



International UN Volunteer Midwife, Rose Omega Aliru (Uganda) in the Munuki PHCC clinic of Juba, South Sudan, inserting a contraceptive implant to a young mother while a community midwife observes. (UNFPA, 2016)

## Eradicating famine and poverty through health education in South Sudan

Rose Aliru Omega (Uganda) is an international UN Volunteer Midwife with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in South Sudan. Her work is focused on the reduction of maternal mortality and neonatal deaths through improved access to health facilities. She encourages women from South Sudan to learn about their reproductive health rights and family planning to prevent frequent child bearing and post-partum complications.

Rose comes from a village in Uganda where many deaths have been attributed to famine. She remembers a particularly difficult time when her community gathered for at least one week to mourn the deceased. The mortality rate had been particularly high due to the outbreak of disease among the new born. The extensive mourning unfortunately had an incendiary effect—interrupted attention to crops and market activities magnified the impact of the famine in her community. In that difficult moment, sorrow had brought on more suffering.

Rose found inspiration in that tragic experience and became a volunteer so that communities such as hers could have access to vital health services and information to reduce mortality rates attributed to crises such as famine.

Although such initiatives might not directly contribute to the prevention of such a crisis, she knew that improving access to health services alleviate its impacts and contribute to saving lives. When the opportunity presented itself, Rose did not hesitate to become a UN Volunteer. Her service has been a life changing experience.

“ Through the knowledge and skills acquired as a volunteer you are given the chance to discover who you are, your strengths and weaknesses. This helps you to understand how to interact with others and help them surpass anything. Volunteerism means showing to those who have lost hope, that there is hope.

Since 2014, Rose is an international UN Volunteer in South Sudan. Rose contributes to the goal of eliminating maternal and child mortality across six primary health care centres. She is responsible for the provision of clinical services as well as the coordination and supervision of national UN Volunteers in her team, including ward managers and community health workers. She is accountable for the training of midwives, teaching them basic emergency obstetric and new-born care, emphasising health education, training and the mentoring of health workers as the building blocks of these objectives.

Among her initiatives as a UN Volunteer, Rose founded two programmes for adolescent mothers which operate within the health care centres. Assisted by her team of trained midwives, she provides reproductive health services for pregnant teenagers along with general counselling and career guidance. Her team helps young mothers go back to school, encouraging them to contribute to their entire community's well-being. For these young women, Rose and her team are a source of inspiration, support and empowered. Through her work as a UN Volunteer, Rose raises awareness of the importance of educating young women and the massive impact of small volunteering actions.

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“ My way of life has changed my home to the extent that the little good which I do for individuals has impacts on entire families, helping people see the importance and the need to educate women.

Rose inspired many women to enrol and complete midwifery school. Her first batch of 17 students will soon graduate from the State Institute and go one to contribute to health care within their own communities. She is clearly inspiration in action.

 East and Southern Africa

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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 3: Good health and well-being](#)