



GOAL AREA 5

Every child has an equitable
chance in life

Global Annual
Results Report 2019

unicef 
for every child

Cover image: © UNICEF/Zambia/2020/Schermbucker
Nola, a six-year-old living in Zambia, whose grandmother, Albertina, is the recipient of a UNICEF-supported cash transfer programme. In 2019, Zambia experienced below-normal rainfall, leading to widespread crop failure and food insecurity across four of 10 provinces. During such shocks, women and girls are more likely to absorb the economic shock to the household by reducing their food intake. In addition to the ongoing in-kind food relief, the Government – with UNICEF support – introduced a supplementary social protection package to stabilize chronically food-insecure households and reduce the risk of them resorting to negative coping strategies. This Emergency Cash Transfer programme benefited 90,202 households in 22 districts and was implemented by UNICEF and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS), with financial support from the governments of Sweden and the United Kingdom.

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 highlight the flexibility that thematic funding provides for long-term planning and sustainability of programmes. These funds ensure ongoing strategic, technical and operational support for the rights of the most marginalized. We would like to especially thank key thematic donors. In 2019, Norway and Spain provided global thematic funding to Goal Area 5; Sweden, the U.S. Fund for UNICEF and the Australian Committee for UNICEF Limited provided country-level thematic funding.

UNICEF also thanks the European Union and the governments of Australia, Canada, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, as well as to the Alana Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Charles Engelhard Foundation, the David Drummond Fund, ING, the International Monetary Fund, Marimo Berk, the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD), the World Bank and all sister United Nations agencies for supporting Goal Area 5 work towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and fulfilling the rights of children and adolescents.

As the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic pushes 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 specific unmet needs.

"Spain has traditionally considered the defence of children's rights and their holistic promotion as a cornerstone for sustainable development. Investing now in our children and defending their rights is the best way to guaranteeing a better future for humanity and our planet.

In order to promote children's future, Spanish Cooperation has kept a long-standing strategic partnership with UNICEF, as it is uniquely positioned to lead a global response in favour of children's protection and development.

The Spanish Cooperation, in compliance with our Childhood Strategy, has supported UNICEF's work in the area of social inclusion in order to promote children's equitable chance in life through flexible thematic funding. This modality is particularly appreciated in order to support the long-term processes needed to make a lasting impact and the UN Development system reform.

Our Government has seen a significant impact in this area which is essential to our common commitment of not leaving anyone, and particularly any child, behind and fulfilling the 2030 Agenda.

Ángeles Moreno Bau, Secretary of State for International Cooperation, Spain

Seventy-three years after UNICEF was established and 30 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 2019 and reviews the impact of these accomplishments on children and the communities where they live. This is one of eight 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' – and a supplementary report on Communication for Development (C4D, also referred to as social and behaviour change communication, SBCC). It supplements the 2019 Executive Director Annual Report (EDAR/MTR), UNICEF's official accountability document for the past year.

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Executive Summary

Pictured above: After participating in activities at the UNICEF-supported early childhood centre of San Juan Jilotepeque, Jalapa, Guatemala, Emily Samantha López Agustín, 12, and Joel Eduardo Agustín López, 8, play in their house with their brother, Luis Francisco Agustín López, 6, who has a disability. Luis is loved by his siblings who protect him, play with him and teach him.

UNICEF has a universal mandate, anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to safeguard the rights of all children and this mandate is as critical as ever. Building on the principle of *leaving no one behind*, results under UNICEF Goal Area 5 focus on tackling key dimensions of discrimination and inequity that prevent the realization of children's rights, while contributing to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Goal Area 5 efforts apply cross-cutting strategies that impact all Strategic Plan results. These work to reduce child poverty by influencing fiscal policies and social protection

mechanisms; address discrimination on the basis of gender, age 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.

UNICEF supported 154 countries and invested over US\$497.11 million in Goal Area 5 in 2019 to help give children an equitable chance in life. This includes humanitarian action in 60 countries, with related expenses of US\$270 million.

Key results achieved in 2019

At output level, UNICEF had progress rates of over 90 per cent for three of the five results areas under this goal area, and met or came close to meeting 82 per cent of its output milestones.

UNICEF continued its work to encourage governments to monitor child poverty and adapt social and economic policies to address it. As of 2019, sixty-five countries have established routine measurement and reporting on multidimensional child poverty, and 73 on monetary child poverty, surpassing the 2019 milestones of 52 and 65, respectively. Specific policies and programmes addressed child poverty in 28 countries, up from 22 in 2018 and exceeding the milestone of 23.

In 2019, child poverty measurements helped direct focus and resources into areas and sectors with the highest number of deprived children, as in Ghana, Panama and Zambia. These also influenced national poverty-reduction efforts, including increasing social protection coverage for children, as in Malaysia, where the flagship social protection scheme increased child benefits.

UNICEF-supported cash transfer programmes reached over 51 million children in 78 countries in 2019, including almost 8.5 million in humanitarian settings in 30 countries. These numbers include nearly 14 million girls and 10.9 million boys in 36 countries, and almost 700,000 children with disabilities in 21 countries. As of 2019, forty-seven countries had strong or moderately strong social protection systems, up from 38 in 2018, and 9 had national cash transfer programmes ready to respond to a crisis, up from 6 in 2018.

Programming on positive gender norms and socialization – a flagship area of work that contributes to meeting SDG 5 and United Nations Common Chapter results on gender equality – took place in 120 countries in all regions. This covered development of gender-responsive school curricula; parenting practices, including fathers' engagement in caregiving; training for front-line workers; and multisectoral interventions addressing gender norms linked to child marriage and female genital mutilation.

In 2019, UNICEF scaled up disability-inclusive programmes to support 1.7 million children with disabilities across 142 countries, up from 1.4 million across 123 countries in 2018. A total of 36 per cent of UNICEF humanitarian responses (21 of 59 countries) systematically provided disability-inclusive programmes and services, such as 48 accessible classrooms constructed in two refugee camps in Kenya. Over 138,000 children with disabilities received assistive devices and products through emergency kits.

Over 4 million adolescents (61 per cent girls) across 113 countries participated in or led civic-engagement activities through UNICEF-supported programmes, with India accounting for 2.6 million; this significantly surpassed the target of 3.2 million. Thirty-one per cent of UNICEF country offices routinely engaged adolescents in planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of programmes, exceeding the 2019 milestone of 30 per cent. UNICEF continued to play a key role in supporting the operationalization of the Generation Unlimited (GenU) partnership and its localization in countries. This was achieved through technical and knowledge leadership in three of the six priority areas: formal and informal secondary education; skills development; and young people's participation and civic engagement.

UNICEF faced challenges linked to assessing progress at the impact and outcome levels in Goal Area 5 owing to the lack of comparable data, for example, in adolescent empowerment and measuring change in attitudes on disability. Data indicate progress on impact- and outcome-level indicators of child poverty and social protection access, with progress slowest in the public finance for children output in the child poverty result area. The Gender Action Plan II evaluation identified challenges and lessons related to UNICEF performance on gender, which were integrated into the Strategic Plan midterm review.

Midterm review findings identified the need to prioritize continued support to countries in child poverty measurement, one of the biggest issues affecting the human rights of children, and to address challenges in measuring the equity of social-sector spending. Also identified was the

need to support the use of data for strategic policymaking and reform. Finally, UNICEF will accelerate the promotion of shock-responsive social protection systems. This includes

enhancing organizational capacity to address the immediate risks posed by coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and inclusive economic recovery.

Looking ahead

It is now clear that the global crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented. The effects are not limited to health, but extend across the full range of children's rights. Measures taken by governments to contain and mitigate the pandemic have persistent and far-reaching impacts, especially for the most disadvantaged, who are least able to access or practise risk mitigation measures and are disproportionately impacted by the socioeconomic ramifications and disruptions to basic and protective services.

Given these evolving threats, efforts to accelerate Goal Area 5 results in 2020 are being adapted to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. UNICEF is assessing its approach, with a focus on protecting gains made and preventing de-acceleration, while ensuring all programming is 'risk-informed' and integrates a 'triple nexus' approach – humanitarian, development and sustaining peace.

The organization's capacity and global presence places UNICEF at the centre of the international response to the COVID-19 crisis. As a lead agency on strengthening social protection systems, which is a fundamental response to the socioeconomic shocks of the crisis, UNICEF is working to remove financial barriers to accessing services while helping establish and strengthen intersectoral linkages to achieve multisectoral results for children. UNICEF is also leveraging the power of strong partnerships, including within the United Nations system, to support practical programming on positive parenting and child protection, considering the specific rights and needs of the most vulnerable children, including children living in areas affected by conflict, children on the move and those with disabilities. By supporting the building of social protection systems and strengthening of existing systems, UNICEF contributes

UNICEF will continue to address harmful gender norms by translating conceptual and normative frameworks into practical strategies and by focusing on measurement and evidence generation on 'what works'. The organization will also support capacity development and strategic scale-up of promising programmes across countries.

Disability-inclusive programming in humanitarian and development contexts will be a priority in 2020, as will investment in community workers' capacities and accelerating access to assistive devices and technologies, such as hearing aids, wheelchairs, tablets and accessible software. UNICEF will conduct a scoping of health, education and social protection ecosystems to support the provision of assistive technology for children and adults with disabilities and produce models that can be adopted for countries globally.

UNICEF will deepen the comprehensive approach to adolescent programming across the five Strategic Plan goal areas. Through civic engagement, which cuts across all goal areas, UNICEF will broaden its network of partnerships and platforms to amplify the voices of adolescents in the promotion and protection of their own rights. These spaces are critical to ensuring adolescents can make decisions that shape their own lives while helping to address challenges that will impact our collective future – such as climate change and public health.

In 2020, UNICEF will improve the collection of gender-, age- and disability-disaggregated data and evidence to support programming across all goal areas. A global tool to measure adolescent participation outcomes is undergoing cognitive testing; gender norms monitoring and measurement

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