

UNFPA Rwanda

Ensuring rights and
choices for all

*Guharanira uburenganzira
n'amahitamo ya buri wese*

BUILDING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & RIGHTS FOR ALL

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1, 2023



ENGAGING OUR STAFF MEMBERS WHILE BRAINSTORMING ON STRATEGIC PROCESSES AND IDEAS

GUHUZA IMBARAGA Z'ABAKOZI NO KUBONGERERA UBUSHOBOZI MU IGENAMIGAMBI



UNFPA Rwanda Country Office staff on their last day at the retreat in Rubavu District, Western province of Rwanda

PLANNING EFFICIENTLY AND ENHANCING TEAM SPIRIT TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE PROGRAMME DELIVERY

The United Nations Population Fund held a Country Office retreat under the leadership of the UNFPA Representative in Rwanda, **Mr. Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah**, alongside incoming Deputy Representative, **Ms Renata Tallarico**. The event brought together Rwanda Country Office staff to take a deep dive into their 2023 priorities while ensuring healthy office environments and working relationships are maintained, through fun and thought-provoking discussions.

The UNFPA Rwanda Country Office presented the latest information on the 8th

Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) and the development of the Country Programme Document (CPD) alongside the development of the Common Country Analysis and the United Nations Sustainable Development Country Framework. The team was assigned roles and responsibilities to ensure efficient and agile processes with the support of all staff. The meeting presented the link among all those important processes - as reported above- and the opportunities the CO may have to use the information generated for resource mobilization purposes.



UNFPA staff captured here in the moment during group discussions

"We are here not only to interact but most importantly, to reflect on our work at UNFPA Country Office. I thank you for the effortless commitment in delivering UNFPA's mandate to ensure rights and choices for all. You all play a key role of monitoring and evaluating our work in ensuring relevance and effectiveness of UNFPA interventions in Rwanda."

Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah,
UNFPA Representative

POPULATION DYNAMICS AND USE OF DISAGGREGATED DATA

UBWIYONGERE BW'ABATURAGE NO GUHUZA AMAKURU Y'IBARURISHAMIBARE



USING DATA TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

After successfully conducting the 5th Population and Housing Census (RPHC) from 16-30 August 2022, the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda released the results of the Census during the 18th National Dialogue also known as Umushyikirano that was held in Kigali.

According to the results, Rwanda's population increased from 10.5 million in 2012 to 13.2 million in 2022, with a 2.3% annual growth rate. The results also indicated that 51.5% of the population is female and 48.5% are male. 65.3% of the entire population are young people below the age of 30. Life expectancy increased from 64.5 in 2012 to 69.6 in 2022. Maternal mortality over the last decade has significantly decreased from 487/100.000 to 203 deaths /100.000 live births. Rwanda's fertility rate has decreased from 4% in 2012 to 3.6% in 2022 and the contraceptive prevalence rate increased from 52% in 2010 to 62% in 2022. Teenage pregnancy from women aged 15-19 years old in 2022 was at 5% against 6% of women aged 15-19 in 2010.

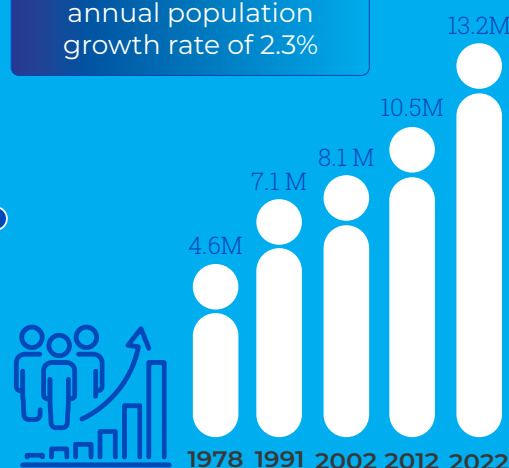
Through the UN joint programme on data, with UNFPA as a lead within the framework of South-South cooperation is supporting the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda to develop 18 thematic papers of monographs to better inform policies and ensure economic inclusion without leaving no one behind.

"UNFPA Disaggregated data are crucial to monitor the progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Most importantly, as we are coming to the end of NST1 and going to have NST2, the data collected through the census will inform where the gaps are and what we need to do for the NST2."

Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah,
UNFPA Representative

 **13,246,394**
Total Population in 2022

The population increased from 10.5M in 2012 to 13.2M in 2022 with an annual population growth rate of 2.3%



DATA-DRIVEN MONITORING FOR MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

IBARURISHAMIBARE MU GUKURIKIRANA UBUZIMA BW'UMUBYEYI N'UMWANA



COLLABORATING FOR BETTER HEALTH: STRENGTHENING MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH OUTCOMES IN RWANDA

In partnership with the Government of Rwanda, through the National Institution of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), other development partners and under the One-UN, UNFPA surveyed to gather data to enable monitoring of the progress of health programs and policies in the country. Through the said partnership, UNFPA disseminated the findings to inform all the district authorities involved in decision-making and the implementation of the health programmes.

According to the 2019-20 RDHS, 58% of women aged 15-49 use modern methods of family planning. 5% of young women between the ages of 15-19 were reported to have begun childbearing. 64% of women aged 15-49 in Rwanda use any contraceptive methods (traditional and modern). UNFPA supports the generation of valid and reliable data and evidence on maternal health and the provision of Sexual and Reproductive Health services for every woman and girl in Rwanda. With this, access to family planning and health services becomes achievable.



Governor HABITEGEKO Francois (front line, center), is captured here with Dr. Kathy Kantengwa, UNFPA Assistant Representative, during the DHS dissemination in Western province.

"We commend UNFPA for the good collaboration in improving how we have to overcome different challenges in the health sector. We realized our gaps and we have immediately drafted recommendations so that we have action plans to address the gaps we have to improve the health of our population." Habitegeko Francois, Governor of the Western Province

CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY KWIZIHIZA UMUNSI MPUZAMAHANGA W'UMUGORE



UNFPA Representative, Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah hands over IPC materials to Valentine Mukase, Vice Mayor in Charge of Social Affairs in Karongi District

IMPROVING QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS TO THE LAST MILE

On March 7, Health Development Initiative (HDI) in partnership with UNFPA and Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC) handed over Infection Prevention Control (IPC) materials including bed sheets and medical scrubs to Karongi District authorities. Healthcare-associated infections are those that patients or health providers acquire while giving or receiving medical care, and they can be caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, and other microorganisms.

The handover was officiated by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Country Representative, Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah and Valentine Mukase, Vice Mayor in Charge of Social Affairs. A total of 780 bedsheets and 390 medical scrubs will be provided to all health centres and hospitals in the districts of Karongi, Nyamasheke and Rusizi.



“Our district has excellent partners, and we are pleased that they joined us today to celebrate women. I would like to remind you all that our partners’ contributions can only benefit us if our communities see the value of working together to capitalize on this support,” said Vestine Mukarutesi, Mayor of Karongi District.



“Lack of IPC materials in health facilities leaves healthcare workers exposed to infectious agents, leading to illness and absenteeism. Additionally, patients may acquire infections that can prolong their hospital stay, increase healthcare costs, and even lead to mortality.” Louange Gutabarwa Twahirwa, Director of Research at Health Development Initiative



FIT FOR TWO: STAYING ACTIVE DURING PREGNANCY

In line with International Women's Day, the United Nations Fund for Population Agency (UNFPA) partnered with the Health Development Initiative (HDI) and other partners to organize a 'sports walk for pregnant women' to raise awareness about the necessity of staying active during and throughout pregnancy.

Physical activity during pregnancy has been associated with decreased risks of adverse health outcomes for both the mother and baby. This sports activity was attended by pregnant women, gynaecologists, and district officials among others.

As the sexual and reproductive health agency of the United Nations, UNFPA works with the government of Rwanda and its partners to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted and safe. Delivering life-saving care to mothers and their newborns is core to the work of UNFPA.



"A pregnant woman can walk for 30 minutes daily and do simple abdominal exercises to build strength and fitness that will enable her to push the baby without many physical challenges. For many, exercise is not easy in the first three months. However, in the last three, it is important."

Dr. Jean Chrysostome Nyirinkwya,
gynaecologist-obstetrician, La Croix du Sud
Hospital

"While I feel more energetic, the baby, on the other hand, feels excited regardless of how much movement is happening. Today, I learnt that doing sports while pregnant sharpens a baby's brain and I like that."

Anita Batamuriza, a participant in the mass sport

EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE IN ACCESSING ADOLESCENT SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH GUFASHA URUBYIRUKO KUBONA AMAKURU AJYANYE N'UBUZIMA BW'IMYOROROKERE



SAFEGUARD YOUNG PEOPLE PROGRAMME: INCREASING ACCESS TO ADOLESCENT, SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Community engagement has been regarded as a vital component to ensure that adolescents and young people have access to information on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) to reduce the possibility for youth to be exposed to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) including HIV, early and unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, child marriages and gender-based violence (GBV).

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), through the Safeguard Youth Programme (SYP), with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and other partners, led a two-day field visit to Karongi and Nyamasheke districts of the Western Province in Rwanda to witness the work done at facility/services levels and youth centres for adolescents and young people. With the increasing rate of teenage pregnancies in these districts, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) has been integrated into the competence-based curriculum both in and out-school countrywide. ***So far, 121 master trainers have been capacitated and over 1.5 million students received knowledge and skills on culturally sensitive and age-appropriate CSE to make informed decisions.***



UNFPA's Adolescent and Youth expert, Vestine MUTARABAYIRE (second from the left), alongside Jyoti Shankar Tewari, UNFPA East and Southern Africa, Michel Evequoz, Deputy Regional Director, SDC and partners

*"This program helps us to help young people change their lives, especially by changing their attitudes and providing them with adequate information about their reproductive health. We will strive to make it sustainable so that in our struggle for the development we want to achieve, we will come together with our youth."*Anthanasie Mukankusi, Vice Mayor, Nyamasheke district

*"At some point, when I am teaching and one asks a specific question about SRH, you realize how lucky she/he is to have that opportunity to ask. You can only imagine the consequences of having no information. I believe that it is important to help them understand that their choices have consequences that can result in early pregnancies, among other challenges,"*said Cyprien Gashabizi, Peer Educator.

INTEGRATING CSE IN THE DELIVERY OF COMPETENCE-BASED CURRICULUM FOR IN & OUT OF SCHOOL YOUNG PEOPLE

KWINJIZA INYIGISHO Z'UBUZIMA BW'IMYOROROKERE MU NTEGANYANYIGISHO ZISHINGIYE KU BUSHOBOZI ZIGENEWE URUBYIRUKO

The Government of Rwanda through its Ministries of Education, Health, Youth and Culture is spearheading the movement to protect and respect the fundamental civil, political and socio-economic rights of young people, including young women, to harness the demographic dividend for the country. As part of harnessing the demographic dividend and empowering youth to address Adolescent, Sexual Reproductive Health issues, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) has been integrated into the competence-based curriculum both

in and out-school countrywide as a cross-cutting subject.

CSE is helping learners to take advantage of educational and other opportunities that will impact their lifelong well-being. Through the partnership with Rwanda Education Board (REB), UNFPA has been championing the implementation of CSE in Rwanda. In that same spirit, UNFPA handed over 4,374 CSE teaching materials to the Inspire, Educate and Empower organization intending to equip teachers with the necessary skills to integrate CSE in the delivery of competence-based teaching and learning.



"Since 2016, through a collaboration with REB, UNFPA has been supporting the implementation of CSE. Building on the tremendous effort of the Government of Rwanda, UNFPA is committed to continuing to support in this endeavour of championing CSE." Dr Kathy KANTENGWA, UNFPA Assistant Representative.



UNFPA Assistant Representative, Kathy Kantengwa hands over Sexuality Comprehensive Education information booklets to Emmanuel Murenzi, Executive Director, from Inspire, Educate, And Empower (IEE).

UNFPA-LED HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN NKAMIRA TRANSIT CENTRE

UNFPA MU BIKORWA BYO GUFASHA IMPUNZI ZO MU NKAMBI YA NKAMIRA



SUPPORTING DISPLACED WOMEN AND GIRLS TO REGAIN THEIR DIGNITY

In an emergency, women and girls are most affected by the crisis. Women and girls are at increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), resulting in physical injuries, unintended pregnancies, fistula, sexually transmitted infections – including HIV – and death. More than 4000 new asylum seekers arrived in Rwanda from the Democratic Republic of Congo between November 2022 and 5th February 2023.

To meet the specific needs of women and girls with the purpose of facilitating their mobility and helping restore their dignity during times of crisis, on 3rd February, UNFPA Rwanda handed over dignity kits targeting vulnerable women, including pregnant women, those in postpartum, and Gender Based Violence survivors from DR Congo asylum seekers that are hosted in the Nkamira transit centre.



Vestine Mutarabayire, HIV Prevention and Humanitarian Response Officer hands over dignity kits to a mother, an asylum seeker from DRC in Nkamira Transit Center.

“The Dignity Kits will help women and girls to maintain proper hygiene after being displaced. These are critical components of the UNFPA humanitarian response. Each component of the kits we handed over today contains a blanket, Kitenge, sanitary pads, Vaseline, soap, and other basic items.” Said Vestine MUTARABAYIRE, HIV Prevention and Humanitarian Response Officer

“I had nothing at the time I gave birth, I had nothing. I had left everything in DR Congo. I hope other women who will give birth from here will find those Kits very useful. I am also thankful for receiving my package because it contains things I need every single day and I wouldn't get them anywhere else”. Said an asylum seeker from DR Congo

UNFPA SUPPORTS THE MIDWIFERY PROFESSION

URUHARE RWA UNFPA MU ITERAMBERE RW'UMWUGA W'UBUBYAZA

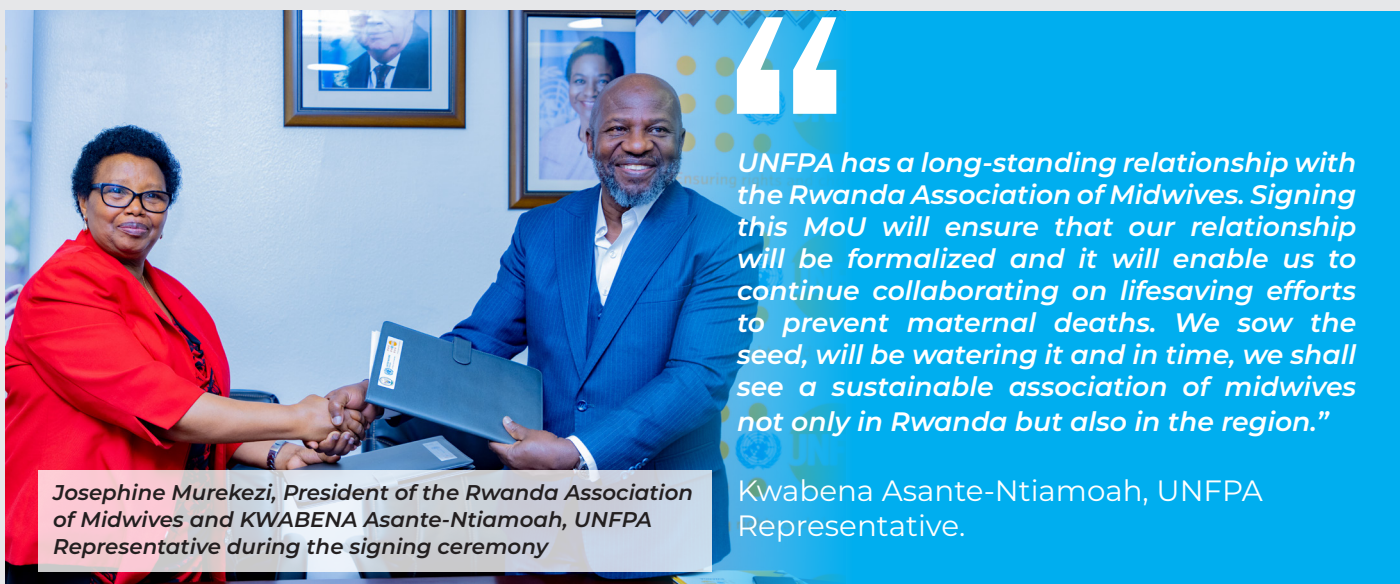


UNFPA Rwanda midwifery expert, Frida Temple (first from the left) interacting with nursing school teachers during the capacity-building workshop in Kigali

BUILDING PARTNERSHIP WITH MIDWIFERY ASSOCIATION TO STRENGTHEN THE MIDWIFERY PROFESSION

Over the past decade, Rwanda made significant progress in decreasing the maternal mortality rate (MMR) from 487 to 203/100,000LB. One of the main contributing factors to this has been educating midwives in the country. However, in the last five years, the decline in maternal mortality has been low (210/100000L.B in 2015 and 203/100000L.B in 2020). Currently, 93% of women give birth in a health facility. Thus, the human resources required for sustaining this increase, while ensuring the quality of care, is a challenge.

Founded in 2011, UNFPA has been working towards strengthening the association and supporting it as one of the three pillars of the UNFPA Midwifery Strategy. Building on this, the United Nations Population Fund signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Rwanda Association of Midwives (RAM) to endorse the partnership and enforce the commitment to strengthen the midwifery profession.



Josephine Murekezi, President of the Rwanda Association of Midwives and KWABENA Asante-Ntiamoah, UNFPA Representative during the signing ceremony

“

UNFPA has a long-standing relationship with the Rwanda Association of Midwives. Signing this MoU will ensure that our relationship will be formalized and it will enable us to continue collaborating on lifesaving efforts to prevent maternal deaths. We sow the seed, will be watering it and in time, we shall see a sustainable association of midwives not only in Rwanda but also in the region.”

Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah, UNFPA Representative.



UNFPA SIMBEGIN SIMULATION FACILITATION TRAINING FOR NURSES AND MIDWIFERY FACULTY

Quality education is crucial to prepare healthcare professionals with the competence to provide high-quality care. Globally, there are very wide variations in the quality, content, and duration of education programs together with challenges in students' learning experiences and opportunities to gain "hands-on" practical experience. Research has shown that inadequate education and lack of clinical training significantly imperil the professional identity, competence, and confidence of nurses and midwives as care providers.

In alignment with the government's needs and priorities, UNFPA Rwanda is supporting the nursing and midwifery institutions in the country. Simulation labs are being established in these institutions and simulation-based clinical teaching is being adopted. So far, more than 800

students have graduated from nursing and midwifery with skills gained from simulation laboratories equipped by UNFPA, and they are now employed at different levels of service delivery from hospitals, health centres, and projects, with others being self-employed in maternal and child health clinics.

To further implement Simulation training and support the faculty to gain training on how to effectively use the simulation labs, UNFPA, proposed SimBegin to train nursing and midwifery faculty on simulation-based methods. And as a result, 12 students have been identified as Champions and they will do Level 2 in May 2023 and Level 3 in August. This will lead to these 12 trainers being able to run SimBegin Courses in the country and cascade the training for facilitators in all universities, high schools and health facilities.



Group photo of UNFPA staff with participants from nursing and midwifery institutions during the SimBegin training

"Simulation training, if done right, has been shown to radically increase the skills of health care providers. Pre-service it can substitute about 50% of clinical placements. In-service evidence shows that continuous capacity development through simulation based training improves the quality of care and has direct results on the reduction of maternal and neonatal deaths."

Frida TEMPLE,
Midwife Expert, UNFPA Rwanda

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS TO FOSTER EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

GUSHIMANGIRA UMUBANO MWIZA N'UBUFATANYE

UNFPA REPRESENTATIVE PAYS A COURTESY CALL TO THE AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN IN RWANDA



UNFPA Representative, Mr Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah paid a courtesy call to H.E. Mr Isao FUKUSHIMA, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Rwanda and expressed UNFPA's appreciation to the Government of Japan for the financial support to save the lives of women and girls in humanitarian settings under 2017 and 2020 Japan Supplementary Budget and appreciate the past partnership and very good collaboration between the Embassy of the Government of Japan in Rwanda and UNFPA.

"UNFPA Commend the Government of Japan for the key results achieved together in Humanitarian settings in 2022, including the availability of the Gender-Based Violence safe room in the Kiziba refugee camp, the renovated maternity ward in Mahama camp, which is providing integrated SRH services including family planning, antenatal care, post-natal care and GBV prevention and response services in Mahama." Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah, UNFPA Representative.

MEETING THE MAYOR OF KARONGI DISTRICT

Mukarutesi Vestine, Mayor of Karongi District, together with James Karangwa, Executive Secretary of the district received Mr Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah, UNFPA representative and his team, appreciated the partnership and support of UNFPA in the district to advance the Sexual Reproductive Health & Youth Empowerment services and also expressed the challenges that can be solved together. UNFPA Representative-Mr Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah greatly appreciated the hospitality and good leadership and pledged the continuous support provided to Karongi District as one of the 3 key UNFPA-supported districts in the Western province.



"Building strong partnerships and collaborations is key to promoting Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights, Youth Empowerment and Gender Equality for a brighter future for all." Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah, UNFPA Representative





**UNFPA, the United Nations
Sexual Reproductive
Health and Rights Agency.**

**Delivering a world where
every pregnancy is wanted
every childbirth is safe and
every young person's
potentials is fulfilled**

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