



Country Profile

Saint Lucia¹

Saint Lucia is considered an upper-middle income country and is rated 'medium' on the Human Development Index (106 of 191 countries).²

ECONOMY



- Largely dependent on tourism which was badly affected during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- However, the economy has rebounded in this sector.

HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES



Drought



Storms/
hurricanes
(Elsa 2021)



Earthquakes



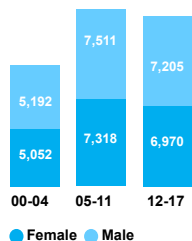
Flooding



Landslides

DEMOGRAPHICS

Child Population by Gender



There are an estimated **39,000** children in an overall population of almost **180,000**, with more boys than girls.

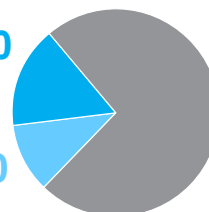
Total Population



39,000



26,000



180,251



SOCIAL STATUS



- The country has a high infant mortality rate (**22.4** deaths per thousand live births) – noticeably higher than most of its neighbours



- Some **34.5** per cent of children are living in monetary poverty. (The average for the Eastern Caribbean is **33** per cent)



- The country is not on course to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals: of **48** child-related targets, only four have so far been met³

1.3%



Child-related
social services

GDP



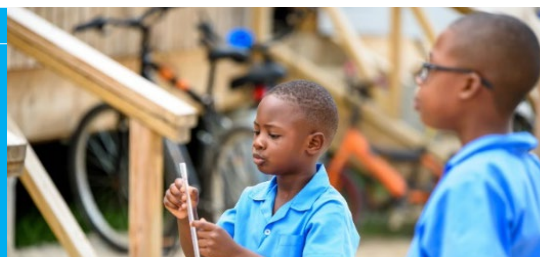
2.9%

Health services
for children

UNICEF IN ACTION FOR CHILDREN

UNICEF is committed to:

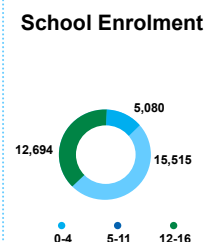
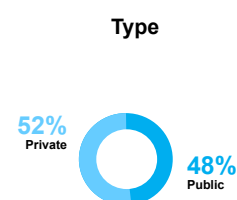
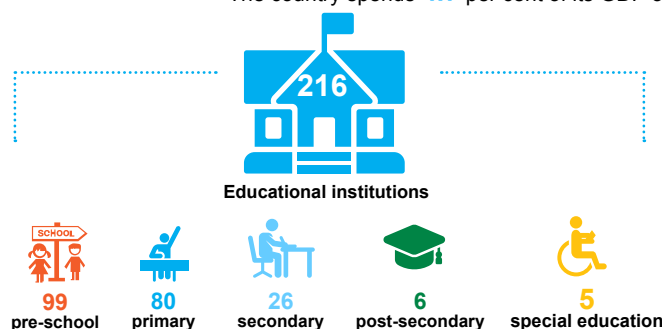
- Serving all children across the Eastern Caribbean, especially the most vulnerable
- Working with country partners to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals
- Challenging deprivations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Promoting targeted action to advance equity regardless of gender or disability
- Providing support for children and their families in the event of emergencies.



EDUCATION

There are **216** educational institutions.

The country spends **4.7** per cent of its GDP on education.⁴



Challenges

- The education system is perceived by many to be out-of-sync with requirements for the future world of work
- A significant number of students were left behind in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic
- 90** per cent of households with children had to stop school activities during the pandemic and **10** per cent were unable to continue remote learning.⁵

UNICEF has supported:

- The Government's Commitment to Action on Transforming Education/Foundational Learning
- Training of early childhood educators in developmentally appropriate practices
- Providing parents with information on nurturing care for young children, including through an innovative television series
- The development of curriculum-based digital content and training of teachers in the production of digital resources
- Working with partners to develop a monitoring tool to track implementation of the Caribbean Safe School Initiative
- Advocacy and communication around the establishment of a Caribbean Safe Schools Day/Week.

UNICEF's commitment: Children access and complete quality education, with the skills to advance to employment or higher education.

CHILD PROTECTION



Challenges

- One quarter of respondents in a recent survey said they knew of a child who had been sexually abused. Almost three-quarters considered it a problem
- Corporal punishment is still acceptable. One-third of survey respondents support a ban in the home and a relatively high 51 per cent support a ban in schools
- 68** per cent of adolescents (10-14) have experienced violent disciplining
- 25** per cent have experienced bullying
- 33** per cent have experienced child-on-child violence
- Mental health issues, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, are increasingly prevalent.

UNICEF has supported:

- A policy and strategic framework for child online protection across Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)⁶
- Launch of region's first ever child/youth mental health resources website
- The development of a regional mental health and psychosocial support chatline model. (MyChild Helpline App)
- Expansion of youth advocacy and engagement around mental health (with youth NGO Let's Unpack It).⁷
- There are now two national youth mental health focal points



UNICEF's commitment: Helping children grow up in a safe, secure environment, protected from all forms of violence and abuse.

SOCIAL PROTECTION



Challenges

- As well as a high child poverty rate, youth unemployment is a serious issue. Unemployment is 20 per cent among the overall population; for young people, this jumps to 45 per cent.
- The rural population is much more likely to be affected by poverty than the urban population.⁸

UNICEF has supported:

- Finalization and endorsement of the OECS Social Inclusion and Social Policy Strategic Action Plan 2023-2030.
- The adoption of a social assistance reform plan
- The finalization of a social protection policy to be adopted.

UNICEF's commitment: Working to improve the availability of more effective, comprehensive, inclusive, shock-responsive social protection systems to improve the lives of children and their families, especially the most vulnerable.

CLIMATE ACTION AND RESILIENCE



Challenges

- Since the year 1980, the country has experienced 19 natural hazards including drought and storms.

UNICEF has supported:

- Formulating Saint Lucia's Nationally Determined Contributions to be child-sensitive and created multimedia product to raise awareness and understanding among children
- Youth engagement in challenging climate change through strong youth advocates
- Promoting climate adaptation through the Beat the Heat campaign.

UNICEF's commitment: Implementing risk-informed, child-sensitive climate policies with effective participation of children, young people and communities to promote climate action and resilience.

HEALTH, IMMUNIZATION, NUTRITION AND NCDs



Challenges:

- Health, nutrition and NCDs are increasingly problematic, with 28 per cent of young people aged 5 to 19 overweight.⁹

UNICEF has supported:

- Advocacy for front-of-package food warning labels for unhealthy foods and programmes to help children develop healthy habits
- Social and behaviour change-related research and strategies to enhance resilience to infectious diseases
- Community engagement in vaccine demand creation and challenging vaccine hesitancy
- Training health promotion officers to design quality SBC interventions and conduct monitoring and evaluation.
- Training for health professionals and educators on Infection Prevention and Control in schools.



CHILD PARTICIPATION/YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



UNICEF has supported:

- The U-report platform is continuing to garner opinions and share information. Its Fundoo initiative offers real-world skills
- Young people from the country were trained in advocacy and building pathways and networks to have their voices heard in community, national and global fora such as the 4th International SIDS Conference via the Children and Youth Action Summit, co-hosted by UNICEF
- Engaging children in exploring their rights in the annual Caribbean Child Research Conference.

UNICEF's commitment: The wants and needs of young people should be firmly at the centre of the national and global rights and development agenda.

Endnotes

1 Unless otherwise stated, sources: UNICEF, UN Data Portal, Central Statistics Office, washdata, PAHO/WHO, HOT

2 Human Development Index, 2021-22

3 [SDG_Progress-on-Childrens-Well-Being-Centring-child-rights-in-the-2030-Agenda-For-every-child-a-sustainable-future-web.pdf](#)

4 This is in line with the Incheon Declaration 2015 recommendation of spending 4-6 per cent of GDP or 15-20 per cent of public expenditure on education

5 The Central Statistical Office (2020)

6 Approved in 2023 by Council of Education ministers and social development ministers, in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union, ITU

7 There are now two youth mental health focal points in the country, contributing to a regional network

8 Situation analysis of children in Saint. Lucia. UNICEF, 2017. <https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/media/1711/file/SiTan%20St.%20Lucia%20document.pdf>

9 Childhood overweight on the rise: Is it too late to turn the tide in Latin America and the Caribbean? UNICEF 2023

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