



UNICEF Country Programme of Cooperation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2017-2022

UNICEF's Support to the Islamic Republic of Iran

UNICEF has been supporting the Government in its work for Iran's children since the early 1950s. UNICEF initially assisted in the vaccination of children against tuberculosis and equipped the country's first pasteurized milk factory. UNICEF later focused on supporting children's health programmes in Iran, such as promoting breastfeeding, vaccination and fighting against diarrhea. This collaboration between UNICEF and the Government was later expanded to other areas, including strengthening the country's healthcare system, maternal, neonatal and child health programmes, fighting all forms of malnutrition, HIV prevention programmes, education, and child protection, as well as social protection to contribute to the welfare of vulnerable children such as children with disabilities, refugee children and children in street situations. UNICEF Iran works collaboratively with other sister UN agencies within the UN Country Team to achieve its mandate and mission for children.

Drug Demand Reduction and HIV/AIDS Prevention among Adolescents and Youths

ISSUE

Adolescence is an important stage in life when high-risk and health threatening behaviours such as smoking, drug and alcohol use, and risky sexual actions can be at their peak for all young people in every corner of the world. At present, substance abuse is growing among young people worldwide. Having extensive borders with Afghanistan, Iran is a convenient location for easy access to illegal drugs particularly at the border areas and the rate of substance use is reported to be increasing annually especially among young population under age 25. Substance abuse is associated with many adverse outcomes among adolescents such as increased risk of physical and mental health problems, abuse, dependence and addiction on other drugs, psychological problems like depression and anxiety, and problems in adjustment to puberty, suicide, interpersonal problems with family and peers, driving-related injuries or death, as well as detrimental impacts on the economy of the family and society. Meanwhile, HIV infection in the country is starting to shift from mainly injecting drug use to sexual transmission considering the rise in risky behaviour among at-risk adolescents and youths.

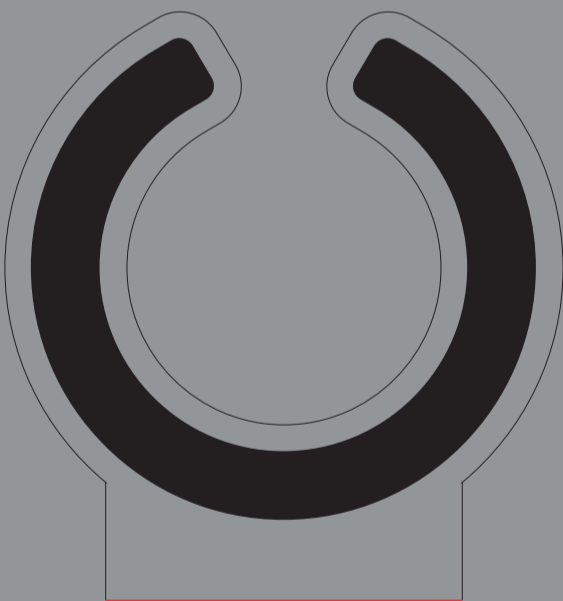
Iran is one of the countries in MENA region worst affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Under such circumstances, adolescents and youths are more likely to be exposed to a variety of harms including anxiety, irritability, depression, domestic violence, conflict with siblings and parents, as well as social and financial stresses which could all increase the prevalence of substance, alcohol and illicit drug abuse. Meanwhile youth unemployment is also considered a challenge in Iran and youths constitute 70 percent of unemployed population.

ACTION

UNICEF helps the Government and people of Iran in promoting adolescent and youth health and wellbeing, their physical and psychological development, prevention of HIV/AIDS and the development and roll-out of drug prevention and substance abuse treatment models targeting adolescent girls and boys including refugees. Some of these interventions include:



- Implementation of the Adolescent Well-being & Development Programme for adolescent girls and boys at national level providing psychosocial support, counselling, social and life skills and related health services and vocational skills to the most vulnerable adolescent girls and boys.
- Roll-out of drug prevention, and mental health promotion programmes for children and adolescents in schools.
- Strengthen adolescent and youth serving organizations such as governmental and non-governmental organizations and Youth Houses, to provide wellbeing and development services to young people such as skills trainings focusing on “Learning to Earning” and “Transition from School to Workplace”
- Assistance in development of HIV/AIDS prevention and life skills initiatives with and for the most at risk adolescents.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

UNICEF has supported Iran's response to COVID-19 through the following action:

- Facilitate “Remote Stepped Psychosocial Care and Support (ReSPCT)” initiative through providing telephone counselling for children, adolescents, youth and their parents affected by the outbreak. To do so, UNICEF provides equipment and trains 320 mental health practitioners as well as counsellors of Adolescent Wellbeing Programme, counselling centers, and schools from 31 provinces in coordination with the Ministry of Sport and Youth, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Drug Control Headquarters, the Ministry of Interior, and Iranian Red Crescent Society respectively.

IMPACT

With the help of Adolescent Well-being & Development Programme and strengthened governmental and non-governmental organizations, thousands of the most disadvantaged and at risk adolescents and their families have more access to comprehensive substance abuse treatment and preventive services, life and social skills trainings, lifesaving education and knowledge on high risk behaviours and related consequences, counselling, and timely interventions that help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and substance abuse among young people and adolescents.

PARTNERS

The main partners of this programme are the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the Ministry of Education, Drug Control Headquarters (DCHQ), the State Welfare Organization, Iranian Red Crescent Society, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Sport and Youth.

Children in Alternative Care

ISSUE

All children have the right to grow up in a happy and supportive family environment that reinforces their full physical, psychological, social and emotional development. Unfortunately, for many children worldwide this is not the case, and in the absence of a proper family setting, they are placed in alternative care. In Iran, like many other parts of the world, there are children living in alternative care who need special attention and care. Deprivation from effective care by parents and other caregivers may force children to endure physical, psychological, emotional and social harms.

ACTION

UNICEF helps the Government and people of Iran in provision of care and support to children without caregivers placed in alternative care, so they may grow up in a supportive and nurturing environment. Some of the interventions taking place in close partnership with the State Welfare Organization include:



- Development of three protocols for provision of comprehensive care and support to children without caregivers in nurseries (0-3 years), residential centres, and family-based foster care settings.

- Support to enhancing the quality of care and assistance to children without caregivers through capacity-building of relevant personnel and provision of essential equipment for nurseries.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, children living in alternative care settings have become more vulnerable. Therefore, UNICEF has supported the Government's response to the pandemic through the following actions:

- Provision of infection, prevention, and control items such as pulse oximeters and sanitizing items to protect vulnerable groups of children i.e. children with disabilities and children without caregivers, including those in nurseries and residential and rehabilitation centres across the country.

IMPACT

Through strengthened child protection policies, systems, and programmes, including trained child protection personnel, children without parental care can live in a protective and healthy environment, flourish to their full potential and ultimately be prepared to integrate within the community. To this end, UNICEF supports the Government and partners' efforts to develop and implement effective programmes which help children in alternative care grow up with opportunities for full and harmonious development.

PARTNERS

The main partner of this programme is the State Welfare Organization.

ISSUE

Emergencies, caused by humans or by natural hazards including epidemics, interrupt the normal flow of life for children and halt their access to basic services and may reduce their ability to reach their full potential. Studies have proven that children are particularly vulnerable during emergencies and suffer first and most in humanitarian contexts. Today, more countries are facing natural hazards and conflicts which can jeopardize children's childhood. Iran is one of the ten most disaster-prone countries in the world and is exposed to a variety of risks.

ACTION

UNICEF supports the Government and people of Iran in building preparedness capacities and maximizing the response to children's needs in emergencies including through provision of basic services and system strengthening, better targeting of at risk and hard to reach children and delivery of shock responsive safety nets. Some joint interventions with the Government include:

- Deliver vaccine fridges, cold boxes and carriers, to ensure continuation of vaccination in areas affected by the 2019 floods.
- Procurement of family and baby hygiene kits for promotion of hygiene and sanitation, as well as water pumps and water tanks for safe drinking water to the most vulnerable people affected by the 2019 and 2020 floods.
- Procurement of educational equipment including educational kits and classroom furniture for schools affected by floods in 2019 and 2020.
- Localize and integrate a Psychological First Aid (PFA) package within the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Rescue and Relief teams.
- Establish Child Friendly spaces in partnership with the IRCS to reduce stress, and promote healthy behavior among children, as a response to the 2019 floods.
- UNICEF supported access to pediatric treatment for children with special diseases. Examples include procurement of EB bandages for children with EB and nebulizers for children with Cystic Fibrosis. UNICEF and partners continue advocacy efforts on applying humanitarian exemptions for children's vaccines and medications.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

The pandemic presents new sets of challenges to health, education and social protection systems. UNICEF and partners have been on the frontlines since the beginning of the pandemic, working to protect and improve the lives of children in Iran, helping prevent the spread of COVID-19 and giving young people a chance for a more hopeful future during this unprecedented period. Some actions include:

- Provision of 63 metric tons of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for health workers across the country.
- Provision of 2,258 COVID-19 test kit packs (with 96 test kits each), targeting 216,768 individuals for distribution in 15 high prevalence provinces.
- Provision of hygiene kits and masks to children in vulnerable settings such as refugees, children in street situations, and those in alternative care facilities
- Production and airing of age-specific short video series for children and parents on COVID-19 prevention and psychosocial support.

IMPACT

UNICEF focuses on children and their families in emergencies to provide them with life-saving supplies as well as essential interventions required for their protection and continuous access to basic services. These interventions occur in many countries before, during and after emergencies and include a range of support such as strengthening long-term capacity of governments to effectively handle the emergencies and put children and those who provide their care first. In addition, UNICEF targets to provide stability and structure in traumatic situations after the emergencies that might threaten children's long-term well-being. These efforts ensure continuous assistance to children in emergencies and bring a positive impact in the long run, so that children can hope to enjoy healthy lives and fulfill their dreams.

PARTNERS

The main partners of this programme are the Ministry of Interior, National Disaster Management Organisation, Iranian Red Crescent Society, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Cooperative Labour and Social Welfare and the State Welfare Organization.

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Children in Judicial Proceedings



ISSUE

Millions of children in the world interact with justice systems on a daily basis for various reasons. Children may be victims or witnesses of various crimes, or accused of or recognized as in conflict with the law. For children, encountering the justice system and legal proceedings may be a frightening experience, as they may not be fully prepared for or understand legal procedures, as well as consequences of legal sentences. Moreover, justice systems and responsible professionals worldwide are not well equipped with knowledge on child sensitive proceedings and special skills to deal with children in contact with the law.

ACTION

UNICEF helps the Government and people of Iran to protect children in judicial proceedings, including children in conflict with the law, child victims and witnesses of crime, and refugee children, in line with national and international instruments. Some of the joint interventions with the Judiciary and the National Body on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (NBCRC) under the Ministry of Justice include:

- Train relevant professionals i.e. judges, prosecutors, attorneys, law enforcement forces and social workers on protection of children in judicial proceedings, with a view to promoting application of alternatives to punishment.
- Support strengthening of aftercare programmes for social reintegration of children in conflict with the law.
- Support to capacity-building of relevant professionals on application of the newly-adopted Law on Protection of Children and Adolescents (2020).
- Development of national guidelines for relevant professionals on protection of children affected by migration, and conducting relevant trainings.
- Support enhancing capacities of provincial bodies of the NBCRC for promoting child wellbeing.
- Support the establishment of an integrated Child Justice Centre in Tabriz, East Azarbaijan to address cases of children in conflict with the law in line with the best interest of the child.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF has supported the Government's response to assist children in conflict with the law through the following actions:

- Provision of pulse oximeters, thermometers, simple masks and latex gloves to children in Juvenile Correction and Rehabilitation Centres (JCRC) and incarcerated mothers.
- Provision of diapers and complementary food for infants of incarcerated mothers.
- Enhancing capacities of social workers and mental health experts of the "Prisons and Security and Corrective Measures Organization" for provision of psychosocial support to children in JCRCs and incarcerated mothers.

IMPACT

UNICEF's support to the Government aims at ensuring that a child friendly justice system is in place which is accessible to all children in contact with the law. Training of relevant legal professionals and development and implementation of child sensitive laws and procedures can keep children away from adult criminal proceedings, promote child-focused restorative justice approaches, and protect children who come into contact with law.

PARTNERS

The main partners of this programme are the Judiciary Deputy Office for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and the National Body on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (NBCRC) under the Ministry of Justice.

Children's Education

ISSUE

For every child, learning should be one of the most joyful experiences. It makes them prepared for life and work; but unfortunately, not all children have this opportunity. Globally, children and adolescents are left out of education for many barriers such as poverty, living in hard to reach locations, gender parity issues, etc; meanwhile for some groups of children access to education is more severe like children with disabilities, refugee children and children in emergency settings. Besides the issue of access to education, quality learning and developing the required skills among children during their schooling remains a challenge. In Iran, since 2011, the Iranian formal national education system is undergoing a major reform, guided by the Fundamental Reform Document of Education in the Islamic Republic of Iran. In 2015, a legal barrier preventing refugee children's access to formal education was removed based on the Supreme Leader's decree allowing all children in the country, regardless of their legal status, to register in formal education system. Therefore, the Ministry of Education requires further support in rapidly accommodating Afghan refugee children into public schools. Primary education net enrolment in Iran is more than 95%, however girls, children with special needs, and children living in border and disadvantaged areas are those needing extra help to access and remain in primary school.

ACTION

UNICEF helps the Government and people of Iran to ensure access of all children, including refugees and children with special needs, to quality educational and learning materials in a participatory environment as well as in emergency situations. Some interventions with the Ministry of Education include:

- Inclusion of citizenship education in teachers' training curricula, for increased participation and interaction between students and teachers in learning and teaching with a focus on the most vulnerable children.
- Support re-establishment and continuity of education services in flood affected areas.
- Promote inclusive education with a focus on children with disabilities and refugee children.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

With school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic almost across all countries, many children faced new challenges with alternative ways of continuous education using technologies. To keep the children's learning, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF Iran have been working jointly on a number of interventions including:

- Provision of technical support to the Ministry of Education on distance learning and safe school reopening for informed decision making since the beginning of this pandemic.
- Support implementation of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) standards for safe school operations, targeting 954 schools in five less developed provinces of Kerman, Sistan and Balouchistan, Hormozgan, Bushehr and Khuzestan. In addition to this, 2969 special schools across the country were provided with IPC/WASH materials for safe school operations during COVID-19.
- Support to the development and improvement of distance learning tools for children with special needs through establishing 32 virtual education centers in provincial centers across the country.

IMPACT

Making focused and targeted efforts in keeping children in schools and providing equitable access for quality education are among the goals that UNICEF pursues in education sector in Iran. With the enumerated efforts that UNICEF makes in partnership with the Ministry of Education, every child in Iran regardless of his/her situation can learn and become prepared for a bright future. As well, equal access to primary education will be increased by the continuous efforts to make a strong educational system for the most disadvantaged children including refugee children, girls, children with special needs and, children in emergency settings.

PARTNERS

The main partners in this programme are the Ministry of Education and the Special Education Organization (SEO).

Children's Health and Nutrition

ISSUE

Two of the bedrocks for child survival and harmonious development are good nutrition and health. These two cores work in tandem; when children are well-nourished and their health conditions and development are guaranteed, they grow and learn quite better and they will be able to develop to their full potential. Today across the world, children and adolescents experience significant issues with regards to their nutrition and health and still lose their lives due to different reasons related to undernutrition or malnutrition and preventable diseases. In Iran, two out of every three deaths of children under five years of age occur during the first month of life. This is equivalent to a rate of 8.44 newborn deaths per 1,000 live births. Prematurity and Respiratory Distress Syndrome (RDS) are among the main causes of neonatal deaths in Iran.

ACTION

UNICEF supports the Government and the people of Iran in improving access to quality health care and nutritional services for all children and their mothers including the most vulnerable children. Special attention is given to the first 1,000 days of life when a child's brain begins to grow and develop and when the foundations for lifelong health are built. Some recent interventions in health and nutrition sector include:

- Deliver 2 million doses of Injectable Polio Vaccines (IPV) for children.
- Support provision of specific medicine for children's specialized disease treatments impacted by sanctions, e.g provision of specialized wound dressings for children suffering from EB skin disease.
- Train national trainers to Help Babies Breath (HBB), including procuring simulators for neonatal resuscitation, which are models for hands-on training of physicians and midwives.
- Tackle micronutrient deficiencies by:
 - Supplementation of 1,362,000 million megadose (200,000 IU) of Vitamin A among under five children in eight less advantaged provinces.
- Support national programmes on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS (PMTCT) to achieve Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS in Iran.
- Establish food and nutrition surveillance system targeting under 5 children in Sistan & Balouchestan and South Khorasan, Ilam and Kohgiluyeh and Boyerahmad provinces.
- Contextualize Ages & Stages Questionnaires to be used for early detection of developmental delay all over the country.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

The pandemic has put the nutrition and health of children at high risk and created new challenges on children's survival, development, and learning. To address the damages generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF has supported the Government response as follows:

- Procurement of a total of 63 metric tons of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) items for health personnel in the frontline of the COVID-19 response.
- Procurement of 216,768 COVID-19 diagnostic test kits .
- Procurement of 160 best quality nebulizers for children with Cystic Fibrosis disease, who are highly vulnerable to serious complications or death from COVID-19.
- Production and airing of educational videos and animations for public and children on prevention of COVID-19, parenting skills as well as tips on coping with the mental impacts of the outbreak.
- Development and distribution of messages on exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and healthy eating for children under five during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Delivery of over millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021 with support of UNICEF as procurement channel under the COVAX facility Procurement and import of 12,000 refrigerator data loggers for vaccines.
- Development of communication and information material to increase public trust in COVID-19 vaccines.

IMPACT

The first 1,000 days of children's lives, from the conception to the child's second birthday, is a unique window of opportunity for securing their health and nutrition and investment in a bright future for them. UNICEF targets this critical period of children's lives and works tirelessly through public and private partnerships and by strengthening health and nutrition systems, to help all children, especially the most at risk and vulnerable ones, survive and thrive. These joint and targeted actions yield dramatic results for children, their families, and communities.

PARTNERS

The main partner of this programme is the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

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Children's Welfare

ISSUE

In every corner of the world, there are children who experience poor living conditions and do not have access to basic needs such as water, nutrition, education, essential health and protection services. The consequences of poverty and deprivation of basic needs can impede their capacity to cope, survive and develop. In Iran also, there are households with children living in poor conditions requiring timely and appropriate action and welfare support to allow these children to develop their full abilities and capacities.

ACTION

UNICEF helps the Government of Iran to enhance efficient and inclusive social protection system and services that reach and protect the most vulnerable households and their children. Some interventions with the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare and the Statistical Center of Iran include:

- Enhance efficiency and targeting of national social protection system, programmes and services.
- Adapt nationally the regular measurement of multidimensional child poverty for informed policy making and strategies and targeted interventions.
- Map the needs of children with disabilities for opportunities of UNICEF support through provision of inclusive health, education and protection social services.
- Customize a child-sensitive national social protection system in partnership with the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPCIG)/Brazil, as world's renowned centre of excellence.
- Establish a national real-time monitoring system with a focus on children's vulnerabilities within the social protection programmes to inform rapid interventions that help most vulnerable cope with difficult situations.
- Generate evidence and produce analysis on the situation of children in Iran for informed decision-making e.g. through ongoing socioeconomic impact analyses of COVID-19.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

The socioeconomic crisis caused by COVID-19 and compounded by the sanctions on Iran has hit children and their families very hard. To address the damages generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF has supported the Government response as follows:

- UNICEF has been leading the social protection component of UN response to the Impact of COVID-19 to guarantee continuity in delivery of basic services to all and stimulate job generation in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak and its impact.
- Rollout of conditional cash transfer and in-kind support in selected pilot provinces to reach the most vulnerable families and children as a complementary model to national social protection coverage offered by the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare. The conditional cash transfers and in-kind support will provide better access to health, education, and nutrition needs of children and will help out of school children return to education while building skills of adolescents and their parents to access jobs.



IMPACT

The ultimate goal for UNICEF and its partners across the world is to give all children an equitable opportunity in life by reducing child poverty. By removing the obstacles caused by poverty for all children, including the most disadvantaged, refugee children and children displaced by conflict and war, and by prioritizing child poverty as a global and national policy, all children have the equitable chance to live a life they deserve. By removing poverty and designing targeted social protection programmes, children eventually will build a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

PARTNERS

The main partners of this programme are the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare and the Statistical Center of Iran.

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Partnerships and Resource Mobilization for Children

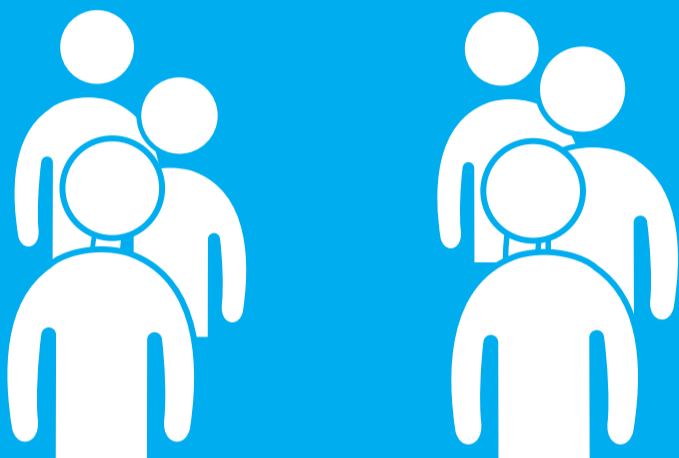
ISSUE

To help children and adolescents survive, thrive, and fulfil their potential, UNICEF needs to team-up with governments, international institutions, UN agencies, multilateral organizations, private sector and many other actors to design innovative solutions which address challenges that can potentially affect children's wellbeing. Public and private partnerships, financial and non-financial support are critical in delivering results for children in Iran through child centered programming and advocacy efforts.

ACTION

UNICEF helps the Government and people of Iran advance welfare and well-being of children through Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI), use innovative approaches to solve problems and improve the lives of children, attract the support of public and private sector, engage with businesses to achieve impactful results and facilitate public-private partnerships. Some interventions with UNICEF's partners include:

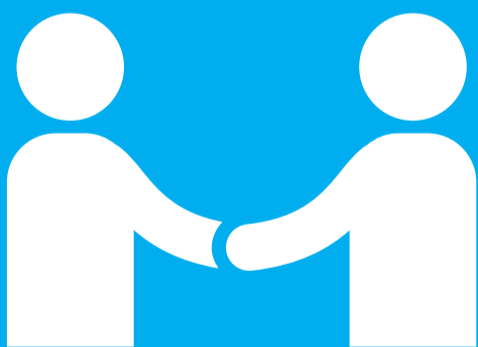
- Support the Ministry of Interior in rolling out the CFCI in Iran with a number of pilot and candidate cities.
- Support the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology in strengthening the ecosystem of innovations for children and adolescents to develop practical and effective solutions.
- Deepen partnerships across the public and private sector, leverage their resources and expertise to better serve the needs of hard-to-reach and the most vulnerable children.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the country, UNICEF has made concerted efforts to protect the health of the most vulnerable children. In close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, UNICEF Iran has worked on the below interventions:

- Provision of some 900 thousand hygiene items for vulnerable children in 11 provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Kordestan, Kermanshah, Kerman, Khuzestan, Hormozgan, Lorestan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Ilam, South Khorasan, and Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari.
- Provision of 160 best quality nebulizers for children suffering from Cystic Fibrosis (CF) disease, who are highly vulnerable to serious complications or death from COVID-19. Cystic Fibrosis is a genetic disease that mostly affects lungs and leads to difficulties in breathing and frequent lung infections.
- Launching the "We Are All Champions" Art Competition as part of the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative to give children and adolescents aged 3 to 19 across the country a chance to express their feelings of admiration to "their champions" who were working hard to help families survive during the COVID-19 outbreak.



IMPACT

Humanitarian response and development programming for children happens when UNICEF engineers solutions and designs smart interventions capitalizing on partners' expertise. UNICEF also motivates partners to put children on top of their agendas and build joint advocacy and collective actions.

PARTNERS

The main partners of this programme are the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology (VP), the Ministry of Interior, and a variety of private sector partners.

Protecting Children against Maltreatment

ISSUE

Child maltreatment occurs in many settings and can take on different forms including corporal punishment, psychological, emotional, and sexual abuse, and neglect. Maltreatment hinders the full growth and harmonious development of children, and ultimately impacts their entire life. Maltreatment is a global issue which occurs everywhere and is deeply entrenched, among other causes, in negative attitudes, social norms and parenting methods.

ACTION

UNICEF helps the Government and people of Iran in prevention, early detection and response to maltreatment of children, including refugee children. Some joint interventions taking place in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education include:

- Development of a national policy on prevention, early detection and response to child maltreatment.
- Promotion of community engagement and pilot establishment of community-based prevention of child maltreatment in the selected provinces.
- Development of positive parenting packages for mental health professionals providing counseling to children, adolescents and their families.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges for children and made them more vulnerable to the secondary impacts of the pandemic. UNICEF has supported the government's response to the pandemic through the following action:

- Development of a standard package on parenting during/after COVID-19 in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

IMPACT

Through the interventions that UNICEF designs and implements in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, children will be better protected against maltreatment, particularly against violent disciplining in the home and institutions. With strong and child-focused systems established in the health, education and social welfare sectors, there will be effective national capacity for prevention, early detection and response to child maltreatment, including stronger coordination between the various sectors to address this issue.

PARTNERS

The main partners of this programme are the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and the State Welfare Organization.

Public and Media Advocacy for Children

ISSUE

Raising public awareness about children and their needs while increasing public engagement in issues that continuously affect children, through different media platforms and other events, is key to harness a truly global commitment for children and adolescents. The main focus of public and media advocacy for children is to win the support of media for all children through enhancing the capacities of media professionals on child-related issues and media guidelines. In Iran, UNICEF's public and media advocacy strengthens the national efforts for the welfare of children, and increases public information on children's situation and UNICEF's mission to improve the lives of children in the country.

ACTION

UNICEF helps the Government and people of Iran to raise awareness among public and the media on UNICEF's response to children's needs and priorities in Iran as well as to enhance capacities of media professionals on ethical principles of representing children in the media. Some of the interventions with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance include:

- Raise awareness among journalists and photojournalists on ethical guidelines of representing children in the media specially the vulnerable children.
- Promote child and adolescent participation, engagement and empowerment via support for existing national children's film festivals and the book-reading leagues.
- Raise awareness among public on harms and risks in the cyberspace for children and offer solutions to protect them.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

The pandemic has been a crisis for everyone including children of all ages, and it created waves of misinformation and child-insensitive information. To address the misinformation and help spread the correct information on prevention of COVID-19 while covering UNICEF-supported response to children's needs, the following actions were taken:

- Raise awareness among the general public including families and children through UNICEF Iran website and social media platforms updated with the latest standard information and material on prevention of COVID-19 and the related psychosocial tips for families.
- Keep the public and media updated with UNICEF's latest programme response to COVID-19 and other ongoing programmes.
- Support art contests for children and adolescents to increase their participation and help them cope with mental challenges of the lock-down.



IMPACT

By sharing timely and ethical information about children, raising awareness about the issues impacting them and covering UNICEF's action in every situation, UNICEF's public and media advocacy mobilises public and stakeholders to joint efforts for and with children.

PARTNERS

The main partner of this programme is the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance as well as the national media and press.