



ACCELERATING THE TRANSFORMATIVE RESULTS IN LIBERIA:

PROGRESS, OPPORTUNITIES AND LEARNINGS

Government Partners

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Education

Ministry of Youth and Sports

Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services

Population Policy Coordination Unit

Liberian Board for Nursing and Midwifery

Implementing Partners

Plan International Liberia

Partners in Health

BRAC Liberia

Donors

Government of the Kingdom of Sweden

Republic of Ireland

Federal Republic of Germany

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Government of Liberia

Friends of UNFPA

The European Union

UN Peacebuilding Fund Donors

Maternal and Neonatal Health Trust Fund Donors

UNFPA Supplies Partnership Donors

UNAIDS Donors



CONTENTS

03

Foreword

05

Country Profile

06

Where We Work

07

What We Do

08

Tracking
Progress

09

Ending Preventable
Maternal Deaths

14

Ending Unmet
Need for
Family Planning

18

Ending Gender-Based
Violence and Harmful
Practices

23

Addressing the
Critical Enablers

26

Data for Development
Planning

28

Partnership and
Resource
Mobilization

35

Moving Forward



Center
Constructed by: UNFPA through MT
Funded by: The Embassy of Sweden



Foreword

Acceleration
Transformation
Reaching the furthest behind



In 2023, Liberia achieved another milestone in its democratic governance. The country underwent peaceful and successful elections that consolidated its democratic progress. Continued peace and political stability in developing countries are important for improving socio-economic and demographic indicators and for creating the necessary conditions for women, girls, men, and boys to exercise their sexual reproductive health and rights.

However, enormous inequalities and challenges persist. Almost a quarter (24 percent) of Liberia's population comprises women of reproductive age (15-49 years). The stark reality exists that many women and their families are robbed of the joy of motherhood as the deaths of women due to preventable childbirth-related complications and their newly born babies remain one of the highest in the world. Adolescents between 15-19 years make up 32 percent of the maternal deaths. Many women who survive difficult and prolonged labor often suffer debilitating childbearing injuries, including obstetric fistula. Additionally, an estimated 33 percent of women who want to avoid pregnancy are not using safe and effective family planning methods due to inadequate access to information and services and the existence of stereotypical gender and social norms about women and girls' independent access to contraceptives.

Adolescent girls continue to be disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices. Approximately 85 percent of rape survivors in 2023 were adolescents and very young children. Child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and the pressure from parents for girl children to become breadwinners at an early age continue to affect adolescent girls' development. The rate of teenage pregnancies remains high in Liberia, with 1 in 3 girls between ages 15 to 19 being either a mother or pregnant. The proportion of adolescents and young women who wish to and are using modern contraception (contraceptive prevalence rate) also remains low at 16.4 percent, and the unmet need for family planning among adolescents is high at 47 percent. The legal requirements for parental consent for girls below 16 years to access contraceptives constitute a barrier for adolescents to access SRH information and services independently.

As the United Nations sexual and reproductive health and rights organization, our mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person reaches their full potential.



In 2023, we continued our journey of ensuring rights and choices for all in Liberia by ending preventable maternal deaths, ending unmet needs for family planning, and ending gender-based violence and harmful practices, including child marriage, and female genital mutilation by:

- Reaching 226,094 women and girls with family planning services, 58 percent of whom were continued users and 42 percent were new users,
- Supporting health facilities to ensure the safe delivery by 130,076 women,
- Supporting the training of 272 students in midwifery and 51 in nurse anesthetics,
- Reaching 41,000 school-going girls with reusable and disposable menstrual hygiene products,
- Meeting the medical, psychosocial, and justice needs of 2,580 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

As we have grown from strength to strength in recent years, UNFPA takes pride in the work we do each day to empower women and young people – in particular, adolescent girls – often under challenging circumstances.

We are intensifying our efforts to tackle harmful gender norms and inequalities, invest in young people, and protect the bodily autonomy of women and girls. At UNFPA, we believe that data and evidence underpin all of this. We must continue to generate data and understand population dynamics and trends in a manner that helps us to assure that all women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the dignity and human rights to expand their capabilities, secure their reproductive health and rights, find decent work, and contribute to economic growth.

Undoubtedly, the availability of high-quality population data at national, sectoral, and local levels is crucial to designing and sustaining Liberia's policy responses and effective development programmes, including macro-economic management, preparation and implementation of poverty reduction programmes, and monitoring programmes towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this regard, UNFPA provided technical and financial support to the Government of Liberia to finalize the 5th National Population and Housing Census.

UNFPA highly values our partnership with the Government of Liberia, civil society organizations, implementing partners, sister UN agencies, and our donors. The progress and results highlighted in this report were only possible with your support.

With renewed partnership and commitment, we can do more to deliver results for Liberia's women and young people, especially the girls.



Ms. Bidisha Pillai
Country Representative
UNFPA Liberia

Country Profile

Liberia has a very youthful population. About 75 percent of the 5.2 million population are under the age of 35. Most of the population lives in urban areas (55 percent), with Montserrado County, host of Liberia's Capital, Monrovia, alone accounting for more than a third of the population (36.7 percent).

Adolescents, young people, and women face constant challenges accessing economic and social amenities, including quality sexual and reproductive health information and services. At the worst end are adolescent girls who are subjected to harmful traditional practices and gender norms that perpetuate teenage pregnancy and high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) daily.

Thus, the need for strategic interventions with a multiplier effect on health system strengthening to reduce the national disease burden, of which maternal and child health conditions constitute 60 percent, remains high.

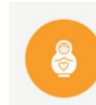
Also, paramount is the need to holistically address the perennial issue of violence and harmful practices against women and girls, including sexual violence, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, and child marriage.



5.2 MILLION
TOTAL POP.



75 PERCENT
UNDER AGE 35



67 PERCENT
WOMEN OF
REPRODUCTIVE AGE
15-49 YEARS



4.2
TOTAL FERTILITY
(NUMBER OF
CHILDREN PER
WOMAN)



LIFE EXPECTANCY
FEMALE: 66 YEARS
MALE: 64 YEARS



79 PERCENT
NET ENROLMENT
RATE PRIMARY
EDUCATION

WHERE WE WORK



Liberia
UNFPA Country Programme



UNFPA COUNTRY OFFICE

UNFPA PROGRAMME AREAS

UNFPA FIELD OFFICE



What we do

UNFPA works to support Liberia's development agenda with its transformative goals of zero preventable maternal death, zero unmet need for family planning, and zero gender based violence and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation, which are at the core of all interventions, ensuring:

- Enhanced integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the prevention of and response to gender-based violence and harmful practices into policies and plans, relevant laws, and accountability frameworks.
- Strengthened capacity of systems, institutions, and communities to provide high-quality comprehensive and integrated sexual reproductive health and rights information and services, including supplies and essential services to address gender-based violence.
- Strengthened data systems and evidence built on relevant and current population dynamics and socio-economic and environmental changes to inform development, humanitarian, and recovery policies, plans, and programs on gender and SRHR.
- Strengthened adolescent and young people's skills and opportunities to promote bodily autonomy, leadership, and participation in advancing SRHR.



A group of adolescent girls at a youth-friendly center in Greenville, Sinoe County



Tracking Progress



Ending preventable maternal deaths



742/100,000
MATERNAL
MORTALITY RATIO

Almost a quarter (24 percent) of Liberia's population comprises women of reproductive age. But for many women and their families, the joy of motherhood can sometimes leave an unforgettable experience as the deaths of women in childbirth remain one of the highest in the sub-region, with 742 deaths per 100,000 live births (1,100 preventable maternal deaths per year). Many women who survive difficult and prolonged labor often suffer debilitating childbearing injuries, including obstetric fistula.



600-1000
ESTIMATED NEW
CASES OF
OBSTETRIC FISTULA
YEARLY



3 OUT OF 10
GIRLS 15-19 YEARS
ARE EITHER
PREGNANT OR
ALREADY MOTHERS

To ensure that efforts to end preventative maternal deaths remain on track, the implementation of maternal health interventions focused on improving access to skilled birth attendants, provision of essential reproductive health drugs and supplies, support to inventory management to avert stockouts, improving antenatal care services for screening and early referral, support to maternal waiting homes for high-risk

pregnant women to stay closer to the health facilities, increasing facility-based delivery and other sexual and reproductive information and services. Working with young people's organizations and coalitions to amplify their voices as part of national advocacy is part of the response.

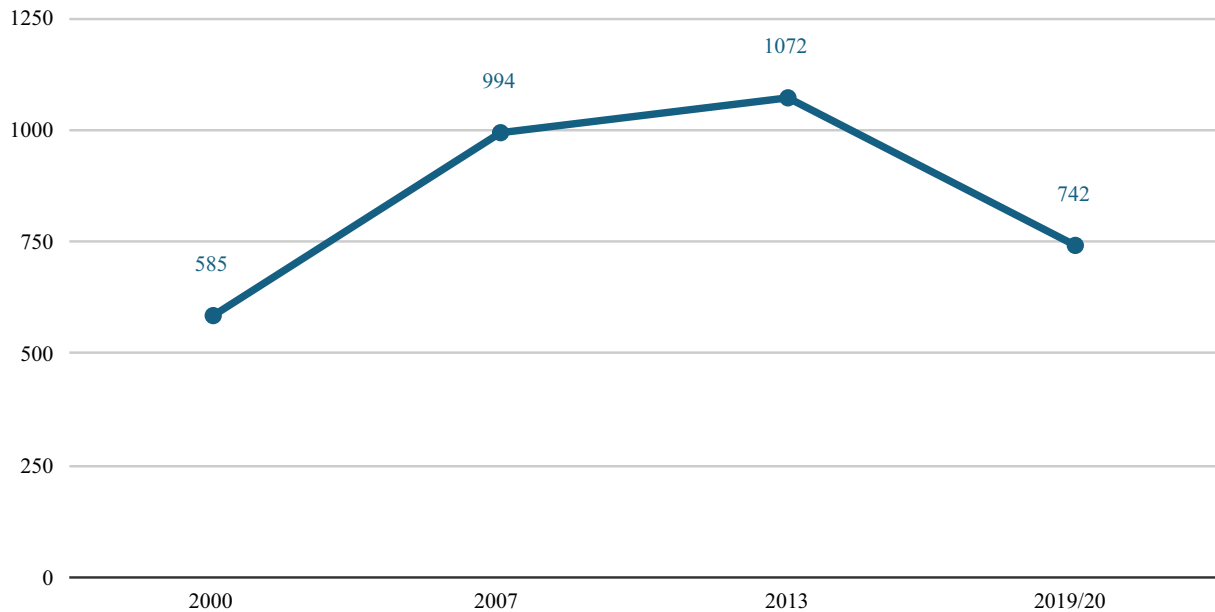


84 PERCENT
SKILLED BIRTH
ATTENDANCE



UNFPA inspects the supply level of life-saving sexual and reproductive health drugs and commodities at the Central Medicine Store in Monrovia.

Trends in Maternal Mortality in Liberia 2000-2020



Key Interventions

- Provided essential reproductive and maternal health drugs, equipment and supplies.
- Supported the Ministry of Health in conducting a deep-dive inquiry into the growing number of maternal and newborn deaths in Liberia. The findings supported the development of relevant action plans on Quality of care, Partnership, Accountability and governance, and Data for information use.
- Led a national six-year retrospective study on maternal and newborn death surveillance and response in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. The study's findings have indicated clear areas for data quality improvement in maternal and newborn death notifications and reviews for action, as well as weaknesses in timely and effective responses along the maternal and newborn care continuum.



Midwives take the lead in providing care for women through pregnancy, childbirth, and afterward.

- Supported the development of Liberia's first costed national fistula strategy. The National Strategy to End Obstetric Fistula will guide the implementation of interventions focusing on prevention, medical and surgical management, rehabilitation, and community reintegration of Fistula Survivors.
- In the area of Supply Chain Management, UNFPA supported an In-Country Assessment of 13 commodity storage sites in two counties, Cape Mount and Rivercess, as part of the Ministry of Health's Last-Mile Assurance Policy. This enabled the tracking of the commodities and supplies from the warehouse to the end users.
- Provided financial and technical support to the Ministry of Health to develop an Emergency Obstetrics and Neonatal Care (EmONC) improvement plan and an EmONC Monitoring Tool. The plan will ensure designated EmONC facilities are appropriately equipped, while the Monitoring Tool will closely monitor the implementation of signal functions (interventions that help save the lives of mothers and their newborns during childbirth) and provide compliance support. For facilities to be adequately capacitated to respond to birth-related complications, they must meet six key signal functions. Effective monitoring is important to ensure that health facilities are ready to respond to birth-related complications and that the system is in place for upward referral if needed.
- Provided financial and technical support for training 272 midwifery and 51 nurse anesthetist students at two training institutions in central and southeastern Liberia. Building a professional workforce of midwives and nurse anesthetists is important for improvement in antenatal care, delivery, and post-natal care for pregnant women, new mothers, and newborns.



Key Results

- Approximately 130,076 pregnant women assisted in safely delivering their babies at UNFPA-supported facilities. Notably, there was an increase in the number of women who received Caesarean Section from 9200 cases in 2022 to 10,723 cases in 2023. This increase was due to the positioning of a new cadre

of surgical staff (Obstetric Clinicians) for Obstetrics Emergency care services at these facilities.

- With UNFPA's support, the Liberia Board for Nursing and Midwifery (LBNM) developed a digital platform with online resources for continuous learning and an online portal for licensure renewal, examination information, and student indexing that supports nurses and midwives' career growth. The availability of the digital platform significantly improved the LBNM's capacity to implement its mandate to enforce standards and quality assure the work of nurses and midwives in Liberia.
- One hundred and forty-eight thousand, seven hundred and seventy (148, 770) adolescents and young people received comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV counseling and testing, family planning counseling and services, GBV counseling, treatment of STIs, emergency contraception, and post-abortion care services, etc.
- More than 21,410 adolescents and young people benefited from age-appropriate and culturally sensitive comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in-and-out of schools with support from UNFPA in 6 counties. The CSE curriculum reinforces healthy and positive values about bodies, puberty, relationships, sexuality, and family life. It aims to equip adolescents and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that empower them to realize their health, well-being, and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and those of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.



Changing Lives

Midwife calls for improved conditions to reduce maternal and newborn deaths in Liberia

“There is still so much work to be done to improve Liberia's maternal and newborn health situation. While there has been an improvement in antenatal visits and facility deliveries by pregnant women, there is a lack of the workforce to attend to the needs of these women adequately,” says Deddeh, a midwife at the Bensonville Hospital, Montserrado County.

Deddeh states that midwives remain among Liberia's least-paid health sector cadre. “We deliver more than babies. Midwives are responsible for antenatal, intrapartum, and postpartum care for women. We attend to women who want to plan their pregnancies. We step in and attend to inpatients when nurses are not around. Yet we receive less pay than other health professionals in Liberia,” she adds.

However, she says the limited incentives do not dampen her passion and commitment to ensuring quality care for pregnant women and their newborns.

“I became a midwife not for financial or material gains but because of my passion for the profession. For example, I spend more than 25 percent of my monthly salary on transportation alone to commute between my residence and the health facility. But I couldn't care less as helping women to deliver babies safely brings me joy and a complete sense of fulfillment.

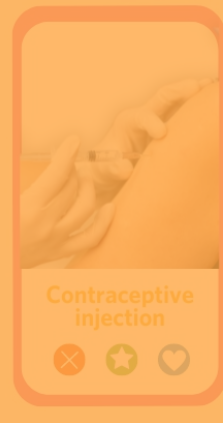
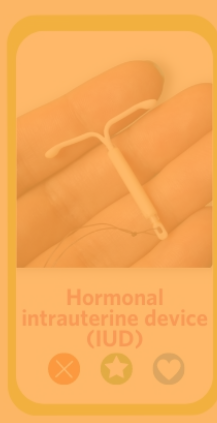
The need for more midwives

It is estimated that Liberia has only one midwife or nurse to about 2000 population, making it one of the countries with a low midwife-to-population ratio. Most of these midwives or nurses work in urban areas - compounding the situation for rural women. Limited incentives and opportunities for career growth have been one of the driving forces behind the concentration of skilled birth attendants in urban communities in Liberia.

Deddeh wants Liberia to prioritize the training and retention of midwives within health policies, budgets, and programmes.



Contraception is about choices and access



Ending unmet need for family planning

Family planning is central to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, and it is a key factor in reducing poverty. However, an estimated 33 percent of women in Liberia who want to avoid pregnancy are not using safe and effective family planning methods for reasons ranging from lack of access to information or services to the lack of support from their partners or communities. This threatens their ability to build a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities. The rate of unmet need for family planning is even higher amongst adolescents, at 47 percent.

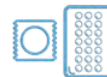


25 PERCENT
CONTRACEPTIVE
PREVALENCE RATE
(ALL MODERN
FAMILY PLANNING
METHODS)



33 PERCENT
UNMET NEED FOR
CONTRACEPTION

UNFPA supports the availability and access to family planning information and services by ensuring a steady, reliable supply of quality contraceptives, strengthening national health systems, advocating for policies promoting family planning, and gathering data to support this work. It also supports youth-friendly centers catering to the needs of adolescents and youth.



18.7 PERCENT
CONTRACEPTIVE
PREVALENCE RATE
AMONG GIRLS AGE
15-19

Key Interventions

- Over 1.1 million clients, including women of reproductive age, adolescent girls, men, and boys were counseled for family planning services.
- Supported 45 youth-friendly centers in 6 counties to provide young people with age-appropriate reproductive health information and services.
- Supported 27 school health clubs in 6 counties to provide students with age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education.



Women access voluntary family planning services in Monrovia.

Key Results

- 349,192 persons (226,094 women and girls) received various family planning commodities excluding condoms, and 123,098 (males and females) received condoms only. Of the total contraceptive users, 58 percent were continued users, while 42 percent were new users. Approximately 31 percent were adolescents aged 10 to 19.
- Using the Marie Stopes International Impact 2, an innovative tool for estimating the impact of reproductive health programmes, the following results were calculated as achievements:
 - Over 81,597 unintended pregnancies averted.
 - An estimated 51,789 abortions (including miscarriage and unsafe abortions) were averted.
 - An estimated 230 maternal deaths averted.
 - Estimated 185,543 Couple Year Protection (CYP), (the estimated protection provided by family planning (FP) methods for women during 2023 through contraceptives procured and distributed).



Changing Lives

Access to sexual and reproductive health services gives adolescent girls the power to prevent unplanned pregnancies in Liberia

One in three adolescents and young girls in Liberia is pregnant or is a mother by age 19. When pregnant, most of the girls drop out of schools and some never return. Limited access to information and services to help girls make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health continues to be a major barrier on the path to attaining their full potential.

Benita was 15 years old and in Grade 7 when she got pregnant and dropped out of school.

Her story is typical of many adolescent girls in Liberia. After completing the only school there, she left her village for Cestos, the capital. "When I first came to Cestos, I stayed with my uncle. Because things were difficult for us, I had to enter a relationship to help myself," she said.

"When I first met my boyfriend, he requested that I get involved in family planning. But I refused because before leaving the village, my mother warned against using family planning. She said it was good for people who had started having children," Benita said.

first person who proposed that I got on my family planning when I delivered on June 10, 2021, which I did".

But Benita's mother would soon change her perception of contraception. "My mother was the

Benita did not only return to school. She is now a member of an adolescent and youth club in her school, educating her peers about safe sex and the prevention of unplanned pregnancy.

The Programme by the Government of Liberia and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), funded by partners including the Embassy of Sweden and the Embassy of Ireland, supports Liberia in providing adolescents and young people access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services to prevent unplanned pregnancies. It uses a three-pronged approach, including schools, communities, and health facilities, to reach adolescents and young people with sexual reproductive and rights information and services, including family planning and the prevention of SEA.

The school-level intervention includes the provision of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) at selected schools by trained teachers and sexual and reproductive health information by peer educators through School Health Clubs. The School Health Clubs team members are mentored to provide sexual reproductive and rights information in schools to adolescents and young people, distribute condoms, and refer their peers to the nearest YFC for services.

The community-level intervention works with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to provide out-of-school adolescents and young people with SRHR information and services.

At the health facilities are youth-friendly corners/centers where adolescents and young people access services, including family planning, treatment of STIs, HIV counseling and testing, and post-abortion care.





Ending gender-based violence and harmful practices

Women and girls endure gender-based violence, including sexual assault, rape, physical and emotional abuse, and female genital mutilation (FGM) daily. This makes Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) a significant challenge to the security, growth, health, and development of women and girls in Liberia.



38 PERCENT
WOMEN AND GIRLS
SUBJECTED TO FGM

The number of cases officially reported to the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MGCSP) has increased steadily over the past three years.



12.3 PERCENT
OF GIRLS ARE
MARRIED BEFORE
AGE 18

UNFPA supports the strengthening of the capacity of systems, institutions, and communities to provide high-quality, comprehensive, and integrated sexual reproductive health and rights information and services, including supplies and essential services to address gender-based violence. UNFPA also supports the delivery of comprehensive sexuality education to young and out-of-school people as a primary prevention strategy to end gender-based violence since it helps adolescents nurture positive gender-equitable attitudes and values, which are linked to reduced violence and healthier, equitable, non-violent relationships. This early intervention can have long-lasting impacts on women's and men's lives.



**DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
PREVALENCE ON
WOMEN AND GIRLS**
AGE 15-19: **53.7
PERCENT**
AGE 20-24: **66.8
PERCENT**



**3204 SGBV CASES
REPORTED IN 2023**
RAPE: **62.6 PERCENT**
SEXUALT ASSAULT:
12.4 PERCENT
INTIMATE PARTNER
VIOLENCE:
24.7 PERCENT

The European Union-funded Spotlight Initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls contributed greatly to the scaling up of resources and investment by UNFPA in six of the fifteen counties of Liberia.

Key Interventions

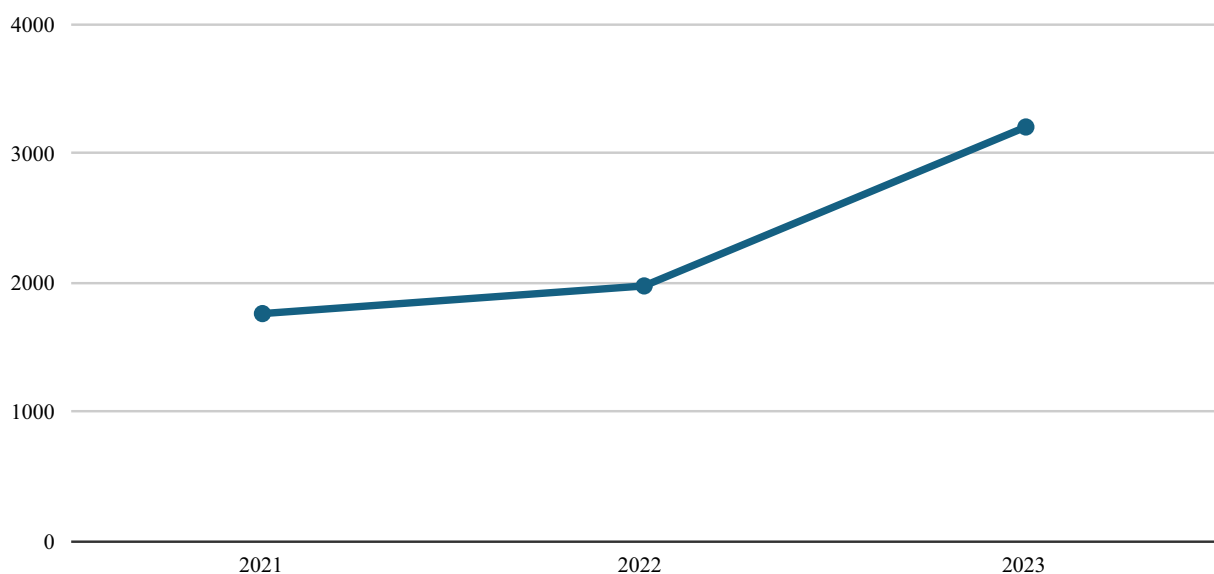
- Supported the effective running of response services to support survivors of



GBV, including 28 SGBV clinical response and integrated centers and 5 safe homes in 5 counties.

- 461,315 women, adolescents, and youth received SRHR/SGBV information, prevention, and protection, including services related to mental health, psychosocial support, and harmful practices through safe homes, one-stop centers for GBV response, youth-friendly centers, health facilities, and correction centers.
- Provided technical and financial support to three social coping and rehabilitation centers hosting pretrial detainees and convicted sex offenders in three counties.
- Established and handed over to the Government of Liberia an SGBV response center at the JFK Medical Center.

Trends in Reported SGBV Cases in Liberia
2021-2023

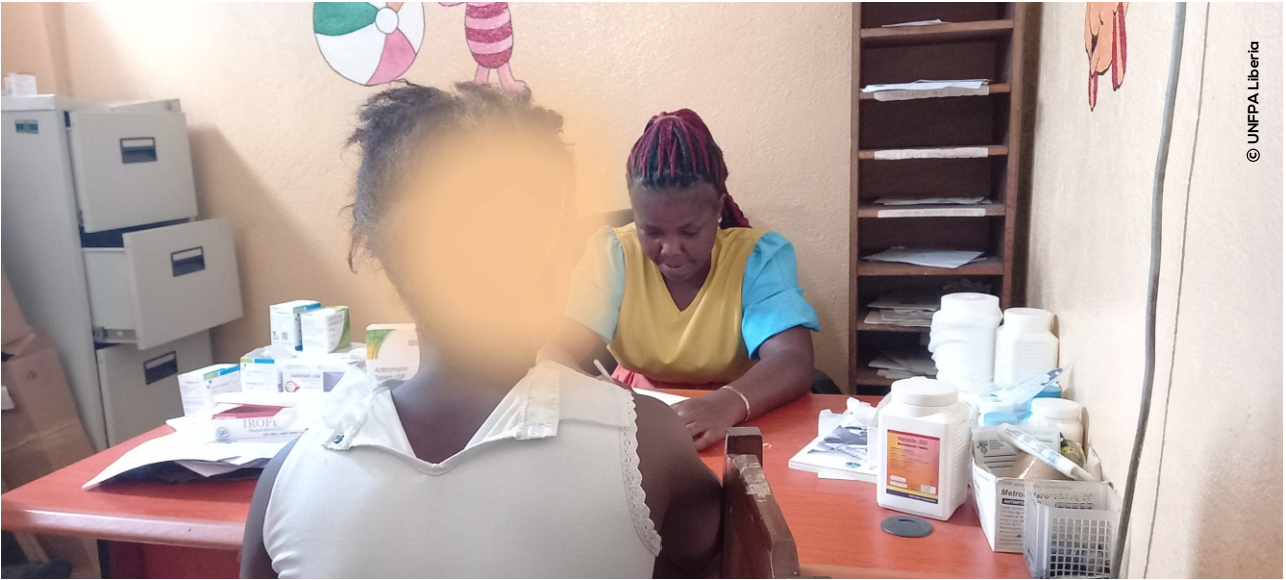


Source: Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

Key Results

- 305 young people, including 205 pretrial detainees and those serving their terms at various corrections centers, benefited from life-skills training and economic empowerment programmes; and 212 inmates (127 pretrial detainees and 85 convicts) acquired skills training in soap making, beads making, tailoring, and adult literacy through the rehabilitation and psychosocial coping centers in 3 counties.
- 140 adolescents, including 75 girls, trained as social media advocates for the Girls Advisory Panel in five counties: Montserrado, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, and Grand Cape Mount Counties, to disseminate SRHR information and GBV prevention messages.
- 41,000 school-going adolescent girls received reusable and disposable menstrual hygiene products as part of UNFPA's support to keep them in school during menstruation.





A service provider attends to a survivor of SGBV at the Redemption Hospital in Monrovia

- 937 sexual and gender-based violence survivors received psychosocial services in five counties, namely, Montserrado, Lofa, Grand Cape Mount, Nimba, and Grand Gedeh.
- 461,315 women, adolescents, and youth benefited from SRHR/SGBV information, prevention, and protection, including services related to mental health, psychosocial support, and harmful practices.



A midwife attends to a client



Changing Lives

One-Stop center at the heart of ensuring comprehensive care for survivors of gender-based violence in Liberia

Two decades after the end of its civil conflict when sexual violence was used as a weapon of war, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) remains a significant challenge to the security, growth, health, and development of women and girls in Liberia. Rape, physical abuse, and other forms of violence against women and girls continue in homes, communities, educational settings, and society at large.

Ella*, 12, is one such victim. She was raped by her maternal uncle in July 2023 while her mother was away on a business trip. Ella was forced to drop out of school because of the stigma and conflict that ensued within her family in the aftermath of the incident.

Unfortunately, stories like hers are all too common in Liberia. According to data from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, in 2023 alone, there were 3204 reported SGBV cases, with rape accounting for nearly 63 percent.

A transformative approach

With support from its partners, including the United Nations, Liberia has strengthened health, psychosocial, and protection service provisions across selected service delivery points. This integration of sexual and gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights responses at selected services delivery points through One-Stop Centers, the training of social workers and health staff to meet the clinical and psychosocial needs of survivors of GBV. This also includes safe homes for temporary protection of survivors, and the establishment, and operationalization of national forensic laboratory to collect critical forensic evidence needed to prosecute perpetrators of sexual of gender-based violence, etc. The GBV One-Stop Center integrates, under one roof, a full range of care available, including clinical treatment for rape, psychological first aid, counseling, legal support, and other services for the survivors.



Reaching those in need

With support from the Joint UN-EU Spotlight initiative, Liberia has expanded the number of GBV One-Stop Centers from 12 to 28 across 10 of the 15 counties. The most recent one to be established is at the John F. Kennedy Medical Center, Liberia's foremost referral and teaching hospital. The GBV One-Stop Center was inaugurated on December 7, 2023.

"The opening of the One-Stop Center at the JFK Medical Center is a dream come true. Every day, survivors of gender-based violence, including women, young and old, are brought to our facility, needing care. They come with high hopes that they are in the right place. But sadly, we often have to refer them to other facilities because we cannot meet their needs. We are glad about the opening of the OSC; adding to the forensic laboratory already in place, we will be able to provide comprehensive support for survivors of SGBV visiting our facility," said Dr. Jerry F. Brown, JFK Medical Center Chief Executive Officer.

"We often notice a high level of transformation by survivors who pass through the one-stop center," says Amanda M. Cooper, a Redemption Hospital SGBV One-Stop Center nurse.

Ella received medical and counseling services from the center. The medical report provided by the Redemption Hospital SGBV One-Stop Center helped arrest the alleged perpetrator, who is awaiting a court trial.

*Name changed to protect the survivor's privacy



Addressing **the** Critical Enablers





© UNFPA Liberia

The UN Country team observes United Nations Day in Monrovia, Liberia





Data for development planning

The availability and use of quality data are strong enablers for Liberia to track the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. Forty-five percent of SDG indicators require sound and reliable population data. Disaggregated, geographically precise data are vital to leaving no one behind and serving first those with the greatest need.

Consequently, UNFPA supports the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) to strengthen the country's population data systems, expand the quality and availability of geo-referenced census and registry data, and use such data to map population vulnerabilities and deliver where it counts.

Key Interventions

- Provided technical and financial support to the Liberia Institute of Statistics to finalize the 2022 Liberia Population and Housing Census, including the writing of 15 thematic reports from the census data covering children, adolescents and youth, people with disabilities, elderly people, and special populations, migration and urbanization, labor force and employment, agriculture, non-monetary poverty, housing conditions and household facilities, mortality, fertility, population projections, education and literacy, health and sanitation, etc. When completed, the thematic reports will present more detailed disaggregated statistics on policy-relevant themes at the national, county, and district levels. The policy relevance of the reports will be premised on the analytical assessment of trends, patterns, and relationships across multi-sectoral variables and tied to the perspective of international, national, and cross-country empirical assessments of the issues under investigation.
- Collaborated with the World Bank to conduct an independent evaluation of the 2022 Liberia Population and Housing Census enumeration to assess the coverage and quality of content using demographic analysis. The evaluation made extensive use of sex and age ratios as well as graphical analysis, the population pyramid, and the use of indices that are sensitive to coverage error, such as the average number of persons per household for small areas of the country and the comparison of average household sizes for urban and rural areas. The outcome indicated a national omission rate of 2.2 percent, meaning that the 2022 Liberia Population and Housing Census covered 97.8 percent of

the “True population.” There were more omissions in urban settings (2.9 percent) than in rural (1.4 percent). This coverage rate means the 2022 LPHC data set is very accurate and can be used for effective development planning for Liberia.

- Supported the government of Liberia in conducting a 10-year implementation status review of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development (AADPD) ten years following its adoption; UNFPA supported Liberia in its review process. The review consulted key government sectors and agencies, civil society and human rights actors, media institutions, young people, women and girls, people with disabilities, educational institutions, the business sector, and local and traditional authorities. It culminated in a national report highlighting progress, the gaps and challenges, and advocacy and policy change needed to achieve the AADPD and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) agenda. Highlights from Liberia's report fed into the continent-wide report by the African Population Experts Committee (APEC) and Ministers in Charge of Population.



The Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services presents the results of the 2022 National Population and Housing Census.





Partnership and Resource Mobilization

A critical ingredient in stimulating and driving sustainable development is partnership. UNFPA works to build a diversified and inclusive partnership to mobilize the required resources, expertise, and creativity to address exclusion factors and promote more inclusive communities for women and girls. This includes exploring innovative and creative engagement platforms to reach the most marginalized and left behind communities. Leaving No One Behind represents the commitment of the development sector to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that undermine the potential of individuals and humanity.

UNFPA maintained its collaborative effort with various partners from the UN, the Government, and Civil Society in 2023. Among the key partnerships are:

Reproductive Health Technical Committee,
National GBV Taskforce,
The EU and UN Spotlight to eliminate violence against women and girls,
The Inter-Agency Youth Taskforce,
The UN M&E Working Group,
The UN Legal Identity Agenda (UNLIA),
The Inter-Agency Programming Team,
The UN Gender Theme Group,
The UN Human Rights Working Group,
National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Technical Working Group,
The UN Joint Team on HIV & AIDS,
The Inter-Agency Working Group on Disability.

Key Interventions

- Collaborated with partners, including Amplifying Rights Network, to organize Liberia's first sexual and reproductive health and rights conference to draw attention to SRHR as a human right.
- Supported the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Youth and Sports and to recruit, rehabilitate and reintegrate at-risk youth in Montserrado, Grand Bassa, and Bomi counties as part of the Government of Liberia and the UN

- Joint At-Risk Youth Rehabilitation and Empowerment programme.
- Supported youth groups to form a coalition to advance youth sexual and reproductive health and bodily autonomy.
- Supported Liberia's participation at the Global Forum for Adolescents at the 2023 SDGs Summit, the world's largest-ever convening of stakeholders – youth networks, governments, private sector, donors, the United Nations agencies, and others – to raise attention to the need for immediate action to advance the significant determinants of adolescent well-being, as a major milestone within the 1.8 billion Young People for Change campaign.

Key Results

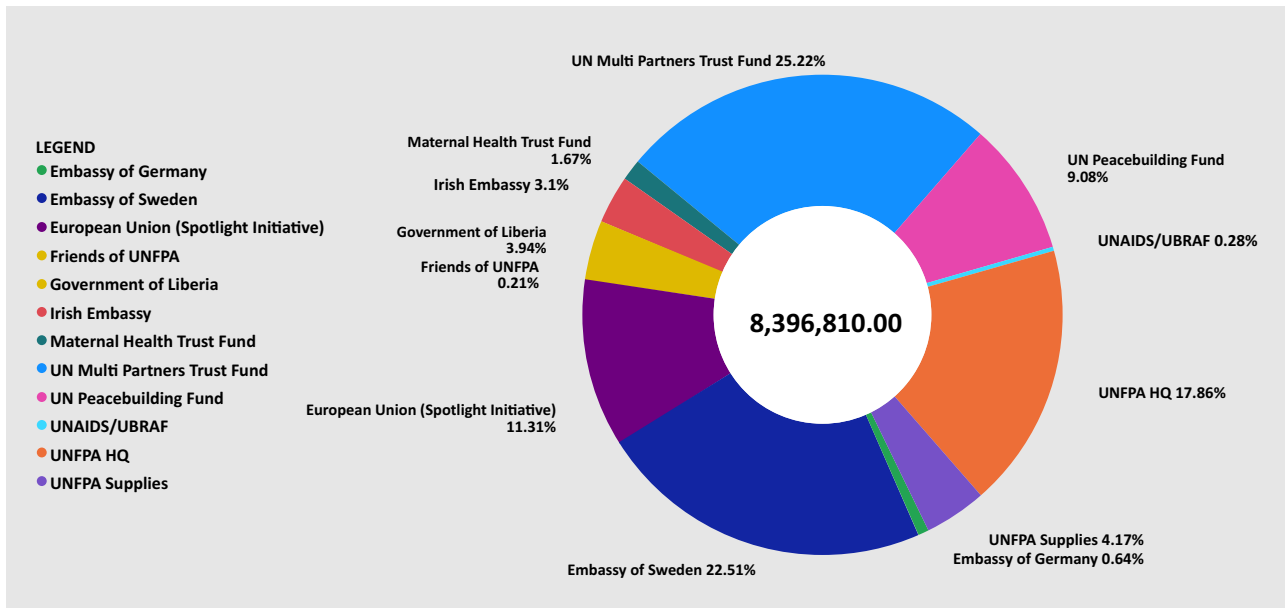
- 300 marginalized youth completed detoxification and enrolled in rehabilitation centers as part of the Government of Liberia and the UN Joint At-Risk Youth Rehabilitation and Empowerment program programme to address the plight of at-risk youth in Liberia.
- Established a youth-led coalition-Liberian Youth Voices for Accelerating the International Conference on Population and Development (L-YV-4-ICPD) –which brings together national adolescent-led and youth-led formal and youth-led formal and informal organizations to raise their voices and transform policies, strategies, approaches, and programmatic responses through youth-led action, advocacy, and accountability on SRHR and bodily autonomy.
- Commitment by the Government of Liberia to ensuring sustainable resources, strengthening the policy and legal environment, and developing programmes to improve adolescent well-being and accelerating the achievement of related SDG priorities for adolescents and young people, delivered at the Global Forum for Adolescents at the 2023 SDGs Summit. The forum was connected to the 30th Anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).



Swedish Ambassador Urban Sjöström (2nd from left), UNFPA Representative Bidisha Pillai (4th from right), and BRAC visit a health facility in River Gee County to understand how the Embassy of Sweden's support for ensuring universal access to sexual reproductive health and rights for all, especially helping adolescent girls prevent unplanned pregnancy are helping transform teenage girls' lives in Southeastern Liberia.

Distribution of resources by source

UNFPA recognizes and appreciates the contributions of all donors, without whose resources the results achieved during the year would not have been possible.



UNFPA Deputy Representative Leonard Kamugisha and German Ambassador H.E. Jakob Haselhuber sign a partnership agreement for youth access to SRHR information and services



Changing Lives

Young voices advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights in Liberia

Unplanned pregnancy continues to hamper the growth and development of adolescent and teenage girls in Liberia, as 33 percent of them are mothers or already pregnant. There is a great lack of agency to decide about their bodies and life-course development opportunities such as health, education, and employment.

Encouragingly, many young people are now rising to make their voices heard. One of them is Joletha K. Joe, a member of the Liberian Youth Voices for Accelerating the International Conference on Population and Development (LYV4ICPD) Programme of Action.

“I want my voice to be among the voices of young people shouting for a change in the status quo. For many adolescents and young people, the lack of opportunities to decide about their bodies often leads them to early pregnancies and childbirth,” says Joletha.

“Many of my peers also suffer violence, including sexual and gender-based violence and forcefully female genital mutilation (FGM),” she adds.

According to Joletha, the engagement of community structures is critical to

efforts to ensure the realization of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) by adolescents and young people and reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriage.

“I grew up in a community wherein most of my peers were forced into early childbearing and subjected to FGM, some of them against their will,”

Joletha says.





A panel of young people, including Joletha, discusses issues affecting adolescents and young people in Liberia during the launch of the Liberian Youth Voices for Accelerating the ICPD.

To reverse this trend, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supports Liberia in empowering adolescents and young people through a range of actions, including a multisectoral and innovative three-access point model (community, school, and health facilities) to deliver an integrated package of sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence information and services in a youth-friendly manner. UNFPA also supports rights holders, including adolescents and young people, in advocating for their priorities and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The LYV4ICPD is a coalition of 40 youth-led organizations formed with support from UNFPA to assist Liberia's young people in amplifying their voices, building networks, and developing common advocacy around issues important to them for local, national, and international advocacy and representation. LYV4ICPD was launched on 05 December 2023 in Monrovia.

The initiative is part of the Young Voices for Change project by UNFPA, with support from the Federal Republic of Germany Embassy in Liberia. It seeks to harness the voices of young people to realize their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriage.



I am tired of living in ghettos on drugs ...Declared a disadvantaged youth as he volunteers for rehabilitation

This is the opportunity I have been yearning for. I can't allow this to pass me by," says Mike as he joins his colleagues waiting to be registered and enrolled in the Joint UN/Government of Liberia At-Risk Youth Rehabilitation and Empowerment program.

According to Mike, age 24, who says he has been on harmful substances for the past ten years, he had long yearned to receive help. "I want to desist from this bad habit [use of illicit drugs) but it has been difficult for me. Drug addiction is bad. When that craving comes, I can do anything to get money to buy drugs to satisfy myself," Mike added.

With ten years in the ghetto, Mike has established himself as the leader of one of the many gangs of violent youths operating in central Monrovia, the Capital. Members of these gangs live at street corners, graveyards, and abandoned buildings across the city.

However, according to him, stopping the use of illicit substances and reuniting with his family outweigh the benefits of leading gang members. "I know that from here, I will no longer be a Four-Star [leader of a group of gangs). But on the other side, I will become a better person for myself and my family. I miss my son a lot. I have not been going around him because of my drug addiction," Mike says.

Mike is among a group of disadvantaged youths on drugs who volunteered to be rehabilitated under the "At-Risk Youth" empowerment programme by the Government in collaboration with the United Nations and other partners launched in June 2022 and is currently in the implementation phase.

Jointly funded by the Government of Liberia and the United Nations through the Peacebuilding Fund, the programme seeks to empower marginalized youths, especially youths using drugs and other substances, with economic livelihood skills, give them the agency and voice to contribute to peacebuilding, and hold state actors accountable. At the helm of this desired goal is helping young people to do away with the use of illicit drugs through comprehensive behavior change and drug prevention interventions, mental health support for those already hooked on drugs, SGBV



prevention, rehabilitation, and economic livelihood interventions; while simultaneously partnering with marginalized youths and their communities to support their reintegration into families and communities, reduce stigma, champion peace messages and support various interventions to promote peaceful co-existence and social cohesion within communities.





Moving Forward

The march toward universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) through the three transformative goals of zero preventable maternal death, zero unmet need for family planning, and zero gender-based violence and harmful practices in Liberia remains UNFPA's key priority.

No doubt, with the availability of quality sexual and reproductive health services, including strengthening of the health workforce, addressing gender-based violence (GBV), and ensuring the supply of modern contraceptives and other essential reproductive health commodities, and working together with the Government and partners, we can have a Liberia where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled can be assured.

As the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, we are committed to ending unmet need for family planning, preventable maternal death, and gender-based violence and harmful practices, including child marriage and female genital mutilation, by 2030.





Ensuring rights and choices for all

ONE UN HOUSE
5TH FLOOR
1st STREET
TUBMAN BOULEVARD
SINKOR
MONROVIA

 liberia.unfpa.org

 UNFPALiberia

 UNFPA Liberia

 UNFPA Liberia

