

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, skilled birth attendance, and emergency obstetric 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 risks of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. In situations of conflicts, 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.

The UNFPA Ethiopia Humanitarian Response Plan (2023) focuses on preventing and responding to gender-based violence and bridging protection, gender equality, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support while building back capacity on sexual and reproductive health and rights across 9 affected regions in Ethiopia. UNFPA Ethiopia has distributed hundreds of thousands of hygiene supplies and reproductive health kits to crisis affected people, providing core life-saving services. UNFPA also deploys trained health personnel and provides other crucial support to affected populations, working to ensure the needs of women and girls are served through preparedness, emergency, and reconstruction phases.

Key milestones

- Support to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Population and Housing Censuses in Ethiopia in 1984, 1994, and 2007 and the preparatory phase for the pending 4th Population and Housing Census
- 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 meters canvas painting painted by 30 prominent artists in Ethiopia 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 to increase skilled birth attendance (2010)
- Launch of the Campaign on Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA) in Ethiopia (2010)
- The World of 7 billion campaign in 2011 to mark the day the World Population reached 7 billion (2011)
- The Africa Region Conference on ICPD+20 that was held in Addis Ababa (2014)
- The Condomize, Don't Compromise campaign held at the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) (2011) and the HIV Voluntary Testing in Gambella 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 2030 commitments and the Country Compact aimed at increasing access to family planning commodities and increasing domestic financing.

Our Partners

 United Nations CERF Central Emergency Response Fund	 Canadian International Development Agency	 EHF Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund	 From the People of Japan
 Irish Aid Department of Foreign Affairs An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha	 THE WORLD BANK	 ITALIAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION	 KOICA Korea International Cooperation Agency
 Spanish Cooperation	 NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS	 Norwegian Embassy Addis Abeba	 Sida
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UNFPA Ethiopia

50 YEARS

Ensuring Rights and Choices for All

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UNFPA, the United Nations Sexual and Reproductive Health Agency, is an international development organization working to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

UNFPA began its development assistance to Ethiopia in 1973 implementing successive Country Programme cycles. Currently, we are implementing the 9th Country Programme (2020-2025) cycle which draws from the Sustainable Development Goals, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2020-2025). The Country Programme is aligned with national development priorities and the UNFPA Strategic Plan (2022-2025) which aims to achieve transformative results – end preventable maternal deaths; end unmet need for family planning; end gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls; and end sexual transmission of HIV – by 2030.

1. Ensuring every pregnancy is wanted

UNFPA, through *UNFPA Supplies*, supports interventions to increase the availability of essential life-saving maternal health medicines and modern family planning methods and services. **Around one-third of the contraceptive requirements of Ethiopia are being addressed through UNFPA Supplies.**

Contraceptive financing, strengthening supply chain management, capacity building of health care providers, ensuring the provision of quality voluntary family planning and maternal health services that are up to human rights standards, and reaching the marginalized and underserved communities are areas that UNFPA is contributing to.

2. Ensuring Every Childbirth is Safe

UNFPA provided critical technical and financial support to Ethiopia over the past decades contributing to the improvement of access to essential maternal health services. Commendable results have been registered in the reduction of maternal mortality though it remains high at 267 per 100,000 live births.

The areas of focus of UNFPA's intervention on maternal health are Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care, Maternal Death Surveillance and Response, and strengthening referral systems with the overarching objective of reducing maternal mortality and morbidities such as obstetric fistula, uterine prolapse, and cervical cancer.

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

Dr. Meseret Zelalem, Lead Executive Officer, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Service, Ministry of 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.

3. Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

UNFPA supports

- Community initiatives to promote and protect the rights of women and girls
- 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 women and girls against harmful practices and gender-based violence.

We are supporting the country through the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation in realizing the country's ambitious commitment to end these two harmful practices by 2025.

Technical support is provided to the national coordination mechanism through women-led associations and Faith-based Organizations to engage men and boys in addressing violence against women and gender inequality manifesting in different forms and at different levels.

4. Helping Young People Fulfill their Potential

Through the right-based approach to adolescent and youth development, we target vulnerable and marginalized adolescents and youth with a particular focus on married adolescent girls, domestic workers, sex workers, and their clients, young people with disabilities, orphans and street children, and students in higher educational institutions.

The strategies we employ to enable young people to claim their rights include promoting youth dialogue and community mobilization; supporting life-skills training; strengthening youth participation; and expanding comprehensive sexuality education. These are aligned with strategies to build the capacity of youth-serving institutions to ensure the provision of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health and rights services at all levels.

UNFPA leads the prevention component of the UN Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS, contributing to the efforts of the Government to prevent and mitigate the spread of HIV with a special focus on vulnerable sections of the population, such as adolescent girls. UNFPA seeks to realize the 90-90-90 target and the global goal of eliminating HIV/AIDS by 2030.

“UNFPA is fully committed to adolescent and youth development in Ethiopia. Our partnership is advancing the agendas of young people in the national landscape of sexual reproductive health and rights,”

Ephrem Berhanu, Managing Director, Talent Youth Association.

We are adeptly working to encourage policies that can help the country realize a Demographic Dividend with a strong belief that healthy, educated, employed, and empowered young people can improve not only their prospects but also that of the country.

5. Population and Development

As the lead UN Agency in supporting Population and Development, we support the generation of gender-disaggregated data and information on population and reproductive health and integrate population issues into development plans and policies. A particular emphasis in this regard is promoting the understanding of emerging population issues such as population and climate change, migration, urbanization, and the implications of the Demographic Dividend for national development.

Census data are central to the monitoring of the 2030 agenda. In this area, we are playing a role in supporting censuses, demographic and health surveys, and other large-scale data-gathering exercises, including in humanitarian settings, and providing technical

“The Ministry of Planning and Development, in collaboration with the UNFPA, has already begun preliminary works on a demographic dividend roadmap. The roadmap would be instrumental in integrating population issues into regional and sectoral development plans,”

H.E. Dr. Fitsum Assefa, Minister of Planning and Development of Ethiopia

support for the analysis and dissemination of the information generated. As the lead agency in coordinating resource mobilization for these exercises, we supported the population and housing censuses held in 1984, 1994, and 2007. Currently, we are supporting preparations for the 4th Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia. Support is also being given to the 5th round of the Demographic and Health Survey and for setting up functional Integrated Management Information Systems at national and regional levels.