

# University of Juba launches a Master of Medicine in Paediatrics and Child Health

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On 6/03/2024, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Juba launched a three-year Master of Medicine (MMed) programme in Paediatrics and Child Health in the School of Medicine. The first batch of seven students includes five females and two males - see figure.

This is the first time that the University of Juba has initiated a Master's programme in Paediatrics and Child Health. According to unpublished records from the South Sudan Paediatrics Association, there are 42 paediatricians in South Sudan. Of these, only 25 are in the country while the rest are in the countries of their training. The MMed programme is based at Al Sabah Children's Hospital in Juba, the only children's referral hospital in South Sudan.

The need for the establishment of this programme was informed by lack of sufficient paediatricians to cater for South Sudan's population of ten million and the following poor health indices:

- The current estimated maternal mortality ratio has significantly improved, but it is still the highest in the world. It is 1223 deaths per 100,000 live births.<sup>[1]</sup>
- The neonatal mortality rate is now 39.63 deaths per 1000 live births (2021), and it is the highest in the world.<sup>[2]</sup>
- The infant mortality rate is 63.76 deaths per 1000 live births, and it is the highest in the world, and it has remained constant from 2017 to 2021.<sup>[2]</sup>
- Under-five mortality is also the highest in the world, but it has remained constant at 98.69 deaths per 1000 live births (2020).<sup>[2]</sup>
- Life expectancy is the lowest in the world. It is estimated at 55.48 years (2020).<sup>[3]</sup>
- Skilled birth attendance in South Sudan is still below 20%. It stood at 15% by the end of 2021, and there are/were significant differences between the 10 States.<sup>[4]</sup>

Dr Justin Bruno Tongun, an Assistant Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Juba and Consultant Paediatrician at the El Sabah Children Hospital in Juba will be the Postgraduate Programme Coordinator for this course.

For details of our work, interested paediatricians and well-wishers may contact Dr Justin Bruno Tongun on Email: [tongunmafi@gmail.com](mailto:tongunmafi@gmail.com) or Phone: +211924004111



*The first batch of MMed students: Dalia Hitler, Sarah Pio, Gile Gai, Mabior Majok, Apuot Angelo, Margaret Amum, and Magboula Louice. (published with their permission)*

1. Trends in maternal mortality 2000-2020. Estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group, and UNDESA 2023.

2. UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation <https://childmortality.org/data/South%20Sudan>.

3. World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.MA.MA.IN?locations=SS>

4. World Health Organization, Regional Office for Africa. <http://www.afro.who.int>