

## Ukraine

### Update on the context and situation of children

On 24 February 2022, the war in Ukraine escalated, creating a humanitarian and child rights catastrophe. The war resulted in death, injuries and the mass displacement of people from the south and eastern parts of Ukraine to the west and to neighbouring countries, as well as severe destruction and damage to homes and civilian infrastructure, including essential services for children such as schools, kindergartens, youth centres, integrated social services and health facilities. A total of 5.9 million people were internally displaced inside Ukraine and 7.9 million people fled to several countries in Europe, with Poland and Germany registering the greatest numbers of refugees from Ukraine. The war significantly increased humanitarian needs. By the end of 2022, 17.7 million people were estimated to be in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, including 3.4 million children requiring protection interventions (OCHA 2022). A total of 429 children were killed and 808 injured (OHCHR 2023), the actual number of children will likely be higher.

Since October, attacks on energy infrastructure have left millions of children without electricity, disrupting water supply and heating systems in the cold of winter. In-person learning has been seriously disrupted due to war. According to the Ministry of Education and Science in Ukraine, 2,619 educational institutions were damaged and another 406 were completely destroyed as of 23 December. At the same time, mobile and internet connectivity challenges following attacks on critical infrastructure hindered access to online learning for approximately 5.7 million children, with 58 per cent of children under five years of age being unable to join the educational process (UNICEF survey).

The war disrupted the provision of mother and child health care services across Ukraine. Between 24 February and 31 December 2022, according to the Ministry of Health in Ukraine, 1,106 healthcare facilities were damaged and 174 were destroyed. According to the public health directorate, routine immunization rates for children remained low, due to the disruption of services, misinformation and vaccine hesitancy (MMR 1: 74.1 per cent, Polio 3: 68.9 per cent, DTP3: 72.9 per cent).

Children with special needs – including children living outside of their families or in institutional care, and children with disabilities – were particularly vulnerable and impacted by the deteriorating availability and quality of support services. Since the beginning of the war, 104,729 of children in different types of institutions were evacuated, displaced inside and outside the country. A total of 38,882 children were returned to families from institutions without prior assessments, and 10,818 orphans, children deprived of parental care raised in alternative family-based care, were forced to leave their homes. It is crucial to mention that 119 facilities (housing) of Children's Family Type Homes and 14 centres of socio-psychological rehabilitation of children were destroyed or significantly damaged, which put children in the situation of having "no chance to return home" (UNICEF monitoring).

The ongoing high intensity of the war, as well as the pattern of violations against children, resulted in the inclusion of Ukraine as a "situation of concern" in the Secretary General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict in July 2022. Ukraine's inclusion triggered the responsibilities of the United Nations (UN) to monitor and report on the grave violations against children. However, children in the territory of Ukraine under the temporary military control of the Russian Federation were not accessible to the UN, despite multiple attempts at frontline deliveries. This seriously prevented the delivery of much-needed humanitarian assistance to children across the frontline.

On 23 June, Ukraine was granted candidate status for European Union (EU) membership, enabling continued reforms and opportunities to receive financial assistance for the transformation of society, the legal system and the economy. The direct macro financial support from international partners to the state budget was over US\$ 32 billion, which ensured a continuity of the social protection system in

Ukraine. However, the share of social protection expenditure decreased from 22 per cent in 2021 to 16 per cent in 2022, education from 4 per cent to 2 per cent, and health from 11 per cent to 7 per cent.

Ukraine reported a 30 per cent drop in GDP in 2022, while consumer inflation in annual terms was 27 per cent. The proportion of children living in poverty increased from 43.5 per cent to 65.2 per cent during the year (UNICEF Child Poverty Brief).

## Major contributions and drivers of results

Given the unprecedented changes in circumstances, the development of the new UN Cooperation Framework has been deferred, and the UN developed an 18-month Transitional Framework 2022-2023 to guide strategic cooperation and serve as a bridging document between the previous UN-Ukraine Partnership Framework (2018-2022) and the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

The UNICEF Country Programme Document has been extended by one year, to the end of 2023, to ensure alignment with the new UNSDCF.

The UNICEF Programme scaled from a planning level of a US\$ 40 million annual work plan with 91 staff to a US \$1 billion humanitarian appeal with 294 personnel. Human resources, technical, programme and financial investments were repurposed to deliver a life-saving multisectoral emergency programme to meet the urgent needs of war-stricken children and their families. Woven throughout the humanitarian scale-up was technical support to the Government of Ukraine and other national and local partners, thereby contributing to systems strengthening despite the disruption of war.

The child-friendly integrated social services programme implemented in eastern Ukraine was transformed into the national flagship ‘**Spilno**’ (meaning ‘together’) initiative. The Spilno child-friendly spaces were visited by over 500,000 children and caregivers across the country. More than 300 temporary and permanent Spilno Child Spots across 20 regions of Ukraine provided a sense of normalcy for children – providing access to play, social cohesion, community engagement and behavior change interventions in a safe environment, in partnership with the Government of Ukraine, civil society and local partners.

UNICEF Ukraine’s support in **health and nutrition** resulted in 4,926,077 children and women with access to essential life-saving primary health care and 508,245 caregivers of children aged 0-23 months with infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counselling services.

The provision of supplies was critical to keeping child and maternal health services functioning. UNICEF provided supplies to 1,005 health care facilities, including 312 maternity houses (perinatal centres) in 24 regions of Ukraine. This included nearly 30,000 medical kits (emergency, obstetric, midwifery, acute watery diarrhoea and first aid kits) and more than 2,200 items of medical equipment (ventilators, anesthesia machines, sterilizers, defibrillators, ultrasound scanners, incubators, patient monitors, oxygen concentrators and ECG recorders), as well as 420 warmer systems for newborns and 78 generators under the winter preparedness plan. Around 15,000 parents of newborns, who were staying in the most affected locations, received special newborn kits (‘Pakunok-Poriatunok’) consisting of all the necessary items (diapers, clothes, hygiene supplies) for a baby’s first month of life. To increase access to health care, UNICEF also provided ambulances to eight regions and supported the rehabilitation of bomb shelters in paediatric and maternity hospitals in the Lviv region.

More than 402,000 people, including 204,000 children, in 22 regions benefitted from essential health services through UNICEF outreach support (home visits, multidisciplinary mobile teams of doctors, nurses and psychologists). Over 15,000 people were reached with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) support through mobile teams. To ensure a better start in life for newborns and

uninterrupted nurturing care for families with children under three, UNICEF began implementing the universal-progressive home-visiting model, with a focus on home-based ECD services, including promoting vaccination and breastfeeding and medical and psychosocial risk screening. To support immunization in Ukraine, UNICEF procured over 2 million doses of vaccines (inactivated polio vaccine, oral polio vaccine, Hepatitis B, tetanus-diphtheria, diphtheria-tetanus, measles-mumps-rubella, BCG for tuberculosis, pentavalent vaccine, rabies) at the request of the Ministry of Health and National Health Service. The cold chain was bolstered through the procurement of 5,186 vaccine refrigerators and freezers, with installation of 2,348 in 3,100 routine vaccination points in 23 accessible regions. Passive cooling equipment for more than 2,500 vaccination points and 800 mobile teams was distributed across Ukraine. UNICEF also procured 30 refrigerated vans for vaccine transportation and field vaccination, which will bring vaccine access to more than 15 million people in 20 regions.

UNICEF distributed nutritional supplies for more than 30,000 children and their families. A special focus within the nutrition response was on promoting breastfeeding and IYCF practices. Over 1.5 million social media users were reached with key messages to support breastfeeding. The emergency response was also strengthened through MHPSS to health workers, in cooperation within the First Lady's initiative on the National Programme of MHPSS and the Ministry of Health.

UNICEF provided support to 1,451,665 children to access **formal and non-formal education**, including early learning. A total of 298,593 children received access to psychosocial support (PSS) and life skills education, and participated in social and emotional learning nationwide. Furthermore, 770,958 children across Ukraine benefitted from distributed learning supplies, such as ECD kits, recreation kits, school-in-a-box kits and individual kits.

UNICEF focused on creating safe spaces for children at schools to ensure continuity of learning through school rehabilitation, supply and distribution of teaching and learning materials, awareness raising on safety measures and the provision of textbooks. UNICEF supported the printing of 336,546 grade five math textbooks, for schools across Ukraine.

Together with the Ministry of Education and Science and other partners, UNICEF strengthened access to online learning through the All-Ukrainian School Online, a national platform for distance and blended learning. UNICEF supported content development, ensured the provision of user support services on the platform and supported the analysis and design of web accessibility features for users with visual, hearing and motor impairments. Furthermore, teachers were trained to effectively use the content and technical features of the platform in face-to-face, online or blended learning modalities. Finally, UNICEF contributed to the design of the strategy development for the platform, including best practice analysis and recommendations for the new design formats, which will address learning and teaching needs in the emergency context. More than 333,000 Ukrainian students and 135,000 teachers have registered on this platform.

UNICEF distributed laptops to 5,050 teachers to help conduct their online and distance teaching. Furthermore, UNICEF assisted the Ministry to conduct the National Multi-Subject Test in the framework of the university admission campaign 2022 to ensure equitable access to tertiary education in Ukraine, mobilizing more than 187,000 adolescents who participated in the test. Together with partners, UNICEF also trained more than 99,000 teachers on MHPSS, social and emotional learning, and life skills education through courses, sessions and tailored mentorship programmes.

In **adolescent development and participation**, UNICEF supported 120 UPSHIFT projects, which engaged over 40,000 of young people through a human-centred design methodology to identify and implement solutions in their communities. Five hundred Upshiffters designed solutions for their communities to address the challenges of the war and displacement. Moreover, 20 polls with an average of 10,000 responses from young people were conducted by U-Report, helping diverse stakeholders to better understand the war's impact on young people's wellbeing, employability, access to learning and interest in volunteering. UNICEF mobilized over 200,000 young people in the

humanitarian response as volunteers and reached around half a million beneficiaries.

To respond to the vast scale and urgency of the complex **protection needs of children and caregivers**, UNICEF provided life-saving protection response services and technical assistance to strengthen the child protection system. These efforts collectively reached 2,978,598 children and caregivers, including 354,509 children with disabilities with MHPSS and 352,103 beneficiaries with information on GBV risk mitigation and prevention and access to response interventions for GBV and violence against children. 70 UNICEF-supported multidisciplinary mobile teams comprising of 4 specialists (social worker, psychologist, lawyer, health-care specialist) served 930,067 cases via integrated services in 18 regions. Among those reached, 38,852 (9,313 children and 29,539 adults) were referred to specialized services (health, social and legal institutions).

In addition: 108,080 individual children in need of support had their cases identified, documented and supported; 3,341 families were trained online to provide temporary care and protection for unaccompanied or separated children; 11,017 professionals and humanitarian workers were trained to provide PSS services, case management and specialized services for children from vulnerable families; and more than 1.5 million people were reached through an online campaign on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

Within the framework of the inter-agency PSEA task force, a community-based complaint mechanism was rolled out, a victim assistance protocol was made available, and standard operating procedures on sexual exploitation and abuse case management and data sharing were developed. PSEA training was provided to 67 implementing partners, reaching 104 women and men and 809 female and male frontline workers. Three hundred frontline workers and implementing partner personnel were also trained on child safeguarding.

UNICEF continued to engage in evidence-based advocacy for child welfare and social protection reforms through the Better Care initiative. With support from the President, the First Lady, Ministry of Social Policy and other key stakeholders, Better Care advocates for prevention of family separation, increased alternative care options and the transformation of institutions to ensure that all children can grow up in family-based care. This involved targeted interventions to prevent the separation of children from families, support and promote alternative care for children, and offer meaningful alternatives to the institutionalization of children through community-based child and family support services, including early intervention for children with developmental delays and disabilities and children subjected to or witnessing violence and neglect. Moreover, large-scale national and international monitoring of children who were in institutions before the war who were subsequently moved (returned to biological parents, evacuated to safer parts of the country, evacuated abroad, etc.) was conducted to assist the government with the tracing and follow up of these children.

UNICEF also established partnerships with 18 target municipalities, prioritizing the development of community social services for vulnerable families with children. All 18 municipalities received direct cash transfers to support families with children with disabilities in improving access to social services and critical supplies.

State counterparts and service providers were capacitated in: early identification of vulnerable families with children and referrals; strengthening community-based services and establishing new services; case management strengthening; MHPSS provision and positive parenting; and in child protection and safeguarding. As a result, 67 families with children between the ages of 0-4 have benefitted from early identification services.

UNICEF supported advocacy for local financing for the sustainability of services in the Vinnytsia, Zhmerynka, Pohrebyshche and Khmilnyk municipalities. At least 100,000 members of target municipalities gained access, through online and offline settings, to critical information and referrals for available community services. At least 18,790 children and caregivers benefited from assistive

devices and other supplies procured by UNICEF.

A helpline for caregivers and social workers was established, reaching 79,967 families and community professionals with required information and counselling. Children with disabilities or developmental delays and their families, as well as internally displaced people and families in crisis, were prioritized in programme interventions, resulting in 1,746 families served through case management.

Moreover, with the escalation of the war, the Barnahus model that was adopted in 2021 was expanded by government partners to include specialized psychologists and new locations in Kyiv city and Chernivtsi oblast, reflecting the urgent need for more specialized MHPSS. In 2022, 46 child survivors and witnesses of violence benefited from child-friendly justice processes and effective responses in a safe environment to prevent further trauma.

In **WASH**, UNICEF and partners ensured access to safe water for 4,649,974 war-affected people. This included: 3,996,600 people, including 759,354 children, reached through the repair/rehabilitation of water and sanitation networks; the delivery of equipment (pipes, pumps, machinery and other critical equipment) to 35 vodokanals (water utility companies) primarily in Dnipropetrovska, Kharkivska, Vinnytska, Donetska and Zhytomyrska; and the provision of water treatment chemicals. A total of 566,386 people, including 107,613 children, were reached through emergency water supplies (bottled water and water trucking in Chernihivska, Donetska, Mykolaivska, Zaporizka and Poltavska). In addition, 86,988 people, including 16,527 children, were reached through the provision of safe water to collective centres, health care facilities, learning facilities and safe spaces, primarily in the Kyivska, Donetska, Volynska, Zhytomyrska and Lvivska regions.

UNICEF continued its support to conflict-affected families by launching a **humanitarian cash transfer (HCT)** programme in March 2022, together with the Ministry of Social Policy. HCTs reached nearly 225,000 households, covering close to 1,060,000 individuals, including 660,000 children. Each eligible household member received approximately US\$ 180 to cover their basic needs for three months. Initially, UNICEF targeted households with a minimum of three children or a child with disabilities. However, as the situation developed, this was expanded to foster families and households with one child. In December 2022, a second payment to 98,901 households was made, resulting in each recipient household receiving approximately US\$ 900 over a period of six months. UNICEF also partnered with the Association of Ukrainian Cities, providing a direct cash transfer of US\$ 50,000 to each of the 51 municipalities enrolled in the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative to support the emergency needs of families with children. This support covered the needs of 300,000 people, including more than 100,000 children.

As part of UNICEF's **social and behaviour change communication (SBCC)** efforts, more than 13 million unique individuals were reached with messaging on positive preventive and healthy behaviors amidst the war, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), disaster risk reduction, MHPSS, ECD, education, breastfeeding, nutrition, hygiene, cash assistance, routine and COVID-19 vaccinations.

Preschool-aged children and their caregivers benefited from interactive and accessible alternative learning tools, including: over 4.6 million unique beneficiaries who watched the NUMO online kindergarten; a Back to Learning Together initiative that was launched to support children, educators and caregivers engage in learning; and a national behaviour change communication campaign on the protection risks facing unaccompanied and separated children that was rolled out to prevent illegal adoption, trafficking and exploitation of children affected by the war in Ukraine, which attracted 260,000 unique visitors to the 'Child is Not Alone' online platform. At least 4.5 million people benefited from the 'Protect Your Close Ones' campaign to generate demand for routine vaccination of children and caregivers. In addition, 9.4 million people were reached via a large-scale campaign in partnership with the State Emergency Service and the national EORE dog, Patron, on safe behaviour with mines and explosive ordnance. Over 300,000 caregivers and children participated in 20,739 educational sessions in schools and Spilno spots. Approximately 75,000 children and young people

participated in online lessons on EORE.

Under the Accountability to Affected People (AAP) agenda, UNICEF received and processed over 300,000 unique inquiries and pieces of feedback via hotlines, feedback forms, research and rapid assessments and other AAP instruments. A daily social listening was conducted to navigate the messages and monitor needs.

UNICEF worked closely with UN agencies, the Government of Ukraine and humanitarian partners under the inter-agency framework. UNICEF led/co-led the WASH, Child Protection and Education clusters, the Social Protection sub-group under the Cash Working Group and the Maternal Child Health Care sub-group under the WHO-led Health Cluster. Dedicated WASH, Child Protection and Education Cluster coordination and information management capacities were put in place. UNICEF and WFP co-led the Cash Working Group Task Team that links humanitarian cash assistance with social protection systems. UNICEF-led clusters coordinated a remarkable response, reaching 1.2 million children with child protection interventions, over 1.8 million children with education services and learning support, and 7.2 million people with WASH interventions.

## UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

In 2022, UNICEF took an active role in the UN Country Team (UNCT) and collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, to ensure coherence and coordination of UN partners, roles and activities in the response. In addition to the UNCT, UNICEF has been a key member of the other UN coordination mechanisms, including the Programme Management Team and Security Management Team, and co-chairs the Operational Management Team. Through these mechanisms, UNICEF has contributed to the Transitional Framework development and coordinated common assessments and reporting.

UNICEF collaborated closely with UN agencies and other humanitarian partners and leveraged existing country programme partnerships, including with key line ministries (Foreign Affairs, Social Policy, Education, Youth and Health), mayors in several cities (including through hromadas/municipalities in the Child and Youth Friendly Cities) and civil society organizations. New partnerships were established with the Office of the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska, GIZ, managers of children's hospitals, maternity wards and perinatal centres. UNICEF expanded civil society partnerships at a decentralized level, and a total of 95 government, civil society and financial services companies partnered with UNICEF to respond to the critical needs of children and families across Ukraine.

UNICEF established a partnership with Ukrzaliznytsia – the Ukrainian Railway – to ensure that educational entertainment gifts reached war-affected children in eastern Ukraine, particularly children in newly-accessible areas such as Kharkiv and Kherson. UNICEF has contributed some 30,000 UNICEF schoolbags and stationery kits towards this initiative.

UNICEF led child protection, education and social protection sector working groups and engaged substantively in other sectoral working groups driving the National Recovery Plan. UNICEF contributed to inter-agency evidence initiatives and needs assessments, notably leading and contributing to several sectors in the second round of the Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, due for completion in March 2023.



### Child-Friendly Spaces and Digital Services for Children

UNICEF established over 300 temporary and permanent ‘Spilno’ child-friendly spaces as an innovative flagship intervention. These spaces were opened in collaboration with the government, local authorities, civil society and business partners to provide a sense of normalcy for families with children affected by war. The ‘Spilno’ spaces were placed as stand-alone inclusive spots both outside communities and inside public places across Ukraine, such as IDP centers, churches and railway stations, while educational, social, health and out-of-school facilities were closed or unavailable for children and caregivers. Parents and children were able to play, interact and receive cross-sectoral services, including consultations on health, MHPSS and social services.

Due to the massive closure of kindergartens, UNICEF developed the first-ever online kindergarten (NUMO), accessible to the displaced, caregivers in occupied territories, refugees in hosting countries and all parents in Ukraine. The NUMO online kindergarten consists of 121 episodes of interactive preschool lessons, covering all of the key competencies of child development for over 4,600,000 unique beneficiaries.

In addition, using the experience of the COVID-19 response, multiple digital platforms and solutions were implemented to provide services for children and parents, as well as collect data, while physical access for beneficiaries was absent or limited.

- - The Social and Behavior Change section tailored its social listening and social data collection instruments for the humanitarian response. The team collected and analyzed real-time data on the needs and behaviours of people on the move, internally displaced people, host communities and communities on the frontline. Reports helped to tailor the programme response (e.g., Back to Learning initiative, winter clothing), and provide additional information and services to children and caregivers on topics such as ECE/ECD, MHPSS, breastfeeding and safety.
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- - Other innovative developments in education included equipping teachers with knowledge and skills on MHPSS and self-care for their students, as well as launching a chatbot on Telegram and Viber to track the well-being of the students and help teachers to identify early signs of distress and anxiety among students and inform them about referral mechanisms. A lesson learned on the web accessibility of the All-Ukrainian School Online platform was that it needed improvements to meet the needs of users with disabilities, including hearing and visual impairments.
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- - The introduction of assistive technologies, in particular eye-tracker and boardmakers technologies, in education settings was another innovation. This required continuous training and engagement of specialists, teachers and parents to help children in using the devices for communication, learning and self-development.

### Third-Party Monitoring

The rapid scale of the UNICEF response, amid limited human resources and access, required innovative solutions for the monitoring of UNICEF supplies and services delivered across the country. UNICEF established a unique third-party monitoring scheme through partnership with academic sociological institutions, which had a network of over 300 data collection professionals spread across the country. As a result, in 2022, over 3,000 face-to-face digital monitoring visits were conducted at distribution sites all over Ukraine. UNICEF also introduced a comprehensive internal reporting and data management system that informed the country office’s decision making, donor reporting,

visualization of the scope of interventions with deep dives into disaggregated data on beneficiaries, implementing partners, geographical coverage, and so on. In addition, live monitoring tools are being developed and improved, including the tools for daily monitoring of Spilno Child Spots, mobile teams and staff field visits, providing knowledge of the situation on the ground, needs, successes and identifying areas for improvement.