



MA' MARA SAKIT
VILLAGE

A YEAR OF REST, REFLECTION & RECUPERATION





INTRODUCTION

2024 was a year of intentional pause.

At Ma' Mara Sakit Village, we believe rest is resistance. We know that true growth doesn't always come from constant motion — it also comes from stillness, reflection, and care.

After years of building, advocating, and amplifying voices, we chose 2024 to slow down, regroup, and breathe for the most part. We prioritized mental health, protected our team from burnout, and reconnected with the core of our mission: facilitating women's communities, providing platform, preserving culture, and fostering collective strength

This pause was not inactivity. It was preparation... the quiet foundation for the bold strides we are now taking in 2025. Because when women rest, they rise stronger, wiser, and ready to lead with intention.

Sincerely,

Ma' Mara Sakit Village Team 



MA' MARA SAKIT
VILLAGE

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FACILITATING WOMEN'S COMMUNITIES BEYOND BORDERS AND THE CAPITAL



In 2024, we embarked on a journey to expand our women's community beyond Juba and South Sudan. Half the year, we engaged with South Sudanese women in the refugee camp in Uganda, and the other half strategized how to take our Feminists' Talking Circles to other states within South Sudan and officially kick off our larger engagements with women from the informal sector in South Sudan.

SOUTH SUDANESE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN DISPLACEMENT

As part of the **Access to Skills and Knowledge Network (ASKnet)**, a consortium of community-driven organizations aiming to build a transformative and sustainable open society along with a professional media ecosystem, Ma' Mara Sakit Village collaborated this year with **Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation (CECI)**, a South Sudanese youth-led organization founded by refugees and based in the refugee settlements of **West Nile, Uganda**. The project engaged **34 women leaders** in the **Biddi-biddi refugee camp** in Uganda through cross-cultural and inter-generational dialogues to explore the role of South Sudanese women's leadership in cultural preservation in displacement. The dialogues were complemented by a three-day media training for young women on how to utilize traditional, digital, and social media as tools for cultural promotion and preservation.

To build on the dialogues and gain more insights into specific forms of cultural preservation, particularly focusing on food, language, art, music, and cultural attire, four South Sudanese women from different ethnic backgrounds were exclusively interviewed. To conclude the women's cross-cultural and intergenerational dialogues, we organized a **one-day cultural event that brought together over 140 people**, including South Sudanese and Congolese refugees and host communities. During this event, various groups showcased their traditional dances, songs, food, and other cultural practices. The Kuku Cultural group demonstrated child naming, while the Kakwa presented their traditional songs and dances. Additionally, the Pojulu and Aringa communities showcased their traditional food and dances, with the Aringa serving as the host community.

To bring these stories home and reflect further with our community of women in Juba, we hosted a half-day cross-cultural and intergenerational conversation, bringing together **45 women**. This event provided additional space for our community to glimpse what South Sudanese women continue to do beyond borders to **promote** and **preserve** South Sudanese cultures. The event started off with the screening of the **Digital Story: South Sudanese Women's Leadership in Displacement.**

This screening was followed by a panel discussion where one of our expert bead-makers and coaches of the: **Suk-Sukna Beadmaking** project and one of the young women journalists who supported This Is Us Part Two reflected on women's leadership and the role of multimedia. This event ignited a sense of responsibility in the younger women who attended the event.



A good number of young women had their **“aha moments”** and the realization that they have a huge responsibility, especially regarding technology, to better contribute to promoting and preserving cultures. This was evident in their contributions, which largely focused on different ways they can use multimedia and showed enormous appreciation for the work done by older women. Some expressed interest in learning how to do beadwork and wanted to explore how to best go about it from the **Suk-Sukna women bead-makers** present at the event.

SOUTH SUDANESE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP & THE ROLE OF MULTIMEDIA IN CULTURAL PROMOTION & PRESERVATION.



SOUTH SUDANESE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP & THE ROLE OF MULTIMEDIA IN CULTURAL PROMOTION & PRESERVATION.



After the in-person event, the panelists went to **Eye Radio** for the same conversation. They engaged with over 6,000 people who watched, directly engaged during the live stream, and continued to watch **The Radio Show** and those who listened across the country. Additionally, during the radio talk show, the people who called equally shared how much they appreciated the program and the need for more of such programs; some also shared the challenges of preserving these cultures, especially when raising children in foreign lands.

YOUNG WOMEN, POLITICS, AND ELECTIONS

To build on **Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)** South Sudan's *"Young Women in Political Institutions in South Sudan: Lessons from Lived Experiences,"* conducted in 2023 with the support of two members from Ma Mara Sakit Village, one of our community members further assisted FES in co-designing the "Political Minds Program." This member served as the lead facilitator for all five modules of the program's first cohort in 2024. Recognizing participants' strong interest in elections, at the end of 2024, Ma Mara Sakit Village partnered with the **European Union Electoral Assistance Team, the United Nations Integrated Electoral Assistance Team, FES,** and the **Swiss Cooperation Office** in South Sudan to host a three-day workshop for **28 young women** in politics.

The workshop aimed to enhance young women's understanding of electoral processes by providing comprehensive knowledge and addressing existing gaps, encouraging cross-sectoral networking, and promoting collaboration among young women from the FES Political Minds Program and the Ma Mara Sakit Village community to establish a supportive network of politically engaged women, and equipping them with tools to strengthen their civic engagement, thereby contributing to a politically active and informed electorate in South Sudan.



STORYTELLING AND CULTURAL PROMOTION AND PRESERVATION

DIGITAL HAIR STORIES

We supported the Jüdische Kulturbund Project in collaboration with the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). We co-facilitated a two-month hybrid program organized for high school girls and boys in the U.S. (Baltimore), Sweden, and South Sudan. **“Hair Stories”** is a hybrid, digital storytelling workshop that explores personal, cultural, social, and legal issues about hair. The program connects young scholars from the United States, South Sudan, Sweden, and Kenya.

You can learn more about this project and find the links to the digital hair stories produced by the boys and girls through this link:

<https://www.judischekulturbund.com/kultur-stories-2024/>.





EXPLORING SOUTH SUDANESE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN DISPLACEMENT

Catch up on our collaborative work with **CECI** in the refugee camp in Uganda, which explores women's leadership in cultural promotion and preservation in displacement through a digital story. The story can be accessed via the **Gender Talk 211** YouTube Channel: **Digital Story: South Sudanese Women's Leadership in Displacement.**



We are a feminist and women's community; **to be inclusive means we must recognize that women are not a monolithic group.** They have various other identities that define them, including gender and sexual identities. For the fourth year, we commemorated Pride Month on our Gender Talk 211 digital and social media platforms.

There is still a lot of ignorance of the basic understanding of gender identities and sexual orientation. Throughout the month, Gender Talk 211 shared basic facts about Sexuality/Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression. Additionally, we published an article sharing reflections on the challenging experiences of LGBTQ South Sudanese and allyship. You can read more about this in this [article](#).

TAKING THE FEMINISTS' TALKING CIRCLES TO THE STATES

Young women and women in the informal sector are our primary community focus. Between 2022 and 2023, we focused on designing our feminists' talking circles program. We facilitated six convenings that brought together 158 young women from diverse backgrounds who make up our current community. In 2024, we dedicated significant time to strategizing on expanding this program to state levels and building states-based young women's communities beyond Juba. Having witnessed the impact of this program over the past two years, we are excited to explore the opportunities of taking this beyond Juba in 2025.

BROADER ENGAGEMENTS WITH WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

Additionally, based on our 2023 assessment on **Women and Girls in the Informal Economy in South Sudan: Understanding forms of organizing and support systems** and the series of follow-up discussions and strategizing we conducted in 2024, we will be broadening our engagement with various women's groups in the informal sector beyond our Suk-Sukna women's group in Juba in 2025.

DIVERSIFICATION OF THE SUK-SUKNA PROJECT:

We are legally registered as a feminist social enterprise because we aspire to be more self-reliant in the long run. While we continue to work towards the long-term village physical space establishment plan, one of our core resource-generating projects is our **"Suk-Sukna project."** A bead-making project that contributes to cultural promotion and preservation that has employed **13 women** and generates resources that have greatly contributed to the sustainability of our programs. In 2025, we plan to include more merchandise beyond our unique beading work and develop a marketing strategy to help increase our sales as we gradually develop our social enterprise wing.

FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

Massive gratitude, as always, to the team that makes our work possible in different capabilities at the board, advisory, and core functioning levels.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Contributors	Amounts (USD)
Opening Balance	7,255
Mama Cash	32,430
African Women Development Fund	32,200
#ASKNET/HIVE COLLAB (supported by the German Cooperation through ROg Agency)	12,497.58
Autonomous Resourcing	3,550
the Jüdische Kulturbund Project	3,233
Total	91,165.58

2024 OUTFLOWS

Programs	Amounts (USD)
Mojtama Al'Mara (Feminist Community Building)	9,262
Gender Talk 211	16,009.51
Gender Talk 211	587.8
Social Justice Sonduk	300
Administrative Expenses	6,001.64
Total	32,160.95

OUR ALLIES





MA' MARA SAKIT

V I L L A G E

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