

THE SITUATION OF **CHILDREN** IN **SOUTH SUDAN**

2020 | ANNUAL REPORT



In 2020, UNICEF South Sudan established a child report programme to create a platform where children can speak up about matters affecting their lives.

By the end of 2020, we had child reporters in Yambio and Juba.



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UNICEF South Sudan, 2020

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The year 2020 came with several challenges. However, it is important to highlight a few achievements that were experienced throughout the year. With the aim to reduce child malnutrition, parents were taught how to closely monitor and treat malnutrition by promoting and using better nutrition and food practices at home. Routine immunization coverage increased from 45 to 57 per cent due to rapid implementation of new guidelines for immunization in the context of COVID-19. Gender-based violence (GBV) counselling services are now more available than ever through the establishment of a GBV hotline. It is easy to focus on all the challenges the pandemic created, but I chose to focus on the opportunities COVID-19 brought about. When UNICEF was challenged by the many restrictions aimed at preventing the spread of the disease, our staff and partners stayed committed and went out of their way to find solutions and continue delivery of services. Besides the delays of a few vaccination campaigns, I am proud to say

that we have not had major breakdowns of essential health, WASH and nutrition service delivery for children in 2020. The lessons from 2020 will shape how we think about delivering for children in 2021 and beyond.

We also have to be honest about the downsides of COVID-19. Before the pandemic hit, children were living under extreme conditions with high levels of food insecurity, poverty, violence and poor access to basic services such as health care and clean water. With COVID-19, an already very difficult situation was exacerbated and children were faced with a multiplicity of crises.

The biggest COVID-19 blow was the closure of all schools. With 2.8 million children out of school before the pandemic, South Sudan had one of the highest out-of-school ratios in the world. When the school gates closed in March 2020 an additional 2 million children were out of school. It goes without saying that academic learning has suffered immensely, but school is so much more than learning. It is a place for play and socialization. It is an entry point for access to services. For many children, their only meal per day is served at school. The most vulnerable children need a break from their suffering and going to school creates structure and normalcy when everything else is chaotic. Lastly, the schools have protective walls against violence, abuse and exploitation including harmful social practices such as child marriage and early pregnancies. The closure of the schools was not an education crisis, it was a child rights crisis.

UNICEF and partners mitigated some of the academic losses by providing a remote learning programme through radio stations, reaching over 1.5 million children. The reopening of schools for candidate classes, Primary 8 and Senior 4, in October was a welcomed milestone and the next one will be the reopening of the rest of the classes. For children to stay protected, we must ensure schools remain open throughout the pandemic. There is significant global evidence that schools are not drivers of the pandemic, and equal evidence for the destructive consequences of school closures on the wellbeing of children.

Severe flooding affecting over a million people, increasing intercommunal violence and an alarming food security situation were also duly noted in 2020. UNICEF South Sudan has responded to all the crises simultaneously while ensuring the continuation of life-saving programmes to avoid new emergencies. Our two main response challenges were the increase in insecurity and the decrease of funding. 2020 saw nine humanitarians killed compared to six the year before. Our Humanitarian Action for Children appeal was only 66 per cent funded with the WASH and Child Protection Sectors hardest hit.

Despite all these challenges we are optimistic. We know there are many supporters of children in South Sudan who will also be there for them in 2021. UNICEF is committed to turning every stone to ensure we get maximum value out of every dollar and will look for innovative ways of assisting children. It is our aspiration that children get back to their classrooms, as this is an important step in realizing every child's rights. Lastly, being around children fills me with optimism and inspires me as they bring fresh views, new ideas and courage- everything we need for a better future for every child.

Hamida Lasseko

UNICEF Representative, South Sudan





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THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN SOUTH SUDAN IN 2020

Children in South Sudan faced persistent inequities and child rights violations, undermining their rights to survive and thrive and fulfil their potential. Women and girls continued to be disproportionately affected due to widespread gender-based violence, mobility restrictions and lack of access to and control over resources.



Over 7.5 million people, including 4.1 million children needed humanitarian assistance in 2020. Almost four million people out of a population of 12 million, were displaced at the end of the year: 1.6 million internally and more than 2.3 million as refugees. With the latter, South Sudan maintained its position as one of the largest refugee crises globally, with only three other countries (Syria, Venezuela and Afghanistan) producing more refugees. New displacement of children and their families happened throughout

the year due to clashes between armed forces and armed groups and intercommunal fighting. The plummeting oil price, high inflation and COVID-19 restrictions affecting businesses contributed to an already dire financial situation in South Sudan, pushing people deeper into poverty.

South Sudan remained one of the most dangerous countries in the world for a child. One out of ten children don't make it past their fifth birthday due to diseases like pneumonia and malaria in combination with poor access to health care and

a scanty nutrition situation. Diarrheal diseases due to lack of access to clean water (35%), sanitation (17%) and hygiene, remain one of the top three causes of death for children under five years of age. Outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases such as measles and vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 were confirmed in 2020. Both outbreaks are due to low routine immunization rates over many years, leaving children at risk of life-threatening diseases. At the end of 2020, the coverage of the diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP3) routine immunisation stood at 57 per cent. Maternal health indices are also quite bleak with a mortality ratio estimated at 789 per 100,000 live births.

Children were hardest hit by the increasing intercommunal fighting and the severe flooding in 2020. More than a million people were affected by the rising water, swallowing houses and health centres, ruined crops and contaminated water sources. The greater Upper Nile region was most affected as a whole, including Jonglei State where most of the intercommunal fighting take place. The multiple shocks these areas were faced with, compounded by a dire food security situation, contributed to the continuation of the nutrition crisis. 1.3 million children were suffering from acute malnutrition in 2020, an all-time high since the country gained its independence.

2020 saw an increase in child protection risks due to COVID-19 restrictions in general and more specifically the closure of schools, affecting girls in particular. UNICEF has multiple accounts of girls being married off early and early pregnancies as a direct consequence of places of learning closing in March 2020 and increasing poverty. Reportedly, there was an increase in gender-based violence due to increased domestic tension as a result of loss of income, more families staying at home and adhering to other lockdown measures. The COVID-19 closure of schools has also had significant impact on children's academic learning and overall wellbeing, especially the most vulnerable ones as classrooms are important platforms for psychosocial support. Recruitment and use of boys and girls by armed forces and armed groups continued, despite the signing of the Action Plan against the Six Grave Violation against Children in Armed Conflict.

The Country Office at a Glance

UNICEF South Sudan was established in 2011 after the independence of the Republic of South Sudan. Before that, the area that is now known as South Sudan was part of Sudan and UNICEF activities were carried out by UNICEF Sudan, including Operation Lifeline Sudan up to 2005. By the end of 2020, UNICEF South Sudan had 13 field and zonal offices to better reach children across the country. The country office had 364 personnel at the end of 2020. UNICEF South Sudan's main partner is the Government of South Sudan and its line ministries. UNICEF has invested in increasing the localization of aid in South Sudan through building capacity of national non-governmental organizations and through targeted resource allocations. Nearly half of UNICEF's partners in South Sudan are national organizations. At the end of 2020, UNICEF South Sudan had 89 active partnerships with civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations.

Responding to the immediate needs of children is central to the UNICEF South Sudan Country Programme. Although the implementation context remained complex and most programmes underfunded, UNICEF delivered critical life-saving child protection, education, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and risk communication and community engagement services. The formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity in February 2020 signalled the start of a shift from humanitarian and recovery into development and systems building efforts. During 2020, progress was made on multiple fronts in strengthening emergency preparedness, responding to public health emergencies including COVID-19. UNICEF also realigned ongoing programmes to ensure continued vigilance and response to the pandemic, while returning to more regular programming on resilience and systems building approaches.

NUTRITION

The key challenge of 2020 was to ensure the continuation of nutrition services despite the COVID-19 restrictions, insecurity and severe flooding. Several outpatient therapeutic programme (OTP) centres were flooded, and service delivery moved to makeshift sites under trees and later to tents to prevent breaches as the most vulnerable children's lives depend on continuation of the treatment. Yet, the operations at several OTPs had to be suspended in the areas hardest hit by the floods and where conflicts erupted. Most of the OTPs were functional again by the end of the year.

The COVID-19 pandemic required intensified hygiene protocols and physical distancing in the OTPs and reduction in number of visitors at the nutrition sites. Going from one to two weeks intervals between OTP visits for the patients and teaching parents how to monitor the child's progression at home, using a mid-upper-arm circumference tape were some of the measures put in place to ensure continuation of services.

With an estimated higher caseload of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in 2020 compared to 2019, a key focus for UNICEF was to ensure all 1172 nutrition sites across the country had enough ready-to-use therapeutic food and other medicines. Despite the many challenges of 2020, no major breaches in service delivery were noted. However, less children than anticipated were admitted to the nutrition programme. Compared to 2019, admission rate was reduced by 19.5 per cent. Given that the



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KEY RESULTS



198,394 children treated for SAM with a 95% recovery rate.

1,172 UNICEF supported nutrition sites in the country.

1,697,683 children provided with Vitamin A supplementation.

1,633,085 pregnant women and caregivers received infant and young child feeding counselling.

6,000 community nutrition volunteers trained on screening of children using colour-coded mid-upper arm circumference in partnership with the World Food Programme and partners.

estimated caseload would be higher in 2020, there are reasons to believe that children in need of help were never brought to the nutrition sites. Many factors, including localized conflict, displacements, suspension of facilities, flooding and adaptations due to COVID-19 are associated with the reduction in SAM admissions in 2020. In addition, the high number of children treated for malnutrition successfully in 2019 could have contributed to lower needs in 2020. UNICEF is proud to note a cure rate of 95 per cent in the UNICEF supported nutrition sites, meaning that if we have access to the children in need, almost every child will recover.

Throughout the year, UNICEF has continued its focus on prevention of malnutrition in children through integrating water sanitation and hygiene at all nutrition sites, providing counselling to mothers and caregivers and training community nutrition volunteers to screen children. Through sustained advocacy and technical discussions with the Ministry of Health, we facilitated the roll-out of guidelines on global infant and young child feeding and breastfeeding. To reduce costs and increase effectiveness UNICEF reduced dependency on air assets and leveraged access by waterways and roads to preposition life-saving supplies. In addition, through an ongoing partnership with the World Food Programme biometric registration system, we strengthened data collection and management to improve follow-up of the children and avoid duplications.

PLAYING IS NOT ONLY FOR FUN

Eleven-month-old Jenty, is smiling and playing again after treatment for malnutrition in Yambio, South Sudan.

“It started with her having diarrhoea for several days. She couldn’t keep down what we were giving her,” says Margaret, her mother. Margaret took Jenty to a UNICEF-supported nutrition centre where she was diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition. “Jenty didn’t have much energy back then. She was given ready-to-use therapeutic food and very quickly she got her energy back.”

When children are malnourished, their brain development slows down. To increase recovery and treatment outcomes, UNICEF has piloted the introduction of early childhood development activities such as play, at the nutrition centre. Playing stimulates the brain and is important for the continuation of the brain development. Focus on play in the period when the child undergoes treatment contributes to a quick recovery.

“Jenty didn’t have much energy back then. She was given ready-to-use therapeutic food and very quickly she got her energy back.”



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Top Resource Partners to Nutrition in 2020 (In alphabetical order) were: the European Commission, The Government of Germany, the United States of America and the United Kingdom

WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)



KEY RESULTS

305,981 people were provided with access to basic water services.

102,704 people supported with basic sanitation.

371,721 individuals have benefitted from the distribution of core-pipeline supplies including jerrycans, buckets, soap and water treatment chemicals.

205,706 people benefitted from improved sanitation in 305 villages that achieved open defecation free status.

2,478 adolescent girls and women of childbearing age received menstrual hygiene kits and messaging.

560,000 reusable face masks were distributed to vulnerable populations.



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With severe flooding affecting over one million people and a COVID-19 pandemic requiring a firm hygiene response, the need for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services grew in 2020, while the funding for the UNICEF programme continued to decline. Yet, UNICEF was able to respond to the most immediate needs of people affected by the flooding by providing water purification chemicals, buckets for handwashing stations, jerrycans for safe storage of water and soap for maintaining hygiene. Some of the areas hardest hit by the floods have some of the most vulnerable children in South Sudan as these areas have the worst health indicators, high food insecurity and prevalence of malnutrition and insecurity. Hence, an adequate WASH response was paramount for saving lives.

With no treatment for COVID-19 available, all efforts in South Sudan were put on prevention which included a comprehensive WASH response with focus of infection prevention and control. Handwashing stations were established in crowded areas such as markets, at the entrance of courts and police stations. Hygiene promoters were placed next to the handwashing facilities to increase use and awareness. Basic hygiene items such as buckets and soap were distributed

in areas where physical distancing is difficult, including camps and settlements for internally displaced people. Reusable face masks were also distributed to the same populations. UNICEF also supported health and nutrition facilities with training on hygiene protocols, personal protection equipment and hygiene items to ensure continuation of critical services in the context of COVID-19.

Despite huge funding shortfalls in 2020, the WASH programme provided access to safe water, basic sanitation and hygiene services to the vulnerable and affected host communities in protection of civilian sites (PoC) and internally displaced people camps. This includes trucking of water, establishment of boreholes, construction of latrines and distribution of soap, buckets and sanitary pads. In five urban centres across South Sudan the programme made a strong shift towards linking humanitarian and development interventions by designing and planning construction of urban water works in Bor, Juba, Torit, Yambio and Yei. UNICEF continued to work with communities to ensure they achieved open defecation free status and scaled- up gender-sensitive WASH to mitigate the risk of gender-based violence.

CLEAN HANDS

“ I wash my hands before taking my tea I wash my hands any time when they are dirty to remove germs. I wash my hand when I eat my food and after using toilet. I also wash hands, so I don't get Corona. ”

Five-year-old Ugwak Santo Tong knows handwashing is something you must do many times per day to stay healthy. In an emergency intervention in response to the COVID-19 prevention activities in Wau, Western Bahr el Ghazal State UNICEF increased access to clean water and hygiene by rehabilitating and laying of new pipelines and water storage tanks and extending existing pipelines to seven water kiosks. Additionally, 25 handwashing stations were placed in frequently visited areas to improve hygiene and prevent transmission of diseases including COVID-19. The project will directly benefit 17,400 people and indirectly reach 41,400 people.



Top Resource Partners to WASH in 2020 (In alphabetical order) were: the Government of Germany, the Government of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

HEALTH



Ensuring continuation of essential health services in the context of COVID-19 was essential to combatting child mortality in 2020. As COVID-19 to a very little extent affects children directly and other diseases prevalent in South Sudan remain a serious threat, the UNICEF response focused on ensuring health facilities could operate as normal as possible. UNICEF established COVID-19 triage in 191 health facilities supported under the access to essential health services project, carried out in partnership with the World Bank. UNICEF trained 3,202 health care and community workers in infection prevention and control and distributed personal protective equipment and other infection prevention control supplies, including soap and buckets. We also developed guidelines and standard operating procedures for 1,753 facilities in eight states to ensure continuity of vaccination and other essential healthcare services.

In 2020, UNICEF and partners continued to tackle the measles outbreak which started in 2019. New localized outbreaks continued to emerge throughout the year. A nation-wide vaccination campaign was launched in February, aiming at reaching 2.5 million children. The first round was a success, but the second round scheduled for April 2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19.

KEY RESULTS



1,791,230 individuals provided with curative consultations, including 818,267 children.

537,850 pregnant women and children provided with insecticide-treated nets in malaria-endemic areas.

321 tons of supplies delivered to 191 health facilities supported by UNICEF in Upper Nile and Jonglei states.

302,128 children aged 6 months to 15 years vaccinated against measles.

The declaration of South Sudan as free of wild poliovirus was an important milestone for the country and for all health partners. However, an outbreak of vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 was declared in September 2020. Together with the Ministry of Health and WHO, UNICEF played a crucial role in the response by procuring the vaccine and contributing to the organisation of the vaccination campaign in response to the outbreak. By the end of the year, all states had completed at least one vaccination round, and the second round is planned for early 2021. The country continues to experience disease outbreaks because of the low routine immunization rates in South Sudan as a result of years of conflict, poor access to quality health care and many people living in hard-to-reach areas.

Over 1.7 million people received curative consultations with the support from UNICEF in 2020. Most children and adults received treatment for malaria (33%) followed by pneumonia (16%) and diarrhoea (11%), which are the top three causes of child morbidity and child mortality in South Sudan.

BREATHING BEADS

To improve access to essential health services and reduce child mortality in rural communities located more than five kilometres away from a healthcare facility, UNICEF rolled out in partnership with the World Bank the Boma Health Initiative in 170 Bomas in Jonglei and Upper Nile States. Mach Jok is one of the volunteers trained to become a Boma Health Worker in Wijok cattle camp in Nasir in the eastern part of South Sudan. For camp residents, the nearest medical facility is more than 5 kilometres away. In his blue box, Mach has malaria medication, oral rehydration salt for treatment of acute watery diarrhoea and medical examination tools and testing kits. "I learned a lot during the (basic healthcare) training," says Mach. "The mothers in the cattle camp are so happy I am here. Now they can take their children to me and save them the long journey." In 2020, the Boma Health Workers contributed to some 256,249 life-saving health consultations for children under the age of five living in remote locations.

“I learned a lot during the (basic healthcare) training. The mothers in the cattle camp are so happy I am here. Now they can take their children to me and save them the long journey.”



Top resource partners to health in 2020 (In alphabetical order) were: Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance, the German Committee for UNICEF, The Government of Germany, The United Kingdom and the United States of America.

EDUCATION



KEY RESULTS

1.5 million children and young people were reached with radio learning.

795,473 children and young people (344,498 girls) in humanitarian situations supported with pre-primary, primary (formal and nonformal) and secondary education.

3,053 teachers (586 female) completed the 40-day in-service Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme, and an additional 8,790 teachers (723 females) were trained on basic pedagogy and learner centred methods.

921,935 children were provided with learning supplies such as exercise books, pens and textbooks.

1,700 schools supported to reopen in during the COVID-19 crisis.

1.9 million textbooks distributed to schools.

In 2020, but before the COVID-19 pandemic hit South Sudan, the country recorded a massive increase in the number of out-of-school children from 2.2 million in 2018 to 2.8 million. Children living in conflict affected and remote areas, internally displaced children, children from pastoralists communities, children with disabilities, child labourers, street children and girls are overrepresented among the out-of-school children.

As a preventive measure against COVID-19, the Government of South Sudan decided to close all educational institutions in South Sudan in March 2020. This put additional 2 million children out of school and threatened to roll back the gains made to ensure children in South Sudan have access to quality education. To mitigate some of the loss in learning due to the school closure and to keep children occupied at home, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), UNICEF and

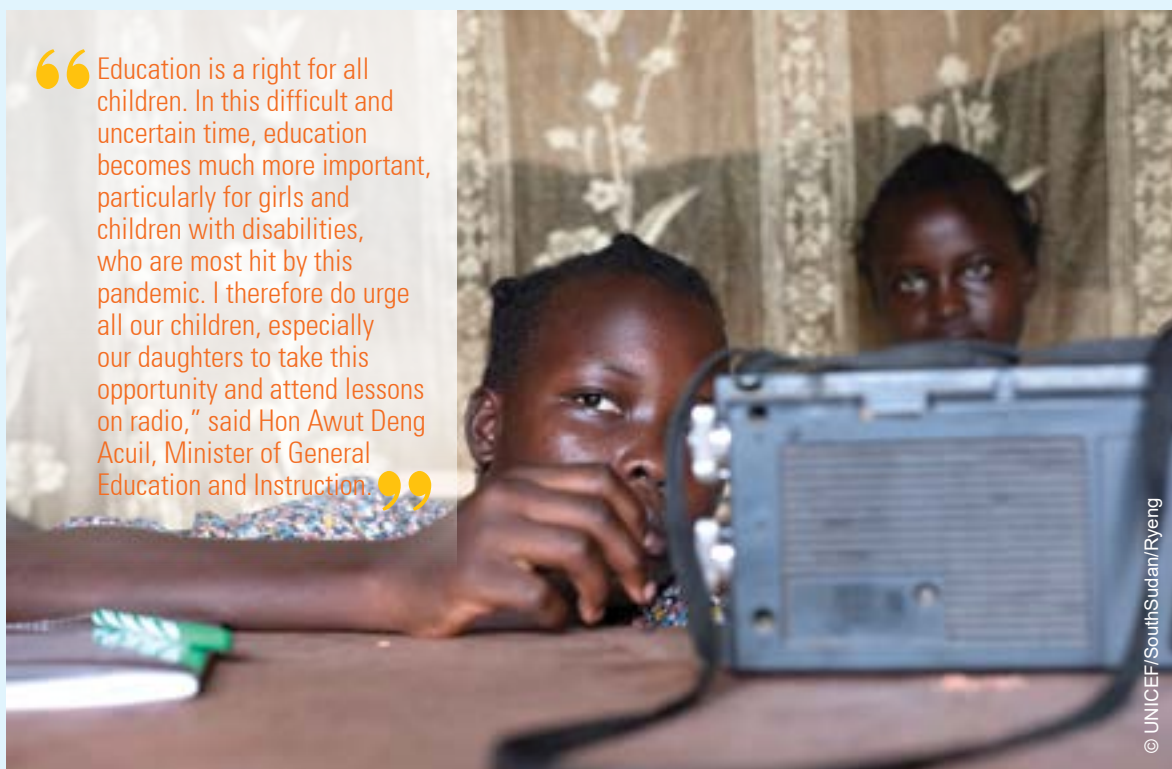
partners launched a remote learning programme using radio. The programmes covered English, mathematics and science. As many families don't have access to radios, UNICEF also handed out radios to some of the most vulnerable families.

In October 2020, schools reopened for Primary 8 and Senior 4 classes, which have their final exams early 2021. UNICEF supported the reopening of 1,700 schools by providing education supplies and hygiene and sanitation items such as buckets and soap for handwashing stations and reusable face masks for the 110,000 students.

Despite the school closure, UNICEF continued with the distribution of the new textbooks for the South Sudan curriculum to schools all over South Sudan. UNICEF also supported the capacity gap assessment of Community Education Centres and National Teacher Training Institutes as a strategic step to institutionalise teacher training.

SUN-POWERED EDUCATION

“Education is a right for all children. In this difficult and uncertain time, education becomes much more important, particularly for girls and children with disabilities, who are most hit by this pandemic. I therefore do urge all our children, especially our daughters to take this opportunity and attend lessons on radio,” said Hon Awut Deng Acuil, Minister of General Education and Instruction.”



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With 2.8 million children out of school in South Sudan before COVID-19 and the literacy rate standing at 14.5 per cent for women and 35 per cent for men, the country cannot afford more children missing out on basic education. To mitigate some of the effects of the school closure, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, UNICEF and partners launched a distance learning programme. Additionally, UNICEF, with the support of USAID, procured 32,000 solar-powered radios, for distribution to children from vulnerable households, including those in rural areas without electricity, and children with special needs across South Sudan.

Top Resource Partners to Education in 2020 were (In alphabetical order): the European Commission, the Global Partnerships for Education, the Government of Norway and the United States of America.

CHILD PROTECTION



KEY RESULTS

234,432 children reached with critical child protection services.

95,487 children (45,755 girls) reached with psychosocial support.

545 unaccompanied and separated children were registered, out of 59 were reunified with caregivers.

83,641 individuals were reached through gender-based violence, response, prevention and risk mitigation interventions.

57 children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) released in 2020; an additional 431 children (158 girls) released in previous years continued to receive case management services.

55,304 individuals (33,182 girls) reached with lifesaving key explosive ordinance risk education (EORE) messages.

38,262 new-borns were issued birth notifications.

845 frontline workers were trained on psychosocial first aid and addressing social stigma, discrimination and self-care.

The child protection needs in South Sudan increased in 2020 while the funding for these essential programmes remained low. The closure of schools due to COVID-19 in March 2020 put children at increased risk of exploitation and abuse. Especially girls were hard hit. There are numerous reports of girls being married off early and teenage pregnancies due to the school closure. Furthermore, there are reports of more street children, boys joining gangs and abusing substances and more child labour. Children have experienced severe psychological distress and disruption in the communities where they grow and develop.

The financial crisis put more strain on families and in combination with families staying more home due to COVID-19 restriction, more incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) were reported. UNICEF has tried to mitigate some of the

devastating effects by launching distant learning programmes for students, using community influencers to stand up against harmful social norms and practices and establishing a GBV hotline. In November 2020, UNICEF Child Protection section and child protection partners, launched the multisectoral safety audit in South Sudan. Through the flagship Communities Care Programme (CCP) which promotes gender equitable and positive social transformation norms, 29 community discussion groups were formed and over 800,000 people were reached through community awareness creation activities. CCP expanded its work in 2020 to address child marriage, teenage pregnancies and sexual violence with 74 per cent of community discussion participants registering positive change in beliefs and attitudes on GBV.

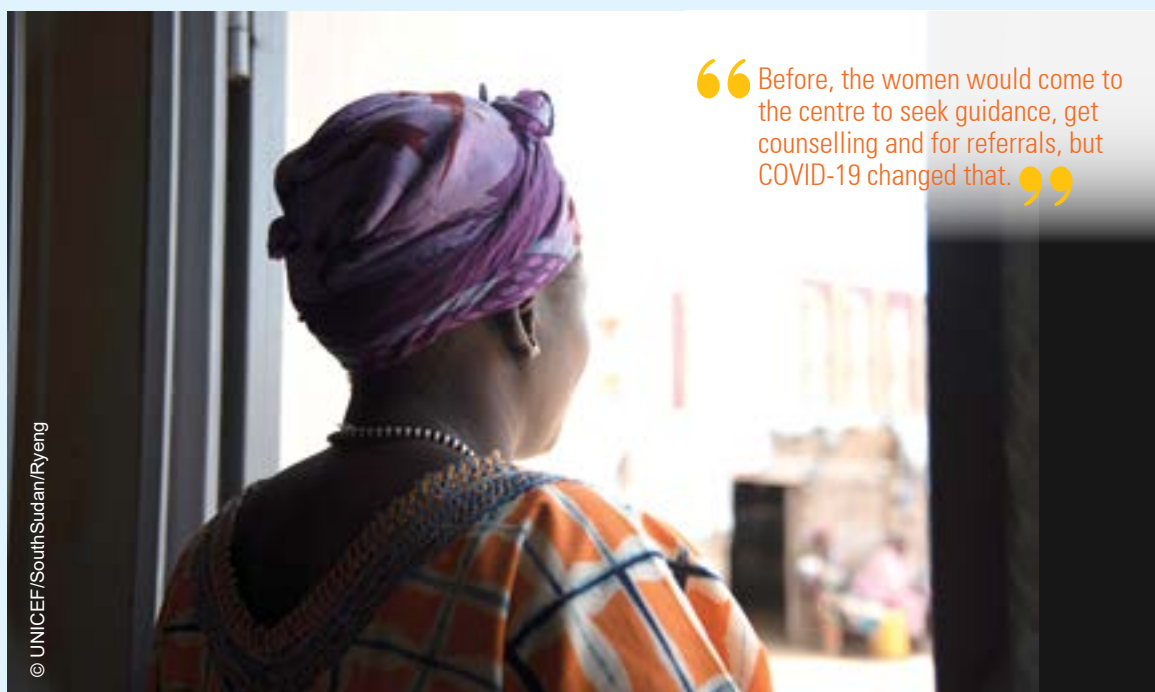
The signing of the Comprehensive Action Plan to End All Grave Violations Against Children

in Armed Conflict in February 2020, was an important milestone to end the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. Yet, more efforts need to be made to implement the plan including for the parties to formally release the plan and for the Government of South Sudan to secure funding for its implementation. Despite these gains, the United Nations continues to verify and document grave violations against children by armed forces and armed groups. The number of verified grave violations declined from 803 in 2018 to 175 violations in 2020. It is important to note that COVID-19 restrictions made monitoring and

verification more challenging and that the numbers might not represent an absolute decline in grave violations against children. COVID-19 restrictions also hampered the verification and release of children associated with armed forces and armed groups in 2020. Yet, a total of 57 children were released in 2020 and provided with reintegration services.

COVID-19 also made family tracing and reunification more difficult. Even though parents were located, reunification could not take place due to movement restrictions.

A PHONELINE BECAME A LIFELINE



In Aweil, Northern Bahr El Ghazal State, a hotline has become a lifeline for women requiring gender-based violence (GBV) support. “Before, the women would come to the centre to seek guidance, get counselling and for referrals, but COVID-19 changed that,” says caseworker Laura Ajang. Due to COVID-19 measures, it became difficult for GBV survivors to seek help at the local women and girl’s friendly centre. There were no means of transport to get to the centre and even for those who could get there, the number of people allowed to assemble has been reduced. American Refugee Committee which runs the hotline with UNICEF support, printed the hotline number and distributed it in public places. Before, the hotline would receive only two to four calls a week. Now they receive two to three per day. “I love that I can help people in my community and in particular women of course. I can support them when they have a problem and guide them to a solution,” Laura says.

Top Resource Partners in 2020 to Child Protection (in alphabetical order) were: the European Commission, the United Nation’s Peacebuilding Fund and the United States of America.

CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

Gender



KEY RESULTS



31,646 children including 16,456 girls benefitted from gender friendly WASH facilities in 48 schools.

67 institutions provided with gender segregated latrines including change rooms for menstrual hygiene.

Women and girls have been particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many women, who are predominantly engaged in the informal economic sector, lost their livelihoods and school closures put more girls at risk of dropping out of school, child marriage and early pregnancies. In 2020, UNICEF continued to work closely with The Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare as an instrumental partner in implementing its cross-sectoral Gender Action Plan 2019 – 2021 and advocating for an end to child marriage.

Additionally, UNICEF increased engagement with schools, faith leaders, communities and other stakeholders on girl child education, menstrual hygiene management, school related gender-based violence and child marriage. UNICEF supported nine Women and Girls Friendly Spaces (WGFS) and continued with provision of GBV specialised support to women and girls including referrals to other specialized and non-specialised services.

WALKING INTO THE FUTURE WITH A BABY IN HER ARMS

Nyaget is navigating two worlds. The first as a mother to a 19-day-old baby boy and the second one as a primary eight student at the Hope Primary School inside the Juba protection of civilian camp (PoC). In South Sudan, many girls drop out of school due to poverty, early marriage and pregnancy. To bridge this learning crisis affecting girls, UNICEF and its implementing partners established the Hope Primary School inside the PoC. Together, they provided teaching and learning materials, payment of teachers' incentives, training of teachers and the establishment of a parents' teachers association. Nyaget was among 990 students from the PoC in Juba who participated in the final exams in February 2020, with support from UNICEF and partners.

“I always wanted to become an educated person,” says Nyaget Mot who is sitting her primary leaving exams. “I would like to continue my education and hopefully one day I can go to university and become a nurse.”



Prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA)



In the context of COVID-19, UNICEF focused its prevention of sexual abuse and exploitations efforts on its implementing partners and especially the front-line workers involved in the COVID-19 response. A total of 22 awareness raising sessions were held, reaching 406 NGO and 19 UNICEF staff members. The training is focused on the six core principles related to sexual exploitation and abuse and reporting channels. In 2020, the country office started rolling out the UNICEF procedure for managing risks of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in implementing partnerships. As UNICEF and WFP have many of the same partners, some of the trainings were done in collaboration with the sister agencies. Due to the travel restrictions related to COVID-19, UNICEF used radio jingles in multiple languages to reach communities with messages on PSEA and safe and confidential reporting. A 'grievance and redress mechanism' (GRM) was piloted under the Provision of Essential Health Services Project. Beneficiaries are encouraged to report any type of

KEY RESULTS

52 UNICEF implementing partners were assessed on risk of SEA.

40 UNICEF partners trained on PSEA procedures.

19 focus group discussions and 3 key informant interviews were conducted in the former Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites in Juba and Malakal.

3,053,029 people reached through radio messages on PSEA.

allegations and concerns encountered as part of the delivery of the services. Lastly, UNICEF was elected one of the co-chairs of the UN country team PSEA taskforce in 2020.

Communication for Development



KEY RESULTS

8.6 million individuals reached with life-saving messages on disease outbreaks, education, nutrition, health, WASH and child protection.

2,500 social mobilizers disseminated key messages.

6,346 community mobilisers trained and engaged on COVID-19.

28,539 community influencers trained and engaged on COVID-19.

50,831 radio jingles with key messages aired.

123,154 calls received on toll free numbers (6666 and 2222)

Responding to disease outbreaks, including Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, COVID-19, Polio and Measles were the focus of the communication for development section in 2020, together with flood response and back to school campaigns. As the lead on risk communication together with the Ministry of Health, UNICEF planned and rolled out multiple large-scale innovative and traditional communication campaigns to raise awareness on disease outbreaks and lifesaving information.

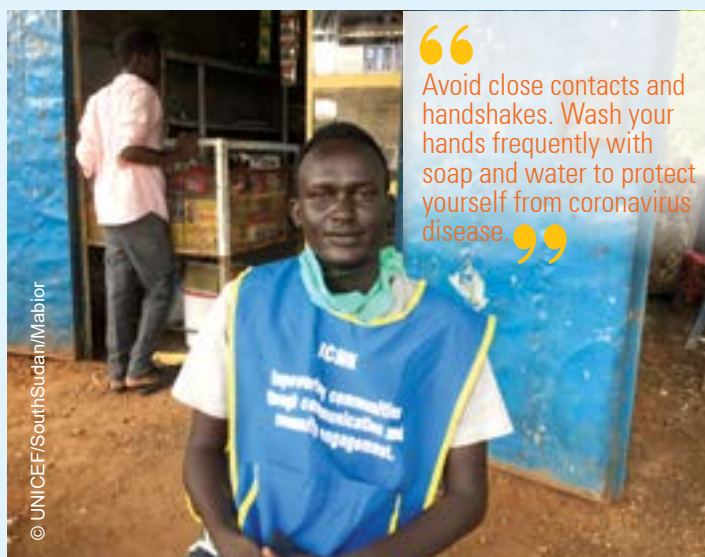
For the COVID-19 response, focus was given to simple measures everyone could adhere to, including physical distancing and handwashing. UNICEF partnered with 42 radio stations to disseminate essential messages airing an average of eight radio jingles every day. A network of 2,500 social mobilizers were disseminating key COVID-19 messages through interpersonal communication and community meetings observing COVID-19 protocols. UNICEF also produced and distributed 1.5 million leaflets, posters and banners in five different languages and trained and sensitised community mobilizers and influencers.

UNICEF supported the community feedback mechanism by partnering with the South Sudan Council of Churches and supported the establishment of the toll-free line 2222 for information sharing and feedback. Together with the Ministry of Health, a COVID-19 hotline, 6666, was created. Community feedback was also collected through the online application ONA, radio talk shows, and community mobilisers moving from house to house. Community feedback is guiding all UNICEF programmes.

UNICEF's communication for development efforts were also central to the measles and polio outbreak responses. Ahead of the vaccination campaigns, the population was mobilised to improve demand for vaccination. In response to the floods, UNICEF scaled up awareness-raising on positive health practices, safe motherhood, infant and young child feeding practices, hygiene promotion in affected areas while linking community members to services and supporting community referral systems. The network of mobilisers was also an essential part of UNICEF's efforts to address issues such as child marriage, girl's education and gender-based violence (GBV).

THE SOUND OF ENDING COVID-19

“Avoid close contacts and handshakes. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water to protect yourself from coronavirus disease,” shouts 25-year-old Nyok Daniel, as he walks through a busy street in the centre of Malakal town, Upper Nile State, megaphone in hand. Nyok is the team leader of UNICEF-supported social mobilisers doing awareness raising and behaviour change communication. Together they are conducting house to house social mobilisation visits, while others are in a mobile van mounted with a sound system, driving slowly in the streets disseminating COVID-19 prevention messages.



SOCIAL POLICY



KEY RESULTS

UNICEF and **UNDP** launched a joint programme to support the Ministry of Finance and Planning on public finance management through the Sustainable Development Goal Fund for Finance.

UNICEF and **WFP** collaborated to roll out a WASH voucher pilot in Aweil, Bor and Bentiu for distribution of hygiene materials and emergency cash reaching 4,105 vulnerable households including over 12,000 children, affected by COVID-19 and floods.

In 2020, UNICEF supported the development of a citizen budget and a consultation with populations on public spending. Although the 2019/20 national budget was more than 2.5 times the previous budget, the overall allocation to social sectors was only 11 per cent, education, health and humanitarian affairs combined. The social spending is far away from the commitments the Government of South Sudan has made through the Abuja Declaration, saying 15 per cent of the national budget should be allocated to the health sector alone. The bulk of the budget was allocated to infrastructure (54%) and security (10%).

PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING



In 2020, partnerships enabled UNICEF's rapid deployment of emergency supplies, building technical capacity and preparing and responding to the challenges affecting women and children. UNICEF continued to enjoy strategic partnerships with sister United Nations organizations and National and International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO).

As part of its localization strategy, UNICEF partnered with the South Sudan NGO Forum to build capacity for national NGOs. Additionally, to improve the capacity of national civil society organizations, UNICEF supported the development and strengthening of seven partners' resource mobilization strategies, conducted a session on communication strategies for 15 implementing partners and reached 257 NGO participants to foster effective management of partnerships, management of financial resources, and anti-fraud awareness. COVID-19 opened new private sector partnerships with media companies including South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation (SSBC), Radio Miraya, Zain and MTN telecommunication network companies who supported our distance learning programmes.



KEY RESULTS

40 per cent of UNICEF's funding was sent to national NGOs.

257 NGO participants received training on management of financial resources and anti-fraud awareness.

89 partnerships.

SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS



South Sudan is one of the most difficult and complex operational environments globally. Lack of infrastructure is the biggest challenge when children's lives depend on efficient movement of medicines, medical supplies, and other commodities. Despite the challenges, in 2020, UNICEF South Sudan carried out procurement for a total of US\$43.1M, including US\$29.3M for services, to support programme and operations within South Sudan, of which 57% was local procurement (74% of which was implemented through LTAs). During the year, supplies for a total value of US\$29.9M were issued from UNICEF-



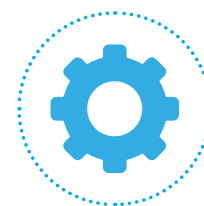
controlled warehouses, including supplies for the Dry Season Prepositioning (DSP) planning, and COVID-19 pandemic and floods responses. UNICEF South Sudan was able to deliver supplies worth USD 31.8 million in 2020 (including Direct Delivery to Implementing Partners).

RESOURCE PARTNERS



In 2020 total income to UNICEF South Sudan increased from \$268 million in 2019 to \$285 million in 2020, representing an increase of 6 per cent. Unearmarked Regular Resources (RR) amounted to \$16.5 million. Earmarked Other Resources were \$164.5 million, including \$79.9 million which came in the form of Other Resources (regular) and \$84.6 million in the form of Other Resources (emergency).

Public sector income constituted \$152.7 million of total income. This was composed mostly of contributions received from government partners, institutional banks and the European Commission.



The three largest public sector partners were the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the World Bank Group. UNICEF South Sudan also received great support from National Committees for UNICEF, GAVI the vaccine alliance and African Development Bank.

Top 10 Public Sector Partners

| | |
|-----------|-------------------|
| 1 USA | 6 Sweden |
| 2 EU | 7 The Netherlands |
| 3 Germany | 8 Canada |
| 4 UK | 9 China |
| 5 Norway | 10 Japan |

Top 10 Public Sector Partners

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1 Germany | 6 Spanish |
| 2 Norway | 7 Danish |
| 3 Switzerland | 8 Poland |
| 4 US | 9 Canada |
| 5 UK | 10 Luxembourg |



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