



Ghana Country Office

2023 ANNUAL REPORT AMPLIFYING VOICES OF THE VULNERABLE





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Of The Vulnerable



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This report was developed by the Ghana Country Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to capture progress made in 2023.

EDITOR

Dr. Wilfred Ochan, Country Representative

DEPUTY EDITOR

Emmily Naphambo, Ph.D, Deputy Country Representative

CONTRIBUTORS

Doris Mawuse Aglobitse Ph.D, Mammah Tenii, Adjoa Yenyi, Dr. Claudia Donkor, Selina Owusu, Faisal Bawa, Priscilla Tigoe, Jude Domosie, Irene Danquah, Ishmael Selassie, Michael Ige, Dela Bright Gle, Vitus Atanga, Eric Okrah, Mutaru Iddrisu, Efua Kwaamba Turkson, Mercy Love Alfa, Miriam Akoto.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ritesh Mistry
Norine Quaye
Jonathan Nusetor
Godwin Adzaku
Kingsley Morcher
Emmanuel Adare
Amanda Odame

PHOTOGRAPHY

Henry Alagbua
Stephen Ofori Amo
Raphael Dassah
David Ettien

PRODUCTION

Abdellah Nii Commey

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Stephen Ofori Amo



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MESSAGE FROM REP



Dr. Wilfred David Ochan

Country Representative

We present to you the 2023 Annual Report of UNFPA Ghana Country Office, which we closed with a high-performance score. I wish to congratulate all the staff and personnel for the hard work. I also wish to extend deep appreciation to the Government of Ghana and our development, collaborating and implementing partners for the unwavering support to UNFPA and its mandate. Each of you did your best to bring the results that we are now reporting on.

In 2023 we planted our foundation for implementing the new 8th Country Programme (2023 - 2027). We did year-by-year configuration of the results we should achieve in the 8th Country Programme and we configured, selected and mobilized intervention sites picking the regions most distant from achieving UNFPA's three Transformative Results (left behind regions): zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths and zero gender-based violence and harmful practices. We selected some new implementing partners that will drive the localization agenda while implementing and achieving the planned results.

In terms of 2023 programmatic performance, we surpassed 3 of the 15 output level indicator targets within the first year of implementing the 8th Country Programme. We supported work on policy development or review in reproductive health, gender and human rights including Universal Periodic Review. Our work on systems strengthening continue to ensure institutionalization, building sustainability of interventions while planning transitions, right from the start. Results on population dynamics and strategic information management generated and promoted the use of evidence for decision making and advocacy, including pinpointing risks and vulnerabilities as they relate to population groups and sexual and reproductive health issues such as family planning use, teenage pregnancy, child marriage, and providing information for reporting on ICPD30 for Ghana. We extended services to underserved and vulnerable groups including displaced populations, urban and peri-urban poor, fistula survivors, etc. Through policy advise, advocacy and services extension, we amplified the needs, aspirations and concerns of vulnerable groups with respect to reproductive health.

While we celebrate these achievements, we are cognizant of our shortfalls and challenges. These will serve as stimuli for more work to revitalise, advance and elevate the ICPD agenda - and keep it living through equitable partnerships that amplify our reach, mobilises stronger voices from alliances, widens the resource base and brings in innovations and creativity.

I welcome you to read our 2023 Annual Report themed, "Amplifying Voices of the Vulnerable" and invite you to join us in any way you can, as equitable partners, to continue delivering for the women and girls and young people of Ghana. Akwaba.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report captures the strides made by UNFPA within the year 2023. During this year, we planted our foundation for implementing the 8th Country, 2023 - 2027. In 2023, we implemented all the recommendations of the previous Country Programme Evaluation and Management Audit recommendations within the year - ahead of the 2024 deadline!

In terms of programme delivery, already by the first year of the 5 year planned results, we fully achieved and even surpassed in three of the 15 output level indicator targets of the 8th Country Programme. We have contributed to the development of a draft Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan; Corporate Health Sector Policy and Mentorship Guideline for Midwives in working with the Ministry of Health. We supported the development of Readers on Sexual and Reproductive Health for Complementary Education Agency training programmes. We supported the validation of the draft National Gender Policy, draft amendment bill of the Domestic Violence Act and its Regulation. We supported national review of the Universal Periodic Review report for Ghana with partners and the development of its national action plan.

We worked with the Government to secure Ghana's commitment and supported Ghana to join the West and Central Africa Region to endorse the West and Central Africa (WCA) commitment for Educated, Healthy and Thriving Adolescent and Youth. This WCA Commitment has expanded the policy frontiers in mobilising needed government support to ensure young people have an unhindered access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, opening doors for revisiting policy around reproductive health education.

To sustain and expand services, UNFPA supported institutional capacity building for SRH. We supported the rolling out of Network of Practice service delivery redesign for Emergency Obstetrics and newborn Care (EmONC) in our target regions. We trained regional focal points on maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response (MPDSR) to improve MPDSR services in the target regions. We equipped Mankessim Fistula Centre for increased fistula repair, and provided skills laboratory equipment to Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology for training of students in the bachelors of midwifery degree programme.

We trained tutors in mentorship of midwives and nurses. UNFPA Ghana continued to provide 40% of family planning commodity needs for the country with significant impact on 1,321,219 pregnancies prevented, 610,977 abortions and 801 maternal deaths averted and more than USD 30,294,716 costs saved, which would have been spent in managing complications of pregnancies and abortions.

We graduated 27 youth leaders (YoLe cohort IV) and enrolled 33 for cohort V with intentional inclusion profiles. UNFPA also trained the Criminal Investigation Department of the Ghana Police Service on cybercrime and GBV case investigations and prosecution to enable them provide the needed services to victims of abuse. At the regional level, CO invested in building the capacity of the Regional Coordinating Councils and other duty bearers on effective coordination in the provision of integrated essential GBV services for women and girls.



We contributed to new studies such as Assessment of Female Genital Mutilation in northern Ghana, Assessment of Midwifery Training Colleges for establishment of Midwifery Centres of Excellence; finalized the Assessment Report on EmONC for Ghana and contributed to the 2022 Ghana Demographic Health Survey (DHS). We also supported the development of investment cases/cost of inaction analysis on family planning, maternal health and child marriage. Based on rich data sets from Census and DHS, we supported in-depth analysis of these with focus on teenage pregnancy, child marriage, fertility-fertility preferences and family planning, maternal mortality, disability, gender dimensions and on adolescents and youth. These reports are generating discussions on these issues while some such as the child marriage in-depth analysis has been used to engage traditional leaders to declare abandonment of child marriage in their communities. We produced the National Review Report on Addis Ababa Declaration on Population & Development/ICPD30.

We provided dignity kits, psychosocial counselling and GBV response services to victims of the Akosombo dam overflow and to the refugees/asylum seekers in the north. We supported the repair of fistula cases, extended GBV response services through the support to the Orange Support Centre, and reached young people including, those living with HIV, those in detention, and in Kayayei trade (head porters) and various underserved groups with RH information and services. In some cases, we provided livelihood skills training while linking these with reproductive health, GBV and training on safeguarding.

We expanded our partnership and engaged the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs in national consultation on drafting of the National Policy on Religion which we hope will be sensitive to gender, dignity, inclusion and rights. Similarly, our advocacy with traditional leaders led to three traditional areas of Avatime, Ogua and Akwamu, each making declaration to end child marriage; while the 16 Shades of Abuse campaign on GBV took our awareness and advocacy to religious spaces (mosques, churches, etc.) and into policy arena and to online channel. We formed Partnership to End Fistula in Ghana (PEFIG); and supported South-to-South Cooperation in population policy management with Niger and youth leadership training with Somalia and Burkina Faso. UNFPA fostered partnership with WFP in the agri-business value chain to elicit youth perspectives on implementation of the Strengthening Food Systems to Empower Smallholder Farmers and Young People project, while beginning the creativity in linking UNFPA's mandate with one of the transitions: Food and Food Systems.

Despite economic crisis, we secured multi-year and increased pledge commitment from the Government of Ghana (USD 160,000 for 4 years) towards UNFPA core resources as well as secured multi-year signing on Family Planning 2030 compact (2023, 2024, 2025) worth over USD 1 million. The Country Office supported the Ministry of Gender as the co-champion on Global Equity 2030 Alliance in the launch and in playing lead role to push on gender equity in science, technology and innovations and financing.

While we celebrate these achievements, we are cognizant of our shortfalls and challenges such as socio-cultural norms still holding back many a women and girls; economic crisis that Ghana faced in the year; spillover effect of the Sahel crisis in the north; polarization and push backs on hitherto agreed on ICPD agenda; paucity of development funding in a Middle Income Country like Ghana.



01

CHAPTER ZERO UNMET NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING

UNFPA Ghana's Reproductive Health programme focuses on the following priorities:



Family Planning and maternal health of the UNFPA global strategic plan (2022-2025).

ZERO UNMET NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING

In Ghana, there is conducive environment for Family Planning (FP), including policies, political support, strong coordination, and the integration of FP in the National Health Insurance benefit package. Between 2014 and 2022 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), there has been significant improvement in Family Planning.



Total Fertility Rate (TFR) reduced from 4.2 to 3.9



Modern Contraceptive Prevalence rate (mCPR) increased from 22.2% to 27.8%



Unmet need decreased from 30% to 23%



Contraceptive use among sexually active unmarried women increased from 45% to 63%



Among adolescent (15-19 years), unmet need for FP decreased from 51% to 31%



mCPR increased from 16.7% to 27.0%.

Within these gains, there are variations by residence (urban or rural), wealth quintiles and educational status.

As part of the efforts to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the target of zero unmet need for family planning, UNFPA's investment within the year focused on and achieved the following results in the priority areas of:



Family planning Procurement



Sustainable Domestic Financing



Data and Knowledge management and Capacity building



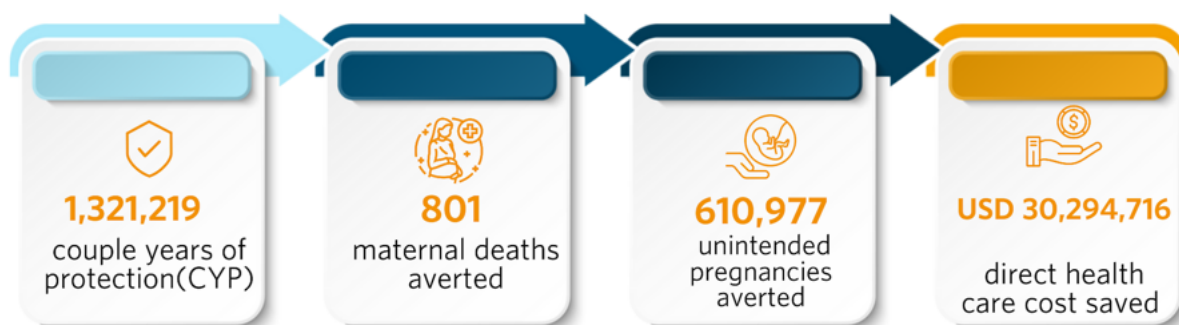
Supply Chain Management

FAMILY PLANNING PROCUREMENT

UNFPA provided up to **40%** of the family planning commodities requirement for the public sector under the Supplies Partnership Programme.



The procurement achieved the following results. Procurement achieved:



The performance on 2023 CYP has surpassed the 5-year target (833,652) for the 8th Country Programme (2023 - 2027). In addition, in strengthening predictable procurement management, UNFPA supported the government in developing the multi-year (2023-2025) supply plans and Contraceptive Procurement Tables (CPT).

SUSTAINABLE DOMESTIC FINANCING FOR FAMILY PLANNING.

UNFPA in collaboration with USAID, FP2030, and the government conducted a series of high-level advocacy dialogues on sustainable financing during key moments such as the World Contraception Day, and as a programme within the 4th Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Scientific Conference held in 2023.

Results achieved included:

- > The Government (Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Health) signed on the UNFPA Supplies compact for two years at a go (2024, and 2025).
- > The government fulfilled its co-financing commitment under the UNFPA supplies partnership programme and procured USD 5 million worth of contraceptives. Based on this performance and in line with the UNFPA co-financing compact, Ghana qualifies to receive matching funds for procurement of additional commodities worth 2 USD million, which is being followed up
- > To sustain advocacy on domestic financing for family planning, UNFPA supported the training of CSOs in SMART advocacy and fostered the formation of a coalition of NGOs, and the development of a roadmap to guide their advocacy efforts.



Audience participation in a dialogue on sustainable financing as part of the FP Week launch

SUPPLY CHAIN SYSTEMS

UNFPA strengthened the coordination and sharing of logistics information on stock status which led to healthy stock levels in the pipeline and at facilities. This was achieved by the:

- > Supporting functional coordinating structures at national (ICC-CS) and sub-national levels that identified issues around stock status and provided the needed guidance including redistribution of commodities among partners to avert stock out or expiries.
- > Development of regional-level supply chain strategies in three new regions (Ahafo, Savanna, and Bono Regions)
- > Implementation of the mandatory Last Mile Assurance processes, including the In-Country Assessment and Quarterly Stock Reviews (QSR).
- > Work with USAID to improve storage facility in Bono East that now serves as a regional hub and reduce transaction cost for many regions that travel to Accra to collect medicine



CAPACITIES FOR SERVICES

UNFPA in partnership with WHO, NGOs, Social Marketing, and the government supported the expansion of DMPA-SC across the country through tailored capacity building and outreaches including community storms at peri-urban and rural areas. It also targeted the most vulnerable populations (Persons with Disabilities, People living with HIV, teenage mothers, refugees, head potters, the "kayeyei").

Results achieved:

300

Health facilities have the full complement of providers with skills to provide DMPA SC self-inject.

50

Community pharmacists are capacitated to provide Human Right Based Family Planning services to women and girls.

30

Health centres have staff equipped to provide FP services during emergencies.

18,000

Adolescents, young people, women, community leaders, market women were reached with FP information and services.

Accelerator: Innovation to reach private sector

To reach corporate or business enterprises who are too busy to visit family planning clinics, UNFPA in collaboration with Total Family Health Organization (TFHO) introduced a corporate sector FP outreach programme targeting busy private sector women. This has seen an increase in FP uptake among women in the corporate sector and is providing lessons for the design of appropriate services delivery.

"It is difficult for us working women. You know, the pressure of work, the traffic and weekends. You are tired and still have household chores to do, so I don't remember the last time I went to the clinic for FP".

"As a working woman, juggling the pressures of work, traffic, and household chores leaves me little time for family planning (FP) clinic visits. We often rely on unreliable methods like withdrawal. However, one day, health workers visited our bank in Mamobi to provide FP services. I picked up their contact and later visited the clinic, where I received an implant. This made me happy and relieved my constant fear of an untimely pregnancy. I believe health providers should visit corporate women like us more often. Many of my colleagues at the bank would love to use FP but are just too busy."

PARTNERSHIPS AND HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS

Data and evidence are crucial for informing policy design and programming. In 2023, UNFPA supported the generation of strategic information in support of family planning initiatives in the country. In partnership with WHO and the Population Council, UNFPA supported the conducting of the DMPA SC -Self inject implementation research in Ghana to inform future national DMPA SC scale-up efforts. UNFPA also contracted the School of Economics of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) to conduct an Investment Case and cost of inaction study on FP. The result is planned to be used for continuous advocacy for increased domestic financing for Family Planning.

DATA AND KNOWLEDGE

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FAMILY PLANNING CHALLENGES

A parliamentary "Resolution" to consign donor items to the government has created bottlenecks in clearing of commodities and obtaining full diplomatic exemption. UNFPA continues to work with partners to address challenges. Although the government continues to invest in FP procurement, most commodities are still procured by partners - UNFPA and USAID.

02

CHAPTER

ZERO

PREVENTABLE

MATERNAL DEATH



Maternal health remains a major priority of the Government of Ghana, evidenced through investment in service expansion including the Community Health Planning Systems (CHPS) and the development of the Network of Practice as a primary healthcare service delivery redesign.

Maternal health service coverage has seen modest improvement. The Ghana Demographic Health Surveys show that between 2014 and 2022, antenatal visits have increased from 97% to 98% while skilled birth attendance increased from 73.7% to 87.6% period and home delivery has decreased from 25 % to 13%.

However, available Ministry of Health data indicates that institutional Maternal Mortality increased from 102.6 to 109.3 deaths per 100,000 live births from 2022 to 2023. Maternal Mortality ratio (MMR) also remained at 310 deaths per 100,000 live births (MHS 2017).

UNFPA PRIORITY AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION IN 2023 WERE:

Midwifery
improvement

Emergency
obstetric and
newborn care

Obstetric Fistula

Maternal and
perinatal death
surveillance and
response

2.1 MIDWIFERY

The CO work in this area supported midwifery education and training, midwifery regulation and practice, and strengthening midwifery associations.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Through the support of UNFPA, the Ministry of Health commenced implementation of the novel Midwifery Centres of Excellence and Practice Initiative (MECEP). Two sites for MECEP (Korle Bu and KNUST) have been identified and will be upgraded to international standards and used as model centres for Midwifery training colleges. This follows a nationwide needs assessment of 16 midwifery training colleges to identify gaps and propose model centres for MECEP. A roadmap has been prepared to support the establishment and operationalization of the MECEP concept.



To improve the quality of the skills training programme for the Bachelor of Science in Midwifery at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, a set of skills laboratory equipment was donated to the University in 2023.

The course, which began with UNFPA's support in the 2011/2012 academic year, has produced 1,135 midwife graduates to date.

1,135 midwife graduates to date.



Some of the equipment that were presented to the KNUST Midwifery Skills Laboratory.

With financial and technical assistance from UNFPA, the Ministry of Health also developed a national mentorship policy guideline and trained master trainers using this guideline. This led to:

- Developing a national roadmap to scale up the mentorship of young midwives in both public and private health training institutions.
- 13 health facilities with the full complement of preceptors equipped with skills to mentor young midwives which has since benefitted 130 mentees.

REGULATION AND PRACTICE

A review of the Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan (2018-2022) and the development of the new Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan (2024-2028) were supported by UNFPA to address gaps observed in the previous plan, integrate new developments and emerging trends, and align with global standards from WHO, ICM, and other new national policies.



MIDWIFERY ASSOCIATIONS

A professional midwifery association is the backbone for promoting a positive professional image, negotiating better conditions and terms of service for members, and advocating for better reproductive health services and outcomes. UNFPA continues to work with Ghana Registered Midwifery Association and National Association of Registered Midwives exclusively focusing on midwifery work with the view to unifying and harmonizing their voices. The office also supported dialogues for the unification of the associations and facilitated the participation of executives in the Bali Conference on Midwives and the commemoration of International Day of the Midwife (IDM) to enable them learn from other countries but also meet with the President of ICM On the agenda for unification. More importantly, the mission was also used to create space for bonding and building trust with the Associations considering unification.

Collaborating with the MoH, the Midwifery Associations, and other development partners, UNFPA supported the commemoration of the 32nd International Day of the Midwife (IDM) which took place under the theme "Together Again, from Evidence to Reality."

Twenty-four (24) midwives were recognized for their contribution to midwifery care in Ghana. The platform helped to amplify the voices of midwives on midwifery and maternal health issues. Learning from the 2023 IDM, UNFPA will facilitate the top three (3) awardees with seed money to implement projects to replicate and scale up the best practices for which they received the award, to other facilities. In this way, the awardees are recognised and best practice from the award is used to scale up services for women and girls in contributing to UNFPA's transformative result.



24 midwives were recognized for their contribution to midwifery care in Ghana and maternal health issues.



Members of the Ghanaian delegation at the 33rd ICM Congress in Bali

PARTNERSHIPS AND HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS

MoH organized the 4th Annual National Nursing and Midwifery Leaders and Managers Conference in partnership with UNFPA, and issued a communique highlighting the following:

- > The need to develop leadership and management competencies of nurses and midwives for leadership positions across the pillars of education, regulation and association;
- > Advocate for the representation and meaningful participation of nurses and midwives in decision-making bodies and policy dialogue fora

2.2 EMERGENCY OBSTETRICS AND NEWBORN CARE: ADVANCING MATERNAL HEALTH THROUGH THE NETWORK OF PRACTICE

Access to quality and timely maternal health service has been expanded in Ghana through the CHPS. However, the quality, supervisory arrangement and referrals have remained weak. The Network of Practice (NoP) is an attempt to (re)arrange health service delivery points in a “bicycle” hub-and-spoke set up for better coordination, referral and supportive supervision, mentorship, and resource sharing/redistribution.

UNFPA, in collaboration with GHS and other partners, is supporting the strengthening of Emergency Obstetrics and Newborn Care (EmONC) into the service delivery redesign under the NoP. This includes ensuring that all the signal functions for both Basic and Comprehensive EmONC are included in rolling out the NoP. In 2023, UNFPA and WHO collaborated to support the capacity building of 250 health providers and administrators in the NoP guidelines drawn from 8 regions of Ghana covering 150 facilities. The training has further contributed to Ghana Health Service mapping out health facilities for the implementation of NoP in 2024.

Building on the 2010 comprehensive EmONC assessment, UNFPA partnered with GHS, USAID, JICA and other partners to undertake the 2022 national EmONC assessment report. The report was finalized in 2023 and it highlights huge gaps in BeMONC service coverage (0.6%).

2.3 MATERNAL AND PERINATAL DEATH SURVEILLANCE AND RESPONSE (MPDSR)

Ghana Health Services (GHS) rolled out the implementation of the revised MDSR guidelines to improve the quality of care, enhance accountability for maternal deaths, and ultimately contribute to the reduction of maternal mortality. UNFPA partnered with UNICEF and WHO to organize continental training on MPDSR, where gaps in Ghana’s MPDSR programme were identified to guide the development of a national action plan to address the gaps. UNFPA subsequently supported a step down training of 83 health professionals on the process of documenting and investigating maternal and perinatal deaths and near-miss cases. This has contributed to strengthening MPDSR services in the target health facilities.

To institutionalize the MPDSR function within GHS, UNFPA supported the establishment of the MPDSR implementation desk at GHS for oversight and coordination. Currently, 60 health facilities at various levels within UNFPA target regions perform routine MPDSR functions.

BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO END OBSTETRIC FISTULA

About 1,300 new cases of Obstetric Fistula (OF) occur every year, mostly among women and girls who are based in rural areas, with low-education and from poor households. Of the new cases, only about 100 are repaired per year leaving a huge backlog.

As part of the efforts to end obstetrics fistula in Ghana, UNFPA mobilized a coalition of organizations to advocate and mobilise funding and domestic financing to eradicate fistula in Ghana. This partnership called "Partnership to End Obstetric Fistula in Ghana (PEFIG)" is a seven-year framework championed by the Office of the First Lady with membership from the UN, public and private sectors, media, and academia to mobilize resources and double the current number of annual repairs.

The idea of PEFIG was mooted during the International Day to End Obstetrics Fistula (IDEOF) 2023 at the Embassy of Norway and was officially launched in December 2023 with nine founding members (Telco (AT), Access Bank, World Food Programme (WFP), MoH/GHS, Mankessim Fistula Centre, National Population Council (NPC), Media Communications Advocacy Network (MCAN), and UNFPA). The partnership mobilized initial resources for the repair of 140 cases at a total value of USD 100,000 and succeeded in repairing 38 cases in one year alone, compared to 6-10 cases that were done previously. In 2023, UNFPA provided fistula repair equipment to the Mankessim Fistula Centre - a designated ECOWAS fistula repair Centre serving Ghana and the sub-region.



Restoring Dignity Among Women With Obstetric Fistula: UNFPA Partners First Lady of the Republic of Ghana and Stakeholders



In 2023, UNFPA provided fistula repair equipment to the Mankessim Fistula Centre - a designated ECOWAS fistula repair Centre serving Ghana and the sub region.

2.4 HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

As part of the National Inter-Agency Working Group on Emergency, UNFPA was engaged in two crises during the year under review: the Akosombo Dam flooding, and the influx of asylum seekers/ refugees in the northern part of Ghana.

The Akosombo dam flooding led to the displacement of 27,279 people of whom 12,489 were women of reproductive age (WRA) with about 1,091 expected pregnancies.

In response to this need, UNFPA collaborated with Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) to donate 600 Dignity Kits to affected populations and supported the provision of SRH and gender-sensitive services to 9,561 displaced persons.

In the northern part of Ghana, a total of 13, 544 asylum seekers/refugees were displaced due to the Sahel crises.

UNFPA donated 568 Dignity Kits to affected persons., UNFPA also participated in the rapid needs assessment for both the northern and Akosombo crises as part of the IAWGE.

Together with GHS, NADMO, and other key partners, UNFPA conducted a national Minimum Readiness Assessment (MRA) for SRH in emergencies for Ghana. Key findings highlighted the lack of a comprehensive national framework for SRH service delivery during emergencies and this led to the development of an action plan to address the gaps.

Key staff in humanitarian leadership, MISP, and emergency response received training through the support of UNFPA. This led to the development of a Contingency Plan which aligns with the IAWGE contingency plan.

UNFPA also supported the empowerment of vulnerable girls “kayayei” (market head potter girls) by running a girls’ empowerment programme to provide the Dignity Kits- a break away from the conventional procurement from private companies. In this, the kayayei were formed into groups and provided the financial incentives to package the Dignity Kits for UNFPA to distribute to affected communities. This change in approach from a procurement to a programme role ensured that rather than preach to other partners to invest in the Kayayei and empower them, UNFPA was leading the packing and encouraging others to do so. The change ensured the kayayei earned additional income and reduced their risks and vulnerabilities they get by the exposures in the kayayei trade, yet UNFPA also secured quality dignity kits for its humanitarian programming.



Dignity kits that were handed over to persons affected in the Akosombo crises

03

CHAPTER

ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARMFUL PRACTICES



UNFPA, as part of its 8th Country Programme (CP8) 2022 - 2027 continues to strengthen mechanisms and capacities of government and nongovernment actors, institutions and data systems to address discriminatory gender and social norms to advance gender equality and women's decision-making. The CP8 focuses on GBV prevention and response, ending child marriage, ending FGM, mainstreaming rights and gender equality and women empowerment. The subsequent sections present brief context and highlights of performance in 2023 for each of the themes.

3.1 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is one of the most systemic and widespread human rights violations. The UN recognises GBV not only as a horrific violation of human rights but also as a public health crisis and a major obstacle to peace, and security and sustainable development. In Ghana, the statistics on GBV are dire, and the decline in GBV prevalence has plateaued over the years. The 2022 Demographic Health Survey reveals that the percentage of ever-married women who have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence committed by their current or most recent husband/partner decreased from 40% in 2008 to 36% in 2022, a very slow annual rate of decline underpinning the need for accelerated actions and multistakeholder approach in addressing GBV.

To help improve the GBV policy environment, UNFPA supported the MoGCSP in 2023 to review and update the Domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732) and its Legislative Instrument (L.I 2237) to make them more responsive to changing times. Similarly, UNFPA partnered with the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, for consultation on the development of a policy on religion in Ghana. This will be the first ever Ghana's Policy on Religion if developed. The outcome of the national consultation indicates that Ghanaians are in favour of the policy. The information gathered during the consultation with the diverse perspectives and recommendations from religious and traditional leaders will be used to guide policy formulation. It is planned that the Policy on Religion will, inter alia, address harmful socio-cultural norms and be sensitive to rights, gender, inclusion, and dignity which align with the ICPD agenda.



UNFPA partnered with the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, for consultation on the development of a policy on religion in Ghana.

UNFPA, in collaboration with the MoGCSP has taken significant strides to enhance the accessibility of high-quality, gender-responsive GBV services for girls at risk of or experiencing GBV



In the 10 regions, a specialized training initiative was implemented, engaging 330 relevant service providers (244 females and 86 males) in around 50 service delivery points from various sectors including health, security, social services, justice, and decentralized structures. The objective was to equip these service providers with the necessary skills to deliver coordinated services addressing SGBV for women and girls. The training, focusing on the Essential Services Package (ESP) for women and girls experiencing violence and help line operators at the OSC on effective case management.



In the areas of services delivery, UNFPA supported MoGCSP to GBV information and services, including medical psychosocial, legal services to support women and girls subject to violence through the Orange Support Centre.



A total of 898 cases have been reported to and registered as GBV cases by the Orange Support Centre. The status of reported cases in 2023 are as follows:

53 cases have been successfully resolved with clients satisfied with services provided

201 cases are ongoing receiving different support services available with some getting to a successful resolution

62 cases reported cases of SGBV handled by Regional Essential Service Package Committees.



An NGO PAYDP, with support from UNFPA, provided gender-responsive social protection and poverty reduction services to 7,447 marginalized adolescent girls (Kayayei, adolescent mothers, street hawkers and girls with disability) through the Shaping Futures programme.



Products from beneficiaries of the the Shaping Futures programme.

MoGCSP led the commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence campaign in 2023 with support from UNFPA as the chair and co-chair of the UN Gender Theme Group and Gender Equality Sector Team/Development Partners (GEST/DP). Advancing dialogue and policy discussions on Gender-Based Violence (GBV), UNFPA led an innovative initiative dubbed, "16 Shades of Abuse".

A photography contest to depict various forms of abuse or empowerment of women and girls. Each of the 16 Days of GBV was used to unveil a winning photo portraying the key message of the campaign. The campaign took UNFPA to public spaces like schools, Embassies (British, Switzerland); policy tables (launch of 16 DoA, National Policy Dialogue); places of worship (churches and mosques); targeting men and boys (gym) and reaching the UN and development partners (Office of the Resident Coordinator). The photos depicted: Child marriage, online-GBV, economic abuse, physical abuse, etc. as seen from the eyes of camera.



Unveiling of one of the selected photographs at the Ghana National Mosque at Kanda.



Unveiling at the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Ghana.

In partnership with 16 Members of Parliament, UNFPA mentored 332 adolescents and benefited 191 community leaders at the annual "Delegates and Legislative Conference." The MPs also solidified their commitment to various pivotal initiatives, including tabling and formulating a private member's bill on elimination of luxury tax on sanitary pads, and persistently championing adolescent development and the prevention of SGBV.



Annual "Delegates and Legislative Conference in Volta Region



3.2 ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

Child marriage in Ghana has declined from about 40% in 1980s to 27% in 2011, and further down to 19.3% per cent in 2018. However, one in five girls is still married or in informal union before the age of 18 years. The prevalence of marriage by age 15 has stalled at 5% over the last ten years, without any visible improvement.

To create an enabling environment for adolescent girls to enjoy their full potential, UNFPA and UNICEF, through the [Global Programme to End Child Marriage](#), have supported the government of Ghana in developing and updating legal frameworks such as the National Strategic Framework for Ending Child Marriage in Ghana (2017-2026), the Five-Year Strategic Plan to Address Adolescent Pregnancy in Ghana 2018-2022; the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) Strategic Plan.



The capacity of 22,918 marginalised girls was enhanced to enable them to make informed decisions and choices regarding marriage, education, and sexual and reproductive health services.



UNFPA partnered with the NGO, PAYDP to provide gender-responsive social protection and poverty reduction services to **29,823 marginalised adolescents.**



13,936 men and boys (comprising 8,006 men and 5,930 boys)

were engaged in gender-transformative programmes that promoted healthy relationships, positive masculinities, and gender equality.



UNFPA supported research on cohabitation among youth, focusing on university students and communities in the Central Region, and produced a thematic brief on child marriage in Ghana. The studies highlighted the prevalence and impacts of child marriage and informal unions, identifying hotspots and informing targeted interventions for Phase III of the Global Programme to End Child Marriage in Ghana.

Three paramountcies publicly committed to ending child marriage and other harmful practices. During this engagement, 1,180 individuals, including paramount chiefs, kings, and queen mothers, were educated on policies and laws regarding harmful practices in Ghana. In the year, through the GPECM, UNFPA and partners reached 7,600 community leaders who pledged to reshape societal norms on gender within their communities.





The misguided belief that marrying girls off early would preserve chastity and prevent premarital sex is regressive, inadvertently punishing girls for what should be a collective educational responsibility of parents, communities and male counterparts

-Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III -Paramount Chief of Akwamu Traditional Area (Eastern Region).



3.3 STRENGTHENING THE FIGHT AGAINST FGM IN GHANA

Ghana abolished Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) following an amendment of the Criminal Code in 1994, which was strengthened in 2007 when the country ratified the Maputo Protocol to combat the practice. Despite the law, FGM is still being practiced especially in northern Ghana and among practicing tribes who have migrated to the south. Four percent (4%) of girls and women aged 15 - 49 have undergone FGM (UNICEF 2013). Meanwhile, 2017/18 MICS indicates a 2.4% rate among the same-age cohort. However, such declining national average prevalence does not reveal the regional disparities nor highlight other forms of disaggregation.

UNFPA Ghana in 2023 focused on generating credible disaggregated data and empirical evidence on FGM. The aim was to come up with data that would be used to measure the effectiveness of interventions as well as development results in FGM programming. A baseline assessment was commissioned in FGM prevalent regions in the Northern part of Ghana. The results indicate that FGM is still occurring in 5 of every 100 women and girls in the region, and 30% of the population support and would like the practice to continue. Other major highlights of the assessment outlined the drivers for the continuous practice of FGM on three levels as follows:



Based on these findings, cross-sectoral action plans have been developed by state and non-state stakeholders, including youth-responsive interventions to facilitate resource mobilization for programme implementation.

The assessment findings have also re-ignited national discussions on FGM eradication, including the need for cross-border strategies.

ASSESSMENT OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN NORTHERN GHANA >>>

SCAN ME



Say No
TO FGM

To strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholders from Ghana's neighbouring countries to help tackle the cross-border aspects of FGM, the UNFPA and Ministry of Gender participated in the 2nd African Union (AU) Conference on FGM. Under the theme 'Change in a Generation', the conference provided a platform for participants to evaluate the progress made in the fight against FGM while exploring innovative strategies for expediting its eradication.



The capacity of identified youth and media personnel was also enhanced through the Young African Innovators Summit which brought together FGM programmers and experts, youth activists, business donors, investors, and digital communicators from across the continent to create an opportunity for addressing issues of harmful practices including FGM innovatively. Additionally, the Fund highlighted the need for the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme on FGM to support operational research and cross-border interventions during the 2023 Annual Technical Consultation in Amman, Jordan.



Launch of the FGM Baseline Report



The youth from border-communities in UER caucusing on strategies to end cross-border FGM.

3.3 GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

UNFPA supported the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) in updating and reviewing the National Gender Policy, the Domestic Violence Act 2007, its Legislative Instrument (LI 2237), passed in 2016, and its National Policy and Plan of Action 2009-2019.

Trainer of Trainers were held for 71 stakeholders drawn from the various departments and agencies and NGOs across the country on the national framework and toolkit for engaging men and boys developed by MoGCSP with support from UNFPA.

Also in collaboration with the Second Lady HE Samira Bawumia, through the “ Africa Women and Children Climate Conference (AFRIWOC), provided a platform for 50 marginalised adolescent girls, mainly “Kayayei” to amplify their voices to over 2500 high-level individuals such as J. Mohammed, the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and the former Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and experts who were present at the conference.



Some models cat walking in the designed clothes by trainees of the Fashion Expressions Programme.

Again, UNFPA in partnership with PRADA supported 30 vulnerable young women under the ‘Fashion Expressions Project”, empowering vulnerable women and girls economically while promoting body autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights. Private sector players and brand names in the fashion industry namely: Poqua Poqu, GG BeSpoke, Boye Doe, Sadia Sanusi contributed hugely to the success of this innovation when they took the young ladies through their six months of industrial attachment to sharpen their skills.

UNFPA built the capacity of MoGCSP as a co-champion of the “Equity 2030 Alliance” themed: Building an Equitable Future through women-centric innovation. The Alliance is a platform to advocate for closing the gender equity gaps in science, technology, and financing. It brings together stakeholders to discuss unified, global efforts to normalise gender equity in science and technology. As the co-champion, the Minister of MoGCSP represented Ghana at the global health summit held in Berlin where more than 3,100 participants on-site from 106 countries, including 12,000 digital participants participated. Over 34,000 viewers rewatched the sessions. Equity 2030 Alliance membership for the Member States is a non-financial non-binding public support and open for all Member States committed to building an equitable future for all.

Another significant achievement in the national gender space for 2023 was the first national review and report drafting on the Maputo Protocol since its ratification in Ghana in 2007. This thought leadership and financial support from UNFPA facilitated consultations with 80 cross-sectoral stakeholders that resulted in the drafting of 10 outstanding state reports by Ghana for submission to the AU since the ratification of the Protocol by the state party.

3.4 WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY

For the first time, UNFPA Ghana (in partnership with UNDP Ghana) successfully accessed one million dollars from the Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) for a 24-month project entitled 'Enhancing social cohesion and social contract, through empowerment of women and youth in three northern regions of Ghana'. The project seeks to prevent and address the root causes of localised and spillover conflicts and vulnerabilities to violent extremism in 8 districts in the Upper East, Upper West and Northeast regions of Ghana.

With this significant milestone, UNFPA, under the project is focussing on initiatives aimed at addressing gender-based violence and negative gender and social-cultural norms, promoting gender equality and empowering young people to enhance social cohesion and stability in 24 selected communities. By investing in the capacities and resilience of women and youth through rights-based and innovative approaches such as the 'Inclusive Development Actors' Forum' and 'Equal Engage Guide' training tools, UNFPA Ghana aims to foster sustainable peace and development and underscore the importance of inclusive peacebuilding efforts that prioritize the needs and contributions of women and youth.

“

I stand for peace”



3.6 HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are "rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled". Proponents of the concept usually assert that everyone is endowed with certain entitlements merely because of being human. Ghana has ratified several international and regional treaties/frameworks that confirm its commitment to promoting the human rights of all people as well as bridging the gender equality gap. The 1992 Constitution presents a national framework in which several articles align with the international human rights framework and regional commitments. Ghana's current policies and laws on marriage, divorce, inheritance, gender-based violence, reproductive health, Criminal Offences Act on Female Genital Mutilation, 'trokosi' and cruel widowhood rites offences all address issues of human rights.

During the year, a toolkit to empower duty bearers with practical guidance on human rights defence, along with a training manual for marginalized groups addressing unique challenges and promoting resilience in safeguarding human rights, was developed.

UNFPA supported CSOs in developing a comprehensive roadmap for effectively monitoring and implementing the state's accepted recommendations during Ghana's 4th UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle. This effort underscores the collaborative approach taken to advance human rights in Ghana and enhance the impact of UPR recommendations. Furthermore, five human rights defenders were supported to participate in the South-South learning for activists, Human Rights Leaders, and Allies from challenging environments in Nairobi.

UNFPA's human rights programming also economically empowered 212 marginalized individuals and supported government agencies and CSOs in creating a joint implementation plan to monitor and implement the recommendations accepted by Ghana under the 4th UN UPR cycle.

04

CHAPTER ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (AYD)



UNFPA Ghana, in 2023, started implementation of the 8th Country Programme with focus on adolescents and youth through strengthening of skills, opportunities, and data systems for adolescents and youth to ensure bodily autonomy, leadership, and participation; to build human capital, including in humanitarian settings. The adolescent and youth programme also continued to evolve, with the development and introduction of new intervention areas including youth peace and security, focusing on youth leadership and participation and taking steps to broaden engagements with stakeholders.

Ghana has a youthful population with an estimated 57% under 25 years out of a population of 30.8 million people. The country recorded an adolescent pregnancy rate of 63 per 1000 live births in 2022 (GDHS) and a 1.7 HIV prevalence rate (15-49). Child Marriage remains a problem in Ghana with 19% of girls and 4% of boys married before the age of 18 respectively, while another 5% of girls are married before their 15th birthday. Although several policies exist for adolescent sexual and reproductive health, currently there is no guideline for reproductive health education.

Given this context, the country office prioritizes its work on adolescents and youth along the following themes/pillars:

Health and Well-being

Youth Empowerment and Engagement

Youth Peace and Security

Youth and Emerging Trends

4.1 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

SECURING GOVERNMENT'S SRHR COMMITMENTS.

Together with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, UNFPA and UNESCO actively shaped and secured Ghana's endorsement of the West and Central Africa Commitment on Educated, Healthy, and Thriving Adolescents and Young People in April 2023. This regional commitment focuses on the necessary steps to remove bottlenecks that impede the delivery of standardized SRHR information and services to young people, including challenges of Reproductive Health Education as it is the case in Ghana. Currently, efforts are fragmented, with partners relying on existing materials that offer basic information to young people, albeit in an uncoordinated manner using a non standardised material.



The Ghanaian delegation at West and Central Africa's Commitment for Educated, Healthy, and Thriving Adolescents and Young People.

In partnership with the Complementary Education Agency, UNFPA supported the development of Three Reproductive Health Readers Manuals as complementary resource materials for youth skilling programmes and TVET training, focusing on out-of-school adolescents and youth. The readers provide additional information on Gender, Menstrual Health, GBV, and adolescent pregnancy amongst other topics.

STRENGTHENING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN HIV PREVENTION

The 2022 DHS report, released in 2023, shows that there is an increase in HIV infection especially amongst the youth. Consequently, UNFPA focuses its HIV prevention programming on vulnerable groups including young people living with HIV (YPLHIV) and young people in detention. To strengthen the capacity of young people and youth networks in the implementation of the HIV prevention roadmap, the CO trained 50 youth leaders from various CSOs such as AfriYAN, PPAG-YAM, HFFG, YAG, YouthKommunity.Org, ProActif PAYDP, YHAGs, Youth Harvest Foundation and Youth Bridge Foundation. At the end of the training, recommendations included the need to intensify prevention actions among young people including the use of technology to advance HIV programming for and with young people.

SUPPORTING YOUTH SRH INFORMATION AND CHOICES

UNFPA in 2023, reached **54,698 (38,645 girls and 16053 boys)** adolescents and youth through selected interventions including SRHR services outreaches and direct services provision at youth-friendly facilities. About **3,094 young people and youth leaders** were also engaged at the community level through peer-to-peer activities to reach young people with SRHR information and facilitate access to needed health services and commodities.



UNFPA Ghana and its partners are implementing a unique intervention targeted at Young People in Detention (YPiD) and Young People Living with HIV (YPLHIV) in collaboration with the Ghana Prisons Service, the Ghana Health Service, and the Ghana AIDS Commission. In 2023, a total of 246 YPLHIV and 95 YPiD were provided with comprehensive knowledge of reproductive health. The programme includes topics on HIV and STI, human rights, gender norms, substance abuse, stigma and discrimination, peer pressure, relationships, community values, positive living, and access to youth-friendly services.

During the year under review, 12,020 inmates in correctional facilities (2,069 females and 9,951 males) were provided with Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV information and services, along with essential medical support, with assistance from UNFPA.

LEVERAGING DIGITALIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Social media continued to be an important medium for sharing critical SRHR information with young people. During the period, 63,348 young people were reached with various SRHR messages including HIV and AIDS contraception, adolescent pregnancy, and peer relationships among others. About 39,348 of these were adolescent girls reached with SRH information and services through work with the Ghana Health Service. To support the capacity of the government to deliver SRH information in a format that is meaningful to young people, the CO continued to support the YMK (You Must Know) mobile app innovation (owned by the Ghana Health Service), which provides SRH and other health-related information to young people.



4.2 YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

THE YOUTH LEADERS (YOLE) FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

The YoLe Fellowship is one of UNFPA Ghana's flagship programmes which aligns with the organisation's mandate of ensuring that every young person's potential is fulfilled. It fits within UNFPA and United Nations Youth Strategy and focuses on Leadership Development for Youth through foundational training on leadership, institutional attachments for shadowing and coaching, and mentorship support from seasoned industry leaders.

In 2023, 27 Fellows graduated from the one-year programme. Of these, 51% were immediately absorbed into employment within the UN and other DP systems (40%) while 11% secured scholarships for Masters Studies. They continue to be UNFPA ambassadors, creating institutional linkages and visibility in their new places of work. For instance, from the Office of the First Lady, a Fellow was recruited and supported the production of a video documentary on Gender Equality in Education and Health care delivery as a joint initiative between UNFPA and the First Lady's office.



DIALOGUE WITH YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

In June 2023, the National Youth Authority (NYA), supported by UNFPA, held a dialogue with the Young Parliamentarian Dialogue Forum in Accra. The event aimed to mobilize parliamentarians as advocates and allies for youth-related policies, address youth challenges, and enhance youth participation in decision-making platforms and structures. Attendees included the leadership from the National Youth Authority, members of the Young Parliamentarian Forum of Ghana, leaders of CSOs and youth networks, UNFPA Youth Leaders Fellows, and UNFPA staff. Parliamentarians were urged to focus on bills, policies, and instruments introduced by the government to advance youth development. The dialogue emphasized the importance of collaboration in policy making, encouraging stakeholders to explore strategies to increase youth involvement in legislation and decision-making structures and processes, and highlighting the need for committed action to empower young people.



Some scenes from the Young Parliamentarian Dialogue at the Parliament House

SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

UNFPA Ghana remains a strong partner for the development of youth agency, amplification of voices for youth, and advocacy for meaningful youth participation in decision-making. In this respect, UNFPA Ghana supported Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) to host an Africa-wide consultation with young people for the Summit of the Future. YAG holds a special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and convenes the African Youth SDGs Summit.

YAG was also supported in organizing the 5th African Youth SDGs Summit that took place in Lusaka, Zambia from 14th - 18th August 2023. The Lusaka Summit echoed the call for more inclusive, youth-centered, and socially progressive action by governments to advance post-COVID development frameworks for countries in the continent.

MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMME DELIVERY.

Through its implementing partners, UNFPA engaged 3,094 youth leaders at the community level as peer-to-peer facilitators. This initiative aimed to harness the power of youth leadership and the value of youth participation to drive positive change in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). By providing training that empowered these leaders to serve as advocates and educators within their communities, UNFPA amplified its impact, ensuring that the message of sexual health and rights reached a wider audience, including marginalized and underserved groups.

4.3 YOUTH PEACE AND SECURITY

TIME IS NOW - ACTION ON YOUTH PEACE AND SECURITY

Ghana remains exposed to the risk of violent extremists because of the ongoing conflicts and activities from surrounding countries in the West African Region. Exclusion; inequitable allocation and distribution of authorities, resources and economic opportunities; and limited access to services coupled with local conflict around resources present grounds for disgruntlement and recruitment into violent extremism.

During the year under review, UNFPA supported the participation of staff from the National Peace Council and Youth Bridge Foundation to attend the West and Central Africa Regional Training on Youth Peace and Security. The team developed a road map that will facilitate the development of Ghana's first National Action Plan on YPS in fulfillment of the UNSC Resolution 2250 and other national and regional commitments.

UNFPA has also initiated a Peace Building Fund programme in Northern Ghana that will look more into drivers of conflict by focusing on social cohesion. Consultative meetings have been held and full programme implementation is due to start in 2024.



Team Ghana at the West and Central Africa (WCA) Regional Commitments for Educated, Healthy and Thriving Adolescents

4.4 YOUTH AND EMERGING TRENDS

The centrality of youth in addressing emerging trends is linked to the UNFPA/ICPD mandate and the consideration that youth are the inheritors and custodians of many of the initiatives that drive future responsiveness to emerging issues.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The youth have the potential to either perpetuate or reverse current environmental trends, depending on how they are mobilized and engaged. Recognizing this, UNFPA supported the National Youth Authority in organizing a national youth conference on climate change. One of the main outcomes of this conference was the establishment of the Youth Action Group on Climate. This group has been set up with UNFPA as a member and supporter. UNFPA will continue to work within this platform to mobilise the youth for climate action.



YOUTH AND THE SDG TRANSITION: FOOD AND FOOD SYSTEM

UNFPA entered into partnership with WFP to conduct a nation-wide youth consultations to mobilize youth voices and promote young people's engagement in agribusiness along the entire value chain as a means for sustainable livelihoods development and strengthening food and food systems. In addition to youth economic/livelihood empowerment, youth voice and participation in the agricultural value chain, UNFPA's other interest in this partnership is also to link SRH and GBV within the interventions for livelihood skills development. Through the consultations, 653 young people across 11 regions of Ghana provided insights to inform programme interventions development, implementation mechanisms and critical factors to be addressed to ensure meaningful engagement of the youth in the programme. Through this partnership, UNFPA is actively positioning reproductive and maternal health appropriately in the programming to promote health and well being while doing food and food system enterprises.

05

CHAPTER

POPULATION DYNAMICS AND EVIDENCE



UTILIZING DATA FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

UNFPA Ghana's work in this area focuses on linkages between population, population dynamics, and development and in using quality population data to inform policy, planning and advocacy. Ghana's population is 30.8 million, with females being 51 percent and 57 percent live in urban areas. Ghana's youth population increased from 34.6 to 38.2 percent, while the child population decreased from 41.3 - 35.3 percent signaling the beginning of a youth bulge in the population age structure. The fertility rate has dropped from 4.2 in 2014 to 3.9 in 2022, while the adolescent-age fertility rate is 10.9 percent. The crude mortality and fertility rates are 7.63 and 28.078, respectively. The migration rate in the country is 28.9 percent.

Ghana has a comprehensive population policy (2017) and a national population council that oversees the implementation of the policy. A roadmap was developed in 2018 for harnessing the Demographic Dividend (DD) and adopted the ICPD@25 Nairobi Commitments that have been integrated into various national and sectoral policies and plans. Ghana has a strong Statistical Service, which provides official data and statistics for monitoring and influencing government policies.

In this context, UNFPA Ghana's work on population dynamics and evidence focuses on:



UNFPA Ghana, in its 5-year target, planned to complete 5 studies. By 2023, this five year target was already achieved through surveys, and further analysis of existing studies to generate evidence for policy measurement and formulation and advocacy.

However, a study on Comprehensive Assessment of Data Gaps on Persons with Disabilities in the National Statistical System was conducted. Two in-depth analyses were conducted on Thematic Briefs on Child Marriage in Ghana and Difficulty in Performing Activities using the 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC) data.

5.1. POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT LINKAGES

In 2023, Ghana reviewed the implementation of the 1994 ICPD PoA at 30 years (ICPD@30) concurrently with a review of the AADPD10, under the leadership of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), through a participatory, inclusive, and consultative process with key stakeholders. The report shows overall progress on the implementation of the ICPD/AADPD, but progress is low.

Worthy to note are achievements attained under the 6 pillars.



UNDER PILLAR 1 (PEOPLE AND DIGNITY)

Ghana adopted the policies and programmes towards achieving gender equality: National Domestic Violence Policy (2009-2019), the Adolescent Pregnancy Strategic Plan (2018-2022), and the National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage in Ghana (2016-2027). Ghana has made strides in poverty alleviation, with the population living below the poverty line declining from 8.4% in 2013 to 8.2% in 2017. Gender disparities across leadership have notably improved in politics and public life, with the proportion of women in parliament increasing from 14% to 27% in the 7th (2016-2020) and 8th (2021-2024) Parliament, respectively.



UNDER PILLAR 2 (HEALTH AND WELLBEING)

Investments in maternal care, universal coverage of antenatal care, an increase in skilled worker deliveries, and the implementation of the health insurance policy have significantly improved the country's overall health outcomes. The unmet need for family planning declined from 29.9% in 2014 to 23.4% in 2022, while the ratio of doctors to patients improved from 1:7,196 in 2018 to 1:5,880 in 2022. The maternal mortality ratio declined from 147 per 100,000 live births in 2017 to 109.2 in 2020 and increased to 119.5 in 2021 before declining to 102.6 in 2022.



UNDER PILLAR 3 (PLACE AND MOBILITY)

Ghana has adopted several policies and international conventions to eliminate international trade barriers and enhance mobility. These include the African Union (AU) Migration Policy Framework (2018- 2030) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Free Movement Protocol (1979). Ghana is also a member of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is the African Union's long-term development strategy for transforming the continent into an international trade centre. Over US\$4.7 billion was remitted in 2022, accounting for 6.1 percent of the country's GDP (World Bank, 2022), making Ghana the second largest recipient of remittances in dollar terms, and the ninth largest in relation to GDP in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the high cost of remittance transfers is identified as a challenge to remittance flows in Ghana.



IN PILLARS 4, 5 AND 6 (GOVERNANCE, DATA & STATISTICS, & PARTNERSHIPS & INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION).

Ghana has made progress in data production and utilization through the use of digital tools. The 2021 population and housing census was the first digital census in Ghana and has data on all aspects of the population at the national and sub-national levels. The data collected over the years substantially improved policy planning, monitoring, and evaluation at local and national levels. In addition, Ghana has parliamentary caucuses/committees on population, health, and gender, which are actively involved in discussions that influence population policies, including women's empowerment, gender equality, sexual reproductive health and rights, and data and evidence.

However, progress was slow under Pillar 3. Ghana is a destination country for many migrants from other African countries, Europe, and Asia. From the west and subregion, Ghana serves as a haven to many countries, including Nigeria, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso, due to the conflicts and other insurgencies they face in their countries. However, capturing the exact number of irregular migrants to Ghana is challenging due to the porous borders.

At the national dissemination of the ICPD30/AADPD10 report, it was recommended that a national acceleration plan on areas of slow progress be developed and implemented. Ghana participated in the African Continental review meeting on ICPD @30/AADPD10, where the African regional report was adopted for submission into the global report for consideration under CPD57.

UNFPA promoted South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTrC) with Niger that came over to understudy the development and management of a National Population Policy. The delegation engaged key government agencies, including the academia and CSOs, that play key roles in implementing and tracking the policy. They also visited one administrative region to understand how the policy is implemented at the decentralized level. The team also shared their experiences in managing the youthful population in Niger since the population age structure is not too different from Ghana's population. Institutionalized South-South arrangements in population policy development and management are being explored between the NPCs of Ghana and Niger.

The 2023 World Population Day was Commemorated under the theme Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities. The event, which was convened under the leadership of NPC, was used to create awareness and mobilise stakeholders on the nationally adopted theme: "Unleashing the power of gender equality to spur national development" to promote women's empowerment and national development.



Snapshot of the Audience at the 2023 World Population Day Commemoration

5.2. DATA, STATISTICS, AND STATISTICAL SYSTEM

UNFPA approaches capacity building by bringing together a government policy and practice institution (Ghana Statistical Services-GSS) and academia (Regional Institute for Population Studies or University of Ghana) to ensure that new learning is used to improve practice but also integrated straight into academic programmes so that new graduates have new knowledge ready for the job market. This twin practice and academic approach ensures sustainability of such capacity building programmes by integrating some elements into academics while using academics to question and improve on the practice.

Experts from the GSS and the Geography Department at the University of Ghana were trained in Geospatial Analysis and Visualization of Census data using GIS and remote sensing. The expert from the Geography Department empowered graduate students at RIPS to use Geospatial Analysis and Visualization in data collection and analysis, while the expert from GSS strengthened the capacity of GSS staff in the data analysis unit to apply Geospatial Analysis in data analysis.

UNFPA also organized capacity-building training in modern population projection technology, of which two GSS staff members benefited. The training's insights were valuable in accelerating the preparation of the national population projections using the 2021 census data.

With support from UNFPA, ISRI, and UNECA, Ghana hosted capacity-building training on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics for Africa. The training enhanced the institutional capacity of the data and statistical system and improved the registration of births and deaths. A follow up action in collaboration with Ghana Registry of Births and Deaths has been planned for 2024.



Geospatial and GIS training in Kenya

5.3. POPULATION DATA AND EVIDENCE

Ghana conducted a digital population and housing census for the first time in 2021, whose result was released within three months after enumeration. UNFPA Ghana's office partnered with the GSS to undertake an in-depth analysis of key areas of interest in ICPD agenda/UNFPA priorities areas. UNFPA supported the production of six thematic briefs: Fertility; Maternal Mortality; Gender Dynamics; Adolescent and Youth; Difficulty in Performing Activities and Child Marriage.

The 2022 GDHS result was launched in December 2023, nine months after the survey started. This resulted in tremendous improvements in the timeliness of the release of the final report, accelerated by the use of digital technology (CAPI). UNFPA, USAID, FCDO, and other partners provided technical and financial support.

The West and Central Africa regional office of UNFPA organized capacity building in small area estimation for the national statistics offices (NSOs) in the region, and staff of GSS participated. They were trained in using small area estimation methodology in estimating indicators at the administrative levels 2 and 3. At the regional and district levels, the survey and census cannot estimate the indicators. The approach ensures development planning captures indicators from the lowest administrative level and leaves no one behind. GSS organised a step-down training for their data analysis unit staff and some selected academic institutions to apply the approach in research.

UNFPA, in partnership with stakeholders, developed a research and data agenda for the 8th CP and what to focus on. The agenda gives a strategic direction on research and data needed to support the implementation of the country programme. The agenda is a public document, and its research topics are open to the government and academia to select and research in collaboration with UNFPA.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

- ADHD** Adolescent Health Development
- ANC** Antenatal Care
- ARHR** Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights
- ASRH** Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health
- AYFH** Adolescent Youth Friendly Health
- CHPS** Community Health Planning and Services
- CM** Child Marriage
- CoPASH** Coalition of Persons Against SGBV and Harmful Practices
- CSOs** Civil Society Organizations
- CSPGs** Cross Sectoral Planning Group
- CYP** Couple-Years of Protection
- DoG** Department of Gender
- DOVVSU** Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit
- DV** Domestic Violence
- FBOs** Faith-Based Organizations
- FP** Family Planning
- GAP** Gender Action Plan
- GAWW** Ghanaian Association for Women's Welfare
- GBV** Gender-Based Violence
- GDHS** Ghana Demographic and Health Survey
- GDP** Gross Domestic Product
- GES** Ghana Education Service
- GEU** Girls Education Unit
- GHS** Ghana Health Service
- GIFTS** Girls Iron-Folate Tablets Supplementation
- GoG** Government of Ghana
- GSS** Ghana Statistical Service
- HPs** Harmful Practices
- HPV** Human Papillomavirus
- ICPD** International Conference on Population and Development
- IEC** Information, Education & Communication
- IGP** Inspector General of Police
- JHS** Junior High School
- JPSC** Joint Program Steering Committee
- KEEA** Komenda Edina Eguafo Abirem
- KOICA** Korea International Cooperation Agency
- LEAP** Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
- LI** Legislative Instrument
- LMIS** Logistic Management Information System
- M&E** Monitoring & Evaluation
- MCAN** Media, Communications and Advocacy Network
- MESP** Mental Emotional State or Process
- MHM** Menstrual Hygiene Management
- mCPR** Modern Contraceptive Prevalence Rate

LIST OF ACRONYMS

- MICS** Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
- MMDAs** Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies
- MSI** Marie Stopes International
- MTNDPF** Medium-Term National Development and Policy Framework
- MYFF** Multi-Year Funding Framework
- MoGCSP** Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection
- NCCE** National Commission for Civic Education
- NDPC** National Development and Planning Commission
- NGOs** Non-Governmental Organizations
- NPC** National Population Council
- NPCS** National Population Council Secretariat
- NYP** National Youth Policy
- NaCCA** National Council for Curriculum Assessment
- NoP** Networks of Practice
- PASS** Promoting Adolescent Safe Spaces
- PATH** Programme for Appropriate Technology for Health
- PAYDP** Purim African Youth Development Platform
- PCC** Parent Child Communication
- PHC** Population and Housing Census
- PHC** Primary Health Care
- PPAG** Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana
- PMTCT** Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
- PTA** Parent Teacher Association
- RHCS** Reproductive Health Security Survey
- RHE** Reproductive Health Education
- RHESY** Reproductive Health Education and Services for Youth
- RMNCHAN** Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child Adolescent Health and Nutrition
- SBCC** Social and Behavioral Change Communication
- SGBV** Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
- SHEP** School Health Education Programme
- SHS** Senior High School
- SMC** School Management Committee
- SRHR** Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
- SSRP** Safe Schools Resource Pack
- STIs** Sexually Transmitted Infections
- SpED** Special Education Division
- TWG** Technical Working Group
- ToT** Training of Trainers
- UNAIDS** Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
- UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- UNIC** United Nations Information Centre



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UNFPA donates essential relief items to Akosombo Dam Spillage Victims



Eliminating Adolescent Pregnancies through the Anto Adolescent Club



UNFPA Ghana Country Office

No. 7, 7th Rangoon Close,
Cantonments, Accra.

+233 (0) 302 746 746

P.O. Box GP 1423,
Accra, Ghana.

