Update on the context and trends

Despite the many challenges in 2020, with the global COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic fallout of lockdowns, UNICEF fundraising offices and National Committees raised a record level of income from the private sector with more than $2 billion for children. At the same time, partnerships across the spectrum delivered beyond expectations on all fronts of UNICEF’s work.

The pandemic forced UNICEF staff to adapt to online working, pivot to new approaches and find new ways to reach and engage with partners and donors. Teams turned to digital and broadcast channels, and they engaged with partners and prospects online and through virtual meetings and field trips. These and many other innovations led to outstanding results that will be foundational in ensuring UNICEF continues to drive sustainable growth in private-sector income for years to come.

Major contributions and drivers of results

The results of 2020 are outlined below in the goal areas of the UNICEF Private Sector Plan 2018–2021: IMPACT for every child.

Goal 1 – Individuals: 100 million people are changing the world with UNICEF through their voices and donations.
- UNICEF ended the year with record results. Overall, individual giving was $1.36 billion dollars, with over 9 million donors supporting UNICEF.
- For the first time, more than 50 per cent of new pledge donors came from emerging markets.
- Digital channels became the largest source of donors for the first time.
- PFP changed in line with global strategic shifts to a single, adaptable campaigning platform.
- With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF launched the Reimagine campaign.

Goal 2 – Key influencers: The impact and effectiveness of key influencers are maximized to advance children’s rights and well-being.
- Over the past year, philanthropists and foundations gave $304 million to UNICEF, while membership-based and faith-based organizations gave $78 million.[MLE1] [WH2]
- More than 1,000 philanthropic partners participated in virtual field trips and other events.
- The foundations new business strategy yielded its first results in 2020, with multi-million-dollar investments from new or lapsed partners, achieving 17 partnerships of more than $1 million in one year. An active $1 million+ pipeline was developed to support sustainable income growth.
- COVID-19 presented new opportunities among a range of top foundations, contributing $37 million towards the pandemic response.

Goal 3 – Business: The power, reach and influence of business are fully harnessed for children.
- The number of shared-value partnerships increased from 15 in 2019 to 21 in 2020.
- More than 2,000 businesses were engaged in contributing their core assets, engaged in child rights and business, and helped with advocacy – 133 million children were reached through non-financial partnerships with business, compared to 34.3 million children in 2019.
- UNICEF rapidly scaled a joint response to the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on children, with innovation, technical expertise, in-kind contributions and donations.
The Business for Results initiative was rolled out in 25 countries, including in 20 virtual sessions.
112 UNICEF offices and National Committees engaged with business to support advocacy and integrated children’s interests into responsible business conduct.
UNICEF’s work on Child Rights and Business continued to accelerate, with 49 country offices and 12 National Committees reporting on Child Rights and Business activities.

Goal 4 – Governments: Governments at all levels in countries with a National Committee presence deliver on UNICEF priorities for children, as defined in the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, both domestically and globally
National Committees immediately responded to address the impact of the pandemic, and their programming activities ensured that child rights were prioritized and aimed to protect the most vulnerable children.
To support National Committees, PFP and the Programme Division issued a guidance note for programming responses for high-income countries.
National Committees’ response helped UNICEF to meet the public-sector and private-sector demand to address COVID-19 domestically, while also supporting UNICEF’s global response.
National Committees seized new partnerships and opportunities, and the programming work enhanced UNICEF’s relevance and visibility as an organization for every child, including those living in high-income countries.

Goal 5 – Brand: By 2021, UNICEF is the most trusted and engaging organization improving the lives of children around the globe.
UNICEF kept its solid second position on spontaneous awareness, behind the Red Cross. Spontaneous awareness ratings were above 20 per cent in 90 per cent of countries.
UNICEF remained the second most trusted organization globally, behind the Red Cross, and ranked first among children’s organizations.
The level of trust remained stable in most countries in 2020 compared to 2018 results, a reassuring result given the large shifts in public behaviours and attitudes due to the pandemic.

Goal 6 – Enablers: By 2020, UNICEF is well positioned, with a common culture, to deliver on ambitious results with the private sector and with the public sector in National Committee countries
The percentage of enabler indicators that were ranked by National Committee executive directors and representatives in country offices as meeting or exceeding expectations continued to average around 70 per cent.
Strategic change initiatives in 2020 included data security, with a focus on meeting payment card industry standards to address related risks.
The COVID-19 pandemic presented key operational challenges to enablers. Quick adaptation to new ways of working, however, ensured that enablers continued to be well positioned to support ambitious results and PFP delivered the first ever virtual skill share with almost 3,000 participants from 157 countries.
A new Situation Analysis of UNICEF’s work with the private sector was conducted as a key input to the next Strategic Plan, PFP’s OMP and Joint Strategic Plans with National Committees.

Yes, I have noticed the discrepancy. Will check. [WH2]
Despite 2020 being a challenging year marred by the global COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF fundraising offices and National Committees for the first time raised more than $2 billion for children from the private sector, and partnerships across the spectrum delivered beyond expectations on all fronts of UNICEF’s work.

Private-sector income growth was achieved by fundraising offices and National Committees around the world, supported by PFP, and generated growth in almost every type of income stream. Individuals around the globe, many already experiencing personal and financial uncertainty, donated $128 million more to UNICEF in 2020 than in the previous year, giving $1.36 billion in all.

When lock downs shut down the largest acquisition channel, face-to-face, teams pivoted quickly to broadcast channels such as digital and DRTV, managing to continue growing UNICEF’s supporter base. Likewise, in the world of business, which saw huge disruption because of the pandemic, teams embraced the new normal and took advantage of the opportunity to engage with many more partners and prospects online. It was a successful strategy, and the COVID HAC was the first time that corporate giving led the way in an emergency. Trusts and foundations also stepped up to strongly support UNICEF’s COVID-19 response – the first time efforts were focused on emergencies – resulting in year-on-year foundations giving increasing by an astounding 40 per cent.

Virtual field trips developed in 2020 because of the pandemic gave many more partners the opportunity to visit programme countries and speak directly to colleagues in the field – a lot of work for the organizers, but far less intrusive for country offices than physical trips. These and many other innovations, not least the huge shift to digital fundraising for individuals, led to outstanding results in 2020 that will be foundational in ensuring UNICEF continues to drive sustainable growth in private-sector income for years to come.