

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

2019 | ANNUAL REPORT







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Peace has been one of the most frequently used words in my first year as the UNICEF Representative in South Sudan. Upon arrival in February, I met cautioned optimism but not full confidence among many who have been in the country. Even though a peace agreement was signed in September 2018, too many people remembered too well the conflict relapses in the past after negotiated peace. The most pessimistic analyses gave the parties only months until the fighting would be back on. Children and their families were holding their breaths.

Pleasantly, 2019 has been one of the most peaceful years in South Sudan in a long time, saving children's lives. Not only are less children killed and injured because guns are laid down, it has also allowed UNICEF and partners to access some of the most vulnerable children in the country whom have been cut off from help for longer periods due to the fighting. In

areas previously inaccessible, UNICEF could resume health and nutrition services and rehabilitate boreholes – saving children's lives.

We can't create new beginnings, but we can still influence how the story ends. No one needs for the story about South Sudan to end well more than the children and youth of this country. Conflict impedes their chance of survival, hinders their development and jeopardises their future and by that the future of South Sudan. The need for investing in children's basic needs and rights have never been greater and the potential dividend never bigger.

Yet, 2019 have been one of the most financially challenging years for UNICEF South Sudan. Funding shortfalls have forced us to make impossible priorities. To UNICEF, the numbers have names. Every day, we are in the communities talking to Grace, playing with Peter, treating Lucy, comforting Mohamed and smile back when getting a shy smile from Nyalun. Every child is a daughter or son who has unleashed potential. If I said that this didn't cause me sleepless nights, I would be lying. Nonetheless, I want to acknowledge and sincerely appreciate and be grateful for the continuous support we received from our donors, which helped us to make a difference on the ground.

The threat of the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease spreading from the Democratic Republic of Congo to South Sudan and unprecedented flooding, also challenged us in 2019 and revealed how vulnerable many communities are and the need for resilience building.

Despite of the challenges we have faced, I am immensely proud of what our team in South Sudan has accomplished in 2019. We have turned every coin to see how to get more assistance out of every cent, been creative and innovative in our approaches to reach out the children that need us the most. Some of my colleagues are featured in this report, please take your time to get to know some of the many faces of UNICEF South Sudan.

Looking towards 2020, I hope peace will continue to prevail in South Sudan. This is the only way we can create robust communities able to handle future shocks. We don't understand fully how climate change will challenge us, only that it will. Ebola is just one of many communicable diseases that will knock on our doors. Only when the basic needs are met, meaning children don't get malnourished, get treated when they are sick, have access to safe water, sanitation and education services and are not married off young, can we create resilient communities where conflict can't find fertile soil.

**Mohamed Ag Ayoya**

Representative, UNICEF South Sudan



# THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN SOUTH SUDAN IN 2019



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The situation for children in South Sudan remained challenging in 2019, as the situation in the country is extremely complex and continuously evolving. On positive developments, 2019 saw a significant decrease in armed hostilities. This had direct positive impact on children's lives as less children got displaced, hurt and killed and improved UNICEF's access to some of the most vulnerable children in the country. A more stable South Sudan allowed for displaced children and their families to return to their homes.

**O**n the challenging end, an unprecedented outbreak of measles was declared in January. As we write 31 December 2019, the outbreak has not come to an end. Abnormal rain caused massive flooding in October, affecting over 900,000 people including 490,000 children. UNICEF noted an upsurge in cases of malaria and acute watery diarrhoea, which affect children the most. Food insecurity remained high across the country in 2019 and the number of children suffering from acute malnutrition surpassed the emergency threshold. The risk of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) spreading from the Democratic Republic of Congo to South Sudan was rated very high throughout the year.

With the Government of South Sudan's funding to social sectors declining from 12 to 9% of the national budget, it was paramount for children's development and wellbeing that UNICEF and partners were able to deliver basic services.

UNICEF was instrumental in improving the country's prevention and preparedness measures, including children's needs in the event of an outbreak. With the Government of South Sudan's funding to social sectors declining from 12% to 9% of the national budget, it was paramount for children's development and wellbeing that UNICEF and partners were able to deliver basic services. Yet, UNICEF was faced with huge funding shortfalls and was not able to reach all 2019 targets. The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and the child protection programmes were hardest hit. Unemployment rates remained high together with the public debt and inflation, pushing children and their families further down into poverty, or hindering social mobility. The child mortality rate and maternal mortality rates remained some of the worst in the world with 99 child deaths per 1,000 live births and 1,150 maternal deaths per 100,000 deliveries. Throughout the year, girls have been disproportionately affected by these negative developments due to cultural and economic barriers.

## The Country Office at a Glance

UNICEF South Sudan was established when the country became independent in 2011. 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. By the end of 2019, UNICEF South Sudan had 13 field and zonal offices to better reach children across the country. The country office had 434 personnel at the end of 2019.

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 2019, UNICEF South Sudan had 131 active partnerships with civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations.

### What are you most proud of in 2019?

Having contributed to ensure that there are enough resources to continue releasing children from armed forces and groups in South Sudan. And that they can get the appropriate support to return to a childhood.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?

Given the many emergencies around world, the biggest challenge was to keep as a priority on the donor governments' agenda all the issues of children in South Sudan.

### What do you hope will happen in 2020?

I hope this renewed peace agreement could bring stability and security and that every child of South Sudan can safely go back to school and to play, starting a new life towards a bright future.



**Andrea Luciani**  
Donor Relations Specialist

# NUTRITION



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## KEY RESULTS

**237,123** children treated for Severe Acute Malnutrition.

**1,145** UNICEF supported nutrition sites in the country.

**2,766,172** children provided with Vitamin A supplementation and deworming.

**1,684,197** caregivers reached with counselling on appropriate infant and young child feeding.

**4,189** health and nutrition workers trained on community management of malnutrition and young child feeding.

Never before have more children suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) received treatment in South Sudan. 92% of the total number of children suffering from SAM received treatment, up from 77% the year before. The treatment quality also improved, marking a 91% cure rate in 2019 compared to 88% the year before. In the same period the death rate improved from 0.6% to 0.4%. While stepping up the response to the nutrition crisis in South Sudan, the needs grew. The prevalence of SAM increased from 2.7% in 2018 to 3.6% in 2019 due to high food insecurity, poor quality and diversity

of food, high morbidity mainly malaria and diarrhoeal infections.

In 2019, UNICEF started working with WFP to institute a multisectoral paradigm shift from treatment focused programming to prevention and treatment. Every child has the right to health, therefore more efforts and additional funding must be directed towards prevention activities, which will not only reduce the need for nutrition services but also have ripple effects in sector such as education and health. Only 7% of the children in South Sudan received the minimum acceptable diet in 2019.

### What are you most proud of in 2019?

To see that what I started in Unity State, namely the Growth Monitoring and Promotion and Early Child Developments on the Nutrition sites, is now being replicated in other states of the country.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?

UNICEF is so supportive that every challenge becomes an opportunity for me. As such I didn't face any major challenges.

### What do you hope will happen in 2020?

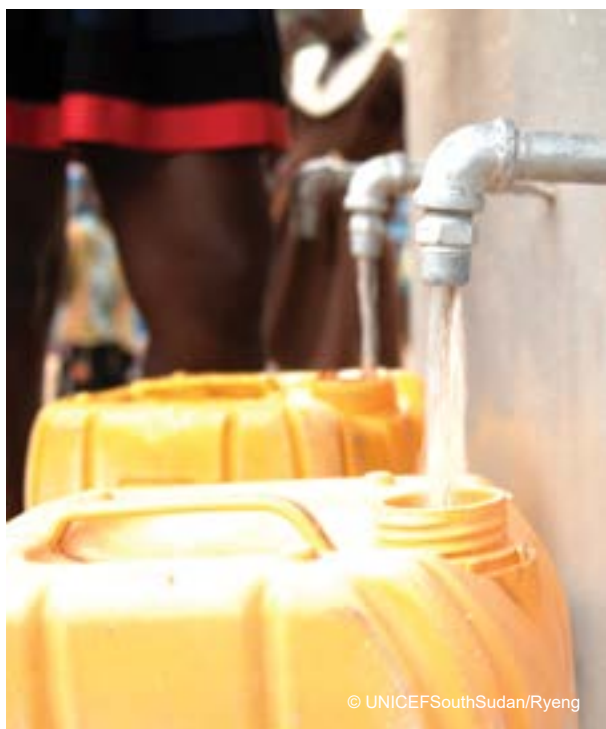
With this COVID situation escalating everywhere, I hope UNICEF emerges as one of the most important organisation with its effective strategies and help South Sudan to come out of this menace successfully!



**Chandrakala Jaiswal**  
Nutrition Specialist,  
Greater Upper Nile Region



# WASH



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## KEY RESULTS

**496,574** people provided with access to clean drinking water

**54** new water points drilled

**626** water points rehabilitated

**202,208** people supported with access to basic sanitation

**361,319** people supported with hygiene items such as soap and buckets

**444,305** people reached with hygiene promotion messages

Considerable investments in providing sustainable access to clean water in urban areas were made in 2019. The building of a pipeline including a water treatment plan in the capital Juba commenced and will serve over 150,000 people when finalized in 2020. Despite a funding gap of almost 60%, a large number of boreholes were made, providing access to clean water. In the south western city of Yambio an innovative project was completed leading natural water sources to the population in need. 'The accelerated sanitation and hygiene for all' programme has started yielding results,

and a total of 77 villages were declared open defecation free in 2019, out of a targeted 135. As a response to the resurgence of Guinea Worm, UNICEF has intensified the distribution of water filters, drilled and rehabilitated boreholes and intensified hygiene promotion.

With only 40% of the population having access to safe drinking water, investments in this sector is crucial to see improvements in children's health and nutrition status as dirty water is one of the main reasons for morbidity in South Sudan.

### What are you most proud of in 2019?

Providing safe drinking water to over 20,000 people in Rubkona town and IDP settlements. There is also less children suffering from acute watery diarrhoea and we haven't seen cholera since the last outbreak.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?

When the borehole in sector 5 in the Protection of Civilians (PoC) camp collapsed and overnight, 30,000 IPDs didn't have good access to water.

### What do you hope will happen in 2020?

I hope more people in South Sudan will get access to clean water and that we are able to build capacity in order to make water projects even more sustainable.



**Abe Charles**

**WASH officer,  
Bentiu Field Office**

# HEALTH



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## KEY RESULTS

**2,087,686** curative consultations, among these 37% were children under five.

**729,304** cases of malaria were treated.

**46,732** families provided with long-lasting insecticide treated mosquito nets.

**919,160** children aged 6 months to 15 years vaccinated against measles.

**119,242** women supported with first antenatal care visit, 51,582 completed four visits.

**23,110** deliveries were conducted by skilled birth attendants.

In 2019, South Sudan faced an unprecedented number of measles outbreaks, affecting a total of 24 out of 86 counties and 4 protection of civilian sites. In spite of the many challenges to respond to the measles outbreaks within 72 hours, UNICEF was instrumental in the response, providing vaccine, cold chain, training of vaccinators and community awareness. A large number of curative consultations was carried out with support from UNICEF in 2019. Malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea continued to be the largest cause of

morbidity among children in South Sudan. In 2019, UNICEF continued to support the Ministry of Health to provide quality integrated maternal and newborn health services, including Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) services, contributing to the reduction of the high maternal mortality in South Sudan. This included provision of essential drugs and medical supplies, training and technical capacity building of health care workers, and strengthening of referral services.



**Anne Laevens**  
Health Specialist

### What are you most proud of in 2019?

To successfully start the "Provision of Essential Health Services Project" in Jonglei and Upper Nile, which we are doing in partnership with the World Bank. The two states are in desperate need of health services as they were hardest hit by the conflict. I'm proud of my amazing team that made this happen.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?

The distribution of essential drugs and medical supplies to 185 health facilities in Jonglei and Upper Nile in the midst of the floods and the dire lack of qualified health workers in South Sudan.

### What do you hope will happen in 2020?

That we manage to improve access to quality health services for women and children in Jonglei and Upper Nile.



# CHILD PROTECTION



## KEY RESULTS

**244,261** children reached with psychosocial support.

**303** children released from armed forces and armed groups and enrolled in a reintegration programme.

**377** children supported with family tracing and reunification.

**133,712** people provided with mine-risk education.

**90,415** people supported with gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response services.

The first ever field-based handbook on case management for psychosocial support was published in South Sudan by UNICEF in 2019. A new online database and application designed to better protect children in emergencies were also launched together with 'Save the Children'. The two innovations will strengthen the services for children in need. Children continued to be released from armed groups with the support from UNICEF and partners and enrolled in a reintegration programme. UNICEF also created a practical

guide for the socio-economic reintegration of girls formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. Despite huge funding gaps, UNICEF and partners were able to trace the families of and reunite 377 children, surpassing 6,000 in total since the conflict started in 2013. UNICEF continued to focus on prevention of gender-based violence through community-led interventions and supporting survivors. UNICEF also embarked on a pilot project aiming at improving justice for children in 2019.



**Anna Hadjixiros**  
Child Protection Officer,  
Yambio Field Office

### What are you most proud of in 2019?


Several successful releases of children associated with armed forces and armed groups and the provision of reintegration services to them, such as vocational training and other essential services.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?

The limited funding which made it impossible to enrol more of the released children into vocational training. Many are now on the waiting list to receive essential reintegration services.

### What do you hope will happen in 2020?

I hope the funding situation will improve to enable the release of all women and children who are still with armed forces and armed groups, and provide them with the relevant reintegration services to help restore their hope for the future.



On World Children's Day  
20 November 2019, children were  
marching in Juba demanding their rights to  
be respected and for child marriage to end.  
Across South Sudan, UNICEF together  
with children celebrated that it was 30 years  
since the Convention on the Rights of the  
Child was adopted by the United Nations  
and asked for these rights to be  
realized, for every child.



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# EDUCATION



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## KEY RESULTS

**618,174** children provided with access to formal or non-formal education services.

**415,840** out of school children provided with access to learning opportunities.

**576** classrooms established and rehabilitated.

**4,055** teachers provided with teaching kit.

**6,368** teachers trained on education in emergencies basic pedagogy.

**55,193** children supported with facilitation of final exams.

For the first time ever, South Sudan has its own curriculum which was developed with support from UNICEF. The change prompted the need for new textbooks reflecting the new curriculum and for teachers to be trained. A total of 1,758,280 primary and secondary grade books have been printed to be disseminated at the beginning of the 2020

academic year. In 2019, UNICEF supported the roll-out of the final primary school exams, including in flood affected areas. UNICEF also continued to focus on out of school children to reduce the high number of children currently not receiving any education services, in addition to focusing on girls' education.

### What are you most proud of in 2019?

I'm proud that we for the first time were able to execute the national exams for primary eight in opposition-controlled areas. A more peaceful and stable South Sudan made this possible. I'm also proud of our flood response where we were able to restart learning for children affected.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?

Dilapidated education infrastructure and high teacher turnover really bothered me a lot. We also had many people who returned to their homes this year, only to find the community school destroyed.

### What do you hope will happen in 2020?

I hope the peace implementation progresses so that we see more resources even from government devoted to improve the education section, building a better nation in terms of the production of quality workforce to develop the country.

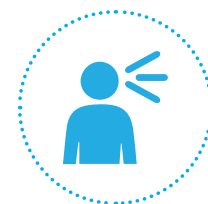


**Amuda James  
Scopas**

**Education Officer,  
Malakal Field Office**



# COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT



With an unprecedented outbreak of measles, resurgence of Guinea worm, outbreaks of hepatitis E, rubella and yellow fever, floods and the risk of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) spreading to South Sudan rated very high, community mobilizers have been instrumental in carrying out life-saving messages to the population at risk. In a country where access to information is extremely challenging, messages about how to protect yourself and stay safe have saved lives in 2019. Over 2,500 community mobilizers worked at the community level to create awareness and mobilize communities on education, nutrition, health, child protection and WASH during emergencies and non-emergencies.

In 2019, UNICEF signed a memorandum of understanding with South Sudan Council of Churches and the World Food Programme (WFP) to support peacebuilding, community resilience and social cohesion efforts. As part of this strategic move, UNICEF conducted a high-level faith-based

## KEY RESULTS

**1.5** million individuals reached with key lifesaving messages on health and hygiene behaviours as part of Ebola preparedness and response in South Sudan.

**2,500** mobilizers trained on how to create awareness and mobilize communities to promote key health behaviours.

**1.6** million people reached with key messages related to ongoing immunization campaigns and outbreak response through radio programmes, house to house visits and other community engagement activities.

**40** radio stations partners throughout the country worked with UNICEF to promote positive social and behavioural change through talk-shows, radio jingles and programmes.

**40,000** information, education and communication materials which included posters, banners, fliers, flip books, etc. were produced in various languages and distributed throughout the country.

**300** social mobilizers in Ebola high-risk areas were trained on rumour collection, dispelling rumours and collecting community feedback.

social behaviour change workshop in Juba with 52 participants who are currently creating awareness and supporting social mobilization efforts in their communities.



**Mercy Kolok**

Communication for  
Development Specialist

### What are you most proud of in 2019?

Together with my colleagues, successfully organize and bring together religious leaders (Christians and Muslims) from diverse backgrounds and locations to work together to realize the rights of children in South Sudan.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?

One of my tasks is to fundraise for the section. It is stressful because if I'm not successful, the programme activities will be closed and colleagues let off. Luckily, in my first three months I was able to raise 1 million USD for the section but the challenge continues.

### What do you hope will happen in 2020?

Before COVID-19, my hopes for 2020 focused on innovating for children through the C4D programme, but now my hope is that COVID-19 comes to an end so that life goes back to normal for us and all the women and children we are supporting.



In 2019, UNICEF supported the first ever national social protection mapping exercise that resulted in recommendations to improve the social protection system. UNICEF launched a South Sudan cash strategy and started a water voucher project in the northern city of Wau, jointly with WFP. The project will be replicated in other sites in 2020 pending funding.

Active advocacy towards the Government of South Sudan to increase spending on social sectors was carried out throughout 2019, including training of trainers on state budget preparation and citizens' engagement processes. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Finance and Planning (MoFP) to produce and publish two citizen budgets for the

## KEY RESULTS

**8,728** people are provided with water through voucher system.

**300** people trained on state budget preparation.

fiscal year 2019/2020 drilling down into public social spending in South Sudan and how it affects children. Additionally, a National Budget Brief and a National Education Sector Budget Brief were launched jointly with MoFP and the Ministry of General Education and Instruction to highlight the importance of national budget allocations towards critically underfunded social services.

### What are you most proud of in 2019?

My ability to identify innovative approaches in my work when faced with funding shortfalls and access issues. I am proud that I developed resilience and truly glad that I achieved results amidst a myriad of hurdles.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?

This was a year of anxiety, grief, broken promises as well as anticipation for peace and hope in both the spiritual and physical realms. Uncertainty was a major challenge, and insecurity, limited funding were crippling impediments in our Social Policy Programme.

### What do you hope will happen in 2020?

As a national who grew up mostly in wartimes in this country, I am (at least for once in my life!) hopeful of peace.



**Eliaba Damundu**  
Social Policy Officer/Chair  
of the Staff Association

# EMERGENCIES



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## Ebola

With the risk of the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) spreading from the Democratic Republic of Congo to South Sudan being rated very high, UNICEF took active part in the country's preparedness and prevention activities. Together with the Government of South Sudan, UNICEF led on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and Risk Communication. UNICEF also took part in the coordination mechanisms established on strategic and operational levels.

### KEY RESULTS

**168** health facilities provided with essential WASH services in EVD high-risk areas.

**240** handwashing stations installed in public places in EVD high-risk areas.

**320** health workers from isolation units and frontline health workers trained on basic IPC/WASH standards.

Trained **162** health workers on comprehensive Ebola clinical care.

**24** drills and 16 mentorship sessions were conducted in isolation facilities.

**1,356,189** people reached with EVD prevention messages.



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## Flood

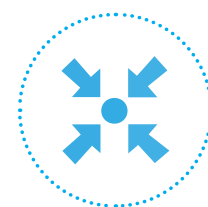
More than 900,000 people, including 490,000 children were affected by severe flooding between July and November 2019. The eastern parts of South Sudan were hardest hit. UNICEF responded to the crisis by deploying teams to the field providing immediate relief for particularly women and children.

### KEY RESULTS

**110,000** people reached with critical assistance within the sectors of health, nutrition, WASH, child protection and education.



# INTEGRATED RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISM (IRRM)



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Reaching the most vulnerable populations in South Sudan remained a priority for UNICEF in 2019. Through the Integrated Rapid Response Mechanism (IRRM), UNICEF reached 318,868 people. In 2019, biometric registration was included in the IRRMs, strengthening data collection, management, follow-up displacement tracking and harmonized reporting. The missions are sent to the least accessible areas in South Sudan, often cut off from any humanitarian assistance. UNICEF is doing these missions jointly with WFP and FAO.

## KEY RESULTS

**32** IRRM missions conducted

**318,868** people reached through IRRMs, including **63,750** under five

### What are you most proud of in 2019?

I'm proud of UNICEF's quick flood response in October and how we were able to help women and children. I was in one of the most affected areas, Pibor, and I'm proud of that I was able to do with colleagues.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?

Access remained an issue, especially due to the floods. The only way to get to the people in need was by air, which is more expensive. The water also washed away the little people had.

### What do you hope will happen in 2020?

I'm hoping history will not repeat itself and that UNICEF, partners and government have preparedness plans in place to save lives if the next rainy season becomes equally bad.



**Joseph Adiomo**  
Emergency Officer,  
IRRM

# GENDER



## KEY RESULTS

**174,474** individuals benefited from improved and gender sensitive water, sanitation and hygiene measures in health care facilities.

**66,038** children benefited from improved and gender sensitive water, sanitation and hygiene measures in schools.

**15,409** adolescence girls and women of childbearing age received menstrual hygiene kits.

**105,456** pregnant women and girls attended their first Antenatal Care (ANC) visit.

**906** (547 males; 359 females) frontline and community health workers enhanced their skills in maternal and/or newborn care through UNICEF supported programmes.

In 2019, UNICEF launched two Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) studies which will be essential to create holistic, cross-sectoral and gender-focused programmes. The study on child marriage, identified key drivers, attitudes and practices, explored promising approaches and the fundamental power dynamics that define traditional gender norms and relationships in South Sudan. Findings of these studies will be used to galvanize stronger programmatic action, political support and resources towards girls' education and ending child marriage in South Sudan. The study on Menstrual Hygiene and

Health assessed the range of personal challenges and needs of girls during menstruation in school settings and the extent of support they receive.

UNICEF continued to scale up its institutional WASH programme in 2019 with a gender-sensitive design to mitigate the risk of gender-based violence (GBV). Schools, health care facilities and nutrition facilities underserved with WASH services continue to be given priority. Latrine blocks for girls in schools included a changing room for Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), helping girls to stay in school when having their periods.



**Aleksandra Vidojevic**  
Gender Programme  
Manager

### What are you most proud of in 2019?

UNICEF South Sudan developed and adopted a holistic and cross-sectoral Gender Action Plan for the next three years.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?

Due to floods, intercommunal violence human and financial resources, it was difficult to reach out to the most vulnerable women/girls and enable them to voice out their priorities, views and opinions when doing the KAP studies on child marriage and menstrual hygiene.

### What do you hope will happen in 2020?

UNICEF to galvanize stronger programmatic action, political support and resources towards ending child marriage in South Sudan.

# SUPPLY



South Sudan is one of the most difficult operational environments globally. The country is the size of France but have just under 200 kilometres with paved roads. During the rainy season, which is approximately half of the year, 60% of the roads become impassable. This became even worse in 2019 due to the massive flooding. UNICEF is using road, air and water to get life-saving supplies to where it is needed.

## KEY RESULTS

**USD 28 million** worth of multisectoral supplies dispatched to over 250 partners.

**USD 13 million** worth of supplies were available in UNICEF warehouses at the end of 2019 to support ongoing requirements and emergency responses.



**Emma Creighton**  
Supply and Logistics  
Manager

### What are you most proud of in 2019?

My wonderful team that managed to deliver over USD28 million of supplies despite a highly challenging environment.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?

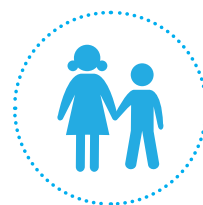
The weather was not kind in 2019, which resulted in widespread flooding making access even more challenging than normal, but with an increased need to deliver.

### What do you hope will happen in 2020?

I am hopeful for the peace process to allow for greater access to expand development activities within South Sudan.



# CLUSTERS



The cluster system, aimed at coordinating efforts across UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs and other partners, has been extensively supported by UNICEF by taking the lead and coordinating the fields of nutrition, WASH, education and child protection.

## **What are you most proud of in 2019?**

UNICEF South Sudan endeavoured on a solar installation project which will increase the office's renewable energy supply to 80%, contributing highly to UNICEF greening initiative.

## **What was the biggest challenge you faced in 2019?**

Delivering efficient and effective support services to programme sections is a big challenge due to various contextual factors. More need to be done to mitigate operational challenges.

## **What do you hope will happen in 2020?**

Ending COVID-19 to allow UNICEF returning to what we do best, supporting women and children in South Sudan.



**Owen Muluzi**  
Administration Manager

## Aweil, South Sudan

The legs are still shaking a little, but new confidence is gained in every step. With a huge grin on her face, she is making her way around the simple hut made of grass. Eight weeks ago, fourteen-month-old Adut William was not able to walk on her own.

“Her peers are already running around but Adut is refusing to take one step unless someone is holding her hand, or she can hold on to something. She is not even playing with her siblings,” her father William Deng said when we first met him.

Adut is not only struggling with walking, she has fever, diarrhoea, is refusing to eat and is generally weak “I don’t know what is going on with my child. She used to eat, now she is not. She is weak and skinny.”

“As a father, how does that feel?” “Sometimes I don’t sleep, I’m just thinking of how I can help Adut. You know, she will be the last one. We have eight children in total and she is the last and that is as special as the first.”

When Adut was admitted to the UNICEF nutrition programme, her mid-upper-arm circumference was, 11.5 cm confirming she was suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Her weight was only 6.5 kg, which is considered normal for a healthy six-month-old, half Adut’s age.

Adut’s Malaria was treated and she was given ready-to-use therapeutic food, UNICEF’s number one ‘medicine’ against severe acute malnutrition. In just eight weeks, the girl had changed completely.

“As you can see, her body and her face are now healthy and there is no more sickness. She’s really moving on well without any problems,” says Adut’s mother Angelina Mayel, grabbing Adut and placing a big kiss on the now chubby cheeks.

“She even fights with her siblings,” Williams says chuckling, thinking of her youngest one snatching food from her older sisters and brothers.

With Adut healthy it is time to start thinking of the future.

“Someday, she will be a minister, or even prime minister. Why not,” William says laughing. “One day she will be a somebody, I’m sure about that and happy about it.”

Severe acute malnutrition (SAM) is a very serious condition for children, but it is treatable. In 2019, UNICEF supported the treatment of 237,123 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition.



week 1

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week 8

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