



1 NO POVERTY



KEY ASKS

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SDG 1: Ending child poverty in all its forms, everywhere

For children, **living in poverty is a denial of their fundamental rights** to good nutrition, health, water, sanitation, education, and shelter – diminishing their life chances and ability to realize their potential. This lack of investment in human capital has devastating, life-long consequences and serious implications for future generations and societies.

In almost every country in the world – rich and poor – children are more likely than adults to live in poverty, and their young age makes them more vulnerable to its effects. One in six children – 355 million – are living in extreme poverty, struggling to survive on less than purchasing power parity (PPP) US\$1.90 a day, and almost **one in three children** – [593 million](#) – are living in households that are multidimensionally poor. High income countries are also not immune from child poverty – where around [1 in 4 children](#) in rich countries are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The onset and ongoing crisis of the global COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the situation for the most vulnerable children. The subsequent economic downturn from the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, including soaring prices of basic goods, have and are significantly increasing the numbers of children living in poverty. It is estimated that [100 million additional children](#) fell into poverty due to the crisis, a 10 per cent increase since 2019. Historically, the burden of such shocks on households have disproportionately been borne by girls. The fast onset of the climate crisis is another clear challenge to addressing child poverty. However, it is possible to end poverty by focusing on children in poverty reduction efforts. For the first time, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), countries have committed to end extreme child poverty and halve the number of boys and girls living in poverty according to national definitions. There are [proven ways to address child poverty](#) effectively, such as through child-sensitive social protection programmes and investing in accessible and quality social services. By focusing on children, national governments can address poverty at its root and build the foundation for stronger, more sustainable, and inclusive development.



KEY ASKS

Reducing child poverty in all its forms effectively and sustainably requires systematic policy and programmatic responses, both at international and national levels. To eliminate extreme poverty and halve the proportion of people living in poverty according to national definitions, UNICEF encourages all governments to:

- 1. Routinely measure and monitor child poverty:** Measuring child poverty both from monetary and multidimensional perspectives not only helps build knowledge and understanding about scale and scope of the issue but also sets the foundation for building evidence-based solutions to effectively address child poverty.
- 2. Prioritize child poverty in national development strategies and plans:** Including child poverty in the national development agenda can have significant impact on reducing it systematically and sustainably. Selecting child poverty as one of the key indicators to measure development progress or including policies and programmes that target poor and vulnerable children can help channel national attention and resources to address child poverty.
- 3. Expand child-sensitive and inclusive social protection programmes, including within governments' immediate and longer-term crisis response:** Social protection is one of the key instruments to address child poverty and build human capital of children, and address gender and disability related vulnerabilities. Yet the vast majority of children still have [no effective social protection coverage](#). To protect and prevent children from the negative impacts of poverty and deprivation, child sensitive social protection, including [cash benefits](#) for children, need to be scaled up rapidly – especially as millions of people around the world have lost their livelihoods in the face of the pandemic and the subsequent economic downturn.

4. **Invest in quality social services:** Child poverty is multidimensional, and many public services are relevant in children's survival, development, and growth. These include early childhood education, primary and secondary schooling, health care, nutrition and water and sanitation, among others. To ensure access to and utilization of these services by the most disadvantaged children, more investment as well as joint planning across sectors are needed.
5. **Safeguard Social Spending:** The COVID-19 crisis and the current economic downturn has greatly impacted children and it is crucial to safeguard spending on health, education, social protection, and other social sectors. Economic and fiscal policies should protect the decades of investments in social sectors and to mitigate the consequences of the current crisis. [Investment in children](#) should always be protected, during and after crisis.



MONITOR -- THE IMPORTANCE OF DISAGGREGATED DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND USE

To track progress in child poverty reduction, countries are encouraged to regularly conduct both income-based measurements that assess the living standard of children's families as well as non-income-based measurements (multidimensional) that assess children's deprivations and well-being. Additionally, it is important to monitor social spending on key sectors that impact children. UNICEF encourages governments to:

- **Report on the baseline and progress towards SDG 1 indicators**, namely:
 - 1.2.1 proportion of the population living below the national poverty line, disaggregated for children;
 - 1.2.2 proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions;
 - 1.3.1 proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, disaggregated for children;
 - 1.a.2 proportion of government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection);
- **Enhance efforts to count and reach children missing from data:** Poverty statistics generally rely on household surveys, which can often [miss certain groups of children](#) who might be living in greatest poverty – such as refugees and migrants, children living in child care institutions or in street situations. To enumerate and capture the situation of these children, governments need to adopt a holistic approach: from making household surveys more inclusive of all populations, to exploring supplementary data collection methods such as specialized surveys to capture these groups of children missing from data.
- **Make better use of existing data and statistics:** Reducing child poverty requires cross-sectoral interventions, including social protection policies that address economic and social vulnerabilities, and programmes that focus on improving the quality, access, equity, and usage of public services. National child poverty reports provide a rich information on the scale, scope and whereabouts of children living in poverty, serving as a powerful evidence base for guiding, designing, implementing, and evaluating these cross sectoral interventions that address child poverty in all its forms. National data on tracking social sector spending is key to better monitor investments in social sectors.



INVEST -- SOCIAL SPENDING AND PROGRESS ON RESULTS FOR CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS & YOUTH

The onset and ongoing crisis of the global COVID-19 pandemic threatens to roll back years of progress on the SDGs. There is also a risk that investments in child rights and well-being as articulated in the 2030 Agenda Outcome Document and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda will be deprioritized in the face of economic shocks and recessions globally. To that end, UNICEF and our partners encourage governments to call for **urgent action to Protect Our Children and to make specific commitments, including financial commitments, to realize this pledge**. Recognising the need to continue to invest in children to safeguard progress, in 2021, UNICEF issued [Financing an Inclusive Recovery for Children: A Call to Action](#) calling on governments and the international community and the private sector to:

- Safeguard critical social spending and minimize the negative impacts of the economic crisis on people, children, ensuring children are last in line for budget cuts.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of financial resources across social sectors for human capital development, maximizing coverage and impact for all children.
- Identify and deploy additional international and domestic financing options, using innovative approaches as necessary to direct adequate finance towards an inclusive recovery that protects children (especially the poorest and most

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marginalized), tackles inequalities (including those of gender that have been revealed and deepened by the pandemic), and sets a course for more resilient economies to respond to future shocks.

Governments around the world have mobilized billions of dollars to save their economies. But there is another impending and devastating loss if we do not act: **a lost generation of children**. Progress towards the SDGs is slipping backwards, and children are the hardest hit. Not only does this have grave consequences for children now, but it is also a threat to their future and our shared humanity.

For more information on UNICEF's key asks on social spending on children, adolescents and young people in all settings including within the context of fragile and humanitarian contexts, please refer to the cross-cutting [SDG 2-pager entitled: "Invest – Social Spending and Progress on Results for children, Adolescents & Youth"](#) included in the SDG Support Package.