

UNICEF Refugee response programme results

Since the start of the response, UNICEF has worked closely with national, regional and local authorities to expand services in child protection, education, health and nutrition, WASH, and social protection. UNICEF's work integrates social cohesion, gender and disability, and accountability to affected populations.



198

Children and women received primary health care services through UNICEF supported mechanisms



7,124 5,605

Children accessed formal or non-formal education, including early learning

Children received individual learning materials



4,684,653

People reached through messaging on prevention and access to services



5,081

People reached with critical WASH supplies



23,057 66,666

Children and caregivers accessed mental health and psychosocial support

People had access to safe spaces, protection and support hubs



764

Households reached with UNICEF funded multi-purpose humanitarian cash transfers

Acronyms: WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Sources: UNICEF (as of 15/02/2023)

In the spotlight

Throughout 2022, UNICEF and partners worked actively to accelerate the humanitarian response in Bulgaria, building on national systems and supporting direct service delivery to reach children, young people, their families and caregivers fleeing from Ukraine. UNICEF ensured continued access to education for nearly 5,000 refugee children through learning hubs and 11 learn and play spaces in 10 locations across the country.

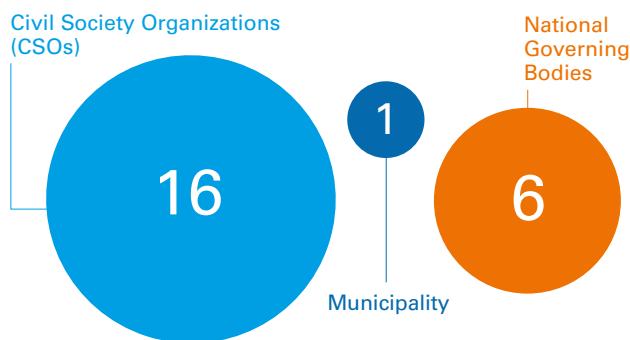
The UPLIFT partnership with Junior Achievement engaged 3,616 Ukrainian and local children and adolescents in 70 educational institutions to develop entrepreneurial thinking, employability, and decision-making, and negotiation skills. UNICEF actively promoted the importance of immunization among Bulgarian and Ukrainian children, and in partnership with the Astra Forum Foundation, strengthened the capacity of 4,221 doctors and organized the first national conference on vaccine-preventable diseases.

Six UNICEF/UNHCR Blue Dots were established in key locations to provide immediate support to refugees from Ukraine. More than 17,940 children and 40,307 adults were reached by the 35 trained frontline workers who provided psychosocial support, risk identification, provision of information, referrals, mediation in front of state authorities, legal aid, counselling, and recreational activities for children in the child-friendly spaces. Within the system strengthening approach, UNICEF is preparing to transition the Blue Dots into sustainable community hubs, open to all vulnerable families.



Refugee families collect winter supplies from UNICEF at the Blue Dot in Sofia, established by UNICEF and UNHCR in partnership with Bulgarian Red Cross.

Delivering through partnerships



Source: UNICEF (as of 15/02/2023)

Since March 2022, UNICEF has leveraged and expanded its strategic partnerships with line ministries and local authorities, working closely with the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the State Agency for Refugees, the State Agency for Child Protection, district administrations and municipalities, as well as civil society organisations. These partnerships have been critical to ensure and increase access to services, protection and social assistance for Ukrainian refugees as well as other extremely vulnerable populations. These partnerships have also enabled UNICEF to scale up its response in health, early childhood development, child protection, education, and launch a winterization operation, reaching more than 12,000 children and vulnerable families with desperately required blankets and warm winter clothes.

Stories about our work

“Mom, we should leave”



After arriving to Bulgaria, Svetlana is helping Ukrainian refugee children like her daughter Vasilisa at the education center.

Svetlana and her daughter Vasilisa fled Ukraine around April, two months after the war escalated. *‘Vasilisa couldn’t sleep at night because we were hearing the sirens every night. And she insisted and said, ‘Mom, we should leave’, Svetlana shared.*

Svetlana is a psychologist and with the help of UNICEF and partners, she and other Ukrainian mothers have established an educational center that has provided support to over 300 children living near Varna, northern Bulgaria.

[Read more about this story here >>](#)

Delivering through national systems

With many drivers of complexity, multiple stakeholders, relatively strong socio-economies and robust government structures in refugee hosting countries, UNICEF adopted a system strengthening humanitarian approach. This involved working with Government at national and sub-national levels to make sure established, but overstretched national services and systems, were expanded to host refugee inflows - bridging humanitarian and development interventions.

Through this, immediate emergency needs were met while ensuring longer-term investment in addressing systemic causes of vulnerability – poverty, inequality and lack of functioning accountability systems – expanding the humanitarian response and building resilience.

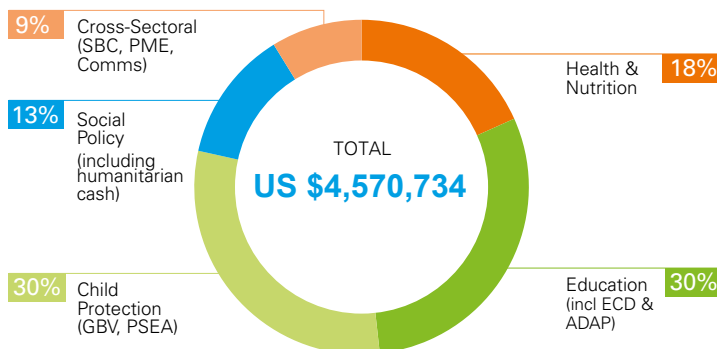
Looking ahead

In 2023 UNICEF will sustain existing partnerships to provide immediate assistance to and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees. UNICEF will continue to foster the inclusion of Ukrainian refugee children in Bulgarian schools through Bulgarian language classes, school mediation and anti-bullying, and advocacy for a flexible enrollment system, while maintaining learning hubs for children not enrolled in the national system.

In health and early childhood development, UNICEF will continue to support capacity building of the healthcare workforce, parenting counselling – including for children with developmental difficulties and disabilities, and immunization. UNICEF will focus on the sustainability of the UNICEF/UNHCR Blue Dots to maintain access to social services, legal assistance, counseling, and protection interventions, while strengthening the national child protection system and social services, with a special focus on unaccompanied and separated children. The needs and interests of adolescents and young people will be addressed through skills-building, civic participation, community engagement and youth development. Social listening and a campaign to foster social cohesion will address misinformation, prevention of rumors, and promote solidarity and integration.

For additional information on **UNICEF’s 2023 Humanitarian response for children outside of Ukraine** please visit [UNICEF Ukraine 2023 Humanitarian Action for Children](#).

Funding requirements for 2023



Acronyms: ECD: Early Childhood Development, ADAP: Adolescent Development And Participation, GBV: Gender-based violence, PSEA: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, SBC: Social and Behavior Change, PME: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Source: UNICEF

Contact

Afshan Khan, Regional Director UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia Email
Email: akhan@unicef.org

Christina de Bruin, Representative
UNICEF Bulgaria Country Office
Email: cdebruin@unicef.org