

RIWA SOUTH SUDAN & MINISTRY OF HEALTH: “ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY”

ADVOCACY ENGAGEMENT REPORT – AUGUST 2025

Dear Partners and Allies,



RiWA South Sudan continues to deepen its strategic collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to advance inclusive, rights-based health policies and amplify community voices in national decision-making. Our engagements reflect a shared commitment to strengthening sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), HIV prevention, and health equity across South Sudan.

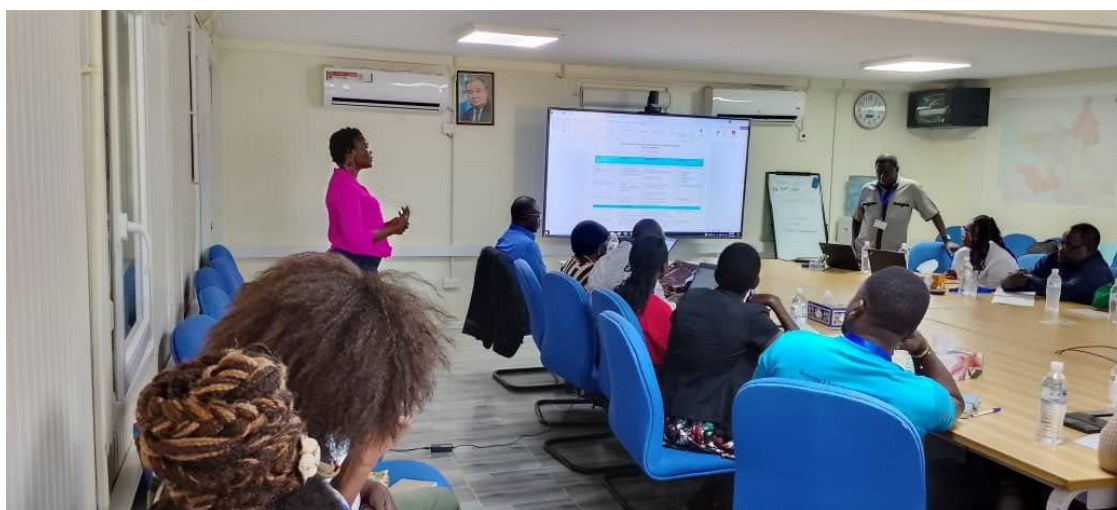
In strengthening strategic partnerships, RiWA has held multiple high-level meetings with MOH

officials to advocate for survivor-centered, gender-responsive health frameworks. The ongoing consultations with MOH Leadership gear towards dialogues with focus on integrating SRHR into national health strategies and ensuring marginalized groups are meaningfully represented.

In a Joint advocacy and partnership with South Sudan AIDS Commission (SSAC) RiWA is contributing to the development of inclusive HIV prevention policies. Our advocacy emphasizes the need for tailored interventions for marginalized communities like women, youth, and sexual minorities, grounded in lived experiences.

Policy Influence & Technical Contributions towards SRHR Policy Review & Recommendations, RiWA submitted technical inputs to the MOH's SRHR policy review process, highlighting gaps in access, accountability, and youth engagement. Our recommendations call for stronger community health systems and climate-resilient SRHR services.

RiWA South Sudan's Strategic Engagement in Global Fund Reallocation for Key Populations



As there was a great global health funding cut as a result of the Trump administration, South Sudan health service provision was greatly compromised, and therefore there is need to



replan. RiWA South Sudan recently participated in a pivotal planning meeting convened to re-assess and re-allocate Global Fund resources targeting Key Populations (KPs). This engagement marks a critical step in ensuring that HIV prevention and treatment programs are community-led, rights-based, and responsive to the realities of marginalized groups in South Sudan. The meeting aimed to: i) Re-evaluate the allocation of Global Fund resources for KP programming under the 2023–2025 cycle, ii) Ensure alignment with the Global HIV Prevention Roadmap for Key Populations, and iii) Strengthen community-led monitoring and advocacy for equitable funding and service delivery.

Advocating for community-led funding RiWA emphasized the need for direct financial support to KP-led organizations, advocating for transparent and inclusive budgeting processes that reflect community priorities.

For evidence-based recommendations drawing from field data and lived experiences, RiWA presented recommendations to improve access to long-acting PrEP, self-testing kits, and differentiated service delivery models tailored to KPs, and for legal and policy reform advocacy, RiWA called for the integration of legal literacy and rights-based approaches into HIV programming, highlighting the intersection of health access and human rights.

key outcomes were;

- i) Agreement to revise KP targets and indicators to reflect community-defined priorities,
- ii) Commitment to increase domestic co-financing for KP programs, with technical support from civil society, inclusion of RiWA in the national KP advisory group and the HIV/AIDS technical working group to monitor implementation and accountability.

Strategic Alignment;

This engagement aligns with global priorities outlined by the Global HIV Prevention Advisory Group (KPAG), which calls for: i) Increased funding transparency, ii) KP-led program design and monitoring, and iii) integration of HIV prevention into broader health and human rights frameworks.

Meeting with the Minister of Health



Sitting in as the deputy chair for the National Aids & health Service Organizations in South Sudan – NASOSS, Rise Initiative for Women's Right Advocacy-RiWA joined a team from the Civil Society Organizations led by NASOSS on the 6th of August 2025, to meet with the Minister of Health, Hon. Sarah Cleto Rial.

Our goal was to present a position paper that was generated in a Civil Society Reference Group (CSRG) meeting that was held on the 24th-25th of July 2025, in Juba.

The paper, developed as a result of the Civil Society Reference Group meeting, focused on strengthening domestic health financing and improving healthcare standards.

We proposed the following to the Hon. Minister of Health:

- i). Increased Budget Allocation to 15% of the national budget to health, with 5% of that amount specifically dedicated to critical areas like HIV, TB, Hepatitis, and Malaria. We suggested innovative funding sources, such as sin taxes on harmful products and levies, to help achieve this goal.
- ii) National Health Insurance Scheme: We advocated for the creation of a national health insurance scheme to spread financial risk and significantly reduce out-of-pocket expenses for citizens. We referenced models from countries like Ethiopia and Kenya, proposing funding from government savings on medical tourism and medical institutional expenditures, as well as contributions from both employers and Individuals.
- iii) Leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): We emphasized the need to formalize private sector engagement and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to further supplement government efforts.



In addition to our proposals, we also raised concerns about i) the hygienic conditions at Juba Teaching Hospital, noting that a cleaner

environment is essential for patient recovery, ii) ongoing challenges with the Health Sector Transformation Project (HSTP), which includes the delay of incentive payments to health care workers, and called on the Minister to ensure the country takes full ownership of its health care system, and iii) urged her to rebuild trust and transform the Ministry of Health into a credible, accountable, and transparent institution.

The Minister acknowledged the issues raised, which include challenges around HSTP, and committed to addressing the incentive delay (so payment for three months was done) and promised that incentives would be paid every month starting in the second phase of the project.

The Minister also assured us of the Ministry's efforts to mobilize resources with critical examinations of the domestic health financing options proposed by the Civil Society for quality health care and encouraged us to continue our open discussions as accountability partners.

Next Steps

- Co-develop a KP Monitoring & Accountability Framework with MOH and SSAC.
- Host continuous dialogues to amplify KP voices in HIV policy reform.
- Document lessons to inform future Global Fund cycles and donor strategies.

Budget Advocacy for Health Equity Through collaborative analysis with MOH stakeholders, RiWA is advocating for equitable budget allocations in health. We are pushing for transparency and community participation in health financing.

RiWA remains committed to ensuring that no one is left behind in the fight against HIV. Through strategic advocacy and community

leadership, we are reshaping the narrative around health equity and justice for Key Populations.

RIGHTS-BASED RESPONSE AND ADVOCACY ENGAGEMENT WITH 62 FEMALE SEX WORKERS

RiWA South Sudan is pleased to share highlights from our recent engagement



In February 2025, 62 female sex workers were arrested in Juba during a coordinated law enforcement sweep by the city mayor targeting key populations. The arrests carried out under punitive public order laws highlighted the urgent need for rights-based advocacy, legal literacy, and survivor-centered support for marginalized women navigating intersecting vulnerabilities.

In response, RiWA South Sudan mobilized a rapid engagement initiative to provide legal aid, psychosocial support, and leadership training to the affected women. This effort not only addressed immediate needs but also amplified their voices in national policy dialogues on HIV, SRHR, and gender justice. The engagement reaffirmed our commitment to decriminalization, dignity, and inclusive health systems that leave no one behind.

The engagement aimed to:

- Build legal literacy and awareness of rights.

- Strengthen leadership and advocacy capacity among female sex workers.
- Gather lived-experience data to inform national HIV policy reform.
- Foster solidarity and peer-led support networks.

Activities & Outcomes



Legal Literacy Workshops Participants received training on consent, access to services, and navigating legal systems. Many expressed increased confidence in asserting their rights and accessing health care.

SRHR Dialogue Circles Safe spaces were created for open dialogue on reproductive health, stigma, and violence. These sessions informed RiWA's policy recommendations to the Ministry of Health and SSAC.

Community-Led Monitoring Participants contributed to a rapid assessment of service gaps in HIV prevention and treatment, including barriers to PrEP, self-testing, and respectful care.

Leadership & Storytelling Training Select participants began crafting personal narratives for advocacy campaigns, amplifying their voices in national and regional forums.

Strategic Impact

This engagement directly feeds into RiWA's advocacy with the Ministry of Health and the Global Fund KP reallocation process. The insights and priorities shared by these 62 women are shaping our push for:

- Increased funding for KP-led initiatives.
- Survivor-centered service delivery models.
- Policy reforms that decriminalize sex work and protect health rights.

Next Steps

Establishing a peer-led advocacy network for female sex workers.

Co-developing a monitoring framework with MOH and SSAC.

Documenting stories for regional and global platforms.

Scaling the initiative to additional regions in South Sudan.

We remain committed to centering the voices of those most affected by systemic exclusion and health inequities. Thank you for your continued support and solidarity.

In justice and resilience,

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