



Health sector transformation project

Strengthening health systems to expand access to basic health and nutrition services in Aweil Centre and Aweil South counties, South Sudan

Background

In South Sudan, a shortage of healthcare workers, inadequate infrastructure and low service use contribute to one of the world's highest rates of maternal and child mortality. About 75 percent of child deaths are caused by preventable diseases such as diarrhoea, malaria and pneumonia.^[1] Only 25 percent of women access skilled care during childbirth, increasing their risk of complications.^[2] Political, economic and geographical barriers, compounded by ongoing conflicts, further impede access to essential health services. With 90 percent of the population residing in rural areas and over half living more than 5 km from a health facility, reaching healthcare remains a major challenge. The health sector receives less than two percent of the national budget,^[3] with only 3.5 skilled providers per 10,000 people, far below World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations.^[4]

The Health Sector Transformation Project (HSTP) is a three-year initiative to strengthen nationwide health service delivery, led by the Ministry of Health in partnership with the World Bank and other funders, and managed by UNICEF. The HSTP is supporting 1,158 health facilities across the 10 states and three administrative areas, replacing the Health Pooled Fund, which ended in June 2024.

Country

South Sudan

Funder

The World Bank and other funders via UNICEF

Length of project

July 2024 – June 2027

Partners

County health departments,
Local leaders,
National Ministry of Health,
State Ministry of Health



Project outline and objectives

Malaria Consortium is implementing HSTP Lot 13 in Aweil Centre and Aweil South counties, Northern Bahr el Ghazal. These counties are affected by floods and conflict, resulting in population displacement and damage to health infrastructure. A scarcity of skilled healthcare workers, high attrition rates and restricted access to essential services and supply shortages have been exacerbated by an increased caseload.

To address these gaps, Malaria Consortium is collaborating with the State Ministry of Health and county health departments to implement a basic package of health and nutrition services that integrates social and behaviour change communication, prioritising high-impact interventions. Tailored community messaging promotes healthy behaviours, and addresses gender equality issues and gender-based violence.

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- Strengthen the capacity of frontline workers to implement the integrated management of childhood illnesses.
- Enhance frontline workers' skills to provide quality maternal and neonatal care in diverse settings.
- Boost government capacity to provide quality routine services, including immunisation and outbreak response.

Activities

Malaria Consortium is training health workers to enhance their capacity to provide quality care, and to collect and analyse data to support decision-making, and strengthen disease outbreak preparedness and response. The project team is overseeing infrastructure maintenance and utility provision at Aweil State Hospital, selected primary healthcare units and primary healthcare centres. By establishing minimum standards for health facilities to function effectively and safely, the project enables health workers to deliver services, and patients to access care.

Last mile distribution of drugs and medical supplies to health facilities and *boma* (village) health workers ensures their consistent availability. Malaria Consortium is supporting the recruitment, training, resourcing and supervision of 400 boma health workers to extend services to remote and hard-to-reach communities.

Outcomes and impact

Reduced child morbidity and mortality caused by preventable diseases. The HSTP is expected to generate lasting improvements in public health systems, particularly for women, children and groups susceptible to disease. By strengthening the capacity of health staff, the project will ensure more effective treatment and diagnosis of common childhood illnesses at both facility and community level.

Strengthened, integrated health service delivery. Health facilities are anticipated to see improvements in infrastructure, service availability and stocks of essential medical supplies, and greater flexibility to address emerging challenges. Alongside stronger coordination with government partners, this will contribute to a more resilient and responsive health system.

Equitable access to care for hard-to-reach populations.

At the community level, improved training and supervision of boma health workers will improve healthcare access for remote and under-resourced populations, increasing health knowledge, service uptake and trust in the health system. Efforts to integrate gender equality and address gender-based violence through social and behaviour change communication will also promote more equitable access to care.

These changes will lay the groundwork for sustainable delivery of similar services across Northern Bahr el Ghazal, in alignment with national health goals and global development targets.

References

1. UNICEF South Sudan. Support essential health care for all. Available from: www.unicef.org/southsudan/support-essential-health-care-all
2. Tongun JB, Mukunya D, Tylleskar T, Sebit MB, Tumwine JK, Ndeezi G. Determinants of health facility utilization at birth in South Sudan. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 2019; 16(13): 2445. Available from: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6651414/>
3. World Health Organisation (WHO). Strengthening primary health care in fragile settings: South Sudan. WHO; 2022. Available from: www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/strengthening-primary-health-care-fragile-settings-south-sudan
4. Healthy Newborn Network (HNN). South Sudan maternal & newborn health country profile. HNN; 2023. Available from: www.healthynetwork.org/hnn-content/uploads/South-Sudan-country-profile_March-2023.pdf

© Malaria Consortium / August 2025

Unless indicated otherwise, this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-profit or educational purposes without permission from the copyright holder. Please clearly acknowledge the source and send a copy or link of the reprinted material to Malaria Consortium. No images from this publication may be used without prior permission from Malaria Consortium.

UK Registered Charity No: 1099776

Contact: info@malariaconsortium.org



Cover image: Health workers attend training in values clarification and attitudes transformation, Aweil Centre county headquarters in Aroyo, South Sudan.

Project lead: Norman Aweno

Contact: info@malariaconsortium.org



www.malariaconsortium.org

 FightingMalaria
 MalariaConsortium

malaria
consortium