

# Ethiopia: 2020 Mid Year Report SOUTH SUDAN REGIONAL RRP

January - June 2020



## 344,481

SOUTH SUDANESE  
REFUGEES HOSTED IN  
ETHIOPIA (30 JUNE 2020)

## US\$ 333.7 M

REQUIRED IN ETHIOPIA IN  
2020

## 10%

FUNDING RECEIVED  
(SEPT 2020)

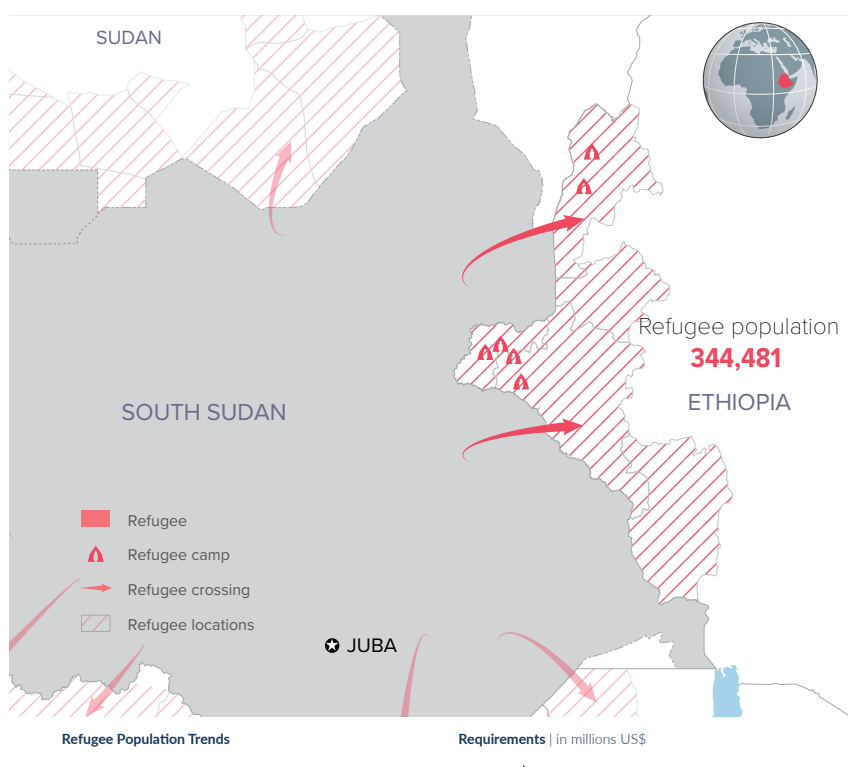
## 27

RRP PARTNERS IN  
ETHIOPIA IN 2020

### SITUATION OVERVIEW

The South Sudanese (SSD) are the largest refugee population in Ethiopia, totalling 344,481 as of June 2020. Of these, 319,130 reside in seven camps in the Gambella Regional State. Most of the South Sudanese refugees arriving in Gambella are to be relocated to the Benishangul-Gumuz Region based on a Government policy issued in January 2019 requiring such transfers. Between 31 August 2019 and 30 March 2020, a total of 7,000 individuals were in the Pamdong Transit Center, 718 of whom were relocated to Assosa. On 30 March, the Government directed the closure of Pamdong Transit Centre, and 2,190 individuals were relocated to the Nguenyiel refugee camp. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Pagak Reception Centre was re-opened in May, and is now hosting more than 8,000 South Sudanese refugees. There is limited accommodation, and services are overstretched for the increasing number of new asylum-seekers, raising public health concerns. Substantial re-investments have been made to ensure the delivery of assistance in Pagak, including the rehabilitation of shelters (and other infrastructure), provision of water and sanitation, health, nutrition and other protection and social services.

In March, Ethiopia closed its land borders in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, new arrivals continued to enter Ethiopia through informal crossings, often fleeing ethnic conflict and food insecurity in parts of South Sudan. On 16 April, the Gambella Regional Health Bureau (RHB) released the third version of the COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (ERRP) aligned with WHO and Ethiopia Government guidelines. RRRP partner resources were re-prioritised to cover critical preparedness activities, including the provision of COVID-19 related training for health care workers, awareness raising campaigns, and distribution of medical equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline workers. Nevertheless, COVID-19 has adversely impacted the humanitarian response to the South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia. RRRP partners have sought alternative implementation modalities in various sectors to sustain humanitarian assistance. In an endeavour to curb the spread of COVID-19, response assistance in critical areas such as protection, health promotion, Core Relief Items (CRI), WASH and shelter were scaled up. Increased gaps are foreseen in the second half of the year, and initiatives are constantly being explored to secure additional funding and resources, in order to sustain the delivery of life-saving assistance and to support the implementation of activities that were suspended.



### COVID-19 GOOD PRACTICES

The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled RRRP partners to identify alternative modalities to deliver appropriate and timely humanitarian assistance to persons of concern. In relation to protection activities, children have been provided with playing materials, and youth outreach activities have supported children-at-risk. Moreover, in efforts to strengthen SGBV case management amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a remote case management mechanism has been established and SGBV survivors can seek help and assistance through the telephone helpline. As regards education in Gambella, initiatives are underway to support students through specially developed radio-based distance learning programs. In the context of livelihoods, refugees have been engaged in producing face masks in Assosa in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Monthly food distributions were delivered to refugees in line with COVID 19 preventive measures (physical distancing, handwashing and temperature checks before food collection). Cash-based interventions (CBI) delivered through electronic fresh food voucher (e-FFV) targeting households with under two-year children, and small-scale nutrition-sensitive backyard gardening was promoted to improve household food security and dietary diversity to reduce anaemia.

The pandemic has compelled RRRP partners to adopt new ways of working in the context of the humanitarian operations. For instance, inter-agency coordination meetings and trainings were conducted using online platforms, communication systems and tools.

### ACHIEVEMENTS TOWARD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Progress was made towards the six strategic objectives, as highlighted in the Ethiopia Country Refugee Response Strategic Direction 2020. RRRP partners and ARRA undertook joint efforts, prioritizing the provision of basic needs and essential services to refugees in the camps and surrounding host communities, while ensuring that the minimum standards were met within the respective sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To promote family-based care for the high number of unaccompanied and separated children, child protection services were availed through trained child protection caseworkers and protection officers. Community-based child protection structures were strengthened to offer basic psychosocial support services to vulnerable children in their respective communities within the camps. In relation to SGBV prevention and response, RRRP partners contributed to enhancing justice and physical


**78**

South Sudanese refugees **tested for COVID-19** by 30 June 2020


**0**

South Sudanese refugees **tested positive for COVID-19**, with 0 deaths reported


**99%**

of South Sudanese refugees and targeted host communities **reached with COVID-19 related messaging**


**13**

health centres supported or established for COVID-19 response, as well as **10 isolation centres & 2 quarantine centres**


**83%**

of health staff participated in **COVID-19 related trainings**


**14,286**

**additional handwashing facilities established**


**11%**

of South Sudanese refugee students reached with **remote learning** (e.g. radio lessons, study packs etc.)


**63,012**

South Sudanese refugee households received **additional core relief items** as part of the COVID-19 response

protection of survivors through case referral and management systems, including provision of psychosocial support amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the security situation in Gambella continues to be unpredictable, initiatives have been undertaken to promote peaceful co-existence between the refugee communities. Construction of a federal police station and accommodation units in Pugnido was commenced with the aim of increasing police deployments to the area and improve security. Furthermore, as part of the response to the natural resource degradation, risk reduction and mitigation measures are implemented, including planting seedlings which also helps to maintain the peaceful coexistence between the two communities.

In Assosa, a mixed approach was implemented to provide refugees with alternative sources of energy for cooking, and at the same time mitigate degradation of the natural environment. As part of this initiative, several resources were provided such as charcoal briquettes, communal kitchens, and firewood. An economic inclusion pilot project was initiated through an agricultural assistance program in two camps, which supported 2,663 refugee households and 875 households from the host community.

Refugees continued to receive basic services across food, health, WASH and shelter sectors, and targeted assistance for nutrition programmes to address acute malnutrition and anaemia. Joint coordination efforts are being made with the Regional Health Bureau to strengthen the Public Health Emergency Operation Centre (PHEOC) in the response to COVID-19. Education partners in Gambella engaged in different activities to ensure continuity of learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. RRRP partners, parenting groups and centre facilitators supported ECCE level learners with home-based literacy and numeracy activities, and for primary education (Grades 1-8) radio and print media-based learning initiatives were provided in collaboration with the Regional Education Bureau and UNICEF.

Ethiopia's new refugee policy grants refugees the right to carry out livelihoods activities and promotes their inclusion within the national development system. During the reporting period, 6,483 refugees received cash grants and business development services for their microbusinesses to sustain trading and livelihood opportunities. Moreover, food security and nutrition-sensitive interventions have been implemented, including vegetable production activities, provision of small ruminants, provision of e-vouchers and aggregation of vendors of fresh food. On durable solutions, 185 South Sudanese refugees from the Assosa operation (Tsore and Gure Shembola Refugee Camps) were identified in need for resettlement, out of whom 109 were submitted to resettlement countries.



## Protection

- As of 30 June 2020, Gambella region recorded **5,979 new arrivals through Pagak and Raad border entry** points, and were registered as prima facie refugees.
- **86 per cent of refugee children with specific needs received support** through individual case management
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, **learning institutions remain closed, increasing the risks of students dropping out of school.**

While the international land borders remain closed, Ethiopia continued to receive new arrivals through informal crossings, often fleeing ethnic conflict and food insecurity in parts of South Sudan. UNHCR and ARRA conducted a screening exercise at Pagak Reception Centre with 3,562 newly arrived refugees from South Sudan. Basic life-saving services were provided at Pagak, and protection assessments and awareness activities conducted in coordination with partners.

A COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan was activated. Simultaneously, a multi-sector sensitization campaign promoting physical distancing and hygiene practices was launched to address misinformation amongst

a population that was largely unaware about the threat of the pandemic. Child protection and SGBV partners continued to provide psychosocial support and to follow-up on cases for vulnerable children and women-at-risk. They distributed playing and awareness materials to be used at home, while engaging youth in home visits and outreach activities to support children with their education. Child-friendly communication techniques (drawing, acting, singing and story telling) were widely used in camps targeting children, youth and caregivers, assisting them to express their feelings around the COVID-19 situation, and to adopt positive coping mechanisms.

Improvements were made in areas of mainstreaming child protection and SGBV into other sectors, as well as community mobilization, awareness-raising and referral of cases. Remote case management mechanisms and helpline numbers were activated in all locations in anticipation of a possible lockdown where humanitarian actors would not be able to access the refugee camps. Partners provided COVID-19 related trainings for community workers, and tailored awareness raising activities and prevention messages through audio recorded sound systems and home visits when possible. 21,709 children-at-risk were supported, and 75 SGBV survivors were referred to health, legal and psychosocial support services.

An active joint Child Protection and SGBV and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support working group enhanced coordination among protection partners and cooperation with other sectors, especially in response to COVID-19. Nevertheless, children continued to face abuse and exploitation with cases of child marriage identified in all locations. The suspension of social activities has greatly affected the stability and well-being of children and adolescents. Lack of youth-targeted programs for the South Sudanese youth affects their behaviour and interactive engagement.

185 South Sudanese refugees from the Assosa operation (Tsore and Gure Shembola Refugee Camps) were identified in need of resettlement, out of whom, 109 were submitted to resettlement countries. 75 South Sudanese refugees from the Gambella camps were submitted to resettlement countries.



## Education

- Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) stands at **54%, 74% and 19% for pre-primary, primary and secondary education respectively**. Tertiary education recorded a GER of 2.2 per cent.
- Preparations to **launch radio-based distance learning has been initiated** in cooperation with the Regional Education Bureau, UNICEF and education partners.
- **WASH is a critical gap in all schools facilities**. The ratio of pupils to latrines stands at 1:170, 1:320 and 1:126 at ECCE, primary, and secondary levels respectively, against a UNHCR standard of 1:40.

UNHCR and partners managed 38 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres, 24 primary and five secondary schools, while strengthening tertiary and adult education for more than 112,000 children and youth. Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for ECCE was 54 per cent, 74 per cent for primary and 19 per cent for secondary school. Tertiary education scholarships were provided to 1,122 students enrolled in Bachelor (663), diploma (55) and certificate (404) programs.

In line with the nationwide directive to prevent the spread of COVID-19, learning institutions were closed on 17 March 2020, affecting over 100,000 South Sudanese refugee children. These measures entail the risk of adversely affecting the development, safety and well-being of children, especially in the camps where schools play an important role in child protection and in promoting peaceful co-existence.

Education actors supported the national distance-learning plan by distributing self-learning materials and through home-to-home visits. 5,000 solar-powered radio sets were procured by partners for distribution as pilot radio-based learning, targeting refugee students enrolled in primary and accelerated learning programs in Nguenyiel camp. Lessons were adapted to suit home-based environment, self-learning materials were provided through

interactive exercises and quizzes, and subjects adjusted to the new process for Grades 1-7, with the intention to continue the preparation of lessons for Grade 8. Out of 113,955 early childhood care and development, primary and secondary level students, only 12,504 (11 per cent) were reached through distance learning due to refugee movements from camps and spontaneous returns, and protection concerns such as child marriage. Limited transmission coverage and capacity to broadcast lessons across the region, and the need to translate lessons to multiple languages remain major obstacles for qualitative distance learning for all children.

The sector faces structural gaps due to lack of access to safe learning environments, lack of learning facilities such as libraries, insufficient qualified teachers, limited community participation and interruption of education due to ethnic conflicts.



## Food

**Successful two-month food distribution assistance was provided to 97 per cent of the population** in the current context of COVID-19.

**CBI and nutrition-sensitive backyard gardening promoted** through nutrition and livelihoods partners.

**Only 1,806 kcal of recommended dietary allowance was met** against recommended 2,100 kcal/person/day.

Food and nutrition programmes were implemented by observing physical distancing, and without the use of biometrics to keep in line with COVID-19 precautionary measures. On a monthly basis, General Food Distribution was provided to refugees, with an average of 97 per cent of the population in need of receiving food assistance in-kind. Community Management of Acute Malnutrition Programmes (CMAM), Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Programmes, Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programmes (BSFP) and community engagement were in place across all camps. The programmes targeted children under five years, pregnant and lactating women, and medical cases. Malnutrition has multi-faceted causes and remains an area of attention.

Only 86 per cent (1,806 kcal/person/day) of the food requirements were met against the recommended dietary allowances of 2,100 kcal/person/day. UNHCR and WFP continued advocacy for additional funding to enable provision of food in-kind to refugees given the limited livelihood opportunities for self-reliance. Additional resources are required to continue with the support and strengthening the engagement of nutrition activities, including prioritization of small scale agricultural subsistence production by households and small groups.



## Health & Nutrition

**178,101 medical consultations were registered in refugee camp health facilities** with 1 per cent from the host community.

**7,185 children <5 years old, and 1,180 Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW)** reached through **acute malnutrition treatment programs**.

The **health facility patient ratio in primary health care is 1:27,000** against the UNHCR standard of 1:10,000

Essential healthcare was provided to meet the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, including 24-hour emergency services, immunization, out-patient consultation and treatment, HIV/AIDs management, reproductive health, ambulance and referral services. 13 health care centers have been established and supported in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rapid Response Teams (RRT) conducted disease surveillance, reporting and contact tracing for COVID-19. A total of 296 health care personnel, representing 80 per cent of the health care capacity were trained on active case finding, surveillance and risk communication activities. Awareness raising campaigns were conducted through home-to-home visits and over media outlets. To strengthen the existing health structures and their response to the pandemic, additional PPE, medical equipment for isolation centres and ambulances have been provided. The

Gambella University, which acts as an isolation and treatment centre does not have the capacity to manage critical cases and requires additional medical equipment. Preparations are underway for the extension of isolation capacity and case management at camp level. Other challenges are reluctance of refugees to visit health centres due to fear of contracting the coronavirus, inadequate PPEs and medical personnel at the different sections of service delivery, including maternal health care.

7,185 children under 5 years and 1,180 pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) were reached through management of acute malnutrition, with performance indicators maintained to sphere standards (cure rate of 90.5 per cent). Emergency nutrition response services, including regular screenings for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) were provided at Pagak Reception Centre to an average of 3,800 individuals per day. 10,148 PLWs were reached with key IYCF messages delivered at baby-friendly spaces, and through outreach counsellors and trained volunteers. In Gambella, blanket supplementary food distributions were provided to 47,464 (84 per cent) children aged 6-59 months and 9,295 (74%) PLWs. Another 10,202 cases were reached to prevent acute malnutrition through continuous community and facility level nutritional screening for early detection and referral to programs.



## Livelihoods & Environment

A total of **6,483 PoCs (18-59 years) benefitted from livelihoods interventions** aimed at providing productive assets, training and/or business support in cash or kind.

The **survival rate after planting trees stands at 86 per cent.**

**91 per cent of the refugee HH** are in **need of energy saving stoves** and equipment.

Several market-based livelihood initiatives were implemented aiming at developing the agriculture sector, providing vocational and entrepreneurship skills training, as well as microfinance services. 5.6 per cent of the targeted population received productive assets, training, and or business support in cash or in kind. In Gambella, 370 refugees and 85 host community members received cash grants and business development services. Essential farming inputs and livelihoods resources were provided in seven camps in Gambella and five camps in Assosa as part of the COVID-19 business continuity plan. Food security and nutrition interventions were implemented, including vegetable production activities, as well as provision of small ruminants, e-vouchers and aggregation of vendors of fresh food. A total of 120.25 hectares of arable farmland has been cultivated. In Assosa, refugees were engaged in producing facemasks to prevent COVID-19 transmission. The creation of a savings and credit cooperative with USD 50,000 start-up capital for loan administration did not fully kick-off in Assosa due to the COVID-19 situation.

Approximately 34 per cent of households have access to electricity and lighting. However, cooking energy remains a critical gap in the operation with only 1.6 per cent of the refugee households using alternative and/or renewable energy. As a result, refugees continue to access firewood as the primary source of energy causing deforestation in the surrounding areas of the host community. New initiatives are planned to increase the provision of alternative energy sources, including briquettes, solar energy for lighting and grid connected communal kitchens. In Assosa, a mixed approach was implemented including the distribution of charcoal briquettes, the communal kitchen at Tsore and Sherkole camps, and provision of firewood to Gure-Shombola camp. As part of the response to the natural resource degradation, risk reduction and mitigation measures are implemented including planting seedlings. Despite the re-forestation efforts, the replacement rate falls far short of the degradation rate.



## Shelter & NFIs

**57.5 per cent of households are living in adequate dwellings.**

**50 per cent of households** have their **needs for basic and domestic items met.**

There is an **urgent need for hanger and emergency shelters for new arrivals at Pagak Reception Center** pending their relocation to refugee camps in the Gambella Region.



With the continued registration of new arrivals, shelter coverage remains a challenge with 42.5 per cent of South Sudanese households in need of adequate shelter. As of June 2020, the overall shelter coverage in Gambella camps stood at 60.2 per cent, leaving 39.58 per cent of the population either to share shelters with family members or live outside the camps. 485 transitional shelters have been provided, and 6.5 per cent of households in need of shelter upgrades or repairs were assisted. Construction of five communal accommodation hangers, two facility hangers for the ARRA clinic and AAH nutrition centers, and 50 emergency shelters was completed at Pagak Reception Center to reduce overcrowding and provide accommodation to new arrivals. In Itang, 1.2 km road construction was completed to provide access to boreholes and water pumping stations to enhance water supply as part of COVID-19 interventions in Tierkidi, Kule and Nguenyiel camps.

Due to reprioritisation for COVID-19 preparedness responses and budget constraints, planned activities for implementation including construction of 1,617 new shelters and maintenance of the road to Okugo camp were suspended.

Provision of basic and domestic items for new arrivals was prioritized. 63,012 households received additional core relief items with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional soap was provided in an effort to enhance handwashing practices; 97 per cent of the refugee population received 450 grams of soap/person/month. 630 households that were relocated from Pamdong Transit Centre to Nguenyiel camp were issued with CRI kits comprising sleeping mats, blankets, jerry cans, soap, kitchen sets, mosquito nets and solar lanterns.

Budgetary constraints limit the distribution and replenishment of core relief items. Poor road infrastructure hampering access to camps (and worsened during the rainy season) and the insecurity in the region negatively affected timely delivery of CRIs to refugee camps.



## WASH

Water access reaches **17.22 l/p/d in refugee camps** and **19.15 l/p/d in the hosting community**.

**14,286 additional hand washing facilities** at household and other public places have been installed as a preventive COVID-19 measure.

**Only 27 per cent of the South Sudanese refugees have a drop-hole latrine or toilet at household level.**

Access to safe water supply improved from the previous 15.3 to 17.2 litres per person per day (l/p/d) in June 2020 attributable to care and maintenance activities at water schemes. Refugee and host community technicians were successfully trained on WASH areas.

As the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, two of the camps (Nguenyiel and Tierkidi) located in Itang axis and hosting 47 per cent of the refugee population, received less than 15 l/p/d (average 10 l/p/d) against the standard of 20 l/p/d. Emergency water trucking was supported to enhance water provision to at least 15 l/p/d. The exorbitant costs and unsustainable practice of water trucking however calls for additional investments to optimize and expand the Itang water schemes. A ground water survey is required to explore possibilities of drilling additional water sources to add into the current system, such as the drilling of two deep wells (boreholes), the installment of pumps and requisite equipment including transmission pipeline to existing tanks in the camp. The water shortage has negatively impacted the lives of the refugees and operations of other sectors. Moreover, limited access to water collection containers and storage containers pose a challenge to safe and quality water access.

The overall household latrines coverage in the camps stands at 27 per cent. There is a need for additional latrines due to the slight increase in population and the high filling rate of simple pit latrines rendering them into a state of disuse. RRRP partners continue to advocate for Urine Diversion Dry Toilets (UDDT) given their recyclability nature. Through trained refugee hygiene promoters, 99 per cent of the refugees received hygiene messages including on handwashing practises as a key measure in preventing the transmission of COVID-19.

## CRRF

The Refugee Proclamation No. 1110/2019 which came into force in 2019 aims to cater to the implementation of Ethiopia's pledges and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) commitments which include local integration of refugees in protracted situations. It spells out rights and grants access to and opportunities for improved socio-economic integration. The majority of South Sudanese refugees are hosted in relatively remote, under-developed and economically under-served areas. The Ethiopian Government made nine pledges to comprehensively respond to refugee needs, and has prepared a roadmap detailing the implementation of each pledge, outlining key opportunities and partnerships that must be put in place.

Ethiopia has taken important steps in applying comprehensive responses, setting the direction for reinforced efforts in 2020. The implementation of the Ethiopian Government's (GoE) pledge to expand its Out-of-Camp policy to benefit 10 percent of the current refugee population requires continued engagement and proper consideration. Substantive progress toward full integration and Out-of-Camp has not yet been achieved. Nevertheless, refugees have the possibility to move in and out of the camp settlements and engage with local communities. RRRP partners are routinely engaged in information-sharing through operational and security briefings, trainings and incident management.

In line with the CRRF objectives, RRRP partners have continuously engaged in sustainable livelihood interventions aiming to enhance refugee and host community resilience and self-reliance. The interventions have focused on vocational and entrepreneurship skills training, development of the agricultural sector, supporting fishermen and women with proper equipment, providing beneficiaries with business management trainings, and supporting refugees and host communities with cash grants for establishing small-scale businesses. UNHCR is exploring the expansion of Cash Based Interventions (CBI) in lieu of CRIs, following successful pilot interventions in several refugee settings in Ethiopia. Although these interventions have yielded positive results, more coordination and collaboration among government entities and RRRP partners is required to address the multi-faceted livelihood challenges.

### RRP PARTNERS

- |                                                                           |                                                    |                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| • Action contre la Faim                                                   | Development And Interchurch Aid                    | • OXFAM                                         |
| • Action for Social Development and Environmental Protection Organization | Commission Refugee And Returnee Affairs Department | • Plan International                            |
| • Action For The Needy In Ethiopia                                        | • Food and Agriculture Organization                | • Right to Play                                 |
| • African Humanitarian Aid and Development Agency                         | • GOAL                                             | • Save the Children International               |
| • Bethany Christian Service Global, LLC                                   | • Help Age International                           | • United Nations Development Programme          |
| • Concern WorldWide                                                       | • International Medical Corps                      | • United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| • Danish Refugee Council                                                  | • International Organization for Migration         | • United Nations Children's Fund                |
| • Doctors with Africa                                                     | • International Rescue Committee                   | • World Food Programme                          |
| • Ethiopian Orthodox Church                                               | • Lutheran World Federation                        | • ZOA                                           |
|                                                                           | • Norwegian Church Aid                             |                                                 |
|                                                                           | • Norwegian Refugee Council                        |                                                 |

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**South Sudan Data Portal** - <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/southsudan>

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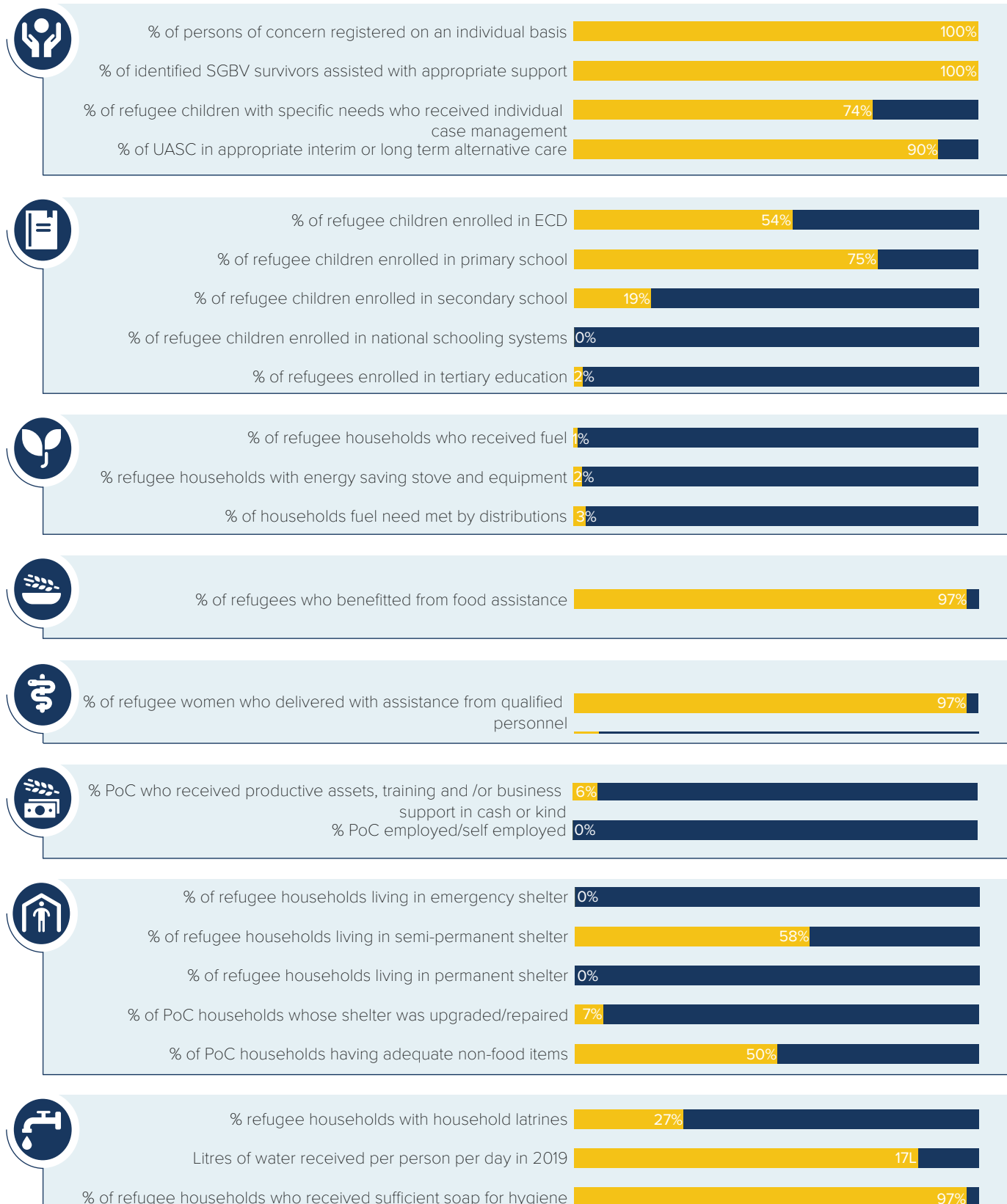


# ETHIOPIA:

## 2020 Mid Year Report

### SOUTH SUDAN REGIONAL RRP

January - June 2020



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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