OVERVIEW

ACHIEVING RESULTS
for Afghanistan’s children

Country Programme of Cooperation
UNICEF and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
2015-2021
Objective and approach

Through the Country Programme of Cooperation, UNICEF Afghanistan supports national frameworks and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to fulfill the rights of all girls and boys to survival, development, protection and participation in alignment with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UNICEF addresses inequity, taking a holistic approach to ensure that all children and women, regardless of ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic background, location, disability or humanitarian situation, have access to the services necessary to fulfill their rights.

The best possible start to life, with access to the proper nutrition at the right stage, quality care and a full course of vaccinations to prevent life-threatening illnesses, and to live in a safe and hygienic environment for every girl and boy is central to the work of UNICEF. A full course of education equips children to make informed decisions for a life of wellbeing, contributing to their own and their country’s development. Working with government and other partners, UNICEF is at the forefront of the effort to eradicate polio in Afghanistan, one of the three remaining countries where the potentially deadly disease remains endemic.

UNICEF supports the development of normative frameworks and services, and building national momentum to protect children under 18 years of age from violence, exploitation and abuse including child labour and early marriage, and enables them to exercise their rights as full members of society. There is also a strong emphasis on gender, particularly the empowerment of girls and women to exercise their rights to health, nutrition, education and protection, and to receive the support they need for a healthy pregnancy and childbirth.

In Afghanistan, UNICEF’s approach is characterized by:

- **Cautious optimism, realism and flexibility.** UNICEF recognizes that Afghanistan’s environment is highly volatile and vulnerable to both natural disasters and conflict. In this context, UNICEF aims to set evidence-based targets for children that aim high yet remain realistic and responsive to changing circumstances.

- **Bridging between development, resilience and humanitarian assistance.** With Afghanistan’s vulnerability to conflict and disaster, it is essential to ensure that development strengthens community and systems’ resilience in future humanitarian situations, while humanitarian support creates a foundation for development and communities that are able to withstand shocks in the future.

- **Intersectoral and geographical convergence.** With intersectoral taskforces to identify and monitor actions that support key areas of work, UNICEF coordinates across programmes and field offices to implement high-impact approaches that achieve results for children.

- **Fearless advocacy for children.** UNICEF engages in both public advocacy and silent diplomacy to speak out on behalf of children and their rights, relying on quality data to develop strong, clear messages that are delivered with political acumen.

Learn more: [https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/](https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/)
UNICEF’s ADDED VALUE

UNICEF has been in Afghanistan since 1949. With this long history, UNICEF is uniquely positioned to deploy global expertise and unmatched access to promote equity, development, peace and wellbeing for all girls and boys.

UNICEF has an extensive footprint across Afghanistan, with field offices in all regions: Herat (west), Jalalabad (east), Mazar-e-Sharif (north), Kandahar (south), and Kabul (central), and outposts in Daykundi, Badghis, Badakshan, Ghor, Paktia and Bamyan.

Humanitarian assistance

In Afghanistan relentless and volatile emergency needs coexist alongside development work. Guided by annual Humanitarian Response Plans, UNICEF has scaled up its response for children affected by different types of emergencies, including children on the move.

Mandated to protect the rights of every child and as the provider of last resort for nutrition, education, water and sanitation and child protection, UNICEF reaches children in acute and protracted emergency situations with the services they need, building the foundation for resilience and future development. Under the Country Programme, UNICEF also aims to integrate peacebuilding and social cohesion into programming and advocacy.

Social inclusion

UNICEF aims for all partners to generate, analyse and use evidence from equity-focused research and evaluation, and to advocate for policy and programming on the basis of robust evidence. This includes monitoring children’s indicators for the SDGs.

UNICEF advocated for and supported the government to develop a national Multidimensional Poverty Index which assesses poverty on the basis of access to health, education and water and sanitation. UNICEF also advocates for public financing for children including child-centred budgeting.

Across the Country Programme, UNICEF supports the collection and use of data on child deprivations using it to underpin evidence-based policies and programmes.

Focusing on children in emergencies and on the move, UNICEF strengthens capacity to develop integrated social protection services. It aims to re-strategize programmes to reach the most marginalized and to use humanitarian cash transfers to create buffers for vulnerable families against shocks.

Applying a gender lens

Women and girls continue to face widespread discrimination and human rights abuses. UNICEF addresses gender inequality by including a gender focus across the Country Programme. In 2018, a major gender review was conducted, which strengthened the gender focus in all programmes and identified priority areas for gender mainstreaming. This review is the basis for further intersectoral action to address gender norms and stereotypes and reduce girls’ vulnerabilities.

Partnerships for children

Under the leadership of the government, UNICEF works in partnership to protect the rights of every child, collaborating with provincial and local governments, community-based organizations, civil society and development partners. UNICEF strives to equip and empower children and their families and communities to develop their potential.

As an active member of the One UN for Afghanistan framework, UNICEF collaborates with sister agencies to make the Country Programme of Cooperation more efficient and effective at scale.

Budget

UNICEF Afghanistan’s 2015–2021 budget is US$ 1.186 billion. This excludes the humanitarian response budget.
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