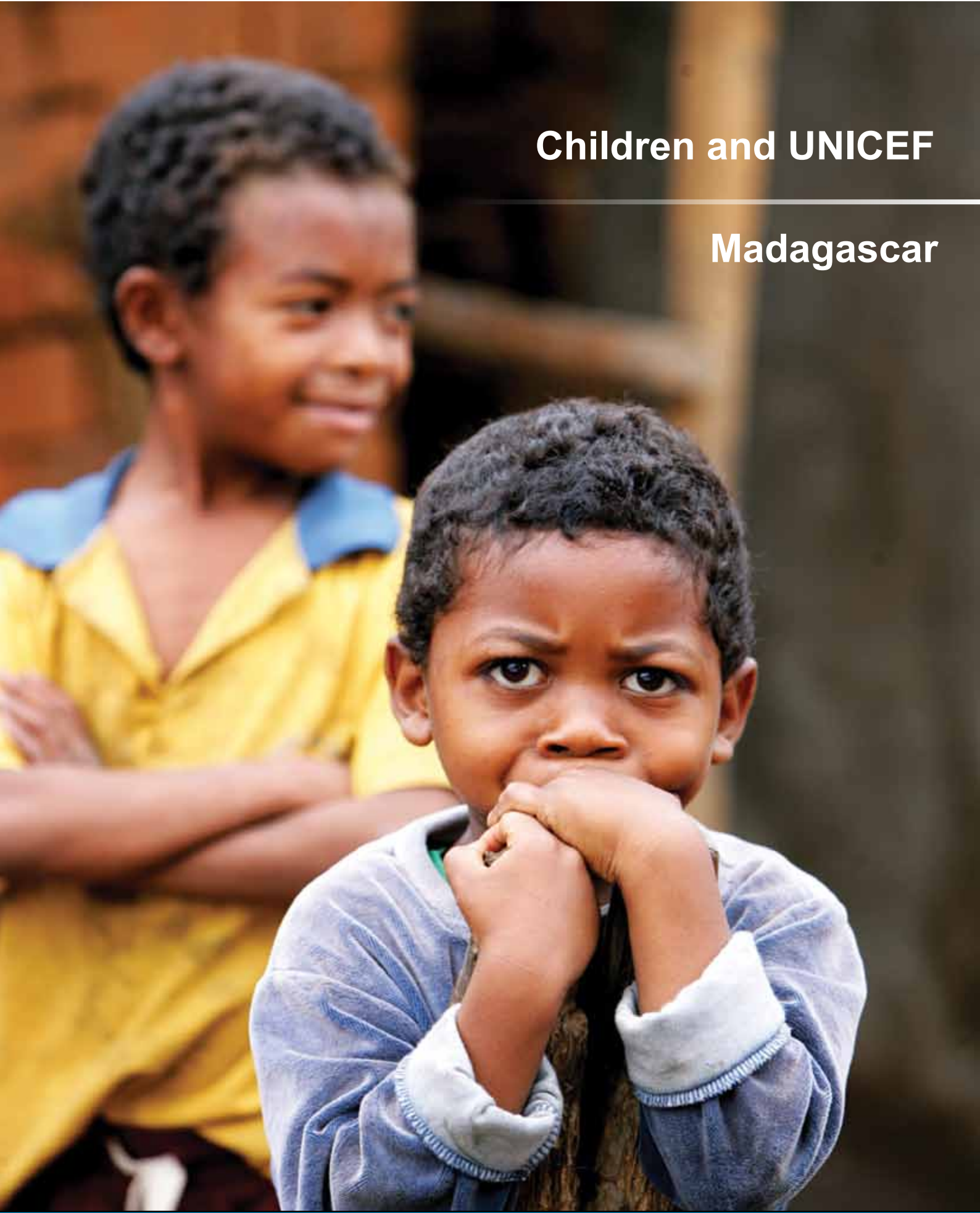


# Children and UNICEF

## Madagascar





# UNICEF Madagascar

## Country Programme Briefing Kit

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# CONTEXT

## The legacy of a crisis

Situated in the Indian Ocean, cast adrift from the east coast of mainland Africa more than 100 million years ago, Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world. Yet despite its image of a remote tropical paradise, Madagascar's children face immense challenges.

A total of 76 per cent of the population, live below the poverty line, while 56.5 per cent, more than 11 million people, are considered extremely poor (*INSTAT 2010*). This means that these children and their families cannot afford the necessary food to ensure sufficient nutritional intake, and have no resources to cover the cost of basic health and social services.

Maternal mortality is alarmingly high, with thousands of unnecessary maternal deaths each year occurring as a result of pregnancy related causes.

Only 30 per cent of people live in towns and cities, while 70 per cent live in rural areas (*SOWC 2011*). These communities are often isolated and remote, cut-off by poor road networks that leave many children and women with no access to basic health care.

Although Madagascar is one of few African countries to show a decline in the under-five mortality rate in recent years, that figure remains high. In every 1,000 live births, 72 children will die before reaching their fifth birthday (*DHS 2009*).

Malaria, diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory infections claim the most lives, while chronic malnutrition affects large swathes of Madagascar's population leaving 50 per cent of children stunted (*DHS 2009*). In the remote, semi-arid southern regions of the country, persistent food insecurity is exacerbated by increasingly unreliable seasonal rains and insect invasions.

Throughout the country, massive deforestation has led to soil erosion that has left once productive farmland degraded. This is a profound problem in a country with a predominantly rural population that is largely dependent on agriculture for survival.

Elsewhere annual flooding and cyclones destroy crops, homes and infrastructure leaving children vulnerable to malnutrition and disease, and disrupting their education.



*In early 2009, Madagascar entered a period of prolonged political crisis that is having a profoundly negative impact on the lives of the country's women and children.*

*In March 2009, the incumbent government was toppled and a transitional government established.*

*The change was accompanied by weeks of often violent street protests in several of Madagascar's main cities.*

*In the capital, Antananarivo, daily anti-government demonstrations often led to looting and clashes with security forces.*

*As a result of the change of government, key donor aid was suspended, leaving Madagascar's economic situation fragile: around 70 per cent of the public investment budget was foreign financed.*

*Basic social services have been severely eroded as national funding for health and education has diminished.*

*In some areas basic health centres have closed, lacking equipment, medicines and human resources. Nationwide, the country's health service is struggling to meet basic funding requirements for providing routine vaccinations for children and pregnant mothers.*

*Thousands of people who should have seen improvements in water and sanitation facilities since the beginning of 2009 are not being reached, making UNICEF's work in this area even more urgent in order to reduce unnecessary childhood deaths caused by waterborne illnesses.*

*Unemployment and rising prices for goods and services compound difficulties for the most vulnerable families.*

*Today the situation for Madagascar's women and children is critical as development progress made in recent years looks set to stagnate, compromising efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals of 2015.*

*Since the beginning of the crisis, UNICEF has been increasing essential monitoring mechanisms of child vulnerability.*

*The results are used to form the basis of evidence-based advocacy, nationally and internationally, to ensure that children are not held hostage or forgotten during this uncertain time.*



**“UNICEF insists that the survival, protection and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress.**

**UNICEF mobilises political will and material resources to help countries build their capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families.**

**UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children - victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities.”**

*From the UNICEF Mission Statement*

# CHILD SURVIVAL

## Meeting the MDGs with equity

Chronic malnutrition among children remains one of Madagascar's most pressing child survival issues. It leaves 50 per cent of children under five with stunted growth (*DHS 2009*), a rate that places Madagascar among the six countries in the world with the highest burden of chronic malnutrition, and is both a direct and indirect cause of child mortality.

In the country's most vulnerable regions, where harvests are often damaged by drought or flooding, the situation is punctuated by repeated peaks of acute malnutrition, particularly during the annual 'lean season' when food supplies are limited.

Among women, maternal mortality is alarmingly high at 498 deaths per 100,000 live births (*DHS 2009*); while anemia affects 35 per cent of women of child-bearing age - threatening their health and that of their unborn children.

A lack of access to health care, especially in remote rural regions, leaves women and children without basic, life-saving social services. It also means that many children do not receive routine immunisations including polio, tetanus, measles and the BCG vaccine to prevent childhood tuberculosis.

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation is poor, with significant disparities between households in rural and urban areas. In rural areas only 29 per cent of families use improved drinking water sources, and only 11 per cent use adequate sanitation facilities (*JMP 2010*). Safe water and sanitation in schools and basic health centres is limited. Less than a third of primary schools have latrines, and less than 15 per cent of basic health centres are equipped with drinking water points.

Since the 2009 political crisis water and sanitation services at de-centralised levels have become increasingly dysfunctional, further weakening the ownership of monitoring of these systems in rural areas.



*The Maternal and Child Survival and Development programme is the framework within which UNICEF Madagascar operates to reach vulnerable groups of society with essential health interventions.*

*These interventions - including immunisations, nutritional supplementation, and water and sanitation activities - are delivered through family and community care, outreach strategies with mobile teams, and clinical care. UNICEF also distributes insecticide treated mosquito nets to protect against malaria as part of Madagascar's strategic plan for malaria elimination.*





## Safeguarding progress

In recent years Madagascar has shown progress in improving the health status of the country's children: notably is it one of few countries in Africa that has succeeded in reducing deaths among children under five. In 1990, the under-five mortality rate was 168 deaths per 1,000 live births. In 2009, this figure stood at 72 deaths per 1,000 live births (*DHS 2009*).

Disparities in child health indicators have also begun to decline, and it is among Madagascar's least wealthy people that the highest gains for vaccination coverage have been felt.

Unfortunately many of these gains risk being reversed as a result of social and economic hardship caused by Madagascar's unresolved political crisis of early 2009. Many health facilities lack equipment, medicines and human resources, making even basic treatment unavailable; and specialised centres for the treatment of malnutrition are increasingly short of therapeutic food and milk, and skilled staff. In this time of political instability, UNICEF's continued work to protect Madagascar's most vulnerable children is critical.

## Delivering high-impact interventions

A vital part of the Child Survival programme are bi-annual Mother and Child Health weeks. These deliver low-cost, high-impact packages of interventions nationwide, focusing on reaching the most remote and isolated areas, and on reaching those children that risk being excluded from basic health services for whatever reason. Interventions include vitamin A supplementation, mosquito net distribution and screening of children under five for malnutrition.

Under the Expanded Programme for Immunisations, UNICEF is extending access to new and improved vaccines, and is working to reinforce the cold chain to ensure the effective distribution of these vaccines.

UNICEF also works to support the training of community health workers in some of Madagascar's most

remote regions, helping to reinforce the national capacity to identify and treat malnutrition in children - particularly in areas vulnerable to food insecurity.

Such training forms part of a wider strategy known as the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses at a community level (IMCI-c), an approach that enables community health workers to identify and treat a basic range of childhood illnesses, including diarrhoea and malaria.

Through the National Nutritional Action Plan, UNICEF is tackling maternal and infant nutrition by promoting improved maternal health care and nutritional practices. Interventions include providing iron foliate supplements, and promoting early and exclusive breastfeeding for babies and infants.

To help reduce neonatal and maternal mortality, selected health workers are trained in emergency obstetric care - providing vital care to women facing complicated pregnancies and births.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Water, sanitation and hygiene projects in communities and schools, accompanied by radio programmes that focus on health issues, are helping to encourage long-term behaviour change that will increase the sustainability of UNICEF's work to promote improved sanitation and hygiene, and to increase access to safe water.

In rural areas, UNICEF is working with local communities to promote community-led total sanitation (CLTS) initiatives - encouraging local residents to construct and use latrines, spearheading their own sanitation projects and learning how to protect themselves from diseases caused by poor sanitation.

In both rural and urban areas, UNICEF is supporting the rehabilitation and construction of water and sanitation infrastructure, while also working with local NGOs to build capacity in planning, monitoring and evaluation, helping to improve the management and maintenance of facilities at local levels.

# EDUCATION

## Lessons for the future

Over the past decade Madagascar has shown important steps towards reaching its goal of primary education for all children by 2015, but challenges remain. Beneath rising primary school attendance figures lies an education system that still does not meet the needs of many school children. Out of 100 children who enter the first grade only about 66 complete their primary school education.

Improvements in pre-school and secondary education have not kept pace with progress in primary education. At the end of 2008, only 7 per cent of pre-school aged children were enrolled in pre-schools. The secondary school completion rate (to ninth grade) was only 25 per cent. The average Malagasy adult has only completed 4.4 years of school.

Girls make up 50 per cent of primary school children, but local realities vary throughout the country. In districts where the gender gap is greatest, there are barely five girls enrolled for every 10 boys. Efforts are still needed to give girls the same opportunity for education as boys.

Most Malagasy children study in dilapidated, overcrowded classrooms with few learning materials, and over half of primary school teachers are recruited by parents' associations and have limited or no training.

Many communities have no schools at all, and 15 per cent of children begin their education in schools that do not offer the complete primary cycle.

Annual cyclones and tropical storms damage school structures every year, destroying limited learning resources. Temporary classroom shelters are built as part of relief efforts, but funds for rebuilding are limited, and there is an accumulation of temporary classroom structures that are now used permanently.

Today, the impact of the 2009 political crisis is an additional challenge for children's education. Most households have experienced a loss in revenues, while the price of basic foodstuffs has risen. Poverty increases the likelihood of children not attending school, especially if they are needed to work to help supplement household income. Public budgets have also been cut, depleting much needed public funds for education.



*UNICEF's Education for Development and Gender Equality programme aims to improve access to quality learning opportunities for all children, and enable girls and disadvantaged children to complete the basic education cycle and graduate to secondary level.*

*In line with Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3, the programme contributes to achieving an 85 per cent primary school completion rate.*

*Initiatives that reduce the direct cost to parents of schooling their children – such as providing all first grade students with 'school kits' including exercise books, pens and pencils, and gradually taking on the payment of previously community-funded teachers – have been vital in increasing school enrolment, ensuring that more children have access to primary education.*



## Education for All

Madagascar's Education for All (EFA) Plan sets out a comprehensive map to improve the quality of, and access to basic education. It is the foundation of UNICEF's work within the education system.

At a national level, to help reach the EFA objectives, UNICEF supports policy and strategy development. UNICEF also plays a major role in maintaining international funding for the education sector, and in channeling this funding directly to schools and teachers to ensure that children are the direct beneficiaries.

In line with the national objective to double the number of children enrolled in post-primary education, UNICEF is working to achieve a 100 percent increase in the number of girls in post-primary education. These efforts focus on target districts where there is a large gender gap, where UNICEF works with local partners to improve primary to secondary transition rates, raise secondary school retention rates and support girls from lower income brackets.

## Child Friendly Schools

The child friendly school (CFS) concept is a simple one: schools should operate in the best interests of the child. Alongside promoting quality standards of education, child friendly schools seek to provide a safe, secure and healthy educational environment, within which children's rights must be protected and their voices must be heard.

UNICEF's work in Madagascar helps support communities to adopt CFS principles, including CFS infrastructure. This not only covers much needed water and sanitation facilities, absent in most Malagasy primary schools, but also child-height enlarged blackboards; child height rails for hanging artwork; mobile and lightweight desks that can be easily rearranged; and the removal of the teacher's podium.

## Education and environmental protection

In fulfilling its EFA goals, Madagascar faces a huge construction challenge to ensure that there are

enough classrooms to allow all children a place at school. Such a challenge is not only expensive, but also carries with it substantial risks for the environment.

A major problem is the prevalent use of clay-fired bricks that rely on burning massive quantities of wood in the firing process.

In order to address this issue, UNICEF has been developing and successfully using new environmentally-sound materials and methods in school construction.

These innovative, child-friendly schools are proving to be an effective way of combining efforts to improve the quality of education, with pioneering efforts to reduce the environmental impact of construction, in a country famous for its unique, yet critically endangered wildlife.

## Supporting communities

Through the Contracts for School Success Programme, UNICEF Madagascar is engaging communities in improving primary school education.

Through the scheme local residents, including students, assess their school's needs and prioritise actions, drawing up a contract that encourages them to take an active role in school improvement.

Communities benefit from UNICEF support that enables them to play a part in ensuring their children's right to quality education is met, and that child friendly school principles can be adopted and sustained.

UNICEF also supports communities in establishing pre-schools for young children, working with partners to promote early childhood development initiatives.

Among the very few children that are enrolled in pre-schools most are from more privileged families in urban areas. Allowing more children access to these early learning centres gives them the opportunity to prepare socially, emotionally and cognitively for the transition to first grade.

# CHILD PROTECTION

## Respecting children's rights

A signatory of the Convention on the Rights of Children, Madagascar has shown a commitment to respecting child rights. The legal system includes legislation on adoption, marriage, people trafficking, sex tourism, and birth registration.

Yet despite the existence of these laws, public knowledge and understanding is lacking; their enforcement is often weak; and reform is needed to improve their integration with international and regional conventions on child rights.

For a large number of Malagasy children, life is defined by work, and nearly a third of children aged between five and 14 are involved in economic activities. The problem is more acute in rural areas, where children work with their families in agriculture and fishing.

With Madagascar's ongoing political crisis there are concerns that child labour is increasing as households affected by growing unemployment are forced to seek alternative sources of revenue. In many instances this results in children being sent to work before or after school, or removed from school altogether.

For girls, threats to their well-being are even more acute, and the commercial sexual exploitation of girls is a serious problem: a significant number of female sex workers are children. Those who solicit them include foreign tourists and workers, as well as Malagasy men. In mining areas and tourist hotspots, where girls are especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation, any increase in child labour is a major concern.

Madagascar's poor system of birth registration leaves unregistered children especially vulnerable to child protection violations: 25 per cent of Malagasy children are not registered at birth, making them more likely to be excluded from basic social services and more vulnerable to abuse.

Since the onset of Madagascar's political crisis in early 2009, social protection mechanisms have been critically weakened and the risk of children and women being exposed to violence and exploitation has increased.



*Raising awareness of children's rights and of the legislation that protects these rights, in tandem with developing national policies, is building a more protective legal framework for Madagascar's children. Between 2005 and early 2008 five important laws reinforcing the principles of child rights were passed in Madagascar.*

*At the same time, building capacity in the national institutions responsible for protecting children's rights aims to ensure that all improvements to Madagascar's child protection systems are sustainable.*

*UNICEF also supports national reviews of compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.*



## Justice for children

UNICEF is helping Madagascar develop a justice system that provides children with greater protection as victims, witnesses and offenders.

Work not only includes strengthening the current administration and integrating a justice system for children that fully respects their rights; but also involves powerful advocacy at all levels to influence public attitudes and to promote a better understanding of child rights issues.

Particular attention is being given to reforming the juvenile justice system, including minimising periods of pre-trial detention, and developing community-based rehabilitation initiatives to provide alternatives to punitive detention. This will help to keep children out of prisons where there are often held with adults, in appalling conditions where their basic rights are ignored.

## Child protection networks

Child protection networks (CPNs) are the entry point for UNICEF Madagascar's child protection work. They help to ensure that local communities are engaged in child protection, and through the networks UNICEF provides support to reinforce community capacity to identify and support vulnerable children.

There are 450 CPNs in 55 districts across Madagascar. They involve civil society and community-based organisations, allowing UNICEF to expand the reach of child protection work and support these organisations in building protective environments for children in their communities.

## Birth Registration

Birth registration in Madagascar has improved significantly in recent years, reaching some of the country's most excluded children, and helping them to claim their rights as Malagasy citizens. Yet, for many parents living in remote and isolated areas, birth registration is often not considered necessary, and is not understood to be a child's fundamental right.

UNICEF is promoting birth registration nationally, working with partners to identify and address the absence of birth registration at strategic points in a child's life.

In turn UNICEF helps district chiefs, judges, mayors and local authorities meet the challenge of creating a system that ensures that all children under 18 are registered.

## Child friendly spaces

UNICEF initially set up 'child friendly spaces' to provide care for children temporarily displaced by flooding in Madagascar's capital, Antananarivo, after Cyclone Ivan struck in 2008. With the onset of Madagascar's political crisis in 2009 however, these spaces have become increasingly popular, and many are now overcrowded.

Not only do they provide children with a safe place to play, they also give them access to basic education services, safe water, sanitation and hygiene, and provide an opportunity to identify children in need of special interventions.

# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND HIV

## Participation and empowerment

Commitments made by African governments to address issues facing young people, and the changing technology landscape in Africa, mean that there has never been a better time to expand opportunities for young people. They are increasingly able to contribute to and engage in influencing decisions that affect their lives, and with access to modern communication spreading young people are speaking up as never before.

For youth in Madagascar, these changes are a valuable opportunity. Of the country's 20 million people, there are 9.8 million people aged 18 years and under, and 4.6 million of them are aged between 10 and 19 years.

Most adolescents have poor access to vocational and life skills, limited economic prospects and little exposure to media and other sources of information. This leaves them vulnerable to exploitation as they are often unaware of their rights, and have limited means through which they can speak out about abuse and injustice.

Among females, 36 per cent of women aged 20 to 24 with children gave birth before they were 18 years old.

In rural areas many young people share the same concerns about their situation: they lack roads and access to water and electricity; school structures and educational instruction are poor; health facilities are insufficient, and rural communities lack sports and recreation facilities.

Elsewhere, a combination of a lack of awareness and high risk behaviour means that adolescents in Madagascar are at high risk of contracting and passing on STIs. The national HIV prevalence rate in Madagascar is low. Yet this is in sharp contrast to high prevalence rates of other sexually transmitted infections, especially among 15 to 24 year olds.

Early sexual activity and low use of condoms are major factors contributing to the spread of STIs. Studies show that only 5 per cent of girls and 12 per cent of boys aged 15 to 24 years used a condom during their last high-risk sexual encounter; and many are unable to identify the two major ways of preventing HIV transmission (using condoms and limiting sex to one faithful, uninfected partner).



*UNICEF Madagascar works to support the creation of sustainable youth engagement initiatives providing platforms for young people to express themselves, and improving young people's access to gender-sensitive health information and services.*

*UNICEF also supports the national campaign to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Madagascar, and improve sexual health among young people. Forming part of the Youth Development programme, UNICEF Madagascar's HIV/AIDS prevention and care programme is committed to maintaining a low HIV prevalence in Madagascar through community-based prevention measures, youth interventions and improved access to basic social services related to reproductive health.*



## Advocacy

UNICEF's work has been instrumental in the analysis and dissemination of data on youth to key actors, decision makers and organisations in Madagascar. The collection and use of strategic information on youth and adolescent risks and vulnerability has been fundamental in mobilising partners' participation in youth work.

With UNICEF's support, the creation and dissemination of an advocacy kit detailing the situation for the most disadvantaged young people in terms of access to education, health, information and development has greatly improved understanding of the challenges facing young people in Madagascar.

## Peer educators

A network of over 1,800 young peer educators is currently at work across Madagascar. Trained in 'life-skills', and with specific knowledge of sexual health issues, these young people help plan activities, share information and advocate for the recognition of youth rights with, and among, their contemporaries.

## Youth participation

UNICEF Madagascar is working through a growing web of youth networks in order to support young people's participation in local and national discussions on issues that affect their lives.

Reflecting the importance of Madagascar's natural environment in ensuring a sustainable future for young people, UNICEF has identified groups in areas near some of the most important protected areas.

Working with local communities, schools and environmental NGOs, UNICEF is building the capacity and resources available to these groups, allowing them to engage in dialogue, not only on environmental issues, but on wider developmental issues.

## Youth centres and information kiosks

In remote and inaccessible areas UNICEF is working to build information kiosks with the involvement of local communities, and to support youth centres.

These places form focal points for community activities involving young people, including sporting and cultural events, and provide information on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The kiosks also provide information on social services including schools and health centres, and access to child protection networks.

To reinforce the work of the information kiosks, UNICEF involves local health centres and schools to help improve access to services, including voluntary testing, treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, and counseling.

## HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention

The prevalence of early sexual activity among young people in Madagascar makes young peer educators key actors in raising awareness of sexual health issues among adolescents.

UNICEF also supports 'La Ligne Verte', a free telephone helpline for young people concerned about HIV/AIDS and sexual health problems.

# POLICY ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS

## Communicating development

UNICEF Madagascar's advocacy, communication and social policy work consists of three components that cut across all UNICEF programme areas. These components are: Social Policy, Planning and Monitoring; Media, External Relations and Corporate Partnerships (MRE); and Communication for Development (C4D).

Working closely with MRE, the Social Policy, Planning and Monitoring component supports advocacy and policy engagement through increasing the availability of strategic information for use in planning and policy-making in areas impacting on the successful realisation of child rights. The component also provides technical support in planning and monitoring to the other programme sections, including capacity development of civil society partners.

The MRE component aims at increased engagement and capacity of national media, decision-makers and other opinion leaders to promote children's and women's rights, and an increased leveraging of resources for the country programme through increasing the visibility of child rights issues in Madagascar both nationally and internationally.

By empowering young people, families, communities, and care-givers with information and knowledge, the C4D component supports the creation of a demand for services, promoting better self-care and the realisation of child rights at community, family and individual levels.



*Across its programmes, UNICEF advocates for children's rights in accordance with two legal and moral touchstones: the Convention on Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Both international agreements have been widely ratified by governments and cover a spectrum of social, economic, cultural and political rights for women and children.*





### Evidence-based advocacy

Since the 2009 political crisis, UNICEF Madagascar's Social Policy, Planning and Monitoring section has helped consolidate UNICEF's reputation as a primary source of information on trends in vulnerability and child poverty in Madagascar.

The country office has streamlined advocacy objectives and evidence-based key messages, highlighting the main challenges facing children as a result of current socioeconomic difficulties. In order to do this, efforts focus on monitoring and analysing the evolution of the situation for children throughout the year.

Advocacy messages emphasise improving access to services and promoting the rights of young people to be heard on issues that affect them, including protection against abuse, violence and manipulation.

Child survival continues to be a top priority for advocacy with donors and other stakeholders to prevent a further erosion of the health system.

### Working with the media

Not only does the MRE section work to disseminate news on the situation for women and children among donors, partners and foreign media, it also works

closely with national media to build capacity in covering stories related to child protection and child rights.

UNICEF's support for journalists includes training, and the development of a 'child-friendly media network' to enable national media partners to build understanding and expertise in reporting on child rights issues.

### Changing behaviour

The C4D programme supports all programme areas, addressing issues of behaviour change at both the communal and household levels. C4D activities focus on helping parents understand and adopt key childcare and family practices that promote and protect the well-being of their children, and in turn create grassroots demand for better social services.

In addition to using more traditional C4D channels, such as local radio stations, UNICEF Madagascar is developing new ways to interact with youth, empowering them to be agents of change themselves.

C4D activities are bringing renewed attention to the Accelerated Child Survival and Development strategy, training opinion leaders and working with communities to develop local action plans to adopt high impact behaviours for better child and family well-being.

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## Corporate partnerships

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UNICEF Madagascar's corporate strategy is designed to leverage the strength of the private sector on behalf of Madagascar's women and children. It seeks to mobilise resources through a network of child-friendly companies committed to promoting child-friendly corporate social investment agendas.

In the context of Madagascar's current political crisis, partnerships with private sector counterparts also form a growing part of the country office advocacy campaign.

UNICEF plays a strategic role among UN agencies involved in cooperation with the corporate community in Madagascar, leading advocacy messaging targeting companies, assisting in providing child specific data and information, and influencing investment in development.

# EMERGENCIES



Madagascar is continually hit by natural disasters. Tropical storms, flooding, drought and insect infestations are all common. In the recent past, the frequency and intensity of these emergencies has increased, possibly as a result of global climate change, and represents an increasing threat to the social development of the country.

In the context of ongoing political instability, the national response to natural emergencies has been limited, leaving children and women in affected areas increasingly vulnerable.

Damage from cyclones is typically large in scale, in particular for social infrastructure such as schools and health centres. In a country where these basic services are already minimal, the impact of such damage is critical, and high levels of poverty further exacerbate the devastating consequences of natural disasters.

## Preparedness and response

UNICEF Madagascar helps to provide life-saving assistance to children affected by disasters, and to protect their rights in any circumstances, no matter how difficult.

The preparedness and response programme is based on both developing capacity in advance of emergencies in order to mitigate the impacts; and on acting swiftly when disaster strikes to reach those children most in need. In placing an emphasis on preparedness, UNICEF works with local communities to strengthen their resilience and ability to recover from disasters.

UNICEF maintains prepositioned stocks of emergency supplies in Antananarivo and the eastern coastal town of Tamatave. These cover the essential need of 20,000 families living in vulnerable regions.

UNICEF also works with the National Office of Disaster Risk Management (BNGRC), to support the development of information management skills, and to support simulation exercises that reinforce the preparedness of partners to deliver effective response strategies.

# MADAGASCAR AT A GLANCE

Population (millions), 2009 (SOWC 2011)	19,625
Population below 18 years (millions), 2009 (SOWC 2011)	9,759
Population under 5 years (millions), 2009 (SOWC 2011)	3,104
Population urbanised, 2009 (SOWC 2011)	30%
Under 5 mortality (per 1,000 live births), 2009 (DHS 2009)	72
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births), 2009 (DHS 2009)	48
Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births) 2009 (DHS 2009)	498
Women aged 20- 24 who gave birth before the age of 18 years (SOWC 2011)	36%

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