refugee and host communities in ending gender-based violence and promoting gender equality.

“Nelly plays volleyball and football. and also volunteers to organize community talks on gender-based violence “When I started, I had little experience with gender-based violence, but as I continued to organize community talks with other women and girls on the issue, I gained a lot of knowledge that is also going to help me in my personal life,” she says.

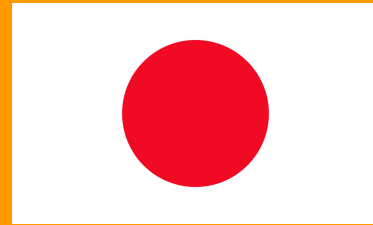
Unlike Nelly who has lived in Kakuma her entire life, 21-year-old Shewid Teferi arrived at the camp just six months ago, after fleeing conflict in Ethiopia’s northernmost region of Tigray. “Being a refugee is difficult, especially when you are alone with no money and away from your family,” she says. Through the Play2Protect project, Shewid has found a purpose in mentoring adolescent girls on sensitive issues such as their sexual and reproductive health, self-esteem, and knowledge of their rights.

The Play2Protect project aims to raise awareness and engage the refugee and host communities in the prevention of gender-based violence among adolescent girls, young women, and boys. With funding support from the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF), UNFPA has partnered with the Kenya Red Cross Society, International Rescue Committee, FilmAid Kenya and UNHCR to roll out the project in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement. By leveraging inter-school sports tournaments, interactive theatre, community dialogues, and radio broadcasts, the project has been able to reach more than 250,000 young people with information on the prevention and response to gender-based violence and the importance of promoting gender equality and inclusion in sports and society.

“When we play side by side with the host community, we feel accepted and also we know that the sports activity is helping all of us with our physical and mental well-being,” says Nelly. With global forced displacements at a record level due to conflict and insecurity, initiatives like Play2Protect are bringing hope to refugees as they work to restart their lives and contribute to their new communities, far away from home.

“I had a good life back at home where I attended a private school, and my family took care of all my financial needs. With my new status as a refugee, I have had to learn how to fend for myself, and I want to help other refugee girls to become strong through sports and mentorship,” says Shewid.

DONORS



The Government of Japan



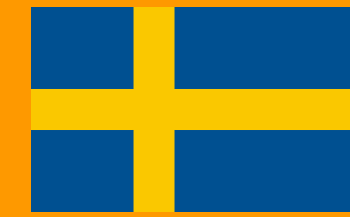
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