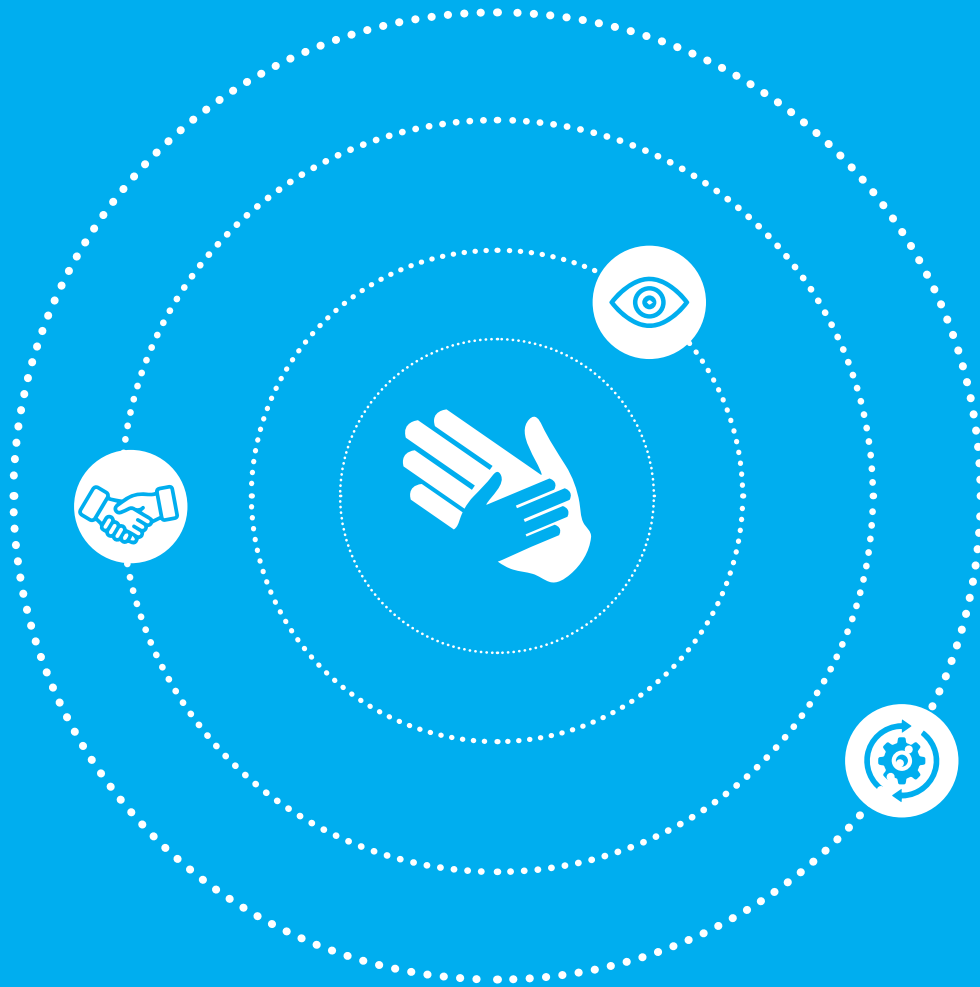




UNICEF Kenya
Annual Report
2024



UNICEF Kenya Country Programme 2022-2027

The UNICEF Kenya Country Programme (CP) 2022-2027 is aligned to the Kenya government's VISION 2030 and contributes towards the Kenya United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2022-2027) and UNICEF Global Strategic Plan (2022-2025). UNICEF supported key development and emergency results in Kenya in 2024.

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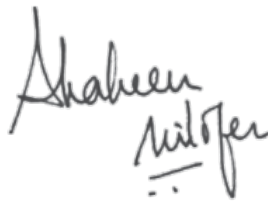
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Foreword



Shaheen Nilofer,
UNICEF Representative, Kenya



It is my honor to present the remarkable achievements for children and women in 2024, accomplished despite challenges of climate emergencies, civil unrest, and limited fiscal space. This year marked 35 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, celebrated alongside World Children's Day, offering a moment to reflect on Kenya's progress for children over the decades.

UNICEF reached over
16 million
children,
women and adults in 2024,
transforming lives through
various initiatives.

UNICEF Kenya was proudly recognized by Brand Africa as the Most Admired UN Entity Doing Good for Society, Environment, and People in Kenya. Through a new financing agreement with the Government of Kenya, UNICEF supported large-scale service delivery, focusing on flood response, resilience building, and strengthening systems to ensure increased social sector allocations, expenditures, and results for children within Kenya's devolved governance structure. These significant efforts underscore our commitment to advancing children's well-being and rights.

In 2024, UNICEF's impactful, multisectoral programmes reached over 16 million children, women, and adults, transforming lives through health, education, nutrition, water, sanitation, and protection initiatives. Advocacy efforts ensured budget allocations were designated to children's priorities, expanded social protection, and scaled up the cash and health education (NICHE) programme, offering families integrated cash and services. UNICEF supported immunization campaigns, strengthened maternal and newborn health services, and addressed malnutrition with positive nutrition practices. Education programmes re-enrolled out-of-school children and enhanced learning via digital platforms, while child protection initiatives focused on violence prevention and support for vulnerable groups. Lifesaving assistance reached over 1 million individuals affected by floods and health emergencies, with 4.6 million receiving public health messages. UNICEF empowered youth through skill-building, and innovative projects like the Children's Climate and Disaster Risk Model fostered resilience. Key achievements included vaccinating 8.3 million children during polio campaigns and providing safe water to over 375,000 people. Cross-cutting efforts, such as humanitarian response, Generation Unlimited (GenU), and disability inclusion, were amplified through robust collaborations with

government and civil society partners, driving integrated and sustainable progress.

This year, significant strides were made in strengthening Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) oversight, including training Civil Society Organization partners. UNICEF, in partnership with IOM, co-chaired the Interagency PSEA Network, contributing actively to UN-wide PSEA efforts.

Working collaboratively within the UN system, we played a pivotal role in implementing joint UN programmes and advancing the overall results of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

On behalf of UNICEF, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Kenya, sector ministries, county governments, donors, development partners, cadres of frontline workers, Civil Society Organizations, and private sector partners. Together, we have contributed significantly to Kenya's VISION 2030.

As we step into 2025, the landscape for funding and financing children's rights is increasingly challenging. However, investing in our children—the cornerstone of a nation's future—is not just a moral imperative but a smart economic strategy. Prioritizing development assistance and ensuring adequate domestic resource allocation for critical sectors that promote children's growth and development unlocks transformative potential.

Finally, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient progress is achievable only when no one is left behind. By focusing on our children, we secure tangible returns that drive national growth and prosperity, fostering a brighter and more equitable future for all.



2024 marked **35 years** of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, celebrated alongside World Children's Day, offering a moment to reflect on Kenya's progress for children over the decades.

CRC@35

Highlights in 2024

UNICEF supported the Government of Kenya in achieving following results for children and people in Kenya:

Social policy and protection



National budget allocation in the interest of children increased from 42 per cent in 2023 to 43.7 per cent in 2024



63,450 women and **215,370 children** benefitting from cash and services

Health



8.3 million children reached through **three rounds of polio campaigns** in twelve high risk counties



1.14 million children received **3 doses** of the **pentavalent vaccine**



307,000 men, women, boys, and girls were reached with uninterrupted essential health services

Nutrition



134,000 children reached with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) treatment services



5.3 million children received **vitamin A doses**

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)



677,060 people gained access to hand hygiene facilities



375,103 people gained basic access to safe water

Education



66,100 out-of-school children **enrolled**, and stayed in school



389,869 children benefited from **online access to learning**

Child protection



45,781 children experiencing violence were **supported with protection** and care services



27,800 children and caregivers received mental health and psychosocial support in refugee camps/host communities

Cross-cutting programmes



Over **1 million people** affected by floods and health emergencies reached with services



4.6 million people reached with public health messages



12,600 young people benefited from entrepreneurship and agriculture skills capacity building

Social Policy and Protection

SUMMARY OF KEY HIGHLIGHTS

UNICEF's work supported the following:



In total, **63,450 women** and **216,00 children** were directly supported with cash transfers through various UNICEF-supported initiatives



The Government's **Cash Transfer** programme reached **1,703,000 households**



National budget allocation to children's priorities in key social sectors increased from 42 per cent in 2023 to **43.7 per cent** in 2024



Publishing of **23 citizen budgets** in counties.

ONGOING CHALLENGES



Ongoing **fiscal consolidation** affected growth and **impacted budgetary allocations** for social services



Only about **14% of children** in need are **covered by social protection** and this is indirectly



Administrative data and county M&E systems are still nascent and require strengthening.

In 2024, UNICEF supported social protection programming, strengthening public finance management and budget allocation, and evidence and data for informed planning and decision-making.

UNICEF's evidence-based advocacy contributed to budget allocation for children's priorities. National allocation increased from 42 per cent in 2023 to 43.7 per cent in 2024 (against a target of 44 per cent); however, counties' budget allocation decreased from 43.7 per cent to 41.7 per cent. The overall decrease is due to huge debt burden at national level (67 per cent of debt to GDP) and public service administration costs at county level crowding out social sector investments. Nevertheless, UNICEF's advocacy influenced the National Assembly and National Treasury to re-instate KES 6 billion (US\$46 million) for social sectors that had been cut following the withdrawal of the Finance Bill for the fiscal year 2024/2025.

© UNICEF/Victor Wahome





As a result of UNICEF's advocacy, children's priorities were included in the County Annual Development Plans (ADPs), County Fiscal Strategy Papers and programme-based budgets in 19 counties (advocating with county assemblies and executives) and nationally in the budget policy statement. UNICEF supported the development of the Public Finance Management Reform Strategy (PFMR 2023-2028), to strengthen national and devolved service delivery in key social sectors. UNICEF provided technical support for publication of citizens budgets, which enables wider access of budget information, published in 23 counties in 2024 (up from 18 in 2023) and one at national level with the county Budget Transparency Score improving to 56 in 2023 from 41 in 2022.

UNICEF contributed to social protection expansion, leading to coverage rising from 1.028 million to 1.703 million households enrolled for National Cash Transfer (surpassing the target). UNICEF provided technical

assistance in the revision of the eligibility criteria for the Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children programme to consider additional vulnerabilities, increasing the number of child beneficiaries. UNICEF continued to partner with the World Bank, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and the Kenyan Government to advance the Nutrition Improvement through Cash and Health Education (NICHE) programme, expanding it to six additional counties in 2024, with 63,450 households reached in 2024 with cash and services, up from 32,879 in 2023. UNICEF, with stakeholders, supported the development of the Kenya Social Protection Policy 2023, launched in 2024, which serves as a landmark and critical tool for the government in advancing the economic and social rights of Kenyans. UNICEF also supported the development of social protection policies in Garissa and Turkana counties, working with county assemblies to ensure these are passed and enacted.

Health

Summary of Key Highlights

UNICEF's work supported the following:



8.3 million children reached through three rounds of polio campaigns in twelve high risk counties



1.14 million children received 3 doses of the pentavalent vaccine



1.02 million girls reached with **1 HPV vaccine dose**, and with **540,000** with **two doses**



307,000 men, women, boys, and girls were reached with uninterrupted essential health services.

Ongoing challenges



Floods and disease outbreaks (polio, measles, Mpox, Marburg), strained health sector resources



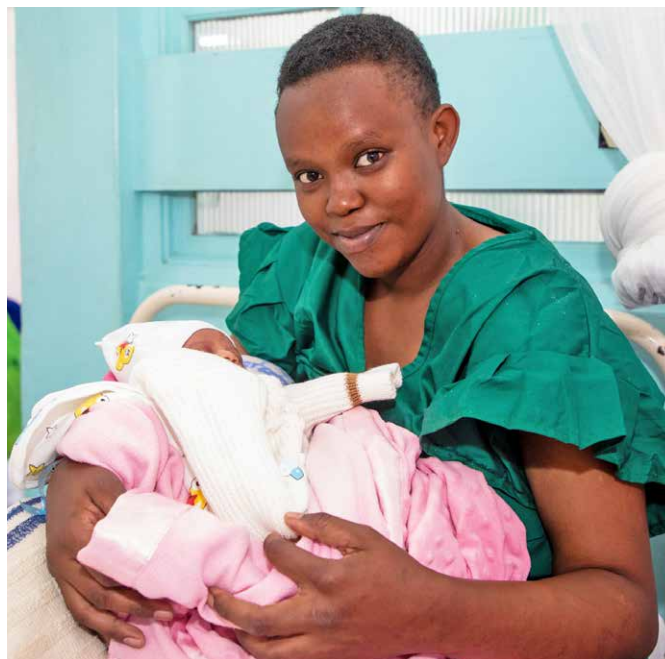
Public fatigue with repeated vaccination campaigns and a doctor's strike hampered service delivery



Delays in releasing funds from national to county level led to shortages of vaccines and essential commodities, including for HIV diagnostics.

In 2024, UNICEF contributed to the Government of Kenya's vision for Universal Health Care, focusing on reducing inequalities, sustaining coverage and bolstering quality of essential services. UNICEF supported under-5 immunization to ensure that 1.14 million children received 3 doses of the pentavalent vaccine. Further, 1,123,205 children received at least one dose of the Measles-Rubella vaccine. UNICEF supported the government to increase the nationwide uptake of HPV vaccinations among 10–14-year-old girls: 1,021,255 girls were reached with one dose, with 540,009 girls receiving two doses of HPV vaccine. UNICEF supported three rounds of polio campaigns in twelve high risk counties, reaching 8.3 million children. UNICEF also supported system strengthening by enhancing the skills of 8,876 health workers and through the distribution and installation of 2,060 units of specialised cold chain equipment (supporting refrigeration of vaccines to enable their usage) to health facilities.

© UNICEF/Lucas Odhiambo



UNICEF contributed to improved maternal and newborn health (MNH) service delivery, with nearly 70 per cent of newborns receiving a post-natal check within two days of birth. UNICEF supported 2 counties to set up learning hubs for MNH skills enhancement,



and newborn care units for in-patient care of small and sick new-born babies, to strengthen quality interventions for mothers and newborns.

To strengthen the health system, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Quality-of-Care assessment of health care facilities, led by the Ministry of Health (MOH), implemented in all counties, contributing to and informing efforts to further strengthen quality through updated training of frontline workers and guideline development and roll-out. UNICEF supported the establishment of 25 primary health care networks in eight counties, to help address bottlenecks around demand for services. Further, 2,740 community health promoters (CHPs) were trained to provide household service delivery, creating access to community services for over 1.3 million people. 6,048 had their skills registered on the electronic community health information system to strengthen reporting, and 269 were trained in integrated community case management to provide life-saving services in underserved ASAL counties.

To support government efforts, UNICEF implemented the 100-day Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) approach and Children and Adolescents Living with HIV Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) to address gaps in PMTCT and Pediatric AIDS cascades, reaching 8,265 children. To date, 74 per cent of children received anti-retroviral drugs, with constraints due to the erratic supply chain and ongoing stigma against people with HIV undermining their treatment-seeking behaviour, especially in ASAL counties.

Addressing flood response, UNICEF supported the government to reach 306,986 men, women, boys, and girls (95 per cent of the target) with uninterrupted essential health services, saving lives and supporting early recovery.

The Learning Hub: Fostering Maternal Health Excellence Through Empowered Healthcare Workers

Training health care workers to improve outcomes for newborns and their mothers

Joy Wanja Muraya

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Ronald Achoki, chief registered nurse
17 July 2024

Ronald stood at the bedside of his new patient, taking her pulse and observing her respiration rate. In contrast, the patient spoke in a panic, fitting more words in a minute than he could follow, but he patiently listened anyway.

Achoki is a chief registered nurse at Pumwani Maternity and Referral Hospital. He works in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit, treating sick newborns and babies born too soon (pre-term births).

This was a typical day in Ronald Achoki's two decades of nursing career. Yet, every pregnant woman who walks through the door at Pumwani Maternity Referral Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya, is a daily reminder of his Florence Nightingale Pledge and dedication to a profession he admired from an early age.

"As an eight-year-old boy growing up in the village, I was intrigued by women and babies, especially the intricate nursing care required by mothers and their newborn children," said Achoki.

His training as one of the few male nurses in his college class at Consolata Mathari Hospital was a preparation to work at his current station at Pumwani Maternity Hospital, which holds the distinction of being the only maternal and newborn referral hospital in the country.

He describes his worst days as a nurse.

"When a mother or a baby dies, it breaks my heart into a million pieces. Sharing the news with their loved one about the death is a very emotionally draining moment for me, too," said Achoki.

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Nurse Midwife Maureen Kaloki at the Pumwani Maternity and Referral Hospital Learning Hub and Centres of Excellence

Achoki acknowledges that in addition to his college degree, the continuous in-service training he gets as a health professional from the health facility-based UNICEF-supported Maternal and Newborn Health (MNH) Learning Hub and Centre of Excellence at Pumwani Maternity Referral Hospital, improves the quality of care and reduces maternal and newborn illnesses and deaths.

The MNH learning hubs, simulation centers, and mentorship programs help ensure health care providers have up-to-date skills and knowledge they need to improve standards of health care provided to their clients and reduce mortality rates for mothers and babies. The learning hub approach moves from traditional classroom instruction to more hospital-based, hands-on training — including post-training follow-up, mentoring, and supportive supervision.

"The course and the use of models and mannequins at the learning hub helped improve my competency, proficiency, and enhance my confidence in applying my skills in caring for mothers and their newborns daily," said Achoki.

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Pumwani Maternity and Referral Hospital Chief Executive Officer Kiteshuo Christine at Pumwani Maternity Referral.

Pumwani Hospital Chief Executive Christine Kiteshuo appreciates the improvements witnessed at Pumwani Maternity Hospital with its current 354-bed capacity, serving an average of 1,527 monthly deliveries.

Dr. Kiteshuo is optimistic about the recent investments at the hospital, including the completion of the Newborn Intensive Care Unit, which is a testament to their commitment towards improving the quality and standards of maternal and newborn care in Kenya.

"We begin at the grassroots, working with the health promoters at the community level on educating pregnant mothers on the importance of attending antenatal care. Pregnant mothers are encouraged to visit their nearest health facility for antenatal check-ups, and ensure they deliver in the facilities. The community health promoters also provide them with nutrition education and screen them for any pregnancy-related danger signs and risks," said Dr. Kiteshuo.

Dr. Laura Oyiengo, a health specialist at UNICEF Kenya in charge of maternal and newborn health, says training health care workers using the practical skills-based approach at the learning hub is a cost-effective investment. Health care workers are trained in an environment that simulates their facility wards, using training mannequins to practice their skills under the guidance of skilled medical trainers and mentors.

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Nurse Midwife Maureen Kaloki demonstrates using a baby model at the learning hub and Centre of Excellence at Pumwani Maternity Hospital

"The MNH learning hubs targeting healthcare workers is part of UNICEF's efforts to improve outcomes for newborns and their mothers," said Dr. Laura.

According to Dr. Laura, UNICEF Kenya also supports equipping the maternity wards and newborn units at the Pumwani Maternity Referral Hospital to provide high-quality care and improve maternal and newborn survival and well-being.

Through a powerful collaboration between UNICEF Kenya, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID, and the Latter-Day Saints Church, a health facility-based maternal health training hub was established at Pumwani Maternity Referral Hospital. This

initiative is set to improve health workers' skills and quality of care, demonstrating the collective impact on maternal and newborn health.

Dr. Laura also added that Dr. Kiteshuo and her team have been instrumental in adopting, implementing, and scaling up maternal and newborn high-impact interventions using skills-based training at Pumwani Maternity and Referral Hospital Learning Hub.

"Traditionally, healthcare worker trainings are delivered in hotel conference facilities for three to five days, leaving a staff gap in the health facility wards. Having the MNH Learning Hub situated at Pumwani Hospital itself means staff can easily access the training, practice the skills using the mannequins provided and learn from real case scenarios at the wards, then implement the new skills acquired under the guidance of a mentor or trainer - all within a health facility setting," said Dr. Laura.

Dr. Laura notes that as an innovation, UNICEF is working together with counties to establish more MNH learning hubs to provide a simulated skills-based training approach. The training strategy makes use of technological advances and a better understanding of the educational benefits of immersing and exposing healthcare professionals in authentic, real-life cases through simulation exercises. This approach has grown into a popular modality of in-service and pre-service clinical training.

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Ronald Achoki at the Pumwani Maternity and Referral Hospital Newborn Born Unit

Achoki recognizes the important role of having a mentor in his own professional development as a nurse. Achoki's mentor, Orina Nyakina, is a senior registered neonatal nurse at Pumwani Maternity Referral Hospital who taught him to always wear a smile and give his best as he practices his nursing profession.

Both at work and home, Achoki has found the stamina, grace, and motivation to provide the highest possible healthcare standards for healthier and happy mothers and babies.

"As a father to two healthy girls and a boy, providing and receiving quality and timely skilled healthcare makes all the difference. I want the same for every mother I meet and serve daily," concludes Achoki, whose wife is also a nurse at another health facility in Nairobi County.

Nutrition

Summary of Key Highlights

UNICEF's work supported the following:



134,000 children reached with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) treatment services



5.3 million children received vitamin A doses



1.8 million primary caregivers received infant and young-child feeding counselling from health workers



Over 5 million radio and television listeners (26 per cent of the population in target counties) received nutrition messaging.

Ongoing challenges



Only 31 per cent of children 6 to 23 months receive a diet of the right quality and quantity



6 out of every 10 children are experiencing child food poverty, with rates of over 90 per cent in Turkana and Samburu



Limited dietary diversity/availability of nutritious foods, inadequate nutrition knowledge, high food prices



Sub-optimal coverage of multi-sectoral services.

In 2024, UNICEF supported the government in addressing malnutrition and promoting adoption of positive nutrition practices by enhancing governance and systems capacity. UNICEF procured doses of vitamin A reaching over 5.3 million children aged 6-59 months. With its partners, UNICEF supported the government to procure and distribute life-saving nutrition commodities, including therapeutic milk and Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF). This effort provided severe acute malnutrition treatment services to 134,164 children aged 6 to 59 months (51.3 per cent girls), and achieved a cure rate of 80.5 per cent. Through UNICEF support, the Family Mid-Upper Arm Circumference approach - empowering caregivers to monitor their children's nutrition status - was scaled up to 13 counties, while 76 per cent (742) of health facilities in 10 Arid Counties implemented the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) surge approach. UNICEF supported the MOH in adoption and adaptation of WHO 2023 recommendations on prevention and management of child wasting.

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Under the Nutrition Improvement through Cash and Health Education (NICHE) programme, UNICEF supported capacity building of 1,886 health workers (755 men, 1,131 women, including 2 with disabilities), contributing to over 1.8 million primary caregivers receiving infant and young child feeding counselling (achieving the target), improving household knowledge and practices. Over 5 million radio and television listeners (26 per cent of the population in target counties) received nutrition messaging with an additional 624,230 (53 per cent female and 47 per cent male) reached through a digital platform. As part of the systems approach to preventing malnutrition, UNICEF developed a strategic roadmap outlining priorities and actions for 2025-2027.

UNICEF significantly contributed to monitoring and evidence generation, supporting national situation analysis, SMART surveys, and the use of the National Information Platform for Nutrition to improve access to information for decision-making. These efforts supported programme implementation to achieve results, helping to assess progress, identify gaps, and guide emergency preparedness and response in 23 ASAL counties.

A Lifeline for Baby Analia

Providing health and nutrition support to children

Dan Oloo

© UNICEFKenya/2023/PaulKidero



*Sabina Naboi with her daughter Analia Wally
15 January 2024*

In the arid expanse of Turkana County, Kenya, the relentless drought, exacerbated by climate change, has taken a heavy toll on its inhabitants. Sabina Naboi, a 23-year-old mother of three, knows this struggle all too well. Born and raised in Kakuma Refugee Camp after her mother arrived in 1999, she has witnessed firsthand the challenges that six consecutive drought seasons have brought. The situation, exacerbated by climate change has had a negative impact on the nutrition status of people in Turkana County.

The failed rainy seasons have left Sabina and her family reliant on food rations given at the refugee camp. Supplementing this with other nutritious food has been a constant challenge due to reduced income and other factors. "Due to the hard situation, I was not able to provide adequate and nutritious food for me and my family," Sabina shares, her words painting a stark picture of their daily struggle.

When her youngest child, Analia, was born in 2023, Sabina was determined to provide her with the best possible start in life. But as Analia reached six months old, the harsh reality of their situation began to take its toll. Analia fell ill, afflicted by persistent diarrhoea and rapid weight loss. Her once bright eyes grew dull, and her tiny body became alarmingly frail. "Her body changed. She had lost so much weight and was in great distress," Sabina recalls.

Desperate, Sabina rushed Analia to the hospital within the camp. There, the grim reality was confirmed after careful, assessment and screening: "It was found that she was suffering from severe acute malnutrition," Sabina recounts, the memory still fresh in her mind.

But amidst the worrying realisation, hope was restored as Analia was enrolled in the outpatient therapeutic program (OTP) and prescribed with Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF). Sabina, guided by the compassionate healthcare workers, began the painstaking process of nursing her daughter back to health. Day after day, Sabina patiently fed Analia the nutrient-rich RUTF. "I started by putting the RUTF in my baby's porridge and she slowly started getting used to it and even enjoying it," Sabina says with a hint of relief in her voice.

Slowly but surely, Analia's strength returned. Her eyes regained their sparkle, her laughter filled their small home once more, and her tiny limbs grew stronger. "I was very happy when I started seeing some improvement in her health. It was such a relief," Sabina shares.

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Sabina Naboi plays with her daughter Analia Wally

© UNICEFKenya/2023/PaulKidero



Analia feeds on RUTF

With EU humanitarian aid support, UNICEF is working with partners on the ground to provide health and nutrition support to children such as Analia. The programme aims to treat malnutrition and its harmful effects on children under 5 years of age in Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee camps and host communities.

In Kakuma, Turkana County, UNICEF Nutrition Officer Susan Jobando is leading efforts on the ground to support the county government through this programme by helping to build the capacity of the healthcare workers and the system to better deal with malnutrition.

“UNICEF is playing a critical role here in ensuring that we have a supply whereby nutrition commodities reach the children who need them the most,” said Susan. “With partners and generous EU aid, we are able to reach children in need not only with treatment strategies but also with preventive measures so that they are able to adapt better to the negative effects of climate change.”

Since 2021 the programme had been catering to over 8,000 children, but through additional EU humanitarian support and through sustained efforts by the Turkana County Government, over 22,000 children are currently being reached with lifesaving nutrition commodities and health services.

Analia, now fully recovered, is a testament to the impact of this work.

“Every mother wants their child to have a good, healthy and strong body. I am glad that my baby was given a fighting chance through this treatment,” says Sabina as she plays with Analia at home.

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Sabina Naboi and her daughter Analia with Maureen Nganyi, UNICEF staff at the hospital in Kakuma



© UNICEF Kenya
Providing health and nutrition support to children in
Kakuma Refugee Camp <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0AUphIY3CE&t=3s>

WASH

Summary of Key Highlights

UNICEF's work supported the following:



2,019 villages became open defecation free, benefiting 764,504 people



677,060 people gained access to hand hygiene facilities



375,103 people gained basic access to safe water



196,805 children benefited from access to WASH services in 547 schools.

Ongoing challenges



6.5 per cent of the population practices **open defecation** - 3.5 million people



19.1 per cent still use **surface water** as the primary source of drinking water



There is **low coverage** of regulated water services in ASAL counties; and a lack of operations and maintenance sustainability.

Contributing to sanitation service coverage, UNICEF supported the MOH and Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation in developing the Guidelines for Scaling Up Safely Managed On-Site Sanitation Services, guiding county staff and frontline workers in implementing scalable, context-specific sanitation solutions, and enhancing monitoring. These efforts resulted in the launch of real-time monitoring and sanitation hubs across all 47 counties, allowing for frequent programme tracking and adjustment, and enhancing accountability.

UNICEF supported 10 counties in enabling 2,019 villages to be open defecation free, benefiting 764,504 people (101 per cent of target), using the Community-led Total Sanitation approach. Additionally, 677,060 people gained access to hand hygiene facilities through UNICEF support. Partnerships with private actors upgraded 13,431 toilets, benefiting 67,042 people. In informal settlements, 209,484 people accessed safely managed sanitation. Emergency

© UNICEF/HFI0363





responses reached 719,698 people with cholera prevention messages, while 53,473 gained improved emergency sanitation services.

During 2024, UNICEF reached 375,103 additional people with basic access to safe water (against a target of 600,000) through the construction and rehabilitation of water sources of which 365,139 people are served from 75 solarised, drought resilient, sustainably managed and protected boreholes. As part of climate adaptation for building community resilience, drilling for three deep boreholes was completed in Samburu, Garissa and Wajir, providing long-term water solutions to those facing water scarcity challenges. These boreholes provided water to 3,600 people in 2024 (in Samburu), including 1010 children in three schools

and one health care facility, with potential to expand reach through further investment in water provision infrastructure.

In support of WASH in institutions, in order to enhance health and education outcomes, together with the MOH, UNICEF capacitated health care workers on WASH in health care facilities, reaching 38 counties out of 47. UNICEF provided access to WASH services in 100 healthcare facilities, and 547 schools (against a target of 100), reaching 196,805 children. UNICEF's multi-sectoral interventions across health, nutrition, and WASH have contributed to a decline in stunting among children under five (26 per cent in 2014 to 18 per cent in 2022) and diarrhea prevalence (from 15 per cent to 14 per cent in eight years).

Safe Toilet Technology used in Kenya is ideal for People With Disabilities

Improving sanitation for people with disabilities

Irene Sinoya

© UNICEFKenya/2024/IreneSinoya



*Accessing toilets was challenging for James Odongo
19 April 2024*

In the aftermath of the civil unrest that followed the 2007 Kenyan elections, James Odongo, a 71-year-old resident of Siaya County in western Kenya, faced significant challenges due to injuries that compromised his mobility and quality of life. "Pain and agony were part of my life," Odongo shared, recounting the difficult period that left him dependent on crutches due to fractures in his spine and leg.

Struggling with the aftermath of these injuries, Odongo found it increasingly difficult to use the squat toilet in his home. This

challenge prompted his family to seek innovative sanitation solutions that could accommodate his needs.

To address this, a low-cost sanitary latrine solution was introduced to Odongo's household, a Safe Toilet (SATO) pan, significantly improving his living conditions. This particular model allows users to sit down and can be fitted on top of traditional pit latrines. Such adaptation marks a shift toward a more inclusive approach to sanitation, offering a dignified solution for those with mobility issues.

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Linet Otieno, a local artisan trained by UNICEF installs a SATO stool

In Siaya, the toilets are installed by UNICEF-trained workers, and feature an air-tight seal that closes off automatically once used, concealing the waste inside and keeping out insects, which can spread diseases.

This initiative, implemented in Siaya County through a collaborative effort between UNICEF, Japan's Lixil Group, and the local government, is part of a broader market-based sanitation project. Odongo praises the solution, noting, "They are always neat and only use a small amount of water for cleaning. They are also child-friendly since they have a small drop hole that a child cannot fit through."

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A sample SATO stool installed in a latrine

The impact of these sanitation solutions extends beyond individual users like Odongo, contributing to the overall health and dignity of communities. Ideal for people with disabilities, these toilets help restore dignity and reduce health risks associated with poor sanitation. This underscores the critical importance of accessibility in sanitation infrastructure.

In Siaya County, which was declared open defecation free (ODF) in 2018, the widespread adoption of these innovative sanitation solutions has played a pivotal role in maintaining ODF status. Jimmy Kariuki, a Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Officer at UNICEF Kenya, emphasizes the broader goals of the project: "This project is important because it aims to eradicate open defecation and ensure that children, families, and communities have universal access to proper sanitation and hygiene in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 6.2."

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James Odongo (left) and his wife Mary Auma (right) at their rural home in Siaya County

Apart from Siaya County, the project is also implemented in six other counties in Kenya which include Homa Bay, Kilifi, Kitui, Kisumu, Migori and Narok. So far, over 550,000 people across the seven counties have benefitted from the project and now have access to basic sanitation. This initiative serves as a model for sustainable and inclusive sanitation solutions, illustrating how targeted interventions can make significant strides in improving quality of life and public health outcomes.

Education

Summary of Key Highlights

UNICEF's work supported the following:



66,100 out-of-school children enrolled, and stayed in school



389,869 children benefited from online access to learning



36,259 children (14,313 girls) supported with skills development



159,030 children (43 per cent female, 73 per cent refugees) in Garissa and Turkana accessed formal or non-formal education in emergencies.

Ongoing challenges



The percentage of **learners in Grade 3 reaching minimum proficiency in numeracy in 2022 dropped** compared to 2019 from 68.8 to 54.2 per cent



Data in the Education sector remains a significant challenge



High rates of teenage pregnancy among school-going girls is a key challenge reducing attendance



There is a lack of recognized alternative pathways for education.

UNICEF collaborates with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to strengthen the education system and support out-of-school children (OOSC). In 2024, UNICEF's interventions including community engagement, and advocacy campaigns helped the MOE re-enroll 66,142 children in schools, totalling 317,644 children since mid-2022.

To strengthen the system, UNICEF enhanced information management, supporting development of education and WASH in school modules in the national school census 2024, covering around 119,000 schools, including schools in refugee settings for the first time. This support will fill data gaps on key education indicators, including net enrolment rate., . Complementing the 6,136 pre-primary children directly supported by UNICEF to re-enroll in schools, UNICEF worked with MOE to ensure the inclusion of pre-primary data into the Kenya Education Management Information System to support informed decisions, policies, and financing on early learning.

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To improve child learning in schools, UNICEF and UN partner advocacy supported the government to restore the KES 3.5 billion budget for school meals. UNICEF, together with partners, provided technical support for the Community Service Learning curriculum re-design to align with the Competency Based Curriculum. UNICEF enhanced online access and learning for 389,869 children (43.3 per cent girls) through training of 7,647 teachers (56 per cent female) on ICT integration in Education and connecting 600 schools nationwide cumulatively to the internet. Additionally, UNICEF supported 36,259 children (14,313 girls) with skills development.

In counties impacted by emergencies, UNICEF supported evidence generation, advocacy, resource mobilisation and coordination. These efforts helped 159,030 children (43 per cent female, 73 per cent refugees) in Garissa and Turkana to access formal or non-formal education. For children affected by climate-induced emergencies, 42,376 children (47 per cent girls) in 11 counties (13 per cent of the children impacted) were supported by UNICEF with access to safe water in schools, remedial and alternative education classes, teaching and learning materials, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). Further, 12 counties were supported with education preparedness and response plans, increasing the resilience of the education system in these counties.

Building Dreams: The joy of learning and inspiring resilience of pupils returning to school

Improving access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services in schools

Joy Wanja and Lucas Odhiambo

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For Joy Nashipai, 12, school is not just a place of learning but a second home.

15 July 2024

This article first appeared in [The Star](#) on July 13, 2024.

Her daily smiles and the joy she finds in the teaching, playful, and mentoring experiences at Ioltulelei Comprehensive School in Samburu County, Kenya, are a testament to the positive impact of education on young minds.

She loves spending her day with her loving friends and supportive instructors and takes notes on mentoring pupils because she aspires to become a teacher.

"My teachers believe in me and encourage confidence, respect, and working hard. They urge me to become the best student and to have a heart full of love and happiness," Nashipai said. She aspires to join Moi Girls School in Maralal, Samburu County, after completing junior secondary school at her current learning institution. Later, she hopes to join a teacher training college.

Nashipai is also grateful for the UNICEF-supplied school kits that students like her received.

"I was very happy to get the UNICEF school bag and its supplies. Aside from notebooks, stationery pens, rulers, erasers, and writing books, it also included sanitary pads for me," said Nashipai.

She added that it made learning and attending school more meaningful and enjoyable.

Overcoming Challenges

Fifteen-year-old Dickson Loumeni knows that livestock is the family's lifeline, but he also recognizes the value of education. He spent most of his early years as a herder, caring for his family's herd of 40 cattle. In the pastoralist community, a family's wealth is measured by the number of cows, goats, and sheep they own.

However, the last two years have been bleak and hard on the family due to prolonged droughts. The severe drought in their area killed all livestock, forcing families like Loumeni's to leave their homelands for water and pasture.

Loumeni considered starting a business to buy more cows, but during an Out-of-School enrolment drive, the local school administration and teachers convinced him to join the school. Though older than his Grade Four classmates, he is happy to attend school and learn to read and write.

"When I first stepped into the school, I was greeted with overwhelming support from my peers and teachers, despite my long absence from the classroom. Today, I can proudly write my name and read a short story," he shares, beaming with pride at his progress.

He shares his career goals, "I am working hard in school to become a doctor in my community. I want to bring hope and smiles to everyone by treating them," Loumei said.

According to Loumeni, the school has kept him engaged in productive activities and steered him away from idle pursuits at home and in the community. It has instilled a sense of responsibility and a vision for his future.

"When I am in school, I am safer than at home where I engage in activities that do not encourage me to become a virtuous young man," he said, adding that interacting with him has taught him about access to education is one important child rights.

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Dickson Loumeni in class

Improving Education and Hygiene

Mrs. Losana Ladismo, a teacher at Loltulelei Primary School, noted that despite growing challenges such as drought, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, and other cultural practices that keep both boys and girls away from school, the number of learners is increasing daily.

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Mrs Losana Ladismo, a teacher at Loltulelei Primary School in Samburu County in Kenya instructs learners in the classroom

“This inspiring trend is a testament to the impact of UNICEF’s support, our collective efforts as teachers, and the resilience of our school community. The number of children re-joining schools has increased since we began receiving WASH support, including improved access to clean drinking water, new student toilet facilities, and educational supplies such as desks that helped the school cope with the pressure from additional learners. The construction of the toilets has greatly improved the sanitation situation in the school,” said Mrs Ladismo.

Teachers and Board of Management members were trained on hygiene promotion, including Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) and operation and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities in the school. The new sanitation facilities for both boys and girls have increased the hygiene levels, and the girls are happy and excited to have new bathrooms.

“The girls are delighted because of the menstrual hygiene support. They received two sanitary packs each and are now much more confident during their menses due to sanitary pads, adequate hygiene facilities, including clean toilets and functional bathrooms with running water,” said Mrs Ladismo.

She noted that the pupils now confidently practice essential handwashing before critical moments, especially before eating and after playing or using the toilet. This is a significant step towards ensuring their health and well-being and reassuring the school community.

Students also receive guidance and counseling classes emphasizing the importance of making informed decisions, developing life skills, and appreciating the crucial role of mentorship. This emphasis on mentorship provides reassurance about the student’s holistic development.

Building Resilience

UNICEF WASH Specialist Jackson Mutia underscores the project’s significance in bolstering community resilience to climate shocks in drought-prone areas like Samburu County. The project’s focus on improved access to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services is a crucial step towards this goal.

According to Mutia, the Embassy of Sweden in Kenya is a key partner supporting the project in Samburu North and Samburu East Sub-Counties of Samburu County. Their support is instrumental in providing access to a sustainable and climate-resilient water supply in the community, schools, and healthcare facilities in the area.

“The project is focused on providing access to safe and equitable water, sanitation, and hygiene services in Samburu County to ensure that residents can enjoy a safe and sustainable environment,” said Mutia.

“UNICEF is also collaborating with the national and county governments to ensure that more schools, early childhood development centers, and healthcare facilities have inclusive, gender-responsive WASH services. This collaboration makes us all part of a more significant effort towards a common goal,” he added.

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Newly constructed sanitation facilities at Loltulelei Comprehensive School in Samburu County

Looking Ahead

For Nashipai and Loumeni, the journey ahead is filled with promise and potential. Nashipai, with her aspiration to become a teacher, and Loumeni, with his dream of becoming a doctor, are both looking towards a more hopeful and brighter future.

Child Protection

Summary of Key Highlights

UNICEF's work supported the following:



45,781 children experiencing violence were supported with protection and care services



27,800 children and caregivers received mental health and psychosocial support in refugee camps/host communities



6,322 children in school were reached with life skills opportunities, girls' agency, and peer to peer support for FGM prevention



7 County Governments created a budget line dedicated for child protection for the first time.

Ongoing challenges



Ongoing challenges to address issues of **violence against children**, high prevalence of FGM especially in border counties include cultural practices and norms which are deeply entrenched; Media and partner reports late in 2024 indicated increased FGM cases following school closures in certain counties such as Migori



44,070 children live in 902 institutional care facilities, and 2,056 children have disabilities



Limited sector and human resources are key bottlenecks.

With UNICEF's advocacy, the budget of the Directorate of Children's Service was maintained during 2024 at KES 250 million (US\$1.9 million), despite the challenging circumstances around the 2024 Finance Bill and youth demonstrations. At county level, seven County Governments created a budget line dedicated for child protection for the first time, which will expand services for children. For Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit and Wajir counties, a budget line was included for the provision of GBV clinical services in the health sector budget as a part of the USAID-funded health project.

As a result of UNICEF's advocacy last year, 50 Children's Officers (government child protection case workers) were recruited. This year, UNICEF developed a workforce investment case and successfully advocated for more equitable deployment of officers to remote Northern Kenya, including Turkana; though the overall numbers are insufficient to provide quality service, at least one officer per sub-county was secured. The workforce ratio in Baringo, West Pokot and Samburu has also improved.

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Despite funding constraints, overall, UNICEF supported 45,781 children experiencing violence with protection and care services. UNICEF supported 1798 unaccompanied and separated children in Busia, Homabay, Kisumu and Garissa with alternative care and/or reunification Services, including 1086 in the refugee camps (Dadaab and Kakuma). To support refugee camps/host communities with other protection services, 27,800 (16,185 female; 11,615 male) children and caregivers received MHPSS; 18,538 (9,730 girls, 8,808 boys) children were reached through help desks and radio programmes on child protection prevention and response; and 4,979 (3,389 female, 590 male) children and caregivers received GBV risk mitigation services. UNICEF reached 150,000 people with key messages addressing child protection and GBV risks in emergencies, including harmful cultural practices.

UNICEF provided extensive support to the Kenyan Government for their engagement in the Global Ministerial Conference on ending Violence against Children in Bogota including the national consultation process. Positively, the Kenyan Government has made a progressive pledge for scaling up programming, funding of protective care reform, supporting safe schools, enhancing protection in health care and helping to end harmful practices, with a concrete financial commitment.

Through the Global UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM, UNICEF reached 6,322 children in school with life skills opportunities, girls' agency, and peer to peer support for FGM prevention. Further, 48,502 people were reached with tailored FGM prevention and response messaging and interventions through community engagement forums to shift deeply rooted social norms in 11 high FGM prevalence counties.

Looking Back and Looking Ahead: What the Future Holds for Children in Kenya

Protecting children rights

Shaheen Nilofer and Pornpun Jib Rabiltoosaporn

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20 November 2024

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35 years ago in November 1989, world leaders made a historic commitment to the world's children by adopting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), an international agreement that promises to protect children's right. Since then, the UNCRC has become the most universally accepted human rights treaty in history.

Kenya became a signatory to the CRC in 1990 and thus upholding the commitment to fulfill the rights of every child in Kenya through its laws, policies and practices. The revision of the 2001 Children Act in 2022 enshrines the specific legislation safeguarding the rights and welfare of children in Kenya.

Kenya's development is dependent on the country having a healthy, well educated, skilled and future-fit workforce. But the burden of poverty which Kenya continues to face is weighing down the potential of our children's futures. While Kenya has seen multi-dimensional poverty in children reduce from 59.3 per cent in 2009 to 47.7 per cent in 2019, an estimated 10.5 million children in Kenya are still at risk of not achieving their potential in life without urgent action. [1]

34 years on from Kenya's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, some progressive strides have been made in improving child-related indicators across sectors. Despite significant efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since 2015, progress for children in recent years has stalled, reversed or has been insufficient in many countries. Inequalities between countries and within countries is a major concern. The challenges facing children are becoming even more complex, given the pressing impacts of climate change, protracted humanitarian crises & conflicts, demographic movements, technological advancements, rapid urbanization, displacement, and severely constrained fiscal envelopes, among other issues.

In terms of how Kenya is tracking against the SDGs, the country reports mixed results with some indicators showing progress, while some showed stagnation or reversals.[2] Across the 17 SDGs, overall poverty, maternal and neonatal mortality has shown improvement. Other indicators which generally improved, include access to healthcare services, basic services (water, sanitation, hygiene, and electricity), school enrolment and completion rates with gender parity attained at all levels. However, overall poverty in the rural populations, under-nourishment and general food insecurity worsened.[3]

Kenya has sustained an impressive reduction in stunting (low height for age, due to chronic undernutrition), which dropped from 26 per cent to 18 per cent between 2014 and 2022.[4] Under five mortality has also halved from 115 per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 47 per 1,000 live births in 2023.[5] But the decline in neonatal mortality has been much slower and the vast majority (70per cent) of all child deaths are still being caused by preventable diseases[6] such as diarrhoea, pneumonia (acute respiratory infections), malnutrition, anemia, malaria, measles, HIV and tuberculosis. To prevent these child deaths, we need to provide essential medicines and medical supplies, recruit, and train community health workers, improve the quality of primary healthcare facilities, and ensure zero-dose children are reached by routine vaccination campaigns.

Poverty alleviation efforts in the past two years include the Government's expansion of the Cash Transfer Programme (Inua Jamii) from 1.2 million households in 2022 to 1.7 million in 2024. Inua Jamii caters to the most vulnerable members of society including children, orphans, people with disabilities, and the elderly to cushion them from poverty. The Government's commitment to expand Inua Jamii's coverage to 2.5 million households by 2026 and prioritizing poor households with children, and those with a high degree of vulnerability is laudable, considering that children comprise 42per cent of the Kenyan population. The planned expansion will not only help families cover their basic needs and improve their daily lives but will also contribute to human capital development and boost economic productivity in the short to medium-term. Sustaining this programme in the years to come is crucial to lift millions of people from poverty and improve their economic futures.

In addition, a plan to end the Triple Threat (new HIV infections, gender-based violence and teenage pregnancy) against girls and women by 2027 was launched in 2023. The plan focuses on empowering adolescents and young people while safeguarding them from health vulnerabilities and inequalities.

In Kenya, only 50 per cent of rural schools have basic sanitation facilities.[7] This makes it difficult for girls to manage their menstrual hygiene needs, forcing girls to miss school during their periods, or even leading to school dropouts. We need renewed commitments and critical leadership to unlock investments towards providing adequate hygiene and sanitation facilities in schools, including climate-resilient water systems. This will ensure schools are conducive to learning and support our students' health and well-being.

The number of girls and women subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM) has significantly dropped from 38 per cent in 1998 to 15 per cent in 2022.[8] However, violence against children remains prevalent, as nearly 30 per cent of girls and 38 per cent of boys reported suffering violence in their homes from parents, caregivers, or adult relatives.[9] Increasing the child protection workforce and rolling out the National Parenting Programme will help curb incidences of violence against children and improve the surveillance and reporting mechanism.

Education for All is the Government of Kenya's drive towards attaining universal primary and secondary education for children nationally. In 2019, there were approximately 2.5 million children in Kenya who were out of school.[10] Establishing diverse education pathways for non-formal education and addressing the critical shortage of teachers in the Arid Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) regions will help address the needs of out-of-school children and bring them back to learning.

The Government of Kenya has legislated many new progressive laws since signing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, such as, the Basic Education Act of 2013 which provides for free and compulsory primary education for every child in Kenya, including children with disabilities. The 2016 Water Act ensures water resources and sewerage services are established, managed, and regulated to give children and their families safe water for their daily needs. The 2017 Health Act aims to improve children's, adolescents', and women's access to health services, thereby improving their health and well-being. These are only some of the many laws, policies, and plans introduced to support children's development and well-being in Kenya. These normative frameworks require adequate funding and allocation of public resources. At the national level, social spending increased from 33 per cent to 43.7 per cent between 2014/15 to 2022/23 while at the county level, social spending improved from 39.7 per cent to 41.7 per cent over the same period.[11] Therefore, given fiscal constraints, it is imperative

to protect budgets and ensure that investments towards children are increased and sustained moving forward.

The Summit of the Future in New York held in September this year sought to forge an international consensus on delivering a better reality for children now and safeguarding their future. It presented an opportunity for world leaders to re-commit to SDGs 2030 for children with a focus on ending hunger and malnutrition, building peace, making science and technology more accessible and inclusive, reducing poverty and inequality by removing barriers that limit children's potential, and addressing the negative impacts of climate change.

On the occasion of CRC's 35th anniversary, we need to remember that children represent our collective future. Now more than at any time in history, they need to be at the centre of our societal commitments and governments, development actors, civil society, the donor community – all of us – must ensure that children's ability to thrive and reach their full potential should be at the cornerstone of our actions. Together, we all need to navigate the current context to build cohesive, sustainable, and inclusive societies. There is no time to waste towards a paradigm shift in our policy and financing decisions that impede investments at scale for accelerating progress. Now is the moment to do so, and by forging flexible alliances in a collaborative approach, let us seize this chance to reset, renew and re-double our commitments to children for a livable future.

By Shaheen Nilofer, Representative, UNICEF Kenya and Pornpun Jib Rabiltoassaporn, Country Director, Save the Children Kenya and Madagascar.

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Cross-cutting areas & Programme Effectiveness

Summary of Key Highlights

UNICEF's work supported the following:



Over 1 million people affected by floods and health emergencies reached with services



4.6 million people reached with public health messages



12,600 young people benefited from entrepreneurship and agriculture skills capacity building



310,000 children and young people engaged in UNICEF-supported initiatives, such as U-Report, climate action, and civic engagement programmes



Assistive technologies provided to 590 children with disabilities.

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In 2024, UNICEF's humanitarian response support reached over one million people affected by floods and health emergencies.

UNICEF supported MoH on prevention of Marburg Virus Disease and responded to cholera, polio, and monkey pox (Mpox) emergencies including development of National Mpox Response Plan and National Mpox Risk Communication and Community Engagement Strategy. UNICEF reached 4.6 million people with public health messages, and organised community dialogues with over 6,000 people. Promoting accountability to affected populations, UNICEF collected and responded to 3,000 concerns / questions through established community feedback mechanisms.

Through Generation Unlimited (GenU) – an initiative that concerns engaging young people often through

media, on the ground meetings and feedback mechanisms to solicit views and mobilize youth - 310,000 young people were engaged in UNICEF-supported initiatives, such as climate action, and civic engagement programmes, with over 28,000 actively participating in community activities. UNICEF's GenU initiative also introduced a green entrepreneurship curriculum, with over 1000 youth completing business training. The Engaging Kenyan Youth in Agriculture and Nutrition (EKYAN) programme supported livelihoods for 11,647 youth by integrating agriculture and nutrition, establishing 14 centers of excellence in public schools to promote climate-smart agriculture and sustainable nutrition practices. Through this work, 100 youth in 2024 were supported to build/grow sustainable businesses in the waste management sector, which also generated additional viable green jobs in the sector.

UNICEF's focus on disability inclusion contributed to the formulation of the National Disability Policy and the expansion of social assistance programmes for children with disabilities. Other notable successes include the provision of assistive technologies to **590 children with disabilities and enrolment of 438 out-of-school children with disabilities into primary schools.**



UNICEF worked with the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), bringing together people with disabilities (PWD) searching employment, and had multiple engagements to promote recruitment of PWD in the UN; UNICEF also worked with Riziki Source to disseminate job advertisements to be more accessible to PWD; and UNICEF coordinated with other UN agencies to foster these approaches to support recruitment and employment of PWD in the wider UN system.

On climate change, UNICEF undertook the development of the Climate Landscape Analysis for Children, to highlight how climate issues affect children specifically to inform policymakers and guide UNICEF programming. The Children's Climate and Disaster Risk Model (CCDRM) analytical report was successfully launched by the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, which will support decision-making and resource allocation for climate mitigation and responsive programming.

Strengthening Protection of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) oversight, UNICEF trained around 70 partner staff and all suppliers with access to children and conducted PSEA capacity assessments for all 34 CSO partners. An internal SEA reporting mechanism was provided to personnel and disseminated among CSO partners. UNICEF, with IOM, co-chaired the Inter-agency PSEA Network, contributing to UN-wide PSEA efforts.

In 2024, UNICEF procured goods and services worth US\$12.6 million, distributing 51.6 million vaccine doses (up from 40 million in 2023). The UN Country team in Kenya launched the first-ever UN Common Back Office initiative: as a service provider, UNICEF now supports UNDP and UN Women with HACT-related services (financial assurance, knowledge management, and capacity-building activities). As a client, UNICEF receives ICT, administration, and medical services from the UN.

Rising from the Ruins of Floods: Education Delivering a Brighter Future

Supporting out-of-school children affected by disasters to continue learning

Joy Wanja Muraya and Lucas Odhiambo

© UNICEFKenya/2024/PaulKidero



*Margaret Mwachai a learner at Tunzanani Primary School in Kilifi County
18 September 2024*

Amid a torrential downpour, the once vibrant Tunzanani Primary School in Kilifi County lay in ruins. The school compound was destroyed, and the students were devastated. This is a result of the recent heavy El Niño rains that affected most parts of Kenya in late 2023.

The classrooms were a mere shadow of their former selves, and the disaster dampened the students' spirits of smooth learning. The pupils had watched the flood waters carry away their books, pens, and pencils and a nearby river blocked their way to school.

For 13-year-old Margaret Mwachai and 12-year-old Gabriel Tofa, their dreams of becoming an eye specialist and a scientist,

respectively, were now distant as the floodwaters filled their school compound with large paddles. Their hopes of smooth learning had been ruined.

However, despite the challenges posed by the floods that affected their schools, the pupils continued their studies through the UNICEF support program enabled by Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and Postcode Education Trust, thanks to funding raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery. It facilitated the restoration of access to education, improved the quality of learning environments, and made them more resilient to future crises.

© UNICEFKenya/2024/PaulKidero



Gabriel Tofa, a learner at Tunzanani Primary School in Kilifi County writes his notes during a lesson in his classroom.

UNICEF Kenya Education Specialist Atsuko Nishimoto noted that the holistic support provided ensured that education was prioritized during emergencies and that the learning continued with minimum or no interruptions.

“The education emergency programming, funded by Education Cannot Wait (ECW) as well as Postcode Education Trust, thanks to funding raised by players of People’s Postcode Lottery, is helping out-of-school children affected by the disaster in Kenya to be enrolled/re-enrolled and continue learning. We are immensely grateful for the support of ECW and the UK, which has allowed us to reach over 30,000 boys and girls through our education emergency program in the past year. Together, we are making a significant impact on the lives of these children,” said Nishimoto.

According to Nishimoto, UNICEF further provided capacity building for the school management and the county government regarding psychosocial support, disaster risk reduction, and response preparedness for potential climate-induced emergencies.

Tunzanani Primary School deputy headteacher Peninah Gambo appreciated the support during the challenging time.

“We are grateful for the support during these challenging times. It has significantly impacted our school, especially in ensuring students access essential resources, including uninterrupted education,” said Gambo.

Margaret Ngotho, program manager of the Life Skills Promoters program, added that the UNICEF’s Education in Emergencies program encouraged sustainability at the school level, leaving schools more prepared.

“After the disaster during the rehabilitation phase, we installed water tanks in the schools to ensure a steady water supply” said Ngotho.

Tsofa appreciated the stationery that has gone a long way to ensure learning in school is now better equipped, and he is now excitedly working hard towards his dream of becoming a scientist.

“When I grow up, I want to be a scientist and work in medicine to create medicines for the people,” Tsofa said.

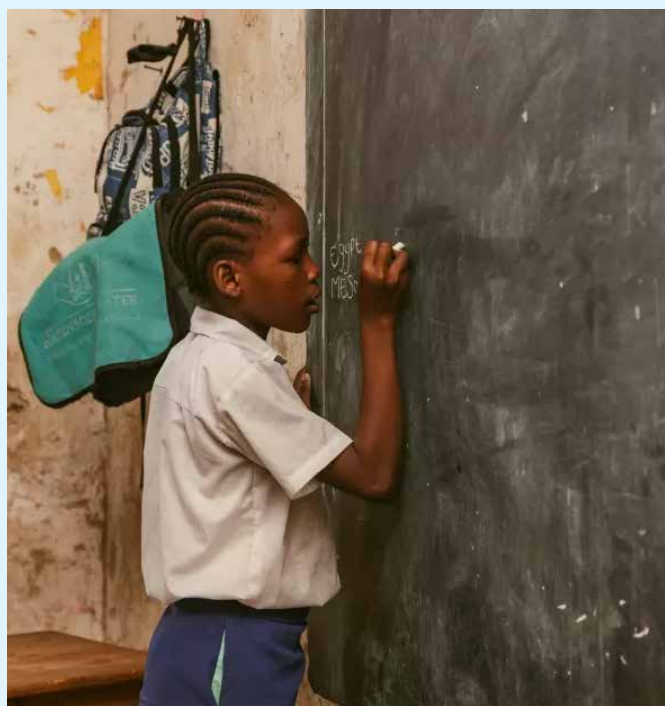
Tsofa expressed gratitude for UNICEF’s support, highlighting the emergency support of school supplies, water tanks, and sanitary towels, which have assisted in managing the crisis.

“I am grateful for UNICEF support, including school bags, pencils, rulers, sharpeners, and teachers’ books to help us manage the crisis. The water tank has also helped us restore the supply of clean water in the school,” said Tsofa.

Mwachai appreciated the sanitary towels provided to girls as a complement to the earlier provisions made by the school administration.

“When I got my menses, I rushed home for sanitary pads, but my mother didn’t always have the money to buy them. When she asked the shopkeeper to get them on credit, he refused because we had other pending debts growing daily. Today, I’m happy that the school, through UNICEF, provided me with sanitary pads,” Mwachai said.

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Margaret Mwachai, a learner at Tunzanani Primary School in Kilifi County writes on the blackboard at her classroom.

These responsive humanitarian efforts collectively aim to enhance the resilience of schools and communities even in challenging times.

For now, the next generation of leaders, such as Mwachai and Tofa, will focus on their futures with the promise that the future is promising.

Pathways to Learning: Kenya's Campaign to Bring Children Back to School

The future of education

Opinion by *Shaheen Nilofer* and *Mary Joy Pigozzi*

© UNICEFKenya/2024



Learners in class
13 September 2024

This article first appeared in [The Standard](#) on September 13, 2024.

Brian Kinyanjui, a 10-year-old boy living in Kajiado County, wants to go to high school and eventually study engineering at university. "I want to become the best engineer in Kenya to provide solutions in our community," he said.

Each and every child around the world has the right to a quality primary education. The benefits of education include better long-term health and economic outcomes, and better life choices, allowing individuals to break the cycle of inter-generational poverty. Quality, safe, inclusive education also benefits society by improving general population health and livelihood outcomes, gender equality, and greater political participation and global citizenship. But greater investments in education are needed to take advantage of what it has to offer.

According to the 2021 Kenya Out-Of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) study, 1.13 million children of primary school age (6-13 years old) across the country are out of school. A combination of barriers contributes to poor school enrolment including poverty, social and cultural norms affecting girls and boys, the absence of school meals, increasing teenage pregnancies, early marriage, nomadic lifestyles, child labour, disability, and children living in crisis.

The out-of-school challenge was further exacerbated by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which saw schools close, and many children not returning. Prolonged drought followed by successive floods recently experienced in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid (ASAL) counties forced families to leave their homelands in search of clean drinking water and pasture for their livestock. The culmination of these crises caused an education catastrophe, leaving many school-aged

children with significant learning loss, learning poverty or excluded from education all together.

To improve access to education, the Ministry of Education, County administrations, Education Above All Foundation (EAA) and key education partners have been working to help children overcome barriers to education, contributing to Kenya's efforts to reach SDG 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality education opportunities for all.

One of the main programmes supporting these efforts is the "Operation Come-to-School," which was implemented by UNICEF in partnership with EAA, the Government of Kenya and NGO partners.

Phase One of the Operation Come-to-School programme ran between 2015-2020 and Phase Two from 2021-2023. Through this partnership, 605,628 out-of-school children have been enrolled in schools throughout Kenya. This includes 322,149 boys and 283,479 girls, demonstrating our shared commitment to expanding educational opportunities for all children.

During the two phases, the programme made significant strides in enhancing education in 18 counties, including 15 arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) counties as well as, Mombasa, Bungoma and urban informal settlements in Nairobi. In total, over 408,808 learners have gained life skills, mentorship and psychosocial support. While more than 1.4 million children benefited from improved teaching materials an impressive 89 per cent of children supported by the programme have stayed in school. The programme has also improved learning environments through the refurbishment of 318 classrooms. 275 gender sensitive latrines were refurbished with 71 new latrines being built. 374 handwashing stands have been installed and hygiene promoted through school health clubs showing the importance of hand-washing practices and techniques. Additionally, 84.7 per cent of trained teachers are now using effective teaching methods.

Policy development has been a key focus, with the finalisation of the Nomadic Education Policy and the creation of a draft bill to enable the participation of all children in quality education in Garissa County. A comprehensive assessment report supports curriculum development in this area. Furthermore, the integration of a Digital Attendance Application into the National Education Management

Information System has enhanced data management across 90 per cent of targeted schools, aiding strategic planning and resource allocation.

As a result of joint advocacy, a multi-faceted approach was implemented to improve education. This included establishing diverse education pathways, strengthening formal education systems, and delivering an Accelerated Education Programme. Additionally, guidelines for non-formal education were developed, teacher shortages in ASAL counties were addressed, and operational guidelines for integrating all children into the national system were created.

Whilst we take a moment to celebrate all that has been achieved through the Operation Come-to-School programme, there is more to be done to ensure that every child has the opportunity to receive a quality primary education. Increased and equitable investment in education is critical. We need improved and periodic data, monitoring of out-of-school children and those at-risk of dropout, and we need to build resilience of schools, education systems and communities. Developing targeted interventions, including upgrading the quality and quantity of education facilities, expanding coverage of school meals and developing school-based strategies to re-engage and support newly enrolled out-of-school children, particularly girls and nomadic groups, is crucial for reintegration and retention.

This year, designated as "The Year of Education in Africa," presents a unique opportunity to advance educational progress and tackle persistent challenges outlined in the [\[1\]](#) Continental Education Strategy for Africa and Sustainable Development Goal 4. As we focus on addressing out-of-school children, learning poverty, and teacher shortages; increased and equitable investment alongside strong partnerships is crucial for the future of education and for our children.

By Shaheen Nilofer, Representative, UNICEF Kenya and Mary Joy Pigozzi, PhD, Executive Director, Educate A Child, [Education Above All Foundation](#).

[\[1\] African Union Themes 2024 The Year of Education - Black Golden Communications](#)

Lessons learned

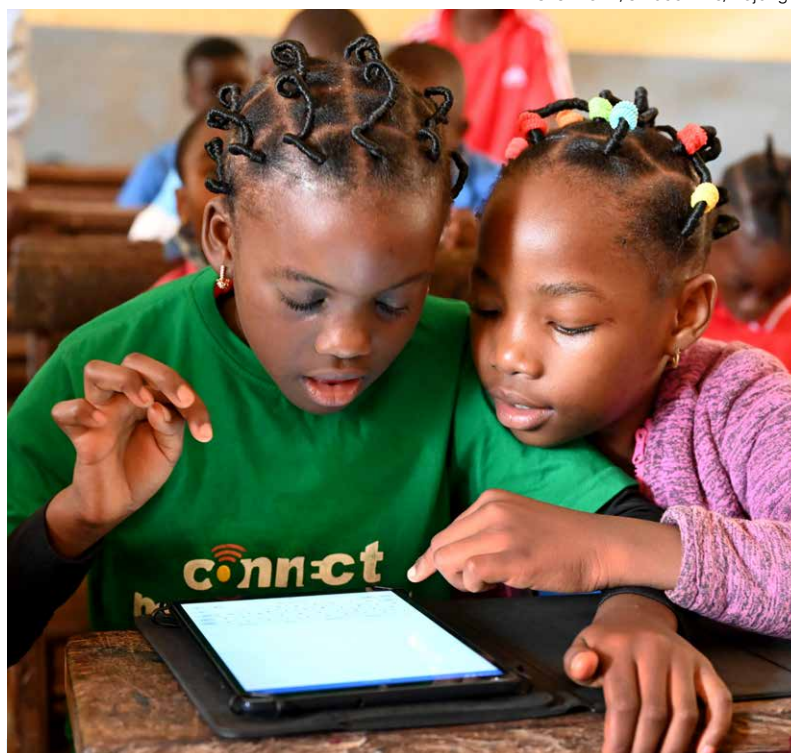
Strategic Use of Data for Programme

Shifts: UNICEF's mid-point strategic review (MPSR) led to a programme re-focus. Analysis of 2022 KDHS data revealed previously overlooked needs in Western Kenya, prompting UNICEF to prioritize six specific counties with significant child deprivations. This responsive approach ensures efforts remain relevant and impactful. UNICEF will leverage its policy influence, mobilize resources, and enhance field office responsibilities for effective program execution in the region.

Climate Change Mainstreaming and

Positioning: The MPSR, informed by the Children's Climate and Disaster Risk Model (CCDRM), revealed the need for greater alignment with UNICEF's global climate ambitions and government priorities. Launching the CCDRM analytical report allowed UNICEF to position itself as a knowledge broker on climate issues and children, exemplified through the launch of the CCDRM analytical report. UNICEF is finalizing a Climate Landscape Analysis for Children to guide future action.

Multi-Sectoral Programming: The independent evaluation of the NICHE programme underscored the value of interconnectedness between social protection, nutrition, and child protection services. This integrated approach enhances relevance, efficiency, and sustainability, filling a gap in the government's strategy for vulnerable households. NICHE contributes to strengthening systems, expanding coverage, and enhancing multisectoral collaborations.



Innovations



Education: UNICEF supported digital learning platforms, reaching 389,869 learners. The new Digital Attendance Application (DAA) was strengthened and expanded, facilitating tracking of school attendance in Mandera county.

Water: Exploratory drilling using innovative techniques and technology to identify underground water sources was conducted in seven water-stressed areas. Drilling for three deep boreholes was completed in Samburu, Wajir, and Garissa. Governance of utilities was strengthened to ensure sustainable management.

Youth Empowerment: Through GenU and various partnerships, The BeGreen initiative has enabled young people to cultivate new approaches in business ventures – for instance bringing in green innovation approaches in the waste sector – an example being the transformation of certain waste from pellets into organic fertilizer. Further expansion of the programme is planned in other counties in 2025.

Partnerships

In 2024, UNICEF strategically enhanced its partnership with the Kenyan government to improve outcomes for children and adolescents, focusing on health, education, social protection, and child protection. Collaborations with ministries and institutions like Kenya National Exams Council and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development facilitated policies, strategies, and funding for key programs. UNICEF championed child rights through advocacy briefs presented to Parliament, the National Treasury, and the Council of Governors (COG) to safeguard social sector budgets. UNICEF also engaged with the COG, Kenya Public Policy Research and Analysis and Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to support policy, data and monitoring and evaluation efforts. Climate change integration was strengthened with the Ministry of Environment. At county level, UNICEF worked with assemblies and the executive by supporting the National Facility Improvement Financing (FIF) Act, helping five counties domesticate the FIF Act and supported eight county assemblies in child-sensitive budgeting, resulting in KES 1.78 billion in social sector budget increases.

UNICEF played a key role in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, with leadership role for the two Joint Programmes (JPs) on Nutrition and Integrated Water Resources Management and contributing to other JPs. The UN JP for Nutrition, with a budget of US\$52 million over 3 years, addressed malnutrition, while collaboration with ILO, WFP, and others designed inclusive programs. Under the UN Joint Programme in Sustainable Water, with a budget of US\$560 million for 10 years to support improving access to safe water, UNICEF has led the coordination

of 10 UN agencies to harness resources and implement programming. UNICEF Country Office plays a key role in the Kenya UN Common Back Office.

Collaboration with the private sector included innovations in sanitation, pursued through collaborations with Fresh Life and LIXIL. Partnerships with organizations like Kenya Society for the Blind provided assistive technologies for children with disabilities. The Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) is a key partner in nutrition programming, aiming to reach 1 million people.

For the World Children's Day and CRC@35 combined celebrations in November, companies and entities celebrated child rights by hosting children takeovers and Going Blue. Those who supported include the African Development Bank, Australian High Commission, Britam Towers, Carrefour, Church of Latter-Day Saints, KEPSA, RMS Media Services, the Nation Group, KLM, Kenya Airways, Safaricom, Sarit Centre, UNESCO, and the UNON. In December, the Latter Day Saints Charities (LDSC) introduced their Giving Machines in Kenya and chose UNICEF as one of six non-profit beneficiaries to receive funds raised from the public.

The PROSPECTS program for refugees and host communities supported by the Government of Netherlands enabled us to deepen our engagement in Dadaab & Kakuma/Kalobyei refugee settings. UNICEF supported the government's NICHE programme with World Bank and FCDO funding and scaled up health and Nutrition programming with USAID support. UNICEF and UNFPA collaborated on the Global Programme to End Female Genital Mutilation.



UNICEF put close to 20 per cent of its annual resources towards collaborating with civil society organizations, around 58 per cent with international entities and 42 per cent with national organizations. These collaborations, also promoting the localization agenda, helped support county and national government in achieving SDGs for children. In particular, results achieved encompassed providing services in health, nutrition, WASH, protection and education (including for refugees and internally displaced people, and as part of emergency response), promoting county budget transparency and reporting at local level, and strengthening positive knowledge and practices within communities.

UNICEF partnered with universities (Turkana University and Garissa University) on research and policy, promoting children's interests at county level, while providing opportunity for youth (including refugees and the host community) to engage.

The two universities conducted research on mapping the comprehensive financing from all sources available in the respective counties, producing recommendations for how funding can be better utilized to provide services for all, and these findings will inform county policies moving forward.

Top donors that enabled moving the agenda for child rights in Kenya are the following: United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs, the Government of the United Kingdom, the European Union, GAVI the Vaccine Alliance, The World Bank, the Government of Japan, the Government of France, the Government of Ireland, United Nation's Multi-Partner Trust, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF Qatar, and UNICEF's National Committees in Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Financial resources

In 2024, the UNICEF Kenya Country Office throughput was US\$82.6 million, enabling the achievement of the afore-mentioned results for children in Kenya.

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Acknowledgement

We would like to express our gratitude to the Government of Kenya, including the sectoral line ministries and County Governments as well as frontline workers, all our donors, development partners, Civil Society Organizations, private sector partners, and UN family that contributed to the results achieved. Together, we contributed significant support to the VISION 2030 of the Government of Kenya and to achieving results for children and women in the country. We are sincerely grateful for your on-going support and continuous collaboration.



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