Fact Sheet: Ujana Wangu Nguvu Yangu

“My youth, My power”: Reaching the furthest behind first in Kigoma Region

Kigoma is one of the poorest regions in Tanzania,\(^1\) and, with its youthful population – 67 per cent are below the age of 24\(^4\) – is home to some of the most marginalized and vulnerable young people in the country. The region is also host to a community of 236,154\(^3\) refugees, primarily from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, who reside in three camps – Nyarugusu, Nduta, and Mtendeli – in Kasulu, Kakonko and Kibondoto Districts.

Adolescents and young people in Kigoma face formidable challenges on a daily basis – staying healthy, getting an education and making their own decisions in life – and for them there is a real danger of being left out and left behind.

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**Reproductive health indicators**\(^5\) - Kigoma Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>15 to 19-year-olds</th>
<th>20 to 24-year-olds</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent contraceptive prevalence rate (modern methods)</td>
<td>7 per cent</td>
<td>21 per cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adolescent pregnancy rate (15 to 19 years)</td>
<td>32 per cent</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adolescent fertility rate (15 to 19 years)</td>
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<td>132 per 1,000 live births</td>
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**Gender-based violence**

Kigoma Region has the second highest rate of gender-based violence (GBV) in the country.\(^6\) Women and girls living in Kigoma’s three refugee camps are particularly vulnerable to GBV as the risk of violence, exploitation and abuse is heightened in humanitarian settings.

- **23.1 per cent of women** (15 to 49 years) report they have experienced sexual violence.
- **42.6 per cent of women and girls** (15 to 49 years) report they have experienced some form of physical violence.

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\(^2\) Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) 2015/16.
\(^3\) UNHCR Tanzania Refugee Situation Statistical Report. 30 September 2019.
\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^5\) TDHS 2015/16.
\(^6\) Ibid.
Realizing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescents and young people

Launched in July 2018, the Ujana Wangu Nguvu Yangu “My youth, My power” project – funded by Irish Aid and implemented by UNFPA, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MOHCGEC), the President’s Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG), Regional Administrative Secretaries (RAS), Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and selected NGOs/Implementing Partners in Kigoma Region – responds to the unique sexual and reproductive health (SRH) needs of young people and adolescents living in Kasulu DC, Kasulu TC, Kibondo DC and Kakonko DC – with targeted support to young people living in the three refugee camps: Nyarugusu, Nduta, and Mtendeli.

Project beneficiaries – refugee and local community

PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES
24,049 adolescents and young people (10 to 24 years) (Local community 20,599; refugees 3,450)

82,352 pregnant women (Local community 58,752; refugees 23,600)

SECONDARY BENEFICIARIES
All women of reproductive age (15 to 49) 293,762

Nothing about youth without youth

Young people have the potential to be powerful drivers of change and resilience builders in the community when empowered to realize their rights and matched with the right opportunities, and are at the forefront of project activities in Kigoma. As experts on their own lives they are best-placed to advocate for the support and solutions they need to realize and exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and live healthy, safe and fulfilling lives.

In 2019, the African Youth and Adolescents Network on Population and Development (AfriYAN) East and Southern Africa – a regional youth network for advocacy on SRHR and population and development – established a chapter in Kigoma recruiting nine youth-led civil society organizations to join the network.

Over the lifecycle of the Ujana project, AfriYAN will play a central role in advocating to different actors, including government, for expanded access to SRHR services and information for all young people in Kigoma – particularly the most vulnerable. AfriYAN members have also attended leadership training to build their skills to meaningfully engage in decision-making processes and to give the young people of Kigoma a voice.

Safe spaces for adolescents and young people

To address low health-seeking behaviour among Kigoma’s adolescents and young people, UNFPA, in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and other partners, has established three adolescent and youth-friendly (AYF) centres in Nyarugusu Camp. The centres are a safe space for vulnerable adolescents and young people to meet and to access a comprehensive package of high-quality, age-appropriate SRH services including voluntary family planning, HIV voluntary counselling and testing, psychosocial counselling, and information on menstrual hygiene management (MHM).

From July 2018 to June 2019, more than 1,700 young people from local communities and Nyarugusu Camp accessed the centres, enabling them to make informed and healthy choices about their SRHR – choices that will shape their future. The centres are also a hub for training activities under the project.

A newly-created cadre of more than 380 peer educators are also an integral part of the primary health care system across project sites. As graduates of Kiota Women’s Health and Development (KWOHDE) SRHR training they act as leaders and mentors in the community and camps, promoting good SRH among their peers and facilitating referrals to the youth centres.
Peer educators have also set up youth centres in the community for in and out-of-school youth. Members meet twice a week to learn about risky sexual behaviours; HIV; early pregnancy; child marriage; and gender-based violence. For adolescent girls and boys who have dropped out of school – in a region where only 6.3 per cent of girls and 10.4 per cent of boys complete secondary education – these sessions are a lifeline to a better future. Drama, music, dance and community meetings also provide a space for young people to meet up and to discuss and learn about their SRHR as well as to build their life skills.

**Managing menstrual hygiene with dignity**

UNFPA is supporting adolescent girls and young women to manage their menstruation with dignity. Menstrual health management (MHM) can be particularly challenging in Kigoma with its limited privacy and access to facilities that allow young women to manage their periods safely and hygienically. In addition, a culture of shame and taboos that exist around menstruation can hinder the day-to-day activities of young women and lead to isolation.

Over a period of three days 650 adolescent girls attended trainings at the youth centres in Nyarugusu Camp, to learn about menstruation and how to manage it. Workshops have also been held for over 1,000 adolescent boys and young men to sensitize them about MHM so that they can be champions and advocates for MHM rights and understanding.

UNFPA has also procured 5,720 Adolescent Dignity Kits, which include kangas, soap, underwear, and reusable sanitary pads. The Kits will be initially prioritized for adolescent girls in school in Nyarugusu Camp, with distribution expanded to include all adolescent girls in the local community in the near future.
Leaving no one behind

First-time young mothers (FTYMs) are a particularly vulnerable group. Shouldered with the responsibilities of raising a child at a young age, lacking access to age-appropriate SRHR services and information, and subject to stigma and discrimination, they often feel isolated, left out and left behind. UNFPA, in collaboration with the Tanzania Midwives Association (TAMA), is working to address their unique needs, and a group of around 25 FTYMs have attended skills building education in parenting, breastfeeding and nutrition, and SRHR, including the right to live free from violence. Emboldened with their newfound knowledge, they will set up support groups for other FTYMs and take the lead in driving resilience in the community.

Healthcare providers have also attended training to ensure the services they deliver meet the particular SRHR and psychosocial needs of young mothers. And to address this group’s social exclusion, 46 influential gatekeepers – community and religious leaders and parents – have attended an awareness-raising session to look at, and discuss, their attitudes towards FTYMs.

Making motherhood safer

Making motherhood safer is a focus of project activities and UNFPA, in collaboration with regional and local government, has identified nine health facilities across project sites that are in the process of being renovated and equipped to improve the delivery of quality reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNACH) services. Maternal wings will be equipped and staffed to deliver antenatal, delivery, and postnatal services improving health outcomes for adolescent girls and young women in the project districts.

Stories from the field

“Many families in my village send their daughter to a friend’s or relatives house when she has her period”, says Aziah,* one of 650 adolescent girls and young women who have attended education sessions that promote healthy menstrual hygiene management (MHM) at Nyarugusu Camp youth centre.

Puberty and menstruation can be confusing times for adolescents, particularly if they have no one to speak to at home or at school about the changes they are experiencing, and challenging for the girls of Kigoma, where stigma and social norms mean that this healthy biological process can restrict their daily activities and lead to isolation. For many of the young girls the MHM sessions are the first opportunity they've ever had to openly discuss their periods, ask questions, and realize that it's a normal part of their adolescence and lives. Zainab,* aged 14, now understands about the menstrual cycle and why she has periods, she says like many of her friends she used to miss school and stay at home during her monthly cycle.

In addition to the sessions at Nyarugusu Camp youth centre, peer educators have conducted MHM outreach for 519 adolescent girls and young women in Kasulu DC, Kasulu TC, Kibondo and Kakonko Districts.

Kagoma,* who recently attended a His Chance workshop in Kasulu, now understands that menstruation is a natural bodily function and that there is no reason why his mother or sister's movements should be restricted during their period. Kagoma is one of 1,261 young men and adolescent boys – from the local community and Nyarugusu Camp – who have been sensitized about MHM to create an environment in which boys and men challenge and change the culture of silence and shame that exists around menstruation and become champions and advocates for MHM rights and understanding.

Going into the second year of the Ujana project, efforts will be accelerated to build effective and sustainable MHM programmes that breakdown the taboos and silence that exist around menstruation so that every girl in Kigoma is supported and empowered to learn and reach her full potential.