# Summary of UNICEF's 2020 Education Results

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the lives of children in 2020 at a scale never seen before. At one point, more than 9 out of 10 students (1.6 billion) lost access to school. The inequities that have long kept millions of children from accessing quality education, were further exposed as millions more missed out on services often provided through schools such as nutrition, immunization, mental health and psychosocial support and protection.

Driven by the scale of the challenge, the nearly 900 UNICEF education staff across the world shifted gear to find new ways to ensure continuity of learning for all children and achieve equitable access, learning and skills. UNICEF's education programmes reached far more children in 2020 than at any other time in the organization's history. UNICEF mobilized its on-the-ground capacity and broad range of partnerships to provide educational materials to more than 43 million children, compared with 12 million in 2019. UNICEF helped 32.6 million children in humanitarian settings (68 per cent of the target) to remain protected and continue learning, up from 7.4 million in 2019. It supported 48 million out-of-school children (49 per cent girls) with access to education, and 301 million children (49 per cent girls) were reached with distance and homebased learning opportunities.

UNICEF was an early advocate for continuity of learning during school closures, focusing on reaching all children, including the marginalized, girls, refugees, children on the move, children with disabilities, those living in poverty, and minority communities. By the end of 2020, UNICEF and its local partners had helped more than 400,000 schools across 89 countries to implement school safety protocols to protect against COVID-19. As societies started reopening, UNICEF continued to promote that return to school be prioritized. UNICEF advocated with governments and partners to ensure all children get back to school with measures in place for them to catch up with the lost learning and resources to empower teachers.

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for every child

UNICEF worked throughout 2020 to place a spotlight on education, to mobilize global solidarity and commitment and, at the same time, to find innovative approaches to solve otherwise insuperable challenges. UNICEF launched the global Reimagine Education initiative to reach every child everywhere with digital learning solutions, by bringing together the expertise and resources of a broad range of partners from the public and private sectors. The Giga Initiative, seeking to connect every child, every school and subsequently every community to the Internet, accelerated its country reach in response to the pandemic to connect over 86,000 schools and more than 25.8 million students and teachers.

In the coming year, UNICEF will begin its next Strategic Plan. As always, the plan will have the most marginalized children and youth at its centre – those whose vulnerability and need for support has been made clear over the past year, but whose resilience in the face of adversity has also been demonstrated.

UNICEF's efforts to address the global learning crisis will help the most marginalized children to gain foundational literacy and numeracy and transferable skills. UNICEF will continue to ensure that learning opportunities are gender-transformative and responsive to the specific needs of all girls and boys to improve learning outcomes.

There is a saying that when one door closes, a new door opens, yet 2020 showed that this is not necessarily true when it is a school door that closes. In the aftermath of the pandemic, UNICEF is committed to opening opportunities and a way forward where the doors of learning are always open to all children.

# Highlight Results

**48 million**

(49% girls), including: 3.9 million children on the move and 32.6 million children in emergencies, have accessed education

**43%**

of countries have equitable education systems for access

**42%**

of countries have gender-responsive education systems for access

**43.4 million**

Children, including 22.4 million children in emergencies, received learning materials

**59,223**

school management committees received training

**41%**

of countries have effective education systems for learning outcomes

**42%**

of countries have gender-responsive teaching and learning systems

**7.7 million**

children (48% girls), including 6.1 million children in emergencies, participated in skills development programmes

**27%**

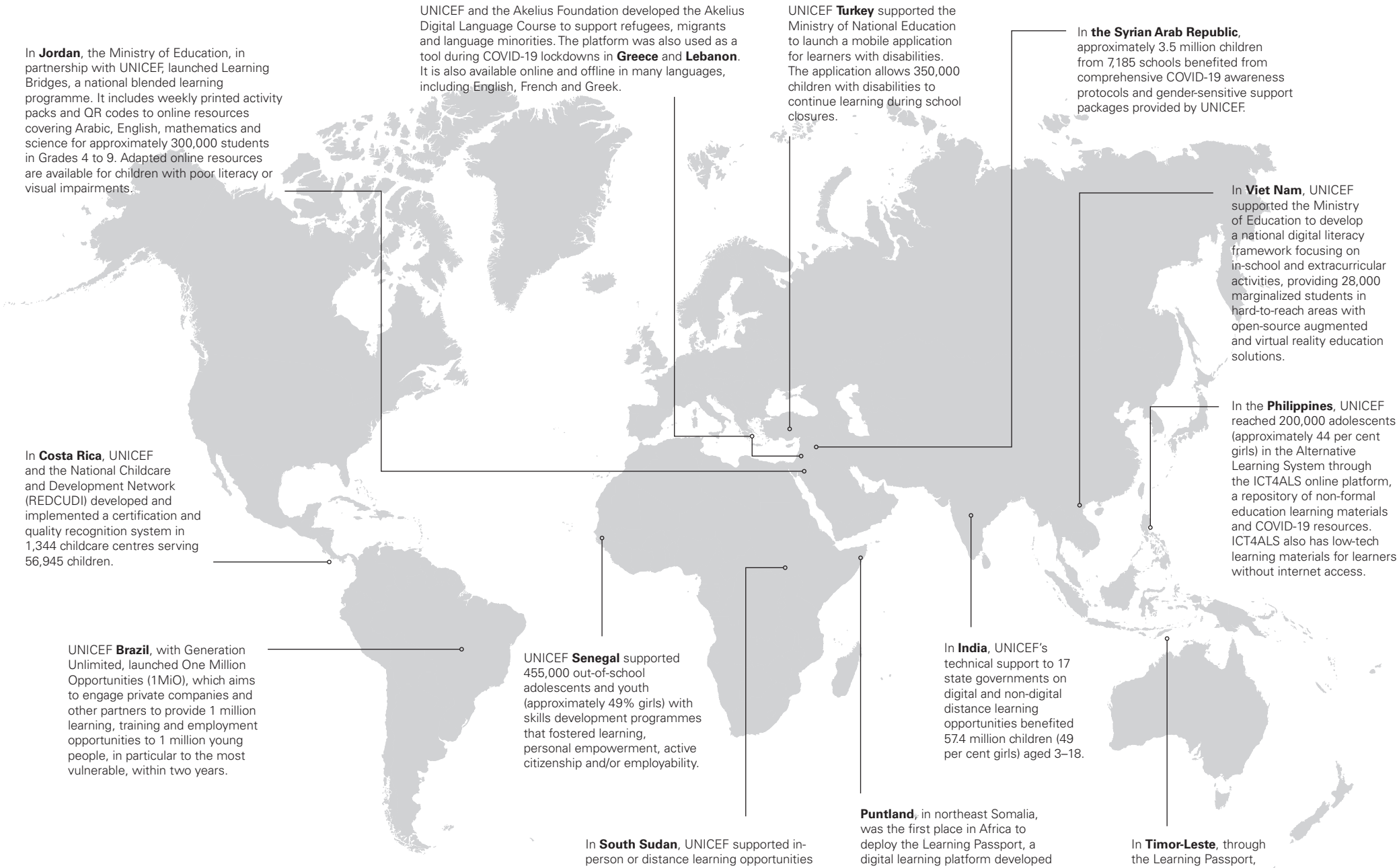
of countries have systems that institutionalize gender-equitable skills

**301 million**

children (49% girls) reached with distance learning

**14 million**

girls in humanitarian contexts participated in primary and secondary school education through UNICEF-supported programmes



In **Jordan**, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with UNICEF, launched Learning Bridges, a national blended learning programme. It includes weekly printed activity packs and QR codes to online resources covering Arabic, English, mathematics and science for approximately 300,000 students in Grades 4 to 9. Adapted online resources are available for children with poor literacy or visual impairments.

UNICEF and the Akelius Foundation developed the Akelius Digital Language Course to support refugees, migrants and language minorities. The platform was also used as a tool during COVID-19 lockdowns in **Greece** and **Lebanon**. It is also available online and offline in many languages, including English, French and Greek.

UNICEF **Turkey** supported the Ministry of National Education to launch a mobile application for learners with disabilities. The application allows 350,000 children with disabilities to continue learning during school closures.

In **the Syrian Arab Republic**, approximately 3.5 million children from 7,185 schools benefited from comprehensive COVID-19 awareness protocols and gender-sensitive support packages provided by UNICEF.

In **Viet Nam**, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to develop a national digital literacy framework focusing on in-school and extracurricular activities, providing 28,000 marginalized students in hard-to-reach areas with open-source augmented and virtual reality education solutions.

In the **Philippines**, UNICEF reached 200,000 adolescents (approximately 44 per cent girls) in the Alternative Learning System through the ICT4ALS online platform, a repository of non-formal education learning materials and COVID-19 resources. ICT4ALS also has low-tech learning materials for learners without internet access.

In **Costa Rica**, UNICEF and the National Childcare and Development Network (REDCUDI) developed and implemented a certification and quality recognition system in 1,344 childcare centres serving 56,945 children.

UNICEF **Brazil**, with Generation Unlimited, launched One Million Opportunities (1MiO), which aims to engage private companies and other partners to provide 1 million learning, training and employment opportunities to 1 million young people, in particular to the most vulnerable, within two years.

UNICEF **Senegal** supported 455,000 out-of-school adolescents and youth (approximately 49% girls) with skills development programmes that fostered learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and/or employability.

In **India**, UNICEF's technical support to 17 state governments on digital and non-digital distance learning opportunities benefited 57.4 million children (49 per cent girls) aged 3–18.

In **South Sudan**, UNICEF supported in-person or distance learning opportunities for 1.5 million students (630,000 girls) during the pandemic and trained 26,000 adolescent girls and young women to serve as role models and advocate for girls' education.

**Puntland**, in northeast Somalia, was the first place in Africa to deploy the Learning Passport, a digital learning platform developed in partnership with Microsoft. 5,000 students accessed education via the Learning Passport when school closures were in effect.

In **Timor-Leste**, through the Learning Passport, 95% of teachers in the country (15,000) were trained on COVID-19 prevention and school reopening.

# Funding for Education

In 2020, partners contributed US$999 million 'other resources – regular' for education – a 75 per cent increase over the previous year. Public sector partners contributed 92 per cent of this total. The top five resource partners were the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Government of Germany, the European Commission, the Government of Norway, and the Education Cannot Wait Fund. In addition, US$121.9 million received in 2020, of which more than 85 per cent came from public sector partners. This compares to an average of just under US$ 92 million received in each of the previous two years of the Strategic Plan.

Total education expenses in 2020 were US$1.167 billion, accounting for 20 per cent of total UNICEF expenses for the year – the second highest category after health expenses, which accounted for 25 per cent. Compared with 2019, the share for education fell by 0.5 of a percentage point; in absolute terms, expenses fell by 1.4 per cent. The share of spending from emergency funds decreased from 41 per cent in 2019 to 34 per cent in 2020. Yet humanitarian crises continue to affect large numbers of children, and countries affected by emergencies and humanitarian crises generally had the largest education expenses.

In 2020, the amount of education spending from thematic funds was nearly US$90 million, of which 31 per cent was emergency thematic funds. West and Central Africa was the region with the highest spending on thematic funds followed by the Middle East and North Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa. The three regions cumulated half of the total education spending from thematic funds.

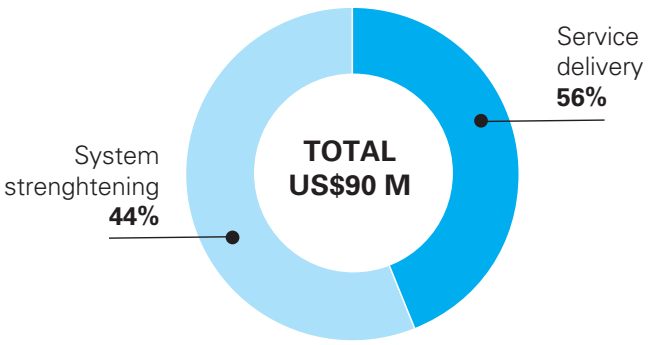
Thematic funding remains a critical source of income for UNICEF programme delivery. It acts as an ideal complement to regular resources, as it can be allocated on a needs-basis, allowing UNICEF to respond more effectively, and facilitating longer-term planning and sustainability. The Government of Norway was the largest thematic resources partner in 2020, providing more than 81 per cent of all thematic education contributions received.

### Top 3 thematic contributions by resource partners to education

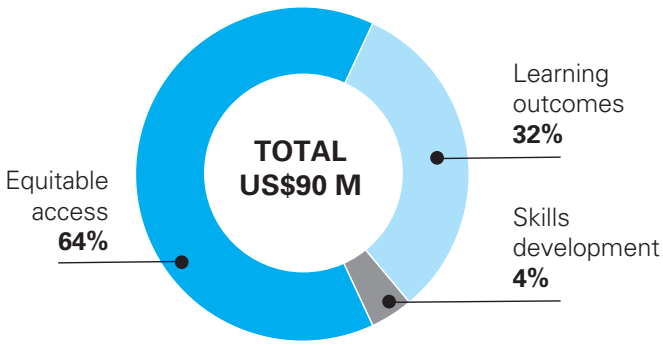
| | |
|---|---|
| Norway | 81% |
| Denmark | 3% |
| Sweden | 1% |

In 2020, three cost categories accounted for nearly 80 per cent of education expenses: transfers and grants to counterparts (US$610 million); staff and other personnel costs (US$179 million); and supplies and commodities (US$129 million). The higher share for 'transfers and grants to counterparts' reflects the increasing use of partnerships to achieve greater impact for children.

### Education thematic funding utilization by activity




### Education thematic funding utilization by result area

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