



"My school has tablets we use in the classroom, which makes me very happy. Technology connects everybody now. I'm glad we're not left out," Emmanuella Apaabey, Dzorwulu Special Needs School. ©Kokoroko/UNICEF/2022

UNICEF GHANA
NEWSLETTER

APRIL - JUNE 2022



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Dear Colleagues, Partners and Friends,

Welcome to the UNICEF Ghana's second Newsletter of 2022. Over the past few months, we have continued to work together to address development priorities and make a difference in the lives of children, young people and their families.

We have advocated, scaled up programmes and identified innovative solutions to create more equitable and shock-resilient social sectors. We continue supporting the Government of Ghana's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular by strengthening the cold chain system and monitoring immunization campaigns. Significant progress was made in water and sanitation, with more investment required to achieve the SDGs. Our UNICEF Team in Tamale is strengthening the resilience of institutions and communities in border areas at risk of the Sahel crisis spill over. UNICEF also supported the launch of engagement centres designed to improve access to digital and other skills that will equip adolescents and youths with transferable skills, for their transition into employment and entrepreneurship. Ghana also marked the Day of the African Child, advocating to end child marriage and other harmful practices.

These efforts, and many others, were supported by the on-going close collaboration with the Government of Ghana, the UN Country Team, Development Partners, the private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations, academia, the media, girls and boys. We are delighted to continue this journey in partnership with you, to advance the 2030 Agenda. Let's keep working unrelentingly for every child in Ghana, with a focus on the most excluded and marginalized. Together, we never give up.

Anne-Claire Dufay, UNICEF Representative in Ghana

Health

UNICEF continued to support the government's efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Ghana through the second and third National COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign Days. UNICEF joined the Ghana Health Service in monitoring the vaccine campaigns from 21st to 26th April and between 24th and 28th June, to assess progress and better understand the challenges with immunization. UNICEF teams visited nine regions, including 41 districts, 59 sub-districts and 64 health facilities.

The National Policy on Medical Oxygen and Costed implementation plan was developed and more than 300 additional oxygen concentrators were procured to augment the medical oxygen capacity of the country. Eleven walk-in cold rooms and 507 vest frost ice-lined refrigerators were procured to strengthen cold chain operations in Ghana. A total of 472,012 children have received Penta 3 immunization since the start of the year.

UNICEF continued to work with the Ministry of Health and Ghana Health Service to strengthen systems through the Maternal and Newborn Health Quality of Care programme. To reduce neonatal mortality and improve access to essential health services, six Newborn Care Units were set up, equipment was distributed, and technical support was provided in six health facilities in the Ashanti Region, with support from Global Affairs Canada.



Medical staff at Ejisu Hospital in Ashanti Region with the High Commissioner of Canada, UNICEF Representative and Ashanti Regional Director of Health Service. ©Kokoroko/UNICEF2022



Nurse at the newborn unit of the Ejisu Government hospital examines a baby ©Kokoroko/UNICEF/2022

Nutrition

UNICEF supported the training of 90 health workers across all 16 regions on combined Maternal Infant and Young Child Feeding package. The trained staff will serve as lactation consultants providing backstopping support to their colleagues in health facilities across all regions.

More children under five years of age received Child Growth Monitoring and Promotion services over the last three months: from 321,865 in March to 335,947 in June. At the community level, efforts continued to support Mothers' groups in promoting breastfeeding.

The first Ghana Health Service 2022 Bulletin of the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System was issued, with UNICEF support on the nutrition component. An increase in prices of cereals and legumes across the country compared to the same period in 2021 was confirmed.



Maternal and Child Health Record Book being used by an attendee of Antenatal Clinic at Nadowli District Hospital ©Kokoroko/UNICEF/2022



Premature newborn baby in the Nadowli District Hospital, ©Kokoroko/UNICEF/2022



UNICEF Health Specialist Dr. Peter Kwarteng with mother and premature newborn ©Kokoroko/UNICEF/2022

Water Sanitation and Hygiene



Mother in Nungua now able to access water at home © Acquah/UNICEF/2021

Between April and June 2022, with funding from the Government of Denmark, UNICEF supported the Low-Income Customer Support Department (LICSD) of the Ghana Water Company (GWCL) in connecting about 700 people with safe water at home.

The construction of improved WASH facilities is in progress in 37 schools, health facilities and priority public spaces in Accra and Kumasi – two cities that are prone to high rates of COVID-19 – to enhance resilience against further outbreak and similar public health emergencies. A feasibility analysis was completed for an additional 32 health facilities in the Ashanti Region, with work expected to begin in July.

Early June, field visits and events were organized in Tamale to celebrate progress under two Water and Sanitation projects jointly implemented by the Government of Ghana and UNICEF, with support from Global Affairs Canada. Transformative results were achieved for women and children, especially in the Northern Region. The previous average of 75 percent of households practicing open defecation (OD) was reduced by 25 percent in the five Northern regions. Over 1,100 rural communities and 35 small towns achieved Open Defecation Free (ODF) status and 4,44 institutions (91 health facilities and 353 schools) were provided with sustainable WASH services. Innovative approaches were modelled, such as Result Based Financing, Sanitation Marketing and District and Regional Sanitation League Tables. End June, the High Commissioner of Canada also observed progress in the Ashanti region, as part of the WASH COVID-19 response in health facilities.



Canadian High Commissioner, UNICEF Representative and Regional Director of Health commission a new bore hole at the Ejisu Government Hospital, 28 June 2022 ©Kokoroko/UNICEF2022

UNICEF worked with Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources and partners in developing the Hand Hygiene for All (HH4A) national costed strategy and operational guidelines. These will help promote hand hygiene in all settings (communities, institutions and public places), as part of a UNICEF-WHO global initiative in six model countries. It seeks to accelerate the uptake of the practice and consolidate the gains made on handwashing with soap, as a key behaviour for improving public health.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

UNICEF is implementing an integrated multi-sector programme in the north of Ghana to support shock-responsive, resilience programming, in the context of the Sahel crisis spill-over to coastal countries. The UNICEF team based at the Tamale Office is conducting an assessment in selected vulnerable districts and strengthening institutions and communities in the Upper West and Upper East regions, with support from the Government of Japan.

Education

Supported by UNICEF, UNESCO and other partners, the Centre for Distance and Open Learning (CENDLOS) held Ghana's Maiden Digital and Distance Learning Conference in Accra, from 6th to 8th June. The conference sought to highlight the progress of digital and distance learning in the country and to throw a spotlight on innovative approaches. One of them is the joint Microsoft-UNICEF initiative, the Learning Passport. UNICEF led discussions on the importance of action research to be embedded into digital and distance learning programmes and facilitated a post-conference Learning Passport content mapping exercise with a diverse group of digital and distance learning stakeholders.

With UNICEF support, as part of the GIGA school internet connecting programme, more than 35,000 schools have been mapped. The initiative aims at supporting and accelerating efforts in Ghana and around the world to connect every school to the Internet in a reliable and sustainable manner, in partnership with the private sector and the government.

During this quarter, 330 and 2,700 district level and school cluster representatives monitored several back-to-school campaigns to ascertain the number of teenage mothers who have returned to school and assess how conducive and receptive prevailing conditions are for them. The findings will inform the nature and strategies to be adopted in the coming campaigns.

The 'Differentiated Learning' training content was digitized and aligned with the National Teaching Council (NTC) digital platform for Continuous Teacher Professional Development, aimed at equipping teachers to teach in an age- and level-appropriate manner. The platform has been popular amongst teachers with an in-built user assessment function indicating positive feedback from teachers to improve teaching and learning in the classroom.

Adolescents and Youth

Ten Youth Engagement Centres were commissioned by UNICEF in partnership with the Ghana Library Authority. The centres will engage adolescents and young people in the communities, build digital and entrepreneurial skills, and provide learning-to-earning transition services such as mentorship and job-matching support. In this first phase, ten centres have been launched in libraries across eight regions of Ghana.

The Government of Ghana signed the [Declaration on Children, Youth, and Climate Action](#). In signing the Declaration, Ghana joins several other countries in committing to accelerate inclusive, child and youth-centred climate policies and action at national and global levels. To drive advocacy efforts for this Declaration, UNICEF partnered with the Youth Climate Council, an independent youth organisation, with the objective of collecting and amplifying the voices and opinions of youth CSOs, young people, and the public in national climate-related decision-making processes.



Child Protection



#endchildmarriage

UNICEF in Ghana marks the Day of African Child 2022

The Day of the African Child was celebrated on 16th June. With the theme of this year's anniversary on "Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children: Progress on Policy and Practices," UNICEF advocated [for an end to #childmarriage](#) through the dissemination of a message via UNICEF's social platforms. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection led a National Forum on reducing harmful practices and discussed the legislation as well as progress made in reducing their occurrences. UNICEF also collaborated with UNFPA to organize a multi-stakeholder workshop for the development of the National Operational M&E Plan on Ending Child Marriage 2022-2024.

As part of efforts to strengthen prevention and mitigation of violence against children, UNICEF supported engagements with 30 religious leaders on their role in protecting children. UNICEF, together with the Executive Director of the Cyber Security Authority, a principal State Attorney and the Director of the Child Protection Digital Forensic lab and Cybercrime Unit participated in the 'We Protect Summit' on turning the tide on child sexual abuse online, which was held in Brussels in June 2022. The summit brought together stakeholders from industry, governments, civil society and international institutions. Ghana's delegation presented achievements in the area of child online protection, including the enactment of the Cyber Security Act, 2020 (Act 1038), the establishment of the Cyber Security Authority and Child Protection Digital Forensic lab, mainstreaming of the flagship pro gram on Integrated Social Services (ISS) initiative and the national awareness creation on child online protection.



Child Protection Specialist Hilda Mensah represents UNICEF at the We Protect Summit in Brussels, (3rd from left) (c) UNICEF2022

The Integrated Social Services (ISS) initiative was scaled from 100 to 160 Metropolitan and Municipal District Authorities to further strengthen the links between social protection, child protection and health service providers on the ground, and to reach the most vulnerable children and their families.

UNICEF supported a national stakeholder workshop led by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to validate findings from: a) a review on the Drivers of Sexual Violence against children in Ghana, and b) a study on Child Sexual Exploitation in the mining, oil, fishing, agricultural and construction sectors in Ghana.

The Ghana Country Office represented UNICEF at the [5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour](#) (16th – 20th May 2022). Hosted by the government of South Africa in collaboration with ILO, the Conference gathered heads of state, ministers, employer and worker representatives, United Nations agencies, academia, civil society organizations and the media from 187 countries across the globe.

Between April and June, more than 86,000 people, including approximately 17,000 girls and boys were reached through social media messages on child protection issues. Topics included Child Online Safety, Gender Equality and awareness on COVID-19. The Ghanaians Against Child Abuse (GACA) campaign continued to mobilize stakeholders.



Mural painting by girls in community
© Norsaac//UNICEF/2022



Religious leaders take GACA pledge ©UNICEF/2022



Adolescent girl leading a community sensitization ©UNICEF/2022

Social Policy and Inclusion

UNICEF supported the Government of Ghana's submission of its Voluntary National Review (VNR) to assess progress made in implementing the 2030 SDG Agenda. As part of the process, led by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), children and youth were consulted using in-person meetings and the U-Report. UNICEF also provided technical support through studies and reports, review of data collection tools for field interviews and discussions, as well as validation of the findings. The VNR was finalized with special consideration to children and youth of all abilities. Key issues such as child poverty, child-sensitive policy and budgeting, health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation, and protection were also featured in the report.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, in collaboration with UNICEF and partners, reviewed progress in implementing the National Social Protection Policy short term plan (2018-2020). The national stakeholder consultation brought together key actors from Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Decentralized Structures, Development Partners, and Social Protection Inter-Sectoral Technical Committee. They assessed the performance over the last four years and identified actions to accelerate the achievement of results. Lessons, the changing socio-economic context and gaps are informing the development of the medium-term implementation plan, which will guide the social protection sector's work in the next four years.

Social and Behavior Change



COVID-19 information and educational murals developed by RISE Ghana supported by UNICEF established in Chiana Kassena Nankana West (c) Rise Ghana/ 2022

UNICEF and its civil society organization partners continued to collaborate with the Ghana Health Service, Ghana Education Service, traditional and religious leaders to sensitize the communities on issues relating to lead poisoning, WASH, maternal, newborn and child health and adolescent reproductive health. They engaged approximately 3,930 people in the Ashanti region and 2,000 community members in the Volta region.

UNICEF continued to provide technical support in social mobilization to mitigate the outbreak of Yellow Fever, to improve COVID-19 vaccination uptake, and polio and routine immunization demand generation. Nine regions, comprising 135,615 people were reached directly through radio discussions, community dialogue meetings, community information center announcements and murals.

The Agoos platform assisted 18,369 adolescents with information on COVID-19 prevention, maternal and child health, child protection and adolescents' issues.

A case study from Ghana on human centered design interventions was presented at the UN Behaviour Science Week. The UNICEF team also presented its misinformation management system at the COVID-19 Vaccine Demand Global Event.



Murals developed by RISE Ghana supported by UNICEF established in Chiana Kassena Nankana West (c) Rise Ghana/ 2022

UNICEF continues to support the Government of Ghana in strengthening systems, to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children, young people and families, in close cooperation with the UN Country Team and other key actors. Thank you for our close partnership.

Next Newsletter: July - September 2022

To learn more about UNICEF's work in Ghana, you can contact:

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Short Story – UNICEF Ghana

Health successes within a small community in the Upper West Region



*Herberta cuddles sleeping two-month-old Kanyiri at a Nursing Support Mothers Group, Upper West Region
©Kokoroko/UNICEF/2022*

“How do you encourage your baby to latch on for feeding?” asked Community Health Nurse Matilda.

“I can show you,” said Herberta as she confidently stood up with her two-month-old daughter and took her seat in the centre of the nursing mothers’ support group. As she was breastfeeding Kanyiri, her two-month-old daughter slept soundly in her arms.



*Community Health Nurse Matilda leading Nursing Mothers’ Support Group in Tabiesi
©Kokoroko/UNICEF/2022*



*Herberta demonstrates baby latching for feeding at Nursing Mothers’ Support Group
©Kokoroko/UNICEF/2022*

Several families within the Tabiesi community were attending the support group meeting this morning. The community was abuzz with a sense of excitement and optimism. They had much to celebrate. As a result of the community-led initiative supported by Ghana Health Service and partners, including UNICEF, the number of babies and children dying at a young age are reported to have reduced in that area.

The Upper West region has been blighted by a high number of neonatal mortalities in recent years. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017 / 2018, neonatal mortality rate in the Upper West Region stands at 28 deaths per 1000 live births, ranking the second highest in Ghana and above the national average of 27 deaths per 1000 live births.

Determined to address this, a strong and successful partnership was forged. With thanks to the generous support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, UNICEF was able to partner with the Ghana Health Service, civil society organizations and community leaders to generate demand for better information and quality services to improve maternal and neonatal health and prevent unnecessary deaths. Information on immunization, good nutrition and good health management has been dispensed more widely, and health personnel make regular visits to Tabiesi to provide additional advice and guidance.

The Nursing Mothers' support Group promotes and advises on timely and appropriate complementary feeding including feeding children variety of foods for proper growth and development of immunizations, and other information that promote child health.

Thanks to this effort, the children of Tabiesi have been receiving the necessary nutrition and health services needed, reducing malnutrition and its dire effects.



*Herberta with husband, Nuradeen, who also attends Father to Father Support Group, Tabiesi community, Upper West
©Kokoroko/UNICEF/2022*