6. Humanitarian Response

Even under normal conditions, reproductive health issues are among the leading causes of death and illness among women of childbearing age. When a crisis strikes, both birth and emergency care often become unavailable, exacerbating the vulnerability of pregnant women. Women face other threats as well. The absence of health services and supplies can increase the risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. In situations of conflict, forced migration, and disasters, sexual violence is known to escalate as the community’s protection systems break down.

UNFPA is on the ground before, during, and after crises, working closely with governments, local NGOs, UN agencies, and other partners to ensure that sexual reproductive health and rights and responses to gender-based violence are integrated into emergency response.

Key milestones

• The launch of the Joint UNFPA-UNICEF Programme on Accelerated Abandonment of FGM (2008).
• The End Child Marriage Campaign launched by the First Lady of Ethiopia and conducted for a year in regions with a high prevalence of child marriage (2008). The campaign featured a 100-meter canvas painting painted by 30 prominent artists in public view at Meskel Square.
• The launch of the Integrated Emergency Surgery and Obstetrics (IESO) Programme to train mid-level health professionals in Emergency Obstetric Surgery to reduce preventable maternal death (2009).
• The innovative Developmental Bible Project in implemented in partnership with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to promote maternal health, the well-being of adolescents and youth, and fighting harmful practices against women and girls (2009).
• The launch of the Accelerated Midwifery Programme to address the shortage of midwives in Ethiopia (2010).
• The launch of the Campaign on Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMO) in Ethiopia (2009).
• The World of 7 billion campaign in 2011 to mark the day the World Population reached 7 billion (2011).
• The Africa Region Conference on ICDDP-10 that was held in Addis Ababa (2010).
• The Condomes. Don’t Compromise campaign held at the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA 2011) and the HIV Viral testing in Gembula Region which went into the Guinness Book of World Records under the category of the number of people tested for HIV in one venue in 8 hours (2014).
• The FP 2020 and FP 2030 commitments and the Country Compact aimed at increasing access to family planning commodities and increasing domestic financing.
UNFPA Ethiopia

1. Ensuring every pregnancy is wanted
UNFPA, through UNFPA Supplies, supports interventions to increase the availability of essential maternal and newborn health commodities and modern family planning methods and services. Around one-third of the contraceptive needs of the population, such as adolescent girls, are being addressed through UNFPA Supplies Ethiopia.

2. Ensuring Every Childbirth is Safe
UNFPA provided critical technical assistance to support Ethiopia over the past decades contributing to the improvement of access to essential maternal and newborn health commodities. Contraceptive methods have been regulated in the recent years reaching 90% for 500,000/600,000 births.

3. Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
UNFPA supports interventions to address GBV practices and gender-based violence manifesting in different forms against women and girls; and end end gender-based violence and harmful practices – end preventable maternal deaths; and contributing to the UNFPA Strategic Plan (2022-2025) aligned with national development priorities (2020-2025). The Country Programme is working to deliver a world where every woman and girl can lead a life free from violence, and where every child is born into, and grows up in, a safe and loving environment.

4. Helping Young People Fulfill their Potential
Through the right information and access to adolescent and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services, young people are empowered to fulfill their potential.

Our focus is on:• Community initiatives to promote and protect the rights of young people;• Establishment and operation of institutions providing protection and response services such as safe houses, rehabilitation centers, and one-stop centers to reach out and provide comprehensive services to GBV survivors;• Strengthening of institutional capacity for the development and implementation of legal and policy frameworks aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of youth against harmful practices and gender-based violence.

We are working through the country the strategic interventions and actions through supportive population and health policies, in coordination with the national child protection policy and the inter-agency Child Protection Framework and within the implementation of the Accelerated Midwifery Program.

We have had strong partnership with UNFPA, in the last five decades in the areas of ending preventable maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity, expansion of SRH services and ensuring quality commodities for sexual and reproductive health, expansion of youth-friendly services on SRH, and strengthening human resources for health.

UNFPA is supporting the government to address the critical shortage of human resources for maternal health by supporting the training of mid-level health professionals through programs such as the Integrated Emergency Surgery and Obstetrics program and the Accelerated Midwifery Program.

We are also working with community structures to create demand for maternal health services and to increase institutional delivery for improved maternal health outcomes.

The strategies we employ to enable young people to access SRH services include youth dialogue and community mobilization initiatives; skills training and strengthening for youth participation; and expanding comprehensive SRH services to young people. These are aligned with strategies to build the capacity and improve institutional services to ensure the provision of youth-friendly sexual health and reproductive health and rights services at all levels.

We target vulnerable groups such as disabled, orphans and marginalized girls, domestic women, married adolescent girls, young people with disabilities, and street children, and students in higher educational institutions.

The Ministry of Planning and Development, in collaboration with the UNFPA, has already begun preparing the 5th population and housing census. The data gathered through the census will provide a clear picture of our nation’s demographic landscape. The data will help the country realize a demographic dividend for the 5th population and housing census held in 2011.

We are working to ensure that young people are provided with information on their rights, including providing technical support for the analysis and dissemination of the information generated. As the lead agency for this national exercise, UNFPA is collaborating with the Ministry of Planning and Development, and the National Bureau of Statistics and other relevant agencies. For the next census, we are highlighting the importance of collecting and disseminating high-quality and timely data through innovative approaches. We are also working with the Ministry of Planning and Development, in collaboration with the UNFPA, to publish the findings of the 5th population and housing census.