



GOAL AREA 5

Every child has access to
inclusive social protection and
lives free from poverty

Global Annual
Results Report 2022

unicef 
for every child

Cover image: © UNICEF/UN0716673/Bidel
Asna, 9, stands by the door at her home in Badghis Province, Afghanistan, on 3 October 2022. In the months following the Taliban takeover, the freezing of Afghan international reserves and the near collapse of the national economy resulted in a precipitous decline in household conditions. Badghis Province was one of the most affected areas. A multipurpose cash transfer programme was designed to help vulnerable families overcome financial barriers to access essential goods and services. The programme

delivered cash transfers to 32,258 households (approximately 245,000 individuals, including approximately 150,000 children) in all districts for a period of three months. The project was funded through thematic funding from the Government of France and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

Expression of thanks

UNICEF is funded through the voluntary support of millions of people around the world and our partners in government, civil society and the private sector. Voluntary contributions enable UNICEF to deliver on its mandate to protect children's rights, help meet their basic needs and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF takes this opportunity to thank all partners for their commitment and trust.

UNICEF would like to acknowledge and thank our key core and thematic resource partners supporting Goal Area 5. Thematic funding offers flexibility for long-term planning, enhances the sustainability of programmes and enables UNICEF to invest in innovative and new approaches. Thematic funding was critical to respond to the emerging needs and challenges of children, including those in humanitarian situations, particularly in the context of UNICEF's comprehensive approach to reducing child poverty, strengthening inclusive, gender-transformative, shock-responsive social protection and care systems, delivering humanitarian cash, enhancing public finance for children and revamping local governance. Under the current UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, the governments of Germany, Ireland, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, the European Commission, the United Nations Joint Programme and others have provided critical support for Goal Area 5 via the thematic window, alongside core funding and country-specific support. UNICEF acknowledges these critical contributions and their role in furthering Goal Area 5 results.

Seventy-six years after UNICEF was established and 33 years since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the organization's mission to promote the full attainment of the rights of all children is as urgent as ever. In this era of uneven recovery from the socioeconomic impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, increasing gaps in financing for social services and escalating and compounding climate, conflict and humanitarian crises, UNICEF's new and revamped Goal Area 5 accelerates progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals by prioritizing the move towards inclusive social protection and ensuring life free from poverty for all children and adolescents. It sets out measurable results for all children, with a specific focus on the most disadvantaged, including in fragile and humanitarian situations, and defines the critical game changers and enablers that support their achievement. Working together with governments at national and subnational levels, United Nations partners, International Financial Institutions, the private sector and civil society – and with the full participation of children and adolescents – UNICEF remains steadfast in its commitment to reversing critical setbacks in child poverty, and realizing the rights of all children, everywhere, for a world in which no child is left behind.

The following report summarizes the results achieved by UNICEF and its partners under Goal Area 5 in 2022, its first year of implementation. It reviews the impact of these accomplishments on children, families and the communities in which they live. This is one of seven Global Annual Results Reports on the results of efforts during the past year, encompassing gender equality and humanitarian action, as well as each of the five Goal Areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025: 'Every child survives and thrives', 'Every child learns', 'Every child is protected from violence and exploitation', 'Every child lives in a safe and clean environment', and 'Every child has access to inclusive social protection and lives free from poverty'. It supplements the 2022 Executive Director Annual Report.



A portrait of thirty-year-old Aisha Mohammed Taher with her six children at her home in Port Sudan. She is a beneficiary of UNICEF's Mother and Child Cash Transfer plus programme (MCCT+). Through the programme she has received unconditional grants and also linked to essential health services at the primary health centre for herself and children. In 2021, UNICEF and partners launched the first ever Cash Plus programme known as the Mother and Child Cash Transfer Plus (MCCT+) Programme, an integrated social protection programme for pregnant women and lactating mothers aimed at boosting the health of their children during the first 1,000 days of life – from conception until their second birthday. Through Primary Health Care facilities, beneficiaries are registered and provided with non-conditional cash grants combined with knowledge and linkages to essential healthcare services including antenatal care, immunization, nutrition care, among others while addressing underlying nutrition and health deprivations.

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Executive Summary

Miriam, 13, at her new school in the Afar region of northern Ethiopia on 4 March 2022.

Introduction

In 2022, global growth decreased from 6 per cent in 2021 to 3.2 per cent in 2022. Global debt grew to US\$226 trillion in 2021, the largest one-year surge since the Second World War. Public debt accounted for almost 40 per cent of that figure, the highest share since the mid-1960s. The increase in visible impacts of climate change and forced displacement, the war in Ukraine and its effects on inflation and food prices further challenged the fiscal environment of many countries, with important impacts on social spending, particularly in low-income settings.

The compounding and overlapping crises the world faces have heightened poverty, inequality and social injustice. And children continue to be disproportionately impacted. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and conflict, more than 100 million children fell into poverty. The challenge is not only in terms of aggregate numbers, but also in the number of new children and families that

have never experienced poverty before, or who were able to recover but then fell back – for instance, those living in urban areas and slums, and families in the informal sector or care economy. Child poverty is a universal challenge, impacting low-, middle- and high-income countries across all regions and contexts. Moreover, children – including those with disabilities, displaced and migrant children, adolescent girls and children from ethnic groups, among others – face a high risk of exclusion from policies and proven approaches that help address poverty and exclusion, including social protection. And financing for those potentially transformative policies is at risk due to economic hardship and calls for austerity measures. Protecting, enhancing and expanding social spending is critical, not only to revert the lost ground but to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 1 and 10.

Key results achieved in 2022

The year 2022 was the first of implementing the new UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, including its strategic revamping of Goal Area 5, which enhanced UNICEF commitments to reducing child poverty. The organization's work under Goal Area 5 spanned 155 countries globally, with different countries engaging in different programmatic areas. The number of countries reporting that evidence and advocacy had led to policies and programmes in child poverty reduction increased from 32 countries in 2021 to 38 countries in 2022. The number of countries measuring multidimensional child poverty, 70, remained static. There was, however, a decrease in the number of countries measuring monetary child poverty – 74 in 2022, compared with 85 in 2021 – and this is worrisome. In part, it is because a number of countries have not updated their estimates since 2017, reflecting the difficulties that countries continue to face in systematically resourcing and supporting national-led child poverty measurement.

Strengthening social protection systems continues to be at the core of UNICEF's work across countries. In 2022, the number of countries whose systems were moderately strong or strong increased to 68, from 56 in 2021. UNICEF also promoted a move towards enhanced gender-transformative and inclusive systems, with 115 country offices embedding explicit gender objectives in their social protection work, an increase from 29 countries in 2019. In addition, in 2022, UNICEF helped 60 countries to initiate disability-inclusive social protection programmes, up from 55 countries in 2021. More than a quarter (26 per cent) of

UNICEF country offices worked with governments and/or partners to deliver cash-based support to displaced and migrant children, leveraging one or more components of a national social protection system.

In 2022, UNICEF also scaled up its engagement with governments to better respond to the increase in economic challenges. A total of 144 countries (up from 137 in 2021) engaged with governments on Public Finance for Children (PF4C), of which 78 countries generated new evidence and strengthened national social sector budgets (up from 65 in 2021). Noteworthy is the increased number of countries working with governments to improve equity in public budgets, from 122 in 2021 to 130 in 2022. UNICEF accelerated its efforts to support governments in leveraging international and private resources to expand social service delivery, and, to this end, engaged in a total of 127 countries (up from 126 in 2021). In 65 of these countries, efforts led to concrete results for social service delivery (up from 55 in 2021).

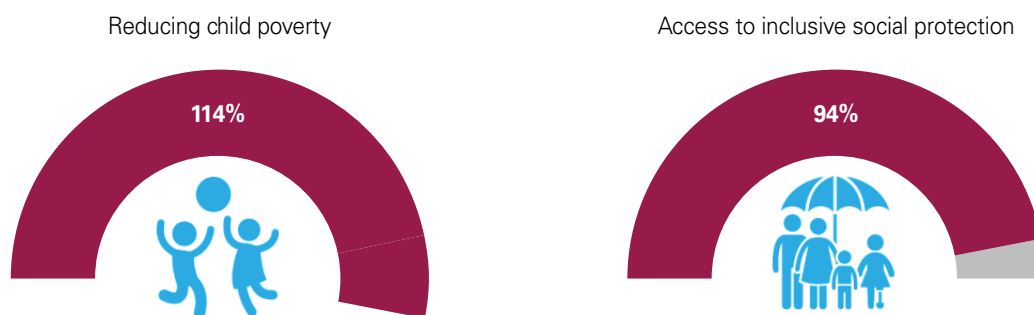
Local governance programming grew in scope and scale, with more countries and more partnerships working with UNICEF to address the multiple deprivations faced by children and their families and caregivers. From major urban centres to the most isolated rural villages, UNICEF provided technical assistance to improve outcomes for children, with a focus on poverty and equity. UNICEF supported local and urban governance programming in 107 programme countries worldwide, up from 77 countries in 2021. The war

in Ukraine further underlined the value of subnational and local governments as front-line responders in humanitarian situations. They play a pivotal role in providing essential emergency support, bridging resource gaps, improving coordination with national governments, and adapting and scaling up existing social services to reach every child.

The year 2022 was also crucial in the evolution of UNICEF’s comprehensive offer in fragile and humanitarian contexts, leveraging our expertise and approach to prepare both government and UNICEF delivery systems to rapidly deliver cash assistance using government, parallel or mixed approaches, depending on the context. Government systems-strengthening continued. The number of countries with moderate readiness to respond to a crisis increased

from 68 to 78 in the past year, while progress in the number of countries with high readiness was slower, increasing from 17 to 18 – highlighting the challenges in developing strongly shock-responsive systems. The increased readiness of UNICEF systems can be seen in the significant scale-up of humanitarian cash transfers (HCTs) as part of emergency responses, including in Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies, where UNICEF exceeded planned milestones for the year. Overall, UNICEF reached an estimated 2.8 million households in 43 countries. The overall volume of payments to UNICEF partners for cash-based assistance increased significantly to US\$725 million over the course of the year.

FIGURE 1: Goal Area 5 progress rates



Source: United Nations Children’s Fund, Annual Report for 2022 of the Executive Director of UNICEF, UNICEF, New York, 2022.

Looking ahead

Moving beyond the pandemic, it will be imperative for UNICEF support to countries not only to catch up with pre-pandemic positive trends to achieve the SDGs but to accelerate them. Bold and timely action is required to stop millions of children falling into poverty – because even short periods of poverty in childhood can have devastating consequences. In 2023, UNICEF will intensify its analysis and advocacy to ensure children are the top priority on national agendas. It will continue to draw attention to and define innovative and tailored programmatic approaches towards new groups of children and families living in poverty. And it will continue to document and leverage innovative examples of countries across the income spectrum that have made children living in poverty their highest priority, to achieve the SDGs of ending extreme child poverty and halving child poverty as nationally defined. Such examples provide valuable inspiration and motivation

as well as knowledge and evidence on effective approaches for global, regional and national actors, showing that ending child poverty is possible and a critical policy choice.

Social protection is becoming an ever more important tool in addressing the multiple challenges facing children and their families. UNICEF will continue to strengthen existing social protection systems and expand coverage, including in fragile contexts. In particular, the organization will prioritize closing the coverage gap for children, and scaling up inclusive, gender-transformative social protection systems and its support for enhancing and financing care services, including family-friendly policies.

Demands for resilient and shock-responsive social protection systems and HCT programmes continue to grow. UNICEF analysis suggests the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance – currently 1 in 23 – is expected to remain high or even rise. UNICEF has many

advantages when it comes to delivering for children in complex contexts, and the organization will continue to evolve and strengthen its capacity to meet the challenges ahead. This includes scaling up UNICEF's comprehensive offer and programmatic and operational capacity around building shock-responsive systems and the delivery of humanitarian cash. Specifically, this will involve enhancing sustainable financing of systems, preparedness and effective delivery via systems, while also enhancing internal capacity for direct delivery when needed, including by strengthening UNICEF's beneficiary data management system, the Humanitarian cash Operational and Programmatic Ecosystem (HOPE).

UNICEF will be revamping its global programme framework on public finance to better respond to the emerging complexities facing all social spending sectors, including leveraging humanitarian and climate financing to scale up resilient social systems. At the same time, it will continue to advocate for the prioritization of sustainable domestic resources for social services and investments for children, while also fostering strategic partnerships with International Financial Institutions, civil society and United Nations partners.

In 2023, local governance and urban programming will continue to focus on enhancing the capacity of governance systems at all levels to address the unique structural barriers to child well-being in rural and urban areas. This will involve improving data – including better intra-urban

data) – as well as the planning, budgeting and delivery of child-sensitive social services, applying a territorial lens. UNICEF will work to enhance the role of local governments in humanitarian responses and emergencies, building on lessons learned, including from the recent experience in Ukraine. The organization will also integrate key global trends into its governance programming, including climate action and gender mainstreaming, and expand its work in urban areas to respond to rapid urbanization and the associated increases in the number of children living in slums and informal settlements, also known as informality. UNICEF will support countries and cities to implement programmes for children in urban settings, with a focus on slums and informal settlements, in line with the updated UNICEF strategy guiding its work for children in urban settings. While maintaining the focus on making urban policies and programmes child-responsive, UNICEF and partners will promote and strengthen birth registration and social protection in poor urban areas. Furthermore, given the significant vaccination gap in urban areas reported in 2019–2021 and with most zero-dose children found to be living in slums¹, UNICEF will make the immunization of these children a top priority in 2023. The organization will work with partners to put children at the centre of slum transformation initiatives and to advocate for participatory and child-centred slum upgrades. In addition, UNICEF will engage in advocacy and provide guidance for the development and upkeep of environmentally safe public spaces for children in urban areas.



Children playing with colours to celebrate Holi in Faridabad, India, on 17 March 2022.



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Strategic Context

On April 11, 2022, a mother and a baby wait for vaccination at a health post in Ba'adley, IDP Site, Shabelle Zone, Somali Region, Ethiopia

Global developments and trends in the situation of children

The first year of implementation of the new Goal Area 5, ‘Every child, including adolescents, has access to inclusive social protection and lives free from poverty’, was critical and unparalleled. Whereas some countries started to move towards recovery from the health and socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, progress was uneven across and within countries. On top of this came the Ukraine war and its impacts on energy prices and inflation, an acute food and nutrition crisis, intensifying climate events, a drop in annual global growth from 6 per cent to 3.2 per cent, and the looming risk of a debt crisis. Global debt reached a record US\$226 trillion at the end of 2021, following the largest surge since the Second World War, and economies now face even more challenging financing gaps. Multiple and compounding impacts continue to challenge the efforts of many countries, communities and households to recover, reconstruct and reverse critical setbacks in terms of poverty and inequality.

Children and their families continue to be particularly affected. Children are more than twice as likely as adults to live below the poverty line and continue to face multiple deprivations. Moreover, due to the combined effects of COVID-19, conflict and climate crises, an additional 100 million children fell into poverty in 2021. The impact on child poverty is not only concerning due to the unprecedented increase in aggregate numbers, but also due to the changing profile of children and families living in poverty, which includes children who had not experienced poverty before. Moreover, poverty rose disproportionately

in urban settings and increased across middle-income economies and among families working in the informal sector and the care economy (among others). The increase in child poverty is not only a concern in low-income and fragile contexts, but also a constant challenge in middle- and high-income settings. For instance, child poverty across Europe and Central Asia has soared by 19 per cent, specifically due to the Ukraine war and rising inflation. This poses critical challenges and an urgent need to rethink our programming to eliminate child poverty and inequality.

The causes of these compounding crises also have their roots in inequality and social injustice. Pre-existing inequality and exclusion determine who suffers most in these times. Children – including children with disabilities, displaced and migrant children, adolescent girls and children from certain ethnic minorities, among others – are at the highest risk of exclusion from critical policies that would help their well-being. In many cases, they are invisible in national policies and programming, and their voices are neither heard nor acknowledged. Moreover, the way recovery is managed, including the investments that are prioritized, can also exacerbate inequalities for children and families and weaken the social contract, as governments fail to prioritize universal social protection, and trust suffers as a result. Budgets and critical domestic financing, both for social sectors and within social sectors, have been shown to have the biggest impact on equality – but they are often the first at risk of being cut in times of economic distress.

Every child has access to inclusive social protection and lives free from poverty

Based on evidence and lessons learned from previous crises, Goal Area 5 acknowledges the critical enablers and innovative programmatic approaches that are urgently needed to address the current context, while also scaling up UNICEF’s unique contribution to accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 and 10, for all children.

UNICEF has solid and recognized experience in executing critical ‘game changers’ across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, and it works in 155 countries under Goal Area 5 (with different countries engaging on different issues). UNICEF leverages its long-standing field

presence, nuanced understanding of cross-cutting issues within the social sector, trust among governments and local actors and operational expertise to:

- Make **children living in poverty visible – their needs, capacities, agency and voice** – via the systematic measurement and monitoring of child poverty, and the effective use of data and analysis to support policy change and innovative programmatic approaches at scale;
- **Protect, enhance and expand inclusive investments for children**, ensuring spending in social sectors is secured and the last to be cut, including in contexts of economic distress, and

enhancing the efficiency, efficacy, equity and transparency of current allocations, while also leveraging additional domestic and international financing to address critical gaps and scale up innovation, as a pillar of investment for cohesive societies;

- **Close the coverage and adequacy gap of social protection** systems for children, including care and family-friendly policies, by enhancing the child-rights lens of policies and strategies; supporting the strengthening of a systems approach that allows for access to relevant social protection programmes across the life cycle (child benefits, accessible childcare, school feeding, removal of school fees, health insurance, parental leave, etc.); enabling links with other social services, while also ensuring adequate and inclusive design to ensure impact on specific excluded groups; and addressing structural social inequalities and power dynamics that further exacerbate poverty (gender, disability, ethnicity, migration or displacement status, conflict/climate, age, geographical differences, etc.);
- **Scale up the delivery of humanitarian cash transfers (HCTs)**, by providing direct and timely income support in humanitarian and emergency contexts, via systems or directly, helping to reduce financing barriers to access critical social services and leveraging this expertise to build and/or strengthen nascent and existing systems, when possible.

UNICEF has a comprehensive offer in fragile and humanitarian contexts. This offer harnesses UNICEF's technical, operational and programming excellence in both social protection systems-strengthening and direct humanitarian cash delivery, to foster sustainable development results and meet UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in humanitarian action. Through this comprehensive offer, UNICEF addresses the financial barriers for children and households to access essential services, cover humanitarian needs, contribute to managing risks and enhance their overall resilience in fragile and humanitarian contexts.

Across all dimensions, an explicit focus on local governance, including tailored responses that address spatial differences and strengthen community, local and subnational capacities, will ensure results are achieved at scale.

Accelerating results for children, including across all Goal Area 5 programming areas, requires working through partnerships at global and field levels. In 2022, UNICEF continued to strengthen and expand its network of partnerships, building strong alliances with regional, national and international partners to foster innovation, enhance advocacy, harness its coordination role among different stakeholders, lead critical policy changes at the country level and leverage financing and support to accelerate positive change. UNICEF continued to drive cross-sectoral collaboration to enhance outcomes for child

poverty reduction and inclusive social protection, working with bilateral and multilateral partners, including other United Nations agencies.

In 2022, UNICEF continued to co-chair a 20-member coalition, alongside Save the Children and the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, that is bringing together a comprehensive policy agenda to end child poverty. With social protection work ongoing in over 130 countries and building on our deep knowledge and experience, UNICEF played a leading role working with governments, other United Nations agencies, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), development partners and civil society to help strengthen nationally owned social protection systems and highlight and influence critical gaps that remain. For instance, UNICEF and partners worked to prioritize the sustainable financing of social protection systems, close coverage gaps, reinforce links with nutrition and food systems, ensure systematic inclusion of women, girls, children with disabilities and migrant children, and promote investment in preparedness and risk-informed approaches. UNICEF also highlighted the critical need to scale up financing for family-friendly policies and care across the life cycle, and the importance of social protection as an accelerator – not only for poverty reduction, but also food and nutrition security and access to education, health and other critical services.

Social protection plays a crucial role in achieving a wide range of positive outcomes for children by addressing poverty, a root cause of various deprivations. As many countries faced food and nutrition crises due to food price inflation and child poverty in 2022, UNICEF actively participated in global forums and resource mobilization efforts to systematically address malnutrition and child poverty. This included launching the 'No Time to Waste Acceleration Plan 2022–2023', which focuses on the 15 most severely affected countries and includes cash transfers in the minimum package of interventions. As the Chair of the newly established Financing Working Group of the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (USP2030), UNICEF co-led inter-agency discussions to develop a global agreement on common principles for financing universal social protection.

UNICEF is a leading member of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions ('the United Nations Social Protection Accelerator'), and leads development partner groups on social protection financing, gender, disability, shock-responsive social protection, and food security and nutrition. Notably, progress has been made across these areas in building coherence and joint products. The World Bank also remains an important partner on social protection programmes and operations in relation to both gender transformation and disability inclusiveness.

UNICEF's work on family-friendly policies and care in 2022 resulted in more countries embracing family-friendly policies for early childhood such as parental leave, breastfeeding support, childcare and child benefits compared to 2021. In 2022, UNICEF worked extensively

to enhance the systematic inclusion of girls, children with disabilities and children on the move in social protection systems, supporting countries to scale up gender-responsive social protection approaches and ensuring that children with disabilities are reached effectively. UNICEF also expanded its work supporting the delivery of cash transfers in fragile and humanitarian contexts, working in harmony with other divisions, offices and teams, including finance and administration as well as technology teams.

Moreover, UNICEF continued its efforts to convene stakeholders across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus and elevate the critical linkages between social protection and humanitarian cash assistance, including via its role as co-lead of the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) Gender Working Group. UNICEF remained a key player in the Cash Coordination Caucus facilitated by the Norwegian Refugee Council, bringing together key stakeholders such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), CashCap, the Alliance for Empowering Partnerships (A4EP), the Collaborative Cash Delivery Network (CCD) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as a donor cash forum made up of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In 2022, UNICEF continued to work to leverage critical financing for children, including enhancing its collaboration with IFIs, bilateral resource partners, governments and civil society organizations. UNICEF partnered with the World Bank to analyse and highlight the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic fallout on households with children, alongside the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, co-chaired by UNICEF. At the country level, UNICEF continued to work with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as government partners to ensure support for protecting social spending and to leverage strategic financing for children across critical social sectors, while also supporting the sustainability of child benefits as part of national social protection systems post COVID-19.

In 2022, jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF started implementing the UNICEF–UNDP Global Financing Flagship, and formally joined the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) facility, supporting the acceleration of investments in social sectors through a coordinated public and private approach. The UNICEF–UNDP Flagship brings together the strengths of the two agencies to advance public and private financing for the SDGs. The goal is to support catalytic collaborations at country and regional levels. These collaborations are focusing on two components – public finance and private

finance – while ensuring synergies and coordination to maximize investments for social services at the country level.

UNICEF’s strong engagement with governments at central and decentralized levels and strong collaboration with international development partners have been critical to advancing social spending for children. In addition to its close working relationship with UNDP and the IFIs, UNICEF continued its collaboration with the Inter-Agency Taskforce on Financing for Development and led the subgroup on Alignment of National Planning, Spending and Implementation as part of the Cluster on Sustainability and Climate Action (Cluster 1), within the Secretary-General’s Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond initiative. It also continued to enhance collaboration with civil society around transparency, including alongside the International Budget Partnership.



Krou Rachelle, 32, a preschool teacher, is the nursery supervisor at a UNICEF-supported center in Guingreni, northern Côte d'Ivoire, as part of the Girl Power project.



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Ending child poverty by 2030

Zenabva, 35, embraces her youngest child, Hadja, at Amma camp for internally displaced persons near Liwa, Chad, on 2 February 2022.

The year 2022 was incredibly difficult for children and their families living in poverty, as well as those vulnerable to falling into poverty. These families were confronted by a series of major crises, including the continued impact of the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the subsequent energy crisis, rising inflation and food insecurity.

Children continue to be disproportionately impacted by poverty, both monetary and multidimensional. The 2022 multidimensional poverty index highlighted that half of the 1.2 billion people living in multidimensional poverty are children under the age of 18.²

Joint analysis by UNICEF and the World Bank in 2022 highlighted that at least two thirds of households with children had lost income since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and adults in nearly half of households with children reported skipping a meal due to lack of money.³ Moreover, child poverty soared in 2022 in Europe and Central Asia as the Ukraine war and rising inflation plunged 4 million children into poverty, a 19 per cent increase on 2021, according to UNICEF analysis.⁴ The UNICEF 2023 Global Outlook report, titled 'Prospects for Children in the Polycrisis', stresses that efforts to tame inflation will have unintended negative effects on child poverty and well-being.⁵ In short, concerted policy action is needed to restore poverty reduction and reach the SDGs of ending extreme child poverty and halving multidimensional child poverty by 2030.

As mentioned, the new Goal Area 5 provided additional impetus for global, regional and national child poverty reduction efforts. Accordingly, UNICEF further strengthened its child poverty efforts in 2022, focusing on:

- Enhancing the visibility of children living in poverty by supporting the universal, nationwide measurement of child poverty in all its dimensions

- Using policy analysis and engagement to influence policies and programmes to reduce child poverty
- Advocating for using child poverty analysis and positioning child poverty as the highest priority in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.

Child poverty reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG 1, ending poverty in all its forms, includes three key poverty indicators/measures which UNICEF tracks at global and national levels:

- Indicator 1.1.1 on ending **extreme monetary child poverty** by 2030 (children struggling to survive on less than purchasing power parity US\$1.90/day)
- Indicator 1.2.1 on halving **monetary child poverty as nationally defined** by 2030 (children living below the national poverty line)
- Indicator 1.2.2 on halving **multidimensional child poverty as nationally defined** by 2030.

Results achieved and challenges to ending child poverty by 2030

Routine measurement and monitoring of child poverty

At the heart of Goal Area 5 is the need to address and end child poverty. Poverty is a violation of a child's rights. As enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), children have a right to an adequate standard of living, and to be free from deprivations across crucial aspects of their lives, including their health, education, nutrition, care and protection. Moreover, reducing child poverty is a specific target of SDG 1.⁶ Routine national measurement of child poverty is central to this, as it brings

into focus which children are being deprived of their rights. Without knowing how many and which children are living in multidimensional or monetary poverty, governments cannot know how they are progressing or understand the impacts of various policies and programmes in terms of child poverty.

In 2022, UNICEF partnered with governments and national statistical offices for the measurement and monitoring of child poverty to inform national policies and programmes that address child poverty. Despite these efforts, between 2021 and 2022 there was an overall drop in the number of countries measuring monetary child poverty, from 85 to 74. This was because a significant number of countries

with monetary child poverty estimates from 2017 have not updated their measurement in recent years and therefore cannot be counted, reflecting the challenges linked to capacity and the prioritization of critical investments. On the positive side, there were several newcomers in 2022 – countries which measured monetary child poverty for the first time ever – including Côte d’Ivoire, Mexico, Nepal, Senegal and Sri Lanka.

In terms of multidimensional child poverty, again some countries provided no recent data, but four countries – Ecuador, El Salvador, Greece and Mauritania – established their first ever multidimensional child poverty estimates, so the total number of 70 countries stayed the same. In 38 countries (up from 32 in 2021), child poverty evidence and advocacy led to policies and programmes that contributed to child poverty reduction, reflecting solid progress. This includes child poverty analysis being used to influence social protection strategy design and inform key indicators in subnational development plans, and feeding into the design and increased coverage of cash transfers – as outlined in the many examples below.

This lack of progress in the number of countries measuring child poverty – both monetary and multidimensional – may be due to several factors. The SDGs may have provided an initial impetus for countries to measure child poverty that has not been given a spotlight or properly linked with other cross-sectoral issues. Another possible explanation is that we are increasingly working in politically sensitive environments, where the poverty debate – including the measurement of child poverty – is sensitive. Finally, there are

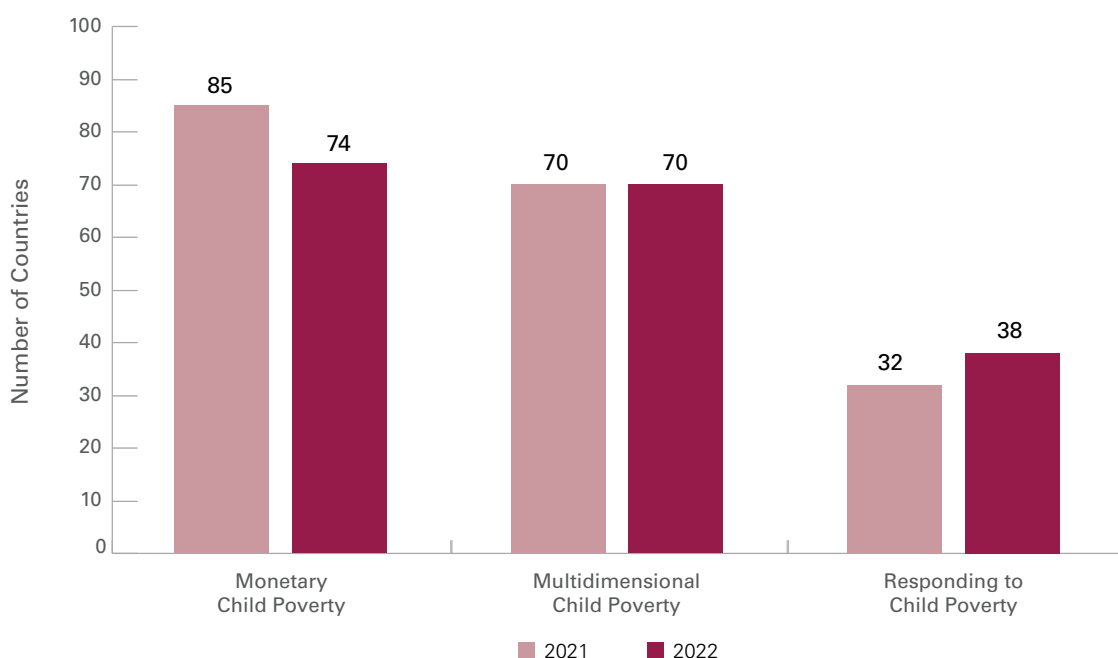
indications that resources for the foundational work of child poverty are becoming more strained at global, regional and country office levels.

Building capacity to address child poverty

In 2022, UNICEF supported capacity-building for the measurement of child poverty in all regions of the world. Rwanda, for example, is one of the countries with established routine measurements of monetary and multidimensional child poverty. In 2022, with support from UNICEF Rwanda, the government launched updated estimates – highlighting among other things that 65.8 per cent of children under 5 years are multidimensionally deprived, and almost one in four children aged 0–23 months are simultaneously deprived in nutrition, health and sanitation.

In the State of Palestine, UNICEF collaborated with the National Poverty Task Force to define multidimensional child poverty and plan for the analysis of monetary child poverty. Data will be collected through the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey planned for 2023–2024. Likewise in Somalia, UNICEF supported the Somali National Statistics Bureau with analysis of multidimensional child poverty. In Pakistan, UNICEF helped the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives to mobilize over 100 national, regional and global poverty experts to discuss the measurement of child poverty in Pakistan and policies to address it.

FIGURE 2: Global progress in countries measuring and addressing child poverty – UNICEF internal monitoring



Source: UNICEF Goal Area 5 Core Standard Indicators (2022).⁷

In partnership with the National Statistics Office of Georgia, UNICEF launched the Child Welfare Survey and embedded a child welfare module into the existing Household Income and Expenditure Survey. The module includes a child deprivation index – a measure of multidimensional child poverty – including additional questions on children with disabilities, allowing for nuanced analysis on the inclusion of children with disabilities. Likewise, UNICEF Ethiopia supported the government’s routine monitoring of child poverty, enhancing the quality and scope of existing surveys and commissioning research and updates on child poverty measurement and its critical drivers.

In many of these countries, through UNICEF support, SDG baselines have been established to monitor progress towards the SDG child poverty targets. In Suriname, multidimensional child poverty analysis revealed that around 36 per cent of children aged 0–17 years in the country are multidimensionally deprived. This finding now serves as a baseline for monitoring Suriname’s progress in reducing child poverty.

Other UNICEF offices which supported national capacities for the measurement and monitoring of child poverty in 2022 include, among others, those in Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus,

Belize, the Comoros, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Madagascar, North Macedonia and Sierra Leone.

Beyond routine measurement, UNICEF supported governments in several countries, including fragile contexts, with child poverty-related policy analysis. In Yemen, for example, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Planning in preparing and publishing editions of the Yemen Socioeconomic Update, a key national source of social and economic information in Yemen, including on socioeconomic issues affecting programming for children living in poverty. UNICEF Philippines supported a disability costing study, revealing that children with disabilities incur 40–80 per cent higher costs than those without disabilities for comparable living standards. Accounting for these costs shows that poverty is 50 per cent higher in families with children with disabilities than reported in standard poverty statistics (without taking these additional costs into account). The Philippines Statistics Authority will refer to this analysis in a forthcoming review of the national poverty statistics methodology.

FIGURE 3: UNICEF-supported child poverty analysis in 2022



Source: UNICEF national child poverty analysis (2022).⁸

Many UNICEF country offices helped governments prepare for future child poverty analysis in 2022; in some cases, their efforts coincided with and complemented milestones of national development. In Cambodia, for example, UNICEF helped the government to prepare an analysis of updated child poverty estimates; these estimates will be launched in time to inform the development of the new National Development Strategic Plan 2024–2028. In Jordan, UNICEF collaborated with the Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation to develop new child poverty estimates using the latest household survey data; the estimates are due to be launched in 2024. UNICEF Yemen is currently working with the government to prepare a measurement of multidimensional child poverty, based on the latest results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey in the country. In Togo, preparations are ongoing with the National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies for the systematic production of data on child poverty for use in national analysis.

Communicating and advocating for an end to child poverty

A crucial step in the fight against child poverty is translating evidence into clear messages, advocacy and action. In 2022, UNICEF boosted its communications and advocacy efforts around child poverty at global, regional and national levels. In Albania, for example, a comprehensive UNICEF media and digital campaign reached more than 70,000 Albanians, informing them of the extent and impact of multiple child deprivations in the country. UNICEF China amplified advocacy efforts to address multidimensional child deprivations in urban and rural settings by writing articles and producing a video on the issue.

In South Africa, evidence generation and advocacy remain key UNICEF strategies to address child poverty and vulnerability. UNICEF has partnered with stakeholders in both government and civil society to develop media content that stresses the importance of addressing multidimensional child poverty in South Africa, and to develop a measure for an acceptable standard of living.

In Peru, in coordination with the National Electoral Institution and the Inter-institutional Group for Children's and Adolescents' Rights, UNICEF supported the 'Round Table for the Fight Against Poverty', preparing agreements that were signed by governors and mayoral candidates from 26 regions during the election process of 2022. To inform stakeholders, UNICEF generated evidence about children in Peru across various areas, including poverty and social protection.

In Burundi, advocacy and capacity-building on child poverty, supported by UNICEF, resulted in a child poverty working group being established. This working group provides an entry-point for sustained dialogue on deprivations experienced by children in Burundi. The overarching

objectives of this advocacy are to guide interventions for a coordinated response to multidimensional child poverty and to advocate for child-sensitive budgeting.

Informing policies and strategies to end child poverty

It is crucial for evidence, communications and advocacy to come together to promote tangible change in the lives of children living in poverty. Reducing child poverty requires a set of policies and programmes to be initiated or expanded across all social sectors, including social protection. To address multidimensional child poverty it is important to provide quality and accessible services – particularly for the most deprived children. And to address monetary child poverty, families and households need to have a minimum income, and governments need to ensure financial barriers never prevent children from accessing key services. A combination of evidence generation, communications and advocacy can support policymakers in making real changes to the lives of children living in poverty and those vulnerable to it.

UNICEF-supported child poverty analysis is used as a powerful influencing tool for a wide range of processes and plans/strategies. For example, in Armenia, monetary and multidimensional child poverty data have been used to inform the draft Labour and Social Protection Sector Development Strategy 2022–2026, as well as the redesign of the family benefit scheme and family vulnerability assessment system. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, multidimensional child poverty measurements influenced high-level commitments to plan and implement programmes in specific sectors and subnational contexts, including the National Plan of Action for Mothers and Children and sector plans. The various measures of child deprivations are also used in the country's respective sector strategies. In Brazil, the results from a UNICEF-supported study on child poverty highlighted that children in the country are twice as likely to live in monetary poverty as adults. UNICEF advocated for a budgetary supplement for child-focused policies, with a key win when Congress approved an earmarked budget for early childhood interventions within the 2023 Budget Guidelines Law. Further:

- Informed by the Namibia Multidimensional Poverty Index Report, UNICEF supported the National Planning Commission to develop and disseminate regional poverty profiles to 12 regions. This helped raise awareness of the child poverty situation in each of the regions. Related advocacy efforts strengthened the regional governments' capacity to embed child poverty in their development plans and budgets. It also influenced an equitable, decentralized resource allocation framework aimed at ending child poverty in line with SDG 1. It was through these advocacy efforts that UNICEF secured a commitment from all 12 regional authorities to include multidimensional child poverty indicators in their regional development plans and inputs to the upcoming 6th National Development Plan.

- In **Zimbabwe**, child poverty indicators are incorporated in the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, which serves as the national strategy for assessing progress in the implementation of the five-year National Development Plan.
- In **the United Republic of Tanzania**, UNICEF provided technical and financial support for the development of the third National Development Plan (the last in the implementation of a long-term, 15-year plan), providing evidence on various aspects of child well-being, including child poverty analysis and policy recommendations for addressing child poverty.
- In **Jordan**, multidimensional child vulnerability analysis informed the development of both the National Social Protection Strategy and the Child Rights Law.
- In **Iraq**, multidimensional child poverty analysis informed the development of the latest National Development Plan and the poverty reduction strategy.

In 2022, UNICEF helped governments in several countries develop comprehensive plans/strategies to address child poverty, including in Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, and Trinidad and Tobago. In 2021, the Council of the European Union adopted a proposal to establish the European Child Guarantee, a policy instrument which aims to comprehensively address childhood disadvantage and exclusion. With support from UNICEF in many countries, the European Child Guarantee was rolled out in 2022, providing opportunities to reduce child poverty and social exclusion in the European Union (EU). As a member of the Permanent Expert Group in Bulgaria (providing technical support and monitoring implementation of the Child Guarantee), UNICEF supported evidence generation for the European Child Guarantee National Action Plan, a policy plan for breaking the cycle of poverty and exclusion among children. Similarly, UNICEF Greece supported the implementation of the European Child Guarantee and the new National Action Plan on Child Rights. UNICEF Croatia played a key role in the implementation of the Child Guarantee Action Plan, as did UNICEF Romania and Montenegro.

Evidence-informed policies in response to multiple crises

As already highlighted, 2022 was extremely challenging for children and their families living in poverty, as well as those vulnerable to falling into poverty. These families were confronted by a series of major crises, which included the continued impact of the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the subsequent energy crisis, rising inflation and food insecurity.

UNICEF continued to produce evidence on the impact of the crisis on children living in poverty and to bring attention to those vulnerable to falling into poverty in the face of crisis. For example, in Indonesia, UNICEF supplemented government estimates of child poverty in 2022 with an analysis of the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic.

The analysis revealed that the gap between the richest and poorest households had widened during the pandemic recovery with subsequent inflation. The resultant estimates showed that the child poverty rate in Indonesia was at its highest level for many years. Further:

- At the onset of the war in **Ukraine**, the comprehensive child poverty and disparities analysis carried out in 2021 by UNICEF and the Institute of Demographic Studies provided critical information on child poverty and disparities prior to the war.
- In the aftermath of the 2022 floods in **Pakistan**, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives in developing the Multidimensional Poverty National Estimate, as part of the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment that estimated the human impact of the crisis, including on multidimensional poverty.
- In **Ecuador**, the National Survey on Household Well-being in the Face of the Pandemic, carried out by UNICEF in 2022, found that 71 per cent of households with children or adolescents reported that their income was lower than before the pandemic.
- To influence policymaking to prevent vulnerable population groups from falling into deeper poverty, UNICEF led a joint SDG programme in **Serbia** to assess and address the negative impact of protracted crises on families and older persons, through research and poverty projections – as well to advocate for policy options, including increasing the adequacy and coverage of cash benefits.
- UNICEF and partners in **Morocco** finalized several pieces of evidence to inform the government's response to the lingering impact of the pandemic and persistent drought. The profile of multidimensional child poverty in Morocco was updated with additional analysis to consider the impact of generalizing family allowances/cash transfers in 2023/24. This analysis indicates that the national level of multidimensional poverty decreased from 39.7 per cent of children in 2015 to 23.4 per cent in 2019 due to the extension of social protection coverage.
- UNICEF continued to work with provincial vice-governors in the Lao People's Democratic Republic through the government-led climate change and child poverty vulnerability assessment and a mapping study to understand the relationship between climate risks and child deprivations, providing the government with a tool for planning and responding to future climate-related emergencies.

The UNICEF-supported 'Child and Family Tracker' in **Nepal** revealed that job and livelihood losses for households with children fell from 60 per cent in May 2020 to 6 per cent in April 2022, indicating a recovery from the peak of the pandemic.

Case Study 1: Argentina and Lebanon: Evidence-based advocacy for children living in poverty



In Argentina, UNICEF [analysis of child and youth poverty](#)⁹ highlighted that approximately 8.8 million children (66 per cent of the country's total) experience monetary poverty or a deprivation of some fundamental rights, such as education, social protection, adequate housing and bathrooms, safe water and habitat. Around 30 per cent of children live in homes with insufficient income and simultaneously experience the violation of at least one fundamental right.

The quantitative analysis was complemented by a qualitative study conducted jointly with La Poderosa, a grass-roots organization working in slums and settlements throughout the country. The study was accompanied by [a 15-minute documentary](#)¹⁰ and multimedia series, told in the first person by women from these poor neighbourhoods. In the film, they explore their fundamental role in community work, including the care of children.

Finally, and importantly, the analysis was accompanied by a [policy analysis](#),¹¹ including a child-focused analysis of the 2023 national budget. This indicated that, unfortunately, the national budget for children in 2023 would fall by 13–22 per cent on the previous year.

The highlights of these reports were sent to key decision makers from the Executive Branch, including the President, the Minister of Economy and the Minister of Social Development.

The results were launched at a hybrid press conference, and the subsequent reach was wide, with 380 articles on the subject and UNICEF messages reaching 33 million people. The daily experiences and struggles of children growing up and living in poverty in the slums of Argentina became visible to the public – a key step in bringing about change for children living in poverty.

Similarly, noting the importance of comprehensive communication and advocacy campaigns that highlight the short- and long-term impacts of multidimensional child poverty, UNICEF Lebanon launched a communications campaign in 2022 called #DeprivedChildhoods. The campaign drew attention to the state of child poverty in the country and advocated for change.

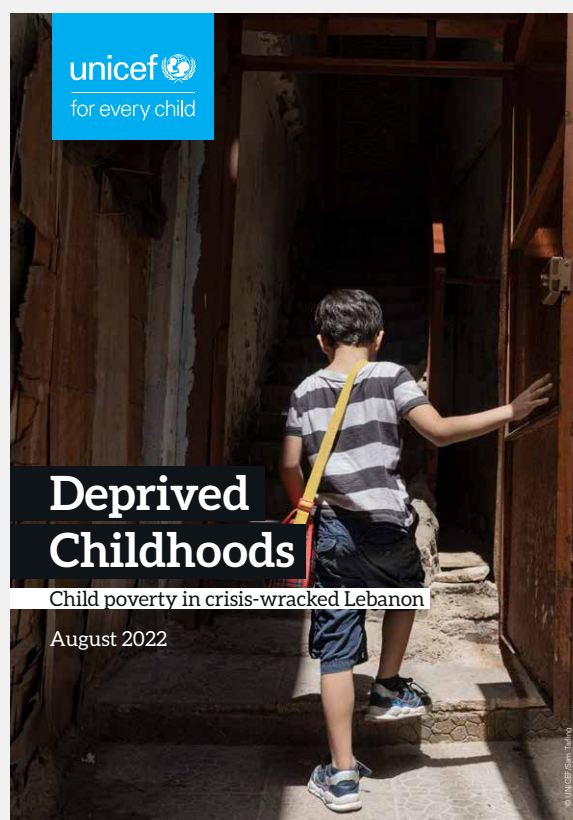
The campaign was based on the UNICEF analysis 'Deprived Childhoods: Child Poverty in crisis-wracked Lebanon', which revealed how profoundly children's lives have been devastated by Lebanon's crisis and how it has pushed children into poverty, affecting their health, welfare and education and causing family relationships to break down.

Three years of economic crisis, compounded by COVID-19, the 2020 Beirut Port explosions, and political instability, have left all families in Lebanon struggling to survive, with severe



consequences for children. Soaring prices and widespread unemployment have plunged numerous families into multidimensional poverty, limiting their ability to provide for their children's basic needs. And as adults increasingly become unemployed, many children start engaging in child labour to bring home some money. The report stressed that economic and financial reform is a critical first step in addressing child deprivations in Lebanon – promoting an inclusive economic recovery that can support the creation of equitable and decent employment. It further noted that this reform must be rapidly accompanied by a massive expansion in access to quality services, including financial access to social services, social assistance for households living in extreme poverty, and social grants for households with specific vulnerabilities, including disability, childhood and old age.

The UNICEF communications efforts included a web story and [a touching video](#)¹² about 13-year-old Bahaa, which showed the dire reality of children like him and how they have lost hope. The reach of the campaign was impressive, with shares on social media by high-profile individuals as well as journalists. The campaign reached 14.3 million people, and 26 national and international media outlets featured the report's findings.



Bahaa, 13, at work in Lebanon to help support his family, on 13 August 2022.

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The impact of COVID-19 on the welfare of households with children



UNICEF and the World Bank collaborated on an analysis of the [impact of COVID-19 on the welfare of households with children](#).¹³

This is the first global-level, child poverty-related analysis using real-time data from a set of high-frequency phone surveys (from 35 countries). The analysis, launched in 2022, highlighted that at least two thirds of households with children have lost income since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The analysis further notes that income losses have left adults in one in four households with children going without food for a day or more. Adults in nearly half of households with children reported skipping a meal due to a lack of money. Around a quarter of adults in all households (with or without children) reported stopping working since the start of the pandemic.

Children are being deprived of the basics, with children in 40 per cent of households not engaging in any form of educational activities while schools were closed. Given that data are compiled at the household level, the actual participation rate at the individual level is likely even lower, especially for children in households with three or more children.

While households with three or more children were the most likely to experience a loss of income, they were also most likely to receive government assistance, with 25 per cent accessing this support, compared to 10 per cent of households with no children.

The analysis and subsequent press release concluded with a UNICEF and World Bank call for a rapid expansion of social protection systems for children and their families. These systems, including the delivery of cash transfers and the universalization of child benefits, represent critical investments that can help lift families out of economic distress and help them prepare for future shocks.

Case Study 2: Europe and Central Asia: The impact of the war in Ukraine and subsequent economic downturn on child poverty

The UNICEF Office of Research and Global Foresight and UNICEF Europe and Central Asia focused on the impact of the war in Ukraine on child poverty in the region, bringing much-needed attention to the issue. The study received widespread global media coverage and was accompanied by a successful social media campaign.

The study compiled data from 22 countries across the region. It underscored the fact that children bear the heaviest burden of the economic crisis caused by the war; while children make up 25 per cent of the population, they account for nearly 40 per cent of the additional 10.4 million people experiencing poverty in the region in 2022.

It further highlights that the Russian Federation has experienced the most significant increase in the number of children living in poverty, with an additional 2.8 million children now living in households below the poverty line, accounting for nearly three quarters of the total increase across the region. Ukraine is home to half a million additional children living in poverty – the second largest share.

The consequences of child poverty stretch far beyond families living in financial distress. The sharp increase in child poverty could result in an additional 4,500 children dying before their first birthday and learning losses equivalent to an additional 117,000 children dropping out of school. The Ukraine war and subsequent cost-of-living crisis means that the poorest children are even less likely to access essential services and are more at risk of child marriage, violence, exploitation and abuse.

The challenges faced by families living in or on the brink of poverty deepen when governments reduce public expenditure, increase consumption taxes or put in place austerity measures in an effort to boost their economies in the short term; all of these measures diminish the reach and quality of support services that families depend on.

The study sets out a framework to help reduce the number of children living in poverty and prevent more families from falling into financial distress. It calls for continued and expanded support to strengthen social protection systems in middle- and high-income countries across Europe and Central Asia, and for the prioritization of funding for social protection programmes, including cash assistance programmes for vulnerable children and families.



A young boy photographed in his bedroom at his family home in Artashat, Armenia.

Partnerships

In 2022, UNICEF convened partners and stakeholders in the fight against child poverty at global, regional and national levels. Convening stakeholders to produce and share information about child poverty and its policy responses, while jointly advocating for critical change, are important steps in understanding how to move forward, and the ways to achieve the SDGs on child poverty.

UNICEF continues to co-chair a 20-member coalition, alongside Save the Children and the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, that is bringing together a comprehensive policy agenda to end child poverty in 2022 (see Box 3).

As already highlighted, UNICEF partnered with the World Bank to analyse the global impact of COVID-19 on households with children using high-frequency phone survey data (see Box 2). Beyond global and regional partnerships, UNICEF and the World Bank have collaborated on poverty-related analyses in many individual countries. In Tajikistan, for example, UNICEF partnered with the Government Agency of Statistics and the World Bank to strengthen national data systems, including for the measurement of child poverty. In Armenia, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, UNICEF and the World Bank undertook a review of poverty-targeting benefits for families and children, exploring a possible transition from proxy means-testing to a hybrid model of means-testing for better outcomes. This was accompanied by econometric simulations, financial scenario building and estimations. Further, in Kazakhstan, UNICEF partnered with the World Bank to administer the 'Listening to Kazakhstan' survey, which revealed, among other things, that 19 per cent of adults and 22 per cent of children lived in self-classified 'poor' families, and that households with many children are substantially more vulnerable to deprivation.

UNDP continues to be an important UNICEF partner for reaching the SDG poverty targets. In Uzbekistan, for example, in partnership with the Centre for Economic Research and Reforms, UNDP and UNICEF supported nationwide consultations and a survey of 1,500 households to define a national measurement of multidimensional poverty in the country, which will be used to inform household survey data collection and provide critical information on multidimensional poverty. In Angola, UNICEF collaborated with the National Institute of Statistics and UNDP to highlight the importance of going beyond income-based measures of poverty, to complement these with multidimensional poverty measures. This included presenting the results of multidimensional poverty studies by the National Institute of Statistics to key stakeholders from national and subnational governments.

UNICEF forged multiple partnerships with academia and research institutes in the fight to end child poverty. In China, UNICEF supported a retrospective study on the impact of the national targeted poverty alleviation

programme on children, conducted jointly with the International Poverty Reduction Center and Zhejiang University. The research aims to increase understanding and awareness of multidimensional child deprivations in China.

Further country-level partnerships include:

- In collaboration with the leading Latin American think tank Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo (FUNDAUNGO), UNICEF **El Salvador** strengthened the evidence base to advocate for key child-focused public policies, emphasizing the socioeconomic vulnerabilities of households with children and the urgency of addressing multidimensional child poverty. The advocacy highlighted that 35 per cent of households with children experience multidimensional poverty, compared with 18 per cent of households without children.
- The National Economic, Social and Environmental Council in **Algeria** supported the second edition of the research project 'Children and youth well-being: a national model on social equity'. The project benefited from the expertise of UNICEF and the Social Policy Research Institute. Further, UNICEF supported the Government of Algeria in carrying out its third measurement of multidimensional child poverty, working with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Ministry of Finance, the National Office of Statistics, the National Human Rights Council, the Research Centre for Applied Economics for Development, the National Body for Child Promotion and Protection and the National Institute of Public Health, as well as civil society representatives.
- In **Egypt**, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, the Economic Research Forum, the University of Cairo, J-Pal, the American University in Cairo, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics and private researchers, UNICEF has analysed poverty, developed public briefs and organized seminars to place children's rights and deprivations at the centre of the national policy debate and policymaking.
- The generation of high-quality evidence and its use in policymaking is a core area of work for UNICEF in **Sri Lanka**. UNICEF supported the analysis of multidimensional poverty with a focus on children in the country, including a joint report by the Department of Census and Statistics, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and UNICEF.

Mobilizing global action to end child poverty – The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

Every year 17 October marks the [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty \(IDEP\)](#),¹⁴ a designated day to promote awareness of the need to end poverty. In 2022, UNICEF observed the event by mobilizing action at every level of the organization.

UNICEF and partners drew unprecedented attention to children and their families living in poverty. A successful communications campaign brought attention to the numbers of children living in monetary and multidimensional poverty – and emphasized that the need to eradicate child poverty had never been more urgent, given the combined impacts of the climate crisis, conflicts, food and fuel crises, and the lingering fallout from the pandemic.

The communications campaign stressed that child poverty is neither inevitable nor immune to efforts to address it. Governments can protect and expand child-sensitive social protection to address this issue. Ending child poverty is a policy choice.

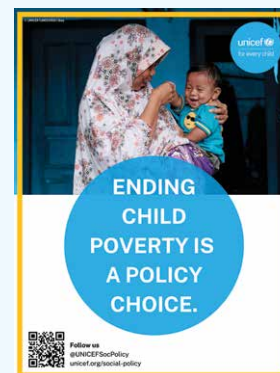
Together with the [Global Coalition to End Child Poverty](#),¹⁵ UNICEF launched a high-profile [policy agenda to end child poverty](#),¹⁶ outlining the urgent need for governments to:

- Make child poverty reduction an explicit national priority in national budgets, policies and laws
- Expand child-sensitive social protection, including universal child benefits
- Improve access to quality public services, including access to quality health and education services
- Promote decent work and an inclusive growth agenda to reach impoverished families and children.

As UNICEF and the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty launched the brief with an online event, government representatives from around the world emphasized how investing in children makes sense and how the expansion of social protection during the pandemic has proved that child poverty can be addressed with the right policies in place.

To mark the day, people with lived experiences of poverty called for accelerated action to end poverty and ensure everyone has a dignified life. “Let us consign poverty to the pages of history,” said the Secretary-General of the United Nations, calling on governments to invest in people-centred solutions.

To advocate for ending child poverty, UNICEF conducted a social media campaign featuring global and country-level content, messaging from the ‘Ending child poverty: A policy agenda’ brief and highlights from the IDEP events. The social media pack included a series of myth-busters around child poverty and social protection.



Looking ahead

The next two years – 2023 and 2024 – will remain challenging as the world continues to deal with the fallout from the pandemic, uneven progress, increased climate-related disasters and rising inflation. The UNICEF global outlook estimates that one in four children will be living below the national poverty line in 2023.¹⁷

Looking ahead, it is imperative not only to catch up with pre-pandemic trends in reducing child poverty but also to accelerate them. Concerted and decisive policy action is needed to ensure that we lower projected poverty reduction rates. We cannot afford to have millions of children spending more time living in poverty; even short periods of poverty in childhood can have lifelong devastating consequences. Ending child poverty is a prerequisite to realizing all rights for children, across all areas and sectors.

UNICEF will continue to prioritize the eradication of child poverty as the cornerstone of the realization of multiple children's rights. It will further enhance its call and support governments and stakeholders to make children living in or vulnerable to poverty the highest priority in national agendas. This will include continued efforts to enhance the visibility of children living in poverty by measuring and monitoring child poverty, including in fragile contexts; address the new drivers of poverty, such as climate and conflict; enhance our understanding of new trends; and use policy analysis and engagement to influence policies and programmes with the potential to reduce child poverty, including expanding the coverage of child-sensitive social protection programmes alongside improved access to quality social services for those living in poverty.

In addition to the above foundational work on child poverty to restore the trajectory evidenced prior to the pandemic, UNICEF and its partners have four key global objectives to bring attention to the most affected children in 2023 and 2024:

1. Develop analysis and linked advocacy on the impact of the climate crisis on children living in poverty and those vulnerable to poverty, alongside concrete policy options to mitigate the impact of the crisis – including in shock-responsive and inclusive social protection. This will be done in collaboration with the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty.
2. Bring attention to new groups of children and their families living in poverty. The pandemic thrust children and their families into poverty, many of whom had not experienced poverty before. Understanding the specific characteristics of these children and their families, alongside the policies and programmes needed to reach them, is key.
3. Bring the voices and experiences of children and their families living in poverty to the forefront of global, regional and national advocacy. The true experts on poverty are those living in poverty. Through global initiatives with the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, as well as regional and national research, communications and advocacy initiatives, UNICEF commits to creating opportunities for those living in poverty to highlight their situation and engage in policy and programming solutions.
4. Document examples of countries (including low-, middle- and high-income countries) that have made children living in poverty their highest priority in national development agendas to achieve the SDGs to end extreme child poverty and halve child poverty as nationally defined. These examples represent important knowledge and learning resources and can provide inspiration for global, regional and national actors to get back on track to end child poverty for good.



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An ethnic Mongolian boy plays football on a grassland of Jarud Banner of Tongliao, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in China, on 9 August 2022



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Strengthening social protection systems

Genesis Alvarez (5 years old) and Kiara Mejia (6 years old) walk into a field at the back of their house in Olintepeque, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

Children face multiple significant challenges, driven by the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, the cost-of-living crisis, increased fragility, conflict and displacement and, alarmingly, the unfolding effects of the climate emergency, where children have contributed so little but will bear so much of the burden. Social protection has proved a crucial player in addressing these immediate and future challenges and so is a central pillar of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025.

Globally, however, there are now clear indications that social protection for children is not expanding sufficiently to address the challenges. The second global publication by UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO) on social protection for children highlighted that close to 1.8 billion children currently have no access to social protection. Progress in increasing effective coverage globally has stalled since 2016; in 2020, only 26 per cent of children under 15 years globally received social protection cash benefits. This is partly due to the retrenchment or discontinuation of large-scale child benefits in some countries, often as part of fiscal consolidation measures. This average masks significant regional disparities: while 82 per cent of children in Europe and Central Asia are covered, coverage was 54 per cent in the Americas, 18 per cent in Asia and the Pacific, 15 per cent in the Arab States and 13 per cent in Africa.¹⁸

Making universal social protection a reality requires urgent and significant investment – US\$77.9 billion per year is required to ensure a social protection floor in low-income countries alone.¹⁹ But the benefits far outweigh the costs. In

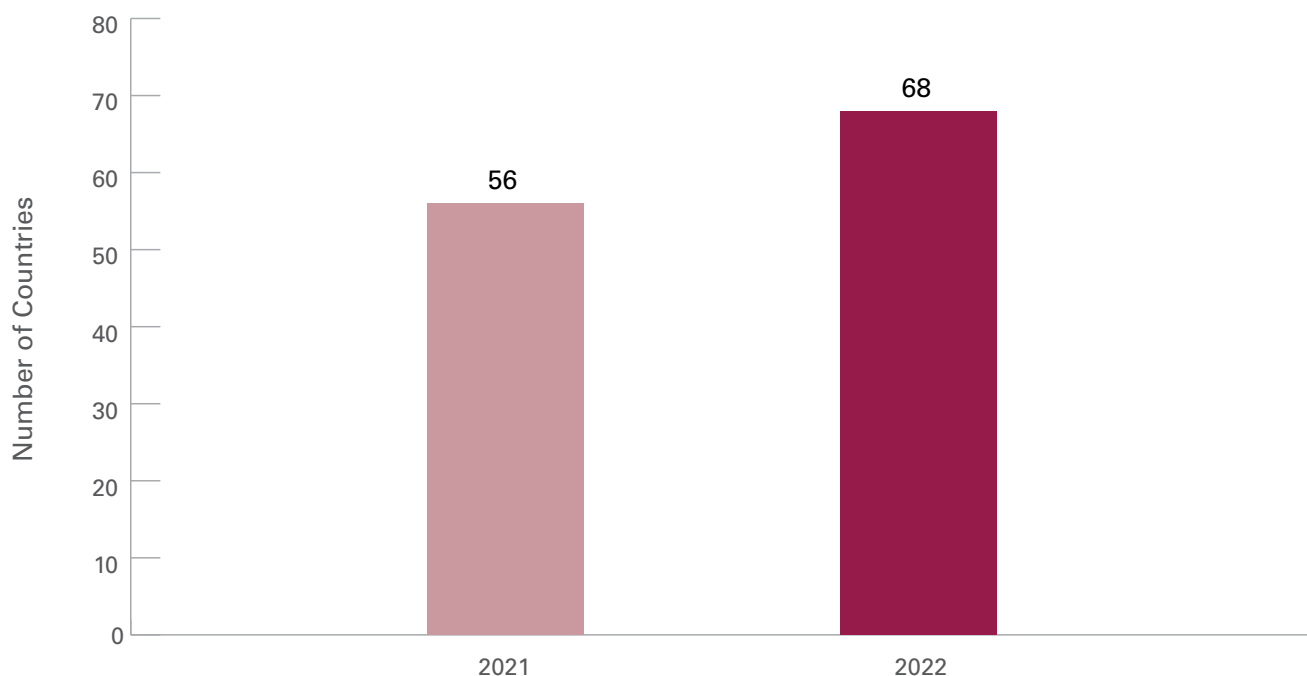
middle-income countries, for example, an annual expenditure of 1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) can reduce poverty for the whole population by 20 per cent; with child poverty reduction, the dividend is even more significant.²⁰

UNICEF worked on strengthening social protection systems across countries; encouragingly, 2022 saw countries strengthening aspects of their social protection, and a steady increase in the number of countries with strong or moderately strong systems, from 56 in 2021 to 68 in 2022 (see Figure 4).

Equally critical is the ongoing scale-up of UNICEF work in fragile and humanitarian contexts. UNICEF supported cash transfers that reached over 2.8 million households in humanitarian settings in 2022, and around 800,000 children with disabilities. (See the following chapter for more on our work on social protection in fragile and humanitarian contexts.)

Moreover, UNICEF has also continued to accelerate its efforts to make social protection systems more gender-transformative and inclusive. In 2022, 115 UNICEF country offices embedded explicit gender objectives in their social protection work (up from 29 in 2019), with 61 UNICEF country offices now targeting results to increase girls' education through their social protection work, and 58 country offices targeting results to reduce gender-based violence. This includes a diverse range of output-level commitments, from conducting gender reviews to identifying gendered barriers to access and how to remove

FIGURE 4: Number of countries that have moderately strong or strong social protection systems, globally 2021-2022



Source: UNICEF Goal Area 5 Core Standard Indicators (2022).²¹

them; from linking social assistance with response services for gender-based violence to adapting 'plus' components that better respond to gendered needs or shift harmful gender norms. UNICEF made strides in addressing the [global care crisis](#),²² with 75 country offices reporting on family-friendly policies and other approaches to addressing the sharply rising global caregiving burden, up from 56 country offices in 2021.

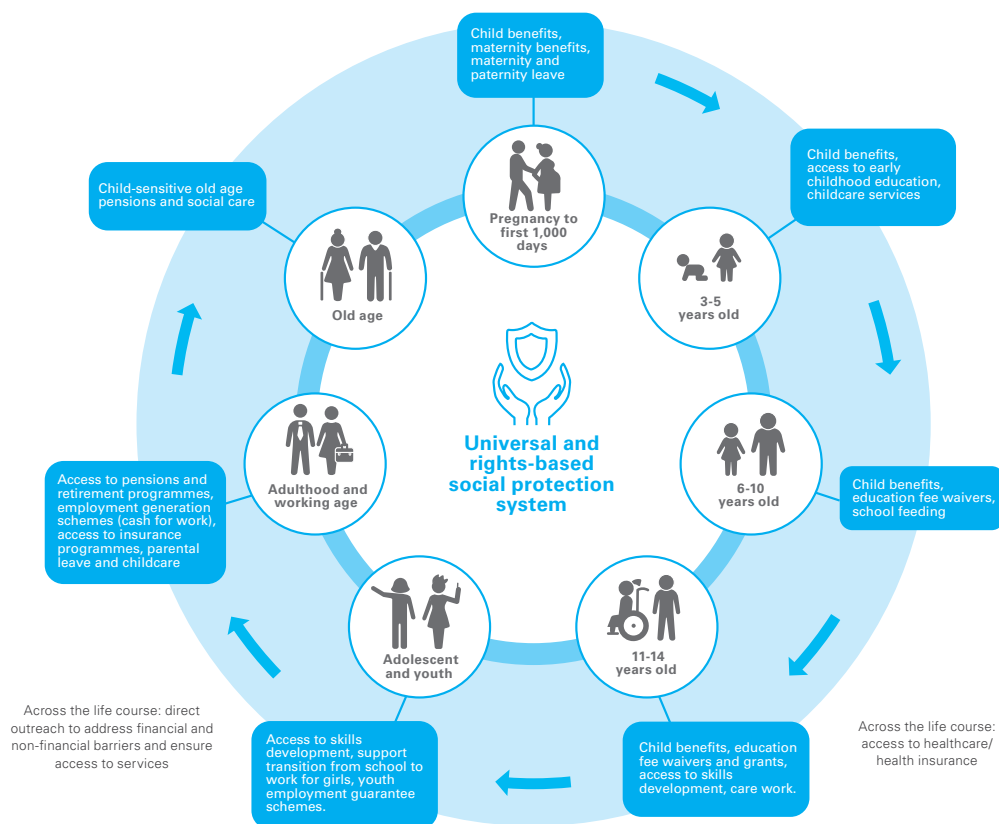
In terms of social protection and disability, UNICEF has worked to make social protection systems more inclusive of children and adults with disabilities. UNICEF has supported 60 countries that now have disability-inclusive social protection programmes, up from 55 in 2021. Support to displaced and migrant populations has also been critical, to ensure no one is left behind. In 2022, 26 per cent of UNICEF country offices worked with governments and/or other partners to deliver HCTs to displaced and migrant children by leveraging one or more components of the social protection system.

Results achieved and challenges to strengthening social protection systems

Building a comprehensive social protection system is at the centre of UNICEF's work to provide support to children and families across the life course, as outlined in UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework. As Figure 5 illustrates, specific programmes are needed

at different stages of childhood, providing for different needs and support at each stage. A systems approach to social protection ensures that the programmes respond effectively to multiple risks and vulnerabilities facing children, including during shocks and crises.

FIGURE 5: Social protection across the life course



Source: UNICEF Global Social Protection Programme Framework (2019).²³

UNICEF support across the key action areas of social protection systems

The following section presents the 2022 results. It follows the four key components of the social protection system of the UNICEF Global Social Protection Programme Framework and also highlights the key achievements towards the results of the new Goal Area 5, particularly in expanding the coverage of child-sensitive social protection, systems-strengthening (including adequacy and comprehensiveness) and inclusive social protection (with a focus on gender, disability and migration).

A foundation of evidence: Child poverty analysis, impact evaluations and systems assessments

A robust evidence base is essential for a comprehensive social protection system. Designing a social protection programme requires understanding the extent to which children experience poverty and vulnerabilities (see the chapter 'Results: Ending child poverty by 2023'), and assessing the impact of existing social protection interventions, thereby uncovering the gaps in coverage and adequacy across the system. Evidence of the most vulnerable, including girls, children with disabilities, and children on the move, is also foundational to ensure inclusive social protection systems. In 2022, UNICEF's work included:

- In **Paraguay**, UNICEF and ILO conducted a diagnostic study on the country's social protection programme, *Vamos!*, to identify gaps in coverage and financing, explore opportunities with the government to increase budget efficiency, and expand fiscal space. The findings from the study will provide evidence for the new government to direct investments for its social protection strategies. Furthermore, UNICEF strengthened operational elements of the programme in four territories, specifically strengthening the capacities of local actors through the creation of local needs assessments and workplans to ensure the most vulnerable populations are able to access the transfers and services they need. In **Bangladesh**, as part of the United Nations joint programme, UNICEF produced an analysis of the poverty impact of a universal cash transfer programme to reach all children (0–4 years) in tea gardens, where poverty and vulnerabilities are particularly high. The analysis demonstrated that there would be a 5 per cent decline in moderate child poverty, providing important evidence used to advocate for expanding cash transfers for children. UNICEF, in collaboration with

the EU, WFP, ILO, World Bank and UNDP, supported the Department of Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Women and Children to implement the detailed implementation plan for a mother and child benefit programme.

- In **Morocco**, UNICEF and partners, including the EU, the World Bank and other United Nations agencies, generated evidence to help the government devise a comprehensive response to address the impact of the pandemic, effects of the crisis in Ukraine and persistent drought. The analyses showed how the pandemic had reversed gains in poverty and vulnerabilities, but also revealed that, due to an expansion in social protection coverage, multidimensional child poverty had dropped from 39.7 per cent in 2015 to 23.4 per cent in 2019. However, data from the third round of the COVID-19 Survey of Households revealed the ways in which the pandemic had reversed gains, with an increase in household poverty, vulnerabilities and inequities.

Policy and strategy development, coordination and financing

At a policy level, UNICEF continued to support countries to develop and strengthen social protection policies, legal and strategic frameworks, and financing and coordination mechanisms. This involved technical support, coordination and advocacy with multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, IFIs, donors and civil society organizations, to push the agenda for universal social protection, in line with international social protection financing principles.

- In **Ethiopia**, UNICEF helped to establish the Federal Social Protection Platform, a multi-stakeholder forum for maintaining momentum and building greater social protection coordination in the country. The forum advocates for strengthening an integrated social protection system with linkages across sectors and provides inputs to relevant policy documents. The platform is chaired by the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, responsible for coordinating social protection, while the platform's members constitute social protection stakeholders from government, development partners and civil society.
- In **Nepal**, UNICEF supported the development and approval of the National Social Protection Framework to enable the coordination and integration of social protection programmes implemented across 13 different federal ministries and agencies at different levels.

Joint programme on social protection and public finance management

UNICEF, ILO and the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors continued to advocate for and strengthen financing for social protection systems in eight countries under the three-year, EU-funded programme 'Improving Synergies Between Social Protection and Public Finance Management'.

Key country-level achievements include:

- Expanded social protection coverage through assessment-based national dialogue in **Angola**
- Strengthened capacity of legislators and policymakers on social protection financing in **Uganda**
- An updated national social protection strategy in **Burkina Faso**
- A feasibility assessment of a social protection fund conducted in **Ethiopia**
- A disability identification mechanism developed in **Cambodia**
- Social dialogue with civil society organizations (CSOs) and trade unions on strengthening social protection systems in **Nepal**
- A technical study on the political economy for social protection in **Paraguay**
- Strengthened capacity of parliamentarians, government actors (particularly those from the Social Budget Monitoring Observatory) and civil society on social protection and public finance management in **Senegal**.

The achievements and lessons learned have been shared and exchanged both within the programme and externally through the cross-country component of the programme, which is led by the headquarters. As the programme concludes in 2023, key learnings and knowledge products will be disseminated further beyond the eight countries, with the aim of leveraging the unique learning from the programme to strengthen the linkage between public finance and social protection in other countries.

Expanding and improving cash transfers for children

Cash transfers are a proven, practical intervention to address poverty and improve child well-being. UNICEF and its partners have been working globally to support the expansion of programmes for children towards universal coverage. In 2022, UNICEF-supported transfers reached over 103 million households across humanitarian and development contexts.

- In **Uzbekistan**, UNICEF continued to support expanded coverage by supporting the development of the Social Protection Single Registry, a new management information system (MIS) that will support the administration of all social protection programmes. The total number of low-income families receiving child benefits and material support increased by 75 per cent, from 1.2 million in 2021 to 2.1 million in 2022. The number of children reached increased by 91 per cent, from 2.4 million in 2021 to 4.6 million in 2022.
- **Tunisia** passed legislation to formalize and institutionalize the child benefit introduced during COVID-19, making what was originally a temporary scheme a key long-term component of the social protection system. The child benefit provides monthly payments to low-income and vulnerable families with children under 5 years of age. UNICEF and its partners, including the World Bank, Germany and the IMF, helped to implement and institutionalize the child benefit. UNICEF continues to work with partners to expand the coverage to children 6–18 years of age through partnerships with the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau and USAID, and also by ensuring that the expansion is included in the Prime Minister's reform programme.
- It is also vital to advocate for an increase in the value of transfers so that they meet the needs of children and families. UNICEF advocacy in **Ghana** led to the 2023 national budget proposal doubling the value of cash transfers under the 'Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty' social protection programme.

Cash plus: A critical step to building systems and connecting income support with information, knowledge and services

To address the multidimensional poverty and vulnerabilities facing children and families, 'cash plus' programmes are a key first step in building and linking social protection and social systems. They aim to create synergies between cash transfers and access to services, goods and information that are critical to children's health, protection and well-being. UNICEF leverages its cross-sectoral programming experience and expertise to create better synergies and linkages across child-responsive programming.

- In **Zambia**, to expand coverage to pregnant and breastfeeding women as well as infants, the government initiated a flagship programme in four districts with UNICEF support. It takes a cash plus approach, linking recipients to nutrition services under the framework of 'The First 1,000 Most Critical Days' programme.
- In **Jordan**, UNICEF supported the Makani programme, which promotes the well-being of the most vulnerable children and youth and supports them to achieve their full potential. The programme offers integrated multisectoral services by linking social protection with other interventions in learning support services, child protection, early childhood development (ECD) and youth empowerment. Using a community-based approach, the programme reached over 145,000 children in 2022.
- In **Albania**, UNICEF supports the government with its cash plus initiative. In 2022, the initiative referred 2,000 families with children receiving cash assistance to other support services to address their multiple deprivations. The families were informed about available benefits and services; improving access to employment and health care services, including COVID-19 vaccination; and support for families impacted by trafficking.

Administration and Integrated service delivery

An efficient administrative system is the nucleus of an integrated social protection system. UNICEF supports governments in improving integrated information systems and registries that underpin them, and supporting coordination and service delivery at the subnational level.

- In the **Republic of Cameroon**, UNICEF supported the development of a computerized MIS for the Unified Social Registry. Developed through OpenMIS, the system helped to digitalize the registration of vulnerable families. It also facilitated referrals to social services and the timely management of information on households' social and economic vulnerabilities to inform preparations for future shocks.
- In **Guatemala**, UNICEF supported the design of a gender-sensitive social household registry, Bono Social (SIBS), which was used in seven municipalities to identify 20,000 households. UNICEF and the World Bank supported the government in determining the functional requirements of the SIBS MIS. They conducted a study to identify innovations and lessons learned from the implementation of Bono Familia, a COVID-19 cash assistance programme, to strengthen the social protection system.

Nutrition collaboration and acceleration plan

Social protection plays a crucial role in achieving a wide range of positive outcomes for children by addressing poverty, a root cause of various deprivations. As many countries faced food and nutrition crises due to food price inflation and child poverty in 2022, UNICEF actively participated in global forums and resource mobilization efforts to systematically address malnutrition and child poverty. This included launching the 'No Time to Waste Acceleration Plan 2022–2023', which focuses on the 15 most severely affected countries where cash transfers have been recognized as part of the minimum package of interventions. UNICEF has also been an active member of a working group for social protection and food systems transformation as part of USP2030. UNICEF worked with partners to develop and disseminate joint messages on the poverty and nutrition/food crisis. Alongside global efforts, progress has been made at the country level, including the following:

- The Government of Burundi has committed to expanding Merankebandi, the flagship national social protection programme supported by the World Bank and UNICEF, from 60,000 households to 145,000 households by 2026. The programme combines complementary nutrition interventions, including social and behaviour change, and monitoring has shown positive results, including improvements in stunting, access to health care and exclusive breastfeeding.
- The Maternal and Child Cash Transfer Plus programme in the Sudan plays a vital role in addressing poverty and vulnerabilities faced by families with children in the first 1,000 days and in linking them with knowledge and services to address their multidimensional needs. Despite operational challenges, UNICEF was able to support the programme in reaching 52,000 pregnant and lactating women in the two most vulnerable states.
- UNICEF contributed to the Government of Timor-Leste's cash transfer programmes by promoting cash plus components. UNICEF participated in the cash plus working group, which targets pregnant women and young children. Nutrition messaging was distributed with the cash to nearly 100,000 families in municipalities with the highest stunting rates.

Case Study 3: Cambodia: A systems approach to delivering social protection

The Royal Government of Cambodia announced in 2022 that a Family Package of integrated cash transfers would be rolled out in 2023–2024, consolidating under one system the four cash transfer programmes – for pregnant women and young children; adults and children with disabilities; children in primary and secondary schools; and future programmes for elderly people – following the UNICEF child-sensitive social protection framework. UNICEF has provided critical inputs to support this transition:

Expansion of coverage: Since 2015, UNICEF has supported the government in expanding its cash transfer programme to reduce poverty and vulnerability, including implementing the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016–2025. A cash transfer pilot for pregnant women and children (0–2 years) was implemented with UNICEF’s technical support and was scaled up in 2019 to cover over 240,000 pregnant women and children at the national level by the end of 2022, including building the digitalized delivery system with the support of the Swedish International Development Agency and the EU. The system was used to introduce a shock-responsive COVID-19 cash transfer for poor and vulnerable households in June 2020, covering an estimated 700,000 households or 2.8 million individuals. Short-term cash transfer programmes were introduced in late 2022 to cover an additional 350,000 at-risk or near-poor households, resulting in over 4 million vulnerable individuals and children covered by the combined emergency and routine cash transfer programmes. UNICEF provided continued support to shock-responsive programmes while supporting the development of the integrated Family Package.

Digitalization and community support to identify vulnerabilities: UNICEF helped the government develop a digital management information system (MIS) that links to the programme for internally displaced persons to identify and enrol the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach families, emphasizing community engagement and collaboration with health centres. Digitalization of the processes, including the payments system, has facilitated enrolment, case management and monitoring of the recipients of the routine and emergency cash transfer programmes. With EU support, UNICEF, in collaboration with national partners, developed Disability Identification Mechanisms and a disability MIS to register adults and children with disabilities. These systems will enable cross-sectoral data analysis, and non-cash responses such as expanding school coverage, accessing community services and improving health and nutrition. The Family Package framework will promote this holistic support.

Enhancing access to services: UNICEF assessed social protection programmes and developed tools to improve access to social services, with a focus on tracking risk, vulnerability and disability. Capacity-building was provided to the lowest administrative units – the communes – to identify, enrol and provide case management for poor, vulnerable and at-risk Cambodians. A strong social service workforce is essential for effective coordination across sectors and is under development.

Expanding livelihoods and life skills: Social protection in Cambodia aims to provide livelihood-related support and life skills along with cash transfer programmes, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for youth at risk of poverty. This will allow participants to generate income and support their families in line with the Family Package framework, which links cash with the delivery of complementary programmes and basic social services. TVET is currently under design for national roll-out.

Partnership: UNICEF leads the coordination of national social assistance development partners and the United Nations Social Protection Accelerator. The joint programme ‘Accelerating Social Protection’ implemented by UNICEF, ILO and the EU continues to support routine and emergency cash transfer programmes while building towards the Family Package roll-out. UNICEF partners with WFP, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, DFAT and ECHO to support the social protection system, including the ‘Shock-Responsive Family Package’, which is under development. UNICEF’s partnership with the EU and ILO in Public Financial Management (PFM) advocates for improved PFM in social sectors.

“Because of the cash transfers, I’ve been able to buy meat, vegetables and milk to ensure good nutrition for myself and my small children, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Things are getting better, but it is still very difficult in my village,” says Chorn. She received the cash transfers, nutritional counselling and information on other services at the community health centre in the village of Knang Pos in north-east Cambodia.



A woman cradles her sleeping child at an integrated community health and nutrition service in Kratie Province, Cambodia, on 12 May 2022.

- In **China**, UNICEF continued to support the Ministry of Child Affairs in reforming its social assistance system with an in-depth situation analysis of local social assistance systems at the county level. UNICEF convened a knowledge-sharing webinar on building a social assistance registry, sharing experiences from Cambodia and Thailand.

Strengthening the social service workforce and direct outreach to families

The social welfare workforce plays a critical role in supporting the most vulnerable families in different ways. Through case management and referral mechanisms, the social welfare workforce can effectively link social protection programmes with essential social services, including child protection, nutrition, health and education services. Yet, in most contexts, investment in the social service workforce is disproportionately low compared to the needs. UNICEF advocates for greater investment in scaling up the workforce to respond to the needs of children and families.

- In **Montenegro**, UNICEF completed a beneficiary assessment and analysis, in line with Core Diagnostic Instrument methodology. This evidence will give a 'human face' to the proposed government reforms and will be used to further underline the necessity of increasing the social service workforce and building its capacities.
- In **South Sudan**, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare to strengthen the social service workforce by conducting a full assessment of it, completed in 2022. The findings will inform a programme to professionalize the workforce.

Gender-transformative and inclusive social protection – gender, disability and migration

One of the critical game changers in the new Goal Area 5 was the explicit commitment to revamp, scale up and effectively monitor the extent to which social protection systems are inclusive and gender-transformative. Social protection is one of the most powerful levers for addressing the socioeconomic drivers of gender inequality and achieving the SDGs for women and men and girls and boys, including adolescents. The recovery from COVID-19 demonstrated that many social protection programmes and policies have fallen short of being inclusive and gender-transformative, thereby limiting their potential impact on large segments of the global population. Fewer than one in five global social protection measures implemented during the pandemic explicitly addressed gender barriers.²⁴ It is vital that we leverage social protection to close the gaps.

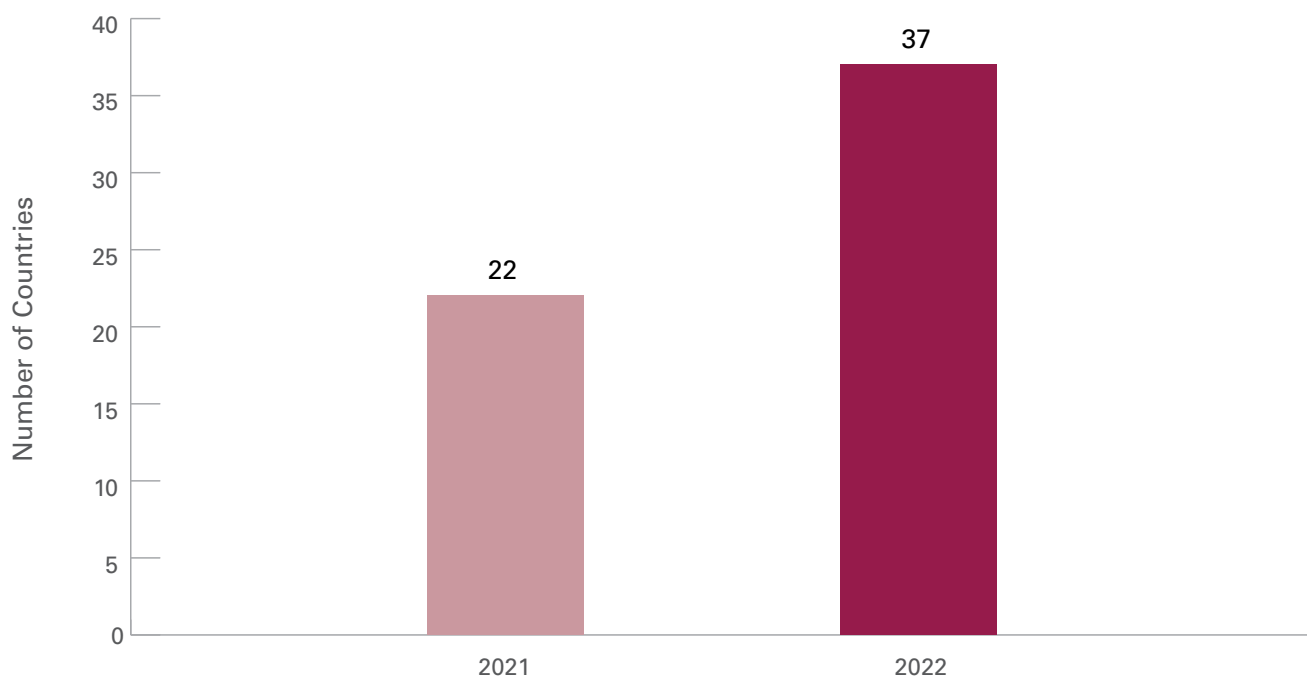
Gender-transformative social protection

In 2022, 115 UNICEF country offices integrated gender-specific objectives in their support for national and subnational social protection systems – 15 more offices than 2021 and a fourfold increase on 2019. Of these 115 offices, 58 specifically tackled gender-based violence, 61 aimed to increase girls' access to education, and 49 targeted an increase in women's and girls' decision-making, corresponding to increases of 45 per cent, 42 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively, on the previous year. This demonstrates growing recognition of the importance of adopting a gender lens across the social protection spectrum. UNICEF is committed to translating these numbers into concrete changes in the lives of women and girls by creating and fostering social protection systems that protect them from exclusion, poverty and gender discrimination.

Through our seminal Gender-Responsive and Age-Sensitive Social Protection (GRASSP) partnership with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, UNICEF also strengthened global knowledge with the highly circulated analysis, 'Mainstreaming gender into social protection strategies and programmes: Evidence from 74 low- and middle-income countries'.²⁵ Country examples abound. In **Lebanon**, UNICEF identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTQI+) individuals as a vulnerable population to be reached by the Haddi programme, an integrated national social assistance programme for children linking cash transfers with other essential services. UNICEF established: (1) an ethical and safe protocol for cash distribution to trans participants; and (2) mitigation measures to minimize risks and protect trans programme participants from harm and transphobia. The gender-responsiveness of the Haddi programme was also enhanced by the development of new manuals/scripts that include guidance on key operational issues affecting women's and girls' access to benefits (for instance, divorced/separated women may not be receiving assistance).

In **Benin**, UNICEF strengthened the two components of the Programme to End Child Marriage through: (1) cash transfers; and (2) care services addressing the social norms that enable and perpetuate child marriage. UNICEF focused on the government's renewed engagement, increased access of girls and adolescents to care services, social mobilization and enhanced community engagement, ultimately improving the legal framework on gender-based violence and gender equality and the continuum of services that keep adolescent girls in school and safe from child marriage. In 2021, 94 per cent of children surveyed knew how to report a case of violence or child marriage, compared to 40 per cent in 2018. In 2022, the number of countries with social protection programmes that met the criteria to be considered gender-responsive or that led to specific transformative gender equality results grew to 37, from 22 in 2021.

FIGURE 6: Number of countries with social protection programmes that are gender-responsive or led to transformative gender equality results, globally and by region 2021-2022



Source: UNICEF Goal Area 5 Core Standard Indicators (2022).²⁶

Disability-inclusive social protection

Across all regions, UNICEF has been supporting countries to build more inclusive social protection programmes and systems that deliver more and better support for children with disabilities and their families. A key area of work for UNICEF has been supporting better evidence on the additional costs faced by children with disabilities and their families, as a foundation to designing more inclusive social protection systems. In **the Philippines**, the national survey conducted by the Department of Social Welfare (with support from UNICEF) showed that families face 40–80 per cent higher costs for a child with disabilities compared with children without disabilities, and that poverty rates are 50 per cent higher in households with children with disabilities. In **Georgia and Peru**, a pilot study provided detailed data on the costs of the goods and services required by different groups of children with disabilities, which will help to redefine the social protection support package.

UNICEF also strengthened national mechanisms for better identification of adults and children with disabilities and their needs, to facilitate inclusive targeting, case management and policy planning. In **Bosnia**, the child disability assessment reform has been expanded, and over 370 social protection, education and health-care professionals have been trained in the new approach. In **Myanmar**, a new screening process has been scaled up, and an online Disability DMIS has been developed following

the experience of Cambodia. Similar efforts have been initiated in **the Niger and Sierra Leone**, among other countries.

UNICEF is also working on expanding cash transfers for children with disabilities and their families. In **Uzbekistan**, UNICEF promoted the introduction of a new monthly cash transfer benefiting 55,541 caregivers of children with disabilities. After the successful UNICEF-supported COVID-19 response cash transfers for families of children with disabilities in **the Dominican Republic**, the government launched a new scheme which will initially provide monthly cash transfers to 500 families with children with severe disabilities. In Lebanon, the national social protection strategy supported by UNICEF and ILO underlines the importance of social grants to address life-cycle vulnerabilities, at times of crisis and beyond. Accordingly, the government approved the pilot of a National Disability Allowance, co-designed with organizations of persons with disabilities and their families. In **Senegal**, UNICEF provided direct cash support to over 55,000 school-age children and students from the poorest households, with a special focus on girls and people with disabilities to facilitate their enrolment and retention in school. In **Ukraine**, UNICEF provided cash transfers to over 58,000 children with disabilities and their families.

Case Study 4: Mozambique: Cash and Care – an integrated approach for expansion



Telma holds her first child at the launch of the Government of Mozambique's expansion of the Child Grant (0–2 years) on 24 November 2022. *Telma faces the challenge of raising her first child. She says that she has always faced obstacles throughout her life. The support she received gave her a new lease of life and allowed her to feel more secure on this unknown journey.*

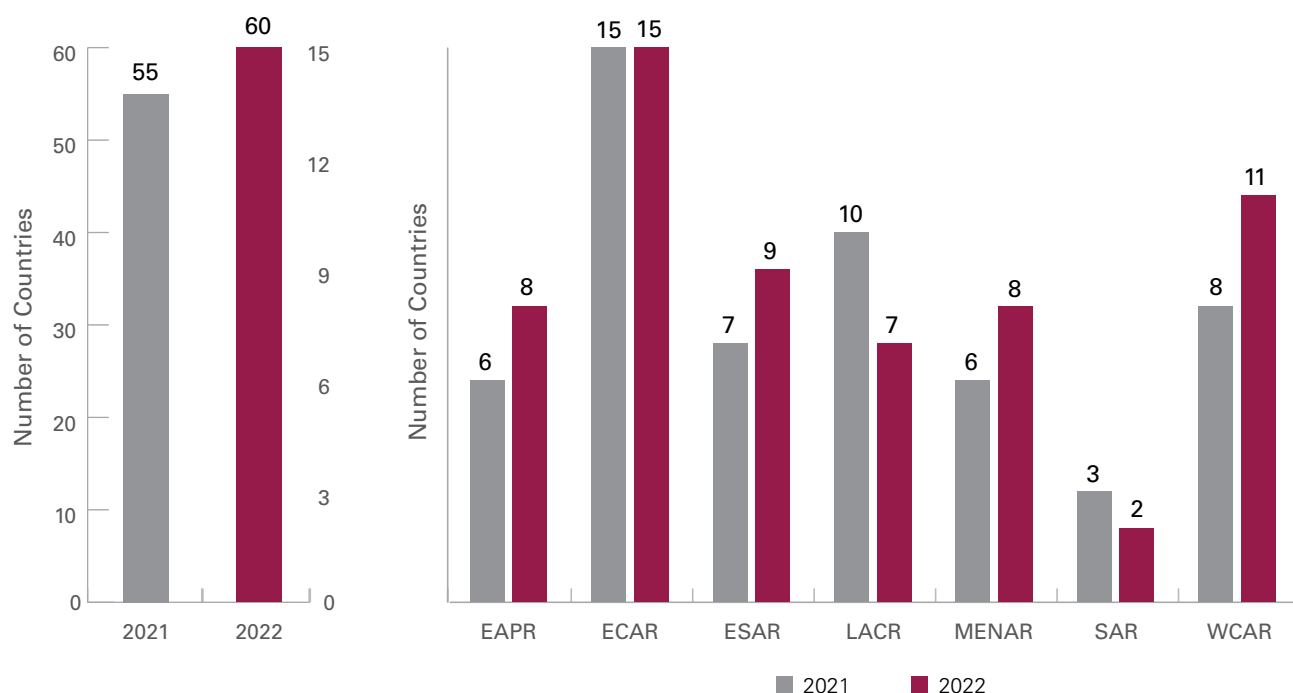
Since 2017, UNICEF has supported the Government of Mozambique with the design, implementation and evaluation of components of the cash plus programme 'Subsidio para a Criança de 0–2 anos' (subsidy for infants 0–2 years). The start-up phase of the programme was implemented in Nampula, one of Mozambique's poorest provinces with a large child population. In 2021, an impact and process evaluation of the Child Grant programme was completed to inform the government's decision on its scale-up. The programme is part of the Basic Social Subsidy Programme, overseen by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action, implemented at national, provincial and district levels.

Cash and Care elements: The programme has three components: (1) a cash transfer of MZN540 (US\$9) per month paid to primary caregivers of children aged 0–2 years in targeted districts; (2) social and behaviour change communication on nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and childcare practices, implemented by community social protection volunteers at cash distribution sites; and (3) a case management component that is offered to recipient families considered the most vulnerable.

Evidence-based advocacy: A comprehensive evaluation of the programme for the period 2019–2021 was conducted to assess the impact on recipients and their families. The findings were striking: there were reductions in poverty, increases in household savings and expenditures, increases in the frequency and diversity of meals provided to children, reductions in gender-based violence and stress, and, surprisingly, reductions in pregnancies. UNICEF and its partners, including key donors, translated these results into strategic advocacy efforts to convince the Government of Mozambique to expand the cash plus programme into more areas.

Progressive expansion: With the results of the impact evaluation, through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action and the National Institute for Social Action, the government committed to expand the programme to more provinces, focusing on areas with high rates of poverty and malnutrition, with support from UNICEF and finance from the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Canada, the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau and the World Bank.

FIGURE 7: Number of countries with disability-inclusive social protection programmes with UNICEF support, globally 2021-2022 (ILO, UNDP, World Bank, WFP)



Indicators (2022).²⁷

Note: EAPR: East Asia and Pacific Region; ECAR: Europe and Central Asia Region; ESAR: Eastern and Southern Africa Region; LACR: Latin America and the Caribbean Region; MENAR: Middle East and North Africa Region; SAR: South Asia Region; WCAR: West and Central Africa Region.

Cash transfers are necessary but alone are insufficient to address the diversity of disability-related costs and barriers faced by children with disabilities and their families. UNICEF is supporting cash plus programmes as a critical step to developing integrated care and support systems. In **Kenya**, the School Transport System for Children with Disabilities (STRIDE) has facilitated the identification of and integrated support for over 3,000 children with disabilities by combining cash and school transportation services while facilitating access to assistive technology and other services. In Tunisia, a monthly allowance was provided for 1,900 children with disabilities as an entry-point to further develop support. Such an approach has also been deployed in humanitarian contexts. In **the Syrian Arab Republic**, 11,350 children with disabilities and their families benefited from quarterly cash assistance and case management services which provided critical support to access services such as health care and rehabilitation. In **Yemen**, in addition to an HCT programme that reached over 14,000 children with disabilities, a case management system was established with the national disability fund (HCRF) which benefited 9,682 persons with disabilities.

Social protection for migrant and displaced children and families

The year 2022 saw a surge in displacement, with around 10 million people newly displaced in 2021,²⁸ bringing the total to more than 100 million people displaced as a result of the polycrisis facing children and families.²⁹ Children are overrepresented among the displaced, accounting for 41 per cent.³⁰ They bear the brunt of the crisis today, and will do in the future. It is estimated that the average duration of displacement is five years. For children, this means spending a quarter of their childhood in displacement with little or no access to basic services such as education, nutrition and health; no support networks; increased exposure to economic and social risks; and heightened vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse.

With a strong focus on leaving no one behind, UNICEF is committed to strengthening social protection systems that are inclusive of displaced and migrant populations while at the same time providing support through a parallel system to meet their immediate needs, when required. In line with its Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, UNICEF assesses the extent of inclusion of migrant and displaced children in social protection policy/legal frameworks and programmes. Information collected from 136 countries in 2022 highlights

that barriers remain for the inclusion of migrant and displaced children in social protection systems: 43 per cent of UNICEF country offices reported that no provisions are in place for the inclusion of displaced and migrant children, while 26 per cent indicated that humanitarian stakeholders can directly support displaced and migrant children by leveraging one or more components of the social protection system. Around 27 per cent reported that displaced and migrant children are included in temporary social protection measures, while only 4 per cent reported that displaced and migrant children are included in routine social protection programmes.

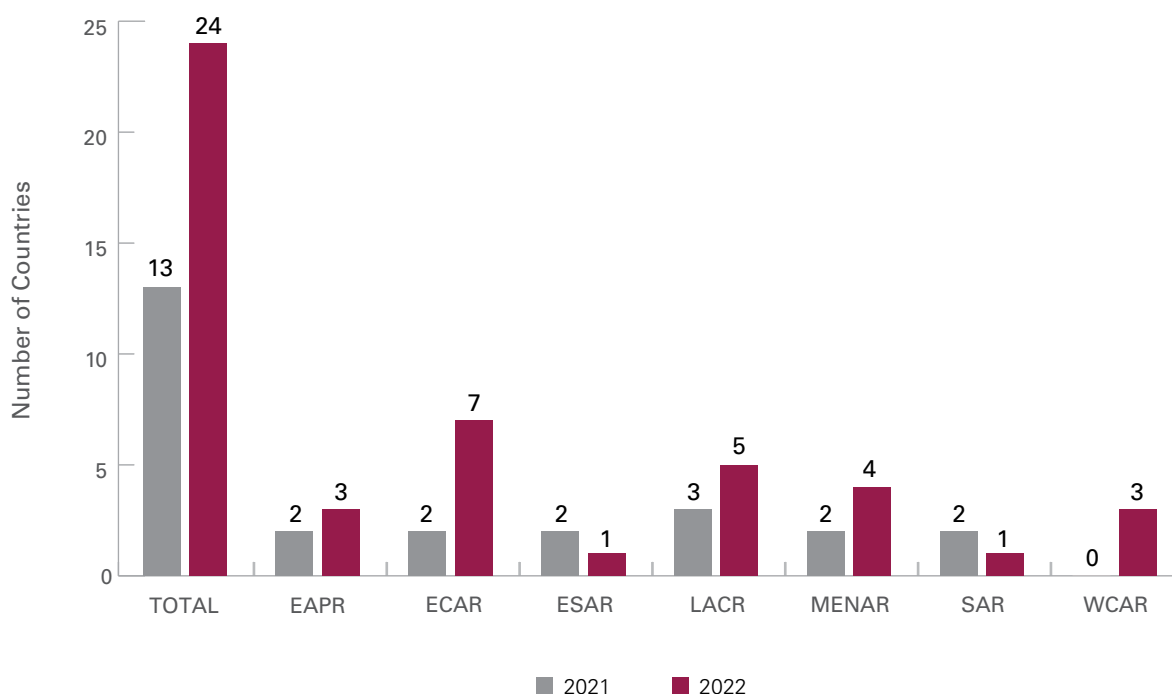
In 2022, UNICEF worked with governments and other partners to deliver HCTs to displaced populations through a government/parallel/mixed delivery system. Some of these countries include Afghanistan, Belize, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon, the Republic of Moldova and Türkiye (see the chapter on UNICEF's comprehensive offer). To reduce the significant gaps that continue to exist, UNICEF has been stepping up its efforts to extend social protection to children on the move. In addition to cash transfers, this includes technical support to governments to ensure social protection systems become more inclusive of children on the move, for example by providing capacity-building to the social service workforce and by supporting governments to draft inclusive social protection policies or design inclusive programmes.

As part of the Ukraine response, for example, UNICEF in **the Republic of Moldova** partnered with UNHCR to enrol 29,755 refugee households (65,492 individual beneficiaries) in the joint UNICEF–UNHCR cash assistance programme, which was implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

Family-friendly policies and care

Family-friendly policies and care are a critical focus and revamped area of work under Goal Area 5. An estimated US\$11 trillion dollars, roughly 9 per cent of global GDP, is infused into the economy annually in the form of unpaid, unrecognized and vastly underrepresented care and domestic work.³¹ In line with the Deputy Secretary-General's priority on unpaid care – and SDG 5.4 to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies – UNICEF made strides in addressing the global care crisis, with 75 country offices reporting on family-friendly policies and approaches to address the sharp rise in caregiving burden in 2022, up by nearly 35 per cent on 2021, with particular progress in East and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and, more recently, the Middle East and North Africa. UNICEF's Family Friendly Policies Initiative offers broad and collective cross-sectoral and regional expertise, including from experts across social policy, gender, ECD, business, nutrition and adolescents.

FIGURE 8: Number of countries taking action to support care work, through family-friendly policies



Source: UNICEF Goal Area 5 Core Standard Indicators (2022).³³

Note: EAPR: East Asia and Pacific Region; ECAR: Europe and Central Asia Region; ESAR: Eastern and Southern Africa Region; LACR: Latin America and the Caribbean Region; MENAR: Middle East and North Africa Region; SAR: South Asia Region; WCAR: West and Central Africa Region.

According to ILO, globally, more than half of mothers are deprived of maternity benefits, and only a quarter of all children have access to any form of child or family benefit.³² Together with partners such as the World Bank, FCDO, ILO, UNHCR and UN Women, UNICEF is encouraging and helping governments to invest in the triple dividend of women's economic empowerment, children's development and decent jobs through family-friendly policies and care.

- In Latin America and the Caribbean, **the Dominican Republic's** Supérate programme introduced a community-based care component and spurred a presidential decree to double paternity leave for civil servants from 7 to 15 days, with support from UNICEF.
- The Government of **Colombia** is developing a National Integrated Care System to benefit children, parents, and people with disabilities, with technical assistance from UNICEF.

- **Uzbekistan** launched a monthly cash benefit targeting caregivers of children with disabilities and a maternity benefit for all new mothers.
- The **Mexico** Country Office and UNICEF Office of Research, in collaboration with Mexico's National Evaluation Council (CONEVAL), are working on an initiative to assess how social protection – mainly cash transfer programmes and childcare services – has evolved in Mexico in recent years and how well it responds to the needs of children, adolescents and women. In 2022, the joint team organized a stakeholder consultation workshop and will continue the analysis in 2023. Also with CONEVAL, UNICEF carried out a study on best practices in childcare in Mexico.

Case Study 5: Colombia: Strengthening links with the private sector to promote children's rights and business principles with an emphasis on family-friendly policies

UNICEF worked closely with businesses to promote children's rights and business principles (CRBP) with an emphasis on family-friendly policies, from parental leave and breastfeeding support to childcare solutions.

Promoting business self-assessments: In 2017–2018, UNICEF conducted a survey to assess the situation in terms of business action, key drivers and challenges in Colombia, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Through an online self-assessment tool, the survey highlighted some of the main issues facing families and provided companies with contextualized information within the CRBP framework. These data were updated, as explained below.

Supporting employees and customers with family-friendly policies: In Colombia, a number of key private sector actors were responsive to adopting family-friendly policies, including Aeropuerto El Dorado. Through their partnership with UNICEF, they set up four breastfeeding rooms and conducted several large-scale breastfeeding promotion campaigns in 2022. In addition, Banco de Bogotá (around 15,000 employees) developed a family-friendly policy strategy that was presented at various business forums and built an in-house childcare and development centre for children of employees. UNICEF influenced and supported the design of key elements of their strategy. Breastfeeding rates among working mothers at the bank have increased and are now double the national average.



Cambodian supporters of the UNICEF #goblue campaign for World Children's Day pose for the camera at a football stadium on 30 November 2022.

Integrating CRBP indicators into national measures: UNICEF Colombia worked with UNDP, the Global Reporting Initiative and the National Planning Department to include key CRBP questions in the 'SDG Corporate Tracker'. The Colombia Country Office was also able to promote and include these same indicators through the United Nations Global Compact and the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce in their 'Unidos por los ODS' survey. These national surveys will provide a statically representative baseline of child rights-related practices in Colombia across the private sector, which will inform future priorities and programmatic strategies. This includes advocacy with the national government to ensure a child-friendly and inclusive focus in the formulation of a national integrated care system policy and institutional arrangements on care, in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank, Agence française de développement (the French development agency), Eurosocial, UN Women and UNICEF, among others.

Partnerships

UNICEF plays a leading role in coordinating partnerships to shape critical social agendas in social protection programming and influence global, regional and country debates on social protection in areas including systems-strengthening, financing, preparedness and inclusion.

At the country level, with social protection work ongoing in over 130 countries, UNICEF plays a leading role in coordinating partners to strengthen social protection systems, including with governments, other United Nations agencies, IFIs, development partners and civil society. In 45 countries UNICEF is an active participant in development partner social protection coordination groups, chairing or co-chairing in 26. As outlined in this chapter, these partnerships have been critical in achieving results on the ground, for example as part of the partnership with the EU, ILO and the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors that operates in eight countries on social protection and public finance. These country-level partnerships are closely supported by regional partnerships, including issue-based coalitions on social protection, including in the Middle East and North Africa, and Europe and Central Asia.

UNICEF's overall work on partnerships is underpinned by extensive work at the global level. UNICEF is a leading member of the Secretary-General's Global Accelerator on Social Protection and Jobs (*see Box 6*), and leads development partner coordination groups on social protection financing, gender, disability, shock-responsive social protection, and food security and nutrition. Notably, progress has been made across these areas in building coherence and joint products. Partnerships with private sector actors such as foundations have also been critical to our work, especially on inclusive, gender-transformative social protection. Through our partnership with the Hewlett Foundation, for example, we have hosted critical consultations with feminist organizations and adolescent girls on their key priorities and needs for social protection in Eastern and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, and South Asia.

The World Bank remains an important partner, with large social protection operations of crucial importance to children. Our partnership plays a critical role in aligning priorities and undertaking joint programmatic work and joint advocacy, including around the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection. UNICEF is co-leading the SPIAC-B Gender Working Group with FCDO, and the World Bank is one of the strongest and most active members and collaborators. We also collaborate with both FCDO and the World Bank in the Gender-Responsive Social Protection programme, a key knowledge and learning partnership that has contributed to the multi-year and multi-country Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection research programme funded by FCDO. We have produced a joint study on the impact of cash programmes on gender-responsive social protection in low- and middle-

income countries; a publication in *Science Magazine* on the impact of COVID-19 on gender and social protection; and a joint event on gender-based violence and social protection ahead of the launch of the World Bank's Safety First toolkit. In 2023, we will also collaborate on a joint technical publication on the parental benefits of family-friendly policies. These collaborations have leveraged UNICEF's strengths across sectors, engaging not only Social Policy but also Gender, Early Childhood Development, Business Engagement and Child Rights, Adolescent Development and Participation, and the Innocenti Research Centre, among others.

The World Bank has also been a crucial partner of our work on disability-inclusive social protection in 2022. UNICEF and the World Bank worked together in Europe and Central Asia as well as globally on disability-related costs and are assessing the possibility of joint staff training to support country teams in making social protection programmes disability-inclusive, with a possible pilot in Europe and Central Asia.

Disability was part of a broader focus on global partnerships in 2022, with a side event at the Global Disability Summit followed by regional and global online conferences on disability and social protection. Both events were organized together with multiple partners, and reached over 400 participants representing over 150 countries, further cementing the vital importance of disability-inclusive social protection and the practical steps needed in disability assessment, costing and programming.

UNICEF's efforts on inclusive social protection for displaced and migrant children were further strengthened in 2022 in close collaboration with the Overseas Development Institute. A policy brief on the issue was commissioned as part of the PROSPECTS project supported by the Government of the Netherlands. Work on a global agreement between UNICEF and UNHCR was initiated, and social protection for displaced populations was included as one of the sectors of cooperation between the two agencies. The groundwork for these initiatives will make UNICEF's work on inclusive social protection more comprehensive.

Looking ahead

While the worst of the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have passed, there has been uneven progress in terms of the recovery, and new challenges are still emerging. The cost-of-living crisis continues to affect children across the globe, and conflict and fragility are also expected to increase. Looming largest is the climate crisis – affecting the children of today with impacts that will continue to accelerate throughout their lifetime and having a profound effect on children and society more broadly. With these unprecedented threats to child rights, it is children living in poverty, those with disabilities, girls and children on the move who face the greatest risks.

Social protection will become an ever more important tool in addressing these challenges. It promotes social inclusion, reduces poverty and inequality, and gives vital support to all families in times of need, especially those at risk of falling into poverty. The pandemic has shown that social protection is essential for those living in extreme poverty, but critical for all, including in middle- and high-income countries. Moreover, the response has clearly shown that, with political commitment, it is possible to scale up social protection systems rapidly and to channel emergency response efficiently. However, critical gaps remain, including in terms of coverage, adequacy and financing. The latest UNICEF–ILO report released in 2022 highlighted that progress in terms of social protection coverage was stagnant leading up to the pandemic, and that the growth programmes experienced during the pandemic was short-lived.

UNICEF has leveraged its field presence, technical expertise and critical partnerships to support the scale-up of responses globally. However, the organization recognizes that more needs to be done to ensure that all children have access to social protection. To address these gaps, UNICEF is committed to placing the strongest emphasis on strengthening social protection systems and expanding coverage. At the heart of this commitment is the organization's leadership in advocating for and providing technical support to governments to expand access to child benefits towards universal approaches, to ensure every child has the opportunity of a healthy and productive future. However, as well as expanding social protection systems, we need to ensure systems are responsive to the most vulnerable groups. For children with disabilities this means routinely assessing disability-related costs by, for example, routinely undertaking disability assessments and monitoring additional costs faced by children with disabilities, so that the social protection system can respond.

Critically, UNICEF will also prioritize the development of inclusive social protection systems that enable responsive care, and support systems across the life cycle of needs, including family-friendly policies such as maternity and parental leave grants, childcare, breastfeeding support

and child benefits. The organization recognizes that the twin crises of poverty and care have highlighted an urgent need to scale up gender-transformative social protection by leveraging multisectoral approaches, including social protection; advocating for targeted public financing for care systems; and tapping into inter-agency initiatives across the United Nations system such as the Global Alliance for Care.³⁴ It is also critical that programmes fully include children with disabilities and address the additional costs these children and their families bear, to ensure the rights of these children are realized.

Exclusion based on displacement status continues to keep many children locked in persistent poverty, thereby affecting not only their development and growth but also those of their country. Inclusive social protection is critical to ensure that displaced and migrant children's rights and needs are protected today and tomorrow. Building on the foundational work done in 2022, UNICEF will elevate its efforts on inclusive social protection in the coming years, especially in light of critical opportunities such as the Global Refugee Forum and COP 28 in 2023 and the high-level event on internal displacement and COP 29 in 2024.

To achieve our goals, working in partnership will be essential. UNICEF was one of the founding partners in the Secretary-General's Global Accelerator on Social Protection and Jobs. The coming year will be crucial in expanding the scope of the Accelerator in pathfinder countries and identifying financing to support expanded progress on social protection and jobs. UNICEF also leads a range of inter-agency forums, including on financing, disability, gender, shock-responsive social protection, and food security and nutrition, all of which play a crucial role in aligning actors behind the common goal of expanding universal social protection. Finally, a defining factor in the success, both globally and in countries, of universal social protection will be financing. Budgets at every level are facing unprecedented strain as the fiscal implications of COVID-19 are still being felt and the global economy slows. Social protection offers crucial protection for the challenges to come, but it is also a productive investment in human capital that expands economic possibility. UNICEF plays a vital role in working with governments and other partners to make this case and works hand in hand with government and partners to support the analysis, design and implementation of child-sensitive social protection systems.

The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions: Closing the coverage gap for children

Created by the Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda, the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions is an initiative the United Nations Secretary-General launched in September 2021 to help countries address multiple crises, accelerate economic recovery while investing in social development and green transition, and prepare for current and future challenges.

Together with ILO and UNDP, UNICEF is a core partner of the Accelerator's coordinating group, which has developed its implementation strategy, engaged with United Nations country teams and governments, and led the financing strategy to underpin progress.

The ambitions of the Accelerator are significant and align closely with the urgent need to expand social protection for children and reach the approximately 1.5 billion children who currently have no social protection coverage. The Accelerator aims to support the creation of 400 million decent jobs and the extension of social protection to the 4 billion people who are currently excluded, and to facilitate 'just' transitions for all. By placing decent work and universal social protection at the heart of recovery, the Accelerator aims to usher in a new era of shared prosperity, sustainable peace and social justice. Pathfinder countries for the Accelerator are already being selected, with a focus on strong government commitment to structural transformation through integrated approaches to social protection and jobs, with 2023 expected to see the implementation and roll-out of national road maps in selected countries.



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Public finance for children: Protecting the rights of children through greater and more equitable investments

Six-year-olds Agata, Maya and Lera play at a UNICEF-supported kindergarten in Gdansk, Poland, on 16 January 2023.

The current socioeconomic climate continues to challenge the efforts of many countries, communities and households to recover, rebuild and reverse the critical setbacks of the pandemic, climate crises and increased conflict and displacement. The SDG financing gap in developing countries increased by 56 per cent after the COVID-19 pandemic, totalling US\$3.9 trillion in 2020, and the gap continues to grow. In addition, limited alignment between critical priorities in terms of climate, development, preparedness and humanitarian flows remains a challenge. Moreover, an increasing number of developing countries are allocating a significant portion of their public revenue to debt service payments.³⁵ As of 2022, 25 developing countries had allocated more than a fifth of their total revenue to servicing public external debt, which further constrained their ability to finance social services. This situation has increased the urgency for governments, the private sector, civil society and international development partners to collaborate to address the short-term impact of the current compounding crises and focus on how to best promote a resilient, sustainable and inclusive recovery.

In this complex environment, UNICEF's long-standing work on Public Finance for Children (PF4C) plays a central role in responding to the challenges. UNICEF's PF4C work focuses on advocating for a rights-based approach to financing. At the heart of this are the principle of leaving no one behind and Article 4 of the CRC.³⁶ This work aims to leverage financing for children at scale, and helps governments develop adequate, effective, efficient, equitable and transparent public financing approaches, including budgets, in line with SDG 1 indicators 1.b.1 on equitable spending and 1.a.2 on the adequacy of public budgets.

Ensuring that public financial management systems are better equipped to finance social services for children equitably, transparently and efficiently has been a key focus of UNICEF's approach and support at the country level. This has included the capacity-building of Ministry of Finance and social line ministry staff at central and local levels on areas such as equitable planning and budget execution, ensuring the transparency, accountability and credibility of public budgets, building budget monitoring capacities and improving procurement processes (see Box 7).

To better provide governments with the required technical support, UNICEF continued to enhance its internal capacity on PF4C. The Global PF4C Course was institutionalized in 2022 with the launch of an online, self-paced PF4C course available to all country offices. The course focuses on UNICEF's approach to public finance, and how UNICEF staff can influence public financial resources to increase investments in children and realize every child's right to social services. For the third year in a row, UNICEF continued its focus on public finance capacity-building with senior leaders, aiming to equip senior managers with the knowledge and skills they need to engage on public finance issues with governments and IFIs, to better safeguard social spending for children.

In 2022, UNICEF made a number of achievements in PF4C in terms of evidence and knowledge generation, country programme support, capacity-building and sector financing. UNICEF continued to support the Social Spending Monitor, an evidence-based advocacy platform that started in 2021 and aims to highlight critical areas for policy change on financing and generate evidence on social spending and its impact on children. In 2022, UNICEF published two social spending policy briefs as part of its Social Spending Monitor series: 'Shortfalls in Social Spending in Low- and Middle-Income Countries',³⁷ which examines how recent trends, including debt, are impacting the fiscal space available for social spending; and 'Monitoring the Social Costs of Climate Change for Low-and Middle-Income Countries',³⁸ which provides evidence on what climate change means for social sector budgets, and the extent to which social sectors are being prioritized in the climate response.

Moreover, UNICEF has been making a strong call for the critical alignment of sustainable and inclusive financing across different forums, including the Financing for Development cluster systems. With the publication of 'Budgets for Climate, Sustainability and Social Inclusion: A rapid review of approaches and tools', UNICEF and UNDP joined forces to highlight the potential entry-points across the budget cycle for achieving these priorities in an integrated manner.³⁹ The organization also developed new internal guidance on the CRC and public finance reporting, strengthening pathways for reporting on States' budgetary obligations under Article 4 of the CRC, where public finance is considered an integral component of child rights and where the right to health, education, social protection and other services can be realized only if governments make budgets – from formulation, to approval, execution and evaluation – and public finance systems work for children.

UNICEF's PF4C work continued to ensure better social sector spending, while addressing public financial management constraints that hinder the delivery of specific social services. In 2021, UNICEF's public finance work was a key component across multiple sectors, including social protection, education, health, child protection, ECD, nutrition, WASH, adolescent participation and development, gender and climate. Tailored support was provided to routine immunization financing and zero-dose communities, as well as to COVID-19 financing. PF4C also generated key evidence and analysis in the immunization report 'Costs and predicted financing gap to deliver COVID-19 vaccines in 133 low- and middle-income countries'.⁴⁰ In relation to other sectors, PF4C supported ECD by developing guidance on innovative financing for ECD, and child protection by contributing to a multi-partner product on the economic case for preventing violence against children.⁴¹

Results achieved and challenges to protecting the rights of children through greater and equitable investments

In 2022, UNICEF worked with governments, development partners, IFIs, the private sector and civil society to protect and leverage resources for children and to ensure sustainable and inclusive social services at scale. A total of 144 UNICEF country offices (up from 137 in 2021) engaged with governments in public finance to strengthen social sector budgets for child rights.

In these 144 countries, UNICEF engaged across all 5 dimensions of public finance – namely, sufficiency/adequacy, effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and equity of social sector budgets – to advance social service delivery (see Figure 9).

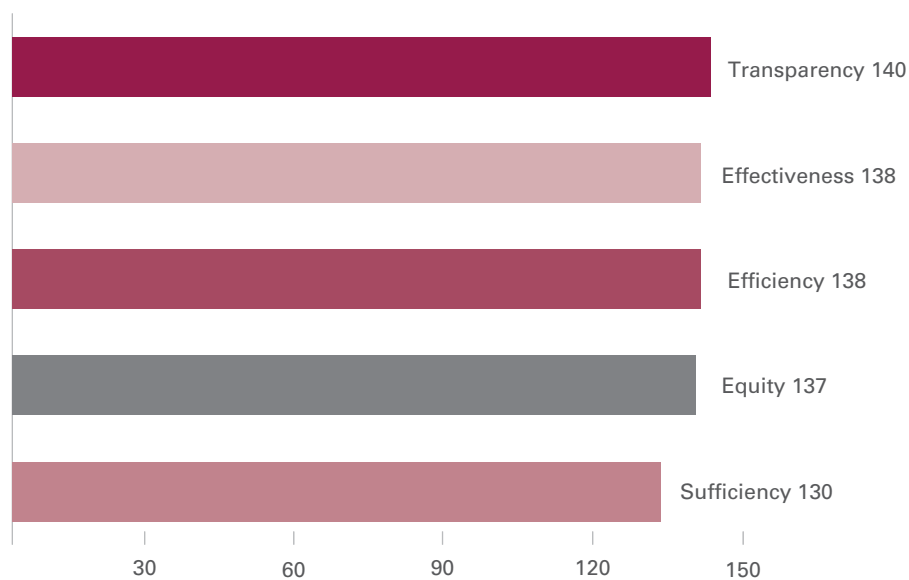
Achieving sustainable change in national budgets is a long-term process. In 2022, UNICEF’s efforts contributed to strengthened social sector budgets in 78 countries (up from 65 in 2021). In other words, UNICEF support – in terms of evidence generation, policy and technical advice and capacity-strengthening – led to tangible results in social sector financing, with an improvement in the adequacy,

efficiency, effectiveness, equity and transparency of allocations and, ultimately, improved access to services for children, including the most disadvantaged.

The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, emphasizes the role of partnerships in advancing PF4C. A new indicator on leveraging international and private resources is now an integral part of Goal Area 5. Public resources remain the key source of social spending, even in low-income countries. However, when fiscal space is limited and public resources are not adequate to finance social services, UNICEF supports governments in leveraging international and private resources.

In 2022, UNICEF accelerated its efforts to support governments in leveraging international and private resources for social service delivery in a total of 127 countries (up from 126 in 2021). In almost half of those countries (65 – up from 55 in 2021), efforts have led to concrete results for social service delivery, as illustrated in the examples and case studies throughout this report.

FIGURE 9: Number of countries (144) reporting on engaging with governments on public finance, by dimension



Source: UNICEF Goal Area 5 Core Standard Indicators (2022).⁴²

Promoting efficient, effective and equitable procurement processes

Through innovative tools and approaches, UNICEF strives to build sustainable systems that lead to better performance outcomes and more efficient use of public resources. The UNICEF Supply Division offers technical assistance to establish and improve national procurement and budgeting systems, including through procurement system evaluation, the capacity-building of forecasting and budgeting, and supply financing. In 2022, technical assistance was provided to six countries (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, the Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and the Sudan), which enabled achievements such as the institutionalization of traditional vaccine procurement, increased domestic budget allocation for vaccine procurement, and the timely meeting of 2022 co-financing obligations for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. These efforts contribute to the goal of promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of public budgets, which is essential for the sustainability and equity of social sector financing. Additionally, the UNICEF Vaccine Independence Initiative (VII) provides support to countries which are able to finance their vaccine needs but experience public finance challenges and procurement delays. VII includes a flexible credit facility and a guarantee fund to address the public finance bottlenecks that risk timely access to vaccines and can lead to stock-outs of essential medicines and commodities. In 2022, VII facilitated a total of US\$225 million in pre-financing and special contracts for 116 million units of essential supplies to 38 partner countries.

Promoting adequate investment for children's rights

UNICEF engages with governments at central and decentralized levels to influence resource allocations to social services. UNICEF anchors its work in evidence-based and context-driven solutions to protect, expand and transform public social spending for children, while ensuring fiscal sustainability and the stability of public budgets. In 2022, UNICEF engaged with governments in 130 countries to promote adequate investments in social sectors – sufficient public funds to meet the rights of every child to access social services – a notable increase from 112 countries in 2020 and 123 in 2021.

To influence public financing in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNICEF developed investment cases for children aged 0–6 years, focusing on social protection, early childhood education (ECE) and health, and two ECE feasibility studies. The objective was to boost investments in early childhood and ensure equitable and inclusive interventions across sectors. The investment cases provided sound empirical evidence on the short-, medium- and long-term cost–benefits, and cost-of-inaction analyses of the socioeconomic returns resulting from adequate and cost-effective investments in a multisectoral ECD package. Specific interventions were designed for each sector, together with a robust methodology to monetize benefits and costs. The investment cases served as a key tool to optimize the use of available public funds through re-channelling, and to advocate for additional resources. The evidence and findings provided a compelling case for investing in ECD. These will be leveraged to inform decision-making processes and enable equitable, efficient and effective financing of quality interventions in early childhood.

In **Mexico**, UNICEF carried out a training workshop for advisers and analysts of the House of Representatives, who are responsible for the annual analysis of the federal budget. The capacity-building course was organized

together with the Child Rights Legislative Commission, and attracted 50 staff from various commissions, including budget, education, health and social development. In addition, UNICEF developed a budget analysis of the Federal Government Expenditure Project for 2023. The study analysed the budget allocations for programmes and services for children and adolescents in 2023 and presented a series of recommendations to legislators from the House of Representatives. Among the highlights of the analysis was that, although social expenditure in Mexico had grown in recent years as a proportion of total expenditure (from 50 per cent in 2018 to 53 per cent in 2023), social expenditure for children as a proportion of total social expenditure had fallen (from 27 per cent in 2018 to 18 per cent in 2023). The findings and recommendations from the study were presented to various legislative commissions, including budget, education and child rights. UNICEF's engagement, evidence generation and capacity-building has been critical to generate awareness about public spending for children in the country and to stimulate dialogue and exchange to improve it over the years.

In **the Sudan**, the Child Focused Expenditure Review was completed at the national level as well as in six **states**. Based on this review, UNICEF supported the development of a capacity-building plan to strengthen the technical capacities of state- and locality-level finance and sectoral planning officers on sectoral planning, budget formulation, implementation, monitoring and accounting for social sector spending. Specifically, a state-level curriculum was prepared and piloted through week-long workshops in North Darfur and South Darfur in December 2022. The curriculum will be rolled out to all 18 states after official approval and adoption by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. UNICEF is complementing this work with evidence-based advocacy to reform PFM laws, rules and systems to increase social sector allocations and accountability for social sector spending.

Case Study 6: Viet Nam: Child-focused planning and budgeting to invest in human capital

In Viet Nam, UNICEF engaged with the government to prioritize children in national and subnational planning and budgeting. UNICEF Viet Nam engaged in advocacy, high-level policy dialogue, evidence generation and technical support to ensure key targets and indicators on children are prioritized in national and subnational plans. This has resulted in a commitment to increase investment in human capital development and social spending for children in the 2021–2030 Socioeconomic Development Strategy and the 2012–2025 Socioeconomic Development Plan. For the first time, important new indicators were introduced, including child malnutrition (stunting), child protection (child abuse, child-friendly justice services), early childhood education (3–5 years of age), child-centred disaster risk reduction and climate action.

UNICEF Viet Nam helped to generate evidence on children's situations in different areas of child rights, including education, health, nutrition, social protection, water, WASH and child protection. Different studies and analyses of public spending on children were conducted at both national and subnational levels, based on which thematic and comprehensive policy briefs to inform policy advocacy were developed.⁴⁴ UNICEF Viet Nam supported the Ministry of Planning and Investment (the government's focal point for the sustainable development agenda) and line ministries to undertake a fiscal space analysis and costing exercises on child-sensitive social assistance, nutrition, WASH and education. They are using these to identify and mobilize adequate investment and, through sectoral plans, to achieve Viet Nam's SDG targets for 2025 and 2030.

UNICEF Viet Nam maintained intensive, adaptive and strategic advocacy, high-level policy dialogues and technical support to make children a priority in national plans. The country office, through a coalition of partners including the National Assembly, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Ministry of Finance and all relevant social ministries, organized technical consultations and high-level advocacy events to ensure the 2021–2030 Socioeconomic Development Strategy, the 2021–2030 National Financing Strategy and the 2021–2025 socioeconomic development and sectoral plans supported the further realization of child rights. Specifically, investment in human capital development and social spending for children was highlighted as a key breakthrough in the 2021–2030 Socioeconomic Development Strategy and the 2021–2025 Socioeconomic Development Plan. In addition, the 2021–2030 National Financing Strategy, approved in March 2022, demonstrated the government's commitment to allocating adequate financial resources for inclusive development to prioritize the most vulnerable groups, including children, poor people and ethnic minorities. At the subnational level, in partnership with four focus provinces and with technical support from UNICEF Viet Nam, the key targets and indicators on children were integrated into the 2021–2025 provincial Socioeconomic Development Plans.



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Vang, 14, poses for the camera at the Secondary Ethnic Minority Boarding School of Bac Ha district of Lao Cai.

Case Study 7: Burundi: Prioritizing social spending in a challenging macroeconomic context

In Burundi, UNICEF built the capacity of the government at central and local levels and embarked on evidence generation and policy dialogue. UNICEF worked to maintain momentum on the importance of investing in social sectors, despite the challenging macroeconomic context.

In 2022, UNICEF Burundi continued to strengthen its partnerships to establish agendas and set strategies for ECD, climate change, social protection, public finance and child poverty. UNICEF continued to work closely with the government, the United Nations Country Team, the Office of the Resident Coordinator, donors, IFIs and CSOs.

UNICEF Burundi's strong advocacy and high-quality evidence led to the government maintaining budget allocations for social sectors in real terms (BIF874.4 billion in 2022/23, compared to BIF867 billion in 2021/22), while increasing the budget allocation for immunization (from BIF850 million in 2020/21 to BIF2.5 billion in 2022/23) and per capita public investments in non-contributory social protection programmes. This progress was achieved despite the challenging economic environment that the country faced in 2022.⁴⁵

A cost-benefit analysis conducted jointly by UNICEF and the government on ECD made a compelling case for greater investment: The analysis revealed a high return on investments – for every US\$1 invested, the return on investment would be US\$18 – and forecast good results for decreasing under-five mortality and stunting by 2050. Following this, UNICEF continued to contribute to national efforts to implement the new national ECD strategy. Through an internal ECD task force, the Burundi Country Office developed both an ECD operational plan and a multisectoral minimum intervention package. The latter will be rolled out in 2023 in provinces showing the highest rates of vulnerabilities. As a result, for the first time in its history, UNICEF Burundi has developed an ECD budget brief, which shows almost a threefold increase in the budget for ECD, from 2.3 per cent in 2020/21 to 6.2 per cent in 2022/23.

UNICEF Burundi also supported the implementation of the capacity-building programme on PFM for parliamentarians and social sector budget focal points at central and local level to strengthen their engagement in the budget cycle, which has led to an increase in local councils' revenues.



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A group of infants at a school in Burundi pose for the camera on 22 September 2021.

Making public spending on children's rights more efficient and effective

Focusing on the efficiency and effectiveness of public budgets is key to ensuring the equity and sustainability of social sector financing. Ensuring that existing budgets are used as efficiently and effectively as possible increases the benefits that can be achieved with a given level of finance and may yield savings that can be reallocated for developing other programmes or increase the coverage of existing ones. It also helps to enhance the credibility of line ministries in terms of absorption and implementation capacity. UNICEF helped governments to make savings in public budgets that could be redirected to priority social spending on child rights and long-term human development. In 2022, UNICEF worked in 138 countries to promote efficient and effective investments in social sectors, a significant increase from 113 countries in 2020 and 125 in 2021. Evidence generation, engagement with budgetary processes, capacity-building and systems-strengthening have been critical to promoting efficient and effective budgets.

In **Namibia**, UNICEF is supporting the government in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the public budget. Using evidence from budget analysis and expenditure reviews, which showed a weak correlation between spending on health and outcomes, mainly due to suboptimal procurements, UNICEF undertook a comprehensive analysis of the major bottlenecks in procurement. The analysis, which was led by the Ministries of Finance and Health, employed the Problem Driven Iterative Approach to identify bottlenecks and co-create solutions. This informed a reform of the public procurement systems, particularly for health procurement. Pooled procurement for health has now been incorporated into the new Public Procurement Act, while the government has developed customized standard bidding documents for pharmaceuticals and clinical supplies as well as multi-year procurements, among other reforms, to enhance spending efficiency. Similarly, the government is reforming its spending on civil service medical aid to make it more effective and equitable, saving almost N\$500 million for reinvestment into the health sector for greater reach and quality of care.

In the Eastern Caribbean, UNICEF's work on PF4C focused on the institutional strengthening of key national stakeholders from 10 countries, including Ministries of Finance and key social sectors, through the implementation of a tailored course with specialized coaching to apply key learnings and regional best practices on PF4C. This was a key step in strengthening the efficiency of public finance and promoting regional PFM knowledge-sharing, influencing public financial decision-making processes and

leveraging domestic resources for children. Preliminary results are encouraging. In **Antigua and Barbuda**, the government is advancing youth engagement in the budget process and expanding the PF4C portfolio to promote efficiencies in social spending outcomes for children. In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the Office of the Prime Minister is using PF4C tools to promote budget efficiencies in the child protection sector with a view to a reform of the national care system.

Making public social spending more equitable

While sufficiency/adequacy, effectiveness and efficiency of public spending are key to financing social services, it is also critical that budget resources are distributed or disbursed in a manner that complies with the obligation of non-discrimination, addressing existing inequalities among groups of children or disparities among geographical regions in the country. Equity in accessing social services is strongly correlated to fiscal equity, to ensure that public resources are spent on services for those who need them most and to reduce poverty and inequality. In 2022, UNICEF worked in 137 countries to promote budget equity, which is a considerable increase from 113 countries in 2020 and 122 in 2021.

In **China**, UNICEF partnered with the National Development Reform Commission to generate evidence to improve the system of early childhood care (ECC) services and establish a sustainable operating mechanism to deliver effective models of ECC services for every child. UNICEF leveraged government resources to scale up and finance equitable and affordable ECC services for children aged 0–3 years across the country. UNICEF also collaborated with the Ministry of Finance and the National Health Commission to leverage central government funding for ECD services, which will be integrated into the Basic Public Health Service Program by securing funding from the earmarked public health service transfers to the provinces.

In **Nepal**, UNICEF helped the Ministry of Finance to establish an Economic Lab to promote evidence-based policymaking processes. The Lab intends to problem-solve, research, model, and analyse contemporary policies and their effectiveness in achieving policy goals. It will also focus on learning about the impacts of public policies on the most vulnerable groups; strengthening the public finance database system; publishing policy briefs; and capacitating the human resources division within the Ministry of Finance and sectoral ministries. The Lab will contribute to analysing the social impact of the budget and aim to produce policy briefs on high inflation and its impact on the most vulnerable groups.

Transparency, accountability and participation

Transparency in social sector budgets and citizen participation in budgetary processes improve public oversight, allocations and spending of public funds, social spending for key child rights and the credibility of social ministries. In 2022, UNICEF worked in 140 countries in this area, a significant increase from 119 countries in 2020 and 129 in 2021. UNICEF works with a broad spectrum of national and international partners to improve budget transparency, accountability and participation, including the International Budget Partnership.

In **Egypt**, UNICEF has been working with the Ministry of Finance over the past four years on increasing fiscal transparency, monitoring the national budget and engaging citizens and young people in the budget development and execution process. UNICEF supported the 'Budget Transparency' series jointly produced with the Ministry of Finance,⁴⁶ which provides easily digested insights into the public budget, including allocations and expenditures for children, to make public finance more comprehensible for citizens, including young people. To enhance sustainability, the programme has placed a major emphasis on enhancing the capacity of government officials to undertake independent efforts to improve fiscal transparency and public participation policies. UNICEF's contribution to the government's efforts ensured that Egypt maintained its transparency score of 43 in 2022 (just below the global average of 45),⁴⁷ and increased its public participation score to 19 (well above the global average of 14).⁴⁸

In **Argentina**, UNICEF continued its support to the Ministry of Economy in producing the 'Social Investment in Children Annual Statistics' series. Quarterly reports are produced to monitor national policies targeting children along the budget cycle. In 2022, for the third consecutive year, a cross-cutting chapter on children and adolescents was included in the 2023 National Budget Bill, which enabled advocacy to protect the budget allocation for children and adolescents. Based on that chapter, UNICEF produced an analysis of

the 2023 budget with a focus on children and adolescents, which identified cutbacks in some crucial programmes for children. The report was presented to the Commission of Family, Childhood and Youth of the Chamber of Deputies of Argentina as part of the 2023 budget deliberation process and was widely covered in the media. It contributed to the Congress approving a budget of AR\$241 billion for children and adolescents in 2023 – a 9 per cent increase on the original budget.⁴⁹

In **Sri Lanka**, UNICEF is engaging with the government, civil society and development partners to safeguard social spending during times of crisis. In 2022, UNICEF continued its work on social sector budget briefs and produced a Public Expenditure Review for Social Protection that provides insights into how to improve the efficiency and equity of the social protection system. UNICEF also continued to support transparency and citizen participation in budget processes by developing a Citizen Budget at the provincial level, a simplified version of the government budget. This was complemented by training CSOs on the importance of open and accountable budgets.

Public finance for children in fragile and humanitarian contexts

Conflict and fragility significantly impact the ability of governments to expand social spending through taxation and borrowing, constraining fiscal space for financing social services. Investing in resilient and risk-informed PFM systems for shock-responsive social spending has been a key area of focus. In complex humanitarian settings it can be very challenging to leverage humanitarian financing to strengthen risk-informed national systems, and to bridge the humanitarian–development nexus. UNICEF has been able to engage with governments, development partners and IFIs to finance social sectors, and to bridge the gap in financing basic social services and humanitarian responses, while maintaining the focus on national systems-strengthening.

Partnerships

Partnerships at global, regional and country levels are at the core of the PF4C programme. UNICEF has been able to strengthen social sector budgets and deliver important results for children by working in partnership with a broad spectrum of organizations and stakeholders. Through its partnerships, UNICEF has played a vital role in initiating advocacy efforts and evidence generation, leveraging critical resources for children for impact at scale, and ensuring resources are provided for impactful programmes that address child-specific priorities.

UNICEF's deep engagement with governments at central and decentralized levels, and strong collaborations with international development partners, the private sector and civil society, have been critical to advancing social spending for children.

UNICEF continued its collaboration with the Inter-Agency Taskforce on Financing for Development and led the subgroup on Alignment of National Planning, Spending and Implementation as part of the Cluster on Sustainability and Climate Action (Cluster 1) within the Secretary-General's

Case Study 8: South Sudan: Leveraging partnerships to prioritize social spending

In South Sudan, UNICEF leveraged its partnerships with the government and the international community to increase social spending for children.

UNICEF engaged with the government and international partners to overcome PFM challenges through evidence generation, budget transparency and capacity-building. UNICEF and partners supported the first ever domestic financing conference on national education⁵⁰ to discuss strategies to raise education budget allocations to 20 per cent of the national budget and 6 per cent of GDP. The findings and recommendations of the UNICEF-supported Education Sector Public Expenditure Review and Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PER/PETS) were confirmed in this forum.

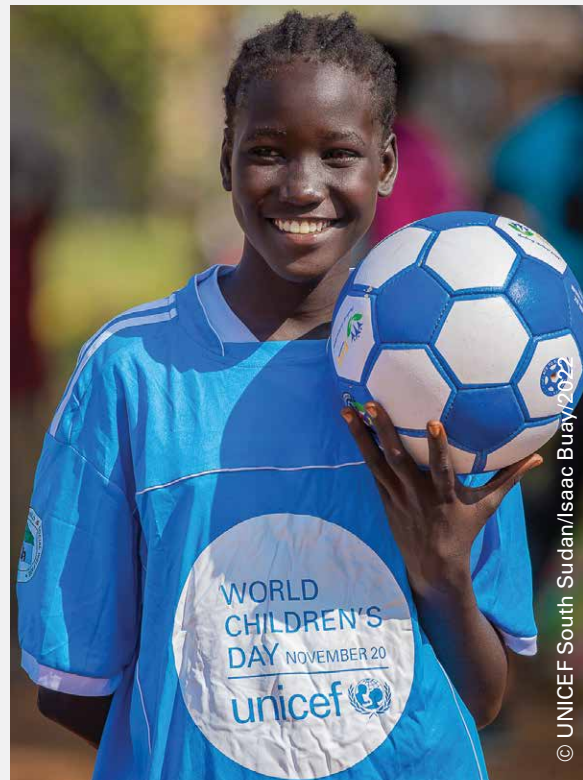
The [UNICEF–UNDP SDG Fund](#) Joint Programme⁵¹ concluded in May 2022, having made marked progress in evidence generation, capacity-building and budget transparency.

- Staff at the Ministry of Finance were trained on using the Integrated Financial Management Information System.
- The National Budget Brief and Citizens' Budget for Fiscal Year 2020/21 was published.
- The 2021 Open Budget Survey results were disseminated.
- The Education Sector PER/PETS was implemented.
- The government re-established State Transfer Monitoring Committees and the County Transfer Monitoring Committees.

UNICEF, as part of the SDG Joint Programme, engaged with [local media houses and journalists](#) on PF4C and budgetary issues on access to health care, education, health and nutrition. UNICEF also empowered government officials⁵² to advocate for increased budget allocations for basic social services and promoted efficiency, effectiveness and budget transparency, helping strengthen resilience and social cohesion for the most vulnerable children and women. In addition, it created opportunities for leveraging donor funding in one of the Special Administrative Areas of South Sudan.

UNICEF's efforts with the government⁵³ and international partners contributed to positive changes. The combined budget allocations for health, education and the social and humanitarian pillar rose to 28 per cent in fiscal year 2021/22 from 14 per cent in 2020/21. The education sector budget increased to 17 per cent in 2021/22 from 14 per cent in FY2020/21, making significant progress towards the 20 per cent national commitment.

Allocations for social and humanitarian affairs also increased from 1.1 to 1.2 per cent in fiscal year 2021/22; although a minor increase, it is a critical push given the complex situation. However, the health sector proportion reduced from 10 per cent in 2020/21 to 9.6 per cent in 2021/22, far from the 15–20 per cent national commitment. UNICEF co-chairs the monthly PFM Working Group with AfDB to ensure that children remain at the centre of the financing agenda.



A young person holds a football at an event to celebrate World Children's Day in South Sudan on 19 November 2022.

Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond Initiative. Throughout 2022, UNICEF continued to collaborate with the International Budget Partnership to improve global awareness of and engagement on budget credibility. UNICEF also partnered with the International Budget Partnership and other United Nations partners (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, UNDP and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UN DESA]) to bring together the African INFF community and senior decision makers to share INFF experiences and learn about the advantages and challenges of setting up SDG-aligned integrated financing strategies, with a particular focus on SDG financing dialogues and open budget reforms.

UNICEF has also continued to promote and strengthen key issues related to financing through its sector-focused partnerships. UNICEF PF4C collaborated with sector specialists to integrate evidence-based advocacy and programming to strengthen domestic investments in health, immunization, ECD, social protection, education, nutrition, WASH and child protection, and to leverage collaborations with other United Nations agencies and partners, such as WHO, the World Bank, ILO, World Vision, Save the Children, Plan International and the Centers for Disease Control, and key foundations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Hilton Foundation and the Porticus Foundation.

Collaboration with IFIs at global, regional and country levels is at the core of UNICEF's work. These partnerships are key to supporting public finance reforms, enhancing joint advocacy, shaping global strategic agendas, and leveraging critical financing strategies to deliver results for children at scale. In the area of public finance, UNICEF partners with IFIs in more than 60 countries to ensure that social spending is protected, that funding allocations are efficient, transparent and equitable, and that specific critical innovations are prioritized and resourced adequately. This is achieved by coordinating and synergizing evidence-based advocacy; providing timely data and analysis on children to help shape and prioritize finance decisions; giving technical support to finance and line ministries; and engaging in joint policy dialogue with governments.

The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, notes the importance of strategies to leverage financing and influence for children by increasing collaboration with IFIs, and includes specific indicators under Goal Area 5. These indicators help to monitor UNICEF's capacity to leverage public and private resources for social sectors, where partnerships with IFIs play a central role.

In **Armenia**, UNICEF has strategically cooperated with the government, the World Bank and the IMF to provide technical assistance in public finance and advocate for more inclusive, child-friendly social policies. Building on this, recent catalytic advocacy and technical engagement as part of the UNICEF–UNDP Global Finance Flagship resulted in commitments by the government in the latest the IMF Stand-By Arrangement to make childcare benefits universal for all children under the age of 2; expand coverage of

UNICEF–UNDP Global Financing Flagship

In 2022, UNICEF started implementing the UNICEF–UNDP Global Financing Flagship, which aims to accelerate investments in social sectors through a coordinated approach. This has greatly enhanced results in PF4C. The UNICEF–UNDP Flagship brings together the strengths of the two organizations to advance public and private financing for the SDGs. The goal is to support catalytic collaborations at country and regional levels. These collaborations are focusing on two components – public finance and private finance – while ensuring synergies and coordination to maximize investments for social services at the country level.

In 2022, the public finance component identified 12 important initiatives that support social spending financing; operationalization of INFFs; financing climate adaptation; improving budget transparency; and SDG budgeting at the subnational level. Among the collaborations, the Flagship supported UNDP and UNICEF country offices in **Armenia** in conducting capacity-building for the National Assembly; provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Finance on aligning the budget and medium-term expenditure framework with the SDGs; developed costed scenarios for social sector financing reforms; and defined a social sector floor.

In **Sri Lanka**, the Flagship worked to develop a systematic assessment of available resources for social protection, and potential financing measures to address financing gaps, bringing together research from both agencies. In **Timor-Leste**, the Flagship provided joint technical assistance to the Ministry of Finance on the roll-out of child budget tagging and developed climate budget tagging based on the child-marker experience. The Flagship also supported the Africa-wide workshop on INFFs and Open Budgets attended by 52 of 54 African governments. This resulted in the preparation of action plans for greater budget transparency and SDG financing strategies from participating countries.

It is important to note that partnerships for social sectors were greatly enhanced by the launch of the UNICEF–UNDP Global Finance Flagship, which places special emphasis on leveraging INFFs to finance social services.

the Family Benefit Program from 50 per cent to 75 per cent; and increase social assistance spending (including allowances for old age, disability and loss of breadwinner). The programme also set a social spending floor for the government and the IMF to use as an indicative target.

In **Sierra Leone**, UNICEF collaborated with the World Bank on the Education Public Expenditure Review covering pre-primary to tertiary education; and leveraged its partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) International Institute for Educational Planning to strengthen the financial simulation model and support the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education and the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education in preparing a credible, country-owned and costed Education Sector Plan (2022–2026). The Sierra Leone Country Office also embarked on advocacy and policy dialogue with the Ministry of Finance to prioritize children. These efforts and partnerships have resulted in the inclusion of child budgeting in the National Budget Call circular for fiscal year 2023, which mandates line ministries to ensure their budgets are child-responsive. To ensure sustainability and systems-strengthening, UNICEF and the Ministry of Finance agreed on national capacity-building for child-responsive budgeting.

In **North Macedonia**, UNICEF, with World Bank funding and advocacy support, provided technical assistance for developing a midterm vision for transforming the primary school network and improving the allocation of its limited resources. The new formula for allocating primary education transfers to municipalities, developed with UNICEF guidance, has been publicly endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry of Finance also supports the new funding mechanism, and UNICEF continues to address the remaining concerns regarding the fiscal implications of the reform. Capacity development and advocacy efforts, on both the national level and among the 80 municipalities, contributed to improving spending efficiency and ensured primary education allocations were equitable and based on objective criteria. By increasing the share of non-salary-related costs in the structure of primary school expenditures from an insufficient 11 per cent to 25 per cent, the new system of funding – along with the optimization of the school network and its human resources – will create equal teaching conditions in all schools, improve spending on the professional and career development of teachers, and enable schools to provide more hours of teaching and learning, ultimately enhancing educational performance.

Looking ahead

The global financing landscape has changed significantly in recent years. In this context, UNICEF continues to prioritize and accelerate its work in PF4C at global, regional and country levels. While the overall PF4C guiding principles (based on Article 4 of the CRC) will remain, UNICEF will work towards revamping its Global Programme Framework on public finance to better respond to the emerging complexities that face social spending. This will entail a more nuanced approach to working in fragile and humanitarian contexts and addressing the financing of climate change, rising inequality and the looming debt crisis facing low- and lower-middle-income countries. To tackle such complex agendas, UNICEF will continue to prioritize leveraging strategic partnerships and resources to advance social sector budgets and make an impact at scale.

UNICEF will continue to advocate for the prioritization and expansion of sustainable and inclusive resources for social services and for investments for children through evidence generation and policy dialogue at global, regional and country levels. It will explicitly focus on generating evidence on the impact of debt, climate change, conflict and inequalities on social sector budgets, while noting country-specific nuances, for example in low-, middle- and high-income countries as well as fragile and humanitarian contexts.

Going forward, UNICEF will continue to strengthen its critical collaboration with IFIs to further joint priorities around safeguarding and increasing social spending. UNICEF will

continue to leverage these partnerships to enhance child-focused investment and its prioritization in the design of country budgetary frameworks, data and evidence generation. It will work to better support governments' decisions to enhance investments for children and vulnerable families; strengthen public finance systems; and build system capacities in areas such as planning, costing and budgeting. Moreover, it will continue to work with IFIs and governments on reforms such as child-sensitive, gender-responsive and climate-responsive budgeting, and to promote budget transparency and credibility.

Collaboration between United Nations agencies and the Joint SDG Fund in evaluating the SDG financing portfolio provides an important opportunity to gather lessons learned on how the United Nations system can synergize financing for social services. For instance, UNICEF's collaboration with UNDP on financing social services and INFFs remains critical in 2023. In addition, UNICEF will focus on supporting emerging priorities, including identifying synergies between climate finance and social protection and exploring SDG financing options at the local government level. We will strategically scale up the work started as part of the UNICEF–UNDP Flagship, which brings together the expertise, experience and breadth of relationships of both organizations. We will also share our learnings with interested Member States and other development partners as a core partner in the INFF Facility, alongside UNDP, UN DESA and OECD.



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Local governance for poverty reduction and child-responsive urban policies and standards

People walk in an area that was flooded after Cyclone Idai made landfall in Beira on 24 March 2019 in Mozambique.

The world continues to urbanize rapidly, with more than 56 per cent of people now living in urban areas, a number that is estimated to reach 70 per cent by 2050. Rapid urbanization has also resulted in an increasing number of people living in slums and informal settlements. The current global slum population of more than 1 billion people, of whom at least 350 million are children, is estimated to triple by mid-century.

With decentralization reforms being rolled out in many countries, local governments in both urban and rural areas are increasingly expected to play a critical role in supporting the realization of child rights and reducing child poverty. However, subnational and local governments continue to face many challenges, such as chronic resource constraints, limited capacities and weak systems. These challenges hamper efforts to effectively provide, adapt and restore social services and to address the economic and social consequences of the different crises the world is facing in relation to conflict, climate, natural disasters and post-COVID recovery.

Local governance programming for UNICEF continued to expand and grow in importance in 2022, in both urban and rural contexts. Programming involved increasing numbers of countries and partnerships with rural and urban governments. In 2022, UNICEF continued to provide technical assistance and support to both large urban centres and isolated rural villages. The objective of this work has been to address the multiple deprivations faced by children and their families and caregivers by strengthening local capacities and systems and building more inclusive, equitable and resilient communities, with a focus on programming for the most vulnerable children.

The crucial role of subnational and local governments as front-line responders in humanitarian situations was further highlighted in 2022. The extended humanitarian situation in Ukraine and subsequent refugee movements underlined the importance of local governments – notably in neighbouring countries – in humanitarian and emergency responses: for providing the most urgent emergency support to affected populations; bridging resource gaps; improving coordination with national governments; and developing, adapting and scaling up existing social services to reach every child.

UNICEF local governance and urban programming work in 2022 continued to address key challenges faced by different levels of governance, with the objective of improving outcomes for children at the subnational and local levels, in both urban and rural settings. The focus on poverty and inequity intensified in 2022, with more countries engaging in local governance and urban programming. UNICEF supported local and urban governance programming in 107 programme countries globally, a substantial increase on 2021, when only 77 countries reported engagement at the subnational and local levels. In 58 of these countries (up from 46 in 2021), subnational and local governance programming reached a

moderate or strong level and is delivering results at scale for children and young people, leading to improved access to social services in their communities.

In 2022, more than 3,900 local governments in 63 countries were supported by UNICEF with the development of child-responsive local plans and budgets.

With rapidly growing urbanization rates, child rights must be mainstreamed in legislation and urban policies at national and subnational levels of governance to shape urbanization for children. In 2022, UNICEF worked directly with nearly 2,300 urban municipalities in more than 30 countries across the world to strengthen their planning and budgeting capacities and improve the accountability of urban governance systems. A total of 13 countries have made their national urban policies, planning standards and programmes child-responsive.

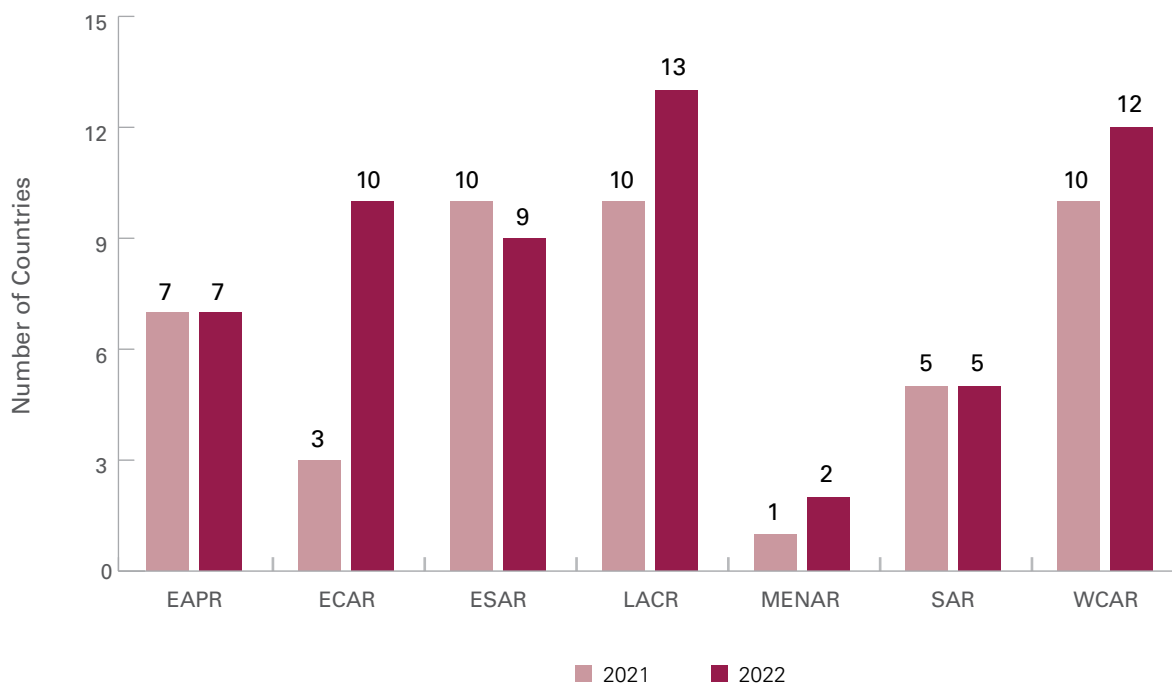
Engagement with different levels of government and other local stakeholders supports a critical transformation in systems-building and improved local capacities. It contributes to better service delivery, better accountability and adequate financial prioritization, while ensuring children's needs are prioritized and protected, especially the most marginalized.



To support UNICEF country offices, UNICEF developed a Subnational and Local Governance Framework in consultation with all programme sectors and regional and country offices. In the 158 countries where UNICEF works on local governance, this Framework provides a territorial perspective for the interaction between territories – urban, peri-urban and rural. It identifies policy

solutions that work for whole territories and supports the application of UNICEF's urban and local governance strategies. In the countries where UNICEF is engaging programmatically at subnational and local levels, the Framework highlights the importance of understanding the functional assignments of local governments as part of the decentralization process. These functional assignments include service delivery and operational accountabilities of different levels of governance (national, regional, local). The new Framework will further enhance the scale-up of UNICEF governance programming and engagement with partners at subnational and local levels. It will also enable better monitoring of the programmatic impact of UNICEF's subnational and local programming on the SDGs and child rights.

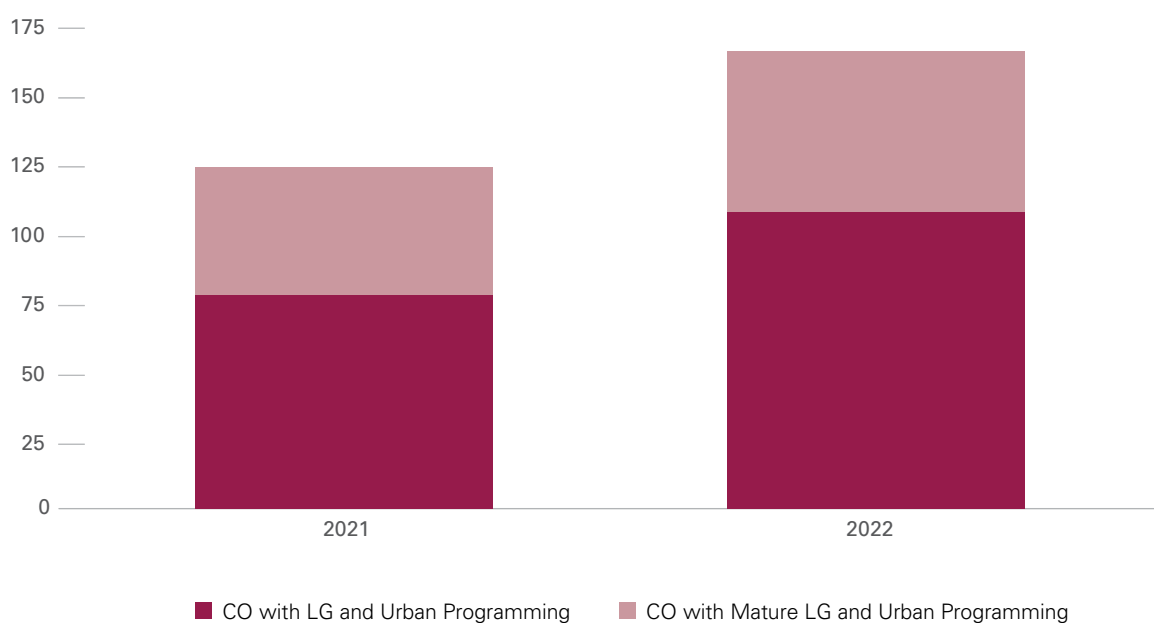
FIGURE 10: Countries with moderate or strong local governance programming by region



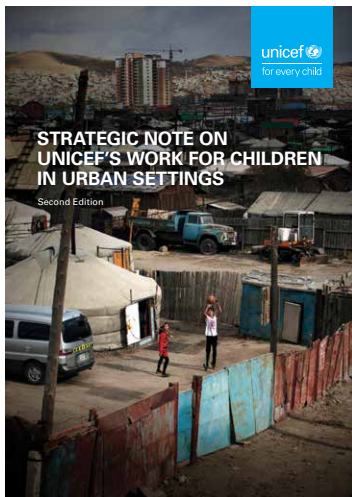
Source: UNICEF Goal Area 5 Core Standard Indicators (2022).⁵⁴

Note: EAPR: East Asia and Pacific Region; ECAR: Europe and Central Asia Region; ESAR: Eastern and Southern Africa Region; LACR: Latin America and the Caribbean Region; MENAR: Middle East and North Africa Region; SAR: South Asia Region; WCAR: West and Central Africa Region.

FIGURE 11: Countries with local governance and urban programming



Source: UNICEF Goal Area 5 Core Standard Indicators (2022).⁵⁵



To further step up UNICEF advocacy and programming for children in urban areas, especially in slums and informal settlements, the 'Strategic Note on UNICEF's work for children in urban settings' was updated with the latest data and lessons from UNICEF experiences in the last five years. More than 2,500 cities and towns where UNICEF provided

support benefited from the new Strategic Note, which aims to strengthen and scale up UNICEF's programming in urban areas with the objective of addressing rapid urbanization trends and key challenges faced by children and families living in urban areas. It looks at complex urban governance systems and the associated equity, inclusion and spatial challenges. Recognizing that many aspects of urban and subnational development are determined at the level of national government, this document also includes aspects of urban development related to children at the national level.

Results achieved and challenges to strengthening local governance systems and capacities through national policies and strategies

One of the main elements of UNICEF local governance and urban programming is its advocacy and technical assistance for the development of national policies, strategies and plans, including budget frameworks and supporting results for children at scale. The goal is to strengthen local governance capacities and systems to exercise functions and responsibilities at subnational and local levels and to improve service delivery at the local level. UNICEF is providing assistance to help make decisions in key social sectors that impact service delivery for children at the local level.

In **North Macedonia**, UNICEF worked with the World Bank to support the Ministry of Education and Science in improving the adequacy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity of public spending in primary and secondary education. To this end, UNICEF and the World Bank helped to overhaul government transfers to municipalities that fund schools. Sweeping demographic changes and resource allocation inefficiencies have meant that municipally run schools do not have the capacity to provide quality and inclusive education; instead, they provide different degrees of service in different parts of the country, and a wide range of learning experiences and outcomes. For instance, 90 per cent of students attend education in only a third of the school facilities, while the remaining two thirds of facilities provide services to just 10 per cent of students, which undermines the quality of education.

UNICEF's support to optimize the primary school network and reform its funding is contributing to strengthening the role of local governments in social service provision and ensuring better access and inclusion of the most vulnerable children – including those with disabilities, ethnic minorities and children from poorer households.

Based on consultations with local stakeholders, also involving students, UNICEF supported the development of detailed municipal plans to adjust school infrastructure, better allocate staff and create modern conditions for learning. The plans also propose repurposing unused spaces in schools to increase pre-primary education coverage and community-based services. Furthermore, the implementation of these plans will strengthen the capacity of local governments to manage accessible and quality social services and establish an equitable system for primary education; it will contribute to establishing equal teaching conditions across the country and efficient allocation of resources.

Improved fiscal decentralization through revised intergovernmental transfers (i.e., the new school funding formula) will better address the specific needs of students and ensure their inclusion. This will include coefficients for teaching in the languages of smaller communities and supporting the education of children with disabilities and those experiencing poverty. The revised funding mechanism will provide additional financial incentives to municipalities that demonstrate measurable progress in

a set of connected educational outcomes, for example by simultaneously reducing dropout and absenteeism rates while expanding extracurricular activities and teachers' professional development. In addition, the revised funding scheme will support the introduction of a national school feeding programme. It is also expected that savings incurred as a result of the reform will remain in the municipal schools and will contribute to both educational outcomes and/or environmental sustainability through a redirection towards cleaner energy sources.

In **Indonesia**, in recognition of the specific challenges faced by children in urban settlements, UNICEF has initiated integrated multisectoral urban programming as a priority. As part of this initiative, UNICEF has developed a strategy and road map to inform its current and future work focused on urban areas by identifying effective, multisectoral interventions that can improve the lives of children living in urban settings. With UNICEF's support, 21.6 million households received cash transfers through existing government social protection systems in 2022. In 2023, a strategy paper and road map will be finalized to improve the delivery of urban-focused programmes throughout the country. Two relevant concept notes and funding proposals will also be developed and submitted to relevant donors.

An important outcome of working at subnational and local levels is the application of the bottom-up approach in which results achieved at the local level can be scaled up and can influence changes in national policies, strategies and plans. In this way, our approach can lead to major changes in legislation and regulations, delivering meaningful change for children and their families and caregivers across whole countries.

In **Guinea**, the convergence municipalities approach was the cornerstone of UNICEF's 2018–2022 Country Programme. Its aim is to support the decentralization process and to promote access to basic social services for vulnerable people. UNICEF is working with 40 pilot municipalities through various strategies aimed at improving effectiveness; establishing a participatory community approach; enabling greater involvement of local actors; strengthening local systems and capacities; and leveraging multisectoral synergies with the joint implementation of programme components. In 2022, UNICEF supported the establishment of a results framework for Local Development Plans and Annual Investment Programmes aligned with the 14 areas of competence that were transferred to municipalities, as well as the SDGs. This results framework has significantly improved funding for child-sensitive interventions in 36 of the 40 convergence municipalities and in 3 urban municipalities. A UNICEF-supported independent evaluation concluded that this approach has a positive impact on the lives of communities. As a result, the government, led by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, developed a document to guide the scale-up. Other changes to national policies and legislation included the adoption of a law on local public services and the signing of the implementing texts of the

Decentralization Code. Those changes offer new prospects for consolidating the decentralization process in Guinea by enabling municipalities to recruit the human resources they need to implement the competencies that have been transferred to them.

Local planning and budgeting

Another key area of intervention within the local and urban governance programming is support for the development of child-responsive local plans and budgets, incorporating the specific and emerging needs of children and ensuring sufficient funding is provided to meet existing child-related priorities. The main programming elements include support for evidence-based planning, and strengthening capacities and resources for the development of local plans that equitably respond to the priorities of children and their families, including in slums and informal settlements. Special consideration is given in urban settings to the complex governance systems in large cities and the relationships between different structures and levels of governance to ensure coordinated service delivery, both within the city and at national and regional levels. To ensure child priorities are identified and included in local development plans, UNICEF country offices are working to strengthen budgeting systems and capacities, including mapping the financing sources and flows for services for children in rural and urban areas; preparing analysis of subnational and local budgets to identify budgets for key social services; exposing gaps in budgets, such as the coverage of slums and informal settlements; and engaging in social sector budget processes with budget actors, including urban finance authorities, legislative oversight bodies and CSOs.

In **Paraguay**, the UNICEF Country Office initiated an agenda to strengthen the capacities of local government institutions to implement results-based programmes. Within the framework of the Child-Friendly Municipalities Initiative, five Local Action Plans for Children were drawn up to respond locally to the problems and inequalities commonly facing Paraguayan children. The plans are varied and seek to promote activities such as climate change awareness, the promotion of sports, the strengthening of Municipal Councils for Children, the creation of training spaces for positive parenting, the adaptation of public recreational spaces and the creation of spaces for the protection and development of at-risk early childhood, among others. UNICEF has provided technical support to these local projects in terms of design, planning, and the development of monitoring instruments. Currently, UNICEF is focusing on training local actors in protection against all types of violence and in adolescent participation, encouraging the engagement of children and adolescents in the deliberative spaces of the local government. These interventions are supporting the development and implementation of local government programmes that directly and indirectly benefit over 230,000 children and adolescents, roughly 10 per cent of the national child population.

In **Zambia**, the new administration elected in 2021 has made decentralization a key priority. In 2022, with UNICEF technical and financial support, all 116 local authorities transitioned from activity-based to output-based budgeting and are now producing annual estimates of revenue and expenditure organized by outputs. This work has enhanced the accountability and transparency of local governments and improved the results-based monitoring. These efforts were further supported by the development of strengthened monitoring and evaluation indicators. The programme was supported by the Joint SDGs Fund and was part of wider efforts to strengthen INFFs in the country. In selected districts, UNICEF will support efforts to link the output-based budgeting with strengthened monitoring and evaluation of local authority development plans. This will support a pilot development financing assessment that can be used by local authorities to develop and update own-source revenue strategies.

UNICEF continued to focus on supporting child outcomes in urban slums and informal settlements in 2022, improving access to and the delivery of social services and cash assistance for the most marginalized and hardest-to-reach children and families.

In **Myanmar**, UNICEF has significantly expanded its footprint in peri-urban Yangon, with a focus on eight townships. An estimated 720,000 pregnant women and children are living in these informal settlements, typically in slum conditions where access to basic services is restricted or unaffordable. UNICEF's interventions have evolved from direct humanitarian assistance to a more holistic systems approach comprising maternal and child cash transfers, the health micro-insurance programme 'Bright Start', installation of water treatment units, and complementary services such as nutrition screening. Throughout 2022, UNICEF provided regular income support to 7,000 families, tripled the coverage of Bright Start to over 31,000 participants, and reached 42,000 women and children with micronutrient supplements. New water kiosks are now offering drinking-water to 100,000 people at a price that is 80 per cent cheaper than commercially bottled water.

In **Nepal**, the UNICEF Country Office collaborated with the Environment and Public Health Organization and the Urban Environment Management Society to pilot a 'Water-Safe Communities' approach in urban areas of the Kathmandu Valley. Collaboration with WHO on WASH standards for health-care facilities and with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) on the 'City Wise Inclusive Sanitation' initiative provided joint support to the government.

Child and adolescent participation and accountability

UNICEF has continued to enhance the accountability of local governance systems by increasing the meaningful participation of children, young people and communities in local decision-making processes as a key element of child-responsive programming and good local governance. Participation in local planning and budgeting processes – and the establishment of institutionalized and functioning accountability mechanisms – empowers children, adolescents and their families to shape local plans and budgets, and to implement programmes that positively affect their lives. In 2022, UNICEF supported the establishment and functioning of working, inclusive and representative participatory mechanisms at the local level as children and adolescents participated in the definition of local policies, programmes, plans and budgets in 85 countries around the world.

Child-friendly governance work by UNICEF in **Nepal** furthered the federalization process by capacitating local government and promoting the meaningful participation of children in planning and budgeting at all levels of the federal structure. UNICEF Nepal and five city governments partnered to foster citizens' engagement in the budgetary process with the aim of increasing budget transparency and accountability by developing civic engagement policies and citizens' budgets. UNICEF helped 22 municipalities in Nepal to start child-friendly local governance work, providing orientation to some 5,000 locally elected government representatives, government staff, teachers and health workers. Over 400 children's clubs were formed, and around 8,500 members (more than half of them girls) received orientation on child rights, child-friendly local governance, local planning process and the roles and responsibilities of children's club members.

In **Uzbekistan**, through the Youth and Child-Friendly Local Governance Initiative, UNICEF succeeded in increasing the comprehension and capacity of local governments to meaningfully engage adolescents and youth in the planning of youth-targeted actions. Specifically, through training on results-based management and results-based budgeting and continuous mentoring support from local and international UNICEF consultants, the local governments were supported to develop of action plans responsive to the needs and interests of children and youth in the cities.

Additionally, effective platforms for youth participation and engagement were established. For example, Youth Advisory Boards (YABs) comprising a total of 47 young people (24 girls and 23 boys) were established to facilitate the dialogue between young people and the local government in each city. The YABs conducted consultations with children and youth on the action plans developed by the local government in their cities. In total, they engaged over 6,000 young people: 1,441 young people (638 boys and 793 girls) through in-person consultations, and 4,925 young people (2,553 boys and 2,372 girls) through the digital platform U-Report. YAB members presented and discussed the results of the consultations with the local government at monthly *Khokim va Yoshlar* (Local Governor and Youth) meetings.

Urban spatial policies and planning

A new priority for UNICEF programming in urban settings is strengthening urban policies and planning to develop standards for child-responsive national planning. Well-planned cities will be better able to improve air quality, manage waste, provide access to essential services and critical infrastructure and promote safer and healthier lifestyles. They can also help to increase social cohesion, including between migrant, refugee or internally displaced populations and host communities, as evident in **Poland** (see *Case Study 10, below*). Providing public spaces, such as safe streets for young children, offers benefits for children such as increased levels of physical activity, improved social and emotional well-being and enhanced cognitive and health development. UNICEF is engaging in advocacy and providing policy guidance for the development of environmentally safe urban spaces for all children, including advocacy for integrating climate action into urban policy. With the large increase in the number of children living in slums and informal settlements, a special focus is on supporting child-centred slum transformation and advocating for participatory and child-centred slum upgrades.

For example, in **China**, the urbanization rate reached 65 per cent in 2021, and there has been growing concern over the living conditions and well-being of children affected by migration, including migrant children and children left behind. To prioritize children's development in urbanization, the 14th Five-Year Plan has set targets to build 100 model child-friendly cities (CFCs) across China (see *Case Study 9*). In this regard, the National Guideline on Urban Child-friendly Space was developed and released, with technical input from UNICEF. The UNICEF-supported study on the CFC indicator system and recognition methods has been used by the National Development Reform Commission (NDRC) as a reference for rolling out the demonstration of CFCs. To further this programme for informing policy on urban planning and urban spaces for children, UNICEF China has developed a new partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and its affiliate the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design.

Local governance in humanitarian situations

Local governments play a critical role in responding to humanitarian crises, such as natural disasters, conflicts and other emergencies. They are often the first responders on the ground and have a deep understanding of the local context, which can help ensure an effective and efficient response for the communities and their territories. Local governments, alongside other local actors, are responsible for putting in place and managing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and preparedness efforts, assessing the needs of affected communities and implementing relief efforts, while communicating and advocating for the needs of affected populations with national authorities. UNICEF plays an important role in supporting DRR at the local level in

many countries. UNICEF's approach to DRR is based on the recognition that children are among the most vulnerable to disasters, and that their needs must be taken into account in all phases of disaster management. UNICEF works closely with governments, communities and other partners to ensure that children are protected from the impacts of disasters and that their rights are upheld.

In response to the migration crisis in Ecuador, in coordination with local governments and in alliance with CSOs, UNICEF developed support spaces in Tulcán, Manta and Esmeraldas to assist children on the move and host communities, with a focus on integration. These supportive spaces have benefited 48,000 people, including children (65 per cent), parents, caregivers and public servants. The initiative has been identified as a positive example by the Quito Process – an intergovernmental initiative that addresses States' responses to the Venezuelan migration emergency.

Indonesia demonstrated the ability of local government to integrate children's needs and perspectives into emergency preparedness with its Guidelines on Child-Centered Contingency Planning. The Guidelines were developed in 2022 by the National Agency for Disaster Management and line ministries, with support from UNICEF, and their recommendations will be rolled out in 2023.

In Kyrgyzstan, 181 representatives of local self-governance bodies improved their knowledge and skills to conduct a disaster risk assessment and include DRR components in their local development strategies. Over 400,000 schoolchildren (43 per cent of them girls), nearly 700 children with disabilities and some 16,000 school administration staff developed emergency preparedness and response skills through DRR information sessions, simulations and emergency drills.

As the Ukraine crisis enters its second year, local governments are playing a pivotal role in response efforts. In the reception of refugees, they are the main humanitarian responders, providing multiple types of assistance to children, their families and caregivers.

Child Friendly Cities Initiative

One of the entry-points for partnering with subnational and local governments, primarily in urban areas and in middle- and high- income countries, is the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI). A network of 20 UNICEF country offices and 24 National Committee countries continue to successfully implement the CFCI, partnering with more than 3,300 municipal governments. The initiative works globally to realize the rights of children at the local level, using the [CRC](#)⁵⁶ as its foundation and delivering positive results for more than 32 million children around the world to date. The CFCI network brings together a wide range of local stakeholders – government, CSOs, the private sector, academia, media and, most importantly, the children themselves, who wish to make their cities and communities more child-friendly.

Case Study 9: China: A new approach to child-friendly cities

China's urbanization rate reached 65 per cent in 2022, beyond the target set by its current Five-Year Plan 2021–2025. This new era of urbanization faces a dual challenge: meeting the growing demands for quality of life and ensuring an inclusive process that leaves no one behind. To prioritize children's development in urbanization, the 14th Five-Year Plan has set targets that demonstrate a new approach in 100 CFCs across China. The first batch of pilot cities was rolled out in 2022.

- At the national level, UNICEF partnered with key ministries on policy studies and technical consultations to incorporate children's needs and perspectives into CFC policymaking.
- To support the nationwide roll-out, a recommended CFC indicator system and recognition methods were used by the NDRC to screen, appraise and guide the piloting process.
- In partnership with NDRC, UNICEF is supporting two policy studies: on (1) child participation mechanisms; and (2) improving children's science, technology and culture services in cities, which will lead to the development of two respective technical guides early next year.
- To address spatial inequality in urban settings, UNICEF has provided the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MoHURD) with technical inputs for developing the National Guideline on Urban Child-friendly Space, to align with global principles.
- An international seminar has been organized with MoHURD and the China Academy of Urban Planning (CAUP) to discuss strategies for getting local governments to apply the Guideline.
- A new partnership with MoHURD and CAUP was also established to further incorporate a child-friendly lens into urban development and urban regeneration processes.
- At the subnational level, UNICEF China provided capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and awareness-raising via events such as International Children's Day and World Children's Day in around 20 cities.

This relationship with cities has demonstrated the effectiveness of responsively and continuously influencing local governments' decision-making on CFCs. In the meantime, UNICEF China has strengthened cross-sectoral synergy by supporting multiple stakeholders and delivering multisectoral results for children at the city level. Sectoral projects on the urban food environment, family-friendly workplaces and social and child protection were integrated into the CFC initiative in the three cities of Chengdu, Shenzhen and Weihai.



Zhao Chen walks with his friend Wang Qingyuan in Beijing, China, on 20 July 2020. Zhao and Wang became friends in high school and have remained friends ever since due to their shared love of music.

Case Study 10: Ukraine: Crisis response

When the war began in February 2022, the Ukraine refugee crisis quickly became one of the largest in the world, with movements continuing throughout the first year of the conflict as the situation for civilians deteriorated. Over 7.9 million refugees from Ukraine, 90 per cent of them women and children, have been recorded across Europe and are struggling to make ends meet.

As the refugees clustered around major cities in host countries, UNICEF swiftly adopted a twin-track approach of working with central government and local authorities, while also partnering with a broad range of non-governmental organizations and CSOs.

UNICEF established 39 new partnerships with municipalities and local authorities in eight of Ukraine's neighbouring countries where it promoted the localization agenda (Belarus, Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Slovakia). Working with subnational systems guaranteed a holistic cross-sectoral response and ensured quicker and easier access to child protection, education, health and nutrition, WASH and social protection entitlements. These included cash benefits for refugee women and children that prioritized vulnerable children, such as Roma and children with disabilities. Working with municipalities, UNICEF integrated cross-cutting issues such as social cohesion, gender and disability, and accountability into its work with affected populations.

UNICEF prioritized linking humanitarian assistance with existing local social protection systems in the refugees' host countries. Leveraging the strengths of these systems allowed assistance programmes to achieve higher coverage, adequacy and comprehensiveness, including ownership and sustainability.

UNICEF mounted an immediate operational response at the very start of the crisis, developing tools and strengthening the capacities of several municipalities in host countries to provide cash transfers to refugee children and families. These cash transfers provided households with financial security and allowed them to make better choices to meet the needs of their children and families and cope with their enforced vulnerability.

- In **Poland**, UNICEF partnered with seven big municipalities and to support distribution of cash transfers to refugee families with children
- In **Hungary**, the evolving partnership with the municipality of Budapest enabled the cash transfer to refugee families with children
- Partnering with the municipality of Zahony, UNICEF supported the establishment of a social protection programme to help vulnerable families and children – nationals of Hungary – to cope with the soaring food and energy prices.

UNICEF's programming with local authorities includes strengthening local governance systems and building their capacity to support, integrate and address child-related issues. Doing so invests in the preparedness of local systems to effectively respond to and minimize the effects of shocks on children and families.



Ina and her daughter Pola from Sumy Oblast in Ukraine stand on a platform at the train station in Przemysł, Poland, on 27 December 2022.



Guidance Note
The Child Friendly Cities Initiative



establishes global minimum criteria that should be met before UNICEF can recognize a city or a community as child-friendly.

Following a comprehensive review of the CFCI in 2021, the programmatic objectives of the initiative were further strengthened in 107 countries in 2022, focusing on achieving better results for children and improving child well-being in participating municipalities. As well as further strengthening the CFCI recognition criteria, improved CFCI brand risk mitigation measures were put in place.

Through the implementation of the CFCI in **the Republic of Korea**, 115 local governments (out of a total of 243) were either recognized as UNICEF child-friendly cities or had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNICEF by the end of 2022. The initiative has the potential to reach 6 million children, 80 per cent of the national child population. The CFCI in the Republic of Korea has achieved the following:

- A new team dedicated to integrating children’s opinions was established within the administrative system of local governments. The CFCI served as a key driver for establishing this local coordination unit, which has dedicated personnel for all child-related policies at the local level; 105 of the 127 local governments with a coordination unit (83 per cent) were either UNICEF CFCs or had signed the Memorandum of Understanding with UNICEF.
- The CFCI encouraged municipalities to mainstream child and youth participation in their decision-making processes. Among the 103 local governments that established mechanisms for child participation, 100 were recognized CFCs or had promoted the CFCI.

These developments influenced important bottom-up changes to national policies. As a result, the 2022 ‘Children’s Project Guide’⁵⁸ developed by the Ministry of Health and Welfare recommended that local governments have one child-friendly policy team in addition to one child protection team and a ‘Dream Start’ team (a unit working to support low-income families), which should substantially increase the welfare of children in the country.

The new ‘Guidance Note: The Child Friendly Cities Initiative’ for country offices and National Committees was issued in 2022, complementing and supporting the UNICEF subnational and local governance programming framework⁵⁷ in the application and implementation of the CFCI. The new guidance strengthens the programmatic focus and results for children and



Wooyoung Song, an 18-year-old Child Council member from Naju, addresses current challenges children face in overcoming social media addiction.

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The CFCI in the Republic of Korea has also contributed to children’s enhanced awareness of child rights. One of the CFCI’s requirements is for local governments to analyse the status of children’s human rights and develop evidence-based policies to protect and realize their rights in their home territories. A comparative analysis between CFCs and non-participating cities found that children in CFCs showed a higher level of respect for human rights, a greater awareness of the CRC, and more engagement with cultural and artistic spaces than those in non-participating cities. A longitudinal study of CFCs found that, compared to 2017, the positive response rate had increased considerably in 2022, especially on issues related to child participation and education.

As part of the CFCI, the **Greece** Country Office organized and facilitated a series of consultations with nearly 600 adolescents as well as mayors, vice-mayors and municipal staff in six CFCI candidate municipalities. The consultations were combined with a presentation and interactive discussion on a child’s right to be heard and to participate in local decision-making processes.

Adolescents shared their opinions regarding the biggest challenges they face in their municipalities and put forward their recommendations on what local authorities could do to make their cities more child-friendly. UNICEF worked with 10 municipalities to set up mechanisms to effectively



A young girl in a Roma settlement in Katerini, Greece, learns about her rights as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

coordinate, monitor and report on the delivery of social services for children and their families at the local level. In 2022, five municipalities (four urban and one island) submitted action plans for integrating child priorities and committing to the systematic coordination, monitoring and delivery of social services for children and their families at the local level. An estimated 165,000 children are set to benefit from the CFCI work.

The priorities identified and included in the action plans focus on:

- Strengthening child and youth participation through municipal youth councils, capacity-building and consultations with children and youth on issues affecting them.
- Improving environmental sustainability and living conditions through educational and awareness-raising initiatives on environmental protection as well as road and traffic safety for children.
- Promoting play and recreation by operating municipal centres that offer art, music and dance for children.
- Ensuring adequate childcare and education through the operation of municipal childcare centres/nurseries and the implementation of lifelong learning programmes.
- Raising awareness on violence, abuse and bullying against children.
- Promoting children's health and well-being through the provision of psychosocial support services.

Partnerships

In 2022, UNICEF continued to enhance partnerships and engagements with other United Nations agencies such as UN-Habitat, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, UNDP and WHO, and with other global and regional local government associations such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). UNICEF works closely with UN-Habitat to strengthen data on children in urban settings and public spaces for children, and to put children's interests at the top of the slum transformation agenda. To help countries address urbanization and enable them to include and address children's issues in national urban policies, UNICEF and UN-Habitat are developing a toolkit for making national urban policies and planning standards child-responsive

UNICEF advocated for and supported the integration of child priorities in UCLG's main strategic document, 'Pact for The Future'. Active participation in the Local2030 coalition, the United Nations system-wide platform and network for supporting and accelerating the localization of

the SDGs, enabled UNICEF to make vital contributions to the coalition's strategy and action plan, ensuring children remain at the heart of the SDGs and their implementation.

Through its partnership with the Development Partners Network on Decentralisation and Local Governance (DeLoG), UNICEF participated in several events organized by the network. UNICEF presented and promoted good practices from different country offices on the role of local governments in the emergency response to Ukraine and on the good work carried out in Colombia to integrate gender issues into local governance planning priorities.

As a founding member, UNICEF remains actively involved in the Cities4Children network and heads the advocacy working group that promotes policies and approaches for CFCs.

Looking ahead

The primary focus of local governance and urban programming in 2023 will continue to be enhancing the capacity of governance systems at national, subnational and local levels to address the unique structural barriers to child well-being in rural and urban areas, as guided by the new Subnational and Local Governance Programming Framework. This includes improving data (including better intra-urban data) and the effective planning, budgeting, financing and delivery of child-sensitive social services. The application of new guidance documents will be enhanced and complemented by knowledge-sharing and other targeted activities. Peer-to-peer learning and exchange of good practices and innovative approaches are critical to enable country offices and National Committees to focus on context-specific elements and to improve their programme effectiveness. UNICEF will continue to ensure that guidance documents are tailored to different contexts; identify policy solutions that work for whole territories; and enhance accountability mechanisms for children, adolescents, parents, caregivers and communities to participate in and support responsive, inclusive and participatory decision-making. Special emphasis will be placed on further enhancing the role of local governments in humanitarian responses and emergencies, building on the good practices and lessons learned from Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Integrating key global trends into local governance programming, such as climate action and gender mainstreaming, will also be prioritized as part of the Local2030 agenda and localization of the SDGs.

Clean and green public spaces are essential for children's development. UNICEF, in collaboration with WHO and UN-Habitat, is finalizing guidance to develop public spaces for children. Countries and cities around the world will find this guidance useful in developing clean and accessible public spaces for children, especially in densely populated urban areas, and positively impacting the overall well-being of children.

With rapid urbanization and increasing informality – the number of children living in slums and informal settlements is expected to triple by 2030 – the focus on urban programming will be expanded to better integrate the issues of children living in slums into urban policies and planning standards. The goal is to strengthen the ability of complex urban governance systems to respond to the needs of the most deprived and excluded urban children. UNICEF will be working with UN-Habitat and other partners to ensure that children's issues are addressed in the Global Implementation Framework for slums. Sectoral priorities in urban areas include: (1) strengthening birth registration systems; (2) Improving social protection for children; (3) addressing the vaccination gap; and (4) city-wide inclusive sanitation in poor urban areas, including in slums and informal settlements.



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Working across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus

A cashier counts money for a social cash transfer beneficiary in Kwataine, Malawi, on 4 April 2022.

UNICEF is uniquely placed to support vulnerable families before, during and after crises. UNICEF leverages its long-standing expertise in building social protection systems and ensuring they are able to prepare and effectively deliver humanitarian cash in an emergency, while also delivering cash directly when national systems are compromised. This comprehensive offer harnesses UNICEF's technical, operational and partnership capacity and expertise in delivering across its dual humanitarian and development mandate and the CCCs. Through this comprehensive offer, UNICEF addresses the financial barriers for children and households to access essential services, cover their humanitarian needs and contribute to managing risks, while also continuing to enhance the overall resilience of households, families and communities.

Given UNICEF's dual mandate, the organization is uniquely placed to engage with a variety of actors on building social protection systems, including governments, local partners, United Nations agencies, development partners, and humanitarian coordination structures such as cash working groups and the cluster system. In addition, UNICEF also leverages its work across sectors to effectively link cash-

based responses with critical services and effectively address the multiple needs of vulnerable children and their families as part of effective humanitarian action.

The comprehensive offer strengthens both national and UNICEF systems to be prepared and agile for all stages of humanitarian action, and identifies which approach or combination of approaches is best used in a specific context. It follows three approaches:

- UNICEF's first choice, where systems are ready and aligned with humanitarian principles, is to support governments in delivering a humanitarian cash response and enable access to services through government systems.
- In instances where national systems cannot be used in full, UNICEF will take a mixed approach that uses parts of the national system.
- When the national system cannot be used in full or in part, UNICEF will implement a fully operational system to deliver a humanitarian cash-based response.

Results achieved and challenges to working across the nexus

UNICEF's work in preparedness is a key enabler of its comprehensive approach to building the readiness of the organization and national social protection systems to deliver HCTs in crisis. It supports the development of both government and UNICEF systems to ensure their readiness to respond to crises. Based on these foundations of preparedness, when delivery is necessary, UNICEF's comprehensive offer uses a predictable and rapid decision-making process to determine the best approach in the given context. This approach enables UNICEF to live up to its CCCs in humanitarian contexts.

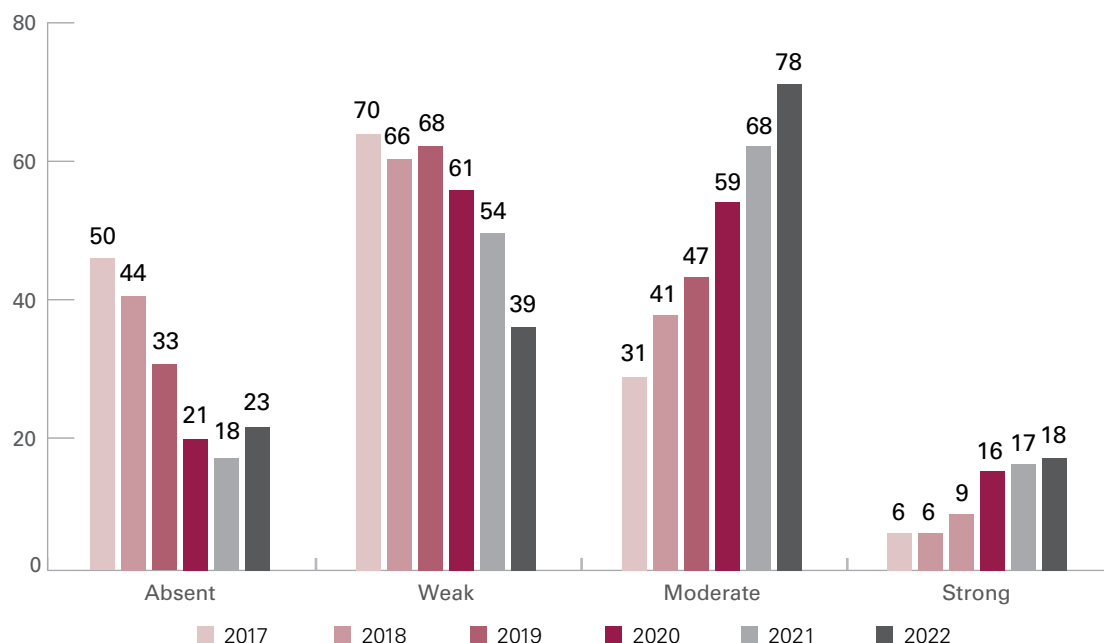
Strengthening the shock-responsiveness of national systems

The sector-level commitments for social protection in the UNICEF CCCs underpin many of UNICEF's efforts to build the capacity of national systems. UNICEF developed a resource pack in 2022 to support the operationalization of the CCCs. This included operational guidance notes on strengthening coordination with humanitarian cash working groups, embedding inclusion in social protection responses, planning, designing and resourcing social protection responses and leveraging delivery systems.

These resources – as well as our growing experience in this area – have allowed for increased technical support and engagement in countries. For example, since 2017, UNICEF has helped multiple governments to strengthen and prepare their social protection systems to support the needs of crisis-affected children, with encouraging results. The positive trend in social protection systems that are ready and able to respond in times of crisis continued in 2022: the number of countries with nascent/low readiness to respond to crises fell to 39 in 2022 from 54 in 2021, whereas the number of countries with moderate readiness grew from 68 to 78 over the same period. Despite a steady increase in the number of countries with strong readiness, progress was slower in 2022. This means that, while the number of countries increased from 17 to 18, this did not meet the 2022 target of 20 countries with strong shock-responsive systems. This reflects the challenges in strengthening the shock-responsiveness of social protection systems – and the critical need to continue working in this area.

Assessing the readiness of current systems and strengthening policies to respond has been a critical part of UNICEF's work on shock-responsive social protection. In **Azerbaijan**, for example, UNICEF helped the government to conduct a rapid assessment of the readiness of the social protection system. The assessment recommended strengthening the design of the targeting

FIGURE 12: Trends in the number of countries with national cash transfer programmes that are ready to respond to crises



Source: UNICEF Goal Area 5 Core Standard Indicators (2022).⁵⁹

system; organizing a multi-stakeholder process to develop a typology of shocks; conducting feasibility for a ‘virtual social registry’; and exploring the interest in setting up an early warning system for climate-related risks and linking it to social policy interventions. Similarly, in the **State of Palestine**, UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Social Development to assess the shock-responsiveness of the social protection system, identify gaps and develop an action plan. This complemented the ongoing efforts of UNICEF, ILO and WFP to harmonize social protection systems with humanitarian cash actions in the country. In **Côte d’Ivoire**, UNICEF leveraged its role as lead of the development partners’ working group on social protection and co-lead of the cash-transfer working group, to engage in policy dialogue for developing a new, child-sensitive, inclusive and shock-responsive social protection strategy.

Establishing the basic building blocks of a shock-responsive social protection system is a crucial area of work to ready systems. For example, UNICEF has been supporting the Government of **Somalia** to establish the building blocks of a shock-responsive system. As part of this process, Unified Social Registry (USR) software was developed and installed at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Progress was also made in completing the guidelines for the USR, the Baxnaano (national safety net) programme manual and data protection guidance. In addition, an MIS is under development and scheduled for completion in February 2023. In **the Cook Islands and Niue**, UNICEF supported the development and deployment of the social protection MISs, which are expected to provide reliable

and timely data to inform social protection interventions in future crises. On similar lines, UNICEF supported the development of a computerized MIS for the USR in **the Republic of Cameroon** (as described in the section ‘Strengthening Social Protection Systems’, above).

In **Nepal**, UNICEF led inter-agency efforts to develop a Joint Humanitarian Cash Programming Framework. This innovative mechanism brings together government and humanitarian agencies to align aid delivery with local needs, while creating synergistic opportunities that benefit both communities and local government alike. This coordination mechanism is expected to support better coordination and implementation of HCTs in the country. Playing a convening role in **Libya**, UNICEF supported the finalization of the Cash and Markets Working Group’s strategy, ‘Linkages Between Cash Assistance and Social Protection’, and successfully advocated for aligning the strategy with the national social protection system.

Another critical part of UNICEF’s work on inclusive and shock-responsive social protection is to facilitate displaced and migrant populations’ access to social protection. In Colombia, UNICEF supported the regularization process for Venezuelan migrants through the Temporary Protection Statute, which has seen 1.6 million Venezuelans issued with identity cards. UNICEF also supported the enrolment in the national social protection system of migrant households intending to settle in Colombia. These activities were complemented by research on sociocultural barriers that affect the social inclusion of migrants and consequently affect the supply side of social services.

Case Study 11: The Philippines: Anticipatory cash transfers through the national social protection system



In the Philippines, UNICEF is part of an innovative pilot, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), that seeks to scale up the quality and quantity of collective anticipatory humanitarian action for people at risk of a forecast Category 4 Typhoon (more than 200 km/h winds near the centre). The pilot covers highly vulnerable municipalities in Bicol Region and Eastern Visayas, with the aim of reaching 250,000 people through multisectoral interventions with support from the Central Emergency Response Fund.

The pilot has not yet been activated, as the triggers and thresholds have not been met in the defined geographical areas. This has led to a project extension of two years, until 2024. If activated, UNICEF will provide an unconditional cash top-up to around 22,000 4Ps households, including 66,000 children, in the target areas three days before the predicted landfall – consistent with the principles of anticipatory action. The benefit will be worth PHP1,000 (US\$20) per family, calculated as 30 per cent of children’s estimated minimum expenditure basket for nutrition, education, WASH and child protection services.

UNICEF is building on its experience of pioneering shock-responsive social protection during Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, together with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Through the 4Ps initiative it is demonstrating, once again, the feasibility of using national social protection schemes to channel emergency disaster responses – this time before the event.

Considering the absence of an enabling policy within DSWD for anticipatory action in terms of disaster risk financing and funds management, UNICEF will adopt the same arrangements that DSWD has in place for its unconditional cash transfer, whereby funds are directly deposited with LandBank (the national central bank). DSWD is responsible for advising LandBank when to transfer the funds to 4Ps beneficiary accounts, with subsequent confirmation from UNICEF to Landbank.

Beyond the immediate objective of the pilot, the lessons learned from the key preparedness activities have contributed to UNICEF’s work on systems-building and policy development. For instance, UNICEF is drafting the DSWD Anticipatory Cash Transfers Guidelines, and incorporating lessons learned from developing the tripartite Memorandum of Understanding and data-sharing agreement between UNICEF, DSWD and LandBank and two simulation exercises used in target provinces to test the readiness of the systems.



A child walks through debris caused by Typhoon Bopha in the town of Cateel in the Philippines.

Strengthening UNICEF's readiness to deliver directly

As the comprehensive approach highlights, government systems can sometimes be compromised or not fully functional during a crisis, even where preparedness efforts have been made. In such circumstances, UNICEF must be ready to deliver directly – and to use its response to link to and/or support the building of nascent systems wherever possible. Significant progress was made in 2022 towards building this capacity. One crucial mechanism UNICEF undertook was the implementation of an inter-divisional approach to HCT programming, bringing programme and operations staff together to make UNICEF better able to implement HCT programmes on the ground. This coordinated approach is required to implement country-level HCT programmes at scale, and it calls for coordinated efforts at headquarters and regional levels across operational and programmatic areas of work. These efforts have resulted in the development of a global digital solution, the Humanitarian cash Operational and Programmatic Ecosystem (HOPE), to manage beneficiary data for country offices to use systematically when no government beneficiary management system is available. It has also translated into the continued strengthening and dissemination of the programmatic and operational frameworks, guidance and tools required for country offices to deliver cash transfers in a timely and risk-informed manner.

UNICEF has also invested significant efforts in strengthening its capacity to deliver cash payments directly to vulnerable households as well as front-line workers, teachers and health-care workers. To that end, implementing a programme management unit (PMU) structure has proven successful for UNICEF country offices to deliver at scale and in a risk-informed manner, especially in contexts where UNICEF is directly accountable for overall implementation. The PMU in **Afghanistan**, for example, is currently managing payments for five HCT programmes, including a regular cash transfer programme, an HCT programme for winterization, an HCT programme for nutrition, a cash grant focused on child protection, and a cash incentive programme for teachers across the country.

Key actions taken in 2022 to strengthen UNICEF's operational capacity to implement timely and risk-informed HCT programmes include the provision of in-country and remote technical and operational support in all of the largest emergencies – Afghanistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, the Sudan and Ukraine – to either start and/or scale up HCT programmes. In addition, UNICEF trained over 230 programmatic and operational staff from 34 country offices, including 3 regional offices, on the management and implementation of HCT programmes.

UNICEF scaled up its beneficiary data management system, HOPE, to an additional nine countries: Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, the Philippines, Slovakia, the Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ukraine. Since its launch in 2021, the system is currently being deployed in 13 countries across

all regions. In **Slovakia**, HOPE has been deployed as part of the HCT programme to support Ukrainian refugees entering Slovakia, registering and issuing nearly 70,000 payments to approximately 34,000 families. In **Kenya**, the HOPE system has been deployed as part of a national pilot programme to address child malnutrition and violence against children by combining cash transfers with community empowerment. HOPE was also deployed in **the Philippines** as part of the response to Typhoon Rai, which hit the country in December 2021. And in **Sri Lanka**, HOPE is being used as part of an HCT programme to help some of the poorest children thrive, with a focus on their first 1,000 days of life. Despite UNICEF's significant efforts to scale up the use of cash in humanitarian assistance, there are still areas that require additional investments to address operational challenges.

Delivering cash-based support across the nexus

Over the course of 2022, UNICEF significantly scaled up the use of HCTs in emergency responses (including Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies), either directly via systems or via hybrid approaches, exceeding its targets for the year. Overall, UNICEF reached an estimated 2.8 million households in 43 countries. Through the direct application of the UNICEF comprehensive offer, 282,000 of these households (10 per cent) were reached using existing national social protection programmes in 10 countries,⁶⁰ while around 2.5 million households were reached using UNICEF delivery systems that aligned with or reused at least one element of an existing social protection system. UNICEF's mixed approach to delivering HCTs was used in 11 countries, namely Armenia, Bangladesh, Kenya, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, the State of Palestine, the Sudan, Türkiye, Ukraine, Yemen and Zimbabwe, while it deployed a fully operational system to deliver HCT-based responses in 24 countries.⁶¹ The number of UNICEF country offices using HCTs has increased significantly in the last five years, from 16 countries in 2017 to 43 countries in 2022, having peaked at 71 countries in 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall volume of payments to UNICEF partners for cash-based assistance increased significantly to US\$725 million over the course of the year.

UNICEF's use of HCTs remains mostly focused on addressing basic humanitarian needs across sectors, including through rapid response mechanisms. Second to this, it is also designed to accelerate results in education and nutrition.

Numerous examples show UNICEF's continued ability to support delivery through national systems. In Eastern and Central Europe, UNICEF played a critical role in influencing and shaping the social protection response to support those impacted by the unprecedented scale of displacement resulting from the war in Ukraine. HCTs formed a key part of this response in **the Republic**

of Moldova, Slovakia and Ukraine (see Case Study 13). Following a phased approach – starting with giving multipurpose emergency cash grants to refugee and host families for two months and subsequently transitioning to a safety net for refugees – the UNICEF team in the Republic of Moldova worked closely with the government to deliver HCTs to 61,000 households through a mixed system. These efforts were complemented by protocols for shock-responsive social protection systems, capacity-building of the government for applying these protocols, and strengthening of the Social Assistance Automatic Information System for online self-enrolment by beneficiaries.

The massive internal displacement caused by conflict, drought and floods has resulted in a proliferation of camps for internally displaced persons and an increase in the number of internally displaced persons in host communities in **Ethiopia**. Working in partnership with the government, UNICEF supported the establishment of an HCT programme that benefited 120,000 internally displaced households with life-saving and recovery-promoting support through the government system in six regions. In **Mongolia**, the joint programme on shock-responsive social protection implemented by ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United

Nations (FAO) contributed to a 5 per cent increase in social and health insurance coverage among herders at the national level, according to the General Authority for Social Insurance.

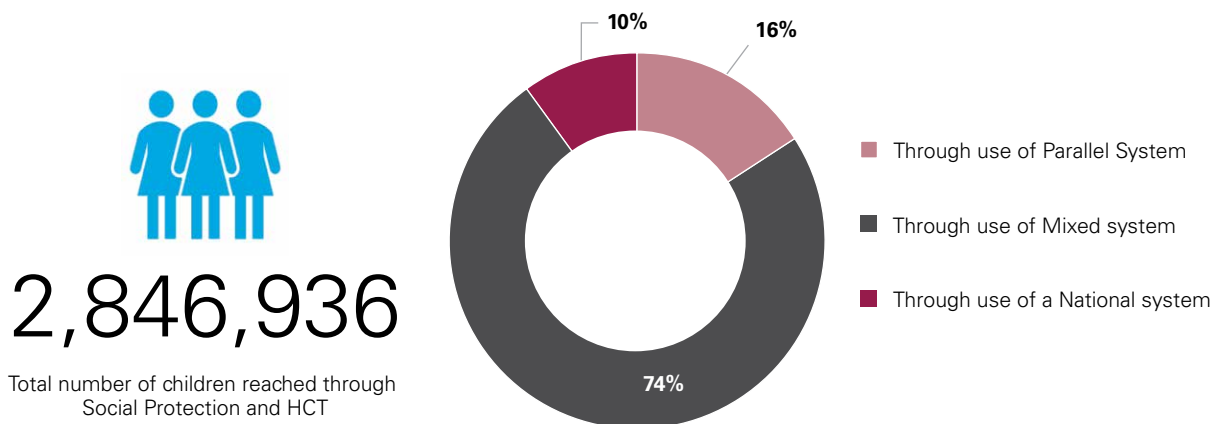
For the past year and a half, UNICEF has been implementing the Haddi integrated child grant programme in **Lebanon**, which offers beneficiaries access to a holistic set of services. An impact evaluation of the programme conducted in 2022 highlighted the positive impact the cash programme has had on the lives of children, improving food security, spending on basic services, and support and care. It also found that the programme has helped to cushion the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable households by increasing total household spending, specifically on education and clothing for children. Additionally, it found that beneficiary households were 20 per cent less likely than non-beneficiary households to borrow money to meet their consumption needs. Haddi beneficiaries were also around 14 per cent less likely to reduce either the size or number of their meals due to a shortage of food or money. They were also more likely to restrict adult consumption in favour of children. UNICEF is leveraging these findings to influence other cash programmes planned and supported by social protection stakeholders.



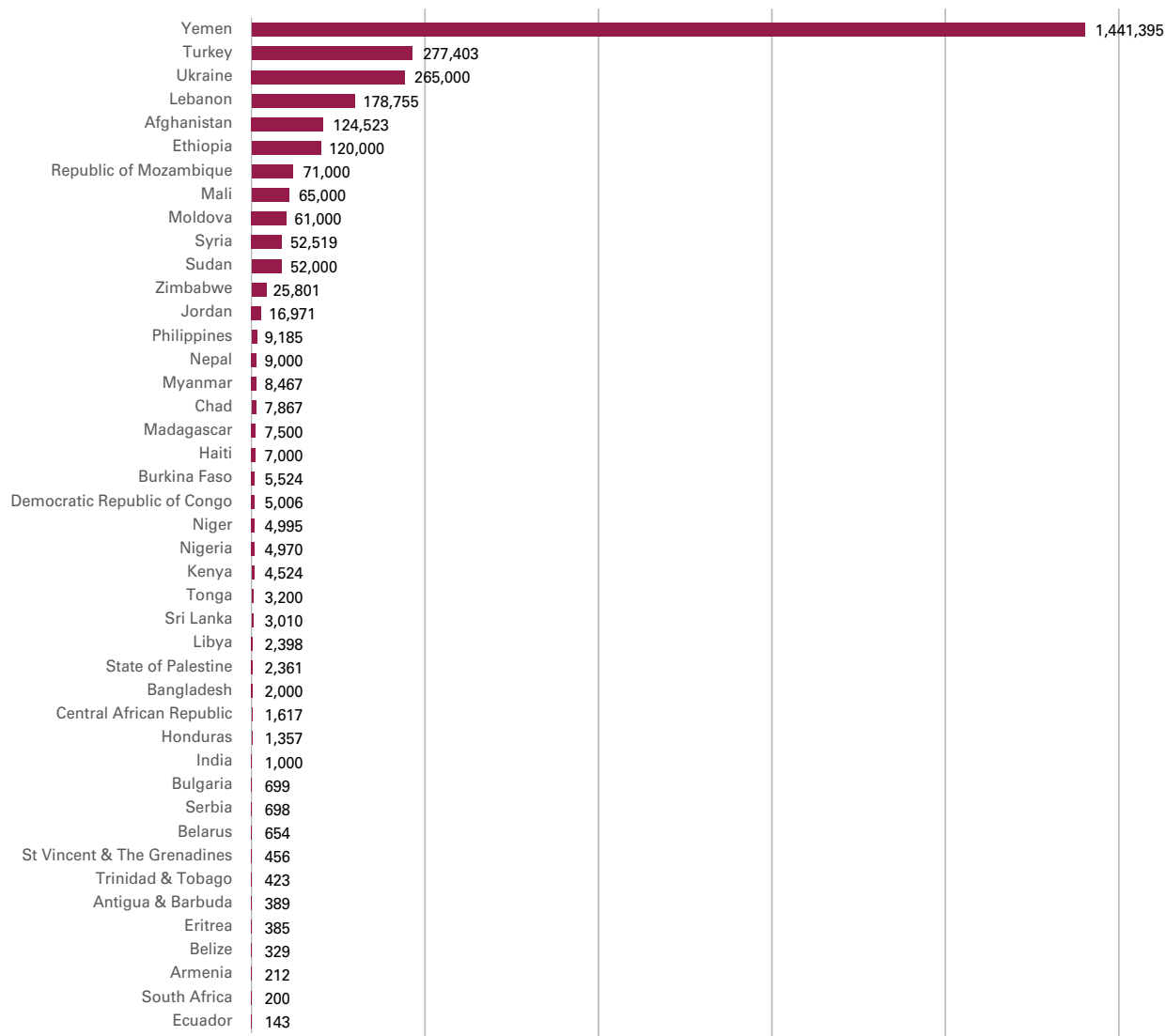
Sindi Damaras, a 14 years old girl, with her best friend Hawa, at the child friendly space of the site of Ngueli, in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad.

FIGURE 13: HCT households reached, by type of assistance and by country 2022

Social Protection and HCT beneficiaries reached



Social Protection and HCT beneficiaries by country



Source: UNICEF Core Standard Indicators (2022).⁶²

Case Study 12: Türkiye: Transitioning large-scale HCTs to a government system

Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) is a national social assistance programme that is implemented by the Ministry of Family and Social Services to encourage children's enrolment and regular attendance in school. Poor households receive cash transfers in return for their children's regular attendance in school, with transfer values based on the student's age, gender and grade.

In 2017, UNICEF supported the extension of the CCTE to school-age refugee children residing in Türkiye under temporary/international protection, with support from the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations and in partnership with the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the Ministry of National Education and the Turkish Red Crescent. This cash programme replicated the design of the national CCTE programme with a few adjustments. As refugee households face multiple barriers to regular school attendance, a 'cash plus' approach was introduced by UNICEF to further enhance the programme's impact. This included a strategic child protection component to ensure the continued school enrolment and attendance of the most vulnerable refugee children, as well as their referral to child protection services. The programme leveraged the information system of the social protection system to deliver cash assistance to refugee households.

In line with UNICEF's commitment to implementing cash transfers in ways that build and strengthen social protection system, the CCTE was fully transferred to the Ministry of Family and Social Services in December 2022. This move is expected to support the inclusion of refugees in the social protection system and to ensure sustainable support to beneficiaries. At the time of transitioning, the programme had surpassed its original target of 700,000 children to reach more than 810,000 school-aged refugee children with cash transfers (half of them girls) and approximately 172,000 with child protection support.



Siblings from Idlib in the Syrian Arab Republic join in with activities at a community centre supported by the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) programme in Türkiye on 23 October 2017.

Case Study 13: Ukraine: Supporting conflict-affected families

Since the start of 2022, UNICEF has been providing innovative support to address the humanitarian needs arising from the war in Ukraine. It is estimated that 17.7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, and that 5.4 million people have been internally displaced. The impacts on women and children have been disproportionate; at least two thirds of children have been displaced, and 90 per cent of the 8 million refugees are women and children.

A key pillar of UNICEF's humanitarian response to address this is the provision of cash transfers to crisis-affected households with children, to support them in meeting their essential needs in a dignified and flexible way. Given UNICEF's presence in Ukraine before the war, the organization was able to leverage its existing relationship with the government and reach an agreement for UNICEF's HCT programme to target families inside Ukraine with young children and/or children with disabilities. Towards the end of the year, this coverage was expanded to include an additional 600 foster families.

Jointly with the Ministry of Social Policy, UNICEF undertook a quick assessment of the existing social protection programmes in the country to evaluate possibilities for horizontal and vertical expansion. As a result, the existing national beneficiary list and the government call centre for grievance management were used and complemented with a parallel cash delivery system managed by UNICEF, to ensure timely delivery across the country.

For nimble implementation of the programme, UNICEF deployed its beneficiary data management system tool, HOPE, which provides a safe and risk-informed approach to managing sensitive data for HCT programmes. HOPE's registration module had an existing in-person registration mechanism, which needed to be switched to an online, self-registration module to ensure safe access to the programme in the context of active conflict. UNICEF quickly developed this online registration platform, making it accessible to recipient families on 1 March 2022, just over a month into the war.

Once the online registration module was available, recipient families could register for UNICEF cash assistance directly through a computer, tablet or mobile phone; families without access to a digital device were helped by a programme partner to register online. This new application system allowed for the daily management of individual data to be processed and cleaned in real time, allowing for 13,000 applications to be submitted on the first day of the launch, 145,000 applications in April, and 232,000 applications in May. Overall, between 30 March and 30 September 2022, a total of 677,433 applications were received.

To pay recipient households, UNICEF leveraged its existing agreement with the house bank to deliver cash transfers directly into individuals' bank accounts. In addition, an existing United Nations agreement between UNHCR and the national post office system was leveraged to facilitate the payment of families without access to a bank account. Under this system, UNICEF worked directly with national post offices to ensure the reach of all beneficiaries across the country. By early May 2022, UNICEF was making payments to households in all 25 oblasts of Ukraine, including the hardest-to-reach oblasts such as Donetsk, Kherson and Luhansk.



Mykyta, 8, sits at his new desk on 29 May 2022, having been internally displaced by fighting in Mariupol.

Over the course of the year, UNICEF rolled out two payment cycles reaching 267,575 households in total, including 599,723 children; 83 per cent of those reached were women and children. The government, jointly with the in-country Cash Working Group, set the transfer value at US\$60 per individual per month, for a period of three months. This resulted in households receiving an average of US\$900 per household over the course of the year, with some households receiving US\$1,800 over a period of six months. Results from the post-distribution monitoring report that the multipurpose cash assistance positively affected households' expenditure on children's needs, and almost 9 out of 10 beneficiaries reported that the cash assistance allowed them to access goods and services for their children that otherwise would not have been accessible. Key child-related expenses for households included psychosocial support, health-related services and nutritious, diversified food.

Partnerships

UNICEF maintained its efforts to influence global policy at international forums and to convene stakeholders across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus to elevate the role of social protection in humanitarian and fragile contexts. This included partnering with the World Bank to facilitate a three-day, in-person dialogue on building shock-responsive social protection for the Anglophone Africa Community of Practice on Cash Transfers in Zambia, and partnering with the World Bank and UNHCR to organize a technical session on social protection at the World Fragility Forum. UNICEF also leveraged the scale of the 2022 G20 summit in Bali to organize a side event on adaptive social protection in partnership with the Government of Indonesia and the World Bank, and worked closely with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and other partners to elevate the role of social protection in DRR via a high-level technical session at the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction. Additionally, UNICEF continued to collaborate with the World Bank and WFP on system diagnostics and other studies to further the adaptive social protection agenda in West Africa.

As co-lead of the SPIAC-B working group on linking humanitarian cash assistance with social protection, UNICEF has continued to strengthen key partnerships

within the sector. The working group includes more than 30 agencies representing donors, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. As part of this work, UNICEF has rolled out webinars on practical ways to link humanitarian actors with social protection in different operating contexts, and hosted a learning event in Türkiye where group members saw two flagship programmes in action, the Social Safety Net and CCTE.

UNICEF has remained a key player in the Cash Coordination Caucus facilitated by the Norwegian Refugee Council, bringing together key stakeholders such as UNHCR, WFP, OCHA, the Cash Learning Partnership, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, CashCap, the Alliance for Empowering Partnerships, the Collaborative Cash Delivery Network and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as a donor cash forum made up of ECHO and USAID. Throughout the year, UNICEF has participated in developing the Cash Advisory Group transition plan to implement the new Cash Coordination Model endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in early 2022. This transition plan provides targeted support for national cash working groups to support the implementation of the new model in their respective countries.

Looking ahead

UNICEF has made significant progress in strengthening resilient and shock-responsive social protection systems and strengthening its own capacity to directly support the delivery of HCT programmes. However, demands in this area of work are clearly growing. UNICEF analysis suggests that the range of crises facing children will persist, with ongoing economic challenges and the cost-of-living crisis, geopolitical strains and conflicts unlikely to be resolved in the near future. The context of the growing climate emergency makes these challenges even more daunting. Currently, 1 in 23 people globally are in need of humanitarian assistance⁶³ – and expectations are that humanitarian emergencies will remain commonplace, become increasingly protracted and could even continue to rise.

Strengthening the capacity of social protection systems to prevent shocks from transitioning into crisis, enhancing their ability to support children and their families when they are faced with a humanitarian crisis and to help them recover and build resilience in the long term, will continue to be a core part of UNICEF’s work on social protection in humanitarian and fragile contexts. UNICEF will further strengthen its efforts to prepare social protection systems

in countries and leverage HCT programmes to build nascent social protection systems where they do not exist or are weak. To complement these ongoing efforts in countries, UNICEF will invest in building evidence to fill knowledge gaps and leverage existing platforms such as the SPIAC-B working group on linking humanitarian (cash) assistance and social protection for dissemination.

UNICEF has many advantages in delivering for children in these complex times, including its presence across multiple contexts and growing experience of both systems-building and the direct delivery of cash transfers. UNICEF will continue to prioritize leveraging its critical role and field presence to close the coverage gap of social protection for children and families and to increase the readiness of government and UNICEF systems to respond.

UNICEF will focus on strengthening its operational capacity by systematically equipping country offices globally to strengthen social protection systems and deliver HCTs in fragile and humanitarian contexts. UNICEF’s global HCT training strategy will continue to strengthen the capacity of UNICEF staff to implement and manage HCT programmes on the ground. This strategy will be

strengthened in 2023 with the pilot of UNICEF's first training for private sector service providers that support the implementation of UNICEF's HCT programmes. In addition, UNICEF will host its first government workshop on the use of HCTs through national systems, which will inform a broader training strategy for governments to build

shock-responsive social protection systems. Also important will be the institutionalization of UNICEF's beneficiary data management system, HOPE. Ensuring HOPE is deployed as a preparedness measure has been identified as a key enabler to strengthen UNICEF's response capacity, contributing to better results for children on the ground.



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Naibobou, four-years-old, who plays energetically with his older sister in their open air 'maneaba' home. He is the youngest child of Kakoroa, a Kiribati public health nurse supported by UNICEF.



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Moving forward with Goal Area 5: Every child has access to inclusive social protection and lives free from poverty

Five-year-old orphan Mykyta embraces a Yorkshire terrier in Uhryniv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, on 17 December 2022, having been forced to evacuate his home in Mariupol.

As UNICEF moves into the second year of its new Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, elevating the critical importance of reducing child poverty remains essential as a pillar for accelerating progress across all SDGs, in all contexts. UNICEF will continue to expand support for the measurement of child poverty so that the impact on child poverty of the current crises is visible and prioritized, while also ensuring that global-, regional- and country-level data analysis and advocacy efforts can effectively lead to policies and programmes to reduce child poverty. Eliminating child poverty needs to be at the centre of critical efforts to realize and protect children’s rights, across regions and contexts. The goal is for child evidence and advocacy to have led to policies and programmes to reduce child poverty in 69 countries by 2030 (up from 38 countries in 2022 and just 19 countries in 2017). UNICEF will continue to reduce child poverty through partnerships and programmes that generate data on monetary and multidimensional child poverty and translate evidence into action, driving policies and programmes with the potential to help children live free from poverty. This includes expanding the coverage of child-sensitive social protection programmes and improving access to quality social services.

Goal Area 5 will continue to call for social protection systems that are gender-transformative, disability-inclusive, resilient and shock-responsive. To achieve this, UNICEF will strengthen its own operational capacity – its ability to both strengthen and enhance government systems and deliver HCTs directly in fragile and humanitarian contexts. The UNICEF comprehensive offer in fragile and humanitarian contexts will further enhance UNICEF’s ability to support effective preparedness and action in these contexts, strengthening systems while also ensuring efficient, timely and impactful cash-based responses using government, parallel or mixed approaches that help to bolster government systems in the longer term. UNICEF will continue to expand in its dual development and humanitarian mandate and its CCCs, while also leveraging its position and presence to close the social protection gap for families and children and increase the readiness of both state and UNICEF systems to respond.

Climate change is compounding the effects of other crises across the world, with a particular impact in low- and middle-income countries. In 2022, UNICEF generated evidence on climate financing, as published by the Social Spending Monitor,⁶⁴ that has led to key recommendations for adaptive and resilient social services. These recommendations will form the basis of a road map for working with governments and international partners to put children at the centre of climate finance initiatives. Moreover, given the crucial role of social protection in addressing these immediate and future challenges, it remains as a central strategic pillar for UNICEF’s work.

To achieve results in Goal Area 5, UNICEF needs to continue enhancing its capacity to leverage domestic financing, and engaging in critical partnerships with IFIs, United Nations agencies, civil society and private sectors, to further expand financing for social services

– and to navigate the nuances of this. Increased efforts will be required to make SDG 1.b.1 on pro-poor public social spending a reality. This will involve not only generating evidence but also providing technical support to governments for the equitable allocation of public resources across income groups and geographic locations, ensuring it is tailored to the needs of the most disadvantaged children. Partnerships will remain key to this work.

Local governance and urban programming will continue to enhance the capacity of governance systems to remove the structural barriers to child well-being in urban areas. UNICEF will continue its technical support to country offices and National Committees on effective programming and tailoring approaches to different contexts, including in emergency situations and humanitarian crises. Guidance on local governance and urban programming will also identify policy solutions that work for whole territories and enhance accountability mechanisms for responsive, inclusive and participatory decision-making. The role of local governments in humanitarian responses and emergencies will also be enhanced, building on the experiences of Ukraine, and key global trends will be integrated into local governance programming (such as climate action and gender mainstreaming), as part of the Local2030 agenda and localization of the SDGs.

With rapid urbanization trends and increasing informality, the focus on urban programming will expand, with the objective of better integrating the issues of children in slums into urban policies and planning standards and strengthening complex urban governance systems to respond to the needs of the most deprived and excluded urban children. UNICEF will work with UN-Habitat and other partners to ensure that children’s issues are addressed in the Global Slum Action Plan Implementation Framework.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CCCs	Core Commitments for Children	INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework
CCTE	Conditional Cash Transfer for Education	LGBTQI+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019	MIS	Management Information System
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	PF4C	Public Finance for Children
CSO	civil society organization	PFM	Public Financial Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ECD	early childhood development	UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
EU	European Union	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
GDP	gross domestic product	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
HCT	humanitarian cash transfer	USP2030	Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals
HOPE	Humanitarian cash Operational and Programmatic Ecosystem	WFP	World Food Programme
IFI	International Financial Institution	4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program
ILO	International Labour Organization		
IMF	International Monetary Fund		

Annex: Financial Report

Contributions received for Goal Area 5 in 2022

In 2022, partners contributed US\$77 million to Goal Area 5⁶⁵ – a 50 per cent decrease compared to 2021. Public sector partners contributed the largest share of ‘other resources – regular’ to Goal Area 5, at 92 per cent (see Figure A1-3). The top five partners to Goal Area 5 in

2022 were the Government of Germany, the European Commission, the United Nations Joint Programme, the Government of Canada and the Danish Committee for UNICEF (see Figure A1-1).⁶⁶

FIGURE A1-1: Top 20 resource partners to Goal Area 5 by total contributions in US\$

Rank	Resource partner	2022
1	Germany	26,652,452
2	European Commission	12,878,596
3	United Nations Joint Programme	12,412,191
4	Canada	3,976,324
5	Danish Committee for UNICEF	3,494,884
6	International Labour Organization (ILO)	2,690,750
7	United Nations Development Group joint programmes	2,436,792
8	Somalia ⁱ	2,193,398
9	Democratic Republic of the Congo ⁱⁱ	2,021,102
10	United States of America	1,278,936
11	Sweden	1,270,192
12	Republic of Korea (the)	952,376
13	Japan Committee for UNICEF	910,806
14	Italy	775,556
15	United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF	638,853
16	Ireland	497,038
17	Australia	363,543
18	United States Fund for UNICEF	293,703
19	UNICEF Egypt	257,233
20	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	200,000

ⁱ Contributions received from Somalia include \$2.2 million related to the World Bank Group.

ⁱⁱ Contributions received from the Democratic Republic of the Congo include \$2.0 million related to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

FIGURE A1-2: GOAL AREA 5 'OTHER RESOURCES – REGULAR' CONTRIBUTIONS, 2014–2022

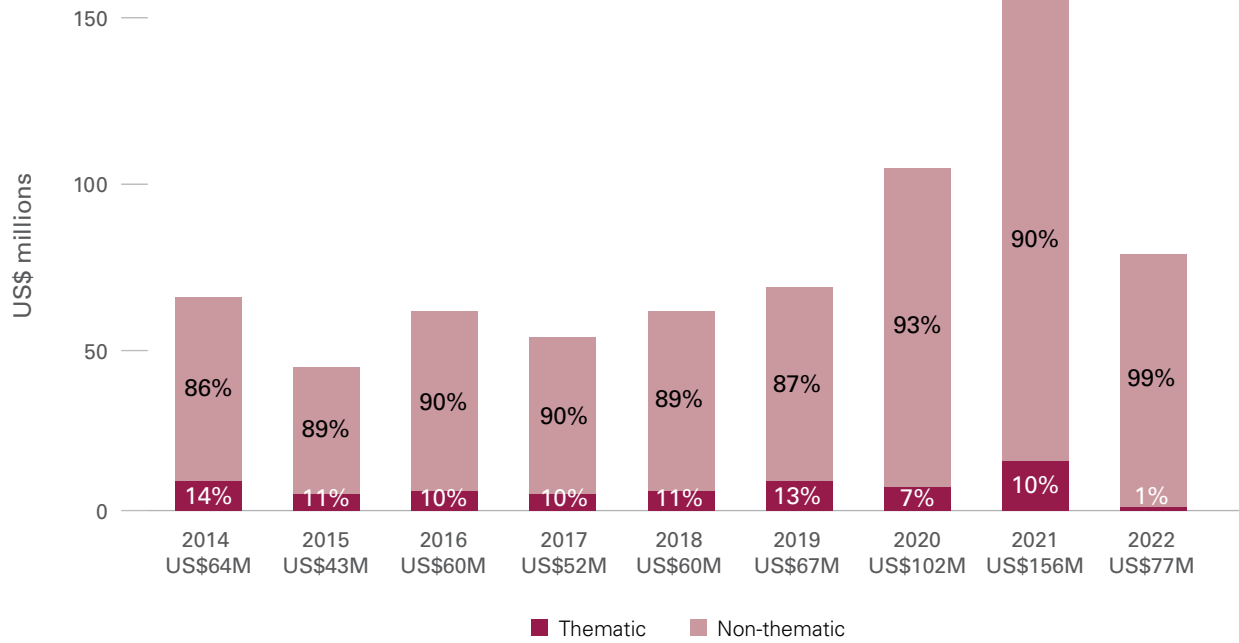
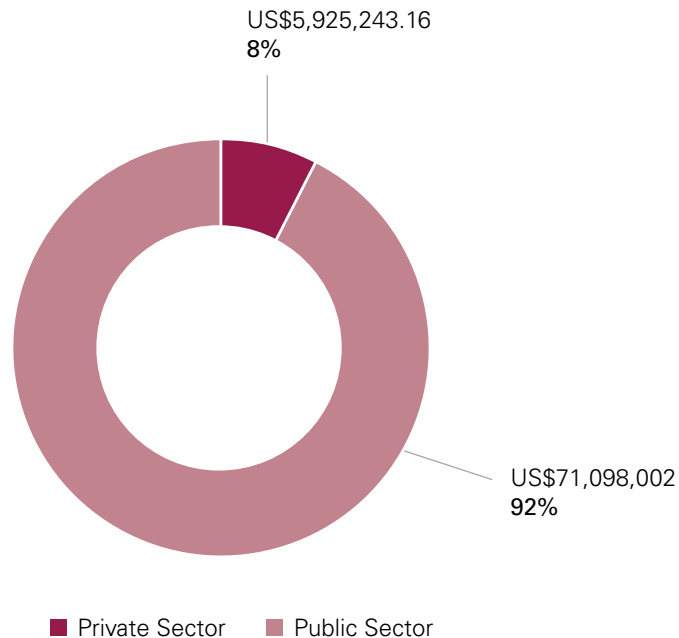


FIGURE A1-3: Total Goal Area 5 funds received by type of resource partner, 2022



UNICEF thematic funds maintain a four-year funding period that covers the entire Strategic Plan, 2022–2025. From 2018, after Norway, the Government of Spain has contributed the largest amount to the social policy and social protection global thematic funding pool (see Figure A1-4). After regular resources, these are the most flexible sources of funding to UNICEF and can be allocated at the headquarters, regional or individual country level.

Only 21 per cent of all thematic social policy and social protection contributions received by UNICEF in 2018–2022 were global-level contributions, and the remaining were raised at country level (see Figure A1-5). Thematic funding contributions for social protection and social policy in 2022 (at all global, regional and country levels) were around US\$530,000.

FIGURE A1-4: Spotlight on global social policy and social protection global thematic funding contributions, 2018–2022

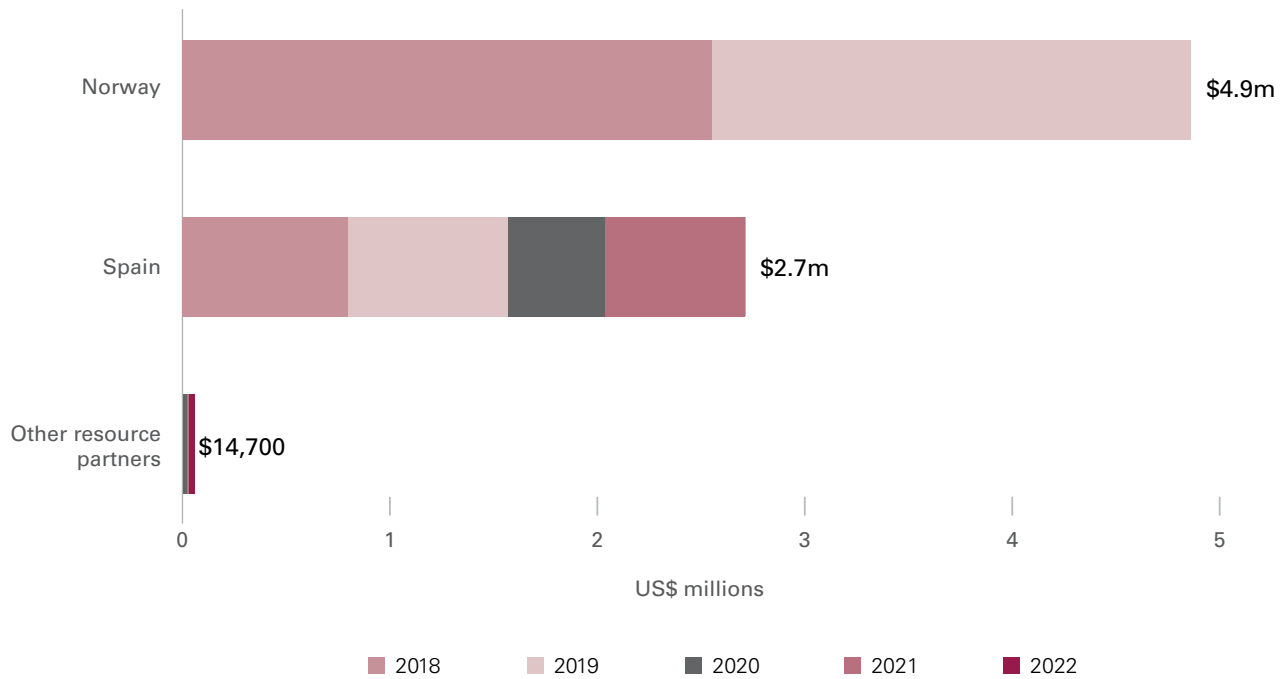
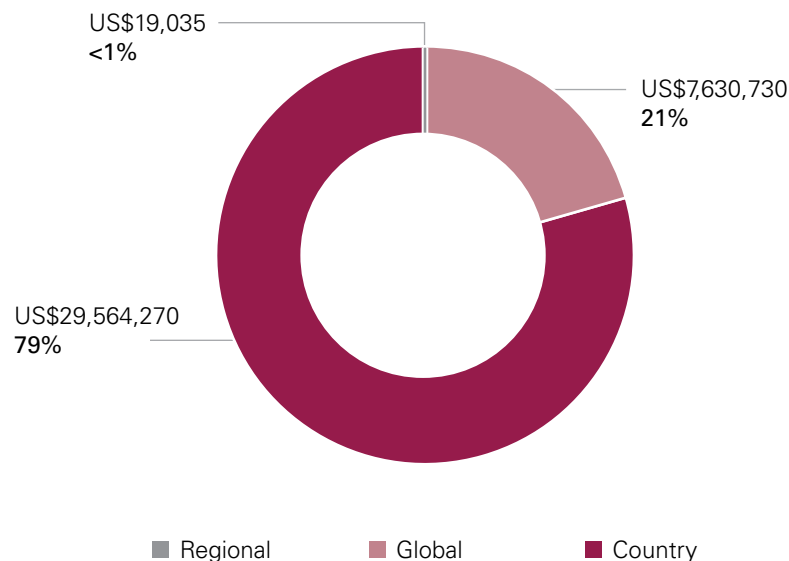


FIGURE A1-5: Social policy and social protection thematic funding contributions at country, regional and global levels, 2018–2022



“Eliminating child poverty, as well as ensuring access to social protection, has been recognized as a critical priority of 2030 Agenda. Under its new Goal Area 5, UNICEF’s strategic plan recognizes the need for a specific strategy to support the most deprived children across multiple contexts to end child poverty. This supports the realization of fundamental rights, while also it represents an essential investment to ensure progress around the ‘leaving no one behind’ agenda.”

“The development cooperation priorities of the Government of Spain include fighting inequality, poverty and environmental crises and defending gender equality, human rights and democracy. The Government of Spain aspires to be a world leader in the promotion of rights for all vulnerable groups, particularly children and women. It also champions the urgent need to eliminate child poverty and expand social protection for children. We are delighted to see the renewed commitment of UNICEF under Goal Area 5. As part of our 2021–2024 Foreign Action Strategy and thematic support to UNICEF, we cooperate to help realize a more resilient and equitable economic model, towards enhanced democracy, security, gender equality and child poverty reduction, and inclusive social protection for all children.”

“Spain highly values its partnership with UNICEF to reduce child poverty, jointly generating an explicit structural change in economic dynamics, while also promoting inclusive policies for children from a young age through adolescence. Under our partnership and support, UNICEF can leverage its unique added value in child poverty programming and long-standing leadership in social policy, public finance for children and social protection: to enhance the visibility of children living in poverty, in terms of numbers and specific characteristics; to strengthen inclusive, gender-transformative, disability- and migrant-inclusive and shock-responsive social protection systems, supporting adequate and effective and inclusive financing and investments for children; and to continue its commitment to tailored responses that address spatial differences and strengthen community, local and subnational capacities, including in emergency and fragile contexts.”

Pilar Cancela Rodríguez, Secretary of State for International Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation

UNICEF is seeking to broaden and diversify its funding base (including thematic contributions) and encourages all partners to give as flexibly as possible. The 2022 allocations of global thematic social policy and social protection funds were made on a needs-based formula for country offices’ regional allocations and regional office allocations. Allocations were based on country offices’ stated intention/commitment to meet one or more relevant strategic plan targets on child poverty, social protection, PF4C or local governance. Further prioritization criteria were:

- Least-developed countries;
- If a country office had the opportunity and a plan to make tangible progress towards one or more of the strategic plan targets for social policy;
- If steps had been taken to incorporate attention to disability and gender in its social policy work;
- If a country office had demonstrated a capacity to absorb funds and had a funding shortfall for its planned social policy activities.

The allocation and expenditure of all thematic funding contributions can be monitored on the UNICEF transparency portal (<http://open.unicef.org>). The results achieved with the funds, assessed against Executive Board-approved targets and indicators at country, regional and global levels, are consolidated and reported across the suite of Global Annual Results Reports. Specific reporting for country and regional thematic funding contributions is provided separately for partners giving at those levels.

Transparency: Follow the flow of funds from contribution to programming by visiting <http://open.unicef.org>.

Expenses for Goal Area 5 in 2022

In 2022, global expenses for Goal Area 5 programming totalled US\$1.03 billion, including cross-thematic funds used to cover operational and other costs (see Figure A1-6). This constitutes an increase of 41 per cent on 2021

(see Figure A1-7). The highest expenses were in Ukraine (US\$318 million), Yemen (US\$158 million), Lebanon (US\$66 million) and Türkiye (US\$55 million) (see Figure A1-9).

FIGURE A1-6: Total expenses by strategic outcome area, 2022

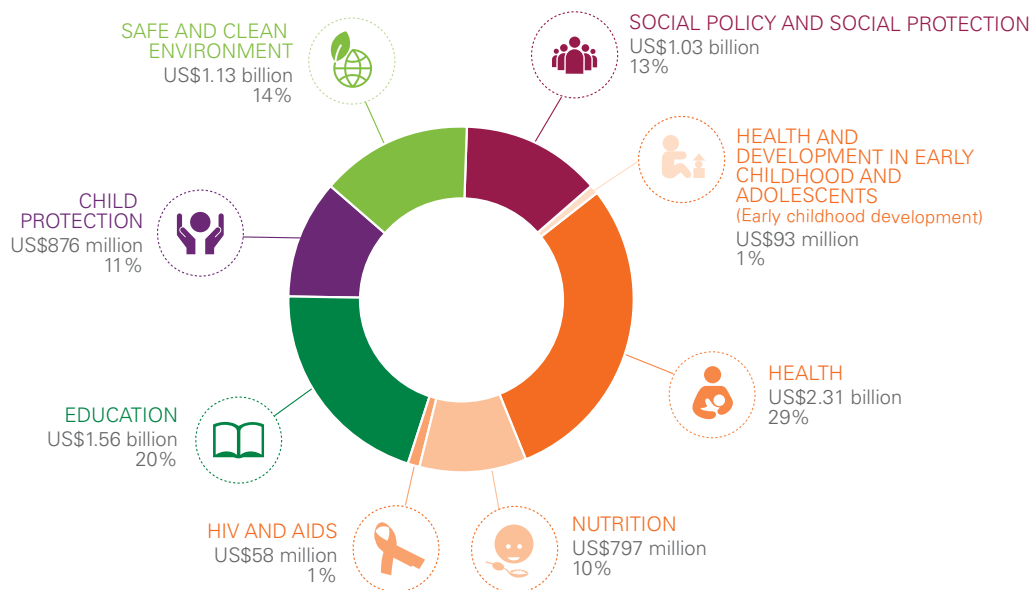
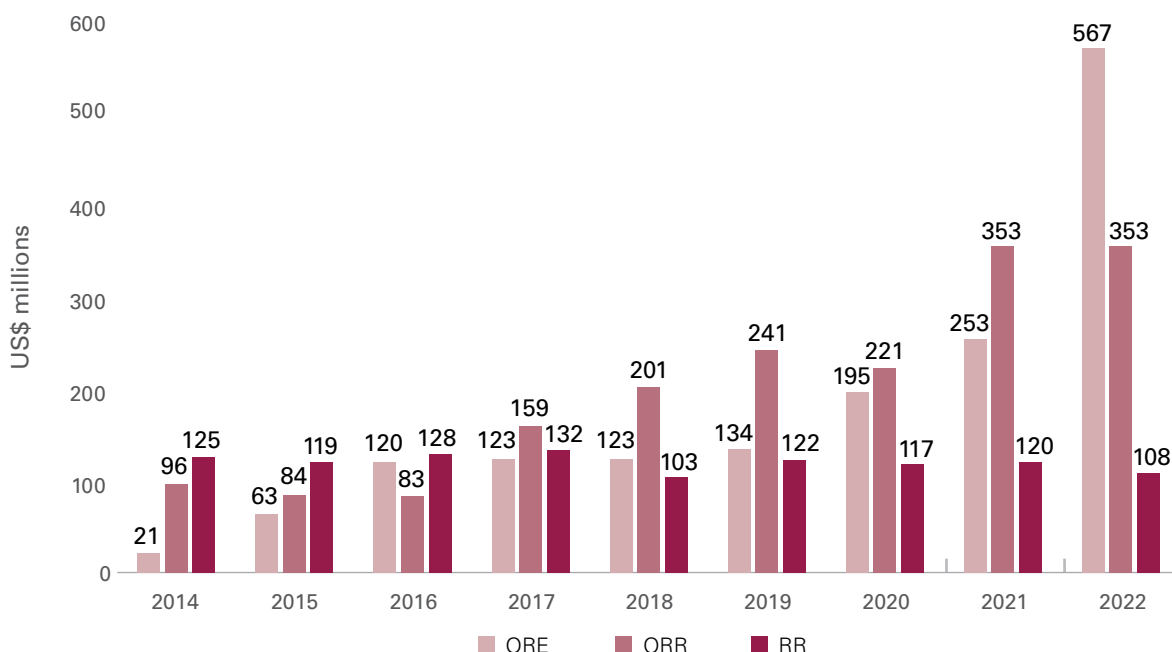


FIGURE A1-7: Expenses trend for Goal Area 5 by year and fund type,ⁱⁱⁱ 2014–2022



ⁱⁱⁱ ORE: Other Resources – Emergency; ORR: Other Resources – Regular; RR: Core Resources for Results.

FIGURE A1-8: Total expenses by Goal Area 5 result areas, 2022

Expense	Other Resources – Emergency	Other Resources – Regular	Regular Resources	Grand Total
35-01 Reducing child poverty	20,450,841	45,993,497	52,598,737	119,043,075
35-02 Access to inclusive social protection	546,836,539	307,161,469	54,918,664	908,916,672
Grand total	567,287,380	353,154,967	107,517,401	1,027,959,747

FIGURE A1-9: Top 20 expenses in million US\$ for Goal Area 5 by country/regional programme headquarters division, 2022

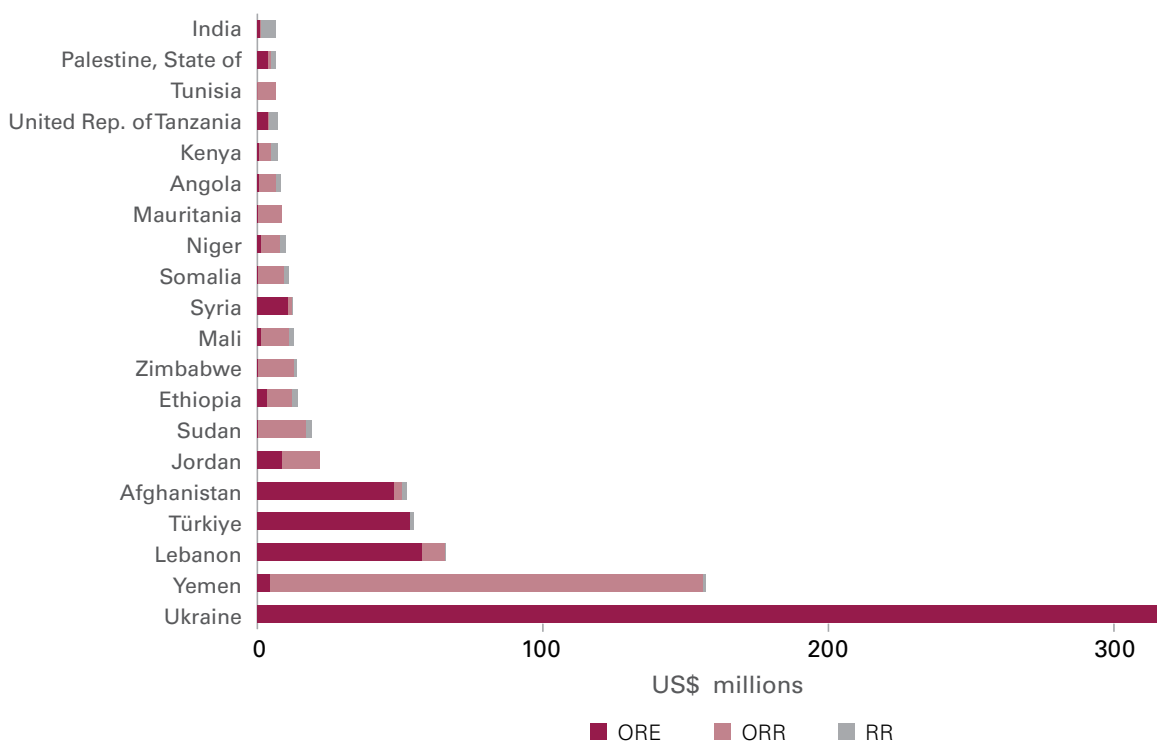
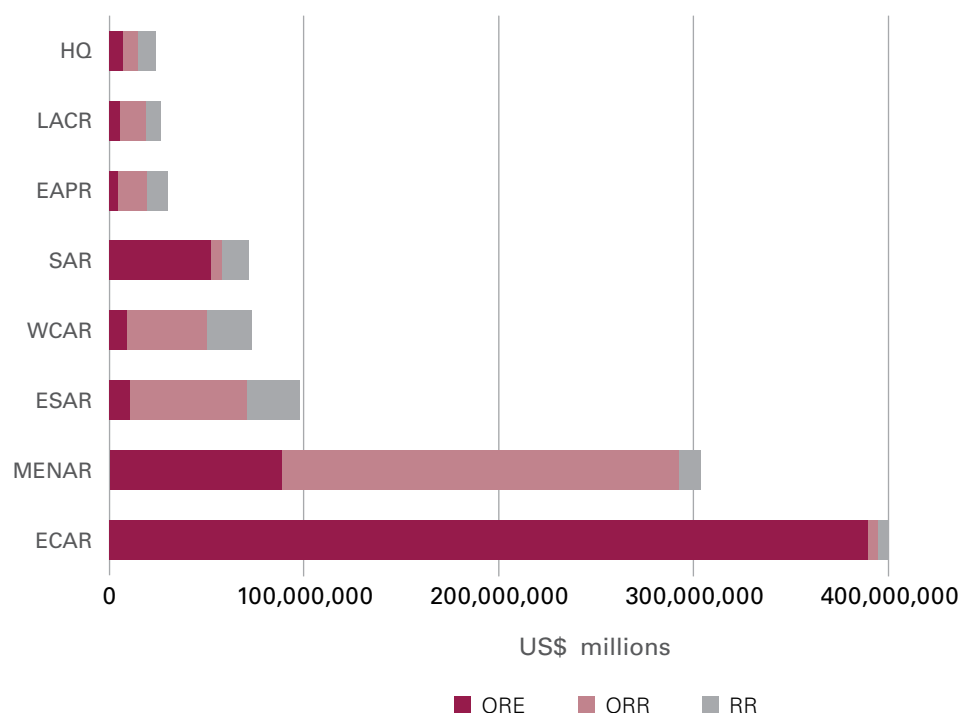


FIGURE A1-10: Total expenses by region and fund type, 2022



Note: EAPR: East Asia and Pacific Region; ECAR: Europe and Central Asia Region; ESAR: Eastern and Southern Africa Region; HQ: Headquarters; LACR: Latin America and the Caribbean Region; MENAR: Middle East and North Africa Region; SAR: South Asia Region; WCAR: West and Central Africa Region.

Additional information by results area

Within Goal Area 5, the highest proportion of expenses in 2022 was under the inclusive social protection results area and constituted US\$908 million (see Figure A1-8). The largest proportion of these funds was spent on delivering social protection programmes that include multisectoral cash transfers through parallel or mixed systems (US\$314 million) and UNICEF-funded HCTs and/or vouchers through mixed and parallel systems (US\$218 million). UNICEF also invested close to US\$72 million in strengthening integrated administrative systems (such as beneficiary identification, grievance mechanisms, payments) and US\$17.5 million to help social protection systems become more shock-responsive. Inclusion of children with disabilities and enhancing gender-responsiveness is not only reflected in the expenses of targeted activities captured under Goal Area 5 but rather cuts across all Goal Areas, including education, child protection, WASH, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS and ECD. In 2022, UNICEF spent around US\$1.3 million supporting the expansion of cash transfers for children with disabilities and the adaptation and/or scale-up of social protection systems to be gender-responsive or -transformative.

Globally, UNICEF spent US\$119 million on child poverty and public finance interventions in 2022. Close to US\$9 million of this was invested in child poverty measurement and analysis, including profiling, mapping and identifying drivers of children’s multidimensional and monetary poverty, and modelling and simulating policy options. UNICEF invested US\$15 million in interventions aimed at improving budget allocation, the effectiveness and efficiency of expenditure, and transparency, accountability and participation. A total of US\$25 million was spent on local governance-related policies, programmes, plans and/or budgets (national, subnational, local), including strengthening urban and rural accountability mechanisms for enhanced community, adolescent and child participation.

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