



5 members of the DROP team, without Ethan Ofosu.

South Sudan has the highest maternal mortality death rate in the world, estimated at roughly 789 deaths per 100,000 live births. Many mothers are dying from issues related to pregnancy and childbirth, often due to infections caused by an unsterile environment during pregnancy and childbirth. Necessary supplies are often available; however, many mothers cannot afford to buy them and organised efforts by hospitals often fail to reach those in rural areas. Whilst international NGOs have made progress on this issue, there is still a lot of work required

in order to solve this problem. We believe that everyone who is born has the right to grow up with a mother figure around. Therefore, we have decided to take action to try and help prevent maternal mortality in South Sudan, something which is part of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, 'Good Health and Wellbeing.'

We are working with local charities to create packages to be given to mothers, as they enter labour or the later stages of pregnancy. Each package will contain various items, all of which will help the mother and the midwives accompanying her to create a sterile environment to prevent infection and to ensure that the mother and child are safe. The items in our boxes are as follows: 5 pairs of gloves, 2 bars of soap, 1 towel, 1 cotton roll, 1 apron, 1 biodegradable bowl (for the placenta and other fluids), 1 reusable sheet (for the mother to lie on), 1 cord clamp, 1 surgical blade. All items are either biodegradable or reusable, helping to combat SDG13 as well. All products are sterile and have been included in our box after consultation with various charities and midwives in South Sudan (see below). Our boxes will be provided free of charge to mothers and will help contribute to preventing maternal mortality and providing good quality healthcare for all, in line with SDG3.

Naturally, this project requires a certain amount of funding, which we initially obtained by talking to our school. They agreed to allow us to fundraise at school and we raised £700, enabling us to supply the first packages to mothers. Additionally, we have also created a Crowdfunder page for the project which we are using to attract donations from the wider community to fund our project in the long run. Thus far, we have raised £365 in donations.

After confirming we would focus on SDG3, we began to educate ourselves on the matter, to ensure the products included in our packages would have the greatest impact possible. Initially, team members researched the products which are most needed, focusing on sanitation and hygiene. Research took the form of surfing websites, speaking on the phone to several NGOs (including ActionAid and International Health Partners to name a couple) and gaining first-hand advice from leading experts in the field. In the process of our research, we stumbled across the UK charity 'Life for African Mothers' (LFAM), based in Cardiff, Wales. After frequent conversations with the CEO, Angela Gorman MBE, we began to understand the impact our packages would have, and most importantly how necessary they are. In order to learn more about pregnancy, previously lacking expertise on the matter, two members of the team attended a live class, alongside midwives in Sierra Leone, to learn about pregnancy and the importance of providing a sterile environment. Ms Gorman said that, 'it was very gratifying to see young people taking an interest in such a sensitive topic. They should be very proud of what they are doing and the lives they will make safer as a result.'

After deciding we would work in South Sudan, we began to speak to James Lual Akech, a newly qualified midwife and founder of the Aweil Blood Donor Club, about how our packages could be transported to South Sudan and distributed to the mothers in need.

Following discussions with suppliers in both the UK and South Sudan, we decided to buy the boxes in South Sudan, helping stimulate economic growth there (SDG8), whilst cutting out the transportation costs and emissions. After a search of local medical suppliers, we were able to find a company (Matching Solutions Company Limited) to assemble the boxes for the cost of \$48.79 (roughly £35).

Whilst the boxes are being assembled in South Sudan, the team wanted to ensure the packages were still personal to the work we are doing. Thus, we are having stickers printed in the UK, to send over via letter, to be stuck onto the boxes. After contacting 'InternationalLABMATE', they offered to sponsor the project and print the stickers free of charge.

In order to maintain the integrity of our project, the DROP team configured a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which can be seen in the DROP video entry, to ensure our packages would get to the mothers and midwives safely. James Lual Akech explained, 'These essential items in the package are not easily afforded by pregnant mothers in rural areas. These packages are going to help in preventing infection of the mother and the newly-born child.'



The first package was given to Mary Achan, a second trimester pregnancy mother. She was incredibly grateful for our package as she had been worried about how she was going to get these resources because of the high cost of them on the market.

This is one of six packages which we have distributed at the time of writing.

Having worked over 60 hours on this project as a team, we are looking to carry it on for as long as possible. This may mean other members of the school becoming involved, not only to continue to provide packages but also to educate young men on issues such as pregnancy which so many are unaware of, or carrying on the project ourselves into our university years and beyond. Having seen the impact our packages have had and will have; we feel it is our duty now to use our position of privilege to help those most in need.

In terms of growing our project, we are currently looking at generating a website in order to gain traction for the project by generating some 'web trafficking,' and thus bring in more funds. We have gained substantial funding through our fundraising efforts thus far, enabling us to be able to run this project for the near future. As explained above, we have a Crowdfunder campaign planned to generate further donations, in order to continue this project for as long as possible in the future.

For now, though, we are focusing on making a success of our pregnancy packages, with the hope we will be able to make a genuine impact and help to prevent maternal mortality, contributing to SDG3.