



TRANSFORMING LIVES, INSPIRING CHANGE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AGYW	Adolescent Girls and Young Women	IP	Implementing Partner
AHA	Anti-Homosexuality Act	LMNS	Local Maternity and Neonatal Systems
ASRH	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health	MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
BEmONC	Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care	MoH	Ministry of Health
CEmONC	Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric And Newborn Care	MPDSR	Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund	NDP	National Development Plan
CO	Country Office	NEETs	Youth Not in Education, Employment nor Training
CP	Country Programme	PAC	Post Abortion Care
CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
CYP	Couple Years of Protection	SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
DD	Demographic Dividend	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
EmONC	Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care	SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
ETOO	Essential Training in Operative Obstetrics	TFR	Total Fertility Rate
FP	Family Planning	UDHS	Uganda Demographic Health Survey
GBV	Gender-based Violence	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
GF	Global Fund	UNJAYP	The Uganda United Nations Joint Adolescent and Youth Programme
GoU	Government of Uganda	UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
HCIV	Health Centre IV	VSLA	Village savings and loans association
ICA	In-country assessment		

Message from the Representative



I am thrilled to present the UNFPA Annual Report 2023 and our efforts towards achieving zero preventable maternal deaths, zero unmet need for family planning, zero gender-based violence (GBV) and other harmful practices, and zero sexual transmission of HIV. Recent data shows a significant decrease in maternal deaths during childbirth, showing the hard work and dedication of everyone in the healthcare sector in Uganda. Yet, there is still more work to be done as some mothers continue to face challenges that put their lives at risk.

In our pursuit of zero maternal deaths, UNFPA Uganda has led initiatives to improve the quality of maternal and neonatal care, strengthen health systems, and drive innovation. From conducting EmONC needs assessments to implementing social change innovations, our focus has been on ensuring every pregnancy is safe and every childbirth is a cause for celebration.

UNFPA Uganda has played a vital role in advancing family planning (FP) through continued support to the government to enhance access to and utilization of FP services. The impact of these efforts is evident in the decreased unmet need for contraception among married women.

Our attention remains on adolescents, especially girls. Despite policy progress, high teenage pregnancy and HIV rates persist. We have collaborated with the government and partners to empower youth with sexual and reproductive health knowledge, skills, and services.

In 2023, UNFPA continued its commitment to combat gender-based violence in Uganda. Using safe spaces and engaging male champions, we provided a holistic response to GBV survivors, involving communities and ensuring access to justice. Our dedication to life-saving assistance in the humanitarian sphere remains resolute. By establishing safe spaces, equipping health facilities, and advocating evidence-based decisions through population data, we promoted resilience and dignity among refugees and displaced populations.

Reflecting on 2023's accomplishments and obstacles, we are reminded of the transformative influence of collaboration and innovation. With our partners, we have made strides towards a world where everyone can live healthy lives with dignity and opportunities.

I express my heartfelt appreciation to our team, government, donors, implementing partners, and other stakeholders for their unwavering dedication and tireless efforts. Through our joint commitment, we will persist in making a positive impact on the lives of women, girls, and vulnerable populations in Uganda.

Ms. Gift Malunga
Country Representative
UNFPA Uganda

UNFPA IN UGANDA

In Uganda, UNFPA is actively advancing its mission – to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled. The Uganda Country Office (CO) is working to ensure universal access to high-quality sexual and reproductive health services for young people, especially women and adolescent girls.

Aligned with national and international development frameworks; the third Uganda National Development Plan (NDP) 2020/2021–2024/2025, National Vision 2040, African Union Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021–2025, our programmes aim to achieve the three transformative results: 1) ending unmet family planning needs, 2) preventing maternal deaths, and 3) eliminating gender-based violence and harmful practices. Through targeted interventions, we are working towards advancing these goals with the following outcome areas: 1) sexual and reproductive health, 2) gender equality and women’s empowerment, and 3) population dynamics.

With the principle of leaving no one behind as a priority for Uganda, the programme prioritizes: 1) strengthening the integration, quality improvement, accessibility and availability of sexual and reproductive health services for the most vulnerable populations, including young people and women, 2) advocacy to strengthen the policy and enabling environment to improve uptake of sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, 3) empowering young people, women and marginalised groups to make informed choices about their health and wellbeing, and exercise their rights to utilise sexual and reproductive health services, 4) strengthening communities and institutions to prevent gender-based violence and harmful practices against young people and women, particularly in humanitarian contexts, 5) evidence-based advocacy to increase sustainable financing for family planning and sexual and reproductive health and rights services and 6) strengthening data systems to support the generation and use of disaggregated data on vulnerable populations, including young people and women, to enhance mutual accountability and better inform targeted policies and programming.

Key programme accelerators include increased focus on resilience-building among vulnerable populations, reducing inequalities through engagement with the poorest and most vulnerable groups, and promoting innovation to accelerate demand and access to integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Through the current 9th Country Programme (CP), UNFPA will contribute to accelerating the achievement of the three transformative goals by 2025.



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COUNTRY CONTEXT



Maternal Health

Uganda has made remarkable strides in reducing maternal morbidity and mortality over the past two decades, with the maternal mortality rate (MMR) decreasing from 336 to 189 deaths per 100,000 live births in a period of 7 years, almost all women (99%) aged 15–49 received antenatal care at least once from a skilled provider, and with 7 of every 10 women (68%) completing four or more antenatal visits. Similarly, almost 9 out of every 10 women (88%) had childbirth attended by a skilled birth attendant, of which the majority (74%) were attended by nurses and midwives¹.

Despite these gains, the current MMR of 189 deaths per 100,000 live births is still unacceptably high as a significant portion of these deaths are preventable. Uganda’s trajectory needs more effort to accelerate reduction to achieve the SDG target of 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030.

Significant challenges remain in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for health, particularly in maternal and neonatal care. While there has been improvement in antenatal and postnatal care, gaps persist in quality of care, contributing to ongoing birth-related complications and deaths². Pregnancy-related haemorrhage, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy and pregnancy-related sepsis are among the leading causes of maternal deaths, highlighting the need for continued efforts to enhance maternal health services and outcomes.

¹ Uganda Demographic Health Survey 2022

² Quality improvement for maternal and newborn health in Malawi and Uganda: A cross country analysis of leaning from the saving newborns alive project, 2020, <https://www.healthynewbornnetwork.org/hnn-content/uploads/SNL-QI-cross-country-report-final-2020.pdf>

Moreover, Uganda grapples with a high total fertility rate of 5.2 births per woman, which is one of the highest in the East African region. Teenage pregnancy also remains a pressing issue, with 1 in every 4 adolescents (25 percent) being pregnant or having given birth before. The high teenage pregnancy rate that has persisted for almost two decades exacerbates the socioeconomic challenges, limiting these young lives from achieving their full potential. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies that address the root causes, such as enrolling and keeping the girl child in school, social behavioural change away from negative practices (e.g. child marriage), sexuality education, and improved access to contraception information and services.

Teenage pregnancy also remains a pressing issue, with 1 in every 4 adolescents (24 per cent) being pregnant or having given birth before.



Family Planning

In 2023, Uganda achieved a general improvement in the family planning indicators, as depicted by the Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS) 2022. The country registered a marginal reduction of 3.7% in Total Fertility Rate (TFR) from 5.4 to 5.2 births per woman. Relatedly, modern contraceptive prevalence rates among married women increased by only three percentage points from 35% (2016) to 38%. On the other hand, the unmet need for family planning reduced from 28 per cent (2016) to 24 per cent among the currently married women aged 15–49.



Gender-based Violence

In 2023, UNFPA continued to support the Government of Uganda GBV prevention and response, registering considerable progress across the pathways for elimination of GBV and harmful practices by 2030. The UDHS 2022 results indicate a slight decline (1.7%) in the number of women who experienced sexual violence in the last 12 months from 12.7% in 2016 to 11% in 2022, and 5.9% reduction in number of women who have ever experienced sexual violence from 21.9% in 2016 to 16% in 2022.

However, the country continues to suffer from increasingly entrenched gender norms adversely affecting adolescents and minority groups. The Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023 (AHA) caused a stir in international human rights and global health communities. This led to funding constraints on key priority areas and the ability of UNFPA to leverage its partnership with key interlocutors. Some research, which is also in line with global and regional assessments, also found an adverse impact on key populations' access to critical SRHR services. UNFPA responded by triangulating data and engaging with partners to identify programmatic entry points to enable UNFPA to continue advocating for continued access to services and information, and implement relevant mitigation strategies.

The UDHS 2022 results indicate a slight decline (1.7%) in the number of women who experienced sexual violence in the last 12 months from 12.7% in 2016 to 11% in 2022, and 5.9% reduction in number of women who have ever experienced sexual violence from 21.9% in 2016 to 16% in 2022.



HIV/AIDS

Uganda has made great strides in tackling the HIV epidemic for more than 4 decades. Excellent progress was made in the reduction of new HIV infection from 2010 to 2022 by 40% and reduction in mortality from AIDS by 65%, in the same period. UNFPA has continued to lead in efforts in ensuring that the HIV/AIDS prevention agenda is brought to the forefront and has supported efforts to strengthen partnerships in the fight against the epidemic.

However, there are still challenges with high HIV infections occurring among adolescents & young people, and among these, AGYW are worst affected due to gaps in access to SRHR and HIV information. The HIV epidemic has disproportionately affected women and girls more than the boys and men, with 33,000 new infections among women in 2022 compared to 18,000 men in the same year.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a burden in Uganda which continues to constrain its social and economic advancement. The current country statistics estimate 1.4 million people are living with HIV and the HIV/AIDS-related deaths of adults and children stand at 17,000. There were 52,000 new infections in 2022 with a prevalence of 5.1% among adults (15–49 years). The new infections have reduced from 54,000 in 2022 to 52,000 infections in 2023. While young people aged 15 – 24 years constituted 16% of the total HIV burden in the country in 2010, this had shrunk to 11% by 2022. However, adolescent girls and young women continue to be disproportionately affected with HIV incidence by new HIV infections which is four times more than their male counterparts.

UNFPA still retains the UN mandate to lead on the three of the five pillars of HIV prevention including: addressing HIV among adolescent girls and young women, protecting sexual health for key populations, and strengthening condom programming as well as integration of SRHR/HIV/GBV response.



Adolescents and Young People

UNFPA is in its second year as the current chair of the AIDS development Partners group (ADPG) and the Joint UN Programme of Support on AIDS (JUPSA). UNFPA continues to ensure coordination of the development partners and mobilization of resources for HIV-related priority interventions with the government. In 2023, the ADPG's key focus areas were mitigating the impact of the government's Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA), addressing the disproportionate burden of new HIV infections on adolescent girls and young women (AGYW), and ensuring the availability of essential HIV commodities.

Several laws and policies have been developed, and programmes have been designed and implemented by the government and partners to enhance SRHR services for adolescents and young people. However, the progress in reduction of the teenage pregnancy rate has stagnated at 24% for the last 20 years. The urban centres registered a 3% increase from 19% in 2016 to 21%, and rural areas registered a 2% decline from 27% to 25%, as per the results of UDHS 2022. The HIV prevalence among adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) is particularly alarming, with 15,000 new cases in 2022 (UNAIDS), accounting for 4 out of 5 new infections among young people. Furthermore, GBV remains pervasive, with AGYW accounting for 86% of the 14,846 sex-related offences reported to police in 2023, translating to 1 case being reported every 13 minutes.



Population Dynamics

- The total population of Uganda in 2023 is 45.6 million (M: 22.5 million; F: 23.1 million).
- Average population growth rate is 3.0%.
- 75.2% of the population is 30 years and below.
- The total fertility rate is 5.2 children per woman.
- 24% of women aged 15–19 have begun childbearing.
- 88% of births delivered by a skilled provider.
- 40.2% of women aged 15–19 years have ever experienced physical violence.
- 23.8% married women and 18.5% of sexually active unmarried women have an unmet need for family planning.
- 1.46 million people living with HIV/AIDS.



Humanitarian

Uganda hosts over 1.6 million refugees and asylum seekers, with women and children making up 81% of the population, fleeing conflict and hardship. Additionally, 582,000 people in Karamoja region faced severe food insecurity, while communities in the southwest and eastern regions were vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather. Despite these challenges, the Uganda CO remained committed to providing life-saving assistance, focusing on refugees, vulnerable nationals, adolescents, women and girls. Critical efforts included protecting women and girls from preventable maternal death, GBV, and lack of access to SRH services.

In 2023, over 88,000 new arrivals sought refuge in Uganda, and the CO prioritized their urgent needs. UNFPA's humanitarian interventions left a lasting impact on the lives of displaced women and girls, focusing on providing life-saving support and fostering resilience.

Mobile outreach clinics offered vital reproductive health services, while education and awareness campaigns addressed GBV.

UNFPA equipped health facilities with essential resources and skilled healthcare workers, and renovated maternity wards and one-stop centres to provide safe havens for birthing and comprehensive support for GBV survivors. UNFPA also integrated SRHR and GBV priorities into disaster management plans and championed the use of population data and evidence for evidence-based decision-making in the future.



Disability Inclusion

Uganda has made commendable progress in enhancing inclusivity for persons with disabilities (PWDs), bolstered by the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and aligned with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. Reflecting this national and international commitment, UNFPA Uganda has diligently integrated a human rights-based approach to disability inclusion within its strategic framework for 2022–2025. This framework is founded on the principles of the 'We Decide' programme, emphasising twin-track, gender transformative and intersectional strategies to empower PWDs, while ensuring accessibility and non-discrimination across all programming and policy actions.

Our approach involves integrating disability-sensitive measures throughout our work, complemented by specific initiatives aimed at the empowerment of PWDs. This twin-track method ensures that disability inclusion permeates every facet of our programmes, reinforcing UNFPA Uganda's role as a leader in promoting the rights and well-being of all individuals, particularly those facing the greatest challenges.

KEY RESULTS IN 2023



Maternal health

Performance of Comprehensive EmONC facilities: 53% can provide caesarean sections and blood transfusions.



Family planning

Under the UNFPA Supplies Partnership UNFPA, in partnership with the Government of Uganda, signed a compact demonstrating its commitment towards increasing domestic financing for contraceptives.

3,732,000

Other SRHR related data

202,940 female and 137,151,904 male condoms were distributed from national warehouses with 3,732,000 condoms distributed directly to hot spots.

460

GBV

460 SGBV cases were disposed of through 9 SGBV special sessions with 265 perpetrators convicted.



Population & data

The first digital National Housing and Population Census launched.

Key findings of Uganda Demographic Health Survey 2022 disseminated.

944,118

HIV

Supported MoH to develop key guidelines for implementation of the HIV prevention and integration of the HIV components into the wider SRHR programme.

944,118 key populations and 894,010 of MARPS & Priority Populations reached with integrated SRH/HIV/GBV services, and 42,118 adolescent girls and young women in commercial sex work.



Disability & Inclusion

Over 73,882 young men and women with disabilities reached with SRHR/GBV/VAW/HIV services.



Youth

2,553,049 young people accessed integrated SRHR services from UNFPA supported districts.

28,884

Humanitarian setting

28,884 women delivered under the care of a skilled birth attendance.



UNFPA INTERVENTIONS IN 2023

In 2023, UNFPA Uganda continued with its commitment to accelerate the achievement of the three transformative goals: ending preventable maternal deaths, addressing unmet family planning and combating GBV and harmful practices. These milestones by enhancing access to and utilization of integrated SRHR, HIV and GBV services and strengthening the national health system. This annual report is our journey to ensuring every pregnancy is wanted, every child birth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

ZERO MATERNAL DEATHS

OVERVIEW

In 2023, UNFPA supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) to improve the maternal and neonatal health outcomes, and increase access to sexual and reproductive health for all, especially girls and young women as evidenced by the UDHS 2022 report. The country office worked with the MoH to enhance quality of care, through building the capacities of the health workforce, reinforcing the surveillance information system, strengthening the policy environment and innovations on maternal health. Specifically, UNFPA:

- Supported MoH to conduct the Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC). The results from this assessment will facilitate the prioritisation and decision making for a systematic capacity-building approach of EmONC services.
- Strengthened the systematic collection, reporting and analysing data on maternal and perinatal deaths at both national and subnational levels, culminating into the weekly national MPDSR dashboard.
- Supported the operationalization of the Local Maternity and Neonatal Systems (LMNS) of West Nile and Acholi sub regions in collaboration with the MoH. The LMNS is the regional platform that strengthens the response of the MPDSR cycle.
- Supported the training and mentorship of medical officers (in West Nile and Acholi region) in Obstetric Operative skills. The training was done in collaboration with the Association of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Uganda (AOGU). Consequently, the trained medical officers operationalized the surgical theatres at two CEmONC sites: Atiak HCIV and Patong HCIV.

- Supported MoH to develop and launch the first-ever Nurses and Midwives Scope of Practice, strengthening the policy and legal environment under which midwives and nurses operate in Uganda; and
- Supported MoH to develop the annual Fistula Performance Report to monitor the performance of fistula programmes in line with the National Obstetric Fistula Strategy (2020/21 - 2024/25).

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

- Maternal mortality ratio reduced from 336 deaths per 100,000 live births to 189 deaths per 100,000 live births.
- Decrease in neonatal mortality rate reduced from 27 deaths per 1,000 live births to 22.
- Percentage of facilities with fully functioning EmONC increased to 12% from 7.1% in 2017.
- Percentage of the performance of comprehensive EmONC facilities increased to 53% from 8.7% in 2017.
- Launch of Nurses and Midwives Scope of Practice and online registration.
- Launch of the National Obstetric Fistula Strategy (2020/21-2024/25).
- Scale-up of six social change innovations under the UpAccelerate incubation mechanism.
- Implementation of the Rich Baby, Healthy Family platform, behaviourally-driven mobile money maternal health savings account platform for maternal health costs.

Success story

UNFPA-supported ANSWER programme re-skills doctors to reduce maternal mortality in Acholi sub-region

Atiak, AMURU, UGANDA — Until just a few months ago, the medical officer in Amuru district grappled with uncertainties when faced with emergency and critical maternity cases. Dr. George Brown Oneka is one of the medical officers at Atiak Health Centre IV who plays a pivotal role in overseeing healthcare delivery and ensuring the provision of quality healthcare services to the community.

Only in July 2023 did Dr. Oneka finally have the chance to address this critical gap in healthcare delivery. The immediate beneficiaries? The mothers in Amuru district, whose lives were forever changed. But the impact didn't stop there — it rippled out, touching every corner of society.

“ I was privileged to attend a five-day essential training in operative obstetrics from Gulu, where I acquired much-needed skills in performing caesarean section (CS) using a better approach, especially on how to open the uterus in a way that minimizes bleeding,” Dr. Oneka explains. “ I can now control bleeding using improvised balloon tamponade by using condoms, in the event of bleeding after childbirth.” Dr. Oneka, armed with life-saving skills and ingenious solutions, emerges as a shining star in maternal healthcare, ensuring mothers receive the quality care they deserve.

In the face of adversity, Dr. Oneka stands unwavering, equipped with a breadth of skills to navigate even the most challenging scenarios,” he elaborates. “Should conventional measures to control bleeding falter, I am now empowered to execute a sub-total hysterectomy, preserving the cervix, and confidently perform a B-Lynch procedure to address refractory bleeding post-childbirth.”



Lifelike mannequin dummy at Gulu University simulation laboratory



A midwife examines a pregnant mother at Atiak HC IV Amuru district.

Dr. Baifa Arwinyo, serves as an obstetrician and gynecologist at Gulu Regional Referral Hospital and is spearheading the Acholi Local Maternity and Newborn System (LMNS). Her dedication and leadership have transformed countless lives, especially through her pivotal role in facilitating skills transfer. With support from the Dutch-funded ANSWER programme, and championed by UNFPA, Dr Arwinyo has contributed to the skills transfer and mentorship of selected medical officers in Essential Training in Operative Obstetrics (ETOO) across Acholi and West Nile sub-regions. Through her tireless efforts, she ensures that every mother and newborn receive the quality care they deserve, bringing forth a brighter and healthier future for communities in need.

This intervention served as a game-changer in maternal and neonatal healthcare by arming the medical officers with essential skills to handle obstetric emergencies with precision. From mastering cesarean sections to coordinating swift responses to maternal and fetal distress, this training instilled confidence and ensured timely interventions. Moreover, it cultivated a culture of safety and continuous improvement, leading to tangible reductions in maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality rates. In essence, it's a catalyst for elevating the quality of obstetric care and safeguarding the well-being of mothers and newborns.

In a remarkable collaboration, the ANSWER programme joined forces with the Ministry of Health and the Association of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Uganda to deliver the transformative ETOO training. At the local level, Gulu Regional Referral Hospital and the Gulu University Department of Reproductive Health took the helm, supported by UNFPA and Marie Stopes Uganda. Gratitude also extends to Gulu University for offering the University Simulation Laboratory — a facility designed for hands-on training and simulation-based education. Here, healthcare professionals immerse themselves in a lifelike environment, honing their clinical skills, fostering critical thinking and mastering teamwork — all within a realm of safety and precision.

The establishment of this laboratory was made possible through the invaluable support of the Center for International Reproductive Health Training (CIRHT), University of Michigan.

With lifelike mannequin dummies mirroring the intricate nuances of labour, healthcare workers step into a realm where learning transcends textbooks. These simulations offer a haven for honing skills and building confidence, allowing practitioners to navigate the complexities of childbirth without the weight of apprehension. Here, mistakes are not feared but embraced as opportunities for growth, empowering healthcare providers to emerge as assured guardians of maternal and newborn health.

In this immersive training environment, doctors and midwives are greeted by lifelike dummy organs like the cervix and uterus and thus have the feel of real human tissue. Each interaction is a sensory journey, crafted to replicate real-life scenarios, ensuring that healthcare providers are not only prepared but also empowered to deliver the highest standard of care with confidence.

Speaking from the heart of Gulu Regional Referral Hospital, where she passionately delivers obstetric and gynaecological care, Dr. Baifa shares a transformative insight. Thanks to the training initiative, Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care sites in the sub-region such as Atiak Health Centre IV have been revitalized, now equipped to perform life-saving cesarean operations. No longer do lower-level facilities have to helplessly refer mothers in dire need of urgent surgery to Gulu Regional Referral Hospital. Instead, they stand empowered to provide critical care right in their communities, ensuring swift and timely interventions for those who need it most.

At the heart of the simulation exercises, Senior Midwife Jackline Ayikoru sheds light on a remarkable detail. As inexperienced doctors tread the path of surgical practice, they're handed cow hearts — whose tissue closely resembles the human uterus under the surgeon's blade. But it doesn't stop there. To heighten the authenticity, crushed watermelon is added to the

Success story

mix, mirroring the “products of conception” in texture and appearance.

Every subtle movement by the doctor is captured by high-resolution cameras, creating a reel of precision and expertise. These recordings serve as a canvas for critique, allowing instructors and peers to dissect each manoeuvre with scrutiny. With state-of-the-art technology at their disposal, the simulation equipment conjures every conceivable scenario — from tumultuous labour contractions to the harrowing sight of a newborn gasping for air. In this immersive setting, doctors are not just practitioners, they’re visionaries, sculpting a future where every life-saving action is executed with mastery and precision.

In a remarkable turnaround, hard-to-reach districts like Lamwo, which had poor maternal health indicators, are now leading in its performance reporting first-trimester Antenatal Care (ANC) visits. Meanwhile, at Atiak Health Centre IV, in Amuru, doctors who once hesitated to perform a caesarean section are now poised to showcase their journey to success on a national stage. This transformation is credited to the ANSWER programme, which provided invaluable support for medical doctors training in the Acholi sub-region, and other interventions, including leveraging the power of the simulation lab to revolutionize healthcare delivery.

However, the process of upskilling extends far beyond the confines of the specialized training lab; it evolves into a daily commitment. Dr. Baifa highlights an innovative approach: leveraging on the power of the Acholi LMNS whatsapp platform that has more than 252 active participants remaining consistently engaged, promptly responding to posts from colleagues seeking consultation on the cases they’re managing. This collaborative platform proves instrumental in reducing maternal mortality rates, showcasing the power of ongoing learning and peer support in healthcare.

“We understand that it’s quicker and more efficient to transport supplies than to move mothers in labour,” she explains. “A simple WhatsApp call requesting specific blood units ensures swift delivery to the mother’s location, far faster than mobilizing an ambulance and navigating challenging terrain.”

In the heartbeat of our efforts, daily consultations pave the way, but it’s the monthly Acholi Local Maternity and Newborn System meetings that truly ignite and sustain our progress. Powered by UNFPA, and led by the Coordinator of the Acholi LMNS, these virtual meetings bring together various actors of the LMNS including frontline healthcare providers and partners to assess, correct and refine operations for continuous advancement.

Dr. Baifa acknowledges our journey’s magnitude. Though our destination remains distant, the strides we’ve made are nothing short of extraordinary. Extending the programme’s reach promises to cement the sustainability of these life-changing interventions.

Yet, Dr. Baifa’s vision extends beyond the surface; she sees the heart of our communities longing to engage and be supported to remain healthy. The striking 11% reduction in PAC services sought across the 15 programme-supported districts speaks volumes, urging us to amplify our awareness efforts.

Together, we will ensure that every woman and girl in need finds solace in seeking Post-Abortion Care (PAC) intervention, for their voices matter and their well-being is non-negotiable.

Edited by Cinderella Anena, UNFPA



Dr. Baifa Arwinyo, serves as an obstetrician and gynecologist at Gulu Regional Referral Hospital

ZERO UNMET NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING

OVERVIEW

As reflected by the UDHS 2022, Uganda realized a general improvement in the family planning indicators, with a reduction in fertility rates from 5.4 births per woman in 2016 to 5.2 in 2022, an increase in the modern contraceptive prevalence rates among married women from 35% (2016) to 38% (2022) and a reduction in unmet need for family planning from 28% (2016) to 23.8% (2022). Through consolidated efforts of partners, UNFPA supported GoU to reach 1,542,063 new family planning users and 3,267,362 total family planning users, and dispensed 4,017,691 Couple Years of Protection (CYP) through health facilities.

Policy and strategic level influence

UNFPA further supported the GoU to strengthen the policy and systemic environment for ensuring sustained resource allocation and implementation of the family planning programme to enable equitable access by the women and girls without exception. Working with other partners, UNFPA supported the GoU to achieve the following milestones:

- The GoU signed off the UNFPA Compact Agreement, and the Minister of Finance and Minister of Health launched the agreement as the Government's commitment to participate in the supplies partnership project phase. In compliance with the Compact Agreement, the Government honoured its commitment and procured commodities worth USD 40,000 through the third-party procurement (TPP) modality.
- Reviewed and revised the Reproductive Health Commodity Security (RHCS) Strategic Plan III (2023/24 – 2027/28), 2020–2025, the Uganda Costed Alternative Distribution Strategy (2021–2026) and the Family Planning Financing Strategy (all under MoH approval processes).
- Finalized the Family Planning Training Manual, which the Honourable Minister of Health launched during the National Safe Motherhood conference.
- Supported the development of action/implementation plans for the Ugandan Government FP2030 Commitments, M&E frameworks of the National Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan (FP CIP) 2020/21– 2024/25 and the



National Total Market Approach (TMA) Strategy.

- With support from UNFPA, the GoU widely disseminated these strategies during the year with the support of multiple partners.
- Supported the MoH to develop an addendum of the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for incorporation into the disaster preparedness plan (DPP). This supplement was designed and reviewed, and is currently under approval by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) for consideration under the DPP.
- Conducted the 2023 Service Delivery Point Survey, establishing the National Reproductive Health Commodities performance on availability.

Reproductive Health Commodity Security Strengthening

- **Integrated national quantification:** UNFPA supported the first National Integrated Quantification, which involved ascertaining a holistic national need for all essential medicines and supplies including RMNCAH, HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB, laboratory, blood supplies, nutrition and other essential medicine. The overall commodity need for 2024 was estimated at USD 1.2 billion. The family planning overall commodity need for 2024 was estimated at USD 35 million inclusive of condoms.
- **National supply chain information systems:** UNFPA supported the development of the eLMIS system to be used by the Alternative Distribution Supply chain mechanism that distributes RH commodities to the accredited private-not-for-profit health facilities. This system will improve ordering and reporting for the commodities received by over 900 private not for profit health facilities.
- **Improved commodity and data visibility for last-mile assurance:** UNFPA Uganda CO, with support from the UNFPA Last Mile Assurance unit based in Copenhagen, piloted the in-country assessment (ICA) for the inventory process resultantly assessing 15 facilities, including warehouses, on their accountability levels for the UNFPA supplies received. UNFPA presented the findings

and recommendations to the MoH to address underlying gaps. This assessment aimed at fostering commodity accountability and transparency across the supply chain.

- **Contraceptive Access within the Refugee Setting** UNFPA further supported MoH to undertake the re-accreditation process of over 1,000 private health facilities obtaining free RH supplies through the Joint Medical Store. This aimed to ensure that facilities receiving the free supplies maintained the minimum standards of commodity management, accountability and service provision. Within this framework, 41 health facilities in refugee settlements obtained accreditation, allowing women and girls in refugee settings to access free contraceptives under the public public health supply chain.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

Working with MoH, UNFPA:

- Contributed over USD 8,396,779.12 worth of commodities.
- Distributed over 2,439,840 couple years of protection (CYP) Reproductive Health commodity security equivalence.
- Distributed 3,732,000 million condoms directly to hot spots.
- Mapped over 7,054 new hotspots for condoms;
- Orientated 20 national trainers in the electronic community health system.
- Trained 1,964 village health team members on the electronic community distribution system and the provision of FP short-term methods.
- Mentored 756 health workers in comprehensive family planning, including emergency contraception, Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs) and new technologies like implanon-NXT.
- Reached 8,972 clients with long-term modern contraceptive methods, 28,599 people reached with modern FP.



SUCCESS STORY

Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development Hon. Matia Kasajja on behalf of the government of Uganda.

From aid dependency to financial sustainability: the Compact Agreement gains on contraceptive procurement in Uganda

Uganda is on its journey to reduce its dependency on donor dependency to self reliance especially for its family planning commodity needs. This has been expressed through a number of commitments Uganda subscribes to including the Family Planning 2030 commitments among others.

In 2023, the Government of Uganda signed the UNFPA Compact Agreement. This agreement signified a shift from product donation to product subsidisation. This implied that for every 100 dollars contributed by UNFPA towards the annual procurement budget of contraceptives, the Government of Uganda would contribute 1% of its domestic finances toward the procurement of contraceptives with an increment of 1 percentage point every year.

Uganda accepted this challenge and by the end of 2023, Uganda had met its mandatory 1% contribution which equated to USD 40,000 used for the procurement of contraceptives. Uganda also participated in the matching fund and benefited \$171,608 in additional financing for reproductive health/family planning (RH/FP) commodities through the UNFPA Supplies Match Fund. This was aligned to the 1:1 matching ratio for every additional domestic contribution that exceeded the mandatory 1% contribution in 2023. To note, UNFPA had availed up to USD 1,500,000 for matching in 2023, however, only 11% of these funds were matched.

The Compact and the Match Fund provides a motivation for the government to realize the commitments made and subscribed to in the shift to have contraceptives funded through domestic resources.

ZERO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND OTHER HARMFUL PRACTICES

OVERVIEW

In 2023, UNFPA supported the Government of Uganda's efforts to prevent and respond to GBV, making significant progress towards eliminating GBV and harmful practices by 2030. While there was a slight decline in the prevalence of sexual violence results, cultural acceptance of domestic violence has significantly reduced over the last five years.

Down from nearly 50% of women and over 40% of men in 2016, the recently released UDHS found that now, a third of Ugandans (33% of women and 30% of men, aged 15–49) believe that a man is justified in beating his wife for specific reasons. While there are collective results, UNFPA has invested extensively in addressing harmful gender norms, including inequitable gender power relations

and intimate partner violence. In addition, the enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023 led UNFPA to halt its partnership with the Inter Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU), a key partner in addressing social and religious norms perpetuating GBV. UNFPA responded by assessing the Act's impact on the SRHR landscape and implementing recommended mitigation strategies.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

150,000

Over 150,000 people were reached with GBV information through Gender Transformative Approaches

57,000

Over 57,000 men reached through EMAP and Male Champions

223

223 public declarations made in community gatherings to eliminate harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation

460

460 SGBV cases were disposed of through 9 SGBV special sessions; and 265 perpetrators convicted, improving the conviction rate from 20% in 2019, to 80% in 2023

1,114

1,114 SGBV survivors accessed response services with UN support, including through legal aid, GBV shelters and other referral services



Supported documents such as National Action Plan on Disability (NAPD) 2023, Gender Policy (approved) and the Sexuality Education Guidelines for Out of School (submitted for approval)



SUCCESS STORY

Part of the Solution: Uganda's men rise to tackle gender-based violence

As a village health worker, Timothy Mbene Masereka went from house to house in some of the most remote places in Kasese District, Uganda. He enjoyed helping people and was adept at managing illnesses such as malaria and pneumonia. However, there was one health emergency that he didn't know how to address: violence against women and girls.

"During my sessions [in people's homes], I saw that gender-based violence was a problem and I tried to handle it at a lower level, using my own reasoning, but I lacked the skills to really solve the issue," he says.

What Mr. Masereka saw wasn't unusual – violence against women and girls is the world's most pervasive human rights violation, affecting one in three women globally. In Uganda, almost 30 per cent of women and girls report experiencing intimate partner violence in the past 12 months.

Despite its prevalence, Mr. Masereka says violence against women and girls was treated as a private issue. "In my community, men dominated, and gender-based violence wasn't discussed openly."

Change starts at home

When Mr. Masereka was approached to complete gender-based violence training supported by Spotlight Initiative through the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), he jumped at the opportunity. "The Community Development Officer talked to me about Spotlight Initiative and its work on preventing violence against women and girls. She said men have a big role to play in preventing violence and asked whether I wanted to work as male action group mentor," says Mr. Masereka.

Mr. Masereka attended a training run by ACORD, a national non-government organisation that promotes social justice. During the course, he learned how to talk to men and boys about gender-based violence, how to counsel couples to resolve disputes through dialogue and how to identify and refer women and girls

experiencing violence to the appropriate authorities and services. The training also opened his eyes to subtler forms of violence, such as economic violence, and unequal gender power dynamics.

"For example, the women plant [crops], but they were given no say in what happens to the crops. The men made [all] the decisions," he explains. The course forced him to examine the distribution of power and labour in his own household.

"I learned that chores in the home can be performed by both men and women. The pounding and cooking of food and bathing the children are all tasks that can be done by both the mother and the father."

When he first began to take on domestic chores, he says people laughed at him: "They would say 'He has been put down by his wife,' things like that." But when they saw how much more productive his house became, their attitudes changed.

"You get things done faster. For example, if my wife is preparing food, I can wash the dishes. If my wife is collecting firewood, I can get water. [This way,] we all eat earlier."

Timothy's ability to educate others, stemmed from his own training in understanding how power and choice are denied to women and girls in his society. Photo: © UNFPA/ Spotlight Initiative/ Timothy Webster

Mr. Masereka says this shift has improved his relationship with his wife and children.

"I feel happy because now the children can tell me anything, my wife doesn't hide anything – she is very clear and transparent, as I am with her."

Shifting attitudes and supporting survivors

Spotlight Initiative aims to eliminate violence against women and girls through comprehensive programming that addresses all key drivers of violence. It promotes laws and policies that prevent violence, strengthens institutions, promotes gender-equitable social norms, strengthens women's movements and provides essential services to survivors of violence.

Since 2019, more than 1,500 men in Uganda have trained as positive male role models with the support of Spotlight Initiative through UNFPA. Each of them plays a critical role in changing the norms and attitudes that lead to violence and supporting survivors to access the services they need.



Live radio activation at Kalerwe market, downtown Kampala during the Get it on, Stay Safe campaign roll out.

ZERO NEW HIV INFECTIONS

OVERVIEW

UNFPA retains the UN mandate to lead three of the five pillars of HIV prevention: addressing HIV among adolescent girls and young women, protecting sexual health for key populations, and strengthening condom programming and SRHR/HIV/GBV integration. In 2023, the AIDS Development Partners Group focused on adolescent girls and young women disproportionately affected by new HIV infections and on HIV commodities and mitigating the anti-homosexuality act (AHA). UNFPA led the development of a joint SRH/HIV/GBV Integration proposal for 2024–2025 with four UN agencies, aiming to increase access to quality integrated SRHR services and address gender and social norms. This 2–year program will enhance existing ASRHR and HIV programs and empower young people to promote positive norms in target districts.

Condom Programming

In general, the national condom programme made commendable progress in strengthening condom program governance and partnership coordination. All districts had a condom focal point with 82% of the districts having hot spots with capacity in condom programming.

MOH Support Tools

UNFPA supported the MoH to develop key instruments for guiding implementation of the HIV prevention and integration of the HIV components into the wider SRHR programme. There was completion of key documents to support policy and guidance for the MoH.

Key Achievements

- The total market approach condom vision and implementation plan for Uganda.
- The costed M&E plan for the National Comprehensive Condom Programming strategy 2020 to 2025.
- The MOH National Integrated Condom Training Guide including standardized training materials, tools, and a framework for sub-national condom coordination.
- The National Condom Social & Behaviour Change Demand Creation Guidelines to reduce HIV, STIs, and unintended pregnancy rates.

Demand Creation and Last Mile Distribution

UNFPA supported PACE's Condom Strategic Initiative with Global Fund funding, focusing on demand creation through an innovation challenge for differentiated SBCC, demand creation, and last-mile distribution. Targeting specific groups in Kampala, Busia, and Yumbe, the peer-led multimedia campaign addressed condom stigma, inadequate demand creation, distribution issues, and limited monitoring. Virtual campaigns on social media used the slogan "Get it on, stay safe," reaching 11,723 individuals and engaging 631,865 more. Condom champions delivered 1,895,618 male condoms to 1,645 GIS-mapped points. Collaborations with the private sector facilitated distribution to 56 establishments. UNFPA also worked with MoH and JMS on an application for last-mile stock tracking through the Alternative Distribution Strategy (ADS) and link to MoH HMIS.

Key Populations

UNFPA through GF supported the PACE and JMS who collaboratively undertook another mapping exercise with the purpose of generating an updated master list that incorporates new hotspots, pick-up points, and drop-in centres (DICs). A total of 150 (100%) hotspots were mapped in Yumbe district, 995/1000 (99.5%) GIS pick up points mapped in Kampala- Kawempe division and 500/600 (83%) GIS pick up points mapped in Busia district. Altogether hotspots were mapped in 118 districts in Uganda.

Condom Programming

- Primary service delivery points with no stock-out of male condoms improved to 88.3%, surpassing the target of 86.8%.
- 202,940 female condoms were distributed, exceeding the target of 200,000; 137,151,904 male condoms were distributed, surpassing the target of 120,000,000.
- With UNFPA support, MoH reached 944,118 key populations and 894,010 MARPS and priority populations with integrated SRH/HIV/GBV services through community outreaches.

The deputy country representative Mr. Daniel Alemu addresses the press during a media briefing held on 23rd October 2023 ahead of the National HIV and AIDS Symposium.





The UNFPA Uganda Country Representative, Ms. Gift Malunga (third from left), with government officials at the launch of Uganda's first digital National Housing and Population Census by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (centre)

POPULATION DYNAMICS AND DATA

OVERVIEW

In 2023, UNFPA worked with the Government of Uganda to improve population data systems at national and subnational levels. The strategic interventions included advocating for the integration of population dynamics in policy planning, providing technical support for data analytics, strengthening platforms for youth and women's participation in policy and accountability, and supporting census and population surveys. These interventions aimed to address inequalities and advance the commitments of the ICPD Programme of Action.

KEY UNFPA SUPPORTED RESULTS IN 2023 Assessments undertaken

- Conducted demographic dividend (DD) compliance assessment both at the national and local government level.
- 102 districts, cities and municipalities were DD compliant at 70%.
- 8 programmes were DD compliant by end of 2023.
- Used results of the DD used to engage with Uganda Local Government Association (ULGA), Uganda Local Finance Commission (ULFC), and Parliamentary budget committee to influence budget allocations and call to action on teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence and maternal health.
- Pilot Census conducted in 10 districts and 3 cities, and monitored by the UN.
- UNFPA, together with UNICEF and WHO, supported the peer review of the UDHS 2022 data.

Reports and strategic documents launched

- UDHS 2022 preliminary findings
- The first ever digital National Housing and Population Census
- The Youth Not in Education, Employment nor Training (NEETs) report.

Key policy documents supported

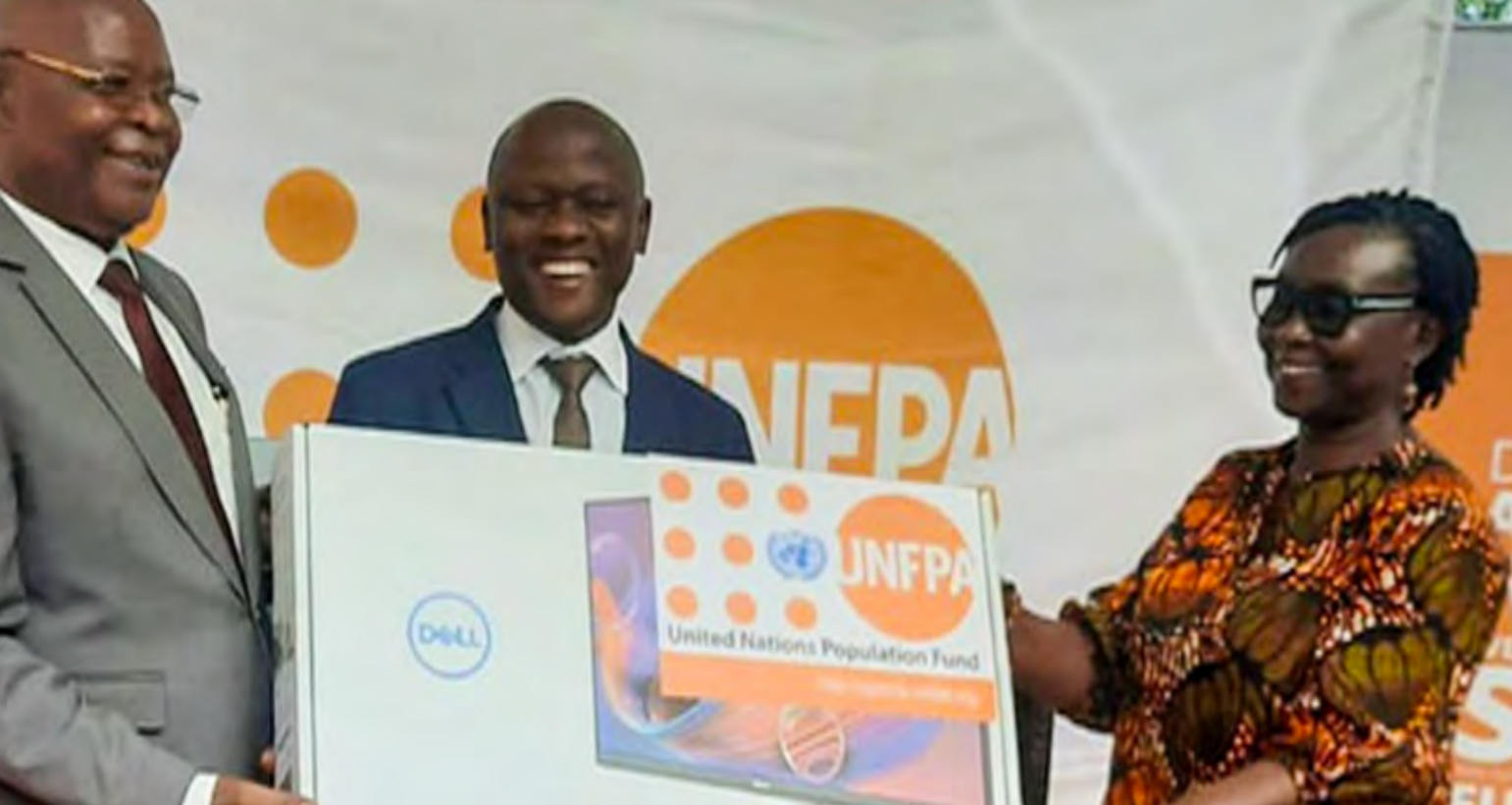
Produced 7 products on evidence generation:

- UDHS summary findings
- UDHS 2022 key findings
- UDHS main report
- UDHS refugee report
- State of the Uganda Population Report 2023
- Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development - AADPD@10 review report
- Resources for Tracking of Family Planning
- Budget tracking - Unpacking the cost investments

for the demographic dividend in Uganda report; National and District reports and policy briefs.

Populations reached for collaboration and advocacy empowerment towards DD and ICPD

- Over 350 youth, political, religious and cultural leaders reached through the Demographic Dividend conference supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Uganda.
- 100 political leaders and academia engaged on the DD.
- 23 district statistical committees oriented on the indicator metadata identification of data sources.
- 6,000 participants reached during the ICPD agenda geared commemoration events and engagements.
- 64 youth structures reached for collaboration and capacity building in advocacy, budgeting process, policy and social accountability.



The UBOS Executive Director Dr. Chris Mukiza (left) receives equipment from the former UNFPA Uganda Representative Dr. Mary Otieno (right)

Supporting Uganda's First Digital Census: A Stepping Stone for Development

In 2023, UNFPA Uganda played a critical role in supporting the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) prepare for their first-ever digital National Housing and Population Census scheduled for May. We provided essential technological resources, including 20 desktop computers, specifically designed for large dataset processing, and Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping.

This USD 43,000 (UGX 157 million) investment will enhance UBOS's capacity to manage the vast amounts of data collected during the census. The digital census, marks a significant milestone for Uganda. This approach streamlines data collection, processing and dissemination, ensuring more timely and accurate results.

The census data will provide invaluable insights into Uganda's population structure. This information is crucial for measuring progress toward national development goals and informing future social and economic planning decisions. UNFPA's commitment extends beyond technological support.

We have collaborated with the Ugandan government to strengthen population data systems at all levels.

This includes advocating for the integration of population dynamics into policy planning, offering technical assistance for data analysis, and fostering youth and women's participation in policy and accountability processes. Additionally, UNFPA supported the launch of the census preparations in December 2023.

By addressing data inequalities and advancing the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action, UNFPA's interventions contribute to a more inclusive and prosperous Uganda.

USD 43,000

USD 43,000 (UGX 157 million) investment will enhance UBOS's capacity to manage the vast amounts of data collected during the census. The digital census, marks a significant milestone for Uganda.

ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

OVERVIEW

UNFPA has made tremendous investments in 2023, to enhance a comprehensive package to support access to integrated sexual and reproductive health services and rights for adolescents and young people. In 2023, UNFPA worked with the GoU to improve knowledge on sexual and reproductive health services and rights and life skills, and create an enabling environment to facilitate access to information and services.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

Adolescents and young people reached

- 2,553,049 young people accessed integrated SRHR services from UNFPA supported districts:
 - * 1,033,292 for Family Planning,
 - * 411,909 for HIV and
 - * 1,107,848 for Antenatal Care Services.
- 418 school administrators and educators' capacities were built on sexuality education (SE).
- 1,940 were oriented on SRHR information.
- 408,846 young people reached SE in schools and 27,088 out of school setting

- 140 teachers were trained using braille to reach learners with disabilities.
- 63 special needs teachers trained on SRH braille materials in Adjumani, Amuru and Madi-Okollo.
- 67,394 vulnerable young people (54,588 F and 13,001M), at risk of violence or gender-based violence, and their families, accessed gender-transformative messages.
- Reached over 9,630 young women and girls across 11 districts through 321 youth saving and loans association clubs.

Enabling environment: Policies and Guidelines developed to support ASRHR

- Adolescent Health Strategy drafted
- National School Health Policy (NSHP) draft finalized and approved by key technical groups.
- Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) guidelines finalized and designed.
- MHM strategy reviewed and validated.
- The draft Adolescent Health Policy was integrated within the draft National Health Policy III.
- Supported 5 technical working groups (TWGs) to strengthen responsive delivery of services for young people.

Youth participation

In 2023, youth participation and engagement involved utilizing existing platforms as well as working with youth to ensure innovative engagement. UNFPA continued to strengthen the functionality of national and subnational platforms for young people and women to participate in policy development, programming, peace building and demand for account. This year UNFPA supported and collaborated with 64 youth structures.

Notably, UNFPA, working with Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) and National Youth Council (NYC):

- Convened a national youth leaders dialogue that brought together youth MPs, Youth leadership from NYC, Uganda National Students Association, AfriYAN and youth leaders at the district level.
- Enhanced youth leaders' capacity in key policy areas and drew up a plan with key priorities for youth for follow up.
- Enhanced the capacity of youth leaders Kamuli and Mayuge districts to be able to meaningfully participate and hold leaders accountable as relates to SRHR issues.
- Promoted inclusion of youth with disabilities through co-creation for 16 Days of Activism, International Youth Day and World Population Day, across 15 districts in Lango and Kigezi regions.
- Supported finalization, approval and distribution of Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health (AYSRH) booklets with 8 topics to primary and secondary schools.
- Obtained approval for braille-format booklets from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) to support learners with visual impairments, and training 63 special needs teachers across 3 districts, including 1 refugee hosting district, on SRH braille materials.

Highlights

- As a result of advocacy statements made by youth leaders during the commemoration of the International Youth day supported by UNFPA In August 2023, President of Uganda H. E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni directed the Ministry of Finance to reverse the budget cuts made towards youth issues.
- The Uganda United Nations Joint Adolescent and Youth Programme (UNJAYP) was launched by the President of Uganda, during the International Youth Day Commemoration in August 2023. The UNJAYP, involving 13 UN agencies, aims to address youth-related actions under the UNSCDF, aligning with the global UN Youth Strategy and national policies, to enable adolescents and youth (A&Y) in Uganda aged 10–30 to achieve their potential, with a budget of \$22.5 million, targeting 8 districts from 2023–2025.



Young people from the UNFPA supported programmes in northern Uganda

I am Akello Gloria Faith
A girl, who previously
lacked the basic life skills.
But with PIASCY, I have
learnt all the skills and plan
for my future. I have
become experienced and
ready to help my friends
with any burning issues
they have.
My dream is to become
a neurosurgeon.



PIASCY club has really
changed me because
before I joined, I was an
extremely shy young girl
but now I am very
Confident and I fear
no one regardless of the
sex and age.

My dream is to become
a gynaecologist



Am Anzoa Tutusi
Benedicta, A student
of St. Mary Assumpta
Girls SS a member of
PIASCY Club. A stubborn
girl before but now
a changed girl after
Joining the club
(PIASCY)



My name is Anzoa
Doreen China. I was
once a victim of suicide
because of stress. My life
turned up and down
before I joined PIASCY
Club. But now, I learnt
to cope up with stress.
I am now a reborned
girl with a goal to be
achieved.

In future, I want to
become a medical doctor.



SUCCESS STORY

Conservative school embraces sexuality education

Christianity and sexuality education are not like oil and water that don't mix. They can mix and produce amazing results, as is happening at St Mary Assumpta Secondary School in Adjumani.

Founded by the Catholic Diocese of Aura, this government-aided school further cemented the church-state partnership when it kicked off implementation of the Presidential Initiative on Aids Strategy for Communication to the Youth – PIASCY – in May 2022 with the forming of school families and training of the pioneer members.

"Sexuality education at school has helped because parents have neither the time nor especially the know-how to address today's teens' challenges, which involve social media, peer groups and influences,"

explains Patrick Okumu, one of the teachers driving the initiative at the school.

"There used to be several dropouts due to pregnancy, but this year, all girls came back after the December holidays!" Out of the six hundred strong student population, 386 are active members of the six PIASCY "families". The girls are skilled and sensitized and equipped with (life) skills to go through their adolescence safely. A chat with randomly picked students in the school reveals the transformative effect of PIASCY, implemented under the ANSWER through UNFPA with funding from the Netherlands. "I was so emotional and only communicated by quarrelling or keeping quiet," laughs Gloria Faith Akello, a Senior 3 student.

Being from Acholi, I thought these girls in West Nile were difficult to deal with. But I have overcome that personality and am enjoying life with everybody here.

Her friends confirm that she was hot-tempered, and they used to inflame her further by making rude jokes about her Acholi people, but all that is past.

Her friends confirm that she was hot-tempered, and they used to inflame her further by making rude jokes about her Acholi people, but all that is past. Benedicta Anzoa, also in Senior 3, says she used to enjoy breaking rules.

"By now I would have become a mother like other girls in my village, who got babies during lockdown," says Anzoa. "I have really changed since I learnt setting goals and remaining focused on them." Sexuality education has helped some of the girls overcome long-held fears and prejudices, like the 18-year-old Bendetha Minzikuru, who just hated male teachers.

"I was just allergic to them because of what happened to my friend years ago," she recalls. "She went to

hospital and a man calling himself a doctor tried to have sex with her."

For Doreen Anzoa China, the programme has made a life and death difference. "By now I would have committed suicide," Doreen states matter-of-factly. "I had spent a long time not talking to my parents because I found them quarrelsome, and I became a loner without a single friend. Finally, I understood that my parent's upbringing was different, and now I cope well with them."

Sister Rebecca, the school principal, explains that the initial two teachers trained for PIASCY have since passed on the knowledge to their colleagues to ensure sustainability of the initiative.

success story



EXPANDING THE POSSIBLE: INNOVATIONS AT UNFPA UGANDA

OVERVIEW

UNFPA Uganda continues to assimilate game-changing technologies in its programmes as an accelerator towards ending the unmet need for family planning, ending preventable maternal deaths and reduction in gender-based violence and harmful practices.

In 2023 UNFPA Uganda implemented the End Teenage Pregnancy HackLab aimed at sourcing innovative solutions to accelerate collective efforts to end early and unintended pregnancy in Uganda. The goal of the HackLab was to create a world where communities, including women and girls are supported and lead the campaign against early and unintended pregnancy. The HackLab engaged youth innovators, and an incubation partner to scale innovation solutions to end early pregnancy in Uganda. 4 youth-led innovative solutions were Identified whilst building a dynamic pipeline of innovation solutions to further accelerate UNFPA's mandate and these social change innovations include:

1. Bulamu Bridge AI is a social innovation which uses digital tools that address the glaring lack of privacy and the debilitating stigma associated with young girls seeking access to contraceptives and SRHR services including the Bridge AI App which has various features including the menstrual period tracker, personalized contraceptive recommendations, a fully stocked e-commerce shop for the purchase of contraceptives discreetly.
2. Her Worth Foundation menstrual hygiene management innovation seeks to address the challenge of early and unintended teenage pregnancy in northern Uganda through the provision of reusable pads and skilling young girls on how to make them for sale, provide information on menstrual hygiene management to eliminate the phenomenon of menstrual taboos, some of which lead to teenage pregnancy.
3. Ndaba Innovation Hub uses comic print material for information access with verified and reliable SRHR information, creating Ndaba Peer Clubs to hold the teenage girls accountable for their actions and

to give them peer support as well as hosting arts competitions and tournaments to share massive SRHR information to address the challenge of early and unintended teenage pregnancy by providing a comic magazine.

4. Diversity Innovations Initiative (DIV) is a disability inclusion innovation which uses sign language application to provide the deaf young people with digital access to comprehensive SRHR information in sign language as well as connect them to friendly SRHR and mental health services in the quest of addressing early and unintended teenage pregnancy.

WAY Catalytic Fund: A scale-up of six (6) out of the fourteen (14) WAY catalytic fund social change Innovations under the UpAccelerate incubation mechanism for West Nile and Northern Uganda Each of the 6 teams received a micro-seed grant of up to 100% of the total seed grant to support scale-up execution accordingly and these include: Mamegi Napkins, ObaMox Community Health Outreach, ACT Uganda, MUP Comics, Baby Kit, Nexus TV.

A scale-up of six (6) out of the fourteen (14) WAY catalytic fund social change Innovations under the UpAccelerate incubation mechanism for West Nile and Northern Uganda Each of the 6 teams received a micro-seed grant of up to 100% of the total seed grant to support scale-up execution.

Deaf Youth Network innovation developers presenting their pitch before a panel of judges at Serena Hotel





success story

SUCCESS STORY

A innovator from Her Worth Foundation shares ideas on menstrual hygiene management during the pitches their idea during the HackLab.

UNFPA HackLab engages youth to innovate social change solutions to end teenage pregnancy in Uganda

As part of its initiative to end early and unintended teenage pregnancy through social change innovative solutions, UNFPA, the United Nations sexual and reproductive health and rights agency, organized the End Teenage Pregnancy HackLab pitch event on 29 August 2023 at Serena Hotel, Kampala.

UNFPA initially launched the End Teenage Pregnancy HackLab in partnership with Outbox Uganda and funding from the Embassy of Sweden on 7 July 2023, to accelerate collective efforts towards ending Early and Unintended Pregnancy in Uganda.

The inception of the End Teenage Pregnancy HackLab was driven by a vision to create a world where communities, including girls and young women, are supported to lead the campaign against early and unintended pregnancy. The HackLab engaged young innovators to scale innovative solutions focusing on the 16 districts of Abim, Amuria, Kaboong, Kaberamaido, Kiryandongo, Kotido, Napak, Nakapiripirit, Pader, Yumbe, Moroto, Gulu, Bundibugyo Kamuli, Mayuge and Kampala.

The End Teenage Pregnancy HackLab 2023 explores innovations that accelerate efforts towards achieving the three Transformative Results including ending preventable maternal mortality, ending unmet need for family planning, and ending sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices all by 2030, and ensuring protection and fulfilment of girls' rights.

The HackLab targets young innovators who have aspiring solutions that, when taken to scale, can make impactful change for girls at risk of early pregnancy.

The HackLab call received 127 innovations from across the nation. Among these, 25 eligible innovations were chosen to undergo a 3-day boot camp that not only trained the young innovators based on business prospectus, but also enabled them to refine their ideas, priming them for further shortlisting. Ten (10) selected Innovators showcased their solutions towards ending early and unintended pregnancies in Uganda at The End Teenage Pregnancy HackLab Pitch event.

Four youth innovation groups won seed funding worth USD 10,000 each and another USD 10,000 worth of technical business support including marketing, brand positioning, investment readiness among others.

Bulamu Bridge AI emerged the winners of the HackLab followed by Ndaba Hub, the Diversity Innovations Initiative formerly known as Disability Innovations, and Her Worth Foundation.

Bulamu Bridge AI developed an AI chatbot which has SRHR-oriented features including the menstrual period tracker, personalised contraceptive recommendations, STD/STI information and HIV/AIDS among others.

"We seek to contribute highly to ending early and unintended teenage pregnancy with the USD 10,000 from UNFPA with support from Sweden to implement our innovative solutions in the 16 target districts in

58.2%

The Uganda Demographic Health Surveys conducted in 2016, 2011, and 2006 consistently revealed that nearly 58.2% of women aged 20 to 49 began childbearing during their teenage years.

Uganda," said Bridge AI innovators during the pitch event in Kampala Serena Hotel after emerging the winners of the grant. Ndaba Innovation Hub aims to provide SRHR information access through comic animated books, creating Ndaba peer Clubs to hold teenage girls accountable in the Eastern Region districts of Amuria and Kaberamaido.

Hillary Odeke, one of the Ndaba Innovation Hub's representatives, emphasized the significance of giving credible information for dealing with serious challenges and ensuring that girls make informed decisions about sexual reproductive health. The high rates of teenage pregnancies in Uganda have been linked to factors such as limited access to reproductive health services, deeply entrenched cultural norms, childhood sexual abuse, high unmet needs for family planning and child marriage, among others.

UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2022–2025 identified innovations as a key accelerator to meet tomorrow's challenges and boost its impact, especially in addressing the needs of the population left furthest behind. It is with such HackLabs that we reimagine the delivery of our programmes and spearhead innovative solutions to accelerate progress for women and girls, by disrupting inequalities and removing the barriers between women and girls and their rights and choices.

The Uganda Demographic Health Surveys conducted in 2016, 2011 and 2006 consistently revealed that nearly 58.2% of women aged 20 to 49 began childbearing during their teenage years. Shockingly, the rate of teenage pregnancies in Uganda has remained stagnant at 25% for over a decade.

The innovative solutions presented by the youth during the pitch event, indicate UNFPA's continued commitment to investing in young people to socially participate in creating solutions towards the much needed equal access to universal sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as zero early and unintended adolescent pregnancy across the country.

Written by Emmanete Nabwire and Josephine Zhane

success story



DISABILITY INCLUSION

OVERVIEW

UNFPA Uganda has made notable strides in policy and advocacy for people living with disabilities (PWDs). In collaboration with the MGLSD, UNFPA supported the comprehensive revision of the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities. This effort aligned the policy with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), especially in enhancing provisions related to SRHR and GBV. Additionally, UNFPA assisted in developing a National Action Plan to facilitate the implementation of the revised Disability Policy, marking a critical advancement in safeguarding and promoting the rights and needs of PWDs.

In 2023, UNFPA Uganda significantly advanced its disability inclusion efforts, ensuring that sexual and

reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention services are accessible to the most vulnerable. This commitment is part of a broader strategy guided by the UNFPA Disability Inclusion Strategy and strategic plans focusing on supporting marginalized groups, including PWDs.

Leveraging the global partnership that UNFPA holds with Special Olympics, UNFPA Uganda partnered with Special Olympics Uganda to train over 117 teachers, VHTs, peer educators and social workers under the ANSWER³ programme. These dedicated volunteers, were trained to provide sexuality education for adolescents and young people in and out of school. In 2023, UNFPA piloted the disability for young people with intellectual disabilities, with an aim to expand sexuality education to those excluded. The pilot was implemented in 5 districts of the 15 ANSWER Programme supported districts.

Special Olympics has been an important partner to UNFPA since 2019 when we signed the global partnership, leveraging the power of sport for development. The partnership has since expanded to over 15 countries, the Uganda Country Office included, an achievement we're extremely proud of.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023:

- UNFPA further engaged with MoES and working with Special Needs and HIV Departments secured approval of ASRH booklets in Braille format so that learners visual impairment can access materials. A total of 63 special needs teachers trained on SRH braille materials to support learners with visual impairment from districts of Adjumani, Amuru and Madi-Okollo.
- Supported the annual International Disability Day and Deaf Awareness Week 2023.
- Supported MoH in developing the National Disability Inclusive Health Services Implementation Guidelines. These guidelines are set to operationalize Health Policy III 2021.

- Built internal capacity of UNFPA on a human rights-based approach to disability fostering an inclusive work culture and enhancing the competency of our teams to support beneficiaries with disabilities effectively.
- Over 73,882 young men and women with disabilities with SRHR/GBV/VAW/HIV services.
- Launched a pilot project in partnership with Special Olympics Uganda, targeting adolescents with intellectual disabilities in Northern and West Nile districts.
- Supported the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) to ensure the inclusion of the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on disability in the census questionnaire to improve the availability of evidence-based data on PWDs to inform better planning and implementation of programs.
- UNFPA Uganda continued to lead the UN Disability Technical Working Group and the annual development of a Disability Scorecard. These efforts help track and assess the extent to which UN programmes include and promote the rights of persons with disabilities.



Brenda Nyangooma being crowned Miss Deaf 2023 during the Golden Jubilee celebrations. UNFPA supported key disability and inclusion days and efforts of the government including the International Disability Day and Deaf Awareness Week 2023.



SUCCESS STORY

Mark talks to Miriam at Miriam's home during a home visit.

Miriam's journey to overcome stigma and defend her rights in Uganda

"I wish I had known earlier that this is not a curse."

ADJUMANI, UGANDA – Born with an intellectual disability, 17-year-old Miriam should have been supported by her family and community to overcome the challenges life had presented her with. Instead, she was ostracized, labelled as 'cursed' and even denied the basic support, health care and rights every individual is entitled to.

Around the world, one in five women live with a disability. They are all too often excluded from making decisions that affect their lives, especially those related to their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

For Miriam, this discrimination led to a life of isolation, with barely any human interaction. While Miriam was sexually active, no one knew or thought that she needed support to protect herself or make informed decisions regarding her sexual health. That was until she crossed paths with Mark, a social worker who helped her overcome the barriers imposed by her community.

As part of his job as a social worker, Mark makes house calls to counsel families with children and young people living with a disability, addressing their specific needs. It was through one of these calls that he heard about Miriam and reached out to her grandmother. "I wish I had known earlier that this is not a curse."

Miriam's grandmother was initially hesitant to disclose her granddaughter's story, for fear of stigma. But Mark's sessions with Miriam soon became a lifeline, allowing her to express her fears and concerns, such as of becoming pregnant without intending to. Mark referred her to a hospital, where she was provided with quality health care and contraception services,

as well as information to protect herself from sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies.

Miriam's grandmother participated in a family forum organized by Special Olympics Uganda in partnership with the ANSWER programme – Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in West Nile and Acholi sub-regions in Uganda – which is implemented by UNFPA and has been funded by The Netherlands for the last four years. "I never knew this was a medical condition, because no one has ever talked to me about it," her grandmother explained.

"I am happy to know that we are not alone, and this is not a curse. I wish I had known earlier in her young life and never lived with shame in the community." Miriam's grandmother has started advocating for more gatherings to combat social exclusion of people with disabilities, and to uphold their sexual and reproductive health needs and rights.

ANSWER is part of the answer

Miriam is one of many young people whose lives have been transformed by the ANSWER programme. In 2023, over 117 teachers, village health teams, peer educators and social workers have been trained in the identification of young people with intellectual disabilities. Like Mark, service providers learned to provide comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents and young people, in and out of school.

UNFPA partnered with Special Olympics Uganda to train over 117 teachers, VHTs, peer educators and social workers under the ANSWER programme. These dedicated volunteers, like Mark, were trained to provide sexuality education for adolescents and young people in and out of school. In 2023, UNFPA piloted the disability for young people with intellectual disabilities, with an aim to expand sexuality education to those excluded. The pilot was implemented in 5 districts of the 15 ANSWER Programme supported districts. Under UNFPA's leadership, Special Olympics Uganda has identified 1,392 persons with Intellectual

Disabilities aged 10–24 in five districts and hopes to expand its reach. Mark's story is an example of the programme's efforts in challenging deeply ingrained beliefs against sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Yet, the journey is far from over in Uganda, where sexuality education is still opposed by many – particularly for people with disabilities. Prevailing negative attitudes prevent people living with a disability from accessing quality reproductive health services and leave them more vulnerable to abuse. Persons with disabilities under the age of 18 are nearly four times more likely to experience abuse compared to their peers without disabilities.

UNFPA and partners like The Netherlands work towards the goal of universal access to sexual and reproductive health, so that every person has the right to make their own choices about their body and their lives.

1,392

Special Olympics Uganda has identified 1,392 persons with Intellectual Disabilities aged 10–24 in five districts and hopes to expand its reach. Mark's story is an example of the programme's efforts in challenging deeply ingrained beliefs against sexual and reproductive health and rights.



SUCCESS STORY

Khot Elizabeth at one of the gatherings to celebrate Safe Spaces. Photo credits: Anena Cinderella

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Zero maternal death

- 28,884 women delivered under the care of a skilled birth attendant, thanks to the support provided by the CERF Secretariat and the UNFPA Humanitarian Thematic Fund to UNFPA Uganda CO humanitarian operations.
- 30 midwives deployed to health facilities serving both the refugee and the Uganda population in districts currently hosting refugees.
- 2 ambulances procured to ensure safe birth for mothers and newborns.
- 7,367 women have been timely transferred to specialized facilities to avert the risks of complicated deliveries.
- 77,639 people were reached (63,455 were aged 10–24 years) with health education, family planning, HIV/STI screening and testing, vaccinations, antenatal and postnatal care, GBV risk and response assessments.
- 5,942 young people received contraceptives.

ZERO GBV

During 2023, 12 Women and Girls Safe Spaces were established, re-equipped or supported in the refugee-hosting districts of Lamwo, Terego, Madi-Okollo, Kyaka and Nakivale, supported by UNFPA. The main activities offered to women and girls in the Safe Spaces in 2023 have been:

- Psychosocial support to women, including GBV survivors – deployed officers for comprehensive psychosocial support.
- Skills training in areas like knitting, soap making, hairdressing and bakery.
- Capacity building of refugee volunteers on SRHR and GBV.

Over 3, 823 women accessed the various services provided. More than 510 individuals received comprehensive psychosocial support.

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Crossed paths and linked destinies: Safe Spaces bring hope to women and girls in Nyumanzi refugee settlement

“We arrived here in this country in 2018, and I joined this women’s space. Progressively, I have learnt to be confident and trust in my ability. I feel more empowered and can stand and talk before men—something that was taboo back at home and was seen as very unusual.”

The bright rays of the sun cast a promising light on the women and girls who have gathered to celebrate their new and old home. It is a place where they can finally feel free and rebuild their lives. The safe space is as much a physical as it is a mental space.

In the depths of Nyumanzi refugee settlement, Adjumani district in Uganda, the United Nations Population Fund, under the Women, Adolescents, Youth Rights and Empowerment programme (WAY), through Care International, established safe spaces where refugee women and girls can have a chance to rebuild their lives and dream again.

And today, a modest delegation has arrived from Denmark and the Royal Danish Embassy. They have come to experience for themselves the difference that the spaces are making for the women and girls, most of whom are refugees from South Sudan. The delegation from the Danish embassy is not only here to witness for themselves the impact of the WAY programme, but also to honour the refugee women and girls whose lives they have touched. Though they may live miles away from each other, in a way, their destinies have crossed, their lives forever linked.

At a young age, Khot Elizabeth fled the war in South Sudan with her family members, and like many of the women here, they took refuge in Nyumanzi. For five years, Elizabeth has come to this space, a haven within the refugee settlement. This place has significantly changed her life and that of hundreds of refugee women and girls.

At a young age, Khot Elizabeth fled the war in South Sudan with her family members, and like many of the women here, they took refuge in Nyumanzi. For five years, Elizabeth has come to this space, a haven within the refugee settlement. This place has significantly changed her life and that of hundreds of refugee women and girls. It has allowed her to process her trauma and bounce back into the woman she was destined to become—a woman beyond her struggles, a woman with hope and the promise of new dawn. She reminisces,

“We arrived here in this country in 2018, and I joined this women’s space. Progressively, I have learnt to be confident and trust in my ability. I feel more empowered and can stand and talk before men—something that was taboo back at home and was seen as very unusual. I am now able to challenge and vie for leadership roles in the community. I want to continue to use the knowledge, experience and skills acquired to positively amplify the voices of women and girls for equality and productive life.”

Elizabeth joined this space as a young girl. In this safe gathering point, Elizabeth like many of her peers, had an opportunity to rebuild herself, her social assets and community networks. Here she accessed information on how to protect herself from early pregnancy, stand up for herself and assert herself in the world. She got business skills in village savings and loans association (VSLA), soap making, making tablecloths and fabric designs, to mention a few.

The women and girls who attend the safe spaces may be of different ages and each on individual journeys, but they have one thing in common, strength and zeal for life! The safe spaces have brought them together and they are thriving. They can claim their place in the world and for most, it is a revelation. They have been given something special, the renewed belief in their power as women and girls, not victims. Their destinies are linked for the better.

The WAY programme covers refugee settlements across the West Nile and Acholi sub-region in the districts of Madi-Okollo/Terego, Adjumani, Yumbe,

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Obongi and Lamwo districts. In these settlements, there are 46 safe spaces for women and youth and 22 refugee volunteers equipped to support the refugees.

In 2023, the WAY programme under the leadership of UNFPA and in partnership with CARE International, supported more than 3,641 refugee women and girls across the 46 safe spaces. More than 1,840 refugee women and girls were trained in various trade skills such as tailoring, beading, and weaving to upscale the profitability of their businesses to further reduce their risks of GBV and enhance their overall empowerment. Over the years, the women’s safe spaces have reduced the risks of GBV and, importantly, provided women and girls with a safe entry point for services and a place to access information.

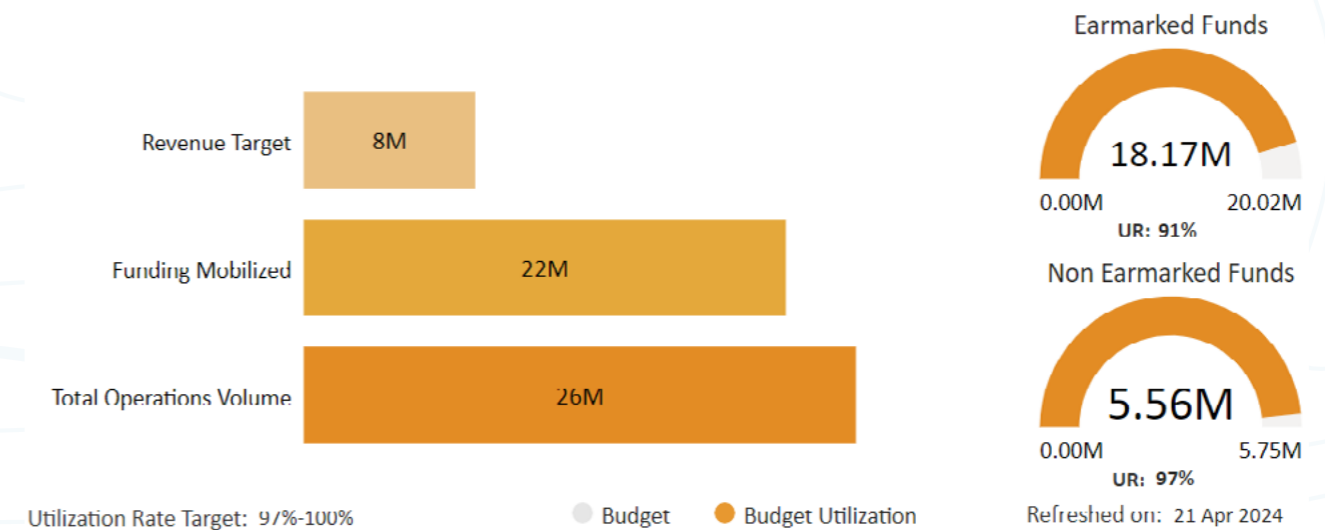
UNFPA continues to advocate for the inclusion of those left behind, most of whom are refugees. The women and girls face the added burdens and challenges related to negative gender norms that make them vulnerable to domestic violence, early pregnancy and even death.

UNFPA is very grateful to the Embassy of Denmark for making it possible to reach women and girls like Elizabeth.

Quick facts: Nyumanzi refugee settlement hosts 216,138 other refugees, part of the 1.5 million refugees currently hosted in Uganda.

PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

AMOUNT OF RESOURCES RAISED IN 2023 (in graphs, infographics)



DONORS

Donor	Donor logo	Project name and description
Austria	Austrian Development Agency	Delivering an integrated package of rights to achieve universal coverage in Karamoja and northern Uganda (2022–2024) to increase the utilization of SRHR and GBV services and reduced GBV and other harmful practices in target districts. Targets women and young people, including those in hard-to-reach communities and those most at risk, will be empowered to exercise their rights free from GBV and social norms, attitudes and behaviours that limit sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).
Denmark	MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK Denmark in Uganda	The Women, Adolescents, and Young People (WAY) programme is a youth and focused programme that empowered women and young people in Northern Uganda including refugees to contribute to their own and their communities’ development through an integrated approach to gender equality, SRHR, GBV services and socio-economic empowerment.

Iceland



Government of Iceland

At the end of 2023, UNFPA received \$3 million from the Embassy of Iceland in Uganda to implement STOP-Survivors Treatment and Obstetric fistula Prevention. The project will target women survivors who have been affected by obstetric fistula to increase access to fistula prevention services, address the stigma and gender-based violence often faced by survivors of fistula, and rehabilitation.

Netherlands



Advancing Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights in the West Nile and Acholi Sub regions in Uganda (ANSWER Programme) was a four year programme (2019–2023) that contributed to the achievement of universal access. The programme also contributed to the integration of the demographic dividend in the National Development Plan III, specifically the Human Capital Development programme and the district development plans.

Norway



Norwegian Embassy
Kampala

The EYE is a 3-year Norwegian government funded programme in Uganda and implemented by UNFPA in partnership with Marie Stopes Uganda, Care Uganda National Population Council, and Naguru Teenage Information and Health Centre and GoU. The programme uses The EYE project, with a multifaceted approach of creating an enabling environment for SRHR, demand generation and delivering essential services to adolescents

Sweden



The Joint Programme for Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response (JPGBV) with Integration of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for Hard-to-Reach and Vulnerable Populations in Uganda aims to contribute to the elimination of gender-based violence and the promotion of the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, girls, boys and men, especially those belonging to disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. The programme is funded by Sweden and implemented by UNFPA and UN Women.

EU



The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate violence against women and girls by 2030. In Uganda, the particular focus is on eliminating sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices of child marriage and female genital mutilation, as well the linkages between GBV (SRHR) and the linkages between GBV and violence against children more broadly.

The Initiative is a multi-stakeholder programme implemented by eight UN agencies (UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR, IOM and Pulse Lab) and entities, more than 20 Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, six District Local Governments, and over 30 civil society organizations, the private sector, religious and cultural institutions, and academia in Uganda. The Spotlight initiative is implemented in 7 districts of Uganda including Amudat, Arua, Kampala, Kasese, Kitgum, Kyegewa and Tororo.



With support from the CERF Secretariat, in 2023 UNFPA implemented a humanitarian response programme aimed at maintaining critical, lifesaving and integrated SRH and GBV services within the Ugandan refugee response. UNFPA and its implementing partner have been able to reach refugees and their host communities in Settlements of Kyaka, Palabek, Imvepi, Rhino Camp, Nakivale. This intervention significantly increased the access to SRH and GBV services within refugee settlements and host communities. The project invested heavily in building the capacity of healthcare workers and community health teams for sustainable impact, with a notable focus on serving young people and addressing the needs of teenage mothers.

UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage
Governments of Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the European Union, as well as Zonta International

The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage promotes the rights of adolescent girls to avert marriage and pregnancy, and enables them to achieve their aspirations through education and alternative pathways. The Global Programme supports households in demonstrating positive attitudes, empowers girls to direct their own futures, and strengthens the services that allow them to do so. It also addresses the underlying conditions that sustain child marriage, advocating for laws and policies that protect girls' rights while highlighting the importance of using robust data to inform such policies.

UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM
European Union and the governments of Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America

UNFPA and UNICEF have jointly led the largest global programme to accelerate the elimination of female genital mutilation (FGM) since 2008. In close collaboration with governments, grassroots community organizations and other key stakeholders, the Joint Programme harnesses the complementary expertise of both UNFPA and UNICEF, as well as the latest social science research, to prevent female genital mutilation across the 17 countries where the programme operates.

PARTNERS

Government of Uganda (GoU)	Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
Uganda Human Rights Commission	Save the Children Uganda (SCU)
Special Olympics Uganda	Plan International Uganda
CARE International	Marie Stopes Uganda (MSU)
Naguru Teenage Information and Health Center (NTIHC)	Reproductive Health Uganda
Outbox	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
clinicPesa	Building Resilience Across Communities (BRAC)
Agency for Cooperation in Research and Development Uganda (ACORD)	ActionAid International Uganda (AAIU)



UN PARTNERS

United Nations in Uganda	UNEP
FAO	UNHCR
ILO	UNICEF
IOM	UNODC
UNAIDS	UNV
UNCDF	UN Women
UNDP	WFP
UNESCO	WHO







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