



GOAL AREA 5

Every child has an equitable
chance in life

Global Annual
Results Report 2020

unicef 
for every child

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Telma Paz, 36 years old, and her children, 11, 9 and 4 years old, benefit from the Bono Familia programme granted by the Government of Guatemala, with support from UNICEF and the World Bank. Telma sells pancakes and works as a seamstress. When a national lockdown was declared on 9 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she was unable to leave her home and her income was seriously affected. She says, "With the money I received, I was able to buy food for my children ... I used some of the money to buy flour for pancakes and fabric to make reusable masks, which I'm selling now." At the onset of the pandemic, UNICEF and the World Bank supported the design and implementation of the unconditional Emergency Cash Transfer programme that identifies poor families during times of confinement measures by tracking electricity consumption. More than 2.5 million families were reached across Guatemala, equivalent to approximately 70 per cent of households, resulting in the largest social protection programme in terms of investment and coverage in the country's history.

Expression of thanks

UNICEF is funded entirely through the voluntary support of millions of people around the world and our partners in government, civil society and the private sector. Voluntary contributions enable UNICEF to deliver on its mandate to protect children's rights, to help meet their basic needs, and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF takes this opportunity to thank all partners for their commitment and trust.



Thematic Funding
Highlight

The Goal Area 5 team would like to acknowledge and thank our key thematic donors. Thematic funding offers flexibility for long-term planning and sustainability of programmes. These funds ensure ongoing strategic, technical and operational support for the rights of the most marginalized. Under the current UNICEF Strategic Plan, Norway, Spain and the U.S. Fund for UNICEF have provided global thematic funding to Goal Area 5. In 2020, Sweden and the Italian Committee for UNICEF provided country-level thematic funding.

As the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has pushed humanity to its limits, flexible resources like thematic funds and regular resources are more important than ever. These funds will allow UNICEF to move swiftly to address the rights and well-being of the most vulnerable and marginalized first, leverage ongoing investments and address unmet needs.

PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

"Every child should have equitable opportunities in life. Fulfilment of children's rights is a cornerstone in the achievement of sustainable development.

Social protection is a shared priority for Norway and UNICEF. Cash transfers are a cost-effective, efficient measure to assist vulnerable groups.

Without legal proof of identity, children are left uncounted and invisible. By strengthening birth registration systems, more children are included in social security systems. With access to education, health and other welfare services, girls and boys are less vulnerable to modern forms of slavery such as child labour and sexual exploitation. UNICEF is a global pioneer in birth registration as well as in advancing the use of disability data, and thus a key partner for Norway in our efforts to reach those furthest behind. We value our cooperation in areas that are highly important to Norway, including combating modern slavery and harmful practices, as well as achieving gender equality and full inclusion of children with disabilities.

UNICEF is a highly trusted partner of Norway, with whom we endeavour to work in ways that maximize impact and effectiveness. Reliable and flexible funding is a priority for our support to the United Nations system and UNICEF. The UNICEF–Norway Disability Partnership is an example of an innovative mode of support that allows us to target disability inclusion efforts within the framework of UNICEF's Strategic Plan. This unearmarked funding allows UNICEF to pursue the interventions and workstreams that most effectively strengthen the impact for children with disabilities across all the areas of UNICEF's work."

- Dag-Inge Ulstein, Minister of International Development, Norway

Seventy-four years after UNICEF was established and thirty-one years since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the organization's mission to promote the full attainment of the rights of all children is as urgent as ever.

The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 is anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and charts a course towards attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the realization of a future in which every child has a fair chance in life. It sets out measurable results for children, especially the most disadvantaged, including in humanitarian situations, and defines the change strategies and enablers that support their achievement.

Working together with governments, United Nations partners, the private sector, civil society and with the full participation of children, UNICEF remains steadfast in its commitment to realize the rights of all children, everywhere, and to achieve the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a world in which no child is left behind.

The following report summarizes how UNICEF and its partners contributed to Goal Area 5 in 2020 and reviews the impact on children and the communities where they live. This is one of seven reports on the results of efforts during the past year, encompassing gender equality and humanitarian action, as well as each of the five Strategic Plan Goal Areas – 'Every child survives and thrives', 'Every child learns', 'Every child is protected from violence and exploitation', 'Every child lives in a safe and clean environment', and 'Every child has an equitable chance in life'. It supplements the 2020 Executive Director Annual Report (EDAR), UNICEF's official accountability document for the past year.

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Executive Summary

Prerona Tanti, 18 years old, of Sapon Tea estate in India, is a member of a girls' club and an avid footballer. She was selected for the district football team but was not able to go due to lockdowns put in place to curb the spread of COVID-19.

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Anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF's universal mandate is to safeguard the rights of all children. The results under UNICEF Goal Area 5 build on the principle of leaving no one behind, tackling key dimensions of discrimination and inequalities that prevent the realization of children's rights, while upholding the rights of children affected by humanitarian crisis through the Core Commitments for Children and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNICEF works to reduce child poverty by influencing fiscal policies and mechanisms; enhance coverage and adequacy of child-

sensitive social protection systems; address discrimination, including on the grounds of age, gender identity and disability; increase the participation, voice and agency of children, adolescents and young people in civic life; and amplify child rights in human rights mechanisms.

In 2020, UNICEF supported 156 countries and invested over US\$533 million in Goal Area 5 to provide children with an equitable chance in life. This includes humanitarian action in 112 countries, with related expenses of US\$255 million.

Key results achieved in 2020

At outcome level, the numbers of children reached by cash transfer programmes, as a critical component of social protection systems, and the civic engagement of adolescents exceeded 2021 targets. At output level, progress rates were above 90 per cent for all five result areas under Goal Area 5. Progress was mixed across other Goal Area 5 outcome indicators despite high performance meeting all output milestones.

A total of 111 UNICEF offices engaged in advocacy efforts to place child poverty high on national agendas, and the organization quickly assessed the rippling impact of COVID-19 with over 70 socioeconomic impact assessments and 62 country-level child poverty analyses in 2020. UNICEF-supported cash transfer programmes reached over 130 million children in 93 countries in 2020, more than doubling the 51 million in 78 countries in 2019. The organization's social protection response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic enabled a more inclusive recovery and created unique entry-points to strengthen social protection financing and partnerships. Furthermore, 61 countries – almost twice the 2017 baseline number – had strong or moderately strong social protection systems. UNICEF continued to strengthen shock-responsive social protection systems in 16 countries, enhancing its impacts in fragile and humanitarian contexts. In 2020, UNICEF supported 48 countries to make their social protection systems more responsive to disability, up from 36 in 2019. UNICEF achieved an almost tripling in country offices reporting that they have intentional gender objectives for their social protection work, from 29 countries in 2019 to 90 countries in 2020. This demonstrates growing attention to addressing the needs of women and men, girls and boys; the transformative potential of social protection; and the importance of gender equality outcomes and transforming harmful gender norms to reduce poverty.

UNICEF worked with governments, development partners and International Financial Institutions to protect and leverage resources for children as part of the COVID-19 response and to ensure public finance reached the poorest and most disadvantaged children (*see Figure 2*). A total of

124 UNICEF country offices (up from 120 in 2019) engaged with governments in public finance to strengthen social sector budgets for child rights. Public finance work covered all social sectors, with the greatest number of country offices focused on social protection education and health, followed by child protection, early childhood development (ECD), nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

UNICEF efforts contributed to strengthened social sector budgets in 55 (of 124) countries in various public finance dimensions. A strengthened social sector budget refers to the actions undertaken by UNICEF country offices in terms of evidence, provision of policy and technical advice, and capacity-strengthening, which have led to tangible results in social sector financing and ultimately contributed to improved access to services for children, including the most disadvantaged.

In 2020, some 7.2 million adolescents (53 per cent girls) across 122 countries participated in or led civic engagement interventions through UNICEF-supported programmes – exceeding the 2021 target of 5.2 million. While COVID-19 measures restricted in-person participation, online platforms for adolescents expanded and offered new opportunities. In addition, 39 countries supported the development of 66 adolescent-friendly policies, surpassing the 2020 milestone of 37 countries.

UNICEF worked to address the impact of the pandemic on children with disabilities who are at risk of being left even further behind. Disability-inclusive development and humanitarian programmes reached more than 2.2 million children with disabilities across 144 countries in 2020. In emergency response contexts, 44 per cent of UNICEF country offices systematically included children with disabilities.

As the pandemic compounded the impacts of gender inequality, UNICEF redoubled efforts in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and strengthening gender data and analysis across programming.

Looking ahead

In 2021, UNICEF faces a critical double challenge: working towards countering the negative trends in poverty reduction caused by COVID-19, conflict and climate change, while continuing to accelerate efforts to meet the SDGs. This entails supporting all countries to measure and monitor child poverty – both monetary and multidimensional – while increasing the evidence base on the policies and programmes that effectively address and end child poverty. In partnership with the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, UNICEF will also capitalize on high-level opportunities related to SDGs reporting to encourage countries to measure, monitor and address child poverty, in line with the SDG target of ending child poverty and the commitment to leaving no child behind.

Given the magnitude and scope of this double threat, and the long shadow it will cast, UNICEF will strengthen its advocacy and programming efforts to help connect this immediate crisis response with priorities for inclusive recovery centred around a child poverty reduction agenda. The organization will continue to collaborate with key partners to move from evidence on child poverty to action for an inclusive recovery, especially through rapid expansion of inclusive and gender-transformative social protection systems, including cash transfers and child benefits, and in fragile and humanitarian contexts. Social protection should be at the centre of an inclusive recovery that protects and strengthens social protection spending and enhances the capacity of these systems to respond to shocks rather than the temporary expansion of programmes.

Taking a rights-based approach is central to the work of UNICEF to ensure the poorest and most disadvantaged children have equitable access to services. The organization will safeguard critical social spending to ensure that financial resources are used efficiently and effectively, and mobilize additional resources for inclusive COVID-19 response and recovery. Moreover, the consequences of economic and fiscal policies

discriminatory norms in early childhood and those relating to GBV and other harmful practices. Working with all partners – including the private sector – to address discrimination and harmful stereotypes against children based on gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability, age and other factors will also be prioritized.

In 2021, UNICEF will continue to work with governments and other partners and increase advocacy at all levels for disability-inclusive policies and programmes and continued meaningful participation of persons with disabilities. This will be critical to building back better and paving the way for transformative, accessible and inclusive societies for all children.

UNICEF will improve the development of knowledge, collection and dissemination of reliable data disaggregated by sex, age and disability, and implement innovative, inclusive programmes. However, more investment and prioritization of disability-inclusive development is needed to build the capacity of systems across sectors at national level. Capacity-building on disability inclusion for front-line workers in all areas is also important to sustain progress at the community level. UNICEF will continue to scale up results to reach more children with disabilities, their families and communities with inclusive programmes and services.

The organization will continue to systematically create space for children, adolescents and young people to engage in policy issues that affect their lives, especially within the evolving context of demands for more equitable opportunities to participate.

Together with its partners, UNICEF is accelerating efforts globally and at country level to create meaningful and safe platforms for children and young people's participation. This includes providing opportunities for children, adolescents and young people to develop their skills, lead change, and design and implement solutions

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