



GOAL AREA 4

Every child lives in a safe
and clean environment

Global Annual
Results Report 2020

unicef 
for every child

PARTNER TESTIMONIALS

“Access to clean water, basic sanitation, and good hygiene practices not only keep children thriving, but also gives them a healthier start in life. Sweden’s International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is committed to investing in efficient, fair and sustainable water use and management, access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and improving opportunities for people to manage their personal hygiene. UNICEF, with its global mandate grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child across both development and humanitarian contexts, is a trusted partner for Sida to deliver results in a world where around 3 billion people still lack basic handwashing facilities with soap and water at home; and hundreds of children under the age of 5 still die every day from diseases caused by the lack of safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

Sida provides predictable global thematic funding to directly support results under Goal Area 4 of UNICEF’s Strategic Plan, to realize the right of every child to live in a clean and safe environment. The thematic funding has been highly effective for enabling long-term strategic programming and for UNICEF to be adequately prepared for responding swiftly in emergencies. It has served to empower communities on hygiene practices and eliminating the dangerous practice of open defecation. This has also been of high relevance in the support to schools and health-care facilities to get access to water, sanitation and handwashing facilities; and for delivering safe water and sanitation facilities amid conflict and crisis in a way that will outlast an emergency.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed deep, long-existing inequalities and their devastating impact on children in the poorest countries and communities, and those already disadvantaged by discrimination, social exclusion, fragility and conflict. Through UNICEF’s results, we have seen how immensely valuable flexible funding is for enabling UNICEF to quickly focus on WASH services as a critical part of its pandemic response by supporting large-scale behavior change on handwashing and providing equitable, affordable access to WASH services, especially in health-care facilities and schools in high-risk areas.

Our partnership with UNICEF during 2020 has further strengthened Sida’s confidence in UNICEF as an efficient and effective partner and strong advocate for the implementation of children’s human rights. Sida’s work is grounded in gender equality and overall social inclusion, and UNICEF is a partner that continues to strive to embed gender results for girls, boys and women across all of its programmes. In this regard, we see critical opportunities for UNICEF to continue to scale up on these efforts. As we work together to ensure access to water, sanitation and hygiene for all by 2030, we furthermore welcome UNICEF’s commitment to making all WASH programmes sustainable and adaptive to climate change by the end of 2021, and we welcome the ‘Water Security for All’ initiative.”

Cecilia Scharp, Assistant Director General, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

“Luxembourg is committed to improving access to safe and affordable health care for all. UNICEF and Luxembourg have been joining forces to strengthen existing health systems, to fight the spread of communicable diseases, to encourage maternal and child health, and to support sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Access to clean drinking water and sanitation is crucial to ensuring the healthy development of children and the further growth of strong communities.”

Franz Fayot, Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, Luxembourg



Expression of thanks

Without the generous and continuing support of resource partners, UNICEF efforts to ensure that all children live in a safe and secure environment would not be possible. 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.

In a year of unprecedented challenges brought on by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, UNICEF would like to thank its resource partners for maintaining or increasing their funding commitments and for their flexibility in cases where funds reprogramming was necessary to effectively respond to the crisis.

Many thanks to the Government of Germany for being the largest resource partner over the last three years of the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme and for contributions to Goal Area 4 generally. UNICEF further thanks the governments of Australia, Iceland, the Republic of Korea, Sweden and the United States of America, as well as the European Union, for their generous donations in 2020.

UNICEF would like to express particular thanks to partners that provided thematic funding, which offers greater flexibility, enables UNICEF to continuously improve the quality of interventions, allows for longer-term planning and makes programmes more sustainable. The largest thematic funding partner for 2020 for Goal Area 4 was the Government of Sweden. Other thematic funding partners included the governments of Finland and Luxembourg, and UNICEF National Committees from 20 countries including Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

UNICEF would also like to thank the governments of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom for their ongoing financial and technical support through the multi-country Accelerating Sanitation, Hygiene and Water for All (ASWA) programme, and in other areas of cooperation.

We would also like to thank our foundation and private sector partners, including the LIXIL company, which are working with UNICEF in a shared-value partnership on sanitation and hand hygiene. See Annex 1 for additional information on funding partners for Goal Area 4 and Annex 2 for a list of all WASH programming partners.

Finally, UNICEF takes this opportunity to thank all our partners for their commitment and trust in us during a difficult and challenging year.

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 4 in 2020 and reviews the impact of these accomplishments 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

A pupil at a new girls' toilet built for the Sintchan-Farba primary school in Guinea-Bissau, where UNICEF support also included menstrual hygiene health services.

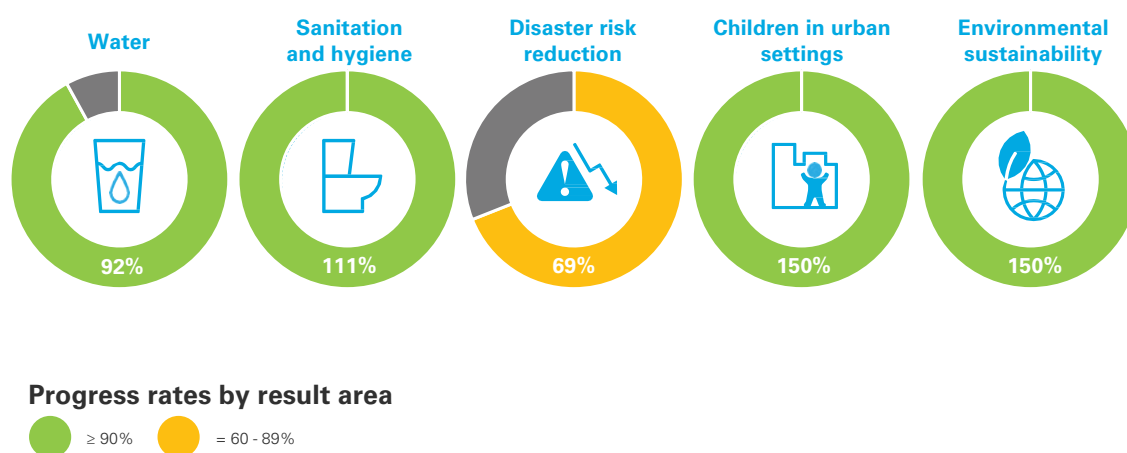
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UNICEF programming within Goal Area 4 of its Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, helps children realize their rights to a safe and clean environment through water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programming, child-sensitive risk-informed planning, peacebuilding, strengthening capacity of local governments in rural and urban areas, and fostering climate action. The importance of this programming area was made crystal clear by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which highlighted the fact that hand hygiene is impossible without adequate water supplies and other WASH services in communities, health centres and schools, that community resilience and local government services are already overstretched and that climate gains are fragile.

Despite the formidable programming challenges posed by COVID-19, good progress was made towards meeting the Goal Area 4 2020 targets through a combination of

emergency response and regular programming (see *Figure 1*). WASH services were maintained and expanded for millions of children and their families, although some sanitation programming was curtailed owing to reallocation of resources and a focus on hygiene for COVID-19 response, coupled with the pandemic-related challenges of field work. The urban programme for children was expanded, local government services were supported, and child-inclusive climate resilience was promoted across all UNICEF regions. Support was also provided for child-centred disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster recovery efforts; nevertheless, progress was slower than planned owing to limited investment and prioritization of the COVID-19 response in many countries.

FIGURE 1: Goal Area 4 progress against 2020 targets across five output areas



Source: UNICEF SMQs (2020).¹

Water, sanitation and hygiene

The entire UNICEF WASH programme was mobilized to respond to the unprecedented emergency posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This mobilization included infection prevention and control (IPC) response and the delivery of hygiene supplies on a large scale, expansion of hand hygiene promotion campaigns and urgent steps to ensure the functionality of existing water and sanitation systems, with a focus on marginalized groups including displaced people and poor urban neighbourhoods. Health-care facilities and schools were a special area of focus, and UNICEF emergency WASH support reached far more of these institutions than ever before. UNICEF developed a comprehensive set of guidance materials for field staff and

partners on WASH and COVID-19 covering all aspects of pandemic response programming. In total, UNICEF support reached 106 million people in 120 countries, including in middle-income countries where COVID-19 exposed critical gaps in WASH services for children.

Regular WASH programming continued in 2020, although it was constrained to some extent by COVID-19-related programming, movement restrictions, funding redirection, supply shortages and other factors. UNICEF continued to strengthen sectoral systems in programme countries, support the elimination of open defecation and shift its programming towards greater climate resilience.

UNICEF significantly expanded hand-washing promotion efforts through media and social media campaigns, and support to community-based programmes in 110 countries, more than ever before. UNICEF procured and distributed tens of millions of hygiene kits and other hygiene items in 2020, brokered major donations of soap from global manufacturers and worked with local companies to increase soap manufacturing capacity and strengthen supply chains. At the global level, efforts coalesced around the Hand Hygiene for All initiative, launched in June 2020 with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners, highlighting the importance of hand washing with soap to control the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to ensure that efforts lead to lasting infrastructure, and to social and behaviour change. Through the 'periods don't stop for pandemics' campaign, UNICEF helped girls and women to get access to menstrual pads and culturally- and age-specific information.

A total of 17.0 million people gained access to safe water services through UNICEF direct support in 2020, and an additional 30.2 million people were provided with short-term emergency water services, such as water trucking.² Other people were reached through UNICEF advocacy efforts to waive tariffs and subsidize water utilities during the pandemic. UNICEF launched its Water Game Plan in 2020, outlining its contributions to meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) water target with a focus on equity, sustainability and climate resilience.

UNICEF continued to stress climate resilience through all programming in 2020, providing support in 46 countries for the implementation of climate-resilient WASH solutions and initiating an analysis of the extent and impacts of water scarcity on children and their families. A total of 6.3 million people were provided with safe water services classified as climate-resilient in 2020 compared with 4.5 million in 2019, including the construction of 1,488 solar-powered water systems.

A key part of UNICEF response to COVID-19 was support for safe school reopening programmes, through the emergency provision of WASH facilities and supplies in schools or temporary learning spaces, ultimately reaching an unprecedented 15.3 million children in 2020 (2.8 million,



Jannat, 9 years old, washing her hands with soap at a water station near her household in the Korail Slum, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

SDG standard of safely managed sanitation, which ensures that sanitation facilities are safe, incorporate provisions for hand washing, are not shared among households and that excreta disposal is environmentally safe. Using a monitoring indicator launched in 2020, UNICEF estimates that over 6 million of the people reached through direct sanitation support are using sanitation facilities that meet climate resilience standards.

The shift towards a greater focus on urban programming continued in 2020 with the launch of the UNICEF Global Framework for Urban WASH, the release of a new analysis of WASH coverage in urban areas in 2020 with a focus on access disparities and a significant increase in results

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