

Responding to COVID-19

unicef 
for every child

75

UNICEF's 2020
key achievements



UNICEF's 2020 key achievements

UNICEF works in more than 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, defend their rights and help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence.

In 2020, COVID-19 exposed deep inequalities that have existed for too long, with the worst impact on children in the poorest countries and communities and those already disadvantaged by discrimination, social exclusion, fragility and conflict.

UNICEF used its data systems to rapidly assess the pandemic's impact on children and leveraged its extensive presence across more than 190 countries and territories, and dual humanitarian and development mandate to play a key role in the United Nations coordinated response to COVID-19. UNICEF's Supply Division leveraged its logistical expertise to ship half a billion items of personal protective equipment in support of 138 countries in 2020.

As always, partnerships and voluntary funding were essential to UNICEF's work to support and improve the lives of children and young people. Public and private sector partners supported COVID-19 efforts. The pandemic also demonstrated how essential flexible resources are to UNICEF's ability to respond quickly and effectively to sudden emergencies and provide countries and communities with the long-term support that builds resilience.

Here are a few of UNICEF's accomplishments in 2020:

- Providing leadership in the COVAX Facility, leading to the financing of COVID-19 vaccines for 92 low- and middle-income countries, and preparing countries to deliver the vaccine
- Distributing critical water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services and supplies for 106 million people, including 58 million children
- Reaching 3 billion people, including approximately 1.53 billion women and girls and 810 million children with risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) information and activities
- Providing personal protective equipment (PPE) for nearly 2.6 million health workers
- Facilitating training on infection prevention and control for 4 million health workers
- Facilitating training on delivering essential services for more than 30,000 social workers
- Supporting community-based mental health and psychosocial interventions in COVID-19 response plans, reaching 78 million children, adolescents, parents and caregivers in 117 countries
- Facilitating treatment and care for nearly 5 million children with severe wasting in more than 70 countries
- Supporting more than 301 million children, including approximately 147 million girls, with remote learning
- Responding to 455 new and ongoing humanitarian situations in 152 countries beyond COVID-19





Goal Area 1

Every child survives and thrives

Throughout the crisis, UNICEF supported the continuity of life-saving maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and immunization, nutrition and early childhood development services. UNICEF adapted its programme delivery to respond quickly, focusing on community-based and digital solutions, making primary health-care systems more resilient.

KEY RESULTS

30.5 million

live births were delivered in health facilities with support from UNICEF

17 million

children in emergency situations were vaccinated against measles

8.7 million

children with suspected pneumonia received antibiotics.

5 million

children with severe acute malnutrition were treated

almost 244 million

children received services for the prevention of stunting and other forms of malnutrition

15 million girls

and
9.7 million boys
were tested for HIV

100 per cent

of targeted countries supported the implementation of high-impact gender-responsive adolescent interventions

nearly 2.8 million

children in emergencies participated in early childhood development or early learning programmes



Eighty million children under 1 year of age in at least 68 countries may miss out on life-saving vaccines.



An additional 6.7 million children under age 5 could suffer from wasting.



By the end of October 2020, one third of countries had drops in coverage of 10 per cent or more in routine immunization. And in some countries, routine immunization dropped by up to 50 per cent.



Goal Area 2

Every child learns

Up to 1.6 billion children and young people have been affected by school closures.



At least 1 in 3 schoolchildren has been unable to access remote learning while their schools were closed.

While the pandemic exacerbated inequalities in education, especially highlighting the digital divide, UNICEF found ways to ensure learning continued while addressing exclusion. Technology was adapted and adopted for distance learning. Schools were safely and inclusively reopened through coordination with health, WASH and child protection. Education financing was protected, enabling education systems to become more resilient.

KEY RESULTS

48 million

out-of-school children participated in early learning, primary or secondary education

over 43 million

children were provided with individual education and early learning materials

more than 7.7 million

children participated in skills development programmes for learning



Goal Area 3

Every child is protected from violence and exploitation



At least 1 in 7 children and young people lived under stay-at-home policies for most of 2020, leading to feelings of anxiety, depression and isolation.

Although acceleration was already required to achieve the child-protection related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) before, COVID-19 intensified the challenge. The pandemic provided opportunities to elevate child protection issues such as mental health, violence in the home, and children without family care. COVID-19 has shown that the social service workforce is indeed 'essential'.

KEY RESULTS

47.2 million

children, adolescents, parents and caregivers were provided with community-based mental health and psychosocial support in humanitarian situations

6 million

adolescent girls received prevention and care interventions to address child marriage

21.2 million

children had their births registered in 57 countries

17.8 million

people received gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions in 84 countries



Goal Area 4

Every child lives in a clean and safe environment

Around 3 billion people worldwide lack basic handwashing facilities with soap and water at home.



On average, more than 700 children under 5 die every day from diseases caused by the lack of water, sanitation and hygiene.

With the onset of COVID-19, UNICEF quickly focused on WASH services as a critical part of its pandemic response by organizing handwashing campaigns and providing equitable, affordable access to WASH services, especially in health-care facilities and schools in high-risk areas.

KEY RESULTS

17 million

additional people gained access to safe drinking water

13.4 million

additional people gained access to basic sanitation services

56 countries

had child-sensitive national or local risk management plans that address disasters, climate change, conflict and other crises

74 countries

implemented child-inclusive programmes that foster climate resilience and low-carbon development



Goal Area 5

Every child has an equitable chance in life



142 million additional children are falling into monetary poverty and lack access to social protection.

UNICEF's social protection response enabled a more inclusive recovery from COVID-19, making visible the economic consequences of the pandemic and making the investment case for social spending'.

KEY RESULTS

31 countries reported that measurement, analysis or advocacy led to policies and programmes that reduced child poverty

UNICEF-supported cash-transfer programmes reached over **130 million children in 93 countries**

7.2 million adolescents in 122 countries participated in or led civic engagement interventions through UNICEF-supported programmes, exceeding targets in humanitarian and development settings

UNICEF reached over **2.2 million children with disabilities across 144 countries** through disability-inclusive development and humanitarian programmes



Gender equality

As the pandemic compounded the impacts of gender inequality, UNICEF redoubled efforts in addressing gender-based violence; maintaining gender-



responsive health and education services; caring for caregivers, especially through quality maternal care; and strengthening gender data and analysis.

- 6 million adolescent girls in 45 countries reached with child marriage-related prevention and care interventions across 45 countries through joint programming with UNFPA.
- The number of countries (88) promoting gender-sensitive or gender-responsive programmes or systems more than tripled compared to 2019.
- COVID-19 accelerated the scaling-up of protection from sexual exploitation and abuse; 91 countries now have safe and accessible reporting channels, country action plans, training for partners and strengthened referral pathways.

Humanitarian action

Often beyond the global headlines and spotlight, UNICEF responded to 455 new and ongoing humanitarian situations in 152 countries alongside its response to COVID-19, including:



- 102 natural disasters
- 72 sociopolitical crises
- 211 health emergencies
- 38 nutrition crises
- 32 other situations



UNICEF 75: Building on a legacy of achievement for children

As UNICEF marks 75 years since its founding during the devastation wrought by World War II, the world is now facing another momentous crisis: the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNICEF is building on its decades of experience to address global challenges including COVID-19, climate change and humanitarian emergencies to reach children and improve their prospects in life. In the 1970s, UNICEF developed life-changing innovations for children with partners including the hand water pump, still the world's most widely used human-powered pump. In the 1980s, UNICEF, governments and partners embarked on a campaign of universal immunization, one of the greatest logistical mobilizations in peacetime history. In the 1990s, UNICEF developed School-in-a-box, which continues to keep children learning in emergency settings today. In the 2000s, UNICEF brought to scale a ready-to-use therapeutic food, which has become the global standard to treat children suffering from malnutrition.

Through decades of challenges, UNICEF has remained undaunted and unwavering in its work for children and continues to act in over 190 countries and territories, helping millions of girls and boys to survive and thrive into healthy, productive adulthood. Working in some of the world's toughest places – and maintaining our presence before, during and after humanitarian emergencies – we remain in the front lines of the fight to provide a fair chance for every child.

unicef 
for every child



For every child

Whoever she is.

Wherever he lives.

Every child deserves a childhood.

A future.

A fair chance.

That's why UNICEF is there.

For each and every child.

Working day in and day out.

In more than 190 countries and territories.

Reaching the hardest to reach.

The furthest from help.

The most excluded.

It's why we stay to the end.

And never give up.