



# ANNUAL REPORT

UNFPA SIERRA LEONE





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<b>CAHLS</b>	Child and Adolescent Health Life Skills
<b>CRVS</b>	Civil Registration Vital Statistics
<b>DHIS2</b>	District Health Information Software 2
<b>EmONC</b>	Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>ICPD</b>	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>MBSSE</b>	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
<b>MOGCA</b>	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MoPED</b>	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
<b>MoSW</b>	Ministry of Social Welfare
<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund

# — Abbreviations

## About UNFPA



The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is the lead UN agency dedicated to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Our core mission is to **deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.**

UNFPA advocates for urgent action to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, realize reproductive rights for all individuals and accelerate the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by 179 governments at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 which shifted the focus of population policy and programmes from numbers to improving the lives of people, and protecting their rights. Reproductive health was acknowledged as one such basic human right

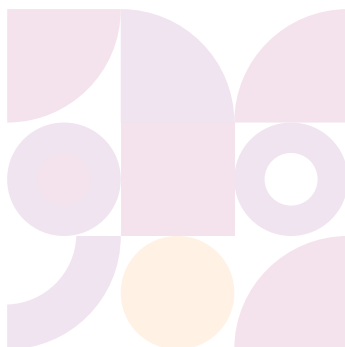
In Sierra Leone, UNFPA's work is centred around advancing gender equality, reducing preventable maternal deaths, addressing the unmet need for family planning, and eliminating gender-based violence and harmful practices including child marriage and female genital mutilation. Our approach emphasizes strengthening data collection and analysis systems, empowering women, adolescents and youth, and upholding the commitment to leave no one behind in the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

*Delivering a  
world where  
every pregnancy  
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person's potential  
is **fulfilled***

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# Foreword



The year 2024 marked the culmination of UNFPA Sierra Leone's 7th Country Programme (2020–2024), a period of significant progress towards ending the unmet need for family planning, ending preventable maternal deaths and eradicating gender-based violence and harmful practices.

This report reflects the collective achievements made possible by the commitment of the Government of Sierra Leone, the unwavering support of our donors, the dedication of our Implementing Partners and the engagement of various stakeholders.

In 2024, our family planning efforts enabled 640,000 women to access modern contraceptives and averted an estimated 230,000 unintended pregnancies, 85,000 unsafe abortions and 740 maternal deaths. Additionally, the Country Office supported the development of a family planning investment case which outlines the financial and other resources required to achieve the country's family planning goals through increased domestic funding, donor support and private sector engagement.

Our dedication ending preventable maternal mortality was further demonstrated by the training of midwives, supporting the prevention and management of obstetric fistula and the delivery of quality sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services to adolescent girls and women. We supported the launch of the innovative app - Pregnancy Registration and Service Tracking Application (PreSTrack) designed by the Government of Sierra Leone, that carries out real-time tracking of pregnancies and flags high-risk conditions to enable timely interventions, enhancing maternal and newborn health outcomes.



Recognizing the importance of investing in the potential of young people, we sustained our support for the integration of Child and Adolescent Health and Lifeskills in schools, reached marginalized girls with life skills programmes and supported the reintegration of vulnerable girls into formal education. The 2024 launch of the Young Women Leading Change Innovation Challenge further empowered young women-led initiatives across 15 districts, addressing diverse challenges and fostering innovation in areas ranging from entrepreneurship to sexual and reproductive health and rights, with a focus on inclusivity for young women with disabilities.

These accomplishments are a testament to the power of collaborative action and the unwavering commitment of all our partners. We extend our deepest gratitude to our donors for their generous contributions, to our Implementing Partners for their tireless efforts, to the communities we serve for their trust and engagement and to the Government of Sierra Leone for its strong leadership and commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action.

As we look ahead to the 8th Country Programme (2025–2030), we are inspired by the progress achieved and remain committed to building on these successes and contributing to a Sierra Leone where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

***Sibeso Mululuma***  
***Officer in Charge***  
***UNFPA Sierra Leone***





# Ending Preventable Maternal Deaths



Reducing preventable maternal deaths is a transformative goal of UNFPA and a top priority for the Government of Sierra Leone. In response to the government's declaration of maternal mortality as a public health emergency, UNFPA provided capacity development, service delivery and legal and policy support to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).



## Key results

**401,914** women and girls were provided information on SRH and the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV).

**48,000** women and girls were reached through community awareness initiatives on SRH services towards prevention of obstetric fistula.

**700+** women and girls were screened , and more than 200 underwent successful surgeries. In addition, 135 women received vocational training and social reintegration support.

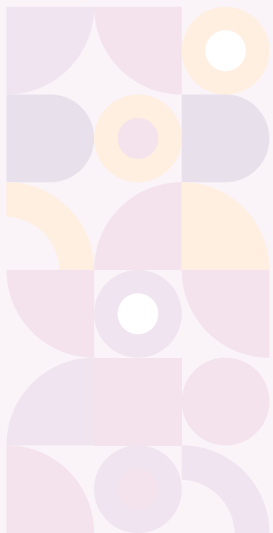
**483** midwifery students were trained as part sustained efforts to strengthen the midwifery health workforce in the country, of whom 283 graduated as midwives.



**328** health care workers received enhanced training in EmONC, family planning, respectful maternity care and infection prevention.

**55** Physician Assistants and Medical Doctors were trained through the Surgical Training Programme, contributing to strengthened clinical and surgical skills, aimed at reducing preventable maternal deaths, including those from obstetric fistula.

**34** health facilities assessed for Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) across six districts — guiding efforts to strengthen maternal and newborn health services.



## Strengthening midwifery education and practice

Acknowledging the important role of skilled birth attendants, UNFPA invested in the training of midwives. Further, a **comprehensive capacity assessment of the country's four national midwifery schools** was undertaken to generate evidence to inform targeted investments for enhancing the quality of midwifery education, thereby ensuring a skilled and knowledgeable health workforce.

UNFPA supported the development of the **National Nursing and Midwifery Strategy**, which provides a comprehensive roadmap for strengthening the nursing and midwifery workforce, ultimately aiming to enhance the quality and accessibility of maternal and newborn care.



### Voices from the field

*"I am truly grateful to UNFPA for their support in our midwifery training. Thanks to their investment, we have the skills and resources to save more mothers and babies. We are seeing real progress in reducing maternal mortality, but continued support — especially in equipping labor wards — will help us do even more."*

Aminata Koroma, Midwife, Bo Government Hospital







## Partnering to end obstetric fistula

In line with national aspirations to eliminate obstetric fistula, a debilitating injury which occurs during childbirth and leaves women stigmatized and ostracized from their communities, UNFPA, with the financial support of the Government of Iceland, sustained its partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Social Welfare, Aberdeen Women's Centre and Haikal Foundation to implement a comprehensive approach focusing on prevention, treatment and social reintegration of women suffering from fistula. Prevention efforts included community sensitization, advocacy with community and religious leaders and the promotion of positive health-seeking behaviours.

With a low national caesarean section coverage of just 4 per cent, with urban areas at 7 per cent and rural areas at only 1 per cent, investments were made in training of 18 Surgical Assistant Community Health Officers as part of comprehensive efforts to reduce the incidence of obstetric fistula.



## Improving access to obstetric and newborn care services

Initiatives to increase access to basic and comprehensive emergency obstetric and newborn care services across the country were supported. These included enhancing the capacity of health workers, improving health infrastructure and equipment, and empowering communities to increase service utilization and promote accountability. The MoH in partnership with other stakeholders including UNFPA, launched the **Maternal and Child Health Situation Room** to facilitate tracking of maternal and perinatal deaths as well as having a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing maternal and child health outcomes and prioritize corresponding interventions accordingly.

# National maternal and perinatal death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR)

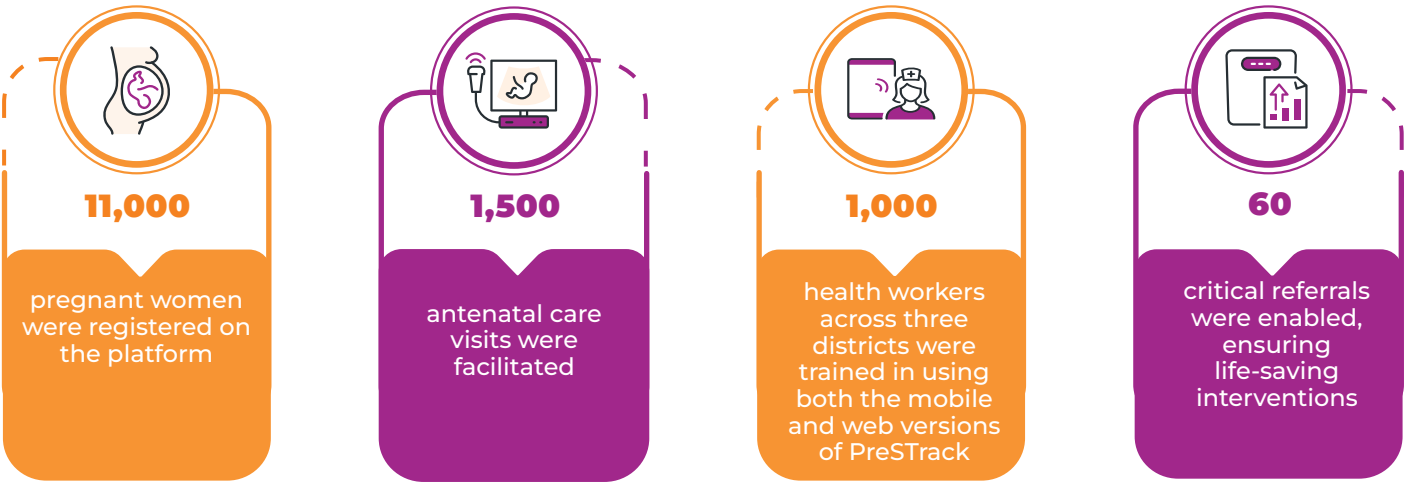
As part of our commitment to enhancing the quality of care and strengthening accountability, UNFPA supported a comprehensive review of the MPDSR guidelines that are currently being utilized in all 16 districts. This initiative aims to provide a standardized framework that empowers District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) to conduct thorough reviews of maternal deaths, facilitating evidence-based interventions to prevent future occurrences.

## Pregnancy Registration and Service Tracking App

The MoH in partnership with the Directorate of Science, Technology, and Innovation, launched PreSTrack, a mobile and web-based application designed to revolutionize maternal and neonatal healthcare in Sierra Leone. The PreSTrack App enables real-time pregnancy tracking, early detection and life-saving interventions, ensuring better health outcomes for mothers and newborns. UNFPA supported the MoH and DSTI in evaluating the app and rolling it out in selected districts as part of the pilot phase.

By providing real-time data, PreSTrack has helped healthcare professionals identify high-risk pregnancies early, allowing for timely medical interventions that save lives.

By the end of 2024:





## Cervical cancer screening and treatment

Through a recently concluded partnership with the Government of China under the Global Development and South-South Collaboration Assistance Fund, UNFPA provided equipment and supplies to nine health facilities and one hospital providing cervical cancer screening and treatment services.

## Voices from the field

*"I was pleased to receive a free screening when I visited the facility. I am still appreciative that I was one of the more than 150 physically challenged women who received free cervical cancer screening and treatment."*

Bintu Sengu, project beneficiary



# Ending unmet needs for family planning



In 2024, with funding from the UNFPA Supplies Partnership, Sierra Leone successfully distributed US\$1,402,488 worth of modern contraceptives and essential life-saving maternal health medicines to hospitals and Peripheral Health Units which form the backbone of primary health care delivery, reaching communities at the grassroots level. This ensured that family planning and life-saving maternal commodities were more readily available to those who needed them most.



## Key results

Improved access to contraceptives and maternal health medicines across all the 16 districts contributed to:



**620,000**

women currently using modern contraceptive methods



**230,000**

unintended pregnancies averted



**85,000**

unsafe abortions averted



**740**

maternal deaths averted



**480,960** couples received contraceptive protection for a one-year period, ensuring continued access to essential reproductive health services.

**3,000+** community members including women and girls were reached through printed IEC materials which enhanced open discussions and supportive environments for family planning.

**945** staff from 759 primary health units and hospitals had their capacity in logistics management strengthened through a competency-based training programme.

**15 per cent** increase in the proportion of women and girls whose demand for family planning was met - from 43.8 per cent in 2012 to 59 per cent in 2024.

**2 per cent** increase in domestic health sector budget allocation — from 7% in 2024 to 9% in 2025 — driven by advocacy initiatives informed by the family planning investment case.



## Increasing demand for family planning services

Efforts to increase family planning demand included a **multi-pronged approach** informed by a social norms study on barriers to family planning access among adolescents and young people. A communication strategy was developed which informed mass media campaigns through radio commercials and talk shows, which reached over **2 million people in six districts**, increasing family planning awareness, particularly among adolescents and people with disabilities. Tailored engagement sessions with these groups and the wider community fostered collaboration, reduced stigma and improved access to SRH services.

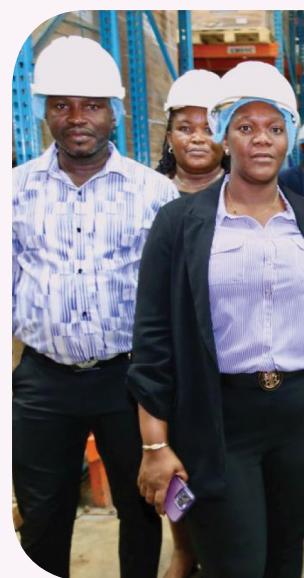
Community-driven interventions aimed to improve family planning uptake and overall SRH outcomes also included **Value Clarification and Attitude Transformation training**, while community-based family planning champions were trained to lead conversations within their communities, fostering stronger networks and advocacy.

## Strengthening health supply chain management

UNFPA contributed to the implementation of the **National Integrated Health Supply Chain Management Strategy** by supporting the development of a Costed Health Supply Chain Design. This design aims to optimize the integrated supply chain for health commodities and promote long-term sustainability. Additionally, UNFPA supported the development of a comprehensive roadmap for the Logistics Management Information System, which outlines the resource and capacity needs required for effective last-mile implementation.

Efforts towards the modernization of supply chain management in Sierra Leone was strengthened through the application of innovative technologies such as the development of an **integrated dashboard that consolidated data from DHIS2 and mSupply**, providing high-level visibility into the management of health commodities at the last mile. This was complemented by the capacity-building of health care providers.

UNFPA supported the MoH in developing a **three-year forecast (2025-2027) and one-year supply plan of family planning** and life-saving maternal health commodities. Further, the **South-South collaboration** established between Sierra Leone's National Medical Supplies Agency and Tanzania's Medical Stores Department created potential opportunities to adopt and implement best supply chain practices from Tanzania in Sierra Leone.





## Creating an enabling policy environment

In 2024, UNFPA partnered with the National AIDS Secretariat, MoH, UNAIDS and other stakeholders to develop and launch the **National Strategy for Condom Programming (2025–2029)**. This five-year strategic plan is a major step forward in the effort to reduce the transmission of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as well as prevent unintended pregnancies.

The strategy was developed through a participatory and consultative process, incorporating valuable input from key stakeholders across various sectors. These stakeholders include representatives from government ministries, departments and agencies; non-governmental and community-based organizations; policy makers; networks of people living with HIV; the private sector; and multilateral and bilateral partners, all of whom contributed their insights and expertise to the strategy.



## Voices from the field



*"As a young couple, we think family planning is really important after having a baby. We are students and we need to take time to prepare for what comes next ... We want to make sure we're ready for our future children which is why we've chosen family planning."*

Hawanatu, 25, and Ibrahim, 27



# Ending GBV and harmful practices



UNFPA supported the strengthening of the capacities of Government institutions, civil society organizations, youth networks, and communities to address discriminatory gender and social norms, promote gender equality, and prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) and other harmful practices.



## Key results



552

survivors of GBV received comprehensive support services through seven One Stop Centres operated by the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs



44

communities reported the abandonment of harmful practices and developed bylaws to prevent child marriage



## Support towards the national response to gender-based violence

UNFPA sustained its support for the provision of comprehensive services through the One Stop Centres managed by the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, which offer a range of integrated services, including health care, legal aid and psychosocial counselling. This holistic approach ensures that survivors receive the necessary care and support to recover from their experiences and rebuild their lives.

## Safe spaces for girls at risk of child marriage and other harmful practices

Through UNFPA's support, Girls Advocacy and Development Network (GADNET) established a secure and supportive safe haven in the Western Area Urban for vulnerable adolescent girls at risk of harmful practices. This safe space was specifically designed to cater to the needs of adolescent girls who had endured the trauma of GBV, female genital mutilation and teenage pregnancy. Additionally, UNFPA and other stakeholders supported GADNET to host a National Girls Summit that brought together over 700 adolescents and young people from across Sierra Leone to develop leadership skills and gain SRH knowledge, empowering them to make informed decisions and reach their full potential.





## Enabling legal and policy environment

Following the enactment of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act, UNFPA partnered with UN Women, UNICEF and UNDP under the UN partnership for gender mainstreaming to support the development and roll out a national operational plan to serve as a strategic framework for coordinated implementation of the Act.

Further, UNFPA alongside other partners supported the enactment of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act as well as stakeholder consultations on the Child Rights Bill, which is currently before Parliament.

UNFPA, in collaboration with UNICEF and other key partners, provided support for the development of the **National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy and Child Marriage**. The multisectoral strategy, developed with the financial support of the Government of Ireland, will serve as the guiding framework for concerted efforts to significantly reduce adolescent pregnancy to 10 per cent and eliminate child marriage in Sierra Leone by 2030.

## Male engagement

UNFPA supported Male Peer Educators (MAPES) in targeted communities to undertake multifaceted campaigns strategically designed to confront harmful social and gender norms while simultaneously fostering positive expressions of masculinity – thereby empowering them to become catalysts of change within their communities, advocating against child marriage and championing gender equality.



## Strategic partnerships

The launch of Phase 3 of the joint UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage which seeks to build on the successes of the two previous phases to contribute to the accelerated reduction of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy in Sierra Leone presented an opportunity for UNFPA to support the implementation of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2024) which was enacted under the stewardship of the First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone. UNFPA's support focused on strengthening national systems to prevent and respond to child marriage and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV).

UNFPA also signed a partnership with the Government of Iceland to eliminate GBV practices in Sierra Leone. The partnership will prioritize enhancing the agency of adolescent girls and their social assets, strengthening the capacity of social movements to challenge social norms that perpetuate harmful practices, and generating evidence to strengthen advocacy and policy decisions.



## Adolescents and youth



In line with the UNFPA's mandate in ensuring every young person's potential is fulfilled, Aa number of initiatives were implemented to support adolescents and young people's access to sexual and reproductive health information and services.



### Key results



**7,807**

marginalized girls were reached with life skills programmes to build their health, social and economic assets.



**4,356**

girls who experienced or were at risk of adolescent pregnancy were reintegrated into formal education. Among them, 922 girls were pregnant or parenting at the time of reintegration, and 176 were living with disabilities.



**900**

adolescents accessed SRH services at SRH hubs.



**50**

Primary and Junior Secondary schools received support for the rollout of the Child and Adolescent Health and Life Skills Curriculum through in-service teacher training.



## Reintegration of marginalized girls into school

In partnership with the Government of Ireland, UNFPA supported the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education in the implementation of the **National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools through the reintegration of vulnerable girls into formal education**. The girls were identified from 28 communities in four districts including 922 pregnant and parenting girls and 176 girls with disabilities.

## Child and adolescent health life skills

UNFPA supported the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education's capacity to deliver **Child and Adolescent Health and Life Skills education through the training of 50 schools and 346 teachers**. These training programmes focused on equipping teachers with the necessary pedagogical approaches, curriculum knowledge and practical skills to effectively deliver age-appropriate and comprehensive life skills education. The training of the teachers represents a substantial investment in human capital within the education sector, creating a cadre of skilled professionals capable of fostering healthy behaviour and positive development among students. Further, the supportive supervision mechanisms for the implementation of these education programmes were significantly strengthened to ensure the quality and consistency of child and adolescent health and life skills education to be delivered in schools.



### Voices from the field

*"We come together every day to learn and support each other. This space has given me the confidence to believe in myself again ... Before now, I had no skills to help me earn a living. But through this programme, I have learned how to sew, and I now have an opportunity to support myself."*

Aisha Kamara, Women and Girls Against Irregular Migration - Kambia



## Young Women Leading Change

UNFPA partnered with the Ministry of Youth Affairs to launch the Young Women Leading Change Innovation Challenge in Sierra Leone on International Youth Day, with the aim of amplifying young women's leadership and supporting innovative solutions led by young women to address key development challenges in their communities. The initiative had 40 winners drawn from 15 of the country's 16 districts, including remote rural settings, and spanned issues that included entrepreneurship and income generation, agriculture, protecting the environment, GBV prevention and advancing SRH. Eight out of the 40 initiatives were led by young women living with disabilities.

### Voices from the field

*"Through the Digital Health and Entrepreneurship Hub, we set out to create real social impact by equipping women with both practical and digital skills. From reusable pad production and gara tie-dyeing to digital literacy, grant writing and project management, we aim to empower women to become self-reliant and confident. We also provide essential health education on family planning and sexual and reproductive health. Our motivation stems from a clear gap in digital access for women and a strong belief in their potential to thrive when given the right tools."*

Zainab Sankoh, Aion Health - Bo

## Improving menstrual health and hygiene management for adolescent girls

UNFPA collaborated with the Ministries of Education and Gender to host a national Menstrual Health and Hygiene Symposium which brought together various stakeholders and provided a platform to showcase innovative, community-based approaches to combat period poverty. The symposium championed the importance of menstrual health education and advocated for sustainable and dignified solutions to create a period-friendly environment across Sierra Leone. Notably 200 adolescents and young women gained hands-on skills in the production of reusable menstrual pads.



## Supporting national response to address drug and substance abuse

In response to national efforts to address the Kush crisis and its impact on young people, UNFPA collaborated with the Ministry of Information and other key stakeholders to organize a national town hall focused on ending substance abuse. Further, UNFPA provided 120 dignity kits to the Ministry of Social Welfare to aid in the rehabilitation of young people affected by drug use and to help restore their dignity. UNFPA also supported some Kush survivors from the National Rehabilitation Centre to return to formal education, providing them with back-to-school kits and reintegrating them into age-appropriate classes.

## Voices from the field

*"Our goal was to train 10 vulnerable returnee women and equip them with essential livelihood skills they need to support themselves. With funding from UNFPA and the Ministry of Youth Affairs, we purchased sewing machines and hired a trainer to teach tailoring skills."*

Mariama Bundu, Women and Girls Against Irregular Migration - Kambia



# Population and development



## Renewing commitments to the ICPD Agenda

Following the review of the progress made in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action, a revised set of national commitments was formulated through wide stakeholder consultations led by MOPED, to address the unfinished business of the ICPD Agenda. These commitments will provide a roadmap for accelerating progress towards the ICPD goals.

## Supporting the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system

As part of ongoing support to the strengthening of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems in Sierra Leone, UNFPA partnered with the Global Financing Facility, World Bank, to provide technical assistance to the National Civil Registration Authority for the ongoing review of the status of CRVS in Sierra Leone to inform the development of the next CRVS strategic plan.

## Population and Housing Census

As the country plans to undertake its next decennial population and housing census, UNFPA has provided technical assistance to the Government in the initial stages of census planning, including for the development of census project document, methodology and tools. The support will contribute to the successful implementation of the census, generating accurate and reliable data essential for evidence-based policy-making and national development planning.



# Disability inclusion

Under the coordination and leadership of the Ministry of Social Welfare, UNFPA partnered with UNDP and UNICEF to implement a UNPRPD-funded programme aimed at enhancing disability inclusion in policy formulation and service delivery. Key milestones include the following:



## Key results



Established, a disability-inclusive SDG monitoring tool in partnership with Statistics Sierra Leone, that ensures disability inclusion in development planning, monitoring and evaluation



Strengthened the capacity of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in areas such as advocacy and policy engagement



Strengthened Multi-Stakeholder Coordination Mechanisms for disability inclusion including at the subnational level for enhanced engagement with OPDs in national development processes



Developed and supported the implementation of a practical checklist to measure compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to guide inclusive policy and legislative reviews



Reviewed the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy, the National Youth Policy, and the National Health Sector Strategic Plan for Disability Inclusion

## SRH Hub - The power of knowledge: Sarah's path to making informed choices

Growing up, 15-year-old Sarah Marrah had a common misconception that teenage pregnancy was an inevitable fact of life, something beyond her influence. Sadly, her community bore witness to this all too often, with numerous girls her age having already left their education behind due to early pregnancy or child marriage. "Some girls in my neighborhood became pregnant before they truly understood what it meant," Sarah recounts, a reality she narrowly escaped herself.



For Sarah, crucial conversations about menstrual hygiene, sex, contraception and reproductive health were absent at home. This silence echoed in her school and community, leaving her without the essential knowledge and, consequently, vulnerable.

A turning point came when she learned about the Sexual and Reproductive Health Hub and decided to attend their sessions. "Initially, I wasn't sure what to expect," Sarah admits. "But my first session opened my eyes to how much I didn't know about my own body." At the SRH Hub, Sarah gained vital knowledge about her reproductive health, menstrual hygiene, and the power of making informed choices to prevent early pregnancy. The impact extended beyond the hub, as mentors also visited her school, reinforcing the lessons for Sarah and her peers.

Now, Sarah is a proactive voice in her community. "When I see younger girls, I urge them to join the SRH hub," she says with conviction. "I tell them, 'This is information you need before it's too late.'"

## SRH Hub - The mentors who fight to keep girls safe



Sarah's story is just one of many. Behind every girl like her is a mentor like Sento Sesay, who refuses to let another girl's education end too soon.

Sento has worked at the SRH Hub for three years, educating girls and engaging with parents. "When we first came to Koinadugu, some parents resisted. They thought we were here to spoil their daughters," she says. "But then the reality of pregnancy-related school dropouts opened their minds."

For Sento, the true challenge lies in shifting deeply held beliefs. The real battle, she explains, is changing mindsets. "I remember two girls in 2023 came to us in tears, desperate to escape arranged marriages and continue their education."

Sento and her colleagues held meetings with the parents to discuss the consequences of early marriage, emphasizing how it could derail their daughters' education and futures. "Those two girls are still in school today," Sento says proudly.

In addition to preventing child marriage, Sento and her team's work also focuses on responding to GBV. By referring cases to the One-Stop Centre and diligently following up, Sento's team ensures survivors receive vital support, and that justice is pursued.

## Empowering Surgical Officers to improve maternal health



"I want to ensure that no mother or child is left without care," says Chernor Jalloh, a Surgical Assistant Community Health Officer at Masanga Hospital in Sierra Leone. This commitment drives him as he seeks to make a tangible difference in maternal and infant health, which is crucial for the well-being of families across the country.

Having recently graduated from the CapaCare Surgical Training Programme, supported by UNFPA, Chernor is equipped with the skills needed to address the urgent issues of maternal mortality and infant care.

His training was put to the test on his birthday. Masanga Hospital was suddenly overwhelmed with emergencies. "We had three critical cases," he recalls, "An ectopic pregnancy, severe eclampsia, and postpartum haemorrhage, a leading cause of maternal death." With senior staff away, Chernor was the most experienced person on duty. He felt a surge of responsibility and a knot of fear. "I knew I had to step up," he says. "There was no one else." That day, three mothers and their babies survived. "When I think about it," Chernor says, "it reminds me why I chose this path. It was a great achievement, but more importantly, three families got to stay together."



## Reintegrating girls into formal education: A story of resilience and hope



*"Girls who are not in school can easily end up married young, and that's not the life I want for myself."*

Jebbeh Rogers, a 14-year-old girl from Pujehun District, was once a top student, full of dreams for her future. "I sat for the National Primary School Examination in 2021 and passed with flying colours," she recalls. But her life took a heartbreaking turn when her father, the family's breadwinner, passed away, leaving Jebbeh's mother to care for her and her six siblings. The family's financial situation forced her to drop out of school.

"I was heartbroken. I did not want to stop going to school," Jebbeh says. "Every morning, I would watch my friends put on their uniforms and head to class, and it broke my heart."

For Jebbeh, leaving school felt like the end of her dreams. She knew the risks that came with being out of school — early marriage and a life of hardship. "Girls who are not in school can easily end up married young, and that's not the life I want for myself," she explains.

UNFPA and partners provide comprehensive support, including school enrolment starter kits containing essential supplies and remedial classes on numeracy, literacy and life skills, including SRHR. Nearly 6,000 girls like Jebbeh have been reintegrated into formal education since 2022, giving them a second chance at learning and growth.

For Jebbeh, this opportunity has been transformative. "I'm so grateful to be back in school," she says. "I want all girls to have this chance. When girls are educated, it's a great thing."



## Leadership transition

In December 2024, Nadia Rasheed completed her successful term as the UNFPA Country Representative in Sierra Leone, a role she held since May 2022. Her leadership was instrumental in strengthening UNFPA's strategic partnerships with key government institutions, young people, UN agencies, Development Partners including international financial institutions, civil society organizations and academia, which enabled the seamless integration of UNFPA's core mandate within the broader national development agenda.









## UNFPA resource mobilization and partnerships

UNFPA works closely with partners that include the Government of Sierra Leone, donor communities, the UN, multilateral organizations, civil society organizations and community-based organizations to advance the organization's three transformative results. UNFPA extends its appreciation to the following Development Partners who made the achievement of the 2024 results possible through their generous financial contributions to the 7th Country Programme:



Government of Iceland  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs



**Irish Aid**  
Government of Ireland  
Rialtas na hÉireann



中国援助  
**CHINA AID**  
FOR SHARED FUTURE



UNFPA is also grateful to the following Implementing Partners and other strategic partners:

### Government

- Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
- Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
- Ministry of Health:
  - Directorate of Reproductive and Child Health
  - Directorate of Nursing and Midwifery Services
  - Directorate of Pharmaceutical Services
- National Medical Supplies Agency
- Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
- Ministry of Social Welfare
- Ministry of Youth Affairs
- National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy and Child Marriage
- Office of the First Lady

- Statistics Sierra Leone
- National Civil Registration Authority
- Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation

### NGO

- Aberdeen Women's Centre
- CapaCare
- Doctors with Africa
- Fambul Initiative Network for Equality
- Haikal Foundation
- Rainbo Initiative
- Restless Development
- Women in Crisis Movement Sierra Leone
- Marie Stopes Sierra Leone
- Project Last Mile
- Girls Advocacy Network (GADNET)





