GOAL AREA 3

Every child is protected from violence and exploitation

Global Annual
Results Report 2022

unicef

for every child

Expression of thanks

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

UNICEF would like to extend particular thanks to its partners who provided global thematic funding for child protection in 2022. Thematic funds are critical in allowing for greater flexibility, long-term planning and innovative programming. These funds have contributed significantly to the results described in this report. UNICEF is seeking to broaden and diversify its funding base, including thematic contributions, and encourages all partners to give as flexibly as possible.

The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, is anchored in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and charts a course towards attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the realization of a future in which every child has a fair chance in life. It sets out measurable results for children – especially the most disadvantaged, including in humanitarian situations – and defines the change strategies and enablers that support their achievement.

Working together with governments, United Nations partners, the private sector and civil society, and with the full participation of children, UNICEF remains steadfast in its commitment to realize the rights of all children, everywhere, and to achieve the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a world in which no child is left behind.

The following report summarizes how UNICEF and its partners contributed to Goal Area 3 in 2022 and reviews the impact of these accomplishments on children and the communities where they live. This is one of seven reports on the results of efforts during the past year, encompassing gender equality and humanitarian action as well as each of the five Strategic Plan Goal Areas – 'Every child survives and thrives', 'Every child learns and acquires skills for the future', 'Every child is protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harmful practices', 'Every child lives in a safe and clean environment', and 'Every child has access to inclusive social protection and lives free of poverty'. It supplements the 2022 Executive Director Annual Report, UNICEF's official accountability document for the past year.

Contents

PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

Every child has the right to live free from violence, exploitation and abuse, yet an estimated billion children globally experience some form of emotional, physical or gender-based violence every year. Children continue to pay the highest price in humanitarian crises. Armed conflict, natural disasters and other emergencies expose millions of girls and boys to unthinkable forms of human rights violations, including exploitation, abuse and neglect.

UNICEF, with its global mandate grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, is an obvious and long-standing trusted partner for Sweden and Sida to advance child protection priorities globally across development and humanitarian contexts. UNICEF's child protection programme plays a leadership role in both emergency responses and development programming, and in the increasingly important links between the two.

Despite significant and positive changes in the child protection-related Sustainable Development Goals such as birth registration, child labour, child marriage and female genital mutilation, they are still mostly off-track. The ongoing global triple crisis – of conflict, climate change and pandemics – has increased vulnerability, pushing families to turn to negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage and child labour.

The work of UNICEF and its partners shows us that child protection violations are preventable. Progress can be made and sustainable results achieved through a human rights-based approach, leading to solid and responsive national child protection systems. Sida continues to have strong confidence in UNICEF's child protection programme. UNICEF is an efficient, effective partner and a strong advocate for the fulfilment of children's human rights globally.

Sida provides long-term flexible thematic funding to UNICEF's child protection programme, as it enables UNICEF to strengthen the ability to deliver on long-term strategic activities and as it enhances effectiveness, promotes sustainability, innovation and better coordination, and reduces transaction costs.

– Torbjörn Pettersson, Assistant Director General,
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Executive summary

This girl lives in the Imamia camp for internally displaced persons in Sindh Province, Pakistan, where UNICEF provides child protection prevention and response services to children and their parents/caregivers, in partnership with the government and other organizations.

While the world has made important progress in the past two decades – notably, the rise in birth registration levels and declining rates of female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage and child labour – significant acceleration is required to fully realize the rights of all children everywhere, and to achieve the child protection-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the end of the Decade of Action in 2030.

Across the world, a child's right to protection, as specified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, is under jeopardy from a convergence of shocks and stresses. Conflict, climate change, displacement, food insecurity, poverty and spiralling global inflation are impacting the daily lives of hundreds of millions of children, their families and their communities – often concurrently.

In 2022, UNICEF child protection (Goal Area 3) partnered with global, regional, and national partners – including governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, and academia – in over 150 countries, including in 90 humanitarian situations, to address these challenges and scale up sustainable evidence-based solutions that we know work. To deliver on these results, UNICEF child protection global programme expenses totalled US$876 million, including US$521 million for humanitarian action.

The results

The year 2022 was the first full year of implementation of the new Child Protection Strategy, 2021–2030, coinciding with the first year of the roll-out of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025.

UNICEF has scaled up prevention and response programming to address the most significant risk and protective factors. This included strengthening family and parenting support to prevent violence in the home; expanding our work to address online child sexual exploitation and abuse; tackling gender-based violence across humanitarian and development contexts; working towards universal access to birth registration; improving access to justice for children; preventing family separation; and ending grave violations in armed conflicts. Of note is our programmatic shift towards anticipatory planning, especially in relation to child protection and humanitarian action, which was critical to effectively supporting the millions of children affected by the war in Ukraine, devastating droughts and food insecurity in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region, floods in Pakistan and many other ongoing humanitarian crises.

UNICEF has invested significantly in strengthening child protection systems to leave no one behind – over 60 per cent of child protection expenses in 2022 were dedicated to the strategic push to strengthen inclusive and effective systems. These efforts are paying dividends, including in developing national and subnational legal, policy and governance frameworks; strengthening the number and quality of social service workforces; and improving data, monitoring, and reporting systems.

UNICEF has also sharpened its programmatic focus to address the social and behavioural determinants of child violations. This included scaling up established social and behaviour change (SBC) programming to end harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage, while also expanding SBC efforts related to violence against girls, boys, and women across all contexts. In 2022, 82 UNICEF country offices supported specific child protection SBC strategies with governments and other partners to step up national SBC plans and programming. We have also invested in scaling up gender-transformative prevention interventions (as part of the UNICEF-wide Adolescent Girls Programme Strategy), notably around ending child marriage, FGM, and gender-based violence.

In 2022, UNICEF and partners' collective actions significantly contributed to reaching millions of children, including adolescents, and their parents and caregivers with a range of UNICEF-supported prevention and response interventions aimed at ending violence against boys, girls, and women.

Systems-strengthening to leave no one behind

A cornerstone of our work is making child protection systems more effective and inclusive, so no child is left behind, including those in humanitarian situations, children on the move, those engaged in child labour, and children with disabilities. In 2022, UNICEF and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees

developed a Strategic Collaboration Framework,[1] building on the strong alliance and learning drawn from the two organizations' 2020–2022 Blueprint for Joint Action for Refugee Children. The framework aims to promote the inclusion of refugee children and their families in national plans, budgets, datasets, and service delivery systems, as well as to prevent childhood statelessness. The new Strategic Collaboration Framework between UNICEF and the International Organization for Migration[2] also prioritizes efforts to strengthen national child protection systems to be inclusive of children affected by migration, while the new 2022–2030 UNICEF Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy[3] also explicitly prioritizes a disability-inclusive approach to child protection.

The UNICEF child protection strategy considers the strengthening of the social service workforce as essential to achieving inclusive and effective child protection systems. While some countries strengthened their social service workforces in 2022 – a 7 per cent increase in the number of countries reporting advancements from 2021 (from 142 to 152 countries) – social service workforce strengthening continues to face significant hurdles at the national level. Many countries have focused on putting in place normative frameworks related to workforce strengthening; however, financial allocations to implement such frameworks remain a major challenge due to the lack of prioritization of social services within national budgets. In 2022, UNICEF introduced important guidance to address these bottlenecks, with a focus on helping policymakers identify minimum workforce-to-population ratios and project the costs required to build a professional cadre of social service workers.

Ending violence against girls, boys and women

SDG targets 5.2 and 16.2 call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and children. UNICEF's parenting programmes are part of broader comprehensive SBC programmes that attempt to address the root causes of violence at individual, social, and structural levels. In 2022, UNICEF-supported parenting programmes increased and expanded, reaching almost 12 million mothers, fathers, and caregivers across more than 80 countries with related interventions, representing a threefold increase over 2021. This reflects UNICEF's stronger strategic approach to scaling up violence prevention to meet SDG targets.

Early in 2022, the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour in South Africa served as a strong reminder that if the world is serious about the prevention of child protection violations and meeting the child protection-related SDGs, we must support governments to design and implement multisectoral solutions that include education, social protection, a stronger child protection workforce, working with the private sector and ensuring adequate public financing. With global progress against child labour stalling for the first time in two decades, the Durban Call

to Action (see 'Eliminating child labour') also served as a stark reminder to Member States that a renewed impetus is urgently required if we are to meet SDG target 8.7 on ending child labour.

The first official United Nations World Day for the Prevention of and Healing from Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Violence was held in 2022. UNICEF's voice was among those calling for a long overdue globally recognized moment to let survivors know that the world stands with them and that they have a right to justice and healing.

As part of UNICEF's commitment to building systems that more effectively support child survivors of violence, abuse, and exploitation, strengthening integration across sectors is an important driver of results for children. Programmatically, UNICEF worked with national partners to strengthen service delivery systems, enabling 4.7 million children (48 per cent girls), across 109 countries, who had experienced violence to receive health, social work, or justice/law enforcement services – a 7 per cent increase from the number of children accessing services in 2021. Despite complex operating contexts, UNICEF-supported programming to address gender-based violence in humanitarian action, including scaling up access to risk mitigation, prevention, and/or response interventions, benefited almost 9 million people in 75 countries in 2022 (this includes 3.6 million girls in those countries reporting sex-disaggregated data). Additionally, UNICEF is accelerating cross-sectoral programming to address gender-based violence, including by drawing on important findings from its 2022 global rapid evidence assessment that highlights important linkages between maternal caregivers' exposure to intimate partner violence and nutrition outcomes for children.

Ending grave violations in armed conflict

Twenty-five years on from the landmark 2007 Paris Principles agreement to combat the use of children in conflict, children as young as 8 years old are still at risk around the world from unlawful recruitment by armed forces or armed groups. UNICEF continued its significant investment in strengthening monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in conflict situations, to prevent and end violations and respond to affected children. In 2022, 25 country and regional situations were monitored – the highest number since the children in armed conflict agenda (CAAC) was established. Information gathered in each of these situations informed both engagement with parties to conflict, including to develop action plans and to take other concrete measures to prevent and end violations, and providing response services to affected children and families. Across 17 countries, UNICEF provided protection services to, or reintegrated with their families or caregivers, almost 6 out of every 10 children formerly associated with an armed force or armed group.

To illustrate not only the impact that armed conflicts have had on children but also how data can be used to respond to children's needs, and the benefits of engagement with parties to the conflict, UNICEF launched the report, '25 Years of Children and Armed Conflict: Taking Action to Protect Children in War', which outlines key recommendations for all stakeholders involved in the CAAC agenda.

In 2022, UNICEF scaled up its prevention and victim assistance work to help nearly 10 million children affected by landmines and other explosive weapons – an 89 per cent increase from 2021. At the normative level, UNICEF high-level advocacy supported the development of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA), a critical advancement to protect children, who represent more than half the civilian casualties of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

Promoting legal Identity and birth registration

UNICEF presented critical data at the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registry, held in Ethiopia in 2022 to advance legal identity for all, including ensuring the registration of the births of all children across the world. These data included a new UNICEF statistical profile of birth registration in Africa, which shows that 20 countries are on track to achieve universal birth registration (SDG 19.2) by 2030. These are encouraging trends for Africa, where more than half of the 164 million unregistered children aged under 5 years worldwide live. Efforts to increase interoperability with the health sector have supported significant progress in universal access to birth registration in this and other regions.

Without a legal identity, children remain uncounted and struggle to secure their fundamental rights. In 2022, the number of countries with interoperability between the health and civil registration systems to facilitate birth registration increased to 59, from 54 in 2021. In 2022, 15 of the reporting countries recorded a 100 per cent increase in the number of children whose births were registered compared to 2021.

Ensuring full access to justice

UNICEF's Reimagine Justice for Children Agenda has been instrumental in providing a cohesive approach to strengthening justice for children's systems. In 2022, the first year of the agenda's roll-out, UNICEF focused its efforts on mainstreaming it into broader United Nations Rule of Law and Access to Justice initiatives and supporting its operationalization at the country level. UNICEF, together with the United Nations Task Force on Children Deprived of

their Liberty, also joined the pledge on ending immigration detention that will further support implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

Programmatically, the momentum created by the COVID-19 pandemic in releasing children from detention, and lessons learned through years of UNICEF engagement with partner countries, have created the necessary space to initiate transformative shifts to ensure children have full access to justice. More children in a growing number of countries can access child-friendly justice services as countries progressively put in place policies, laws, and systems to push forward national justice for children reforms. The number of countries reporting a specialized justice system increased by 29 per cent from 24 in 2021 to 31 in 2022. Diversion modalities for children in conflict with the law, alongside normative changes such as laws increasing the age of criminal responsibility, in line with international standards, have proven effective at reducing the number of children in detention.

Preventing children's separation from their families and caregivers

To address challenges of children separated from their parents, including in public health emergencies and during situations of displacement, UNICEF prioritizes the prevention of family separation, reducing the number of children living in institutions, and scaling up alternative family-based options when necessary. The number of countries reporting on children in all forms of formal alternative care increased from 68 in 2021 to 88 in 2022. Data from these 88 countries indicate that more than 40 per cent of children in alternative care were placed in family-based care, such as kinship care or foster care (compared to 27 per cent in 2021).

Children who are unaccompanied or become separated from their primary caregivers in humanitarian situations face threats to their safety and survival that make them especially vulnerable to multiple protection risks. UNICEF and partners are improving case management systems to more effectively identify and refer these children for services. As a result, more than double the number of unaccompanied or separated children were identified and received family- or community-based care in 2022 compared to 2021.

Supporting mental health and psychosocial well-being

The strategic thrust to scale up mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) has seen an almost doubling of the number of children, adolescents, parents, and caregivers receiving UNICEF-supported community-based MHPSS prevention and response services across

humanitarian and development contexts (from 12 million in 2021 to 25.2 million in 2022). This includes, for instance, UNICEF's rapid emergency response to the child protection needs in Ukraine, where nearly 3 million children and caregivers benefitted from MHPSS, including through the delivery of services by 70 mobile teams deployed across the country. UNICEF also worked with governments, including city governments, and civil society organizations in neighbouring countries receiving Ukrainian refugees to meet the needs of the massive influx, including providing a range of MHPSS for more than 1.2 million children and caregivers.

Ending harmful practices

UNICEF amplified its commitment to eliminating harmful practices (SDG 5.3), working in close partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and others, including the African Union at the regional level, to accelerate results, especially in high-burden countries. With just eight years left to reach the SDG 5.3 target of ending child marriage and eliminating FGM, only collective and well-funded action across a diverse group of stakeholders can end these harmful practices.

Ending child marriage is firmly established as a global priority: 93 governments have signed up to SDG target 5.3 to end child, early and forced marriage, and 41 of the 50 UNICEF-supported countries either have or are working to develop national action plans to end child marriage. To accelerate action to meet the SDG target of eliminating FGM, UNICEF developed and rolled out a maturity model in 12 countries to measure and monitor changes in the management of national policies addressing

harmful practices. With 15 of the 17 UNFPA–UNICEF Joint Programme countries having legislation prohibiting FGM, UNICEF and partners have shifted their focus to working in partnership with governments, civil society, and communities to improve the enforcement of these laws.

As part of the strategic shift to scale up gender-transformative approaches, UNICEF has focused on strengthening community engagement. Across 53 countries, UNICEF's interventions aimed at changing discriminatory harmful practices through reflective dialogues within affected communities impacted more than 31.1 million people, a 40 per cent increase from 2021 (in 45 countries). Around 1.1 million individuals in over 3,600 communities made public declarations on eliminating FGM.

In 2022, there was a doubling of the number of girls and women receiving UNICEF-supported prevention and care interventions for child marriage (17.2 million in 2022 compared to 7.6 million in 2021) and FGM (384,000 in 2022 compared to 159,000 in 2021). UNICEF is also expanding work to accelerate transformative shifts across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus; 7 of the 10 countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage are currently experiencing some form of crisis due to insecurity, political transition, and/or drought, and more than half of the countries where girls are at the highest risk of FGM have experienced humanitarian crises. For example, UNICEF analysis revealed that in the regions of Ethiopia most affected by the worst drought in 40 years, child marriage has on average more than doubled in the space of a year.[4] This evidence resulted in UNICEF and partners more effectively integrating child marriage programming into the humanitarian response in affected areas.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead to the next three years of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, and towards 2030, UNICEF will continue to advocate and provide technical support to our global, regional, and national partners to accelerate progress on SDGs 3, 5, 8 and 16. Key priorities include:

- Scaling up evidence-based prevention approaches to child protection and making child protection systems more inclusive and effective across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, particularly by building the capacity of the social service workforce and deepening cross-sectoral collaboration.

- Building momentum to expand a multi-country portfolio of social and behaviour change interventions that address the most prevalent forms of violence against girls, boys, and women and which demonstrate excellence in terms of reach and effectiveness.

- Convening partners and governments to prevent and end grave violations in armed conflict, including engaging States to better protect children from the threat of explosive weapons, and providing comprehensive, integrated services for all children caught up in humanitarian situations.

- Advancing child protection approaches related to climate change and extreme weather events, including building anticipatory action to mitigate against the harmful protection consequences of these crises, particularly for children on the move.

- Intensifying efforts to assist governments, especially in six priority countries in Africa and South Asia, in adopting strategies around five critical pillars to accelerate progress towards universal birth registration and ensure that every child's right to a legal identity is protected.

- Integrating the programming priorities laid out in the Reimagine Justice for Children Agenda to accelerate national justice for children reforms, with a focus on ensuring the six interconnected priorities become an explicit part of national justice for children reforms.

- Driving partnerships with key policy decision makers to accelerate the promotion of prevention strategies for care reform, with a focus on preventing family separation across contexts, and prioritizing family-based alternatives to institutional care for children who need it, including children with disabilities.

- Resetting the global agenda to eliminate child marriage and FGM, particularly by scaling our work with and for adolescent girls, in partnership with other sectors' efforts across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

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A young girl (8) is invited by a member of the Forum Anak (Child Forum) to write down her hopes for a safe internet for children during a child-friendly digital/internet space campaign in Wonosobo square, Central Java, Indonesia. UNICEF Indonesia and partners organized the training to educate children and adolescents on protection from online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Strategic context

Young girls playing in a camp for internally displaced persons in Somalia. In 2022, around 1 million people were displaced by drought and 500,000 by conflict in Somalia; 66 per cent were children. In response to the crisis, UNICEF has scaled up community-based child protection mechanisms to strengthen case management services to more effectively identify and refer children for specialized support, as well as implement a range of interventions to engage communities on changing social norms and harmful practices.

Across the world, a child's right to protection, as specified in the <u>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</u>[5] is under threat. While the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic subside, the harms to children continue due to a convergence of shocks and stresses: food insecurity; new and protracted conflicts; increasingly visible effects of climate hazards; historic rates of poverty; a spiralling global debt burden; and a shrinking fiscal space for many countries. These factors are threatening to erode hard-earned child protection gains.[6]

Yet there are opportunities for change.

While the rapidly evolving protection landscape continues to test the resilience of child protection systems worldwide, it has also emboldened UNICEF to work with government partners to 'think big' and build back better in this Decade of Action.

Today, a historic confluence of multiple, interdependent, near-simultaneous shocks – termed a 'polycrisis' – has created a perfect storm for increased vulnerability to protection risks. Around the world, the risk of multiple rights violations for boys, girls, and women is greater than it has been for decades. The current global context exacerbates the vulnerabilities of children in contact with the law, children without parental care, and issues of mental health, among other challenges. This is unfolding at a time when the number of children requiring humanitarian assistance continues to grow to historic proportions.

Political insecurity and conflict are widespread. In the 25 years since the release of Dr. Graça Machel's historic report on children affected by armed conflict, there have been over a quarter of a million grave violations verified against children, committed by parties in more than 30 different conflict situations. Children as young as 8 years old are still at risk in some parts of the world from unlawful recruitment by armed forces or armed groups. And with more than 400 million children living in areas under conflict, with the number of violations continuing to grow, much more global action is needed to end these brutal attacks on a child's rights.[7]

Conflict, violence, and other crises left a record 36.5 million children displaced from their homes at the end of 2021 – the highest number recorded since the Second World War. These figures do not include children displaced by climate and environmental shocks or disasters, or those newly displaced in 2022, including by the war in Ukraine. Uprooted children – whether refugees, asylum-seekers or internally displaced – can face grave risks to their well-being and safety. This is particularly true for the hundreds of thousands of unaccompanied or separated children, who are at heightened risk of trafficking, exploitation, violence, and abuse. Children account for approximately 34 per cent of detected trafficking victims globally.[8]

Climate change is also exacerbating pre-existing tensions and conflicts across the globe. Ninety-five per cent of new conflict-related displacements recorded worldwide in 2020[9] occurred in countries that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The anticipated impact of climate change is now becoming an all-too-visible reality for many children – from the harsh droughts and food insecurity spreading across the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa, to the catastrophic floods in Pakistan – and we are witnessing at first hand the devastating impact this can have on communities, families, and children.

Latest UNICEF data reveal how the global food crisis is making women and girls even more vulnerable. As families struggle to cope, women and girls are more likely to be exposed to sexual violence, intimate partner violence, exploitation, and forced marriage. The risks to women and girls who have been displaced can be even more acute. This is evident in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, where historic drought is driving mass displacement and triggering a malnutrition crisis. In Somalia, there was a 20 per cent increase in the number of women and girls seeking gender-based violence (GBV) services in drought-affected communities during the first half of 2022, while in Ethiopia, rates of child marriage have more than doubled within a year.[10]

Throughout the world, there is a record surge in child poverty: 356 million children are living in extreme poverty, forced to survive on less than $1.90 a day. Globally, about 1 billion children are multidimensionally poor, meaning they lack access to basic necessities, exposing them to increased protection risks. Since 2019, an estimated 100 million additional children were plunged into multidimensional poverty due to COVID-19, and events in 2022 continued to drive families deeper into the poverty spiral across the world.[11]

Global inflation continues to soar. The disruption of COVID-19 left many developing countries with a shrinking fiscal space. The war in Ukraine, coupled with other related shocks, has driven up food and fuel prices and stemmed global supply chains. Combined, these factors and others have had a negative impact on governments' national budgets. The ever-shrinking fiscal space in which

countries operate means it is becoming harder and harder to fund service provision, including for child and social protection.[12]

Against this backdrop, international resource flows to developing countries are not rising to meet the increasing needs. Humanitarian funding is also under severe stress, as needs outpace supply. In 2022, the United Nations humanitarian appeal was only 50 per cent funded; a concerning foreshadowing of the humanitarian needs in 2023. The unfolding of events such as the earthquakes in Türkiye in early 2023, and new climate-related disasters projected to be increasingly likely in the Sahel and other places, serve to compound an already complex global landscape.

Building on its extensive, evidence-based efforts and strong partnerships, the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy 2021–2030[13] and the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025,[14] have shifted towards an expanded, transformative approach to ending violence against women and children across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, and addressing its root causes – including discriminatory structures, legal frameworks, and social norms. UNICEF's strategic priority is focused on ensuring all children grow up in a protective environment (**universal prevention**). This includes ensuring that children living in situations of risk receive targeted support (**leaving no one behind**). At the same time, we are scaling up action to guarantee children experiencing violations receive quality and sustainable services (**response and preventing recurrence**) *(see Figure 1).*

The Child Protection Strategy has three objectives:

UNIVERSAL PREVENTION:

Ensuring all children grow up in a protective environment

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND:

Ensuring children living in situations of highest risk receive targeted support
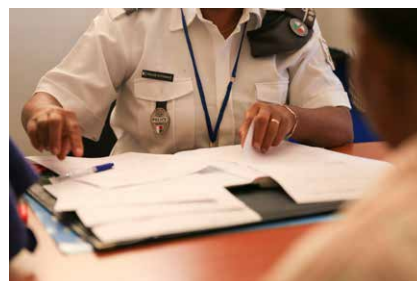
RESPOND AND PREVENT RECURRENCE:

Ensuring children experiencing violations receive quality services

To translate these objectives into transformational impact, UNICEF is delivering results around a core set of thematic priorities, all of which are anchored in the guiding principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in UNICEF's mandates in humanitarian and conflict situations, including the UNICEF Core Commitments for Children.[15] This report provides a summary of UNICEF's contribution in 2022 to meeting these commitments across each of its thematic priorities.

VISION

A world where all children are free from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect & harmful practises
(Guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child)

GOALS

SDG 3.4 Promote mental health and well-being
SDG 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls
SDG 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practises, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

SDG 8.7 End child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers
SDG 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
SDG 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

SDG 16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
Preventing family-child separation, ending institutionalisation of children and strengthening family-based alternative care

OBJECTIVES

1. All children grow in a protective environment (*Universal Prevention*)

2. Children living in situations of risk receive targeted support (*Leaving No one Behind*)

3. Children experiencing violations receive services (*Response & Preventing Recurrence*)

PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES

1. To effectively address the social, cultural and economic determinants of child protection violations at scale (with particular emphasis on social norms and gender transformation)

2. To support inclusive and effective Child Protection Systems in preventing and responding to child protection violations (with particular emphasis on case management and the social service workforce)

3. To effectively prevent and respond to child protection violations in humanitarian situations (and across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus)

PROGRAMMING APPROACHES

Strengthen data and research generation and use

Advocate for national legislation, policies, budgets & accountability

Build capacity for scaled up child protection service delivery across sectors

Strengthen the engagement of communities, children and adolescents

Develop partnerships for coordinated global and national action

THEMATIC PRIORITIES

Legal Identity

Access to Justice

Prevention of Family Separation

Mental Health and Psycho-Social Well-Being

Harmful Practices

Violence Against Girls, Boys and Women

Grave violations in armed conflict

CHILD PROTECTION CONTEXT
Latest Data [16]

→ Decades-long progress in child protection has resulted in **increases in birth registration and reductions in child marriage, FGM and child labour.** Yet, despite progress, the world remains **off track to meeting child protection-related SDG indicators.**

Countries in situations of **fragility and conflict are the furthest behind,** while other dynamics, such as displacement and increased violence in the virtual world, heighten threats to the protection of children.

Ending violence against girls, boys, and women

Violence takes many forms and happens across all countries and contexts. The consequences of violence are devastating, lifelong and can be deadly.
With only **eight years remaining** to keep the promise of the **2030 Agenda,** including **SDGs 5.2** and **16.2,** action must be **accelerated to end violence against children**

2 in 3 children are **subjected to violent discipline** by caregivers

1 out 3 girls **will experience physical** and or **sexual violence** in their lifetime, worldwide

1 in 10 of all children world-wide

1 in 5 in poorest countries

are in child labour

Across 12 countries in the East Asia and Pacific and Eastern and Southern Africa regions **up to 20% of children suffered online sexual exploitation and abuse in the past year ***

*One in three of them did not tell anyone about this experience.

Ending grave violations in humanitarian situations

Conflicts such as those in Ukraine, Northern Ethiopia, Syria and Yemen, and the famines sweeping the Horn of Africa have pushed millions of children and their communities to the edge

82% of countries **in situations of conflict** or fragility are **not on track** to reach **SDG** goals

250k **grave violations verified** against children committed by parties to conflict in the past 25 years

1.2 billion children living in countries with **complex emergencies**

More than **1/2** of grave violations are committed **by non-State armed groups**

Children represent more than half the civilian casualties of landmines and explosive remnants of war

1/3 of grave violations are committed by **government and international armed forces**

Promoting legal identity and birth registration

The right to be **recognized as a person before the law** is a critical step in ensuring lifelong protection and access to all rights

20/**54** Notable progress has been made in Africa, with **20 out of 54 countries on track to meet SDG 16.9** (legal identity for all, including universal birth registration) **by 2030**

India Pakistan
Bangladesh DRC
Nigeria Ethiopia

Account for **half of all remaining unregistered children** worldwide

3 out of 4 births of **children** under five years old **are registered today**, compared with 6 in 10 in 2000.

Ensuring full access to justice

Access to justice for children is key to achieving all the SDGs – particularly targets 16.3, 16.2 and 16.9 . However, many countries lack adequate administrative data systems, making it difficult to fully gauge how many children are deprived of their liberty across contexts

1.3 to 1.5 million
children each year are **deprived of their liberty**

400,000
are detained in the **administration of justice**

330,000
in **migration-related detention**

36,000
children are detained in armed conflict situations, including **on grounds of national security**

19,000
children are **living with their primary caregivers in prisons**

680,000
children are living in institutions

Supporting mental health and psychosocial well-being

Promoting the psychosocial well-being of children and their caregivers is considered a critical element of prevention, as it is associated with reduced risk of other child rights violations

10–20%
An estimated 1 to 2 children out of 10 suffer from **mental health issues**

Suicide
third leading cause of death in 15–19-year-olds; adolescent girls are especially at risk of depression

264 million
People are suffering from **depression**

284 million
people are suffering from **anxiety**

$390 billion a year
is the **estimated lost contribution to economies** due to mental disorders that lead to disability or death among young people

FGM

The world will miss SDG target 5.3 of eliminating FGM by 2030 without urgent action – including from men and boys

In countries affected by FGM, 7 in 10 **girls and women think the practice should end**

200 million
of 300 million boys and men living in practicing countries in Africa and the Middle East, **think FGM should stop**

In 2022 , three countries – **Egypt, Kenya and Mauritania** – reported a decrease in FGM prevalence rates

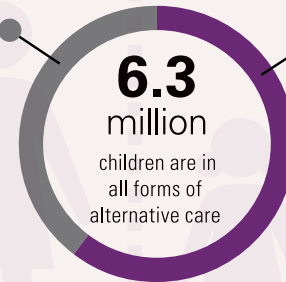**4.3 million**
Girls are at risk of FGM in 2023

Preventing children's separation from their families and caregivers

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the centrality of families in the care of children across all contexts

2.5 million
children are in family-based alternative care

6.3 million
children are in all forms of alternative care

3.8 million
children are in some form of residential/ institutional care

There is no official global data on the **number of unaccompanied and separated children.** UNICEF support in 2022 reached in excess of **200,000 UASC,** but the numbers worldwide are likely to be far higher

Child Marriage

Despite a steady decline in child marriage in the last decade, multiple crises are threatening to reverse hard-earned gains and achievement of SDG target 5.3

Today, **one in five young women aged 20 to 24 years were married as children** versus nearly one in four 10 years ago.

×20
Times faster

To end child marriage, progress must be 20 times faster. At the current pace, still over **9 million girls will marry in the year 2030**

Gains made can be quickly lost, especially in times of crisis:

10 million
child brides due to Covid-19

×10
7%
When **conflict intensifies** tenfold, **child marriage increases** by 7 per cent

10%
1%
A 10 per cent **change in rainfall** is associated with a 1 per cent **increase in child marriage**

Results by strategic output

Displaced children at the Dar Es Salam refugee camp, Baga Sola, in western Chad. UNICEF and partners implement child protection activities here, including providing mental health and psychosocial care through child-friendly spaces.

© UNICEF/UN0594603/Dejongh

FIGURE 2: Reaching children to leave no one behind: **results achieved in 2022**

UNICEF and partners worked in **over 150 countries**, reaching tens of milllions of vulnerable children across the world with Child Protection prevention and response interventions

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

4.7 million

children who had experienced violence received health, social work, and justice services

109 countries

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

25.2 million

children, adolescents, parents and caregivers received mental health & psychosocial support services

109 countries

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

8.8 million

women and children benefited from gender-based violence risk mitigation or support services

75 countries

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

200 thousand

children in conflict with the law were subject to a diversion order or a non-custodial measure

83 countries

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

49.2 million

children and adults have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse

110 countries

BIRTH REGISTRATION

47.9 million

birth certificates were issued

63 countries

LANDMINES AND OTHER EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS

9.85 million

girls and boys in areas affected by landmines and other explosive weapons provided with relevant prevention and/or survivor-assistance interventions

18 countries

PREVENTING FAMILY SEPARATION

41 %

children in family-based care from the total number of children in all forms of formal alternative care

88 countries

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

2.1 million

girls and women received FGM-related prevention and protection services (2018-2022) - 384,000 women and girls in 2022

19 countries

CHILD MARRIAGE

17.2 million

adolescent girls reached with prevention and care interventions for child marriage

41 countries

HARMFUL PRACTICES

31.1 million

people engaged through community platforms in reflective dialogue towards eliminating discriminatory social and gender norms and harmful practices

53 countries

CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

*5.6 million**

children displaced in humanitarian contexts have received community-based MHPSS services

45 countries

* From the total 25.2 million receiving MHPSS services in 2022

FIGURE 3: Summary of Goal Area 3 strategic output results: global footprint, 2022

In 2022, UNICEF Child Protection worked with partners in **151 countries**, including in **90 humanitarian situations**.

UNICEF's programmatic footprint on Child Protection continues to span across all **7 regions of the world**, in countries of all income levels.

Countries supported by region, 2022

LAC	36
WCA	24
EAP ECA	22 22
ESA	21
MENA	18
SA	8
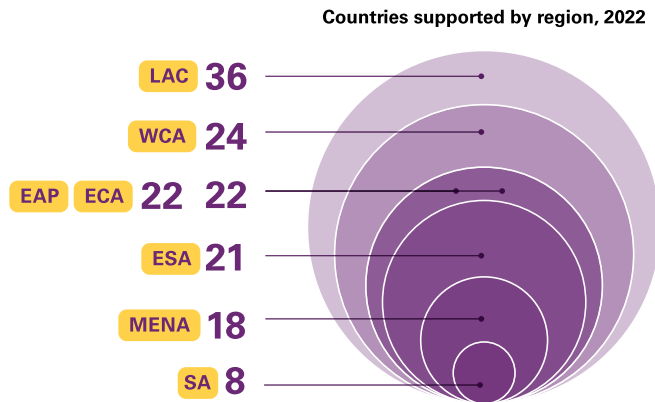
Country engagement and support across development and humanitarian settings, by strategic output, 2022

Strategic output 1: Protecting children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect

134 countries

Strategic output 2: Promoting care, mental health and psychosocial well-being and justice

150 countries

Strategic output 3: Preventing harmful practices*

73 countries

* this figure is based on number of data reporting countries only as opposed to the number of countries UNICEF worked with.

Selected highlights of UNICEF programming expansion, 2022

+19 countries
strengthened laws and/or policies to end corporal punishment of children

| 84 | +19 | 103 |
| 2021 | | 2022 |

+6 countries
adopted legislation and policy frameworks to end child sexual exploitation and abuse

| 107 | +6 | 113 |
| 2021 | | 2022 |

+6 countries
improved policies and programmes to improve birth registration and civil registration/vital statistics

| 73 | +6 | 79 |
| 2021 | | 2022 |

+7 countries
have specialized justice for children systems

| 24 | +7 | 31 |
| 2021 | | 2022 |

+9.6 million
adolescent girls received prevention and care interventions to address child marriage through UNICEF-supported programmes

| 7.6m | +9.6m | 17.2m |
| 2021 | | 2022 |

Notes: EAP, East Asia and the Pacific; **ECA**, Europe and Central Asia; **ESA**, Eastern and Southern Africa; **LAC**, Latin America and the Caribbean; **MENA**, Middle East and North Africa; **SA**, South Asia; **WCA**, West and Central Africa.

Inclusive and effective child protection systems to prevent and respond to all child protection violations

Protecting children from violence, abuse, exploitation and harmful practices across development and humanitarian contexts requires mature child protection systems.[17] A mature child protection system, with the social welfare and justice system as its core, and well-established linkages to other systems, including health, education, social protection and civil registration, is a cornerstone in preventing and responding to all child protection violations.

The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, and Child Protection Strategy 2021–2030 identify strengthening **inclusive and effective child protection systems** as a core programming strategy to ensure that every child is protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harmful practices. Even in the most acute humanitarian contexts, UNICEF seeks to ensure the foundations for a strong child protection system that is inclusive of all children without discrimination.

Determining the maturity of child protection systems

In 2021, UNICEF formally outlined its approach to child protection systems-strengthening[18] and introduced an accompanying set of benchmarks[19] to determine the level of maturity of national child protection systems.

Two years on, countries are developing systematic ways of undertaking comprehensive and evidence-based assessments of their child protection systems that will enable them to effectively measure progress on child protection systems-strengthening over time. While two years of data is insufficient to make definitive conclusions about trends, countries are now able to start to identify themes and generate 'theories' about why some areas appear to be stronger or more mature than others. At the same time, this enables countries to identify the areas of child protection systems-strengthening that need immediate attention, and redirect investments to those areas.

In 2022, UNICEF worked with partners in 158 countries to assess the stage of development of their child protection systems using a four-phase maturity model *(see Figure 4)*. This level of assessment provides critical data for UNICEF and national partners to identify priority areas of their systems requiring additional investment. Progress measured in 2022 suggested reasons for optimism.

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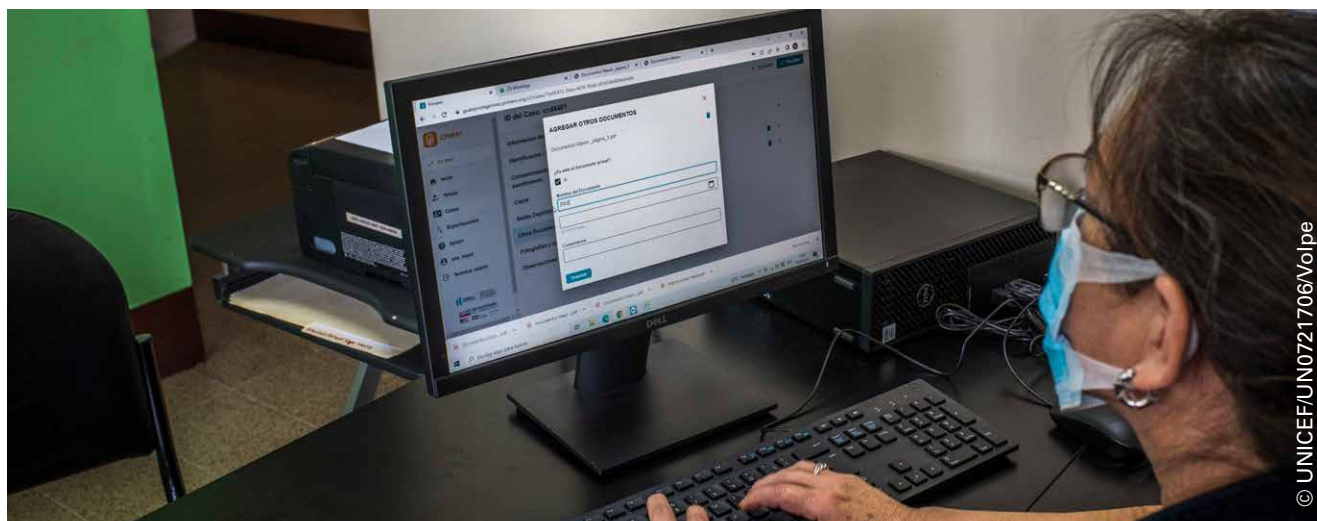
A social worker is using using PRIMERO, the child protection information management system, at the Casa Nuestras Raíces shelter in Guatemala City which provides services for returned migrant children.

FIGURE 4: Data on the maturity of child protection systems, 2022
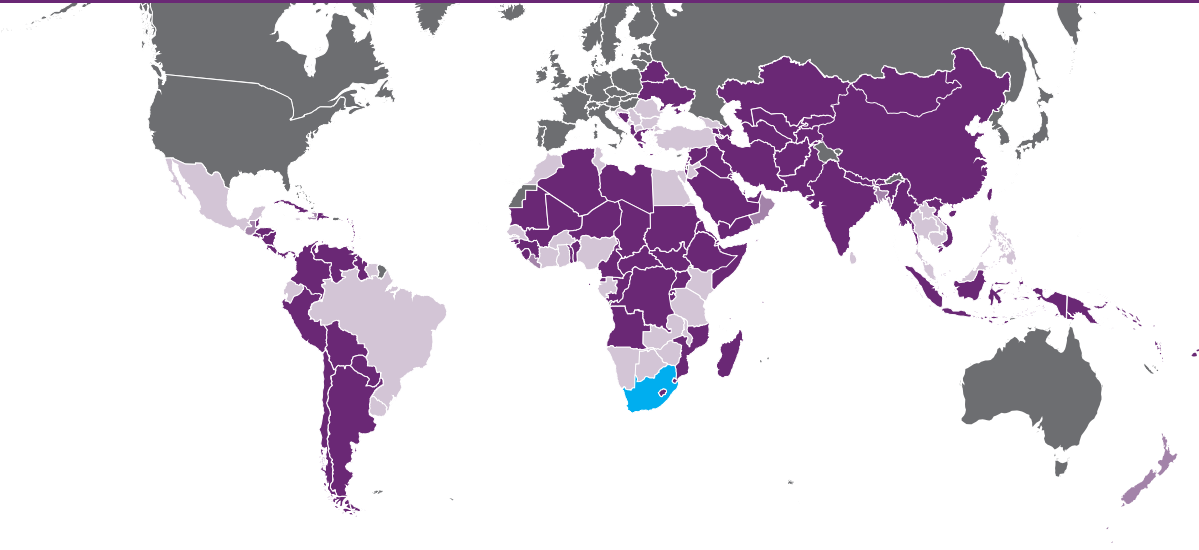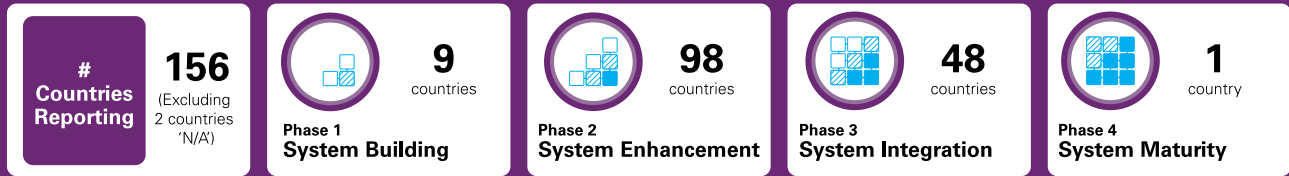
# Countries Reporting	**156** (Excluding 2 countries 'N/A')

9 countries
Phase 1 System Building

98 countries
Phase 2 System Enhancement

48 countries
Phase 3 System Integration

1 country
Phase 4 System Maturity

■ Not Applicable/No Data ■ System Building ■ System Enhancement ■ System Integration ■ System Maturity

Regional Profile of Maturity of Child Protection Systems, 2022

Across regions, an average of **63%** of the countries are in the **system enhancement** phase.

Region	EAP	ECA	ESA	LAC	MENA	SA	WCA
System Maturity			1				
System Integration	6	10	7	11	4	2	8
System Enhancement	17	12	13	23	14	5	14
System Building	3			2	1	1	2
Not Applicable/No Data	1				1		

Number of Countries

■ Not Applicable/No Data ■ System Building ■ System Enhancement
■ System Integration ■ System Maturity
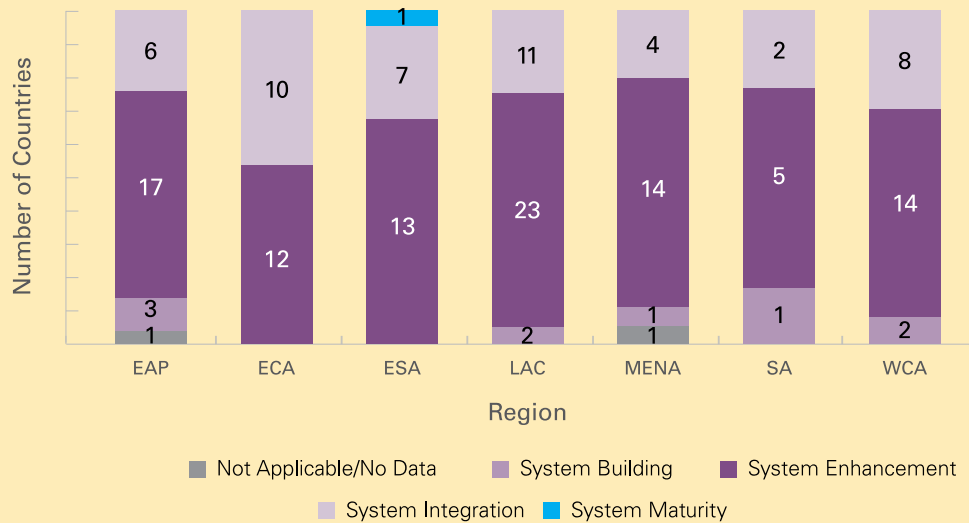
CP: Child Protection; CPs: Child Protection Strategy; CPSS: Child Protection System Strengthening. Source: United Nations Children's Fund, Child Protection Systems Strengthening data, UNICEF, New York, 2022.

Operationalizing the UNICEF child protection systems-strengthening approach

In 2022, UNICEF issued user guidance on how to use the child protection systems-strengthening (CPSS) benchmarks to measure, for the first time, the **effectiveness of investments in strengthening child protection systems**. The benchmark tool aims to enable stakeholders to identify specific areas of systems (based on 7 'intermediate outcomes' that are further subdivided into 19 'subdomains' or specific child protection system elements) that are lagging in progress. The user guidance aims to support UNICEF and partners to put in place a systematic and inclusive way of assessing and reporting on the benchmarks. The guidance calls for policymakers, experts and practitioners, as well as community members, including children and young people, to play a crucial role in making these informed assessments. The assessment process needs to be led and owned by governments.

Measuring the Maturity of Child Protection Systems
A GUIDE ON HOW TO USE THE CPSS BENCHMARKS

The most demonstrable area of progress in 2022 is the number of countries reaching the third phase of maturity (system integration). The number of countries reporting system integration increased from 39 in 2021 to 48 in 2022. They include Benin, Botswana, Gabon, Georgia, Jordan, Maldives, Mexico, Namibia, Suriname and Thailand. South Africa remains the only country assessed as reaching system maturity (Phase 4). However, most countries are either at Phase 1 (system building, 9 countries) or Phase 2 (system enhancement, 98 countries) *(see Figure 5)*.

FIGURE 5: The main areas of progress for countries with more mature systems, 2022

In countries that are at a more mature stage of child protection systems-strengthening (i.e., Phase 3 (System Integration) or Phase 4 (System Maturity)) significant advancements include:

51 countries	**40** countries	**37** countries	**34** countries	**32** countries
Strengthening legislation on child protection system and implementation structures	Improving understanding and articulation of national child protection system	Establishing child friendly legal procedures for children's access to justice	Building national, multisector, coordination mechanism	Scaling up the availability of child protection case management and referral systems

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Highlights of country progress include in Jordan, where UNICEF is helping to pilot an automated case management system that connects different ministries and is aimed at providing a streamlined response for cases of family violence. Similarly, in the Maldives, UNICEF supported the development and roll-out of the Child Rights Protection Act and Juvenile Justice Act, alongside providing training in a survivor-centred approach to key actors in the justice sector. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF served as an advisory body to the government to help draft the country's first national child protection policy. In Nepal, UNICEF supported the enactment of the Children's Regulation Act, which establishes additional minimum criteria and provisions for child protection human resources, services and facilities.

Strengthening the inclusion of refugee and migrant children in national child protection systems

In 2022, UNICEF's commitment to 'leave no child behind' was reinforced through the development of a new Global Strategic Collaboration Framework[20] with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), released in early 2023, which aims to bring about transformational change for refugee children and their families. The framework outlines a joint commitment to promote and support the inclusion of refugee children in national child protection systems. It builds on strong collaboration and learning from the Blueprint for Joint Action for Refugee Children, jointly implemented between 2020 and 2022.

Similarly, a new Strategic Collaboration Framework[21] between UNICEF and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) prioritizes efforts to strengthen national child protection systems to be inclusive of children affected by migration. In 2022, UNICEF and IOM developed evidence-based technical guidance on the inclusion of children affected by migration in national child protection systems (due for release in 2023), using the CPSS framework that UNICEF has adopted (See also '*Accelerating prevention and response actions for children on the move*').

Strengthening disability-inclusive child protection approaches

UNICEF continues to raise awareness of disability-inclusive child protection approaches (within UNICEF, across the United Nations system and among partners) through strategic engagements in cross-sectoral partnerships, key strategies (such as UNICEF's new 2022 Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy), global standards (such as the International Mine Action Standards 13.10 edition) and a diverse range of technical materials and knowledge products.

In 2022, UNICEF country offices report that concrete action was particularly notable in systems and workforce strengthening and improving prevention and response interventions *(see also Figure 6)*. In Albania, Cambodia and Rwanda, for example, UNICEF provided training and capacity-building for social service workers (including volunteers and para-social workers) on delivering inclusive services to children with disabilities and their families. In the Gambia and Kosovo, UNICEF supported legislative reform to enhance protection of children with disabilities. In the alternative care space, UNICEF continued to work with government and civil society partners to prioritize children with disabilities. National-level care reform efforts were seen in Chile, Kenya and Uzbekistan; prevention of family separation programming scaled up in Kazakhstan and North Macedonia; and deinstitutionalization and reintegration in Belarus and Rwanda.

FIGURE 6: Mainstreaming a disability-inclusive approach to child protection programming: Summary of results, 2022

303K
children with disabilities reached with **community-based MHPSS** across 40 countries – compared with nearly 50K in 51 countries in 2021

MORE THAN 5-fold increase

41K
children with disabilities who experienced violence were reached with **VAC services** across 35 countries – compared with over 45,000 in 64 countries in 2021

NO INCREASE from 2021

68K
children with disabilities affected by landmines and other explosive weapons provided with relevant **prevention and survivor assistance interventions** across 10 countries – compared with 70,000 across 12 countries in 2021

NO INCREASE from 2021

75K
adolescent girls with disabilities across 18 countries benefited from **prevention and care interventions to address child marriage** – compared to 11,000 adolescent girls with disabilities in 21 countries in 2021

NEARLY 6-fold increase

Strengthening the social service workforce in child protection

Strengthening the social service workforce is key to achieving inclusive and effective systems. A diverse and robust social service workforce is the best way to ensure that a child protection system can function in an inclusive and effective manner. Social service workers are often the first and best placed to respond to needs at the community level.

In 2022, UNICEF supported 152 countries to strengthen their social service workforce for child protection. This is an increase of 7 per cent from the 142 countries reporting progress in 2021 – and points to the prioritization of this critical element of child protection systems by UNICEF and partners.

Of these 152 countries, 41 report the availability of a quality assurance system for the social service workforce, in line with UNICEF's Guidelines for strengthening the social service workforce for child protection.[22] These countries represent 27 per cent of all reporting countries in 2022, suggesting that building a cadre of qualified social service workers for child protection remains at a nascent stage. Most countries are either at the early- (40 countries) or mid-development (55 countries) phase of building up their

workforces. Such data are critical to allow countries to take stock of progress and inform the direction of their investments.

There are stronger signs of progress in the number of countries developing a normative framework (65 countries in 2022). These frameworks outline and define social workforce functions, such as roles and responsibilities, working procedures and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for social service workers at the national and/or subnational level.

A national decree in Viet Nam, for example, now provides a strong definition of the role and function of social workers, as well as policy circulars outlining job codes, standards and a standardized salary scale for social workers. In the Middle East and Northern Africa, UNICEF and partners examined how integrated social protection and child protection systems[23] can enhance the SOPs for the social service workforce, drawing on key learnings from Brazil, Egypt, Iraq and Morocco.

A licensing or accreditation system is another foundational way to strengthen the social service workforce. In 2022, 44 countries reported progress in this area of work.

Support in Botswana focused on developing a code of conduct for social workers and drafting a bill to establish a Social Work Council to regulate social work professionals. In China, UNICEF helped design a new policy comprehensively outlining the formal process for applying for and approving social worker licences. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the government formally expanded the definition of social workers specialized in child protection to include para-social workers, social educators and investigators.

Some countries have sought to address human resource gaps by increasing the number of social workers to reduce the caseload burden.

In Bangladesh, UNICEF advocacy to improve the ratio of social workers to children contributed to the government increasing the number of social workers from 463 to 1,000. In South Africa, UNICEF, together with the government, addressed the ratio of social workers to children (1:400) by training an additional 450 health workers and 20 police officials on child protection issues. In Afghanistan, there was a significant scale-up of the social work sector, with the number of social workers increasing from 500 in 2021 to nearly 5,000 in 2022. In Ethiopia, an additional 800 social workers and community workers were deployed to fill the gaps in the child protection workforce.

It is encouraging to note that more countries are building the technical capacity of their social service workforce.

In India, UNICEF supported subdistrict structures to orient 1.2 million front-line workers and community volunteer members on prevention of violence against women and children, child labour, child marriage and family separation. In Indonesia, Social Work Learning Centers were established in 11 provinces, and at least 2,300 social service workers were trained in service standards and case management in 2022. In Bangladesh, UNICEF worked with ministries to capitalize on the visibility of the critical role social workers played during the COVID-19 pandemic, to build additional public support for the role of social workers through messaging on mass media channels; more than 30 million people nationwide had access to related messaging.

Despite progress, social service workforce strengthening continues to face significant hurdles at the national level.
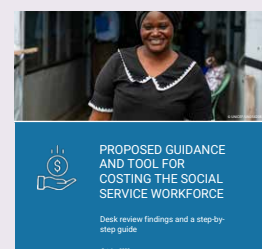
While normative frameworks related to workforce strengthening are being put in place, financial allocations to implement such frameworks remain a major challenge, due to the lack of prioritization of social services within national budgets. The COVID-19 pandemic led several countries to recognize the essential role social workers play in protecting children, yet three years of this recognition has not translated into increased investments at the level required. At the same time, there is increased attention to addressing the unmet needs of the national social service workforce.

Guidance on improving the ratios and costing of the social service workforce

In 2022, UNICEF and the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance issued the first-ever technical guidance on the ratios and costs of the social service workforce. The process was guided by an independent expert group.

The guidance on minimum social service workforce ratios[24] is intended to inform policymakers and workforce managers by enabling them to define an adequate level of resourcing for social services, and, on this basis, a minimum ratio of the workforce to population, alongside other steps to strengthen the social service workforce. It aims to serve as a step-by-step guide, outlining key considerations for estimating minimum workforce ratios at the country level or for a specific local context, to enable equitable access to quality social services for all. It can be applied in both development and humanitarian contexts.

The guidance on costing the social service workforce[25] advises policymakers and planners on how to apply a set of variables to their specific context to enable them to calculate the costs of the human resources required to meet a target minimum ratio of social service workers per population, in the country in question. The guidance first discusses the essential steps to prepare for a costing exercise, and then the specific steps to take in a costing exercise for the workforce.

PROPOSED GUIDANCE ON DEVELOPING MINIMUM SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE RATIOS

Desk review findings and a step-by-step guide

October 2022

PROPOSED GUIDANCE AND TOOL FOR COSTING THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

Desk review findings and a step-by-step guide

October 2022

Scaling up information management systems solutions

To help the social service workforce to effectively manage their caseloads, UNICEF continues to invest in strengthening child protection information management systems to support child protection actors in humanitarian and development contexts to manage protection-related data.

This includes scaling up digitally supported case management and incident monitoring solutions such as Primero,[26] an open-source digital public good. Since its launch in 2016, Primero has been used to support **more than 1 million children** and survivors of violence in **more than 50 countries and territories across all regions**. By the end of 2022, **over 10,000 users** from hundreds of organizations were using Primero to support care and services for vulnerable children.

Key accomplishments in scaling up information management systems in the past year include:

- **CPIMS+**[27] is being implemented in Eswatini, the Republic of Moldova, Nepal, Romania, Trinidad and Tobago, and Zanzibar, with major scale-ups in Guatemala, Iraq and Nigeria.

- **MRMIMS+** version 2 was rolled out in Afghanistan, Somalia and Ukraine, and is ready to be deployed globally, with the aim that all monitoring and reporting mechanism operations will be using Primero by the end of 2024.

- **GBVIMS+** is working, for the first time, to support government-led roll-outs in Sierra Leone.

To date, Primero has been offered as a hosted service, but a new hybrid service called 'Tier 4' became available in 2022.

This enables governments and other partners to host and manage Primero in-country – a major step forward in ensuring Primero becomes a truly integrated part of a country's systems-strengthening approach for child protection. Similarly, it continues to be integrated with other data systems such as UNHCR's proGres v4. For example, a pilot integration of Primero and ProGres v4[28] in Gambella, Ethiopia, is helping to advance the aims of the UNICEF–UNHCR Global Strategic Collaboration Framework. This work is a true testament to the role Primero can play in strengthening case management services for refugee children as part of improved humanitarian–development–peace nexus programming.

> *By the end of 2022, UNICEF had supported 66 Primero implementations, which were live in 51 countries and territories. In 2022, more than 10,000 users were managing over 380,000 cases for vulnerable children and survivors of violence on the Primero platform – an increase of 87 per cent compared to 2021. To mobilize the use of Primero, UNICEF supported the training of more than 2,500 new social service workforce members – an increase of over 30 per cent in one year.*

Countries with a quality assurance system in place for social service work
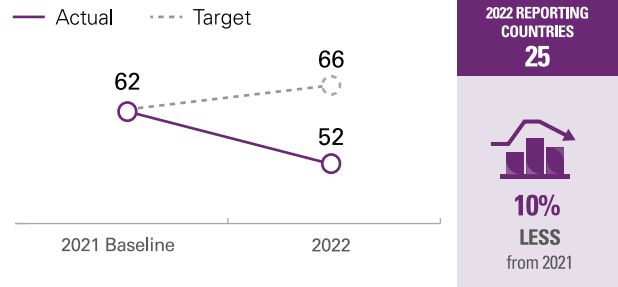
— Actual   ···· Target

2022 REPORTING COUNTRIES
152

40
41
41

2021 Baseline   2022
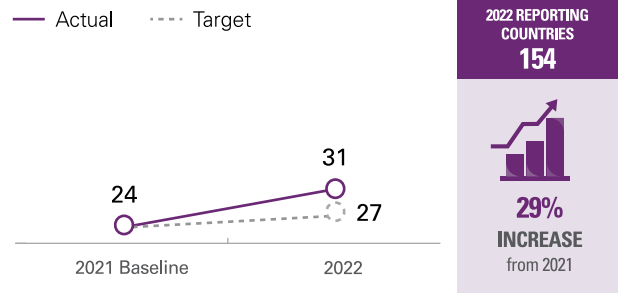
3%
INCREASE
from 2021
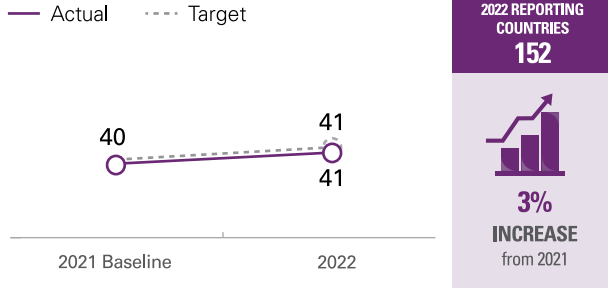
% of countries experiencing conflict with a system in place to document, analyse and use data about grave child rights violations/other serious rights violations to strengthen prevention and response services

— Actual   ···· Target

2022 REPORTING COUNTRIES
25

62
66
52

2021 Baseline   2022

10%
LESS
from 2021

Countries with legislative and policy framework to eliminate the worst forms of child labour

— Actual   ···· Target

2022 REPORTING COUNTRIES
156

72
58
60

2021 Baseline   2022

24%
INCREASE
from 2021

Countries with specialized justice for children systems

— Actual   ···· Target

2022 REPORTING COUNTRIES
154

31
24
27

2021 Baseline   2022

29%
INCREASE
from 2021

Countries with legislative and policy framework to end child sexual exploitation and abuse (including technology-enabled)

— Actual   ···· Target

2022 REPORTING COUNTRIES
155

43
29
32

2021 Baseline   2022

48%
INCREASE
from 2021
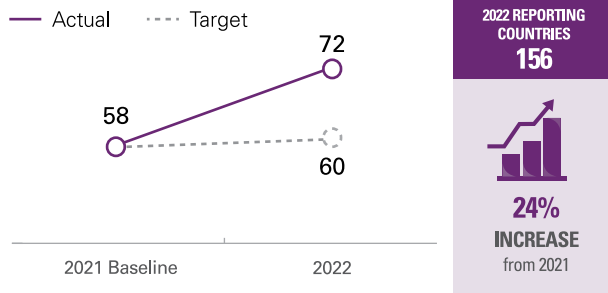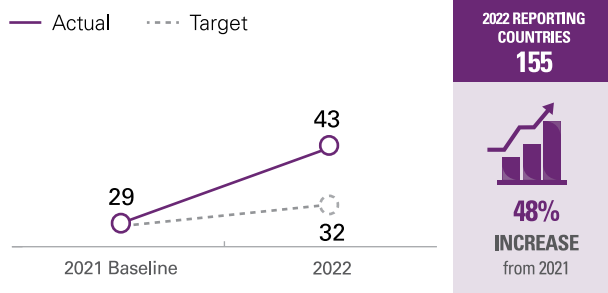
Countries that have policies, programmes and mechanisms for prevention of family separation and promotion of family-based alternative care, in line with the 2009 Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children
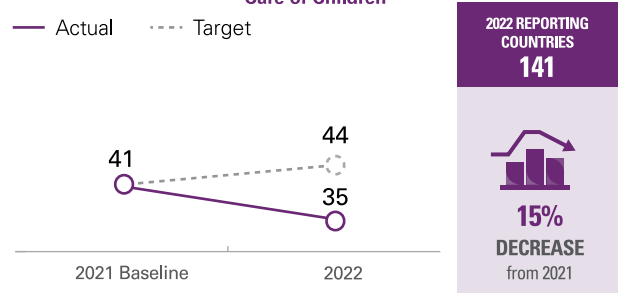
— Actual   ···· Target

2022 REPORTING COUNTRIES
141

41
44
35

2021 Baseline   2022

15%
DECREASE
from 2021

Countries with legislative and policy framework to end the corporal punishment of children

— Actual   ···· Target

2022 REPORTING COUNTRIES
154

48
50
45

2021 Baseline   2022

6%
DECREASE
from 2021
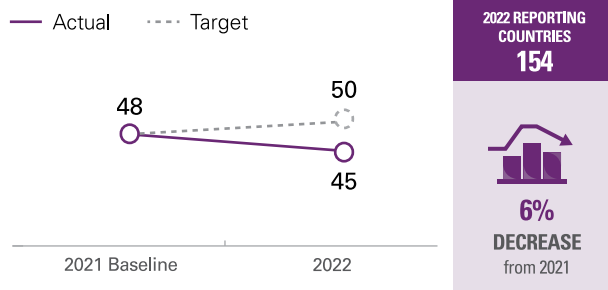
Countries that have in place free and universal birth registration service within the civil registration system

— Actual   ···· Target

2022 REPORTING COUNTRIES
153

47
50
50

2021 Baseline   2022

6%
INCREASE
from 2021
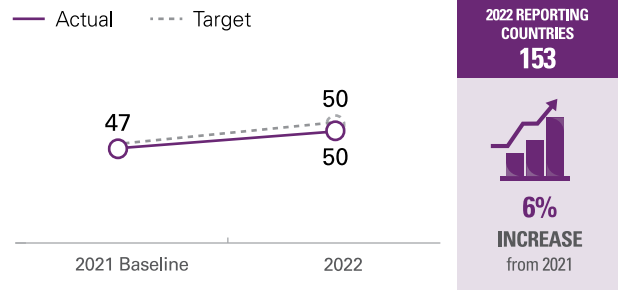
Strategic output 3.1: Protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect

UNICEF supports the establishment of the Barnahus network in Ukraine, where a multidisciplinary team helps children who have witnessed war crimes avoid re-traumatization.

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Reducing all forms of violence against girls, boys and women

Violence can take many forms, threatening the safety and well-being of girls, boys and women in every country and across all contexts. Latest data indicate that, worldwide, about half of all children and a third of women are subject to physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.[29] These risks are magnified in climate-related and public health emergencies, fragile settings and situations of armed conflict.

In 2022, UNICEF adopted a more pronounced approach to prevention programming aimed at addressing the social and behaviour drivers of violence and operating at the intersections of violence against women and violence against girls and boys. Greater programming attention has been paid to strengthening integration with other sectors – including health, nutrition, education, justice and social protection – a cornerstone of the shift towards prevention to end violence in schools, prevent family separation and address GBV, and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) offline and online *(see also integrated results in 'Strengthening the social service workforce', 'Strategic output 3.2', 'Strategic output 3.3' and the 'UNICEF Goal Area 2 (Education) 2022 Annual Results Report').*

> *In 2022, almost 5 million children (48 per cent girls) who experienced violence across 109 countries accessed UNICEF-supported health, social welfare and justice-related services. In humanitarian situations, nearly 9 million people in 75 countries (3.6 million girls in countries reporting sex-disaggregated data) were provided with UNICEF-supported GBV risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions. UNICEF also supported efforts to fill gaps in legal frameworks to address the worst forms of child labour, child SEA (including technology-facilitated), and the prohibition of corporal punishment in all its forms (see Figure 7).*

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In the Republic of Congo, UNICEF and partners launched a campaign against online violence which coincided with the adoption of the Mouebara Law. The Law aims to combat violence against girls and women in the country, both online and offline.

FIGURE 8: Summary of results on addressing **violence against girls, boys and women**, 2022

4.7 million

children who had experienced violence reached with health, social work and justice/law enforcement **services in 109 countries*****

80%	12%	8%
Social work/social services	Justice/law enforcement services	Health services

Nearly 9 million

women and children benefited from gender-based violence risk mitigation or support services **in 75 countries.**

Age

60%	40%
Under 18 years	18 years and above

Gender

♀ 58%	♂ 42%

Intervention type

43%	50%	7%
Risk mitigation	Prevention	Response

49.2 million

children and adults have **access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse** (110 countries)

Age

37%	63%
Under 18 years	18 years and above

**Gender**

♂ 47%	♀ 53%

Nearly 12 million

parents and caregivers reached through parenting programmes across **81 countries***

7%	8%	84%

1%

Parents and caregivers of children in adolescence

Parents and caregivers of children across all/several age ranges

Parents and caregivers of children prior to school entry

Parents and caregivers of children in middle childhood

43 countries
+14 from 2021

have **legislative and policy framework to prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse** (including technology-enabled)

72 countries
+14 from 2021

have **legislative and policy framework to eliminate the worst forms of child labour**

45 countries

have **legislative and policy framework to prohibit corporal punishment** in all settings*

% reporting countries with policy frameworks to end corporal punishment, by setting, 2022

Sentence for crime
73%
of 154 countries

Home
34%
of 154 countries

Alternative Care
46%
of 154 countries

Penal Institutions
66%
of 154 countries

Schools
68%
of 154 countries

Day care
43%
of 154 countries

Note: Changes are compared to results achieved in 2021 unless otherwise specified. Figures are rounded. *Individuals received one or more intervention **Disaggregated data are not always available for the entire aggregated total. The proportion provided here are based on available country data with relevant disaggregated information. *** Data based on selected number of reporting countries for 2022
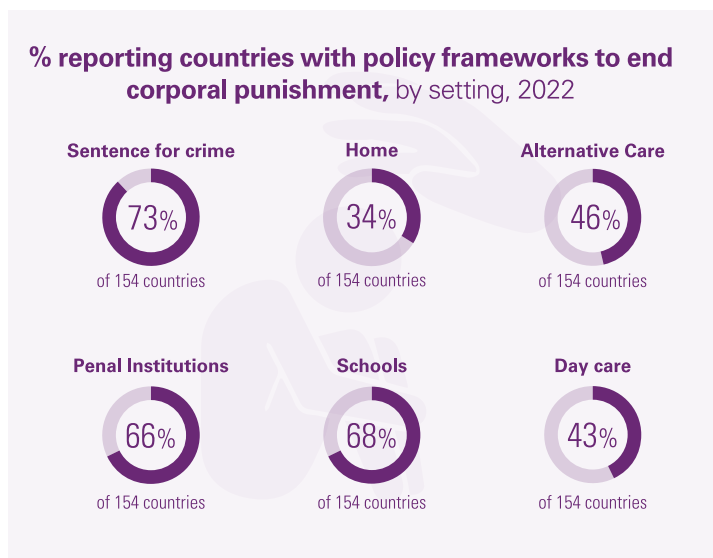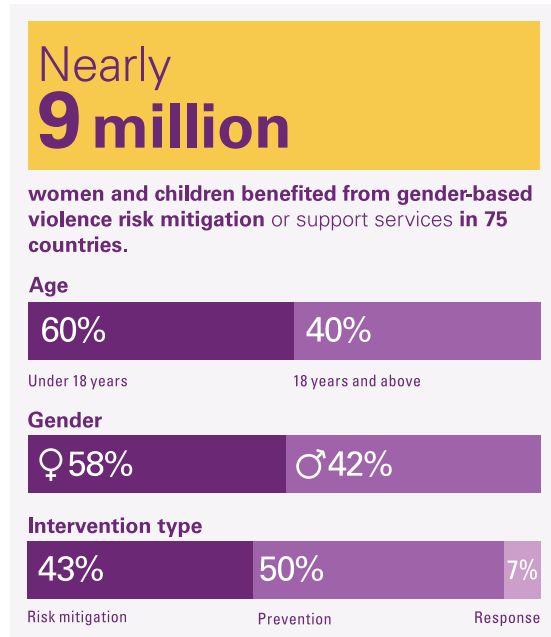
Fostering global partnerships to accelerate action

UNICEF collaborates closely with multiple partners to advocate for and mobilize action to end violence against girls, boys and women. In 2022, UNICEF provided technical support for Member State initiatives, including the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on a World Day for the Prevention of and Healing from Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Violence.[30] This global recognition of an annual day of reflection and response will provide much-needed leverage to accelerate calls to action across the world.

The Together to #ENDviolence Leaders' Event[31] held in 2022 resulted in 15 countries reaffirming national commitments to end all forms of violence, with notable strong statements from Cambodia, Guinea, Jordan and Zambia. UNICEF also supported over 20 countries to convene National Government-led Policy Dialogues,[32] as part of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children,[33] to advocate for and mobilize action to end violence against girls, boys and women.

As an active participant in the WeProtect Global Alliance[34] and the World Economic Forum Global Coalition for Digital Safety,[35] UNICEF supports advocacy to shape normative frameworks with global consequences within this space. UNICEF mobilized significant government participation in the WeProtect Global Summit, which brought together 400 leaders from government, industry, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations to identify solutions to accelerate action to combat online child SEA. UNICEF's publication 'Framing the Future'[36] – a 42-country review of the implementation of national responses to online child SEA – was the Summit's flagship publication. Findings presented in the report influenced the revision of the WeProtect Global Alliance Model National Response framework.

UNICEF also advocated for legislative responses to online child SEA in the elaboration of an international treaty on cybercrime. For example, UNICEF entered a framework of cooperation with INTERPOL to support the strengthening of national criminal justice responses to online child SEA. UNICEF also actively partners with the International Telecommunication Union[37] and works to strengthen engagement with industry. In Southeast Asia, for example, UNICEF supported the first-ever Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) ICT Forum on Child Online Protection, which created momentum across the region for the technology industry to understand its responsibility and the opportunity to collaborate to provide a safer digital environment for children. UNICEF offices supported member country participation as well as children's engagement, which informed the 2022 Regional Call to Action from Children and Young People to the Private Sector on Child Online Protection.[38]

UNICEF is also addressing the need for better-quality and functional data to understand the drivers and incidence of violence. It is imperative to use this knowledge to identify effective interventions in different country contexts. In 2022, UNICEF supported Member States in the elaboration of an International Classification of Violence against Children[39] to standardize international definitions and data collection and increase data availability.

Preventing violence against children through social and behaviour change

UNICEF is amplifying initiatives to prevent all forms of violence against girls, boys and women across all contexts by increasing the use of comprehensive social and behaviour change (SBC) programmes that address the root causes of violence at individual, social and structural levels.

SBC programmes are grounded in formative research that identifies the context-specific determinants of violence and works with key stakeholders to target prevention initiatives.

For example, research commissioned by UNICEF Zimbabwe in 2022 identified the important role of traditional chiefs in protecting children within communities. These findings are being used to develop government-supported programmes that position traditional leaders as champions of children's rights, to influence and shape community-led dialogues *(see also 'Strategic output 3.2' for more work in this area).*

SBC interventions are increasingly being integrated across many areas of UNICEF prevention programming, including those that promote parenting practices, prevent online child SEA and tackle GBV. Integration of SBC is also an effective strategy to create safer learning environments for children and leverage the important role schools can play in building skills and promoting norms that protect children from violence.

Sorontsoa, 46, shows the back of his t-shirt. It reads "A father with positive ambition protects his family." Sorontsoa is part of a programme supported by UNICEF Madagascar that focuses on positive masculinity. It consists of creating awareness about gender-based violence and providing information and tools for sexual health, parenting practices and positive attitudes for men. The volunteers are called 'responsible men' and come from different backgrounds.

In countries as diverse as Azerbaijan, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico and Somalia, UNICEF led evidence-informed SBC approaches to address violence in and around schools.

The UNICEF-supported Safe Schools programme in Somalia, for example, aims to challenge social and discriminatory gender norms by building a protective school environment, while also empowering girls and reducing bystander apathy among boys. In 2022, the programme was implemented in 71 schools, enabling 10,500 boys and girls to participate in a range of SBC activities such as peer-to-peer dialogues. These interventions were complemented with the development of a code of conduct for schools and anti-bullying policies and procedures; subsequent to these actions, a marked improvement was noted in boys' attitudes towards the rights of girls and women and their leadership role in communities.

UNICEF also prioritized expanding the use of community engagement approaches as an important means to reach wider communities, including by building the capacity of local institutions and communities to lead SBC interventions.

For example, in Honduras, UNICEF, with the support of 23 local organizations and 2,300 young people, enabled almost 81,000 children, adolescents, youth and women to participate in community engagement interventions to promote social cohesion and challenge beliefs based on gender inequality. Of these, around 5,900 men and adolescents regularly participated in transformative masculinities programmes. In Jordan, social media influencers helped create online safety content that was accessed by 7 million individuals through social media platforms and 2 million people via the use of SMS messaging.

Building parenting skills to promote nurturing care

UNICEF invests in evidence-based prevention programmes that strengthen parenting skills, while also challenging social norms that underpin violence against children in the home. In 2022, UNICEF-supported parenting programmes increased and expanded, reaching 11.8 million mothers, fathers and caregivers across more than 80 countries. This is a threefold increase from 2021 (*see Figure 8*).

Most of this increase stems from the integration of parenting interventions in national service delivery mechanisms in countries with large populations. This includes expanding reach via community-based systems to reach village level, as in the case of Bangladesh, where almost 4 million people benefited from the integration of interventions in 2022. In the Philippines, a key strategy employed by UNICEF and government partners was to link parenting support with the conditional cash transfer system, impacting nearly 4.2 million people in 2022.

FIGURE 9: Summary of results on strengthening parenting and caregiver support, 2022

Number of countries reporting on providing parenting programmes supported by UNICEF

81 Grand total

18	15	15	10	10	7	6
ECA	LAC	WCA	ESA	EAP	MENA	SA

Around **11.8 million** mothers, fathers and caregivers were directly reached through UNICEF-supported **parenting programmes across 81 countries**.

3-fold INCREASE FROM 2021

Parent and caregiver support by gender of children
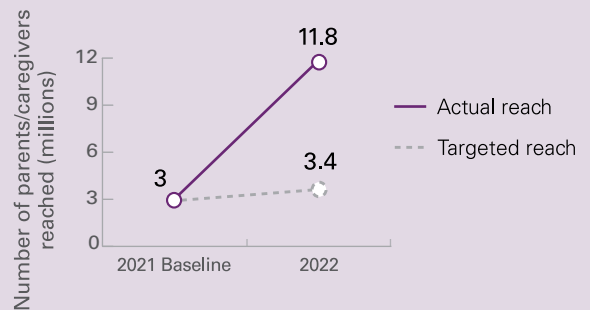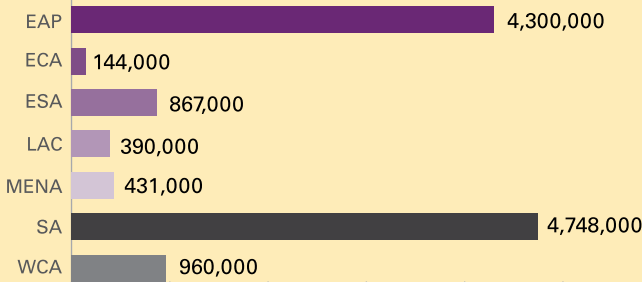
32% 68%

Parent and caregiver support by age range of children
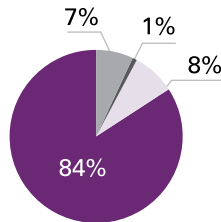
7% 1% 8% 84%

- Parents and caregivers of children prior to school entry
- Parents and caregivers of children in middle childhood
- Parents and caregivers of children in adolescence
- Parents and caregivers of children across all/several age ranges

Parents and caregivers reached with interventions, by region

Region	Number
EAP	4,300,000
ECA	144,000
ESA	867,000
LAC	390,000
MENA	431,000
SA	4,748,000
WCA	960,000

Number of parents/caregivers reached (millions)

11.8

3

3.4

2021 Baseline — 2022

—— Actual reach
- - - Targeted reach

Notes: EAP, East Asia and the Pacific; ECA, Europe and Central Asia; ESA, Eastern and Southern Africa; LAC, Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA, Middle East and North Africa; SA, South Asia; WCA, West and Central Africa. Disaggregated data are not always available for the entire aggregated total. The proportion provided here is based on and out of the available data with relevant disaggregated information.

PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

"We are very proud of our five-year partnership with UNICEF. Our jointly staged LOVE MYSELF campaign supports UNICEF's worldwide efforts to end violence against children and continues to promote self-love, kindness, and well-being. We look forward to continuing the partnership even further, to help ensure that every child, everywhere, lives a life free from violence."

– BIGHIT MUSIC

Spotlight: Driving positive change to parenting practices at scale in the Philippines

In 2022, the Government of the Philippines measured 'child discipline at home' in national statistics for the first time since 1968 – a significant step in understanding the prevalence of violence against children. This evidence has bolstered national action.

The government's integration of its parenting programming with a conditional cash transfer programme expanded access to training, chat groups and family development sessions (online and offline) to over 4 million parents and caregivers.

Alongside efforts to build caregiving capacity, UNICEF Philippines is also driving structural and normative change. A key milestone included the passing of the Parenting Effectiveness Service Programme Act, which mandates local government units to support skills-building and societal norms change initiatives in communities.

In 2022, UNICEF worked with partners to identify and challenge the harmful social and gender norms that perpetuate violent discipline in the home.

For example, in Uganda, UNICEF's partnership with Makerere University continued to provide technical expertise to the national parenting programme. This included developing national standards on parenting programmes which, in turn, are informing the development of a parenting manual, a facilitator's guide and information, education and communication (IEC) materials to guide community-based structured parenting sessions. The manual looks at the whole-of-life-cycle approach to positive parenting to tackle harmful norms associated with sexual and gender-based violence and child maltreatment. In Georgia, to address similar concerns, UNICEF initiated the 'Be a Parent' intervention aimed at promoting positive parenting behaviour for parents with children under 12 years. This included distributing a parenting resource, 'Parents ABC', in print and digital formats, reaching over 334,900 parents.

Technology-facilitated parenting initiatives have enabled countries across the world to reach parents and caregivers. UNICEF supplemented in-person group and home-based programmes with novel remote and digital delivery modalities to provide parenting support that is both at scale and affordable.

For example, UNICEF is working with the Parenting for Lifelong Health Initiative in piloting and scaling up 'ParentChat' – online parent support groups delivered by trained facilitators via group chats in messaging apps – and 'ParentText', an interactive evidence-informed online parenting messaging system that provides tips in text to basic phones and smartphones covering various stages of a child's development from birth to 17 years. In 2022, progress was made in piloting and scaling up these innovations in partnership with government and other partners in countries such as Jamaica, Malaysia and South Africa.

Spotlight: Improving access to early childhood care in Egypt

In Egypt, UNICEF, working in close partnership with the government and NGOs, adopted a multisectoral approach to strengthening positive parenting approaches, with a focus on improving access to early childhood care. Three innovative community 'hubs' were set up to provide community-based childcare services across three governorates. Additionally, UNICEF linked programming within the national cash transfer programme, equipping social workers, nursery facilitators, nurses and community health workers to provide parenting support more directly within social protection programming. Over 3,500 service providers were trained through the 'hub' network, who subsequently engaged almost 300,000 parents with face-to-face support. These initiatives are paving the way for the development of a national positive parenting programme.

Addressing violence against children in relation to digital environments

Child protection issues in the digital environment are continuing to evolve, challenging the capacity of parents and caregivers, communities and governments to respond. UNICEF is working in all regions to support partners in this fast-changing area to ensure prevention and response policies and programmes are fit for purpose in the digital age.

In general, legislative frameworks have failed to keep pace with the changing nature of crimes against children facilitated by technology. UNICEF continued to innovate in systems-strengthening and legislative reform to address the challenges to children's protection presented by the digital environment.

In response to these challenges, UNICEF developed a global guide on improving legislative frameworks to protect children from online SEA in 2022. The guide, 'Legislating for the digital age',[41] is aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and other international and regional conventions, general comments and guidelines of treaty bodies, model laws and good practices. The guide has been used to influence legislative reform in the European Union (EU), as well as current negotiations for an international treaty on cybercrime.

At the country level, UNICEF prioritized ensuring legislative frameworks protect children from all forms of violence enabled by technology, including online child SEA.

Significant milestones in 2022 included the passage of new legislation in the Philippines to tackle online sexual abuse and exploitation, and a Presidential Decree in Tunisia on cybersecurity that criminalizes online child sexual exploitation. UNICEF also supported policy development and multisectoral governance structures in child online protection in countries as diverse as China, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

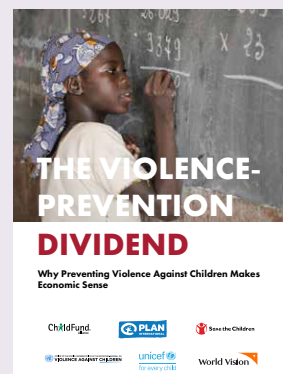*UNICEF also supported capacity development for key sectors responsible for service delivery.*

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF supported the Safer Internet Centre to better respond to and support survivors of online violence. In Ghana, following the success of the first digital forensic lab that UNICEF supported to establish in Accra in 2021, a second digital forensic lab, supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), was established to better support criminal prosecutions in the northern part of the country. In Mongolia, UNICEF supported the training of law enforcement officers, prosecutors and other justice officials on victim identification, digital evidence and investigative techniques. In the United Republic of Tanzania, pre- and in-service training for the police now includes ways to deal with cases of online child SEA. In 2022, all 3,000 police graduates received the training. These graduates will be deployed in different police departments nationwide. Furthermore, in the last year, 200 police officers in three regions went through in-service training on online child SEA.

Across all regions, the education sector is an important partner to promote safe internet use for children and young people.

In Ecuador, UNICEF conducted a survey with the Ministry of Education to gain insights from over 26,000 adolescents and young people. Survey findings are informing the development of a national protocol for using the internet as a safe and violence-free space. In Ghana, almost 2,000 school staff members have been trained on a digital literacy package as part of the safe school initiative.

Building evidence on the socioeconomic dividends of ending violence against girls, boys and women

Violence against children can have devastating consequences for a child, their family and communities. But violence also places a high financial burden on a country's economy. UNICEF made important contributions to provide evidence on the scale of this burden and offer solutions. The release of an inter-agency publication, 'The Violence Prevention Dividend',[40] presents an investment case for preventing violence against children, showing that ending violence against children offers the potential to generate large social and economic dividends. This includes removing a crucial barrier to children achieving their full potential, as well as potentially saving costs of up to 5 per cent of national gross domestic product.

THE VIOLENCE-PREVENTION **DIVIDEND**

Why Preventing Violence Against Children Makes Economic Sense

ChildFund · PLAN · Save the Children · END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN · unicef for every child · World Vision

Spotlight: From evidence to action – the case of Indonesia

In late 2022, the [Disrupting Harm in Indonesia](#)[42] report was launched, led by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection. The report has informed multiple efforts to prevent and respond to online risks, including the development of a national road map on child protection and revisions of national standards and training modules for integrated delivery of services for the protection of women and children.

To increase visibility, UNICEF also supported the development of a web-based platform, *Jogo Konco* (meaning 'protect a friend'), to provide resources for children to mitigate risks, including online safety. To build cross-sectoral linkages, UNICEF established a new partnership with the Indonesian National Police in late 2022 to more effectively strengthen the quality of response services for survivors and witnesses of online child SEA, which aims to scale up the breadth and reach of services.

Similar research has been launched in 13 countries across Eastern and Southern Africa and Southeast Asia. Additionally, the project was extended to 11 countries in Latin America, the Middle East and Northern Africa, and Eastern Europe for the period 2022–2025. The research is undertaken by the Office of Research – Innocenti, INTERPOL and ECPAT International, with support from the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

DISRUPTING HARM IN INDONESIA

Evidence on online child sexual exploitation and abuse

Funded by: End Violence Against Children

Implemented by: ECPAT / INTERPOL / unicef Office of Research–Innocenti

## Addressing gender-based violence in humanitarian action

GBV is one of the most pervasive and least visible types of violence perpetrated against girls and women. At least one in three females, or more than 1 billion girls and women worldwide, will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, simply because of their gender.[43] GBV occurs in all settings, in times of peace and in situations of instability. The Sustainable Development Gaols (SDGs) –

with particular emphasis on SDGs 5.2 and 16.2 – will not be met without prioritizing action to prevent GBV across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.
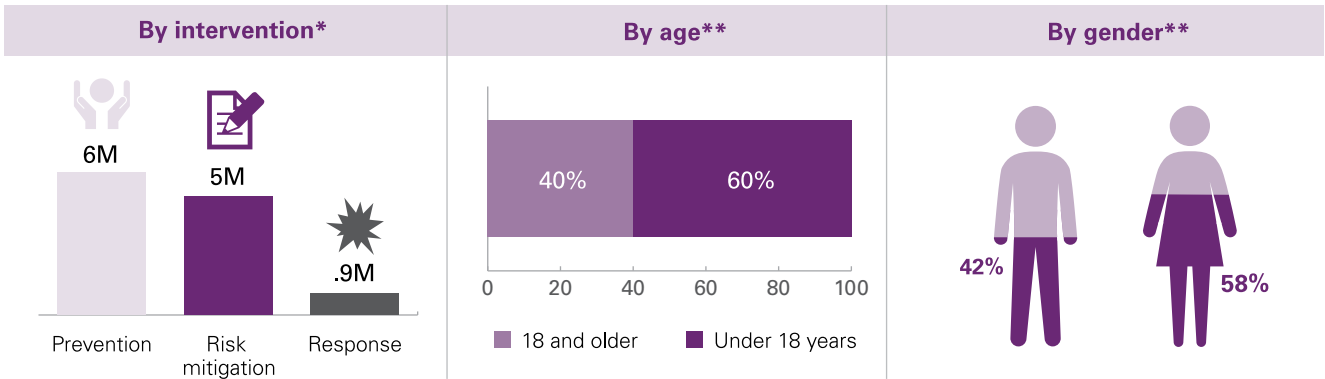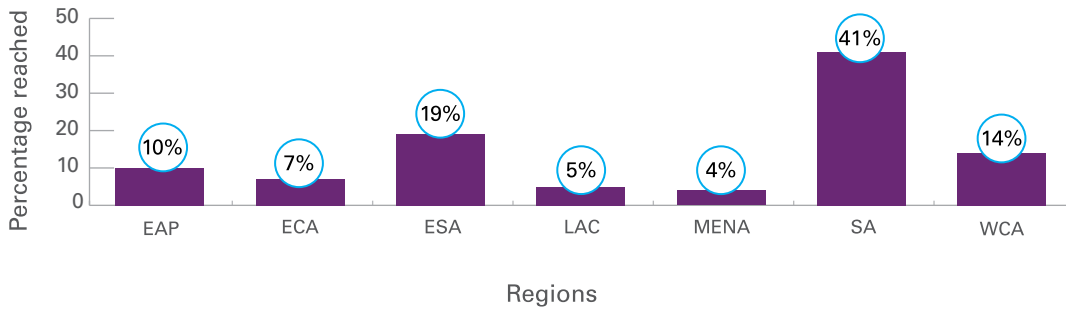
In crisis settings, such as armed conflict, public health emergencies and natural disasters, risks are amplified, and rates of GBV soar. Girls and women, especially adolescents, face the greatest risk. UNICEF places a strategic priority on building response, risk mitigation and prevention programmes at scale.

> *In 2022, UNICEF continued investing in programmes to prevent GBV in humanitarian contexts, resulting in nearly 9 million people across 75 countries accessing a comprehensive set of services designed to support survivors of GBV, mitigate the risk of GBV and prevent GBV by addressing its underlying conditions and drivers (see Figure 9).*

FIGURE 10: Countries reporting on women and children receiving GBV services, by region, 2022

16 WCA	**15** LAC	**13** ECA	**11** ESA	**7** EAP	**7** MENA	**6** SA

Countries reporting on women and children receiving GBV services

75 Grand total
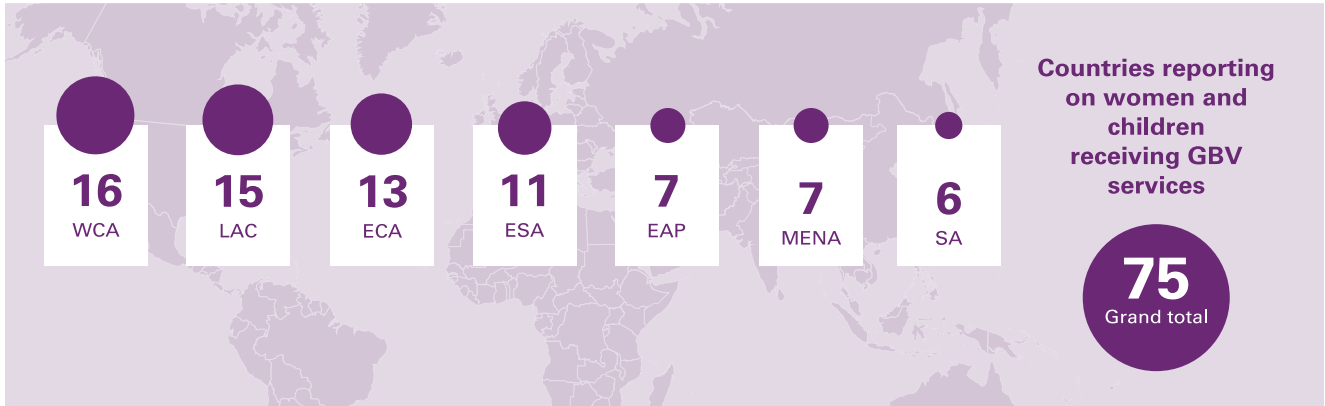
Nearly 9 million women. girls and boys were reached with UNICEF-supported interventions across regions in 2022

Percentage reached / Regions

EAP 10%, ECA 7%, ESA 19%, LAC 5%, MENA 4%, SA 41%, WCA 14%

By intervention*

6M Prevention
5M Risk mitigation
.9M Response

By age**

40% — 60%

0 20 40 60 80 100

■ 18 and older   ■ Under 18 years

By gender**

42%   58%

Notes: Figures are rounded. * Individuals received one or more intervention **Disaggregated data are not always available for the entire aggregated total. The proportion provided here are based on availalable country data with relevant disaggregated information.

Strengthening tools to increase women's and girls' access to virtual safe spaces

In 2022, a digital tool to address GBV was created with and for girls and women and is one of UNICEF's Generation Equality[44] commitments. The tool was piloted and tested in Iraq and Ecuador, and implementation started in Afghanistan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The GBV e-referral pathway app enables remote and digital updating of referral pathways in real time so that information on quality services is more widely accessible. It was launched in Bangladesh and Zimbabwe in 2022. In Bangladesh, the product is now being used in Cox's Bazar by 79 focal points from 28 organizations providing specialized services to GBV survivors (which represent 54 per cent of the specialized organizations operating in Cox's Bazar). In Zimbabwe, 77 focal points from 14 organizations providing services in three key provinces (Harare, Manicaland and Masvingo) are registered with the app (which represents 77 per cent of the specialized organizations operating in the country). The next phase will deploy in Sierra Leone and Türkiye (cross-border regions).

In 2022, UNICEF supported almost 900,000 women and children to access GBV response services across 55 countries. GBV survivors need timely, comprehensive services and quality care for physical and psychosocial recovery – a critical requirement in humanitarian contexts. Receipt of services ensures a survivor's right to life-saving care and contributes to her safety and dignity.

In Ukraine, UNICEF utilized existing mobile GBV teams in the east of the country as well as ongoing work with the government and municipalities to quickly and effectively scale up related services at the onset of the war. Over 106,800 women and children accessed these services, enabling them to receive a range of social services and health-care, psychosocial and legal support. In Somalia, UNICEF supported 122,000 individuals (69 per cent women and girls) to access clinical, psychosocial and legal support, and safe accommodation through one-stop centres, safe houses, family care centres, and women and girls' safe spaces in camps for internally displaced persons and in host communities.

As the designated lead United Nations agency for GBV risk mitigation, UNICEF accelerated programming to integrate GBV risk mitigation across all sectors. In total, UNICEF supported over 5 million girls, boys and women in 65 countries to benefit from risk mitigation interventions.

The largest populations benefitting from such interventions were in Afghanistan (101,000), Benin (220,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (212,000), Haiti (134,000), Jordan (125,000), Somalia (106,000), Ukraine (141,000) and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (162,000). Progress was also made elsewhere to strengthen GBV programming. In Lebanon, for example, UNICEF focused support at the community level to address the upsurge of reported GBV incidents since the beginning of 2022. UNICEF and partners put in place several risk mitigation interventions that were identified

as being needed by women and girls during community-based discussions. As a result, over 70 per cent of the women and girls who received interventions subsequently reported feeling safer. In the Republic of Moldova, UNICEF collaborated with partners to coordinate multisectoral safety audits to assess risks and put in place remedial measures, benefiting almost 63,500 people across several sites, many of whom were fleeing from the war in Ukraine.

UNICEF and partners also enabled 6 million women and children to access GBV prevention interventions in 64 countries. This includes through UNICEF's flagship Communities Care: Transforming Lives and Preventing Violence programme. This is a community-based model for preventing and responding to sexual violence against girls and women in conflict-affected settings, with a focus on Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan.

In 2022, Communities Care was tailored and contextualized for Iraq and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, over 600 men and boys, including local and traditional leaders, took part in a series of focused dialogues, subsequently resulting in the community leaders pledging commitments to address GBV and child marriage. More broadly, UNICEF expanded peer networks and improved access to services, benefiting over 141,000 people. Messages around preventing and responding to GBV were also aired on five local radio stations.

UNICEF also invested in empowering local women's organizations to specifically address prevention of GBV in emergencies. In 2022, UNCEF provided direct support to 165 local women's organizations across multiple countries. To strengthen this type of engagement, UNICEF is piloting a partnership assessment tool that was developed collaboratively with local women's organizations. UNICEF is also undertaking participatory research to assess the social network importance of local women's organizations in tackling GBV at the community level.

Investing in data and evidence on GBV in humanitarian action

Measuring the cost of inaction in Colombia: UNICEF undertook the first-ever analysis of the cost of inaction[45] on intimate partner violence, focused on Colombia. Findings identified that women and adolescent girls (13–24 years old) who were exposed to conflict were twice as likely to experience physical intimate partner violence compared to women and girls not affected by conflict. The report concludes that nearly 40 per cent of the overall 'cost of inaction' around ending physical intimate partner violence against women and adolescent girls is linked to the approximately quarter of girls and women who are affected by conflict. This research provides stark evidence around the costs associated with conflict-related GBV, and the importance of prioritizing and investing in interventions at the onset of crises to mitigate long-term impact.

Measuring the effectiveness of GBV risk mitigation in nutrition programming: UNICEF and partners[46] are conducting multi-year collaborative research in South Sudan to measure the effectiveness of an integrated package of GBV/nutrition programming. The study seeks to capture if and how GBV risk mitigation interventions affect safety and access to nutrition services for women and adolescent girls, as well as to identify key performance indicators for nutrition programming. Initial findings illustrate important linkages between gendered power dynamics, GBV-related safety risks and the links to delivery of nutrition services. The results from South Sudan are consistent with, and complementary to, the findings of UNICEF's 2022 global rapid evidence assessment that highlights important linkages between maternal caregivers' exposure to intimate partner violence and nutrition outcomes for children. The South Sudan GBV/nutrition programmatic model will be adapted and rolled out within multiple UNICEF operations responding to the Horn of Africa crisis in early 2023.

Strengthening GBV prevention and response services in development contexts

In 2022, UNICEF collaborated with governments across multiple development contexts to ensure GBV prevention and response systems are more effectively integrated into national child protection systems. This includes developing legal and policy frameworks to enable a protective environment for girls and women at risk of or survivors of GBV.

UNICEF Guyana, for example, supported the drafting of a new Family Violence Bill to directly tackle the weaknesses in the Domestic Violence Act of 1996. The Bill strengths legal provisions to deal with intimate partner violence and introduces innovative provisions that extend protections to cohabiting couples who are not legally married. In the Philippines, UNICEF supported the passage of critical child protection laws such as increasing the age of sexual consent from 12 to 16 years.

As part of the systems approach, it is also critical to ensure access to comprehensive (and integrated) services (including in the health-care, education, social protection and legal sectors), so that girls and women at risk of or affected by GBV receive the care they need.

In Ecuador, UNICEF worked with the justice sector to strengthen professional capacity by developing a training module on sexual crimes against children and GBV. In 2022, the judiciary made this training mandatory for all judicial officials. UNICEF in Zimbabwe focused on enhancing the quality of and access to integrated services in the health sector, benefiting over 57,000 children and adults (69 per cent female). Services received include community-based MHPSS. In Tajikistan, as part of the Spotlight Initiative,[47] UNICEF strengthened reporting mechanisms across 61 schools, making it easier to report cases of GBV and other forms of violence for more than 90,000 schoolchildren and staff. In addition, almost 17,800 school directors and education department employees (52 per cent women) from a further 177 schools were oriented on GBV prevention and response.

Scaling up response services for survivors of violence

While the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy 2021–2030 emphasizes ensuring all children grow up in a protective environment (**universal prevention**), at the same time, UNICEF worked in over 100 countries in 2022 to scale up action to ensure children experiencing violations receive quality and sustainable services (**response and preventing recurrence**).

Stronger service integration across sectors was an important driver of results for children. UNICEF worked with partners in all regions to improve response and support services for survivors of violence.

In South Africa, UNICEF supported the government's development of the National Violence Prevention Strategy, as well as relevant ministries to expand the integration of child protection service delivery in health-care facilities and in the court system. Social workers were also oriented to use improved case management processes. In 2022, over 764,000 children either at risk or who had experienced some form of violence received specialized health, social work or legal services. In El Salvador, UNICEF provided child violence prevention and gender-sensitive training for almost 1,500 health personnel and supported the creation of child-friendly spaces in 8 hospitals for child and adolescent survivors. UNICEF also continued to work with the justice sector to strengthen services for child survivors, with a focus on GBV. In 2022, over 7,200 children who had experienced some form of violence received UNICEF-supported specialized health, social work or legal services.

UNICEF also supports 'one-stop shop' coordinated services so that child survivors can receive multidisciplinary services 'under one roof' or through multidisciplinary teams.

In Albania, 'one-stop centres' (Barnahus)[48] are now fully operational for child survivors of all forms of violence in two regional paediatric hospitals. In 2022, 1,800 children received at least one UNICEF-supported health, social work or legal service. In Georgia, UNICEF supported the opening of the first-ever integrated centre for child survivors of violence, to provide a comprehensive, integrated set of services, including protection, social welfare, health and legal services. Around 1,600 children who had experienced some form of violence received UNICEF-supported services in 2022.

The criticality of child helplines to provide front-line support to survivors of all forms of violence and those at risk was reinforced in 2022 (see also 'Strengthening mental health and psychosocial support to children and families').

In Eswatini, the national child helpline was operationalized in November 2022, thanks to UNICEF's sustained advocacy and technical support since 2019. In Honduras, UNICEF supported the reactivation of the '110 helpline', which is providing critical free access to confidential reporting of violence and a safe and accessible channel for children to seek advice and counselling. In Mozambique, UNICEF's technical assistance led to the full operationalization of the child helpline across the country; it received over 170,655 calls in 2022, resulting in 3,600 child victims or survivors of violence being referred to specialized services, including legal services, health, and social welfare.

Students display U-Report bangles inscribed with child helpline numbers that they can use to make free calls to report cases of violence and seek protection support. UNICEF works closely with the Government of Uganda to strengthen prevention and response services for girls, boys and women that aim to tackle all forms of violence and harmful practices.

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Afghanistan: Scaling up response services to address violence against girls, boys and women in humanitarian contexts

In Afghanistan, to address the challenging protection situation of children and women, including limitations in the number of social workers, and access to formal social welfare and justice systems, UNICEF and its partners adopted several innovative implementation strategies to fill gaps.

UNICEF and partners continued to develop a strategy to increase the capacity of essential workers to provide child protection services in all 34 provinces, supporting the recruitment and deployment of over 5,000 social work providers in 2022 (from 519 in 2021).

UNICEF is also focused on establishing and maintaining over 1,500 community-based child protection structures across the country, such as community-based child protection networks, community committees and Child Protection Action Networks, to facilitate the provision of child protection services, particularly in previously inaccessible and hard-to-reach areas. This includes, for example, strengthening child protection networks to establish child-friendly spaces, strengthening case management systems and setting up registration points for unaccompanied and separated children following the 2022 earthquake and flooding in the central region of Afghanistan.

In 2022, 8.6 million vulnerable and at-risk children and caregivers (44 per cent girls and women) in 401 districts in 34 provinces benefitted from UNICEF-supported interventions, including over 1.1 million child survivors of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect who received at least one specialized health, social work and/or justice service.

Preventing and responding to sexual abuse and exploitation in all contexts

Global cooperation and coordination are essential for protecting women and children from SEA by humanitarian, development, protection or other personnel across settings at country level. In its capacity as a core member of the

Technical Advisory Group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (IASC PSEA), UNICEF continued to play a critical role in driving an increasingly cohesive and collaborative inter-agency PSEA system, and continued to invest in the scale-up of a survivor-centred and standards-based approach at country level to ensure safe, quality programming.

UNICEF is committed to ensuring every child and adult survivor of SEA has access to quality, survivor-centred assistance and support in line with their needs, including medical care, psychosocial support, legal assistance and reintegration support. This included bolstering global frameworks and coordination mechanisms, developing technical guidance, and supporting countries to integrate the system at country level to prevent and respond to SEA more effectively from the outset of humanitarian response.

At the inter-agency level, in 2022, UNICEF provided training to Humanitarian Country Teams and inter-agency PSEA coordinators and networks in 11 IASC high-priority countries to more effectively roll out the United Nations Victims' Assistance Protocol,[49] which contributes to guiding the consistent delivery of quality, survivor-centred assistance that is timely, predictable, sustainable and adequately resourced.

To assist countries with tracking and measuring progress against the required minimum PSEA actions, UNICEF led the development and roll-out of the IASC PSEA Core Indicators Guidance Note, establishing – for the first time – a global set of inter-agency PSEA indicators to guide the implementation and monitoring of collective inter-agency progress on PSEA across humanitarian responses. UNICEF also co-led the development of the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Risk Overview (SEARO),[50] a global IASC tool

that provides an index of factors that influence the risk of SEA. The SEARO presents data for 33 countries, outlining SEA risk factors, and is geared towards informing country planning and decision-making.

At the country level, UNICEF continued to invest in rolling out and scaling up safe and accessible PSEA systems. In 2022, 123 out of 129 UNICEF reporting country offices were actively engaged in establishing and/or scaling up systems for PSEA, 65 of which have a PSEA system in place, compared to 53 in 2021. Globally, over 49 million children and adults had access to safe and accessible reporting channels across 110 countries in all 7 regions in 2022 *(see Figure 10)*. As the first United Nations agency to mandate the inclusion of PSEA interventions from the outset of every humanitarian response, UNICEF worked in all crisis-affected countries (75 with Humanitarian Action for Children appeals) to scale up PSEA in 2022. Notably, the onset of the crisis in Ukraine prompted a broader scale-up of SEA reporting channels throughout the UNICEF East and Central Asia Regional Office. In 2022, 18 of the 22 countries in the East and Central Asia Region (82 per cent) were engaged in this work.

Poster from UNICEF Afghanistan provides information on how to report sexual exploitation and abuse.

In 2022, 65 country offices have PSEA system in place, compared to 53 in 2021, including having developed country action plans, rolled out the UN Protocol on Assistance to Victims of SEA, strengthened referral pathways and implemented capacity building for partners.

Reporting countries, by year

TOTAL 110 countries

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022

By gender

Male
47% 74

Female
53% 75

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ # countries

By setting

Humanitarian
26% 41

Development
74% 41

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
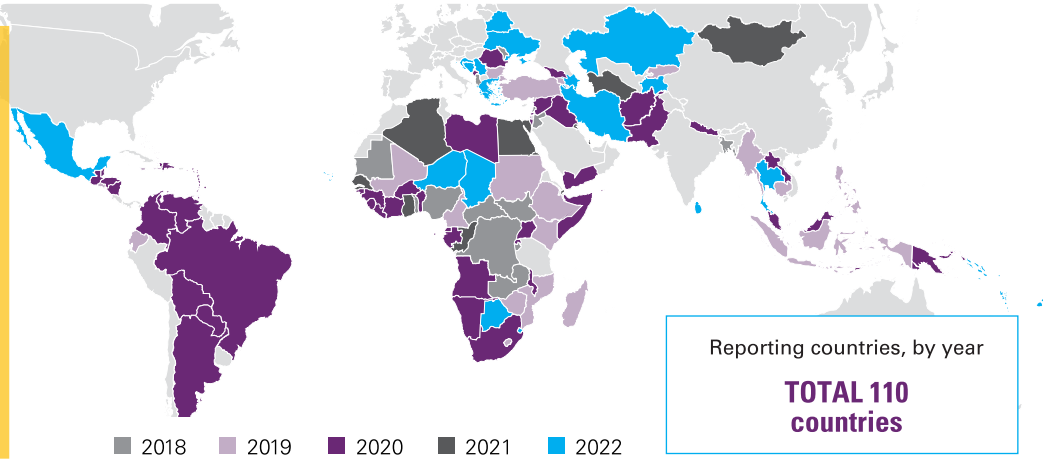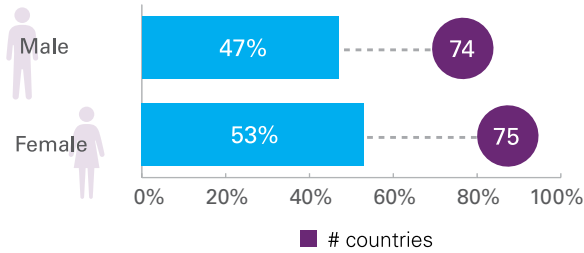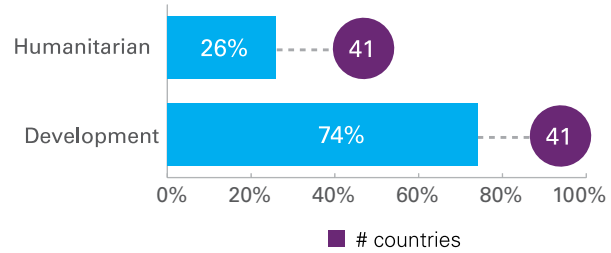
■ # countries

49.2 million

children and adults across **110 countries** in 2022 have access to SEA reporting channels

20% decrease from 2021**

Improved UNICEF-supported reporting channels and community trust has led to an increase in the number of reports received compared to the 8 reported cases in 2017

50 UNICEF-related allegations reported to SG

29%

9 million

2019

40 UNICEF-related allegations reported to SG

389%

44 million

2020

39%

61 million

57 UNICEF-related allegations reported to SG

2021

45* UNICEF-related allegations reported to SG

20%

49.2 million

2022
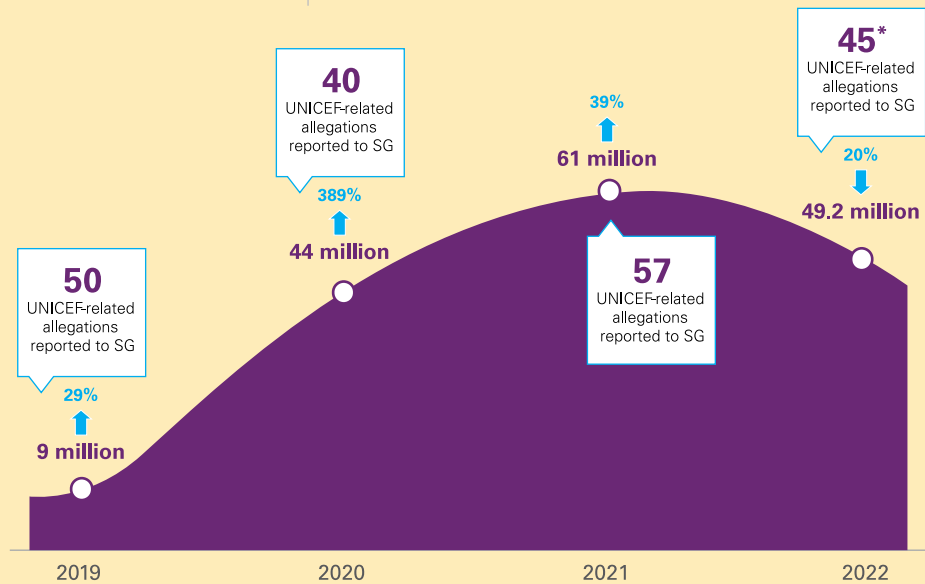
Notes: Data comparisons from 2021 unless otherwise stated. Data for map is a combination of UNICEF Strategic Monitoring Questions as well as investments in select humanitarian countries. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Due to rounding, percentages may differ slightly. Disaggregated data are not always available for the entire aggregated total. The proportion provided here are based on available country data with relevant disaggregated information. * One allegation may involve one or more survivors. ** Decrease due to reduction of programme scope and reach in some countries

Strengthening PSEA systems through humanitarian response

In 2022, UNICEF supported PSEA systems-strengthening at the country level through ongoing humanitarian response, seeking to bolster prevention and response systems through the implementation and integration of PSEA programming and interventions at the onset of emergency response and through ongoing humanitarian action.

For example, in Ukraine, a UNICEF-supported PSEA communication campaign using Facebook and Instagram engaged over 1.6 million young people with contextualized materials in Ukrainian and Polish languages. UNICEF also supported UNHCR PSEA coordinators to establish and launch PSEA networks in Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, and led the roll-out of the United Nations Victims' Assistance Protocol for the PSEA networks in Poland and Ukraine. In Yemen, UNICEF and partners established a complaint and feedback mechanism as part of a call centre service linked to the World Bank's grievance redress mechanism. Additionally, around 1.4 million children and adults benefited from community messaging on PSEA.

In Pakistan, a PSEA plan was scaled up to respond to the potential SEA risks resulting from the flood emergency. UNICEF designated a PSEA focal person in each mobile emergency response team (polio, water, sanitation and hygiene [WASH], etc.) to provide awareness and outreach activities. Over 8,000 front-line workers were trained through online and mandatory face-to-face training sessions. As a result of these combined interventions, more than 2.3 million people in UNICEF-supported locations received PSEA messages and had access to a safe and accessible channel to report SEA in 2022.

In Afghanistan, innovative approaches were used to scale up programming, including using mass SMS messaging, and integrating SEA awareness and reporting channels in cash assistance programmes and as part of dignity kits provided to vulnerable women and girls. Over 3 million messages on PSEA were sent out via the U-Report platform, and around 80,000 PSEA information and education campaign materials were printed and distributed. Overall, these actions contributed to improving access to SEA reporting channels for around 671,000 children and adults in 2022, compared to 158,000 in 2021.

Pursuing government cooperation on PSEA

In 2022, UNICEF launched an inter-agency working group to establish a global framework for government cooperation on PSEA, aiming to streamline government and inter-agency engagement and bolster government capacity alongside broader United Nations and humanitarian efforts.

Key highlights of action to facilitate greater government cooperation and engagement in 2022 included in Mozambique, where UNICEF supported the drafting of a national government engagement strategy. At the subnational level, the Cabo Delgado PSEA network strengthened the capacity of government partners and worked on joint identification of referral pathways with the local Public Prosecutor's office. In Türkiye, UNICEF conducted a comprehensive analysis of the legislative and policy framework to identify gaps and opportunities to engage more effectively with government on advancing the PSEA agenda. In Timor-Leste, UNICEF engaged the police and the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion to establish a PSEA reporting mechanism to improve the referral of cases, and strengthen community mobilization, enabling 232,000 children and adults to have access to SEA reporting in 2022, an almost threefold increase compared to 2021.

This young woman is 19-years-old and runs a sewing shop in Cameroon. She faced challenges growing up, and was living in a street situation for some time. Thanks to support from UNICEF and partners, she was able to attend life skills training in tailoring and is now a thriving small business entrepreneur.

Eliminating child labour

Recent data have revealed that progress in the fight against child labour has stagnated, and almost 1 in 10 of all children worldwide are impacted. UNICEF is an active member of Alliance 8.7 on Child Labour, Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking,[51] which aims to build collective action to eliminate all forms of child labour and meet SDG 8.7 commitments.

The 5th Global Conference on Child Labour[52] in Durban, South Africa, in 2022 was an important milestone to reinforce these commitments. The concluding declaration

– the Durban Call to Action – served as a strong reminder that if the world is serious about the elimination of child labour, governments must be supported to design and implement multisectoral solutions. These must include strengthened sector linkages; a stronger child protection workforce; explicit partnerships with the private sector; and adequate public financing to invest in sustainable solutions.

FIGURE 12: Summary of results on eliminating child labour, 2022

Total number of countries which have legislative and policy frameworks to eliminate worst forms of child labour, by region, 2022

72 Grand total

- **6** EAP
- **8** ECA
- **13** ESA
- **14** LAC
- **9** MENA
- **5** SA
- **17** WCA

In 2022,
72 countries
reported having legislative and policy frameworks to eliminate the worst forms of child labour

+24%
from 2021

Progress on strengthening legislative and policy framework to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, 2022

— Actual reach
- - - Targeted reach

Year	Actual	Targeted
2017	22	
2018	24	
2019	28	
2020	30	
2021	58	32
2022	72	60
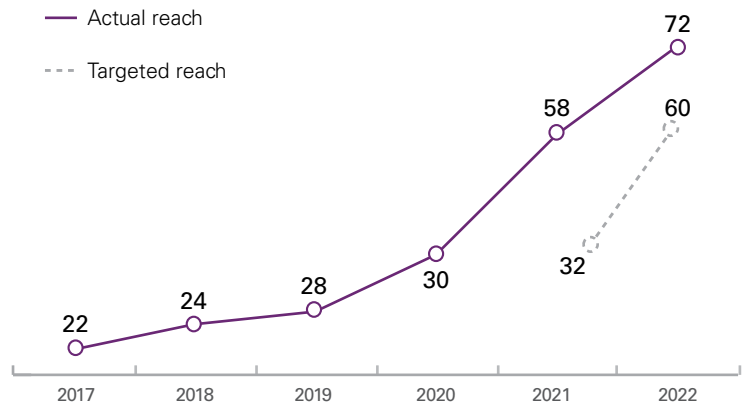
Progress on strengthening legislative and policy framework to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, by criteria

Common bottlenecks include a lack of national policies and programmes to eliminate child labour, including National Action Plans to prevent the worst forms of child labour
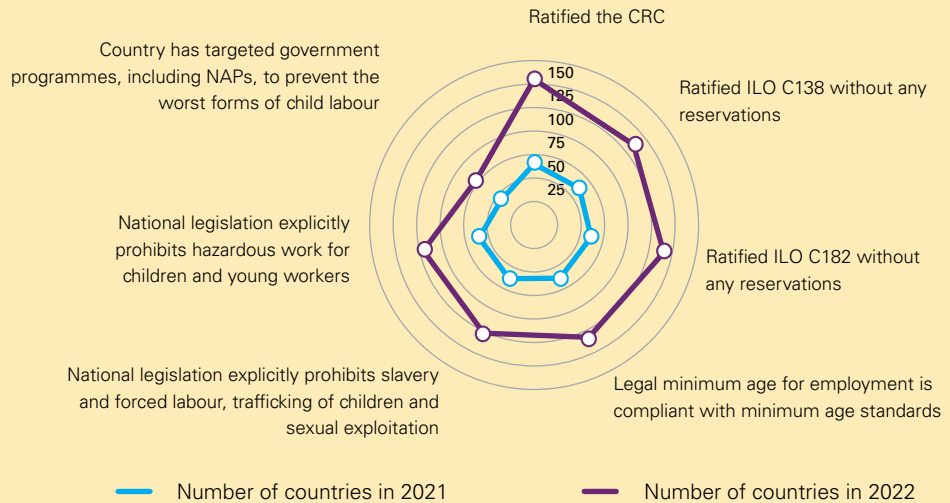
Ratified the CRC

Ratified ILO C138 without any reservations

Ratified ILO C182 without any reservations

Legal minimum age for employment is compliant with minimum age standards

National legislation explicitly prohibits slavery and forced labour, trafficking of children and sexual exploitation

National legislation explicitly prohibits hazardous work for children and young workers

Country has targeted government programmes, including NAPs, to prevent the worst forms of child labour

Scale: 25, 50, 75, 100, 125, 150

— Number of countries in 2021
— Number of countries in 2022

Note: EAP, East Asia and the Pacific; ECA, Europe and Central Asia; ESA, Eastern and Southern Africa; LAC, Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA, Middle East and North Africa; SA, South Asia; WCA, West and Central Africa. Disaggregated data are not always available for the entire aggregated total. The proportion provided here is based on and out of the available data with relevant disaggregated information.

Selected country highlights, 2022

At the country level, UNICEF works with a range of partners, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), governments, the private sector and CSOs to drive progress. Important gains were made in 16 countries, specifically: strengthening national action plans to provide a comprehensive strategy for programming at scale, including child labour-free jurisdictions; strengthening the legislative and policy environment to ensure adequate legal protections for children; and targeting programmes to address the root causes of child labour.

Côte d'Ivoire

UNICEF, ILO and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) collaborated to tackle the causes of child labour in cocoa production in the Nawa region, with the aim of linking actions to end child labour with those to improve youth employability through offering life skills courses. Child protection services were also linked with social welfare mechanisms.

Ghana

UNICEF supported the development of a new National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2022–2026).

Honduras

UNICEF built strong partnerships with local industry to develop a response to address children working in the coffee sector, with an emphasis on strengthening prevention and response strategies with education and the social service sector; and encouraging responsible business conduct with local industry.

Nepal

UNICEF is working with the government to decentralize its 10-year National Master plan on Child Labour (2018–2028), including developing more effective local government guidelines.

Costa Rica

UNICEF provided technical support to develop a National Strategic Plan to accelerate efforts to make the country free of child labour by 2025. UNICEF also supported local governments to contextualize national guidelines, so that they are tailored to address the unique requirements at subnational level.

Bangladesh

A notable breakthrough came with the country's ratification of all fundamental Conventions and relevant Protocols, including the ILO Minimum Age Convention.

Turkey

UNICEF placed attention on fostering public–private partnerships to mitigate child labour in industries. UNICEF's collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and the Turkish Confederation of Tradesmen and Craftsmen resulted in 4,500 workplace audits. The audits helped to identify 3,000 children at risk of child labour who were then referred for protection services.

Somalia

UNICEF helped develop the National Action Plan, as well as strengthen child rights in the Anti-Trafficking Bill and emphasize child labour issues in the Child's Rights Bill.

Building responsible business conduct to eradicate child labour

Child Labour and Responsible Business Conduct
A Guidance Note for Action

unicef ♥
for every child

The 'Child Labour and Responsible Business Conduct'[53] report provides guidance to businesses, policymakers and other stakeholders on meeting SDG 8.7 – eradicating child labour by 2025. It improves existing literature by emphasizing responsible business practices that address root causes and wider children's rights deprivations. The report outlines how the private sector can respond to child labour more effectively and sustainably. It includes in-depth analysis of business policies and practices in three key sectors: cobalt, cocoa and cotton.

Based on this analysis, the report offers guidance on grounding child labour strategies in child rights-based approaches, focusing on prevention and integration across core business practices and strategies. It also explores emerging mandatory human rights due diligence legislation and the criteria such laws should include to effectively protect children from adverse business impacts, including child labour.

Grave violations in armed conflict

Twenty-five years have passed since the United Nations Member States established the children and armed conflict (CAAC) agenda, a comprehensive framework that supports a range of actions aimed at improving the protection and care of children in armed conflict. UNICEF plays a critical role in delivering that agenda. Despite achieving significant progress since the inception of the CAAC agenda at local, national and international levels, including engaging with armed actors to release more than 100,000 children from armed forces or armed groups, critical work remains to be done.
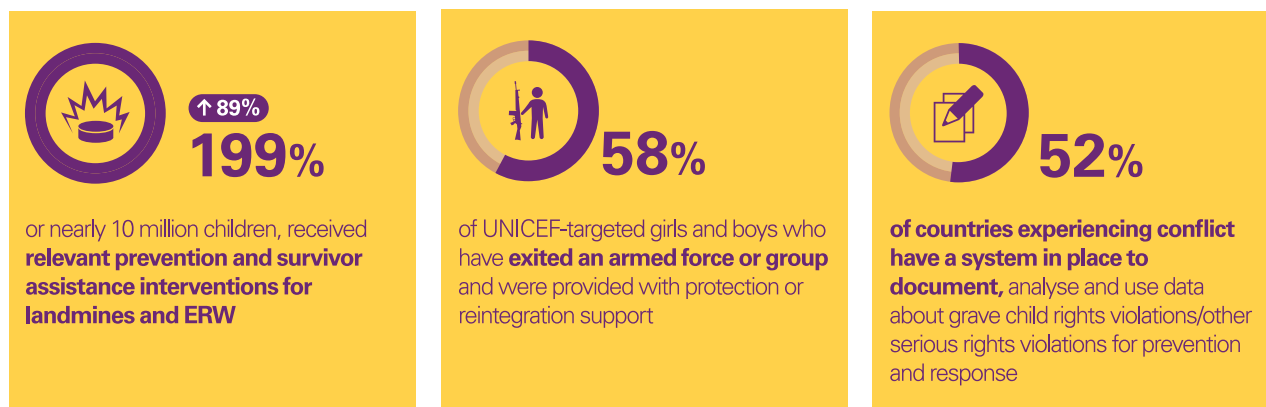
At the end of 2022, around 400 million children worldwide lived in protracted or emerging conflict situations, suffering grave violations of their rights and devastating consequences to their safety and well-being. UNICEF plays a key role in documenting grave violations, supporting affected children and communities, and holding perpetrators accountable (*see Figure 11*).

A 15-year-old in Kidal, Mali, left her family home due to mistreatment from her stepmother and became a house servant for an armed group. UNICEF and its partner, the NGO Solidarité pour le Sahel (SOLISA), supported her release and reintegration back into her community. She now goes to school and dreams of becoming a nurse.

FIGURE 13: Summary of **results on addressing grave violations** in armed conflict, 2022
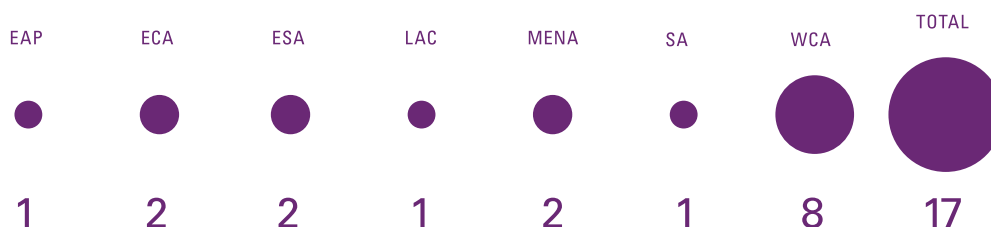
↑ 89%
199%

or nearly 10 million children, received **relevant prevention and survivor assistance interventions for landmines and ERW**

58%

of UNICEF-targeted girls and boys who have **exited an armed force or group** and were provided with protection or reintegration support

52%

of countries experiencing conflict have a system in place to document, analyse and use data about grave child rights violations/other serious rights violations for prevention and response

Countries reporting on **grave child rights violations/other serious rights violations,** 2022

| EAP	ECA	ESA	LAC	MENA	SA	WCA	TOTAL
2	1	4	1	6	3	8	25
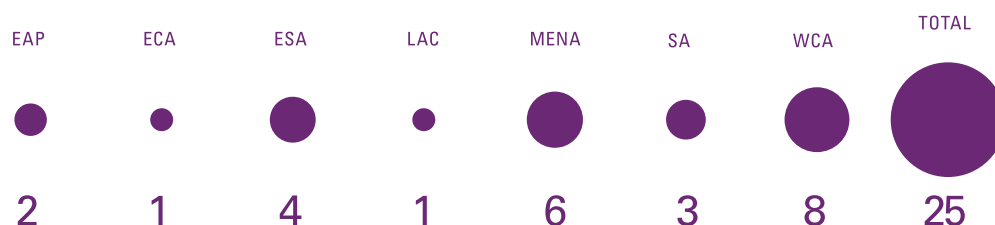
Abbreviations:
ERW - explosive remnants of war
EAP, East Asia and the Pacific; **ECA,** Europe and Central Asia; **ESA,** Eastern and Southern Africa; **LAC,** Latin America and the Caribbean; **MENA,** Middle East and North Africa; **SA,** South Asia; **WCA,** West and Central Africa. Disaggregated data are not always available for the entire aggregated total. The proportion provided here is based on and out of the available data with relevant disaggregated information.

Notes:
Changes are compared to results achieved in 2021 unless otherwise specified.

Countries reporting on number of girls and boys **who have exited an armed force or group and who have been provided with UNICEF-supported protection or reintegration support,** 2022

EAP	ECA	ESA	LAC	MENA	SA	WCA	TOTAL
1	2	2	1	2	1	8	17

Countries **reporting on UNICEF-supported prevention and survivor assistance interventions for landmines and ERW,** 2022

EAP	ECA	ESA	LAC	MENA	SA	WCA	TOTAL
1	2	3	1	6	1	4	18
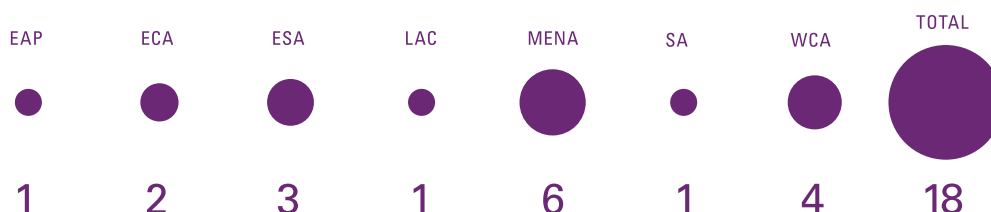
Marking the anniversary of the CAAC agenda

25 YEARS OF CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT:
TAKING ACTION TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN WAR

In 2022, UNICEF published '25 Years of Children and Armed Conflict: Taking Action to Protect Children in War',[54] a comprehensive examination of how documentation of grave violations over time and direct engagement with parties to conflict have led to concrete prevention and response measures. The report uses specific country examples to illustrate the impact that armed conflicts have had on children, and presents important recommendations on actions required. The report informs global, regional and national advocacy to highlight the consequences of war on children, and the need for continuing efforts to address them. For example, data analysis contributed to an advocacy brief, 'Build Back Better Lives: Protecting children from grave violations in West and Central Africa',[55] providing evidence that in recent years the region has consistently had some of the highest numbers of grave violations against children, with the highest number of children recruited and used by non-state armed groups, as well as of survivors of sexual violence.

Monitoring grave violations of child rights in situations of armed conflict

The incidence of child abductions, sexual violence, recruitment of children by armed forces or armed groups, and injury or death of children from explosive weapons of war remains alarmingly high. As a co-lead of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism[56] to document grave violations against children – currently in 25 situations of armed conflict – UNICEF works in partnership with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and other United Nations bodies.

> *In 2022, the United Nations verified more than 24,000 grave violations of child rights in situations of armed conflict, affecting over 12,500 children. The United Nations Secretary-General added three more countries as situations of concern: Ethiopia, Mozambique and Ukraine. The United Nations Secretary-General also requested enhanced monitoring capacity in the Central Sahel region, to document the growing number of grave violations in areas of Niger and Chad currently not captured in established country-level monitoring or under the Lake Chad Basin monitoring mechanism. These additions bring the total number of country and regional situations to 25 – the highest number since the CAAC agenda was established.*

Between 2016 and 2020, non-state actors accounted for almost 60 per cent of all verified violations. Moreover, in 2022, there was a sharp increase in the number of verified attacks on schools, which increased by 135 per cent from 2021.

This represents the sharpest increase over the past four years, with the most cases verified in Ukraine, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Myanmar (countries listed in decreasing order). There was also an increase in the number of children recruited and used by armed forces and armed groups in 2022. The countries with the highest concentration of verified cases include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Syrian Arab Republic, Somalia, Mali and Afghanistan. The country with the most notable improvement in continued reporting of low numbers of violations relative to 2016 is South Sudan. This indicates continued adherence to policy and enforcement measures, aligned with the 2018 Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

In 2022, UNICEF and partners continued sustained advocacy for the prevention or abandonment of the recruitment of children.

In Yemen, these efforts resulted in an action plan signed by the Houthis (or 'Ansar Allah') with the United Nations to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children. The Houthi leadership appointed senior focal points as part of a high-level Joint Technical Committee with the United Nations and other key partners to develop a time-bound implementation strategy for the action plan. Standard operating procedures, with age determination criteria, were also developed to establish an approved system to prevent the recruitment and use of children in the future.

Mine action and explosive weapons

Explosive weapons endanger a child's most fundamental rights – both during periods of armed conflict, especially when used in populated areas, and in the aftermath of war, when landmines and unexploded and abandoned ordnance continue to harm children. Explosive weapons also cause severe harm to children indirectly by destroying infrastructure and vital services, such as schools and hospitals, and causing displacement.
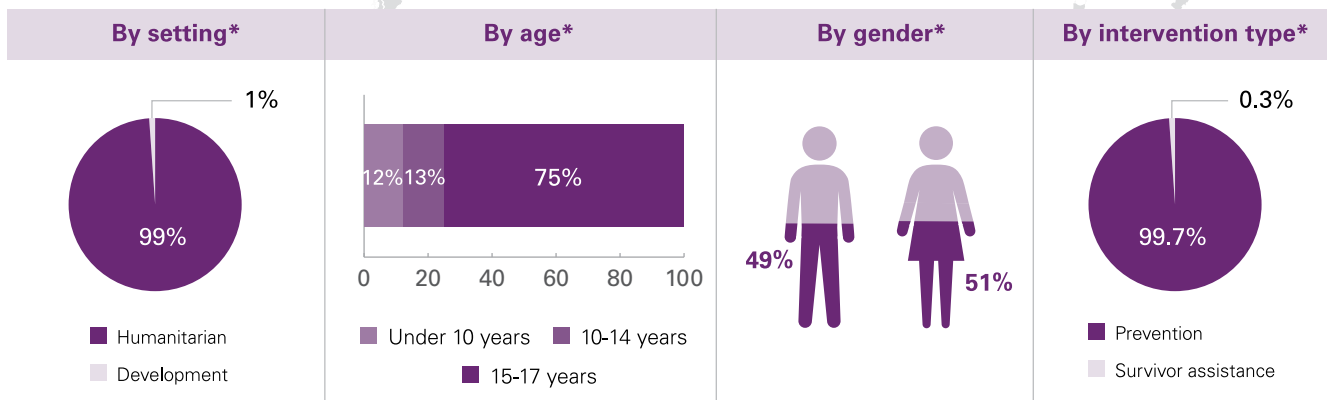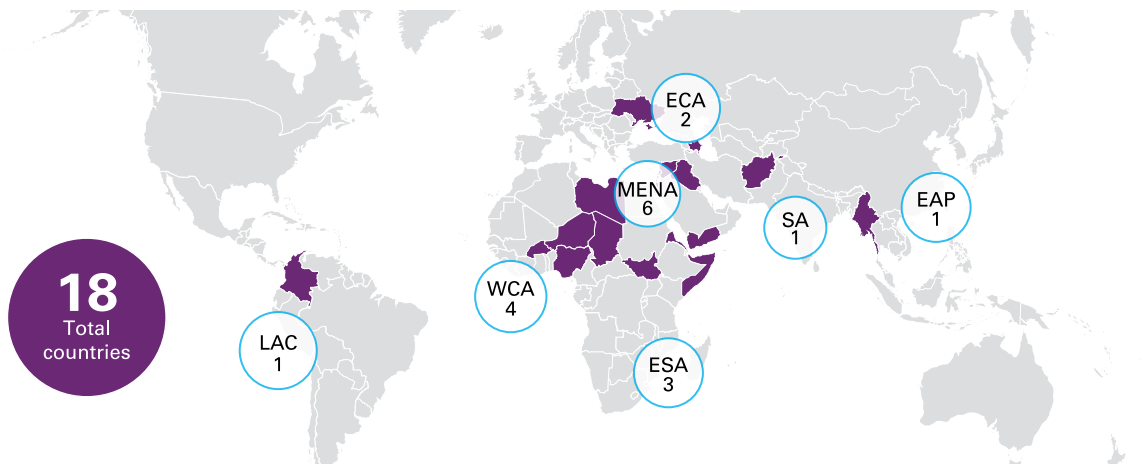
In 2022, UNICEF and partners programming enabled nearly 10 million children in 18 countries to participate in life-saving explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), mostly in regions affected by ongoing conflicts. UNICEF also assisted almost 5,700 child victims with support services in 12 countries, nearly six times as many as in 2021. This rise is partly attributable to the expansion of the victim assistance programme in Afghanistan, where over 2,000 children affected by explosive ordnance received assistance (see Figure 12).

FIGURE 14: Results summary of UNICEF support to risk education efforts on landmines and other explosive weapons, 2022

UNICEF and partners worked in 18 countries affected by landmines and explosive weapons, to reach almost 10 million people people with prevention and/or survivor-assistance interventions

89% INCREASE from 2021

Number of reporting countries providing support to children in affected areas, 2022

ECA 2
MENA 6
SA 1
EAP 1
WCA 4
LAC 1
ESA 3

18 Total countries

By setting*	By age*	By gender*	By intervention type*

By setting*
1%
99%
■ Humanitarian
■ Development

By age*
12% 13% 75%
0 20 40 60 80 100
■ Under 10 years ■ 10-14 years
■ 15-17 years

By gender*
49% 51%

By intervention type*
0.3%
99.7%
■ Prevention
■ Survivor assistance

Note: * Disaggregated data are not always available for the entire aggregated total. The proportion provided here is based on and out of the available data with relevant disaggregated information.

UNICEF continued to be a driving force in accelerating the shift from using traditional explosive ordnance risk education approaches (EORE), which centred on public EORE campaigns, to more comprehensive and integrated multisector SBC approaches, including expanding the use of digital solutions. To strengthen the availability of learning resources, UNICEF and the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining led the development of a new technical note on EORE to provide enhanced guidance on community engagement and for use in mass messaging in environments where improvised explosive devices are increasingly used.

Championing global action to protect children from EWIPA

Over 90 per cent of the casualties from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA) are not soldiers, but civilians, and around half of those are children. In 2022, UNICEF, together with United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Network on Explosive Weapons, championed the adoption of a landmark political declaration on EWIPA,[57] a critical step to protect children from the consequences of urban warfare. This achievement is the culmination of years of advocacy efforts led by UNICEF and a small group of international organizations and Member States to raise awareness among governments, development actors and the general public.

The EWIPA declaration, led by the Government of Ireland, has been adopted by 83 States. It provides a road map for signatory States to improve implementation of applicable international humanitarian law, and to voluntarily adopt measures that further enhance the protection of civilians, including children, by ensuring their armed forces restrict or refrain from the use of EWIPA. States must also identify and adopt military measures and other practices that reduce harm to children and their communities.

"This milestone declaration brings hope that the immense suffering of civilians is no longer accepted as an inevitable by-product of warfare."

– Mirjana Spoljaric, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross[58]

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS
Dublin Conference 2022

The improved integration of EORE preventive work with other humanitarian programming has been a game changer in expanding reach to affected or at-risk populations.

For example, integrating EORE with health and education campaigns helped deliver life-saving EORE to a greater number of at-risk children in Afghanistan, where explosive ordnance is one of the leading causes of child casualties. Over 700 children were killed or injured by explosive ordnance in 2022. UNICEF integrated EORE into outreach polio drives and mobile health and nutrition services. These interventions, combined with mass multisectoral messaging initiatives, impacted almost 2.9 million children and adults in 2022, compared to 1.6 million in 2021.

In Yemen, UNICEF prioritized investment in campaigns designed to reach as many children as possible either through mass messaging or community engagement. All 22 governorates have some form of explosive contamination. Around 2.3 million children and 2.4 million adults benefitted from the scale up of mass media messaging as part of targeted radio and television campaigns. To broaden the reach, sign language was also used. Further, over 600,000 children were directly engaged in EORE through schools, child-friendly spaces, interventions in temporary settlements and other community gatherings.

When primary prevention fails and a child is seriously injured but survives or has lost a parent in an explosion, victim assistance is vital. In 2022, UNICEF and partners significantly expanded programming to reach almost 5,700 children in 12 countries with victim assistance support – almost six times as many as the nearly 1,000 children supported in 11 countries in 2021.

The increased level of support reflects improved reporting at country level and increased investment by UNICEF in mine action work in countries such as Afghanistan during the year. Almost 2,100 child victims were supported with various services, including family treatment and rehabilitation, and referrals to medical services. The range of victim assistance services is also expanding to include cash transfers, family treatment and rehabilitation, referrals to health services and livelihood support. In the Syrian Arab Republic, for example, around 180 child survivors (33 per cent girls) and their families were provided with quarterly cash assistance and case management services.

Iraq: Explosive ordnance continues to impact children

In the wake of violent conflict, landmines and remnants of war can be as deadly for children as war itself. In Iraq, which remains one of the countries most contaminated with explosive ordnance, children continue to be killed or severely injured as they go about daily life. In 2022, 85 children (70 boys and 15 girls) were accidentally killed or maimed by explosive ordnance in the country.

On a normal day, collecting vegetables, 9-year-old Zainab from Basra in southern Iraq became a survivor of explosive ordinance. Zainab lost her mother and her sight, and her brother was disfigured. "When I think of her, I start to cry. I lost my eyes, and I lost my mother," Zainab says. "She was my whole life. I miss seeing her."

As well as the physical effects, survivors of explosive ordnance often experience a range of social consequences, including separation from family and community members, and difficulties becoming economically self-sufficient. They may also face challenges to their mental health and psychological well-being. People with disabilities are often vulnerable to social stigmatization, rejection and unemployment. Zainab, for example, wants to return to school, but schools where she lives are not able to properly support a student with injuries like hers. She relies on her older brother, Abdel, for almost everything, but says she is determined to continue her education. UNICEF and local partners are providing a range of support for Zainab to enable her to fulfil this dream.

UNICEF is working with partners to support the efforts of child protection systems to integrate EORE in the work of front-line social workers so we can help more children like Zainab. In 2022, UNICEF and partners assisted over 28,000 at-risk children (42 per cent girls) and trained more than 8,300 professionals and caregivers (46 per cent women) in EORE to improve the support provided.

© UNICEF/UN0611896/Ibarra Sánchez
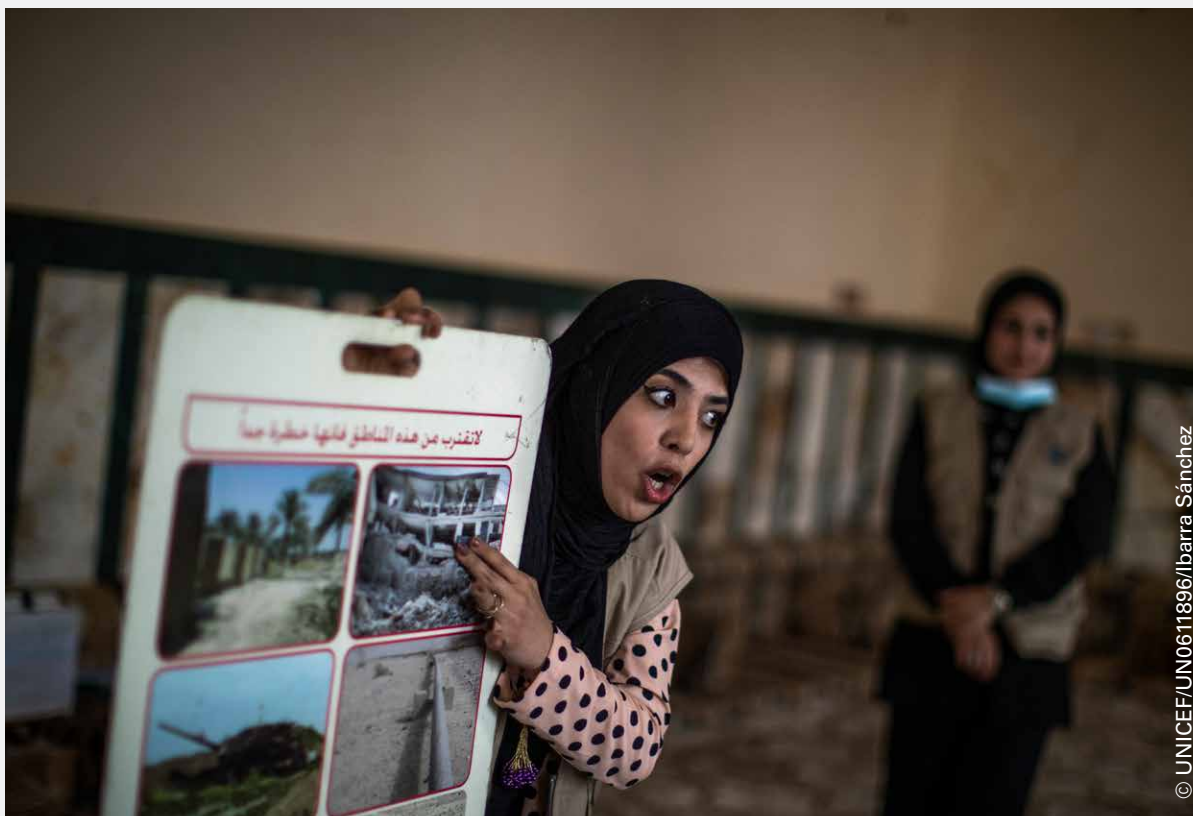
A trainer is presenting during a UNICEF-led mine action training session for a local community in Iraq.

Children associated with armed forces and armed groups

In 2022, UNICEF worked closely with governments, United Nations Country Teams and other partners to ensure care and protection for children who have exited armed forces or armed groups in 17 conflict and crisis situations. This included advocating on their behalf and engaging with all parties to conflict to ensure that the children's rights were upheld. UNICEF works with partners to reunite children with their families, reintegrate them into their communities and provide MHPSS and other services as needed, such as life skills and employment opportunities.

UNICEF, in its capacity as co-chair of the Paris Principles Steering Group, along with Save the Children, published the Paris Principles Operational Handbook, an essential document providing guidance to practitioners and policymakers on the protections and legal rights of children related to their recruitment and use in armed conflict, as well as holistic, community-based actions to support their release and reintegration, including specific actions to support the needs of girls.

In 2022, UNICEF provided direct care and protection support to almost 12,500 children who had exited armed forces or armed groups, including almost 4,200 in Nigeria, more than 3,300 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 1,640 in the Central African Republic. More than 5,800 of the 12,500 children receiving services were supported to reintegrate with their families and communities.

For example, in Somalia, 1,200 children (16 per cent girls) associated with armed forces and armed groups, as well as children identified as being at risk of recruitment, received a variety of support services, including shelter, vocational skills training, medical care and MHPSS. In the Central African Republic, UNICEF conducted capacity-building with service providers and community-based child protection groups on case management and services available to support vulnerable children. This resulted in identification and provision of reintegration support to 1,467 children (37 per cent girls) who had exited armed groups, of whom 1,415 accessed socioeconomic reintegration services, enabling them to return to school, attend vocational training or engage in income-generating activities.

Rapidly changing conflict dynamics, access restrictions, stigma faced by returning children and other operating challenges continue to limit reach in some countries.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, UNICEF and partners undertook a series of community consultations with more than 1,000 girls, community leaders and other community members to identify the main barriers for girls to access services once released from armed forces or armed groups, and to develop programmes accordingly.

In some countries, children are detained in the context of armed conflict upon their release from armed forces or armed groups, rather than provided with supportive recovery and reintegration services.

In line with the Reimagine Justice for Children Agenda, which calls for an end to child detention in all its forms, UNICEF works with partners, including governments, in Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia and elsewhere, advocating to end the detention of and secure better protections for children associated with armed forces and armed groups (*see also '*Reimagining access to justice for children*'*). A key breakthrough in 2022 came when the governments of Burkina Faso and Nigeria signed Handover Protocols with the United Nations for the transfer and care of children encountered during military operations in their countries. This breakthrough is the outcome of several years of sustained advocacy and engagement and will directly result in the transfer of children from military custody to civilian child protection actors to receive the care and support they need.

FIGURE 15: Summary of results on UNICEF care and protection support for children who have exited armed forces or armed groups, 2022

Countries reporting on women and children receiving GBV services, by region, 2022

| 17 Grand total | 8 WCA | 2 MENA | 2 ESA | 2 ECA | 1 EAP | 1 LAC | 1 SA |

In 2022, UNICEF provided direct care and protection support to almost 12,500 children who had exited armed forces or armed groups, including almost
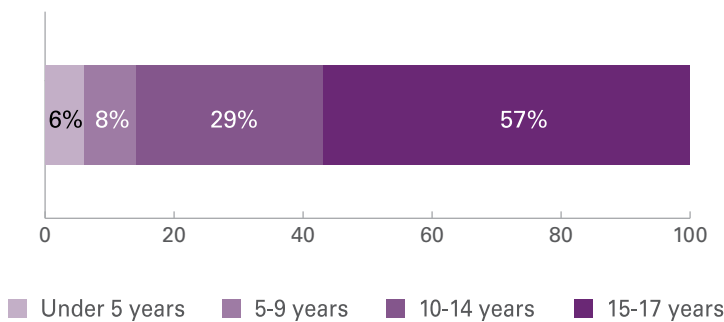
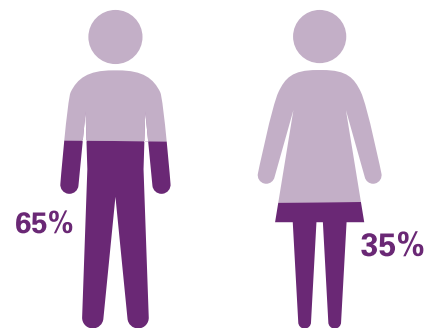**4,200 in Nigeria,** **more than 3,300 in the Democratic Republic of Congo and** **1,640 in Central African Republic**

Of the 12,500 children receiving services, more than 5,800 were supported to reintegrate with their families and communities.

By age

| 6% | 8% | 29% | 57% |

0   20   40   60   80   100

■ Under 5 years ■ 5-9 years ■ 10-14 years ■ 15-17 years

By gender

65% **35%**

Note: Disaggregated data are not always available for the entire aggregated total. The proportion provided here is based on and out of the available data with relevant disaggregated information. EAP, East Asia and the Pacific; ECA, Europe and Central Asia; ESA, Eastern and Southern Africa; LAC, Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA, Middle East and North Africa; SA, South Asia; WCA, West and Central Africa.

Strategic output 3.2: Promotion of care, mental health and psychosocial well-being and justice

This 17-year-old boy lives in Niamey, the capital of Niger. He dropped out of school after being in conflict with the law. After receiving guidance from a UNICEF-supported NGO, he is now training as a car mechanic and dreams of owning his own garage. UNICEF supports children in conflict with the law by advocating for alternatives to detention, and post-detention support.

Closing the legal identity gap and achieving universal birth registration

Countries across regions are on a rapid path to recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems. In 2022, more than 7 out of every 10 countries reported an improvement in the number of children's births notified (78 per cent), registered (73 per cent) and certified (73 per cent), compared to 2021. Nevertheless, there are still 164 million unregistered children under 5 years of age worldwide. Unregistered children experience limited access to essential services, such as health care and education, and are left vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. More than half (around 91 million) of these children live in Africa.[59]

Despite improvements, countries still face challenges in achieving universal coverage of birth registration. This includes the drop-off between registration and certification, as there are many places where these two processes are not carried out simultaneously. In some cases, such as Kenya and Rwanda, certification is done on demand, leading to delays and gaps in the registration process. Structural inequities also disproportionately affect vulnerable and marginalized groups, particularly those residing in rural or hard-to-reach areas. Moreover, in many countries, costs are still applied to registration and certification, even for children registered within the legally permissible time windows. This further exacerbates the challenges faced by vulnerable populations and contributes to the persistence of low registration rates in some areas.

To bridge these gaps, UNICEF collaborated with 79 countries in 2022, including 42 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, to improve their birth registration and legal identity status through tailored support. In 2022, UNICEF supported partners to notify around 34 million births in 56 countries, register more than 53 million births in 71 countries, and issue around 48 million birth certificates in 63 countries. Important gains include 15 countries recording a 100 per cent increase in the number of children registered in 2022 compared to 2021[60] (*see Figure 13*).

© UNICEF/UN0668283/Dejongh

A UNICEF staff member is talking with a mother at the integrated health center of Dougoï, in Maroua, the extreme north of Cameroon.

Mothers come here for health checks for their babies. They are also given the opportunity to register their children's births if they haven't yet done so.

# FIGURE 16: Summary of results on closing the **legal identity gap and achieving universal birth registration**, 2022

In 2022, 50 countries have free and universal birth registration service within the civil registration system
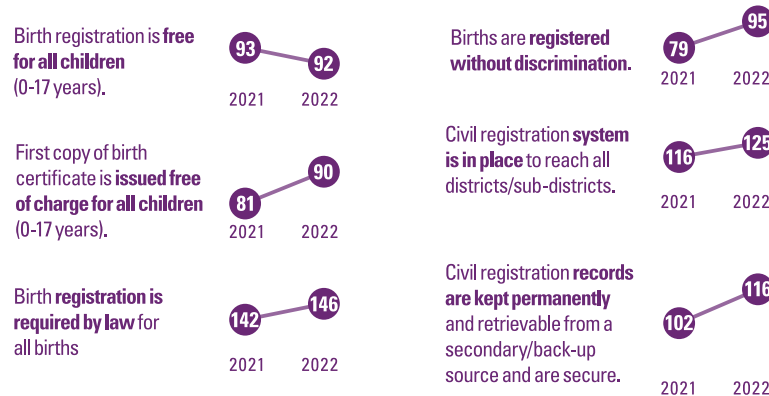
↑ **6% increase from 2021**

Countries supported with programmes aimed at improving birth registration within the civil registration system, by region
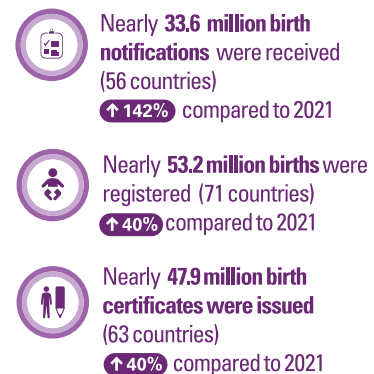
ECA **4**
MENA **6**
SA **6**
WCA **23**
LAC **9**
EAP **12**
ESA **19**
Total **79**
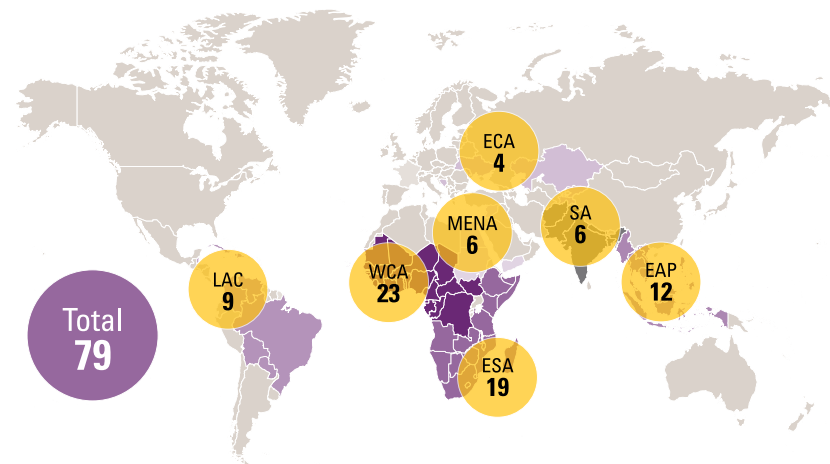
Challenges **most faced across countries are that birth registration and receipt of certificate is NOT free** for all children and that births are **not registered without discrimination.**
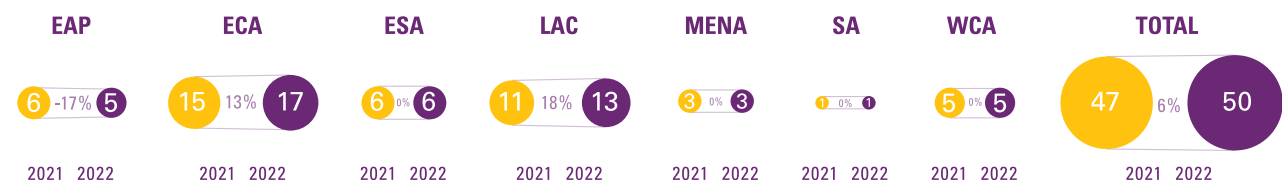
Progress on **strengthening birth registration and civil registration and vital statistics**

Birth registration is **free for all children** (0-17 years).
93 — 92
2021   2022

First copy of birth certificate is **issued free of charge for all children** (0-17 years).
81 — 90
2021   2022

Birth **registration is required by law** for all births
142 — 146
2021   2022

Births are **registered without discrimination.**
79 — 95
2021   2022

Civil registration **system is in place** to reach all districts/sub-districts.
116 — 125
2021   2022

Civil registration **records are kept permanently** and retrievable from a secondary/back-up source and are secure.
102 — 116
2021   2022

Number of **births notified and registered** and **birth certificates received through** UNICEF-support

Nearly **33.6 million birth notifications** were received (56 countries)
↑ **142%** compared to 2021

Nearly **53.2 million births** were registered (71 countries)
↑ **40%** compared to 2021

Nearly **47.9 million birth certificates were issued** (63 countries)
↑ **40%** compared to 2021

Number of countries with **free and universal BR services within civil registration,** by region

EAP	ECA	ESA	LAC	MENA	SA	WCA	TOTAL
6 -17% 5	15 13% 17	6 0% 6	11 18% 13	3 0% 3	1 0% 1	5 0% 5	47 6% 50
2021 2022	2021 2022	2021 2022	2021 2022	2021 2022	2021 2022	2021 2022	2021 2022

Global advocacy, dialogue, partnerships and collaboration

UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs jointly lead the United Nations Legal Identity Agenda (UNLIA) Task Force, which aims to promote an integrated and collaborative 'One United Nations' approach to managing CRVS and legal identity. In 2022, the UNLIA Task Force undertook three country assessments – in Ethiopia, Guinea and Senegal – to assess the current situation and capacity of national stakeholders to implement UNLIA, bringing the total number of countries assessed to 13. The findings of these reports will guide the future interventions required to improve countries' systems and align them with the UNLIA-recommended approach to legal identity from birth to death. Strategic and technical oversight was also provided to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Zambia, to support efforts to reform and strengthen their CRVS systems.

Regional collaboration is also critical to achieve progress. In 2022, UNICEF participated in the Expert Meeting of the 6th Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, to review the progress of African nations towards achieving SDG 16.9. The event allowed UNICEF to re-emphasize the importance of several key strategies that form a critical part of governments' efforts to accelerate the pace of birth registration and have proven effective in Africa.[61]

In 2022, UNICEF and Vital Strategies entered into an important new partnership that aims to provide coherent support to governments in their efforts to establish a well-functioning CRVS system, with a particular emphasis on supporting Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cameroon, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam to accelerate their progress towards achieving SDGs.

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19-year-old Rose and her 5-day-old son Mphatso live in the Bangula camp in Nsanje, southern Malawi. UNICEF partnered with the National Registration Bureau, the Ministry of Health and the United Nations Development Programme to expand children's birth registration so that mothers such as Rose can more easily register the birth of their children.
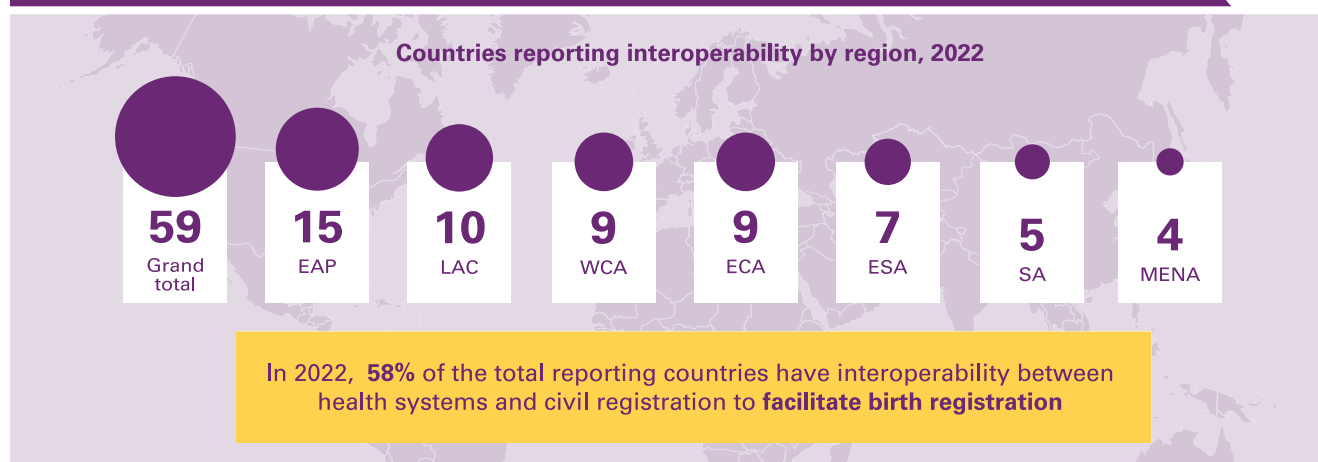
Leveraging other systems to improve birth registration and legal identity

Ongoing efforts to enhance interoperability with other sectors, especially the health sector, are proving transformative.[62] By integrating birth registration services into maternal health-care facilities and immunization stations, countries are able to bridge the service gap between birth registration coverage and routine health care.
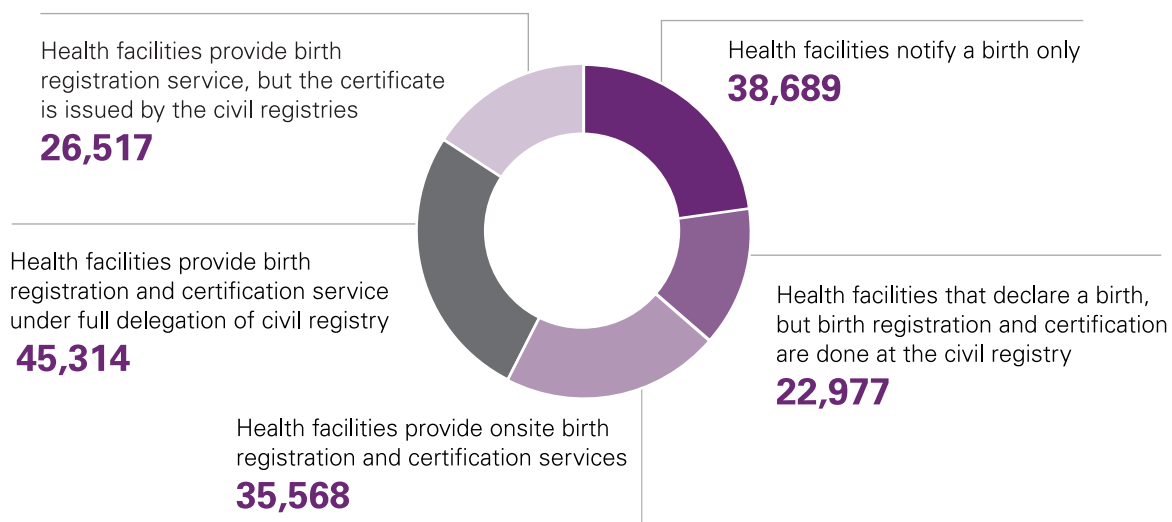
In just one year, the number of countries that have achieved interoperability between birth registration and health services increased from 54 to 59, and the number of health-care facilities providing integrated services more than doubled, from 64,700 to an impressive 130,400.

UNICEF supported a number of countries to leverage other systems to improve birth registration and legal identity, with important gains made in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania. In Mozambique, for instance, birth registration services were expanded to 143 health-care facilities in 2022, from 74 in 2021, resulting in nearly twice as many registered children (661,000 in 2022, compared to 361,000 in 2021). An innovative approach in Rwanda to link birth registration to an immunization e-tracker system in all 511 health centres across the country enabled an extension of the reach of services particularly to disadvantaged communities and resulted in increasing birth registration coverage to 91 per cent of births.

FIGURE 17: Countries with interoperability between the health system and civil registration system to facilitate birth registration

Countries reporting interoperability by region, 2022

59	15	10	9	9	7	5	4
Grand total	EAP	LAC	WCA	ECA	ESA	SA	MENA

In 2022, **58%** of the total reporting countries have interoperability between health systems and civil registration to **facilitate birth registration**

Type of UNICEF-supported birth registration services provided at health facilities, 2022

Health facilities provide birth registration service, but the certificate is issued by the civil registries
26,517

Health facilities provide birth registration and certification service under full delegation of civil registry
45,314

Health facilities provide onsite birth registration and certification services
35,568

Health facilities notify a birth only
38,689

Health facilities that declare a birth, but birth registration and certification are done at the civil registry
22,977

Notes: EAP, East Asia and the Pacific; ECA, Europe and Central Asia; ESA, Eastern and Southern Africa; LAC, Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA, Middle East and North Africa; SA, South Asia; WCA, West and Central Africa.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF promoted increased collaboration between the civil registration system and health, education and social protection services to identify unregistered children and provide them with birth certificates. For example, UNICEF successfully advocated for the digitalization of civil registration by integrating birth registration into the web-based health management information system. Birth registration data are used as a key target for immunization inclusiveness and planning. As a result of collective actions, the total number of children registered at birth in 2022 increased significantly to 1.4 million children (including 1.2 million within the legal time frame of 90 days after birth).

Interoperability with the national ID sector is a natural next step towards establishing a health–civil registration–national ID pathway.

With support from UNICEF and partners over several years, countries such as Mozambique, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Zambia have started issuing a unique ID number at birth registration to establish an organic relationship between birth registration and national ID, which is in line with the UNLIA-recommended life-cycle approach to legal identity from birth to death.

For example, in Uttar Pradesh, India, the state successfully expanded its birth registration coverage by linking services to the Aadhaar programme (India's free-of-charge national biometric ID system) in 503 government hospitals across 35 districts in 2022, up from 27 districts in 2021. This resulted in the issuing of 120,000 Aadhaar Linked Birth Registration certificates. Staff from over 18,200 private hospitals were also trained on the system. Further, the state integrated data from MaNTrA (a health status tracking app) into the system, enabling real-time monitoring of birth registration at 25,814 government health-care facilities. As a result of these efforts, the birth registration rate in the state increased to 89 per cent, benefiting more than 4.6 million newborns in 2022.

To ensure that no child is left behind, UNICEF advocates for an integrated and holistic approach to service delivery across nutrition, HIV, education, sanitation, SBC and other child protection interventions to improve access to services.

In 2022, important gains were made in improving the birth registration of children through collaborative engagements with other sectors in Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali and Yemen. In Yemen, UNICEF collaboration across actors in child protection, health and SBC interventions, including training of campaign volunteers to more effectively conduct birth registration campaigns, helped scale up access to birth registration services in all governorates, resulting in over 212,100 children (45 per cent girls) receiving birth certificates.

Demand creation, including by identifying bottlenecks and through legal and policy reviews

UNICEF supports governments in various ways to raise awareness among parents, community and religious leaders, and other stakeholders on the significance of timely birth registration and certification. This includes campaigns, undertaking analysis and reviews, and engaging supply-side actors. UNICEF also works to empower parents, families and communities to demand birth registration and certification as a right.

In Bangladesh, UNICEF supported the Office of the Registrar General for Birth and Death Registration to reach more than 70 million people all over the country through the national campaign on birth and death registration, leading to the birth registration of over 10 million children in 2022 – a significant increase from approximately 4 million in 2020. In Senegal, UNICEF successfully organized 1,290 discussion sessions (focused on interactions with pregnant women and nursing mothers) and inter-village meetings (aimed at reaching a broader audience) on the significance of birth registration and its procedures. Feedback from sessions showed a significant increase in the percentage of mothers who understood the importance of birth registration compared to 2021 (from 84 per cent to 93 per cent in rural areas; from 89 per cent to 95 per cent in urban areas). A UNICEF-led bottleneck analysis in four key districts in Sierra Leone identified the barriers to registering births, especially in hard-to-reach areas, and offered remedial actions. As one of 20 African countries that are on track to achieve SDG 16.9, these findings have proved critical for UNICEF to support the government to develop a targeted action plan to stay on track to achieve universal birth registration by 2030.

Facilitating birth registration and legal identity in humanitarian situations

Children's right to an identity is often at risk in humanitarian contexts and protracted emergencies, which include armed conflicts, natural disasters, mass cross-border or internal displacement, and public health emergencies. In such situations, children may not have a birth certificate, making it difficult to prove their identity and access services.

UNICEF works with countries to overcome these constraints. In Pakistan, UNICEF successfully advocated with the government to waive the birth registration fee for children in flood-affected areas and worked with civil society partners across four provinces to raise awareness of the importance and process of birth registration. Despite the challenges created by the 2022 floods, UNICEF's support led to a 128 per cent increase in birth registration, with 5.5 million children (47 per cent girls) registered in 2022.

To improve access, UNICEF Iraq assessed the digital needs of linking birth registration with health-care facilities, which led to the development of an action plan with the authorities, including orienting staff on digital processes. Equipment compatible with various platforms and internet access were provided to 380 key birth registration offices to improve the birth registration process. As a result of UNICEF and partner actions, almost 6,200 children received birth certificates, a critical protection measure in this post-conflict context.

Addressing childhood statelessness

A lack of documentation can also lead to statelessness, as children cannot establish their nationality.

To address these issues, UNICEF supports legal reviews of civil registration and nationality laws to assess their inclusivity of statelessness; works with agencies to simplify birth registration processes for refugee children and those at risk of statelessness; supports systems to help children who are stateless navigate registration systems; and undertakes SBC programming with government and civil society to stimulate awareness about the importance and benefits of birth registration with populations.

To this end, UNICEF supported the Government of Fiji to revise its Nationality Law to include provisions that prevent childhood statelessness. In Myanmar, UNICEF and partners organized legal aid workshops in a vulnerable region to strengthen access to legal aid services for stateless children. In Colombia, UNICEF helped local hospital administrations link registration services to the National Registry System, which records children with Venezuelan parents born in Colombia. And in Thailand, UNICEF and the government launched a nationwide public advocacy campaign to support an end to childhood statelessness, reaching 12 million people.

Reimagining justice for children

To accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs, and in particular SDG 16 (16.2, 16.3 and 16.9), UNICEF launched an ambitious Reimagine Justice for Children Agenda[63] at the World Congress on Justice with Children in 2021. It builds on the findings and recommendations of the Global Study on Children Deprived of their Liberty, the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, and the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy 2021–2030. The agenda will guide UNICEF's work on strengthening justice systems in the next 10 years, emphasizing **States' and individuals' accountability** for children's human rights; **children's legal empowerment**; and a call to **end the detention of children in all its forms**.

In 2022, the first year of the agenda's roll-out, UNICEF focused its efforts on mainstreaming it into broader United Nations Rule of Law and Access to Justice initiatives at the global level, while accelerating efforts to operationalize the six programmatic priorities of the renewed focus on justice for children at the country level. In 2022, UNICEF collaborated closely with the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General and global focal points on rule of law to ensure the six programme priorities of the agenda were mainstreamed as areas for action in the Secretary-General's Rule of Law report, the new United Nations Rule of Law Vision and the Secretary-General's Technical Guidance on Transitional Justice. These are critical steps towards reaching UNICEF's vision of ensuring all children, everywhere, have access to justice.

The momentum created by the COVID-19 pandemic in releasing 45,000 children from detention and lessons learned through UNICEF advocacy and programming engagement with partner countries to strengthen justice systems for children have allowed transformative shifts to begin at the country level. Improved data and reporting systems in recent years show that more children in a growing number of countries can access child-friendly justice services as countries progressively put in place policies, laws and systems to implement national justice for children reforms.

There has been an increase in the number of countries reporting a specialized justice system, from 24 countries in 2021 to 31 in 2022 (an increase of 29 per cent). This includes impressive gains made in countries such as Benin, Costa Rica, Guyana, Liberia, Romania, Rwanda, the Sudan and Uganda. Countries are beginning to expand the use of restorative justice approaches and scale up diversion and non-custodial measures for children in conflict with the law.

Similarly, countries are progressively building the capacity of justice professionals, including those certified to support children in conflict with the law and child survivors/victims, and expanding the specialized services available to support children in civil proceedings. Across 90 countries where UNICEF worked with partners in 2022, there has been an increase in the number of children benefiting from improved access to justice services, such as legal aid, child-friendly procedures and court processes, and strengthened integration of allied services (such as health and social welfare) to provide multidisciplinary prevention and response services (*see Figure 14*).

FIGURE 18: Summary of results **on strengthening justice systems for children,** 2022

Countries reporting on specialized justice for children systems, by region, 2022

EAP	ECA	ESA	LAC	MENA	SA	WCA	TOTAL
26	22	21	35	18	8	24	154
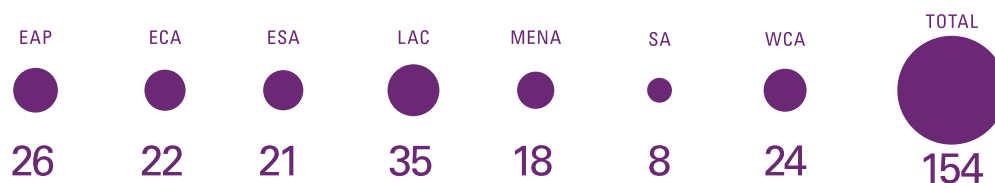
Abbreviations:
EAP, East Asia and the Pacific; **ECA,** Europe and Central Asia; **ESA,** Eastern and Southern Africa; **LAC,** Latin America and the Caribbean; **MENA,** Middle East and North Africa; **SA,** South Asia; **WCA,** West and Central Africa

Note:
Disaggregated data are not always available for the entire aggregated total.

↑**40%**

In 2022, **40 per cent more countries reported specialized justice for children systems** resulting in an increased number of children in contact with the law receiving services.

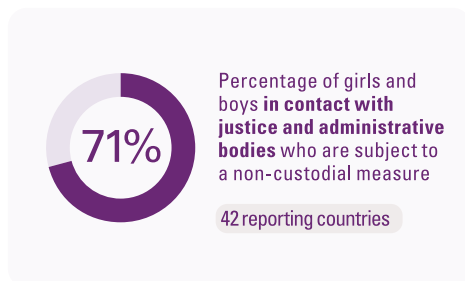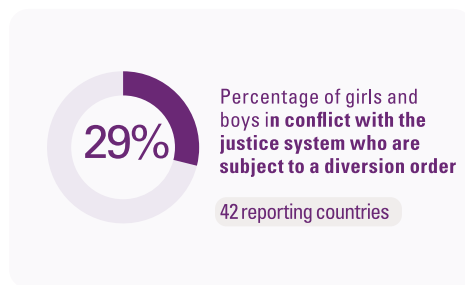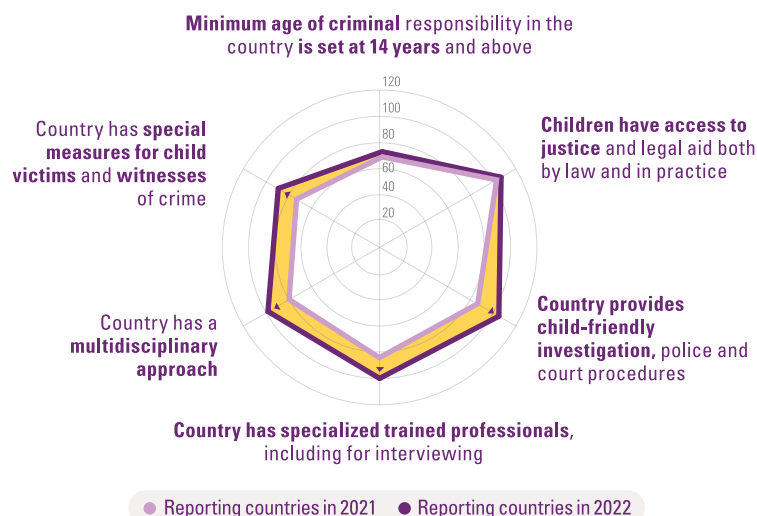**Children in contact with the law reached by UNICEF-supported services, 2022**

By age

2%	17%	81%

Under 10 years
5 countries

10-14 years
18 countries

15-17 years
30 countries

By gender

♀22%	♂78%

Progress on strengthening children's access to justice, by criteria, 2021-2022

Minimum age of criminal responsibility in the country **is set at 14 years** and above

Country has **special measures for child victims** and **witnesses** of crime

Children have access to justice and legal aid both by law and in practice

Country has a **multidisciplinary approach**

Country provides child-friendly investigation, police and court procedures

Country has specialized trained professionals, including for interviewing

● Reporting countries in 2021　● Reporting countries in 2022

29%
Percentage of girls and boys in **conflict with the justice system who are subject to a diversion order**

42 reporting countries

71%
Percentage of girls and boys **in contact with justice and administrative bodies** who are subject to a non-custodial measure

42 reporting countries

Scaling up programming priority areas to strengthen children's access to justice at the country level

In 2022, UNICEF country offices reported encouraging progress in operationalizing each of the six interconnected priority areas for action.

- *Every child in conflict with the law can be diverted: UNICEF prioritizes early intervention in child offending, placing a significant emphasis on facilitating the expanded use of diversion as an alternative key strategy. To prevent children from undergoing formal criminal justice proceedings, UNICEF supports governments and CSOs to develop programmes that would make children accountable but still allow them to retain their other rights, such as to education. Instead of being drawn into proceedings that negatively affect their physical and mental health, children undertake community services and participate in other restorative justice mechanisms. This prevents children from entering detention and receiving a criminal record.*

In 2022, around 40 per cent (just 200,000 out of a total of 500,000) of the children in conflict with the law (from countries with disaggregated data) were subjected to diversion and non-custodial measures (78 per cent boys and 22 per cent girls). The renewed focus on justice for children seeks to sustain the momentum and increase these numbers. Regions reporting the greatest number of children in conflict with the law who are diverted or subjected to non-custodial measures include the East Asia and Pacific Region, where the proportion of children in conflict with the law receiving alternative measures increased from 8 per cent in 2021 to 40 per cent in 2022.

Important progress to prioritize prevention and early intervention has taken place in Bangladesh, where UNICEF worked in close cooperation with the authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate the release of children in conflict with the law from detention. These trends have continued, due mainly to the continued effort to institutionalize the close working collaboration post-pandemic between the justice and social welfare sectors to strengthen early intervention and post-release support. The diversion rate increased significantly, from less than 10 per cent in 2021 to over 23 per cent in 2022. More than 4,500 children were released from detention and received community-based care and post-release support in 2022.

- *Every child is protected from detention: UNICEF is committed to ending the detention of children in conflict with the law, as well as strengthening post-release reintegration support to reduce the risks of re-offending. This is coupled with advocating for legal reforms to prevent detention of children, such as laws stipulating a minimum age of criminal responsibility over the age of 14 years. UNICEF is also committed to ending the unlawful and arbitrary detention of children based on their migration status see Box 'End child detention, including migration-related detention', as well as detention due to association with armed groups or for national security reasons (see ‘Output 3.1: Ending grave violations’ for results on our work with children associated with armed groups).*

Notable advancements include in Croatia, where the 'A Step Forward' programme was introduced and aims to extend the use of both non-custodial and custodial interventions by deepening formal collaboration between the social welfare and justice sectors. In Egypt, UNICEF is working with the justice sector and the social service workforce to strengthen the availability of legal, social and MHPSS services for children in contact with the law, with over 21,000 child victims and children in conflict with the law in 2022 receiving one or more service. In Angola, a one-stop-shop model for child-friendly service delivery was established, integrating social and judicial services for children in conflict with the law.

End child detention, including migration-related detention

With more than 80 countries continuing to have laws and policies that allow children to be detained based on their migration status, in 2022, UNICEF, together with the United Nations Task Force on Children Deprived of their Liberty, joined the global pledge on ending immigration detention. This was part of a broader commitment of support for the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.[64]

In 2022, UNICEF supported a review of the Global Compact for Migration,[65] led by the International Migration Review Forum, which aimed to identify where the global community can further translate this agenda into accelerated action. This led to several key national commitments: Germany pledged to end the use of deportation detention for children; Mexico pledged to develop a national strategy for alternative care for children in situations of mobility; and Colombia pledged its leadership in steering peer learning exchanges.

UNICEF country offices are also contributing to these efforts. For example, the Government of Thailand developed a framework to more effectively implement an existing national Strategy on Alternatives to Detention, as part of its commitment to the global pledge. Through UNICEF advocacy and support in strengthening the capacity of justice professionals to more effectively operationalize the strategy, over 305 migrant and stateless children and 62 mothers were released from immigration detention in 2022.

Additionally, significant steps taken in Thailand to increase the legal minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12 years have also resulted in fewer children going through the formal justice system in 2022. This policy change had an immediate impact on the lives of 250 children (10–12 years of age) already in the criminal justice system. Further, for children aged 12–15 years, the courts have been empowered to strengthen the use of non-custodial measures such as diversion. UNICEF continues to support the Royal Thai Government in strengthening capacity and generating evidence in the justice sector to guide further efforts to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14 years, as recommended in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Globally, 73 countries reported having a minimum age of criminal responsibility above 14 years (the minimum age recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child) in 2022 – an increase of four countries from 2021.

- ***Every child survivor of sexual violence, abuse or exploitation receives justice: UNICEF places a high priority on embedding child-friendly and gender-sensitive justice processes and procedures into national systems, and strengthening cooperation between justice, child protection and allied systems to respond to child survivors or witnesses of violence, abuse and exploitation.***

In 2022, some 92 countries reported progress in ensuring access to specialized services for child survivors and witnesses of crime, compared to 77 countries in 2021.

UNICEF Zimbabwe strengthened the national survivor-friendly system and child-friendly courts, supporting over 2,000 cases. A UNICEF-supported analysis of legal frameworks in Uzbekistan led to important changes in the Criminal Code, including reducing interview periods from 8 to 4 hours, ensuring a legal representative and a psychologist are present when engaging with children under 18 years (previously 16 years), and providing survivor- and child-friendly interview rooms.

Similarly, 100 countries have invested in training specialized professionals, including in child-friendly and gender-sensitive interviewing and case processing. In Ghana, over 3,000 police officers received pre-service training on engaging with children in contact with the law, including child survivors and witnesses.

- ***Every child can access free legal aid, representation and services: UNICEF works to expand access to free legal aid for children and build national cadres of specialized lawyers and paralegal services, as well as supporting social work and child specialization within the justice sector (see also 'Output 3.1: Violence against girls, boys and women').***

In 2022, some 107 countries advanced measures to improve children's access to justice and legal aid both by law and in practice – a marginal but important increase from the 103 countries reporting in 2021. Achievements include, for example, Ethiopia, where the government provided free legal aid services to children and other vulnerable groups in urban areas for the first time. To scale up these services beyond urban areas, UNICEF also provided technical inputs to the government in the drafting of a legal aid strategy that aims to provide support for all children in contact with the law in the country. UNICEF Zimbabwe supported the decentralization of legal services at help desks and using mobile community legal aid clinics in provincial areas to improve access to justice for children in hard-to-reach locations.

- ***Every child can access alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and child-friendly courts: UNICEF is increasingly advocating for justice systems to integrate traditional/informal justice mechanisms that are usually undertaken at local levels, as well as ensuring these and other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are child-friendly, gender-responsive and, where appropriate, provide remedies for violations of children's rights to protection, in line with international standards.***

UNICEF Rwanda contributed to the development of the new criminal justice policy and the passing of an alternative dispute resolution policy, which was used to provide in-service training for around 440 justice and child protection professionals. Indonesia strengthened the integration of community-based mechanisms within the provincial justice system in West Nusa Tenggara to formalize the use of community-led alternative dispute options as the first step in the process of managing local cases of children in conflict with the law.

- ***Every child knows and can claim their rights:
  UNICEF supports countries to invest in legal
  rights awareness for children in the justice and
  welfare systems, and in reforms that recognize
  children's legal standing and their right to be
  heard. This is a relatively nascent area of work
  for UNICEF and partners, and an area requiring
  greater attention and programming investments
  as the Reimagine Justice for Children Agenda
  becomes more fully operationalized within
  country contexts.***

In Tajikistan, UNICEF facilitated the first-ever participation of young people in three different government-led policy dialogues as part of the development of the second phase of the country's Juvenile Justice System Reform Strategy (2023–2027). This led the Ministry of Justice to invite the youth participants to be a part of a working group to share their inputs on a planned roll-out of the strategy. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, consultations were undertaken with young people, including students, children with disabilities, children from minority ethnic groups and abandoned children, as part of a process to amend the Law on Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children.

In the East Asia and the Pacific Region, UNICEF developed a study on legal empowerment which was initially validated in Indonesia and Malaysia. Recognizing that children typically have limited access to formal judicial mechanisms, the report reflects on how children can advance their rights through legal and non-legal pathways and outlines a four-step legal empowerment strategy that encompasses education, expression, access to remedy and safety.

Colombia: Voices of youth in the transitional justice system – the story of Kim Estela

Kim Estela is a 19-year-old indigenous youth from the Embera Dobidá community in the Chocó department of Colombia. Her community has been affected by decades of armed conflict and violence, recruitment and sexual and gender-based violence against women. Kim has always been passionate about being a leader for her people, inspired by her grandfather, father and aunt. In 2019, she was introduced to UNICEF at a Red-Hand Day event – the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers. This introduction had a profound impact on her.

UNICEF invited Kim to participate in the Truth Commission's National Youth Consultation,[66] a multi-stakeholder collaboration taking place 25 years after Colombia's National Mandate of Children for Peace. The Commission brought together children, adolescents and young people to voice their aspirations for truth about the conflict in the country. Kim initially felt unprepared to participate but eventually opened herself to learning and discovered that young people can change things and make things better. The consultation also gave Kim a space to voice her vision for Colombia's future, emphasizing the importance of coming together and solidarity.

Today, Kim is in her first semester of law school and continues to be a respected young leader for her community. The National Youth Consultation was a crucial step in this process, and it had a significant impact on Kim's personal development as a leader. She feels empowered to overcome any barrier that lies in her way, and encourages other young people to participate in civic engagement.

UNICEF continues to support Colombia's transitional justice and peacebuilding processes and is committed to ensure that children, adolescents and young people's voices are included, fulfilling their rights to participation and driving their positive civic engagement. To take this commitment forward, UNICEF and partners rolled out a peace leader programme in 2022, supporting 25 youth leaders to lead social mobilization initiatives that impacted over 8,000 people in 2022. UNICEF, in partnership with UNFPA and the Youth Council of Colombia, is committed to supporting the new, long-term peacebuilding programme in the country, the Development Programme, to promote social cohesion, inclusive services and safety.

© Photo by courtesy of KimEstela

Protecting the rights of children born through surrogacy

Surrogacy, especially through international arrangements, now surpasses the use of intercountry adoption as a method of family formation. Although there are no precise global figures on how many children have been born through surrogacy, the development of assisted reproductive technology, changes in social norms and the trend for having children later are leading to more children being born through surrogacy.

To date, no internationally agreed definition of the different forms of surrogacy exists. Currently international human rights law does not provide safeguards specifically focusing on domestic surrogacy and international surrogacy arrangements, which places children born through surrogacy at risk.

In 2021, UNICEF released – for the first time – a Briefing Note on Key Considerations: Children's Rights and Surrogacy,[67] together with our partner organization Child Identity Protection (CHIP), recognizing that children born through surrogacy have the same rights as all children under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF also provided input to the development of the principles for the protection of the rights of the child born through surrogacy (Verona principles).[68] UNICEF has also participated in advocacy for the development of an international normative framework to protect and promote the rights of children born through surrogacy. This includes participation in the Expert Group on Parentage and Surrogacy of the Hague Conference on Private International Law to explore the feasibility of one or more private international law instruments on legal parentage, including surrogacy.

Prevention of family separation

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of all children to family care.[69] The care reform agenda continues to face tough challenges, especially in the current global environment in which many countries continue to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. Ineffective or inadequate linkages between social and child protection programmes, limited community-based inclusive health and education services, and insufficient numbers of qualified social service workers all have an impact on the quality of care for children separated from their caregivers.

To address challenges and drive the care reform agenda, UNICEF is advancing global dialogue to capitalize on the global momentum to shift the focus towards preventing family separation, prioritize family-based alternative care for children who need it and end the institutionalization of children.[70]

UNICEF works with governments to advocate for, develop and implement national care reforms, including deinstitutionalization policies, and to strengthen the integrated provision of prevention and care services for children and their parents. UNICEF is also increasing efforts at the global and national levels to collect better data on children without parental care, to more effectively assess the overall number of children in care – a key challenge for the sector.

At the country level, there was an increase in the number of UNICEF country offices reporting on children in all forms of formal alternative care, from 68 countries in 2021 to 88

countries in 2022. Data from these 88 countries indicate that more than 40 per cent of children in alternative care in 2022 were placed in family-based care such as kinship care or foster care, compared to 27 per cent in 2021 *(see Figure 15)*.
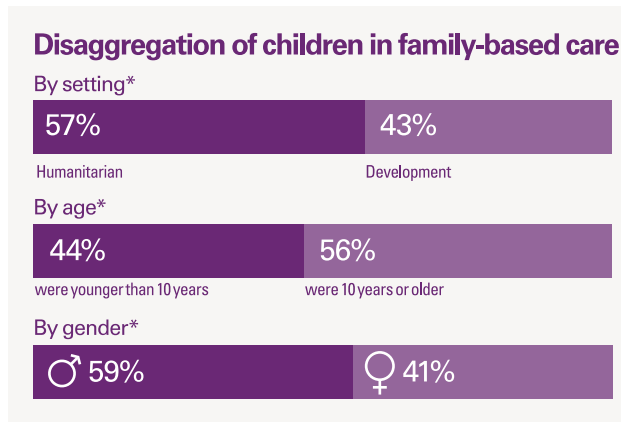

An 8-year-old boy smiles outside his family's home in Tanguieta, Benin. He and his family fled an attack in Burkina Faso and walked over 200 km to reach a safe haven. UNICEF is helping refugee families at the Social Promotion Centre, focusing on ensuring children are prevented from being separated from their families during conflicts or natural disasters.

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FIGURE 19: Summary of results on **supporting children without parental or family care,** 2022
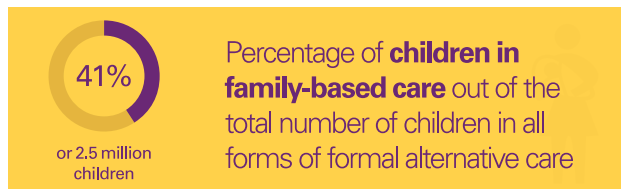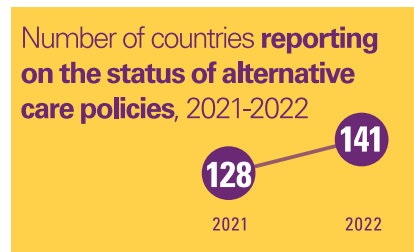
Number of countries **reporting on the status of alternative care policies**, 2021-2022

128 2021 → **141** 2022

35 countries

reported having **comprehensive policies and mechanisms** for preventing family separation, in line with the 2009 **Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children**

41% or 2.5 million children

Percentage of **children in family-based care** out of the total number of children in all forms of formal alternative care

Disaggregation of children in family-based care

By setting*
57%	43%
Humanitarian	Development

By age*
44%	56%
were younger than 10 years	were 10 years or older

By gender*
♂ 59%	♀ 41%

Progress on strengthening **alternative care systems for children**, 2021-2022**

There is a **range of services available that prevent unnecessary** separation from the family

There is a **monitoring and inspection mechanism** in place for alternative care providers and facilities

There is a **periodic review mechanism in place to ensure that the needs of children living in alternative care** continue to be met and more sustainable solutions sought as appropriate

There is a **review mechanism in place**

There is a **range of alternative care options**

● Reporting countries in 2022   ● Reporting countries in 2021

In **humanitarian situations,** UNICEF and partners provided almost **201,000 unaccompanied or separated children (45% girls)** with related services (61 countries)

48% of these children were placed in **care arrangements**

21% were placed in **temporary care and subsequently reunified** with their families or caregivers

31% were **reunified directly** with their families or caregivers

Countries **reporting on strengthening alternative care,** by region, 2022

EAP	ECA	ESA	LAC	MENA	SA	WCA
18	21	20	35	17	7	23

Fostering global collaborations to drive care reform

Since 2022, the Transforming Children's Care (TCC) global collaborative has grown into a vibrant community with more than 800 members representing 385 organizations, networks and agencies, as well as including many more individuals with lived experience of the care system. TCC provides a community for shared learning to more effectively support the transition of residential care services across different country contexts. UNICEF and the Better Care Network, as co-conveners of the TCC Task Force on Family Strengthening, bring together key cross-sectoral learning about what works to strengthen families' capacities to care and prevent the separation of children from their families. In 2022, a global toolkit was developed to help policymakers more effectively implement national care reforms, including a measurement framework to track national progress.[71]

"We are finally seeing in action this large and diverse community of policy advocates, researchers, local practitioners, care-experienced advocates, donors, come together to share, learn, identify effective solutions, and leverage more effectively their efforts from local to global to transform systems of care so that children can grow up in safe and nurturing family care."

– Florence Martin, Better Care Network

UNICEF seeks to strengthen family-based alternative care by working with governments to strengthen the legal and policy environment to ensure consistency in care standards and approaches.

In Kenya, for example, in 2022, UNICEF provided technical assistance to develop the Children Act, which provides clearer provisions on using family-based alternative care and on reintegrating children currently in residential care with their families or caregivers. In Romania, UNICEF worked with the government to add amendments to the Law on Child Rights that specifically target actions to reduce the number of children in institutions, especially those under the age of 7 years and those with disabilities.

UNICEF has placed a major focus on developing or modifying alternative care guidelines, in line with the 2009 Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

In Pakistan, UNICEF supported the development of minimum standards and a policy framework on alternative care, aligned with international standards. In Zambia, UNICEF helped develop guidance to operationalize policies on emergency kinship care in 20 districts, which included orientations for district social welfare officers on case management, using a newly rolled out Case Management Handbook. In Cambodia, UNICEF helped develop practical guidance for care workers to support children's reintegration to their families after transitioning from residential care institutions.

UNICEF's sustained advocacy and technical support resulted in many countries systematically dismantling the use of institutional care in favour of a family-based care approach.

This includes in Mozambique, where investment in strengthening the social service sector has resulted in the number of children in residential care decreasing by 47 per cent in the past three years (from 7,300 children in 2019 to 3,400 in 2022). In Ghana, the country's Care Reform Initiative, which provides a comprehensive framework to prevent family separation, enabled 30 per cent of the 1,100 children in institutions in 2022 to be reunited with their families, and a further 22 per cent of children to be placed in foster care arrangements.

UNICEF works with countries to scale up interventions to promote parental care and to prevent unnecessary family separation.[72] In 2022, 76 countries reported having in place a range of services to prevent children being separated from their families.

In India, for example, UNICEF supported the government to link over 350,000 children identified as being at risk of labour, unsafe migration and trafficking with social protection schemes, enabling almost 130,200 children to receive care and protection services. In Rwanda, a household risk assessment mapping in two targeted areas identified more than 6,700 children with disabilities potentially at risk. This led UNICEF and partners to contextualize parenting resources and target support for these communities. Additionally, 138 rehabilitation services were established to strengthen parents' caregiving skills, alongside providing locally made and cost-effective assistive devices to improve home accessibility.

Tajikistan: 'Baby Homes' become family-based support centres

Children from poor families, particularly those with disabilities, are often placed in institutions by their families as a coping strategy. It is a practice that persists even though there is now a broad global consensus that children in institutions miss out on opportunities for healthy development and are also at greater risk of violence, neglect and abuse. UNICEF has partnered with the Government of Tajikistan to promote family-based alternative care for children and end institutionalization.

The transformation of residential childcare institutions (called 'Baby Homes') for children under 5 years of age into Family and Child Support Centres now helps to identify vulnerable families and to detect developmental delays and disabilities in young children. This enables children to receive the family- and community-based support they need, as opposed to institutionalization.

These efforts helped contribute to a 20 per cent decrease in the number of children in residential care in 2021 (latest data available).

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A girl at one of Tajikistan's 'baby homes' (family-based support centers).

UNICEF places a high priority on securing a qualified social service workforce to enhance care services, as well as strengthening care systems to more effectively identify, refer and monitor individual cases (see also ['Strengthening the social sector workforce'](#)).

In 2022, some 75 countries had a review mechanism in place to ensure children are only separated from their family if necessary, and which determines the most appropriate alternative care option based on a child's best interests. Similarly, 65 countries have a monitoring and inspection mechanism in place for alternative care providers and facilities to determine a minimum standard of quality of care. Though many countries are establishing national policies and legislation, the extent to which these are implemented is, at times, limited. This is largely due to the absence of nationally available case management systems, and limits on the availability of social workers qualified to provide systematic reviews and inspections.

Yet despite challenges, progress is being made to strengthen the social service workforce, to provide the necessary front-line services for children in care. Important gains in 2022 include in Armenia, where UNICEF advocacy to strengthen case management processes contributed to increased state financing, doubling the 2023 budget to extend access to foster care and increasing support fivefold to improve the quality of services of CSOs nationwide that provide critical care services at the community level. In Croatia, a new service of 'family assistants' to support families at risk of separation was introduced, and over 750 care and related professionals were accredited with formal licences. In India, UNICEF worked to strengthen preventive and rehabilitative care services in 314 districts across 14 states, orienting around 14,500 child protection (social) workers on gatekeeping, improved case management processes and skills to identify and refer cases for family-based alternative care.

UNICEF places a high priority on strengthening data collection on children's care, including those living outside family care, which is often not captured in regular data collection – making it hard to know how many children are in alternative care and what services they receive.

UNICEF developed the first-ever comprehensive package to collect data on children living in residential care settings in 2022. This led to the creation of a global database on children in residential care.[73] Data were gathered for 2010–2021 from 125 countries with available information, as well as global and regional estimates. At the country level, UNICEF also works to strengthen generation of evidence that can be used to advocate and shape policy. In Viet Nam, for example, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Justice in an assessment of the current adoption procedures, which helped to clarify steps to amend the country's Law on Adoption to bring it into alignment with international standards.

Addressing the needs of unaccompanied and separated children in humanitarian contexts

All children who are unaccompanied or become separated from their primary caregivers in humanitarian contexts face increased threats to their safety and survival, making them especially vulnerable to multiple protection risks.
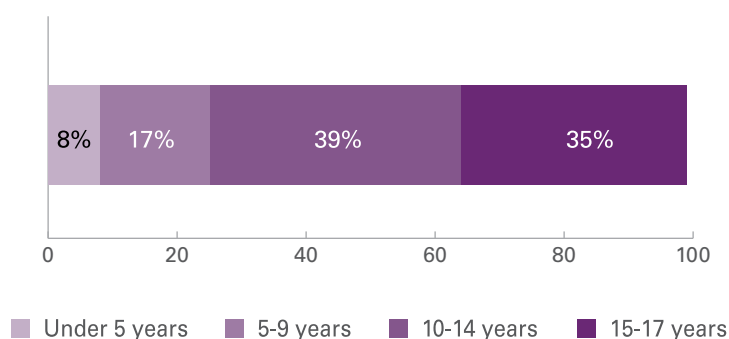
> *In 2022, UNICEF and partners provided almost 201,000 children (45 per cent girls) already unaccompanied or separated across 61 countries with temporary alternative care while pursuing family tracing, reunification and other durable solutions (compared to 179,200 children in 67 countries in 2021). Based on disaggregated data, 48 per cent of these children were placed in care arrangements, 21 per cent were placed in temporary care and subsequently reunified with their families or caregivers, and 31 per cent were reunified directly with their families or caregivers (see Figure 16).*

FIGURE 20: Results summary of UNICEF support to unaccompanied and separated children, 2022

96% of target population, or 201,000 children in humanitarian contexts, were provided with **alternative care or reunified** with their family and/or caregivers
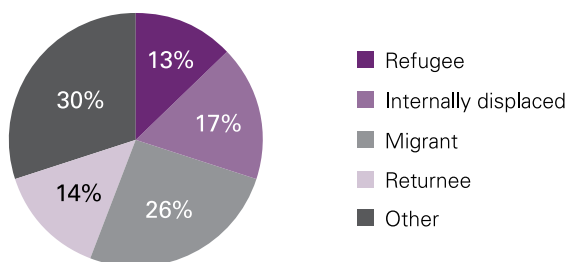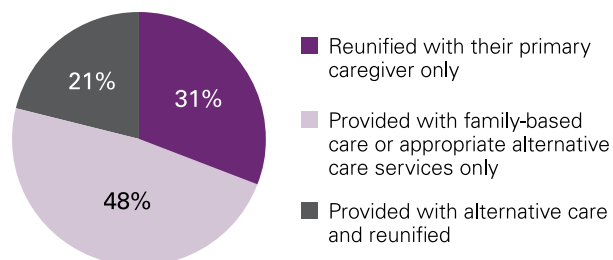
12% INCREASE from 2021

By age*

8%	Under 5 years
17%	5-9 years
39%	10-14 years
35%	15-17 years

By gender*

55%   45%

60,466 children on the move supported**

- Refugee — 13%
- Internally displaced — 17%
- Migrant — 26%
- Returnee — 14%
- Other — 30%

67,584 reunified and/or provided with alternative care*

- Reunified with their primary caregiver only — 31%
- Provided with family-based care or appropriate alternative care services only — 48%
- Provided with alternative care and reunified — 21%

* Percentage is calculated based on available disaggregated data on migration status.

** Of the total number reached

UNICEF provided family- and community-based care to around 133,350 unaccompanied or separated children (UASC) in humanitarian contexts in 2022. This is more than double the number of children receiving support in 2021. This increase is, in part, a reflection of improved UNICEF data systems that aim to more effectively track the services provided for UASC, as well as the increased integration of the use of case management systems to identify and refer children for response services.

UNICEF's ability to monitor and report on the migration status of children also improves our ability to effectively advocate for their rights and identify the type of protection services they need.

In 2022, out of the total of 201,000 UASC, there were almost 60,500 children identified as being on the move, 13 per cent of whom were asylum-seekers or refugees, 17 per cent were internally displaced persons, 14 per cent were returnees, and 26 per cent were migrants (*see also 'Strategic output 3.2: Children on the move' for further results*).

Child protection case management is a key tool in humanitarian situations to enable UNICEF and partners to respond to the violations children have experienced and protect them from further harm. While the majority of UASC supported by UNICEF in 2022 were children aged 10–14 years, improved case management tracking shows that there was a significant increase in support to children under 5 years of age, an age group that is often

at risk of being invisible. This is important to help UNICEF and partners more effectively target their prevention and response services. Over 276,000 of the total of 565,125 children reported to have received individual case management in humanitarian contexts were identified as children on the move. This includes 34 per cent who were identified as migrants, asylum-seekers or refugees, or returnees, and an additional 26 per cent of whom were identified as internally displaced children.

In 2022, UNICEF supported the integration of the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS+) in four new humanitarian contexts to more effectively support UASC. These include in Kenya (Dadaab), Myanmar, Romania, the Sudan and Ukraine. As a result, the number of CPIMS+ users doubled from 2021, managing more than 403,000 UASC cases in 2022.

For example, UNICEF, working closely with border police and local child protection authorities, identified and subsequently provided specialized services to almost 5,000 UASC out of the estimated 700,000 children who crossed the border from Ukraine into Romania. Children were referred to temporary community- or family-based care where needed or reunified with their families.

Work also continues elsewhere to fortify ongoing case management systems. In Ethiopia, for example, the existing integrated UNICEF–UNHCR child CPIMS+ proved invaluable in the response to the acute crisis in 2022, particularly in drought-affected regions. UNICEF and UNHCR were able to identify children in the key locations where there were increased risks of family separation. This enabled a timely response to identify more than 12,200 UASC and provide them with alternative care while they underwent family tracing and reunification services.

Once identified, UNICEF provides UASC with a range of multisectoral support and services across the continuum of care, in partnership with local and community-based child protection networks and local governments.

For example, in Afghanistan, over 14,900 UASC and displaced and returnee children from neighbouring countries were offered a comprehensive package of reunification services, compared with approximately 5,000 in 2021. UNICEF's response to the situation in Haiti and the Dominican Republic resulted in nearly 4,900 unaccompanied children being provided with a range of social services, and health and mental health assistance.

Spotlight on Somalia

In Somalia, the prolonged drought has compounded existing vulnerabilities stemming from protracted conflict and a weakened social safety net in the country. This has caused families to turn to negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage, increased children's vulnerabilities to be recruited by armed groups, and led to family separations. Nearly 13,800 children benefited from identification, family tracing and reunification services, while around 2,200 unaccompanied children received alternative care or reunification services.

UNICEF is also working with key ministries to strengthen integrated care services for UASC, such as MHPSS, education and health care. In 2022, all separated children living in alternative care arrangements (mostly extended families) were assigned a community-based social worker to follow up on their well-being and support their reintegration into their communities.

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Yunis had to walk for a month before reaching this camp for internally displaced persons in Somalia where displaced children are receiving support from UNICEF and other aid agencies. To link the emergency response to systems-strengthening, UNICEF provided training to social service workers on rapid response for GBV, and on family tracing and reunification support for unaccompanied and separated children.

Strengthening mental health and psychosocial support for children and families

Addressing the mental health and well-being of children underpins the achievement of all the SDGs but directly impacts the achievement of SDG 3 (ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages that is essential to sustainable development).

In 2022, UNICEF continued its commitment to scaling up the delivery of prevention and response services to address the mental health and well-being needs of children, as well as expanding enhanced support to parents and communities across humanitarian and development settings. UNICEF work is guided by the UNICEF Global Multisector Operational Framework for MHPSS (*see also the Box on 'Building tools to strengthen MHPSS services in humanitarian situations'*).

> *In 2022, 25.2 million people across 109 countries received UNICEF-supported MHPSS, more than double those benefitting from support in 2021. This includes support for 12.6 million children and adults in humanitarian situations. The number of countries tracking delivery and referral information related to MHPSS services for children and adolescents increased from 23 in 2021 to 49 in 2022 (see Figure 17).*
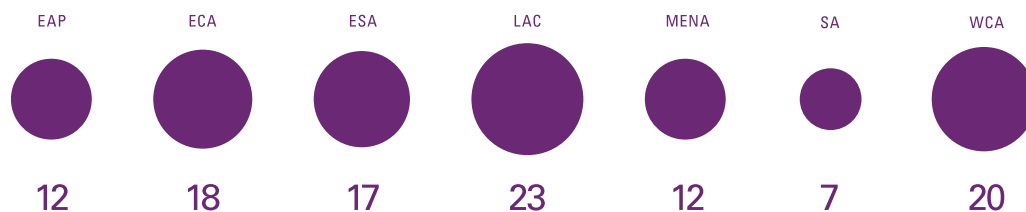

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Children participate in psychosocial activities organized by UNICEF and partners in Kay Castro displaced persons site in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Armed violence is forcing children and families to flee their homes in Haiti.

FIGURE 21: Result summary of UNICEF **mental health and psychosocial support,** 2022

25.2 million

children, adolescents, parents and caregivers received mental health & psychosocial support services

109 countries
reported

Abbreviations:
M - millions; **K -** thousands; **EAP**, East Asia and the Pacific; **ECA**, Europe and Central Asia; **ESA**, Eastern and Southern Africa; **LAC**, Latin America and the Caribbean; **MENA**, Middle East and North Africa; **SA**, South Asia; **WCA**, West and Central Africa.
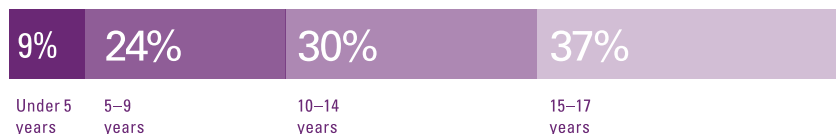
Notes:
The charts visualize percentages and numbers based on the total number of reported disaggregated data. * Total disaggregated data may differ from total number reported for the indicator. ** Results include the parents/caregivers and/or children who received one or more intervention in 2022.
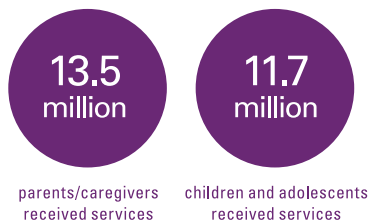
Regional breakdown of countries that supported MHPSS in 2022

EAP	ECA	ESA	LAC	MENA	SA	WCA
12	18	17	23	12	7	20

Disaggregation of MHPSS services received

By gender

♂ 47%   ♀ 53%

By services

13.5 million
parents/caregivers received services

11.7 million
children and adolescents received services

By age (children)*

9%	24%	30%	37%
Under 5 years	5–9 years	10–14 years	15–17 years

By migration status

2%	3%	5%	22%	68%

Migrant   IDP   Other children, including those in host communities

Returnee

Asylum seeker or refugee
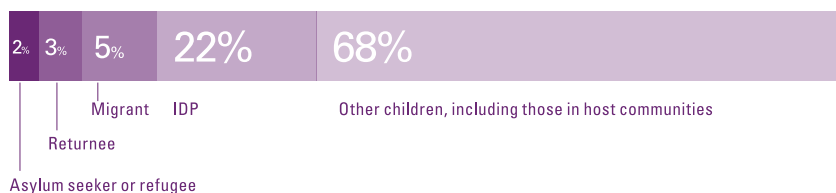
By focus of intervention**

9.2m	7.2m	6.5m	6.3m	5.1m	4.3m
Community awareness and positive behaviour change	Community mental health and psychosocial wellbeing support systems in Child Protection & Education	Improvement of wellbeing, coping and recovery in families, parents, caregivers, and/or teachers	Facilitation of positive relationships that promote inclusion, belonging and agency	Opportunities for stimulation, learning and skills development	Safe and nurturing environments in the community, including in schools

691k — Skills for parenting and supporting children in distress

460k — Facilitation of access to family and community support networks

172k — Care systems across social welfare, protection, and education

How does UNICEF help address mental health and well-being?

MHPSS for children includes a variety of interventions, including promoting positive coping strategies; reducing stigma and building understanding of common stress reactions; offering structured group activities to provide routine, stability and opportunities for play and social support; and providing intensive individual support for those in severe distress. UNICEF integrates the provision of mental health and well-being prevention and response services across all its thematic areas. This includes, for example UNICEF work with parents and caregivers, to increase their skills and understanding to provide nurturing care and environments to children (*see also 'Building parenting skills to promote nurturing'*).

UNICEF works with partners to prevent stigma and promote positive environments for mental health and psychosocial well-being through community awareness campaigns and positive behaviour change programmes for children, adolescents, caregivers, families and communities.

In 2022, almost 9.3 million people benefitted from UNICEF-supported community awareness and positive behaviour change programmes.

The largest of these programmes was in Bangladesh where around 3.5 million people benefitted from a range of activities (digitally and through community outreach) that included information on common stress reactions, positive coping, and how family members and peers can provide basic psychosocial support to those in distress. Messages were also distributed through mass media such as radio campaigns and information leaflets, as well as through other community-based activities – for example, through mobile health and nutrition teams and activities at child-friendly spaces.

UNICEF also continued to invest in improving the availability of MHPSS services, including increasing the interoperability of MHPSS services (social services, health, education and justice) and strengthening the capacity of social service and other front-line workers at community level.

In the Philippines, for instance, UNICEF built on existing community mechanisms to equip community volunteers and front-line workers with enhanced skills to provide first-line prevention and response services. This included training over 320 youth volunteers to operate child-friendly spaces that provide a safe area for play and recreational activities for children and offer a one-stop-shop location for parenting support. The spaces also enable front-line workers to identify children for referral for more specialized support from social service workers and other related professionals. In 2022, almost 30,000 children participated in these community spaces.

As part of UNICEF investment in strengthening workforce capacity and systems for MHPSS, greater attention is being paid to scaling up access to professional support via helplines. Approximately one third of calls to UNICEF-supported helplines are for mental health-related concerns (see also 'Output 3.1: Violence against girls, boys and women').

In Cambodia, for instance, UNICEF, together with Child Helpline, supported the training of 1,725 child safe agents (64 per cent females) to identify, refer and report child protection cases, including for MHPSS. In 2022, more than 16,300 helpline calls from children (49 per cent girls) and 13,500 calls from youth and adults, including caregivers (24 per cent females), received counselling and other MHPSS services. In Zambia, UNICEF supported partners Childline/Lifeline to engage French-, Amharic- and Kiswahili-speaking counsellors to scale up MHPSS services to migrant children, youth and caregivers. In 2022, around 3,500 children called the helpline for support, of which almost 300 (83 per cent boys) were migrants in childcare or detention facilities.

In 2022, UNICEF-supported MHPSS interventions benefitted 13.5 million parents and caregivers – more than three times as many as the 3.6 million in 2021. Much of this work is linked to UNICEF's broader work in supporting positive parenting programmes across the humanitarian–development-peace nexus.

In Burundi, for instance, almost 700 volunteers running over 100 child protection committees were equipped with enhancing guidance and providing positive parenting skills. An innovative extension of this approach was the creation of over 220 'solidarity groups' for parents to join where they received focused positive parenting support. Over 97,000 parents (63 per cent mothers) participated in these groups in 2022 (*see also 'Building parenting skills to promote nurturing' for more results*).

Building tools to strengthen MHPSS services in humanitarian situations

UNICEF's expertise has helped drive the development of global goods such as the Inter Agency Steering Committee (IASC) MHPSS Minimum Service Package (MSP),[74] the culmination of a three-year project led by UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) with UNHCR and UNFPA.

In late 2022, the MSP was approved as an IASC product, the highest stamp of collaborative approval. The MSP is intended to lead to better-coordinated, more predictable and more equitable responses that make effective use of limited resources and thus improve the scale and quality of programming.

Already, we are seeing the uptake and use of the MSP by actors in some of the most challenging contexts where children's well-being is threatened. For example, in Iraq, one of the five countries to pilot the MSP, UNICEF and partners have worked to integrate minimum services in the justice sector, benefiting over 5,300 children (99 per cent boys) in detention centres with an improved package of post-release services that includes MHPSS care services to help with their reintegration into their communities.

The EQUIP: Ensuring Quality in Psychological Support platform was also launched[75] – a joint WHO–UNICEF project that makes assessment tools and e-learning courses freely available to improve the MHPSS competencies of helpers and the consistency and quality of training and service delivery. The platform makes resources freely available to governments, training institutions and NGOs, both in humanitarian and development settings, to deliver effective MHPSS to children and adults.

In 2022, UNICEF oriented 924 humanitarian programme planners on the MSP and trained 281 service providers on EQUIP.

Addressing heightened vulnerabilities in humanitarian situations

Living through conflicts and disasters can have a devastating impact on children's well-being and compromise their social, emotional and cognitive development. Many affected children endure the sudden deaths of loved ones, separation from family members, homelessness, poverty, hunger, injuries, and severe disruption to their daily routines, education and friendship networks.

In times of crisis, UNICEF provides MHPSS activities to help children and families to re-establish a sense of safety, strengthen social connections, regain a sense of control and develop a sense of hope – factors directly associated with positive well-being, resilience and recovery.

In Yemen, for example, UNICEF strengthened the delivery of MHPSS across the health and education sectors to increase access to services in health-care facilities, schools, community centres and camps for internally displaced persons, benefiting over 478,000 individuals, including nearly 401,000 children (49 per cent girls). In Afghanistan, services were provided to over 3.1 million children (46 per cent girls) through a mix of interventions. These included integrating MHPSS as part of mobile health services, supporting front-line workers to conduct routine door-to-door welfare checks, making child-friendly spaces available for children and parents, and arranging peer groups. In South Sudan, UNICEF and partners disseminated key MHPSS messages to combat stigma and promote help-seeking behaviour, reaching over 48,000 people. Regular recreational and structured group activities were also provided, reaching 915 children (49 per cent girls) and over 1,100 individuals (50 per cent females) to participate in UNICEF-supported community-led MHPSS activities.

> *In 2022, UNICEF-supported interventions enabled close to 12.6 million children, adolescents, parents and caregivers living in 57 humanitarian contexts to access MHPSS. This included providing support to 5.6 million children on the move who have been forced to flee their homes, as well as almost 304,000 children with disabilities who received specialized support.*

Ukraine: Children on the move

In February 2022, UNICEF rapidly activated a humanitarian response to address the immediate protection needs of children in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries (Belarus, Czechia, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia). UNICEF leveraged its long-standing experience and partnerships with host governments, the EU, CSOs, municipalities and other United Nations agencies to activate an urgent and immediate response, ensuring protection in the framework of the EU Temporary Protection Directive while working on integrating service provision through national systems.

UNICEF provided substantial in-country and remote support. This included deployment of specialized professionals, the development of guidelines to deliver support for migrant and displaced children, alongside providing training and capacity-building for staff and others deployed to help. UNICEF also leveraged MHPSS guidance developed as part of the US Migration Programme and adapted it for the Ukrainian context. This included guidance for community volunteers in delivering support to children and families in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. By the end of 2022, over 3.3 million children and caregivers had received MHPSS support.

In refugee response countries, UNICEF supported governments to ensure access to child-centred, gender-responsive and inclusive services, protection and social assistance for Ukrainian children, their families and host communities in 19 countries. UNICEF and UNHCR, together with partners, set up 39 'Blue Dots' (child and family protection hubs) to provide key information, legal aid and counselling to refugees, help identify children at risk, including UASC, and provide access to child-friendly spaces, psychosocial support and referral to specialized services.

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Lenke (6) laughs while peeking out of the Mother and Child tent at the UNICEF-supported Blue Dot hub in Northern Romania. The Blue Dot hubs include child-friendly spaces and offer integrated services, including family reunification and psychological support.

Leaving no one behind: accelerating prevention and response actions for children on the move[76]

With forced displacement already at a record high worldwide, UNICEF is committed to accelerating child protection prevention and response actions for children on the move.[77] To deliver on the organization's universal mandate to protect and uphold the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child for all children – without discrimination – UNICEF plays a critical convening role at the global level to drive forward the agenda for the protection of children on the move. At the country level, UNICEF advocates and provides technical support to national authorities to mitigate and minimize migration- and displacement-related risks for children. This includes ensuring their rights are more effectively guaranteed in child protection systems, and a central component of humanitarian response planning for large-scale movements.

Fostering global partnerships and collaborative action

In 2022, UNICEF formalized two strategic partnerships, with IOM and UNHCR. Both aim to more effectively address the specific needs of migrant and refugee children in national child protection systems.

In 2022, the first global review of the Global Compact for Migration[78] was undertaken by the International Migration Review Forum. UNICEF played a key role in the review process to ensure that the rights of migrant children, including the *end to child immigration detention*, were explicitly specified in the International Migration Review Forum Review Declaration. UNICEF also provided technical inputs to the United Nations Secretary-General's Second Report on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.[79] This includes playing a key role in the roll-out of the Action Agenda in 16 priority countries as a member of the United Nations Steering Group of the Office of the Solutions Advisor.[80]

UNICEF also successfully secured the adoption of the first-ever child sensitivity marker to assess applications to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund.[81] This sets a critical precedent and incentive to include child-sensitive budgeting in other United Nations Multi-donor Trust Funds.

Further, UNICEF co-leads the United Nations Migration Network's work stream on Return, Readmission and Reintegration, together with UNHCR, IOM and the Migration Policy Institute. In 2022, the United Nations Migration Network developed a checklist for safe and

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UNICEF Guatemala, thanks to funding from the Government of Sweden, and through its partner the Pop No'j Association, supports returnee migrant children by providing various services in their native language to facilitate their reintegration into the community.

dignified return and sustainable reintegration,[82] and *new tools to assist practitioners to follow a Best Interests Procedure for migrant children*.[83] These tools aim to facilitate improved reintegration support for migrant children and their families. UNICEF and the Migration Policy Institute developed Four Strategies to Improve Services for Unaccompanied Children in the United States[84] for policymakers to use as standardized guidance to address the fragmentation of support services available to children as they navigate their reunion with family, immigration proceedings and/or their assimilation to a new culture in the United States.

UNICEF's multi-agency PROSPECTS partnership also continued to provide a unique model to deliver programming in displacement contexts, strengthening self-reliance, inclusion and participation of young refugees.

PROPECTS supports programming for refugees and host communities in Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, the Sudan and Uganda (*see highlights in the Box 'Building national child protection systems and services for displaced children'*).
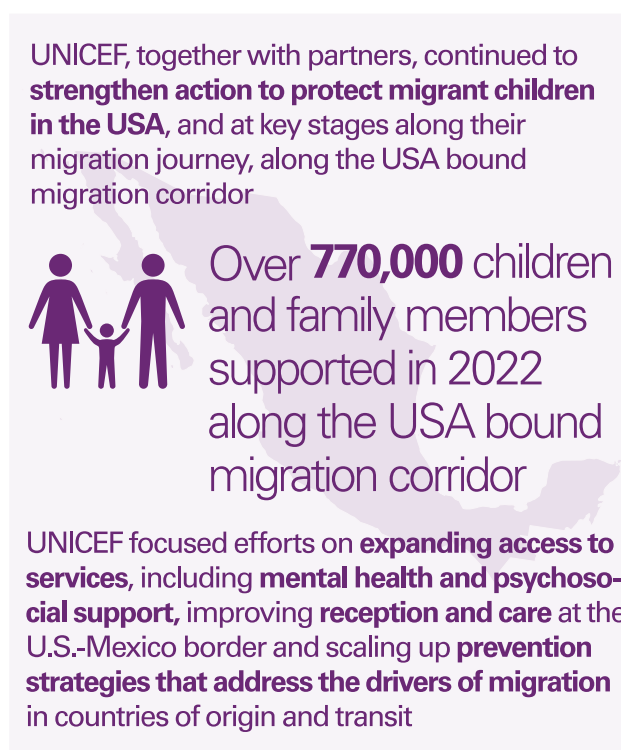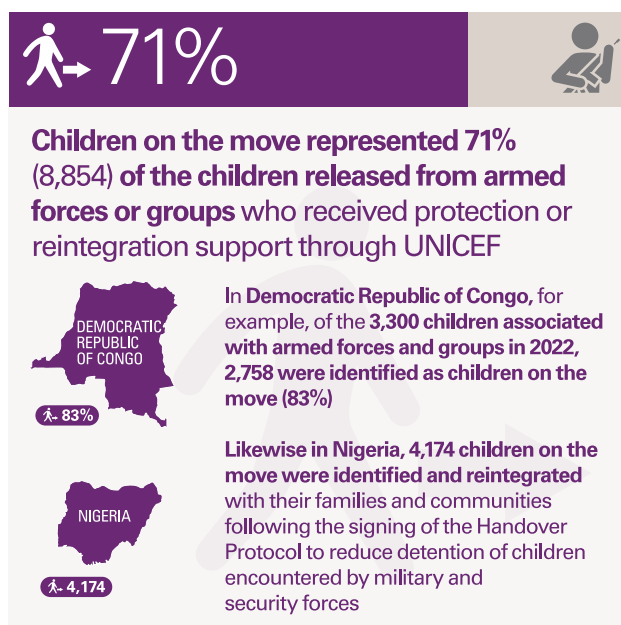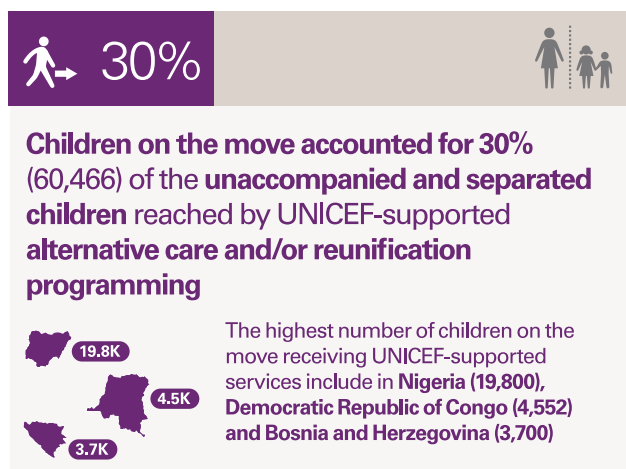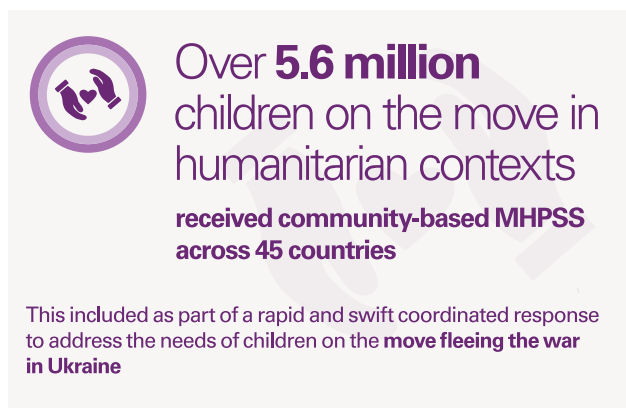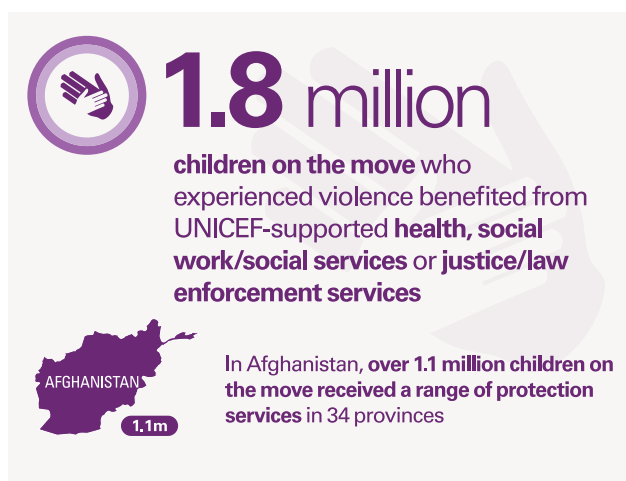
In partnership with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center and the Patrick J McGovern Foundation, UNICEF unlocked new insights from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center's disaster displacement and risk modelling data to identify hot spots where children are at greatest risk of displacement now and in the future. The research helps overcome the huge gaps in age-disaggregated displacement data, to better inform efforts by governments – and the communities and young people affected – to minimize risk, and plan and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

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A young boy at a temporary Reception Center in Ušivak, supported by UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina in partnership with the NGO World Vision International. The Child Friendly Space currently enables around 180 refugee and migrant children to access learning, social activities, sports, creative workshops, and psychosocial support.

FIGURE 22: In 2022, UNICEF and partners worked in **over 66 countries** on prevention and response programming to protect **children on the move***

1.8 million

children on the move who experienced violence benefited from UNICEF-supported **health, social work/social services** or **justice/law enforcement services**

AFGHANISTAN
1.1m

In Afghanistan, **over 1.1 million children on the move received a range of protection services** in 34 provinces

Over **5.6 million** children on the move in humanitarian contexts

received community-based MHPSS across 45 countries

This included as part of a rapid and swift coordinated response to address the needs of children on the **move fleeing the war in Ukraine**

30%

Children on the move accounted for 30% (60,466) of the unaccompanied and separated children reached by UNICEF-supported **alternative care and/or reunification programming**

19.8K
4.5K
3.7K

The highest number of children on the move receiving UNICEF-supported services include in **Nigeria (19,800), Democratic Republic of Congo (4,552) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (3,700)**

71%

Children on the move represented 71% (8,854) of the children released from armed forces or groups who received protection or reintegration support through UNICEF

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
83%

In **Democratic Republic of Congo,** for example, of the **3,300 children associated with armed forces and groups in 2022, 2,758 were identified as children on the move (83%)**

NIGERIA
4,174

Likewise in Nigeria, **4,174 children on the move were identified and reintegrated** with their families and communities following the signing of the Handover Protocol to reduce detention of children encountered by military and security forces

UNICEF, together with partners, continued to **strengthen action to protect migrant children in the USA**, and at key stages along their migration journey, along the USA bound migration corridor

Over **770,000** children and family members supported in 2022 along the USA bound migration corridor

UNICEF focused efforts on **expanding access to services,** including **mental health and psychosocial support,** improving **reception and care** at the U.S.-Mexico border and scaling up **prevention strategies that address the drivers of migration** in countries of origin and transit

Note: *Figures for the number of children on the move reached is based on the proportion calculated from the total number of children reached by UNICEF child protection in 2022

Building national child protection systems and services for displaced children

In 2022, UNICEF and UNHCR capitalized on the PROSPECTS partnership to strengthen national child protection systems to be more inclusive of displaced children. Global public goods developed under this initiative included the MHPSS MSP,[85] developed jointly with UNHCR and WHO for use in emergencies (see also '*Strengthening mental health and psychosocial support to children and families*').

In 2022, UNICEF developed two additional resources: a documentation of existing practices and lessons learned on the inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeking children in national child protection systems and a diagnostic tool to assist countries to measure the extent of inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeking children in child protection systems. The tools and new approaches were rolled out in the three PROSPECT focus countries: Ethiopia, Lebanon and Uganda.

In Lebanon, for example, UNICEF and UNHCR scaled up an alternative care pilot, expanding it to all regions of the country to increase protection services for children on the move by 250 per cent. To strengthen integration of refugee children in the national system in Uganda, UNICEF, UNHCR and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development developed improved procedures on providing alternative care services in refugee-hosting districts, linking cases to the national alternative care framework. UNICEF and partners also used the MSP to train facilitators to provide specialized community-based psychosocial support services, benefiting almost 1,000 children (51 per cent girls) in targeted refugee settlements and host communities.

Spotlight: UNICEF is committed to empowering young people on the move

To strengthen youth engagement, UNICEF launched a new Youth on the Move Fellowship programme, with Children and Youth International. The fellowship is designed to remove barriers that prevent migrant, refugee or displaced youth from accessing work experience opportunities. In 2022, eight fellows were hosted by different offices across UNICEF and other United Nations agencies to share ideas and gain valuable hands-on experience of their work. As part of the process, the fellows produced a powerful Call to Action – jointly developed with the Global Refugee Youth Network – to share their vision of how UNICEF and partners can more effectively leverage the skills and ideas of young people in the design and implementation of programmes for children on the move.

UNICEF also supported youth climate mobility delegates to contribute to global discussions at COP27. The delegates shared their experiences and jointly discussed solutions with key decision makers and influencers, launching the first-ever African Youth Declaration on Climate Mobility.[86]

Together with youth partners, UNICEF also launched an innovation challenge to identify youth-led solutions to build community resilience and prevent displacement. Two young innovators from the United Republic of Tanzania and South Sudan were selected for a fellowship with the Global Center for Climate Mobility to further develop their solutions, with the potential of taking them to scale.

@Ehab Eid/2022

Strategic output 3.3: Prevention of harmful practices

Women members of a local committee that aims to end child marriage in Karadakana Village in Ganjam, Odisha, India. UNICEF supports community-led initiatives to prevent child marriage by providing education, life skills training and livelihood opportunities to empower girls and their families.

© UNICEF/UN0736612/Das

> *"While we appreciate the generous support of donors, we must do more to save the lives of millions of children. We must remember that behind every statistic, there is a child with the same hopes and dreams as children everywhere – and the same right to reach their full potential."*
>
> *– Catherine Russell, UNICEF Executive Director*

Despite critical progress in reducing the number of child marriages and adolescent girls undergoing FGM, UNICEF recognizes that increased investment and a rapid scale-up of evidence-based preventive interventions are prerequisites to achieving the ambitions of SDG 5.3 by 2030. This includes recognizing the need to shift harmful social and gender norms that drive harmful practices and, equally, addressing the structural inequalities that underpin the practice and prevent girls from realizing their rights and achieving their full potential.

Child marriage

Ending child marriage is firmly established as a global priority: 93 governments have signed up to SDG 5.3 to end child, early and forced marriage ('child marriage'), and 41 UNICEF-supported countries have either developed, or are working on, national action plans to end child marriage at the national or subnational level. With just seven years remaining to meet the global SDG targets, UNICEF and partners continue to push the global agenda to end child marriage, advocating at all levels to increase the momentum to deliver on critical key commitments.

Working in close partnership with governments and other partners, UNICEF is supporting over 50 countries to scale up prevention and response interventions to end child marriage. This includes across the 12 countries that are part of the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage[87] (*see Figure 19*).

Driving global conversations, identifying sustainable solutions, recalibrating action

At the global level, UNICEF and partners play a critical convening role in driving policy and advocacy to keep the world on track to meet SDG targets. In 2022, a key advocacy moment came with the unanimous adoption of a resolution on child, early and forced marriage,[88] led jointly by the governments of Zambia and Canada, at the United Nations General Assembly's Third Committee biennial meeting. This culminated in a call for urgent action to reach the poorest and most marginalized girls and women, including those in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

A high-level event at the sixty-sixth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women echoed similar sentiments. The event, 'No Time to Lose: Child Marriage and the Triple Crisis', provided a critical space for United Nations Member States and other stakeholders to identify sustainable solutions that more effectively integrate the empowerment of women and girls in climate, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.

FIGURE 23: Summary of results on **ending child marriage,** 2022

17.2 million girls

reached with child marriage-related prevention and care interventions

41 countries **+ 127%**

31 countries

implementing **costed and funded action plans** or strategies with monitoring and evaluation **frameworks to end child marriage****

Abbreviations:

CM - Child marriage
K - thousand; **M -** million
EAP, East Asia and the Pacific; **ECA**, Europe and Central Asia; **ESA**, Eastern and Southern Africa; **LAC**, Latin America and the Caribbean; **MENA**, Middle East and North Africa; **SA**, South Asia; **WCA**, West and Central Africa
The proportion provided here are based on available country data with relevant disaggregated information

Note:

Changes are since 2021 unless otherwise specified. *Disaggregated Data are not always available for the entire aggregated total **6 of these countries are transitioning to new plans

By age

54% 2.3M girls	46% 2M girls
between 10—14 years	between 15—17 years

75k adolescent girls

with disabilities across 18 countries benefited from prevention and care interventions to address child marriage

×6 increase from 2021

By intervention

Number of adolescent girls receiving prevention and care interventions to address child marriage

38% (6.5M girls)	62% (10.7M girls)
Life skills or comprehensive sexual education interventions	Conditional cash transfers, bursaries, stipends and/or scholarships

The number of adolescent girls accessing UNICEF-supported interventions to address child marriage, by region

2.5k LAC	**16k** EAP	**57k** MENA	**217k** ECA	**253k** ESA	**477k** WCA	**16.2m** SA
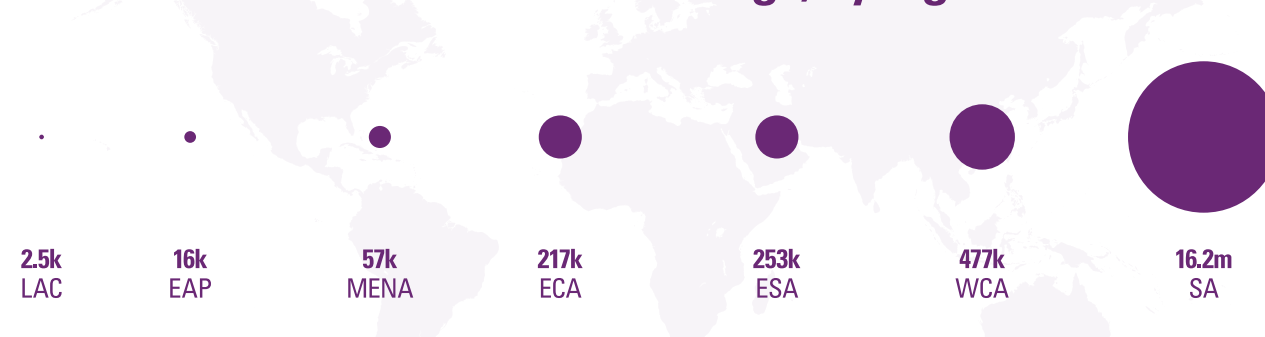
Investing in community-level engagement to promote social change and address harmful social and gender norms

UNICEF and partners' long-term investment at the community level is translating into transformational change to promote gender equality and challenge discriminatory social and gender norms that drive harmful practices. More than 31.1 million people were engaged in UNICEF-supported community reflective dialogues across 53 countries in 2022, a 40 per cent increase on the number engaged in 45 countries in 2021.

In Afghanistan, as part of the collective engagement of communities to address negative social norms such as child marriage, UNICEF supported the recruitment of more than 40,400 community members (20,700 men and 19,700 women) who engaged close to 1.1 million adolescents and caregivers in community dialogues promoting gender equitable norms and the prevention of GBV and child marriage. An emphasis of the discussions was placed on empowering adolescents to act as agents of change.

In Bangladesh, to amplify the voices of children, UNICEF supported the participation of child journalists in a social media campaign to end harmful practices, reaching 26.5 million adolescents and young people nationwide. In addition, over 13.1 million people participated in community-based dialogues across key locations.

UNICEF and partners in Mozambique held over 300 community initiatives that aimed to break the culture of silence that continues to hamper the reporting of cases of child marriage, FGM and GBV. These initiatives contributed to a 141 per cent increase in the number of child marriage cases identified and reported to the authorities in 2022 compared to 2021.

UNICEF's gender-transformative approaches prioritize scaling up actions to help traditional, religious and community leaders to more effectively engage boys and men in discussions that promote positive masculinities. In 2022, over 13 million boys and men received messages addressing harmful masculinities and gender norms across the countries supported by the Global Programme.

In Ethiopia, a 2022 survey in selected communities found that more than three quarters of boys indicated support for girls having the same opportunities in the community as boys and women and participating equally in household decision-making. UNICEF and partners also worked with religious leaders to orchestrate community-led dialogues, reaching 72,400 boys and men. Overall, community-based interventions engaged more than 442,000 people nationwide and prevented more than 600 child marriages and almost 800 cases of FGM from taking place. In Mali, UNICEF facilitated discussions in husband and adolescent clubs, engaging 439,000 boys and men, which subsequently contributed to 42 villages signing declarations to abandon child marriage and FGM. Further, more than 750 child marriages and almost 450 cases of FGM were prevented.

Spotlight: Raising visibility on ending harmful practices through mass media
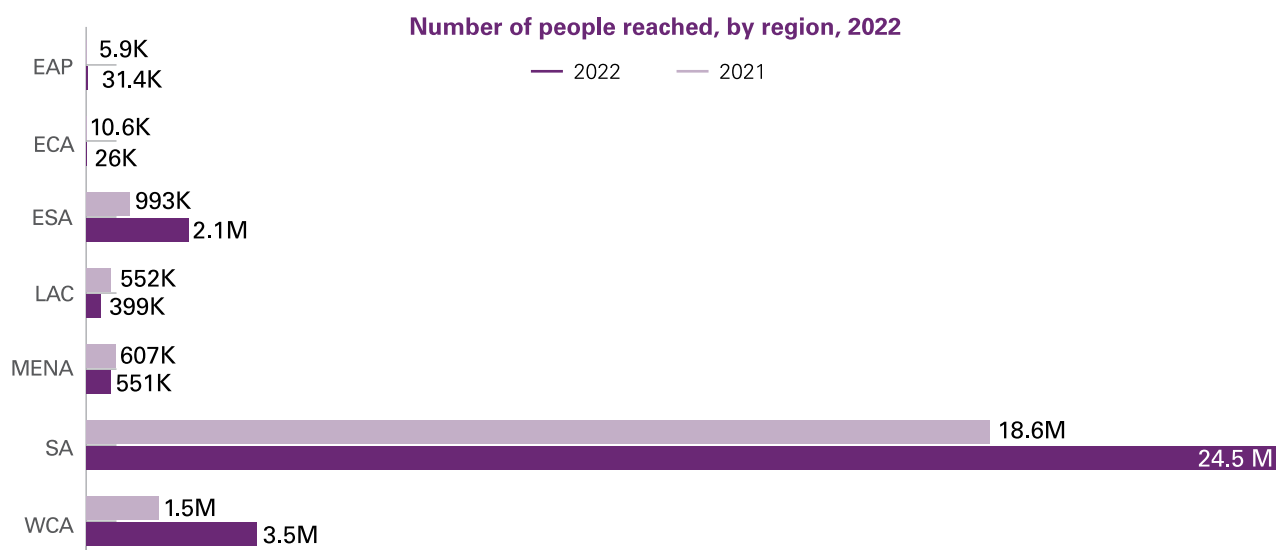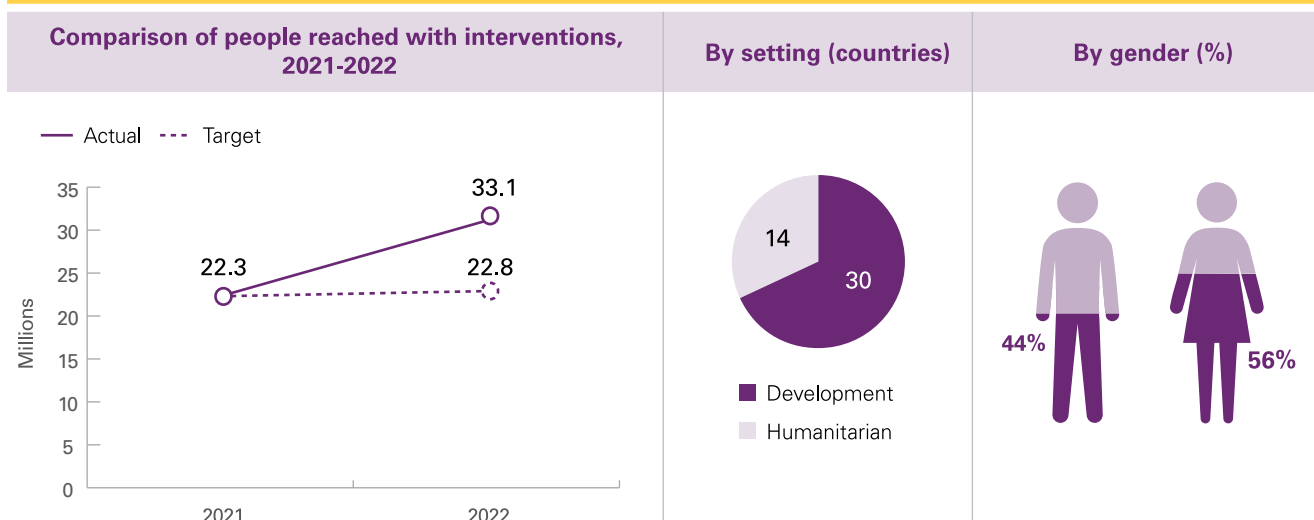
The groundbreaking release of *Vaillante*, a fictional mini-series – and a first for UNICEF – explores the issue of child marriage, which affects millions of girls and women across West and Central Africa. It showcases how young people, especially girls, can be part of the solution if empowered to take action. *Vaillante* has become a valuable mechanism for scaling up multi-country social engagement. Its release on the Canal+ television channel extended its broadcasting reach to over 6 million households in Africa in 2022. A further 61,500 viewers worldwide also watched the series on YouTube. It was also accepted for viewing at six festivals in Africa, the United States and Canada.

"I CAN'T LET THE PAST GET IN THE WAY OF WHAT I'M FIGHTING FOR"

VAILLANTE

FIGURE 24: Number of people engaged in reflective dialogues to promote gender equality and challenge discriminatory social and gender norms, 2022

31.1 million people across 53 countries participated in community-based dialogues about eliminating discriminatory social and gender norms and harmful practices that **affect girls and women**

40% INCREASE from 2021

Comparison of people reached with interventions, 2021-2022	By setting (countries)	By gender (%)

— Actual --- Target

22.3   22.8

33.1

Millions

2021   2022

14   30

■ Development
■ Humanitarian

44%   56%

Number of people reached, by region, 2022

— 2022   — 2021

EAP   5.9K
      31.4K

ECA   10.6K
      26K

ESA   993K
      2.1M

LAC   552K
      399K

MENA 607K
      551K

SA   18.6M
      24.5 M

WCA   1.5M
      3.5M

Note: EAP, East Asia and the Pacific; ECA, Europe and Central Asia; ESA, Eastern and Southern Africa; LAC, Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA, Middle East and North Africa; SA, South Asia; WCA, West and Central Africa. Disaggregated data are not always available for the entire aggregated total. The proportion provided here are based on available country data with relevant disaggregated information.

Spotlight: UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Angélique Kidjo celebrates the resilience of girls and young people during a visit to Benin

UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and five-time GRAMMY award winner Angélique Kidjo returned to her home country, Benin, in 2022 to meet children and young people impacted by the spillover of violence from the Sahel crisis, and climate change in the region. In Benin, 3 in 10 girls are married before the age of 18. Kidjo met with adolescent girls who have escaped child marriage and have been reintegrated into their communities through vocational training opportunities and income-generating activities, such as sewing, cooking, welding and masonry.

"I met a young girl who is only 16, so articulate, and so determined to promote social cohesion. She wants her community to live in peace, and for that she gathers her peers every week to provide them with reliable information on how they can seek help, breaking taboos around issues that aren't discussed in school or at home and empowering them to campaign against child marriage, early pregnancies, alcohol abuse and sexual harassment in and out of school. That's the youth I want to see in every country I go to in Africa."

– Angelique Kidjo, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador

In Benin, UNICEF is working to increase knowledge and understanding among adolescents, parents, community members, and traditional and religious leaders on the harms associated with child marriage, while ensuring that adolescents have access to high-quality prevention and care services.

On 14 December 2022 in northern Benin, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Angélique Kidjo dances with women in Korontière, near Boukoumb.

Promoting adolescent empowerment to end child marriage

A key strategy to prevent girls entering into child marriages is to create and expand empowerment opportunities for adolescent girls and their families. This includes strengthening partnerships with other agencies and government departments to enhance life and employability skills, encouraging school retention, and improving the programming linkages for child marriage in social protection schemes.

In Niger, UNICEF has forged partnerships with CSOs in three regions to expand opportunities for girls to gain technical skills training in agro-processing, sewing, cosmetics and embroidery to provide them with income-generating opportunities. In 2022, 25,000 girls and young women benefited. UNICEF in India is working with self-help groups, women's rights organizations and grass-roots workers to identify adolescent girls at risk of child marriage, especially in hard-to-reach locations, and effectively link them with government social protection schemes. In 2022, close to 5 million girls were identified and received social protection and education support. In Ghana, UNICEF helped expand and secure sustainable financing for the country's Integrated Social Services Initiative, which aims to increase access to health services for poor and vulnerable people, benefiting over 100,000 households with girls at risk of child marriage in 2022.

Strengthening legislative and policy frameworks to end child marriage

UNICEF continues to advocate with governments to allocate public financial resources for the implementation of national policies and programmes at decentralized levels, including the funding of quality education, health and protection services for adolescent girls and women.

In 2022, 41 countries developed national actions plans to end child marriage, and 13 of these plans have been costed, with public financial resources allocated for their implementation. UNICEF works in collaboration with various partners to support the development and strengthening of legislation that prohibits harmful practices such as child marriage and aligns with international standards (*see Figure 21*).

FIGURE 25: Supporting national action plans to end child marriage, 2022

Number of countries developing national action plans to end child marriage, 2022 — **41**

13 Costed national strategy or action plan with M&E framework is funded and implemented

12 National strategy or action plan approved by government with an operational plan and monitoring arrangements

16 National strategy or action plan developed

Note: India has 12 states with fully funded action plans, but no national action plan.

In the United Republic of Tanzania, UNICEF and partners supported the government in amending the Law of Marriage Act to increase the minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 years. UNICEF Uganda supported the development of the second National Strategy to end Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy, which is promoting multisectoral and decentralized coordination to address risk factors for vulnerable adolescents in hard-to-reach locations. To strengthen school retention for adolescent girls, UNICEF in Zambia worked with the government to introduce a system of free primary to secondary education that aims to encourage adolescent girls to transition to secondary school.

Ensuring the availability of quality prevention and response services

Long-term investment in strengthening the enabling environment is also paying dividends, with many countries scaling up the reach of, and access to, prevention and response services.

Overall, UNICEF-supported protection programmes enabled over 17 million adolescent girls across 41 countries to access prevention and care interventions to address child marriage – more than double those supported in 2021 (7.6 million). Among this group, the number of girls with disabilities, who often face additional barriers to accessing support, benefiting from related interventions also rose to around 75,400 girls in 18 countries, compared to 11,000 in 20 countries in 2021 (*see Figure 22*).

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UNICEF Indonesia works with a range of stakeholders, from adolescent and youth groups, to community and religious leaders, to high-level decision makers to address the high child marriage rate in Wajo, Indonesia.

UNICEF prioritizes support to address issues of scalability, including expanding the availability of and access to service delivery points that provide a range of critical services relating to sexual and reproductive health, specialized support for teen pregnancy, and GBV. In 2022, UNICEF and partners strengthened over 7,800 delivery points providing protection and care services across the 12 Global Programme focus countries – a significant scale-up from the 3,276 delivery points supported in 2021.

In Niger, to bridge the gap between the delivery of formal and non-formal health, education and protection services, UNICEF helped establish an additional 454 village child protection committees, bringing the total number to over 2,200. In 2022, child protection committees prevented more than 12,600 cases of child marriage; over 39,500 adolescent girls were referred for prevention and care services, and 28,000 adolescent girls accessed education.

In Burkina Faso, around 1,095 community child monitoring and protection units were established and over 5,300 community members oriented on the national guidelines for community-based child protection. To increase adolescent girls' retention in school, over 1,000 schools benefited from in-service training on a 'child-friendly quality school' model, ensuring that 70,600 adolescent girls received social and material support.

In India, UNICEF supported the government flagship schemes and platforms that include improving livelihood skills, expanding access to education and employment-related opportunities, as well as enabling improved access to reproductive and sexual health services, and referral mechanisms. Close to 13 million adolescent girls were able to access a combination of these services in 2022.

Addressing the increased vulnerabilities in humanitarian situations

As the global community increasingly faces complex, protracted humanitarian situations – such as large-scale refugee and migration crises, natural disasters and public health emergencies – the vulnerability of adolescent girls to harmful practices is increasing.

Seven of the 10 countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage are in West and Central Africa and currently experiencing some form of crisis due to insecurity, political transitions and droughts (see: Ethiopia box). Similarly, more than half of the countries where girls are at the highest risk of FGM have experienced humanitarian crises. Further, with the mass movements of forcibly displaced people, as in the case of Burkina Faso or Egypt, evidence is pointing to the resurgence of the practice or even the introduction of the practice among communities with no previous history of performing FGM, such as Syrian refugees in Egypt.

UNICEF is increasingly mainstreaming the humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach in its harmful practices programming to address these increasing vulnerabilities. In 2022, UNICEF supported five countries (Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Mauritania, Senegal and the Sudan) to develop budgeted emergency preparedness and response plans that integrate harmful practices programming. In Burkina Faso, for example, the forced displacement of people impeded community surveillance mechanisms to monitor declarations to eliminate FGM. This led UNICEF to leverage other health humanitarian programming as an entry-point to integrate interventions to address harmful practices in emergency health outreach services to ensure programme continuity.

Ethiopia: Helping prevent child marriage amid a severe drought

In the regions of Ethiopia most affected by the worst drought in 40 years, child marriage has on average more than doubled in the space of a year.[89] Further, the number of children at risk of dropping out of school across the country due to the impact of the crisis has tripled within three months – leaving vast numbers of adolescent girls in even greater danger of child marriage.

Our integrated response: UNICEF trend analysis on the spikes in child marriage in drought-affected regions enabled child marriage programming to be an integrated element of the humanitarian response. Utilizing funding from the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, UNICEF took the bold approach – a first for the country office – of adapting more development-focused programming for relevance in a humanitarian context.

Collaborations and partnerships: Initially it was difficult to reach vulnerable girls with prevention and response services, as the crisis was driving them and their families away from their homes to camps for internally displaced persons. The crisis was also displacing community and social workers who were supporting families to protect their daughters from child marriage. So, in cooperation with the government, a model was developed to adapt programming to sites for internally displaced persons, based on good practices from tackling child marriage in 11 districts in the region before the drought.

Making an impact: UNICEF and partners provided a range of community engagement activities and life skills training to promote an end to the practice of child marriage. UNICEF strengthened coordination links with the social and justice sectors and improved case management systems to better generate data to monitor progress. UNICEF also worked with religious and community leaders to facilitate men and boys' participation in community conversations. More than 1,400 cases of child marriage were identified, and over 90 per cent of them were prevented. UNICEF also worked with partners to reach vulnerable families with cash transfers (incorporating some type of child protection activity as a conditional element of the assistance) across 15 sites for internally displaced persons.

Lessons learned: UNICEF gathered and analysed data on the prevalence of child marriage in different regions, to identify key locations where risks were particularly acute and make a strong argument for the allocation of resources to integrate child marriage programming into emergency preparedness plans. This approach has been critical in advocating with decision makers to prioritize efforts to end child marriage in Ethiopia. UNICEF Ethiopia – for the first time – has integrated a child marriage response into its upcoming 2023 Humanitarian Appeal Plan.

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"I am a child, not a bride", says this 11-year-old girl. In the drought-stricken Afar region of north-eastern Ethiopia, water scarcity and loss of livelihoods are threatening the future of girls, who are increasingly forced into child marriage. UNICEF is conducting awareness-raising activities on the ground to ensure that young girls such as Aicha are not forced into marriage.

Female genital mutilation

With the end of the Decade of Action fast approaching, accelerating progress towards the elimination of FGM requires transformative change. In 2022, UNICEF and UNFPA launched Phase IV of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the elimination of female genital mutilation[90] (2022–2030) in 17 countries. Phase IV marks a critical opportunity for UNICEF to replicate and scale up evidence-based interventions, as well as increase adaptability and flexibility in responding to new global realities. It also calls for multi-level and multidimensional approaches and partnering with a broad range of actors, including governments, civil society, media, academia, the private sector and religious institutions.

In 2022, UNICEF and partners continued to promote girls' agency and equitable gender and social norms. As part of the transformative approach, UNICEF and partners are also increasingly supporting interventions that engage men and boys as change agents. Scaling up girls and women's access to opportunities and services is also prioritized, to ensure those at risk of or affected by FGM receive the care they need (*see Figure 23*).

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The UNICEF-supported Saleema Initiative in Sudan strengthens the protection of girls from harmful practices, such as FGM. The initiative undertakes a range of SBC activities using radio, television, billboards/posters, social media, and through establishing Saleema girls' clubs for girls to participate in related activities, including trainings on livelihoods and empowerment skills. The initiative aims to mobilize communities to shift away from traditional practices and beliefs towards new social norms that abandon the practice.

FIGURE 26: Summary of results on **eliminating FGM**, 2022

Key results

Promoting girls' agency

111k Community-level surveillance structures that monitor and report girls at risk of FGM **prevented approximately 111,000 girls** from undergoing the practice in 2022*

Ensuring girls' and women's access to opportunities and services

2,000 **law enforcement staff** were trained in the implementation of FGM legislation, double the number compared to last year*

384k girls and women received health care, social services and legal services **

370 ↑58% **cases brought to court, and 306 convictions in 2022,** 58 per cent increase in the number of cases brought to court, and a 43 per cent increase in convictions from 2021*

Promoting equitable social and gender norms

2.4m individuals were engaged in community-level reflective dialogues promoting changes in social and gender norms that drive FGM*

50k ↑62% religious leaders and community/traditional influencers publicly denounced FGM, a 62 per cent increase from 2021 *

441k boys and men actively participated in peer education and reflective dialogues promoting positive masculinities and gender equitable norms*

18.7m ↑1m individuals were reached by communication campaigns promoting gender equality and FGM elimination, + 1 million from 2021*

*JOINT PROGRAMME DATA, 2022   ** UNICEF DATA, 2022

Number of girls and women who **receive prevention and protection services on female genital mutilation**

By age

33% 7 countries	35% 12 countries	32% 13 countries
Under 10 years	10–14 years	15–19 years

By intervention

7% 12 countries	46% 18 countries	47% 13 countries
Health services	Social and legal services	Educational support

Translating global advocacy into sustainable action

In 2022, 12 United Nations Member States called for an intensification of global efforts to eliminate FGM, in the United Nations Secretary-General's Report[91] of the seventy-seventh session of the Third Committee at the United Nations General Assembly. Similar sentiments were made in the report[92] of the sixty-sixth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

Similarly, at its fiftieth session, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution[93] on FGM elimination focused on the impact of humanitarian crises exacerbating cross-border and transnational FGM. Particular attention was paid to the protection needs of refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants and internally displaced women and girls living in cross-border communities. The EU also reaffirmed its regional commitments with a proposal[94] for EU-wide legislation to end violence against women, including measures to combat GBV and FGM.

UNICEF also works in partnership with the EU Spotlight Initiative for Africa Regional Programme and the African Union to drive elimination goals. A key milestone in 2022 came with the roll-out of the African Union Accountability Framework on the Elimination of Harmful Practices to monitor continental progress towards FGM elimination among African Union Member States. A UNICEF collaboration with the African Council of Religious Leaders, the 'Faith for Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities' initiative is also yielding results, through a declaration calling on religious leaders in border communities in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania to scale up work with communities to end FGM.

In 2022, the UNFPA–UNICEF Joint Programme launched the #InvestDontRest campaign on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM, catalysing global attention to increase investments in FGM elimination to meet SDG targets. Approximately 29.7 million people accessed campaign information on UNICEF and UNFPA social media platforms.

Strengthening community engagement and building social movements

To enhance girls' agency and leadership and their ability to claim their rights, UNICEF works to strengthen community engagement and build social movements that drive change in social and gender norms and address structural inequalities. This includes expanding partnerships with youth- and women-led organizations and feminist movements to raise their voices as agents of social change.

In five states with a high prevalence of FGM in Nigeria, for example, UNICEF launched the 'Movement for Good to End FGM' (or @M4Good), which aims to mobilize 5 million Nigerians to commit to ending FGM. UNICEF partnered with nine women- and youth-led organizations in 36 communities to mobilize support from around 1,500 grass-roots organizations. Within its first year, over 296,000 local community influencers made pledges to take action to end

FGM. The campaign was further amplified through mass and social media, reaching as many as 1.3 million people nationally.

In 2022, about 1.2 million individuals in 3,665 communities made public declarations to abandon FGM practices.

In Ethiopia, for example, 338,500 individuals (50 per cent women) in 241 communities made public declarations to abandon FGM practices. These commitments were followed by the adoption of community by-laws and local action plans, including establishing child protection committees to monitor and report cases of FGM. In 2022, 652 girls did not undergo the practice as a result of these actions.

In Kenya, UNICEF trained around 2,350 youth advocates and almost 600 (41 per cent female) community volunteers, to improve their capacity to monitor and report FGM, who provided outreach services to over 48,000 individuals. UNICEF is also partnering with 'Men End FGM' to roll out national guidelines on male engagement in ending FGM.

Spotlight: Award-winning documentary strengthens community engagement in Egypt

In Egypt, UNICEF supported the production of It Takes a Village,[95] a short documentary film telling the story of three girls who participated in the National Girls' Empowerment Initiative, 'Dawwie' (or 'echoed voice' in Arabic). UNICEF, in partnership with faith-based organizations, showed the documentary at viewing clubs to approximately 53,000 community members, activating lively discussions on abandoning FGM within their communities. The film won the 'Best Short Documentary' award at the New York Movie Awards in 2022.

@UNICEF/Egypt 2022/Nourhan Maayouf

Asmaa Yaacoub and her mother Layla after the screening of *It Takes a Village* in Heisa island, Aswan.

Promoting adolescent empowerment to eliminate FGM

UNICEF works closely with partners to provide adolescent girls with empowerment opportunities such as access to life skills and digital literacy training, while also expanding linkages with social protection programmes to address the financial barriers to accessing education and health care.

In 2022, around 660,000 girls accessed life skills programmes through girls' or youth clubs – 50 per cent more than the number of girls participating in 2021. In Burkina Faso, working alongside local government and civil society partners, UNICEF supported more than 2,700 adolescent clubs and safe spaces, expanding the quality of and access to life skills training for around 118,000 adolescent girls in 2022.

In Eritrea, UNICEF's social protection programme supported almost 8,000 households (50 per cent female-headed households) as a means to improve school retention of children, especially girls. Around 42,000 house-to-house visits were also made by child protection promoters in five sub-zones. Collectively, these actions contributed to more than 57,000 girls being protected from FGM in 2022.

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Sisters pose for a photo with their father, in the locality of Damaro in the Kankan region of Guinea. They are members of a club for young female leaders in their community and work with local elected officials to eliminate FGM.

Strengthening enforceable legislative and policy environments to eliminate FGM

Fifteen of the 17 Joint Programme countries have legislation prohibiting FGM. In 2022, 12 Joint Programme countries[96] were implementing multisectoral, evidence-based, gender-transformative policies and National Action Plans that include targets, a budget and a monitoring and evaluation framework for the elimination of FGM.

In Kenya, the enactment of the Children Act 2022 provides enhanced legal safeguards for the rights of 24 million children, including provisions that protect against harmful practices. The new Act also increases penalties for perpetrators of FGM. With key government and civil society actors, UNICEF initiated a review of the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act to identify gaps in the legislation on enforcing bans on FGM and strengthening access to justice for FGM survivors.

In the Gambia, a costed National FGM Strategy and Plan of Action for Elimination of FGM (2022–2026) was finalized that includes greater focus on addressing challenges such as cross-border FGM, legal enforcement, and improved integration of FGM programming into existing gender and social development plans.

In recent years, UNICEF and partners have shifted their focus to work in partnership with governments, civil society and communities to more effectively strengthen the enforcement of these laws.

In all, almost 2,000 law enforcement staff were trained in the implementation of FGM legislation in 2022 – double the number in 2021. In Egypt, UNICEF oriented 186 lawyers on the country's legal framework on violence against girls, boys and women, including FGM laws. In Senegal, UNICEF helped develop training materials to orient over 20,700 professionals from the social welfare, education, health, justice and security sectors on sector-specific child protection issues, including strengthening protection and enforcement mechanisms to prevent FGM.

Improving access to FGM prevention and protection services

Access to comprehensive (and integrated) prevention and response services (including in the health care, education, social protection and legal sectors) is critical for ensuring that girls and women at risk of or affected by FGM receive the care they need.

In 2022, UNICEF-supported interventions enabled around 384,000 girls and women from 19 countries to receive comprehensive prevention and protection services – more than double the number receiving services in 2021. Across these 19 countries, 47 per cent of the girls and women were supported with education support services (in 13 countries), and a further 46 per cent with social/legal services (in 18 countries) (*see Figure 23*).

UNICEF Nigeria worked with local governments and civil society to improve the quality of services in five states with the highest FGM prevalence, resulting in 72,500 girls and women receiving services (health care, 25,000; social, 31,000; and legal, 16,500). In Kenya, UNICEF and partners launched a free digital mobile application, 'PASHA', which introduced a new element to enable more effective reporting and tracking of FGM cases in border communities with the highest prevalence of FGM in the country. This is an important addition, as there are an increasing number of cases taking place across borders, which are harder to track within national systems. The app enables the sharing of alerts either by text or a voice recording and complements existing FGM reporting mechanisms such as the child helpline and the national GBV helpline.

Building the data and evidence base to drive advocacy and action

In 2022, UNICEF continued to collaborate with a range of partners to improve evidence and data. These resources are transforming global and national conversations and opening opportunities to amplify our collective voice to influence and inform policy and programming.

Taking the field forward: Investing in knowledge to end child marriage: A publication catalogue[97] is now available that compiles 119 research and evidence pieces (2020–2021) and serves as a global knowledge-sharing resource for practitioners.

STAR child marriage evidence briefs: The Strategic Technical Assistance for Research[98] (STAR) Initiative focuses on evidence generation, synthesis and uptake, providing three country-specific evidence briefs in 2022 on child marriage in Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

Child Marriage Monitoring Mechanism (CMMM): CMMM[99] produced 50 new child marriage analytical country data profiles[100] to assess how and why shifts occur in child marriage in different settings over different time periods. CMMM also provides an important monitoring function, with the governments of Canada, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and Zambia committed to undertake annual data reviews to assess progress towards SDG 5.3 from 2023 onwards.

The Child Marriage Research to Action Network (CRANK):[101] The CRANK[102] fosters collaborative efforts to identify and fill research gaps, including an evidence landscape in 2022 that looked at proven and promising interventions to prevent child marriage.

Global Research Agenda to Accelerate the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation: UNICEF and UNFPA collaborated with the Population Council, Kenya, to conduct a global review of evidence on the effectiveness of FGM interventions spanning over a decade. Subsequently, an expert meeting was held to prioritize the findings and develop a global research agenda,[103] which represents a critical next step in gathering global evidence on FGM to accelerate efforts to meet SDG 5.3.

Note: The publications cited above are selected examples of work in 2022 only.
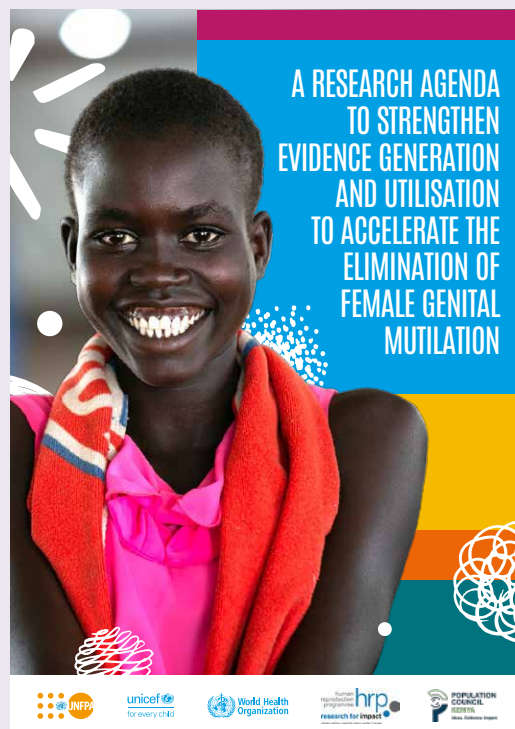
High-level priorities

Players from one of the football teams cheering before a match during the World Children's Day celebration led by UNICEF and local partners in Mone Koe, Northern Shan State, Myanmar.

© UNICEF/UN0755674/Zar Mon

Accelerating child protection systems-strengthening efforts

UNICEF will continue to roll out its CPSS approach: UNICEF will support governments and other partners to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of CPSS efforts through high-impact interventions, such as social service workforce strengthening and the strategic use of the CPSS benchmarks, while making the case for further investment.

Supporting the inclusion of children affected by migration and children with disabilities in national child protection systems: UNICEF will prioritize implementation of commitments made through the strategic partnership frameworks with IOM and UNHCR and will continue to provide strategic oversight and technical support for the inclusion of children affected by migration, including refugee children, in national child protection systems, as part of a broader effort towards bridging the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. Similarly, UNICEF will prioritize implementation of the actions identified in the Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2022–2030), including strengthening the capacities of the social service workforce to deliver disability-inclusive child protection services and prevent family separation of children with disabilities.

Strengthening the social service workforce through advocacy and support: UNICEF will assist governments with policy, legislation, regulatory frameworks and human resources that strengthen the workforce, while aligning diverse sectors to leverage local knowledge and help train social service workers. UNICEF, along with partners such as the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, will focus particularly on continuing to make an investment case for social service workforce strengthening and identify new ways of financing, and government and donor commitments through global forums such as the Global Refugee Forum, with the objective of improving the availability of qualified social service workforce.

Promoting digital transformation in the child protection sector: UNICEF will continue to invest in scaling up and supporting the implementation of Primero, with the goal of reaching 91 implementations in 2023 – an increase of 24 implementations from 2022. UNICEF will also invest in scaling up the use of Primero across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, paying particular attention to building systems in middle- and upper-middle-income programming countries. Further investment will be made to build digital case management tools to more effectively enhance data on disability inclusion and improve data supervision features.
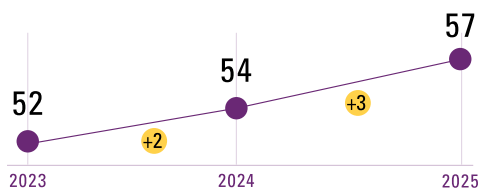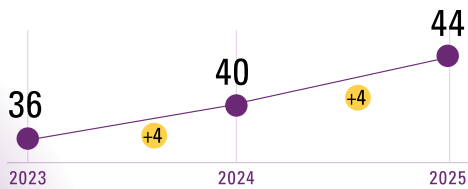
FIGURE 27: Output 3.1 **Protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect**

## Reducing all forms of violence against girls, boys and women

# countries with **legislative and policy framework to end the corporal punishment of children**

52 — 2023
+2
54 — 2024
+3
57 — 2025

countries with legislative and policy framework to **end child sexual exploitation and abuse** (including technology-enabled)

36 — 2023
+4
40 — 2024
+4
44 — 2025

countries with legislative and policy framework to **eliminate the worst forms of child labour**

63 — 2023
+3
66 — 2024
+3
69 — 2025
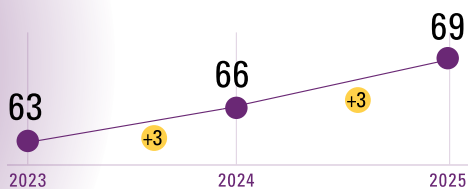
% UNICEF-targeted women, girls and boys in **humanitarian contexts provided with GBV risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions**

≥90%
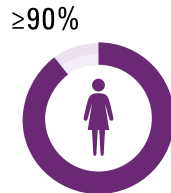
2023, 2024, 2025

children who **have experienced violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect reached by health, social work or justice/law enforcement services** through UNICEF-supported programmes

5.4 million — 2023
+0.5m
5.9 million — 2024
+0.7m
6.6 million — 2025
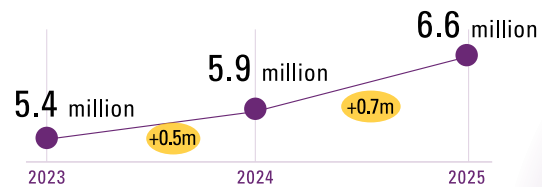
mothers, fathers and caregivers reached through **parenting programmes** through UNICEF-supported programmes

4 million — 2023
+0.5m
4.5 million — 2024
+0.6m
5.1 million — 2025
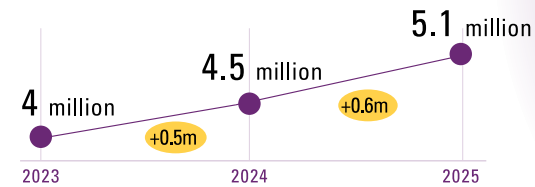
children and adults who **have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse** by humanitarian, development, protection and/or other personnel

64.9 million — 2023
+3.4m
68.3 million — 2024
+3.6m
71.9 million — 2025
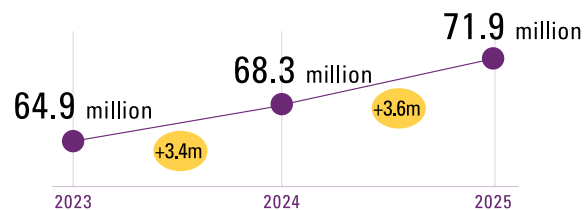
Tailoring prevention programming from early age to adolescence: UNICEF will guide the development of country-level interventions focused on violence prevention in the early years, where gender-transformative parent and caregiver support can reduce violence and transform gender-imbalanced power structures in families; and on prevention in adolescence, where gender norms and expectations become more deeply entrenched, and where peer-to-peer violence is often gender-based.

Building momentum to expand a multi-country portfolio of SBC interventions: UNICEF will build momentum to expand a multi-country portfolio of SBC interventions that address the most prevalent forms of violence against girls, boys and women, and seek to influence measurable change in disclosure of sexual violence; violence in adolescent intimate partner relationships; violent discipline; and bullying.

Strengthening the inclusion of violence from digital dimensions in child protection systems: UNICEF will continue to prioritize support to strengthen systems and capacity, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries, where the risks may be high, and the response capacities limited. UNICEF will use its global guide on improving legislative frameworks to protect children from online SEA to influence legislative reform efforts around the world.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA): UNICEF will continue to advance progress on scaling up PSEA through a focus on reinforcing capacity to deliver PSEA from the outset of the response; integrating PSEA across all UNICEF programming; and supporting governments with the development and roll-out of a PSEA framework.
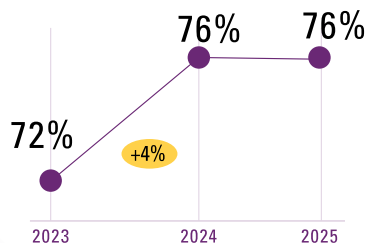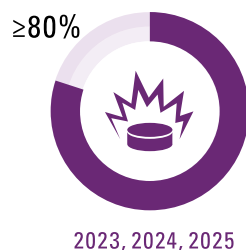
2023—2024 milestones and 2025 target

FIGURE 28: Output 3.1 Protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect

Grave violations in armed conflict

% countries experiencing conflict **having a system in place to document, analyse and use data** about grave child rights violations/other serious rights violations for prevention and response

% UNICEF-targeted girls and boys in areas **affected by landmines and other explosive weapons provided with relevant prevention** and/or survivor-assistance interventions

% UNICEF-targeted girls and boys who **have exited an armed force or group and who have been provided with protection** or reintegration support

72% 2023 · +4% · 76% 2024 · 76% 2025

≥80% · 2023, 2024, 2025

65% 2023 · +3% · 68% 2024 · +3% · 71% 2025
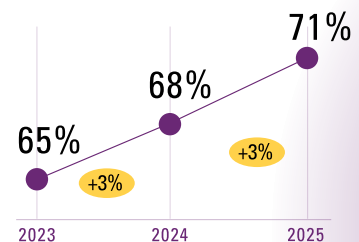
Driving action at all levels to end the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict: UNICEF will continue to be a leading global advocate and core implementing partner to engage with all parties to conflict, including non-state actors, to end and prevent violations against children and meaningfully respond to the needs of affected children and communities.

Promoting actions to implement the EWIPA declaration: A key focus will be to promote universalization and effective implementation of the EWIPA political declaration to protect children from harm. UNICEF will increase Member States' awareness of the interconnected nature of the dangers posed by EWIPA and other major protection risks.

Strengthening support to children caught up in armed conflict: UNICEF will continue to provide child rights-based programming, including preventing rights violations and supporting the release of children from armed forces or groups and from detention in the context of armed conflict. UNICEF will scale up the provision of holistic reintegration and other protection support such as MHPSS, services to prevent and respond to GBV, and case management support.
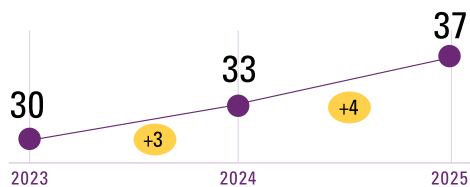
© UNICEF/UN0765149/Pedro

UNICEF, with the support of the Global Programme to end Child Marriage (GPECM), produced and painted a graffiti on the walls of a secondary school in Monapo district Nampula province, in Mozambique, to sensitize the community on the negative impact of child marriage and on the appropriate reporting channel to utilize (Child Helpline 116).

# FIGURE 29: Output 3.2 : **Promotion of care, mental health and psychosocial well-being and justice**

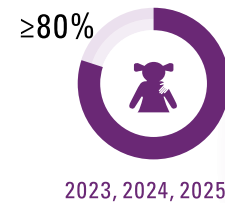# countries **with specialized justice for children systems**
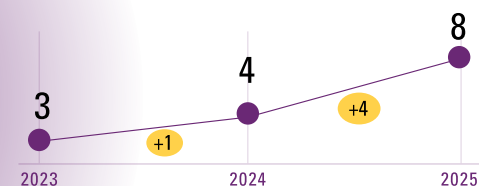
2023: 30
2024: 33 (+3)
2025: 37 (+4)

countries that **have policies, programmes and mechanisms for prevention of family separation and promotion of family-based alternative care***

2023: 47
2024: 50 (+3)
2025: 53 (+3)

countries that **have mature child protection systems**

2023: 3
2024: 4 (+1)
2025: 8 (+4)

% UNICEF-targeted girls and boys in humanitarian contexts who **have received individual case management**

≥80%

2023, 2024, 2025

countries that have in place a **free and universal birth registration service within civil registration and vital statistics****
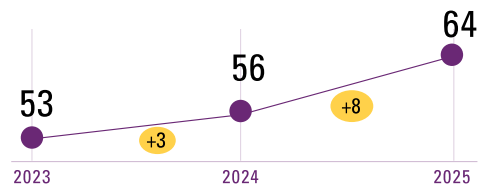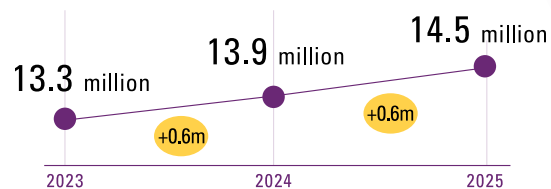
2023: 53
2024: 56 (+3)
2025: 64 (+8)
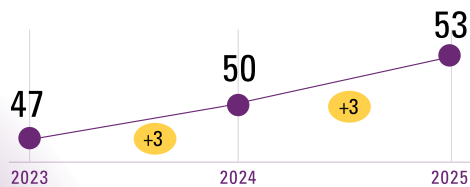
% UNICEF-targeted **unaccompanied and separated girls and boys in humanitarian contexts who were provided with alternative care and/or reunified**
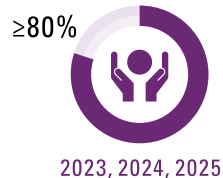
≥80%

2023, 2024, 2025

UNICEF-targeted children, adolescents, parents and caregivers **provided with community-based MHPSS****

2023: 13.3 million
2024: 13.9 million (+0.6m)
2025: 14.5 million (+0.6m)

countries with a **quality assurance system in place for social service work**

2023: 43
2024: 45 (+2)
2025: 47 (+2)

Note:* In line with the 2009 Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children ** In accordance with international standards and best practices *** mental health and psychosocial support services

Accelerating birth registration to close the legal identity gap

Strengthening global and national partnerships to accelerate action: UNICEF and UNHCR will begin to operationalize the joint workplan for 2023–2024, prioritizing actions in several target countries to accelerate action under the IBelong Campaign. Additionally, UNICEF will work with partners to accelerate solutions to statelessness through a collective multi-stakeholder approach. UNICEF is also committed to intensifying efforts to assist governments, especially in Africa and South Asia, in adopting strategies around the five critical pillars to accelerate progress towards universal birth registration and ensure that every child's right to a legal identity is protected.

Investing in the digitization of birth registration services: UNICEF will support national investments to scale up the digitization of CRVS systems. However, UNICEF recognizes that it is equally important to prioritize the safety, security and integrity of the data being collected and stored, as well as clear data ownership and availability. UNICEF and its partners will ensure that these critical services remain accessible, secure and effective for everyone.

Prioritizing the operationalization of the legal identify agenda in humanitarian situations: UNICEF will work on developing tailored strategies to ensure that children can establish, preserve and re-establish their identity in humanitarian situations, by embedding their rights to an identity within the overall CRVS framework.

Reimagining access to justice

Fostering partnerships at all levels to contextualize the agenda in regional and national contexts: This includes with regional bodies, building on new and existing collaborative partnerships, including with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the African Union, the Council of Europe and the Organization of Interamerican and Ibero American States, among others, as well as with networks of CSOs at regional levels. At the country level, UNICEF will also strengthen programmatic links with civil society and quasi-judicial mechanisms to support the roll-out of the Reimagine Justice for Children Agenda.

Expanding humanitarian–development–peace nexus programming: UNICEF will place additional emphasis on strengthening children's rights to justice in conflict and

post-conflict settings, including mainstreaming the agenda in other 'social justice' work such as transitional justice and peacebuilding. UNICEF will also prioritize children's access to justice in care, custody and protection proceedings, including for children finding themselves outside their country of origin due to humanitarian situations.

Building administrative data systems: UNICEF will strengthen access to quality and reliable information by working with national partners to strengthen these systems and expanding the use of UNICEF's data administrative toolkit,[104] which has been developed to help countries assess the current effectiveness of their administrative data system and help identify where investments are needed to improve performance.

Children without parental or family care

Strengthening alliances and partnerships at all levels: UNICEF will continue to drive partnerships with key policy decision makers to accelerate the prevention of family separation and prioritize family-based alternatives to institutional care for children who need it. At the country level, UNICEF will foster existing relationships with the United Nations Country Team, key government ministries and other decision makers to advocate for and implement high-impact family-strengthening initiatives.

Promoting the inclusivity of care services: UNICEF will work to integrate care services more effectively within broader social protection mechanisms in countries, and will identify and promote proven community- and family-based alternative care options that are more inclusive of children with disabilities.

Unaccompanied and separated children in humanitarian situations

Drive sectoral leadership and coordination: UNICEF will strengthen its leadership and coordination through contributions to the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, and the two Strategic Collaboration Frameworks with UNHCR and with IOM. UNICEF will also build evidence on family separation and case management generated data as part of our commitment to strengthen evidence-based programming and advocacy.

Strengthening social service workforce skills and the delivery of services in humanitarian situations: UNICEF will continue to equip national social service workforces and front-line practitioners with adequate skills and knowledge, and effective case management procedures – including robust best interest determination mechanisms. UNICEF will pursue the promotion of short- and long-term care options for those children who cannot be immediately reunified, integrating these components as part of inclusive national child protection systems in-country, in countries of origin or in third countries.

Strengthening mental health and psychosocial support to children and families

Enhancing capacity and quality: UNICEF will continue to roll out the MHPSS MSP and EQUIP packages to strengthen the technical quality and reach of existing programming. To build capacity in existing government systems, UNICEF is working with partners to develop a global course on MHPSS for children and families for front-line government workers.

Addressing critical gaps in services: In collaboration with WHO, UNICEF will continue to develop an evidence-based, scalable psychological intervention for children aged 5–10 years, addressing a critical gap in humanitarian and development settings, where a severe lack of specialized MHPSS providers currently leaves children and adolescents without the psychological care they need.

Accelerating community-led MHPSS: UNICEF will invest in programmes that build on informal community support in humanitarian and development settings. MHPSS activities co-designed with the local population are more relevant and sustainable and can reduce dependency on external support.

Children on the move

Adapting child protection systems to address the rights of children on the move: UNICEF will scale up investments that close critical protection gaps across the continuum of protection and care for UASC, detained children, returnee and stateless children and children at risk of trafficking. This includes increasing the interoperability between child protection and migration and asylum systems and ensuring that child protection actors, including front-line social service workers, are more effectively equipped to support children on the move at critical moments along their journey.

Strengthening the meaningful participation of young people: UNICEF will continue to advocate for and provide technical assistance to increase the systematic and meaningful participation of young people to develop effective migration policies and programme. UNICEF will also work towards refining an adaptation strategy to identify the impact of climate shocks on children on the move, with a focus on providing a set of short-, medium- and long-term solutions.
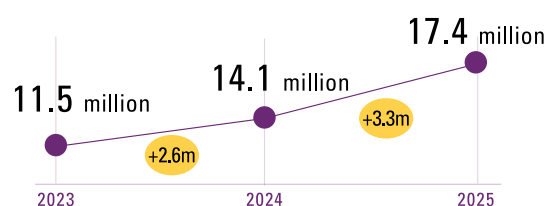
FIGURE 30: Output 3.3 : **Prevention of harmful practices**

# girls and women who **receive FGM prevention and protection services** through UNICEF-supported programmes
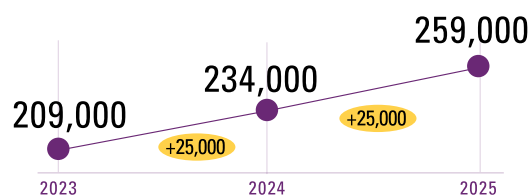
209,000 — 2023
234,000 — 2024 (+25,000)
259,000 — 2025 (+25,000)

adolescent girls **receiving prevention and care interventions to address child marriage through UNICEF-supported programmes**

11.5 million — 2023
14.1 million — 2024 (+2.6m)
17.4 million — 2025 (+3.3m)

people engaged **through community platforms in reflective dialogue towards eliminating discriminatory social and gender norms and harmful practices**

23.2 million — 2023 (+0.3m)
23.5 million — 2024 (+0.4m)
23.9 million — 2025
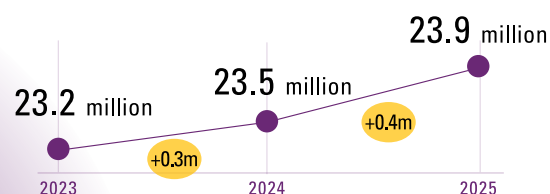
countries **implementing evidence-based, costed and funded action plans or strategies with monitoring** and evaluation frameworks to end child marriage

35 — 2023 (+3)
38 — 2024 (+3)
41 — 2025
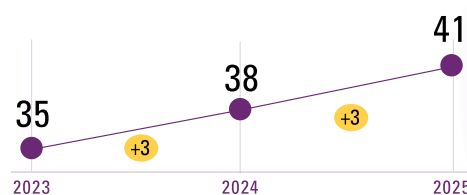
Child marriage

Advancing gender-transformative programming: UNICEF will lead the development of Phase III of the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, with a strong focus on accelerating and scaling up context-appropriate delivery of large-scale gender-transformative results; and continue to institutionalize a systematic approach to support design, implementation and monitoring of gender-transformative milestones as an integral and inseparable part of its programming work.

Focus on crisis-adaptive and resilient programming: Through the Global Programme to End Child Marriage, UNICEF will develop and implement programming approaches that are adapted to the needs of adolescent girls and communities affected by different type of humanitarian crisis.

Accelerating, leveraging and mobilizing policies to achieve large-scale results: UNICEF will prioritize sustained evidence-informed advocacy and monitoring to translate national and subnational action plans on ending child marriage into government budgetary allocations and implementation. UNICEF will mobilize grass-roots organizations and community leaders to support linkages and referrals for prevention and care services to adolescent girls and their families.

Female genital mutilation

Mobilizing capital to end FGM: In 2021, UNICEF commissioned a scoping exercise to understand promising, innovative financing models that support gender equality and the empowerment of girls. UNICEF will utilize these findings to explore innovative financing mechanisms to mobilize capital for the elimination of FGM.

Building coalitions and movements to eliminate FGM: UNICEF will continue to prioritize movement-building by expanding purposeful partnerships and fostering cooperation with women- and youth-led organizations and feminist and youth movements, as well as by enhancing adolescent girls' agency and capacities to influence social change and amplify their voices on issues related to FGM through innovative and safe platforms and spaces.

Strengthening the humanitarian–development–peace nexus: As the global community faces increasingly complex, protracted crises – such as large-scale refugee and migration crises, natural disasters and public health emergencies – UNICEF will continue to mainstream FGM programming within humanitarian programming.

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U-Reporters in Niamey, the capital of Niger. U-Report is a social platform created by UNICEF, available via SMS, Facebook and Twitter, where young people express their opinions and can be positive agents of change in their communities.

Abbreviations and acronyms

CAAC	children in armed conflict agenda		**MHPSS**	mental health and psychosocial support
CPIMS+	child protection information management system		**NGO**	non-governmental organization
CPSS	child protection systems-strengthening		**PSEA**	protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
CRVS	civil registration and vital statistics		**SBC**	social and behaviour change
CSO	civil society organization		**SDG**	Sustainable Development Goal
EORE	explosive ordnance risk education		**SEA**	sexual exploitation and abuse
EU	European Union		**UASC**	unaccompanied and separated children
EWIPA	Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas		**UNFPA**	United Nations Population Fund
FGM	female genital mutilation		**UNHCR**	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
GBV	gender-based violence		**UNLIA**	United Nations Legal Identity Agenda
IDP	internally displaced people		**WHO**	World Health Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization			
IOM	International Organization for Migration			

Annex 1: UNICEF Goal Area 3 income and expenses[i]

Through the European Union (EU) Strategy on the Rights of the Child and in our first-ever Youth Action Plan in EU External Action, the European Commission plays a pivotal role in safeguarding youth and children and their rights worldwide. We fulfill this commitment by working together with UNICEF and civil society organisations to ensure that no young people or child is left behind. No one chooses where they are born, but that should not define who we become.

— *Ms. Jutta Urpilainen, Commissioner for International Partnerships, European Commission*

Goal Area 3 income

In the first year of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 period, partners contributed US$142 million 'other resources – regular' (ORR) for child protection (Goal Area 3) – a 16 per cent decrease over the previous year (US$170 million) and US$92 million 'other resources – emergencies' (ORE) for child protection in humanitarian action – a 100 per cent increase from the previous year (US$46 million) (*see Figure A1-1*).

FIGURE A1-1: Other resources contributions 2018–2022 for Goal Area 3 (US$ million)
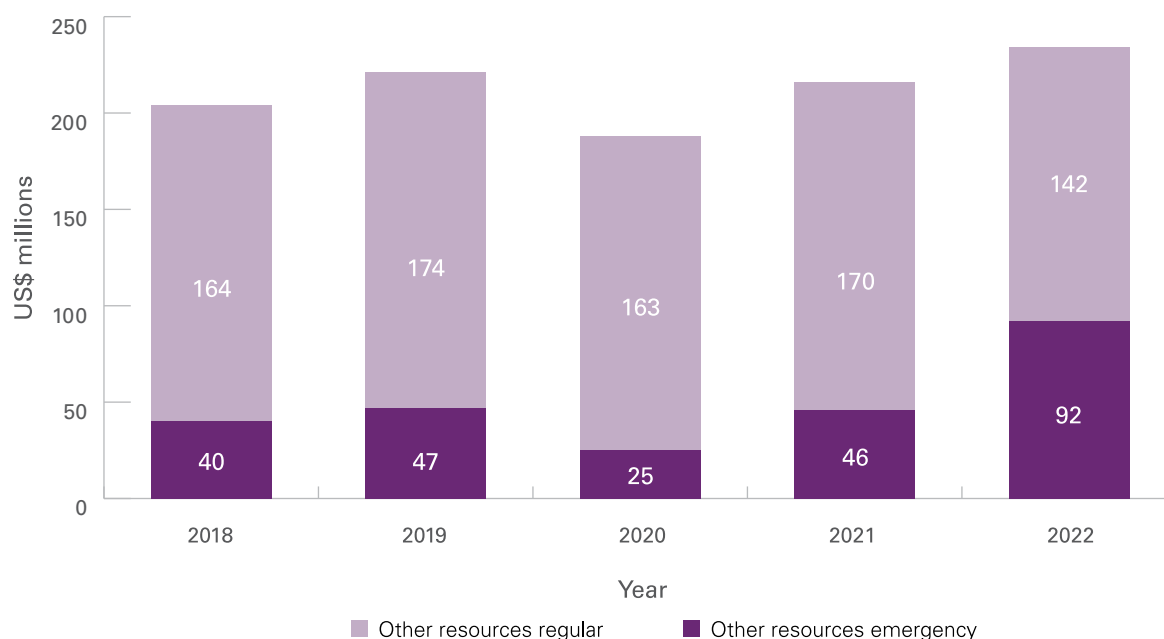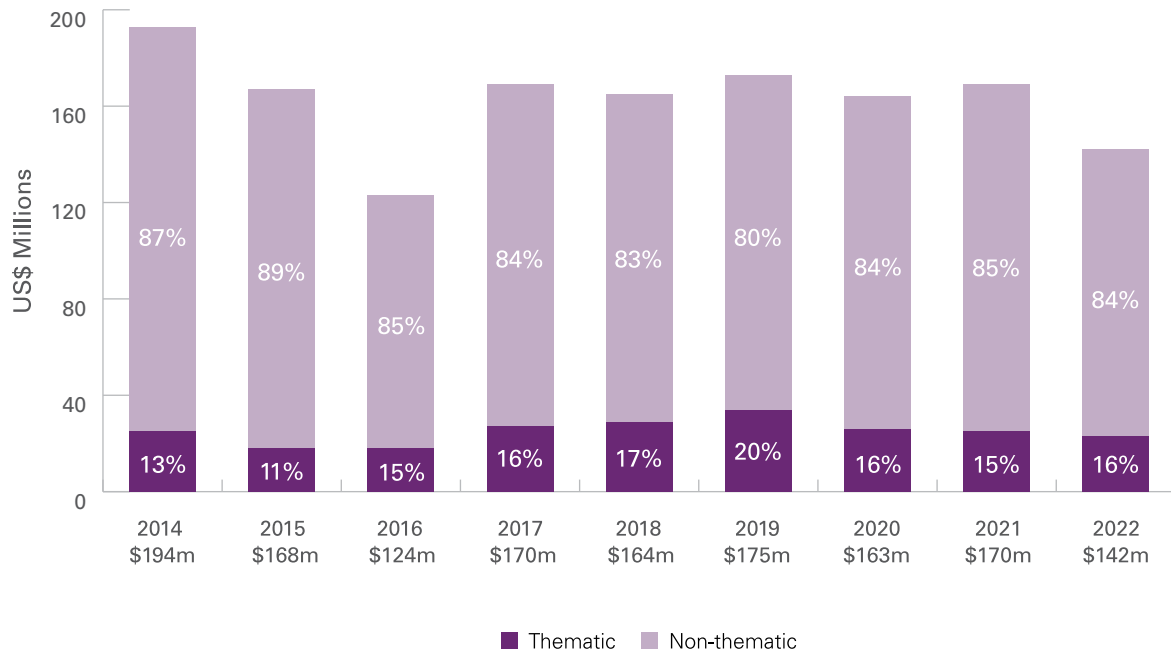
FIGURE A1-2: Goal Area 3 'other resources – regular' contributions, 2018–2022

US$ Millions

Year	Thematic	Non-thematic
2014 $194m	13%	87%
2015 $168m	11%	89%
2016 $124m	15%	85%
2017 $170m	16%	84%
2018 $164m	17%	83%
2019 $175m	20%	80%
2020 $163m	16%	84%
2021 $170m	15%	85%
2022 $142m	16%	84%

■ Thematic   ■ Non-thematic

In 2022, child protection thematic contributions amounted to 16 per cent (US$23 million) of total Goal Area 3 ORR contributions for 2022. This is a marginal reduction from the 2021 allocation of US$25 million. Non-thematic contributions represent 84 per cent (US$119 million) of total Goal Area 3 ORR contributions for 2022 (*see Figure A1-2*).

In 2022, public sector partners contributed the largest share of ORR to UNICEF Child Protection, at 84 per cent (*see Figure A1-3*). This remains consistent with the share of contributions received from public sector sources over the period of the previous strategic plan (2018–2021): a four-year annual average of 84 per cent. Principal donors for public sector contributions are governments, intergovernmental organizations and inter-organizational arrangements.

FIGURE A1-3: Total Goal Area 3 funds received by type of donor, 2022: US$142 million

Public Sector
US$119M
84%

Private Sector
US$23M
16%
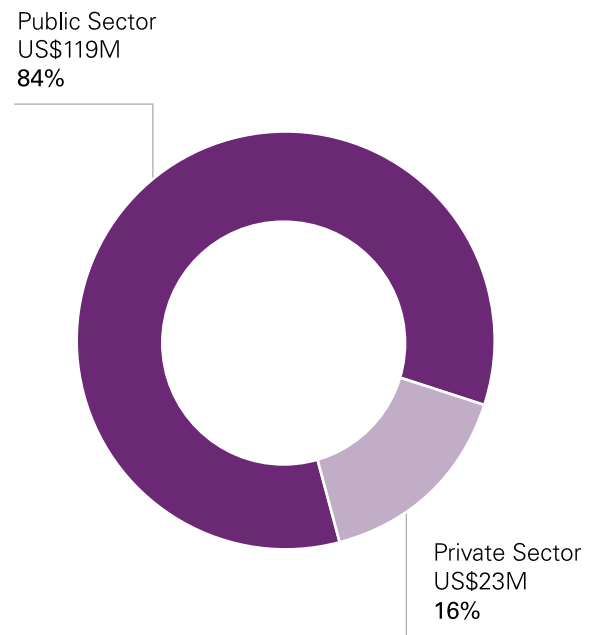
In 2022, 20 partners contributed US$125 million to child protection, collectively representing 88 per cent of total contributions for 2022 (*see Table A1-1*). Despite an overall reduction in the level of Goal Area 3 ORR contributions in 2022, several partners increased their contribution. Of note are sizable increases in support from the End Violence Against Children fund (165 per cent increase in income contributions compared to 2021); the Government of Germany (144 per cent increase); the Committee for UNICEF Switzerland and Liechtenstein (104 per cent increase); the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund (96 per cent increase); the Government of the United States of America (62 per cent increase); and the European Commission (25 per cent increase).

TABLE A1-1: Top 20 resource partners to Goal Area 3 by total contributions, 2022	
Partner	**Total contribution (US$)**
European Commission	30,675,796
Sweden	22,809,691
United Nations Multi Partner Trust	8,093,977
End Violence Against Children Fund	7,028,175
UNFPA-UNICEF Joint FGM Programme	6,197,915
Education Cannot Wait Fund	5,272,522
United States	4,790,694
United States Fund for UNICEF	4,693,308
Swiss Committee for UNICEF	4,050,008
Germany	3,926,921
Denmark	3,905,218
Norway	3,561,014
United Nations Joint Programme	3,225,663
French Committee for UNICEF	2,753,760
German Committee for UNICEF	2,606,507
United Kingdom	2,566,875
WHO	2,544,723
Republic of Korea	2,414,881
Canada	2,011,098
Netherlands	1,974,920

The top 20 largest grant contributions amounted to 51 per cent of total Goal Area 3 ORR contributions received in 2022. The largest contributions (in order) were received from: the European Commission to foster programming to advance child rights and strengthen the empowerment of children and adolescents in Bangladesh; global thematic support for child protection from the Government of Sweden; contributions from the United Nations Joint Programmes for UNICEF's programming to eliminate FGM; and additional support from the Government of Sweden to accelerate rights-based, systems-strengthening programming to scale up social safety nets for the most vulnerable women in Ethiopia (*see Table A1-2*).

TABLE A1-2: Top 20 grant contributions to Goal Area 3, 2022

Rank	Grant Description	Partner	Total (US$)
1	Fostering Rights and Empowerment (Bangladesh)	European Commission	8,927,301
2	Child protection global thematic support	Sweden	7,870,237
3	UNFPA-UNICEF FGM Joint Programme	United Nations Joint Programme	5,572,786
4	Building an Integrated Safety Net System for the Most Vulnerable Women (Ethiopia)	Sweden	4,595,675
5	Education Cannot Wait Funds (Ethiopia)	Education Cannot Wait Fund	4,060,952
6	Thematic support for child protection (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger)	Denmark	3,828,484
7	Child protection (West and Central Africa Region)	European Commission	3,793,409
8	European Union global promotion of best practices for children in migration (Eastern and Southern Africa)	European Commission	3,731,950
9	Child protection ((Libya)	European Commission	3,383,520
10	Improving psychosocial support and protection services (Ukraine)	Germany	3,166,525
11	End Violence Against Children Funds for UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti	End Violence Against Children Fund	3,071,970
12	Country thematic support to child protection in Yemen	Sweden	2,998,201
13	Child protection (East and Central Asia region)	European Commission	2,992,414
14	UNFPA–UNICEF FGM Joint Programme (Sudan)	United Nations Joint Programme	2,891,475
15	Implementing minimum service package for MHPSS in humanitarian settings	WHO	2,154,600
16	Supporting learning, protection and empowerment of children in Mozambique	Norway	2,090,581
17	Improving the lives of children without parental care (India)	United States Fund for UNICEF	1,960,000
18	Multisector support to improve access to services, including child protection	Republic of Korea	1,916,000
19	Thematic support for child protection (Brazil)	Committee for UNICEF Switzerland and Liechtenstein	1,855,027
20	Strengthened protection of girls and boys' human rights (Guatemala)	Sweden	1,779,201

In 2022, UNICEF expresses particular thanks to those trusted donors that continue to provide sizeable thematic contributions, including the governments of Sweden and Denmark, and the Committee for UNICEF Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the German Committee for UNICEF, the United States Fund for UNICEF, the French Committee for UNICEF and the Korean Committee for UNICEF, among others (*see Table A1-3*).

TABLE A1-3: Thematic contributions to Goal Area 3 by resource partner, 2022

Resource Partner Type	Resource Partner	Total (US$)	Percentage of total
Governments 76.3%	Sweden	13,355,039	58.8%
	Denmark	3,828,484	16.9%
	Hungary	150,000	0.7%
Private sector 23.7%	Committee for UNICEF Switzerland and Liechtenstein	1,877,027	8.3%
	German Committee for UNICEF	978,352	4.3%
	United States Fund for UNICEF	657,979	2.9%
	French Committee for UNICEF	616,129	2.7%
	Korean Committee for UNICEF	568,283	2.5%
	Czech Committee for UNICEF	148,913	0.7%
	Japan Committee for UNICEF	129,534	0.6%
	Italian Committee for UNICEF	105,597	0.5%
	United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF	102,414	0.5%
	Balance from previous year	68,743	0.3%
	Swedish Committee for UNICEF	50,000	0.2%
	Canadian UNICEF Committee	39,373	0.2%
	Norwegian Committee for UNICEF	16,467	0.1%
	Slovenia Foundation for UNICEF	10,996	0.0%
	UNICEF-Bangladesh	3,901	0.0%
	Australian Committee for UNICEF	2,261	0.0%
	Grand total	22,709,492	

Global thematic funding serves as a critical resource to ensure delivery of essential service interventions; provide catalytic funding to initiate innovative work; take programming to scale; and fill temporary funding gaps to avoid interruptions to critical programming.

Global thematic contributions are the most flexible sources of funding to UNICEF, after regular resources, as they are distributed across regions to individual country programmes, according to priority needs. Of all thematic child protection contributions received by UNICEF in 2022, 42 per cent were global-level contributions (*see Figure A1-4*). In 2022, there was a significant increase in the amount of global thematic funding contributed to child protection compared to 2021 – an increase of 27 per cent overall. This is in part due to an increased funding commitment (+19 per cent) from the Government of Sweden, as well as several new contributions from the Korean Committee for UNICEF,

the Canadian UNICEF Committee, the German Committee for UNICEF and the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF. The Japan Committee for UNICEF also increased its global thematic funding contribution by 265 per cent in 2022 compared to 2021.

The Government of Sweden remains UNICEF Child Protection's largest thematic resource partner in 2022, providing 59 per cent of all thematic child protection contributions received, including global thematic funding and country-specific funding for Ethiopia. Sizeable thematic contributions were also received from the Government of Denmark for child protection activities in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, and from the Committee for UNICEF Switzerland and Liechtenstein to support child protection programming in Brazil. In addition, the Japan Committee for UNICEF contributed more than three times as much global child protection thematic funding in 2022 as in 2021.

UNICEF Child Protection continues to experience a reduction in the number of partners contributing thematic resources each year. In 2022, 18 partners contributed thematic funding, representing a decline of 10 per cent in the number of resource partners for child protection since 2021.

In total, UNICEF allocated US$8.5 million global thematic funds – almost double the amount available in 2021 – for child protection programming across global, regional and country offices during the year. Over three quarters of these funds went directly to 47 UNICEF country offices (US$6.6 million); around US$1 million (or 12 per cent) was allocated across the seven regional offices; and approximately US$0.8 million (10 per cent) supported global efforts (*see Figure A1-5 and A1-6*).[1]

Programmatically, these funds contribute to meeting the strategic priorities set out in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 Goal Area 3 (GA3). This includes programming to prevent violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect of children (*see Output 3.1*) and our work to promote the sustainable scale up of care, mental health and psychosocial well-being and justice services for children (*see Output 3.2*) (*see Annex 2 for highlights of selected results utilizing global thematic funding*).

FIGURE A1-4: Goal Area 3 thematic funding contributions at country, regional and global levels, 2018–2022
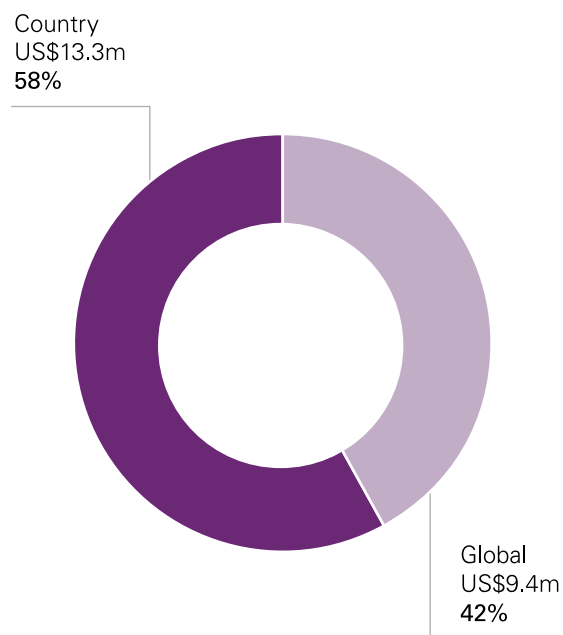

Country
US$13.3m
58%

Global
US$9.4m
42%

FIGURE A1-5: Global thematic allocations to regional and country offices, 2022

9
COUNTRIES

WCA

19%
CO ALLOCATION

14%
RO ALLOCATION

6
COUNTRIES

ESA

16%
CO ALLOCATION

14%
RO ALLOCATION

8
COUNTRIES

ECA

14%
CO ALLOCATION

14%
RO ALLOCATION

5
COUNTRIES

SA

14%
CO ALLOCATION

14%
RO ALLOCATION

8
COUNTRIES

LAC

13%
CO ALLOCATION

14%
RO ALLOCATION

7
COUNTRIES

MENA

13%
CO ALLOCATION

14%
RO ALLOCATION

4
COUNTRIES

EAP

12%
CO ALLOCATION

14%
RO ALLOCATION

CO = Country Office*   RO = Regional Office**
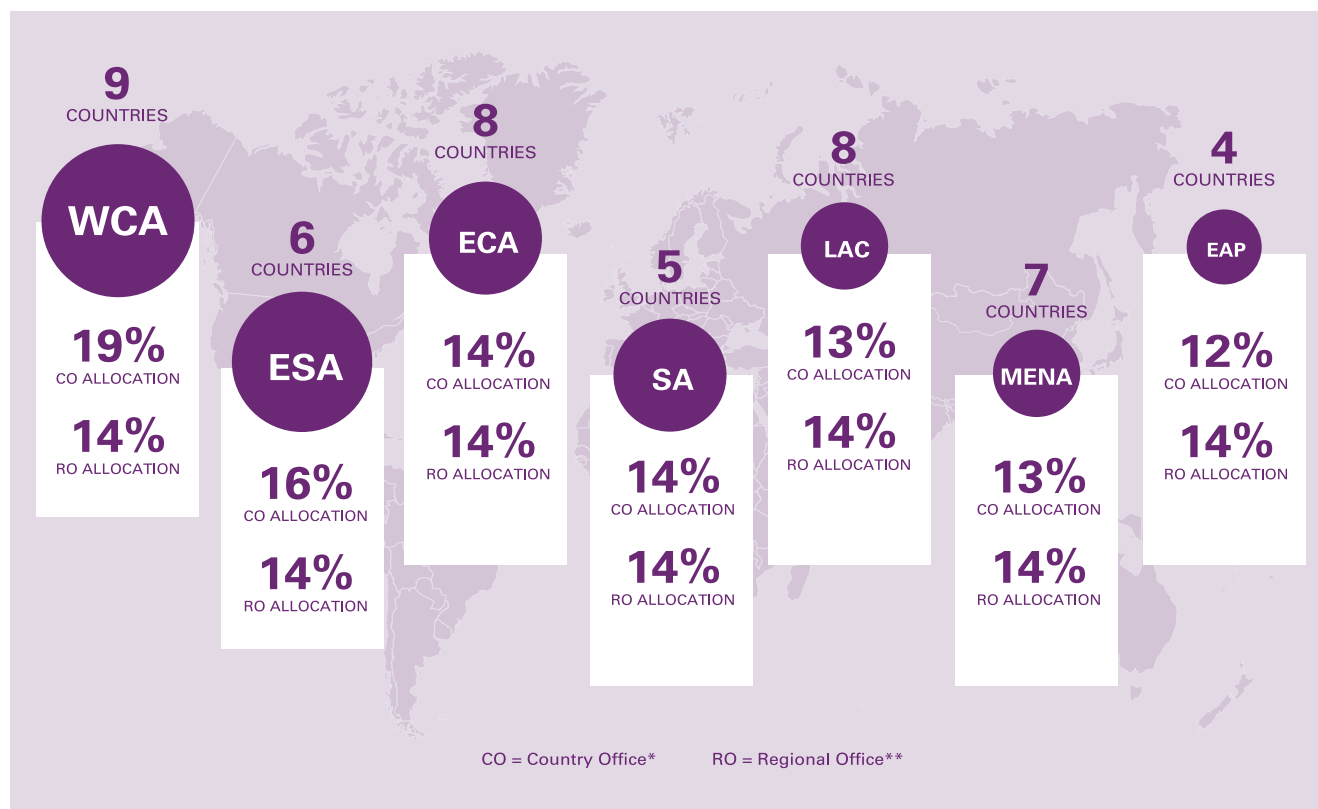
* Percentage denotes the proportion of total allocations allocated to the specific COs in that region

** Percentage denotes the proportion of total regional office allocation allocated to the specific RO

Total global thematic fund allocation to UNICEF $8.5 million (USD)

- ECA
- MENA
- EAP
- SA
- WCA
- LAC
- ESA

Legend:
- $0-$100,000
- $101,000-$149,000
- $150,000-$199,000
- $200,000+

Allocation to Country Offices — USD 6.6 M

Allocation to Regional Offices — USD 1 M
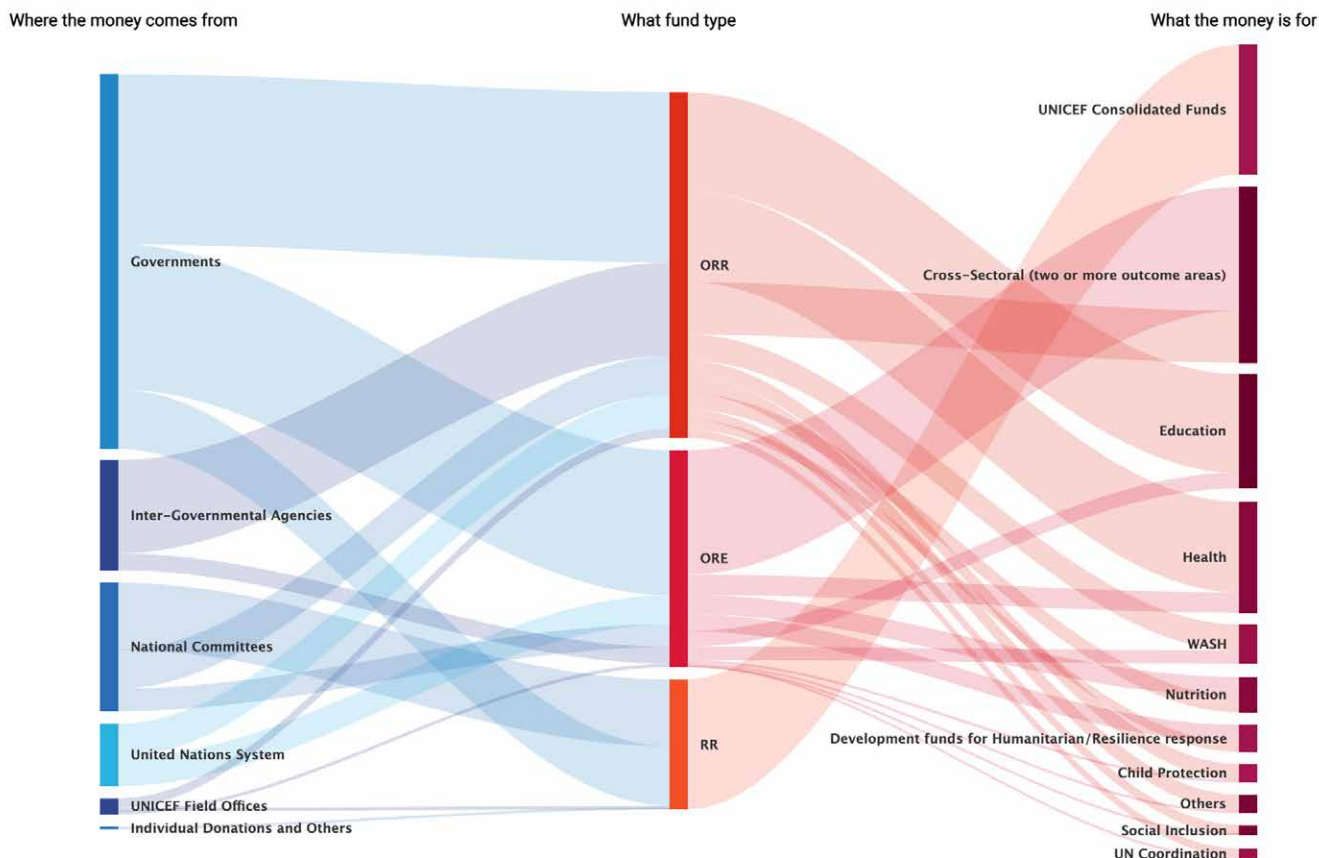
Allocation to Headquarters — USD 0.8 M
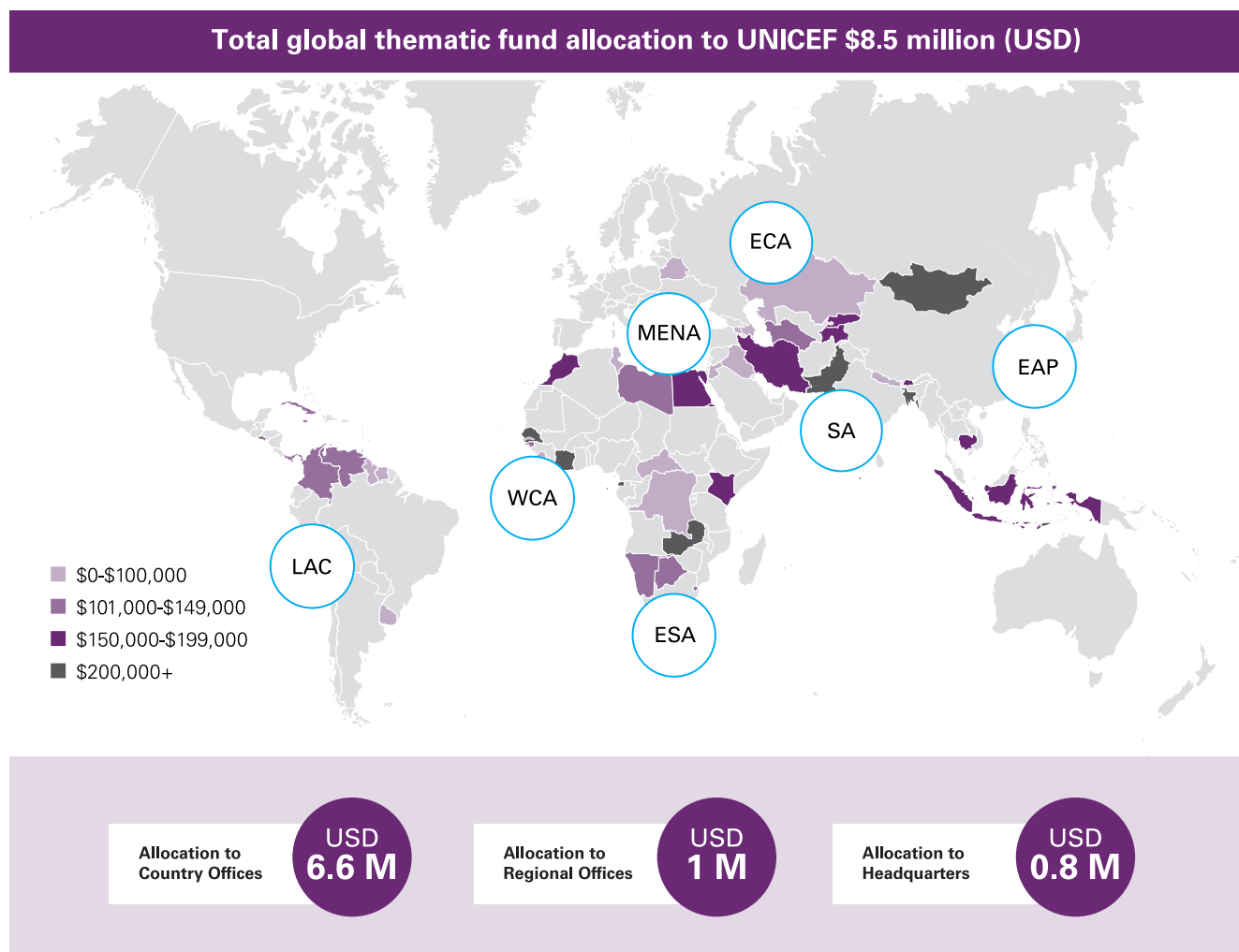
Notes: EAP, East Asia and the Pacific; ECA, Europe and Central Asia; ESA, Eastern and Southern Africa; LAC, Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA, Middle East and North Africa; SA, South Asia; WCA, West and Central Africa.

The allocation and expenditure of all thematic funding contributions can be monitored on the UNICEF transparency portal (<open.unicef.org>), and 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.

For transparency, follow the flow of funds from contribution to programming by visiting <http://open.unicef.org>.

Where the money comes from — Governments, Inter-Governmental Agencies, National Committees, United Nations System, UNICEF Field Offices, Individual Donations and Others

What fund type — ORR, ORE, RR

What the money is for — UNICEF Consolidated Funds, Cross-Sectoral (two or more outcome areas), Education, Health, WASH, Nutrition, Development funds for Humanitarian/Resilience response, Child Protection, Others, Social Inclusion, UN Coordination

Goal Area 3 expenses

Note: Expenses are higher than the income received because expenses comprise total allotments from regular resources and other resources (including balances carried over from previous years), whereas income reflects only earmarked contributions to child protection in 2022. Income received in 2022 is not entirely expended in the same year.

In 2022, child protection expenses were US$876 million – accounting for 11 per cent of total UNICEF expenses (*see Figure A1-7*). This is a drop of 1 percentage point in the proportion of total UNICEF expenses compared to 2021. However, in monetary terms, there was a 26 per cent increase in total UNICEF expenses across all Goal Areas in 2022, from US$6.33 billion in 2021 to US$7.98 billion in 2022.

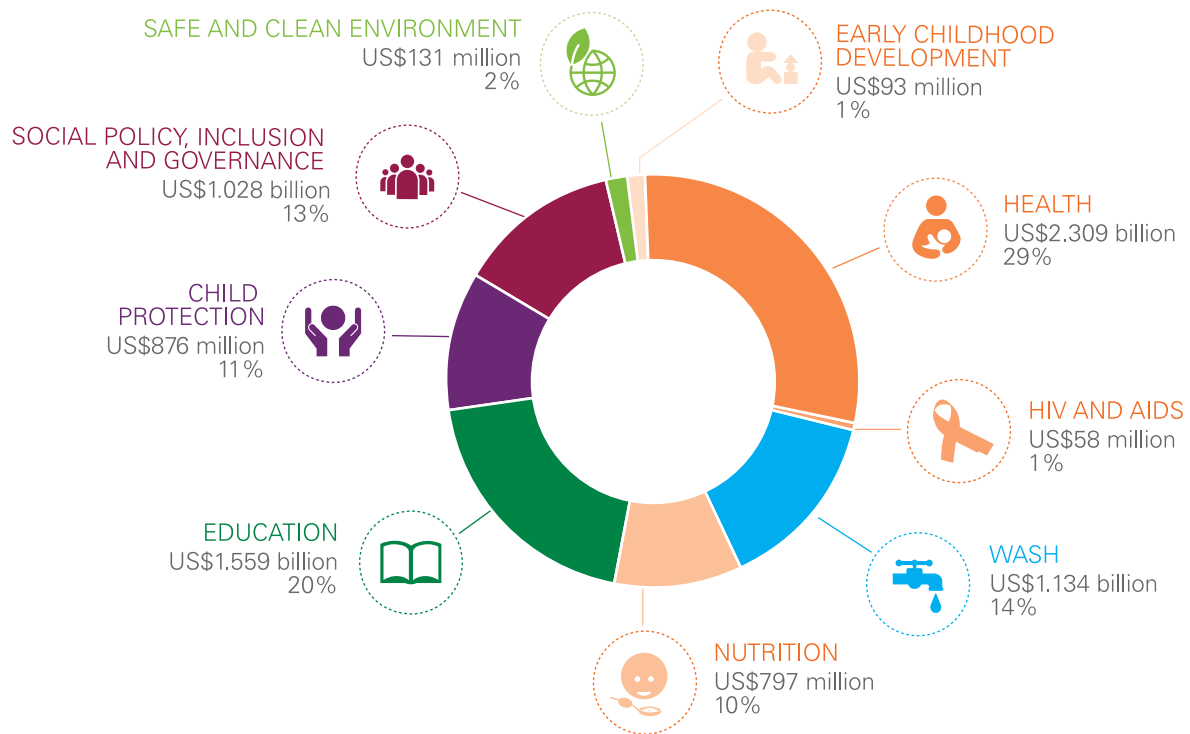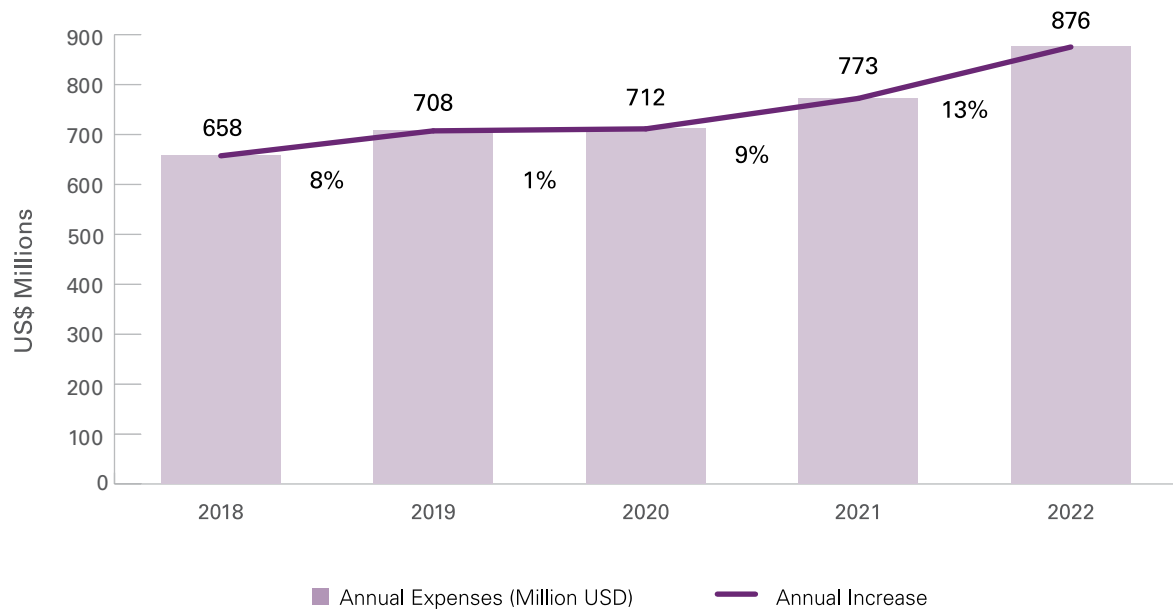FIGURE A1-7: Child protection expenses as a proportion of total UNICEF expenses, 2022 (US$ millions)

SAFE AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT
US$131 million
2%

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
US$93 million
1%

SOCIAL POLICY, INCLUSION AND GOVERNANCE
US$1.028 billion
13%

HEALTH
US$2.309 billion
29%

CHILD PROTECTION
US$876 million
11%

HIV AND AIDS
US$58 million
1%

EDUCATION
US$1.559 billion
20%

WASH
US$1.134 billion
14%

NUTRITION
US$797 million
10%

FIGURE A1-8: Expense trend for child protection, 2018–2022 (US$ millions)

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Annual Expenses (Million USD)	658	708	712	773	876
Annual Increase		8%	1%	9%	13%

US$ Millions

■ Annual Expenses (Million USD)   — Annual Increase

Note: Due to rounding, the totals may differ slightly from the sum of the columns.

FIGURE A1-9: Expense variation by fund type, 2021–2022 (US$ million and %)
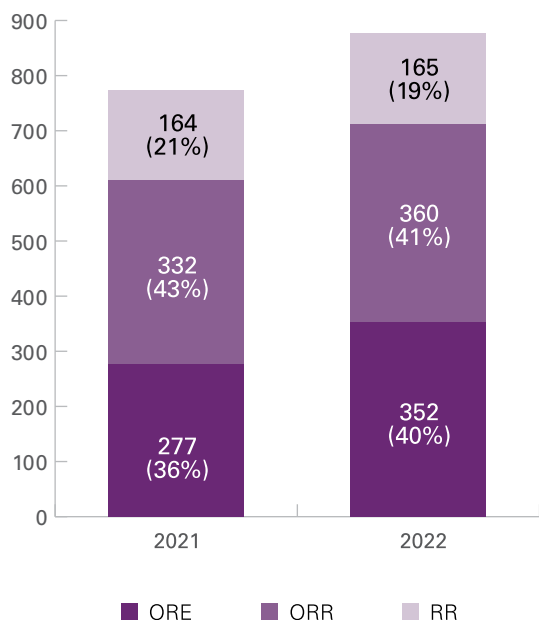

Note: ORE: Other Resources – Emergency; ORR: Other Resources – Regular; RR: Regular Resources. Due to rounding, the totals may differ slightly from the sum of the columns.

Child protection expenses have been increasing steadily since 2018 – by 33 per cent over a five-year period (2018–2022). In 2022, global child protection programme expenses from more than 150 countries totalled US$876 million (including US$521 million spent for humanitarian action), representing a 13 per cent increase compared to 2021 (*see Figure A1-8*). Humanitarian expenses increased by 23 per cent from 2021 levels.

Over the period 2021–2022, the proportion of expenses by funding type remained relatively consistent, apart from an increase in thematic expenses related to emergency programming (*see Figure A1-9*). ORE expenses increased by US$75 million (or 4 percentage points) over the year, as a result of additional humanitarian programming in several contexts, including (in order) Afghanistan, Ukraine and Ethiopia.

FIGURE A1-10: Child protection expenses by region, 2022
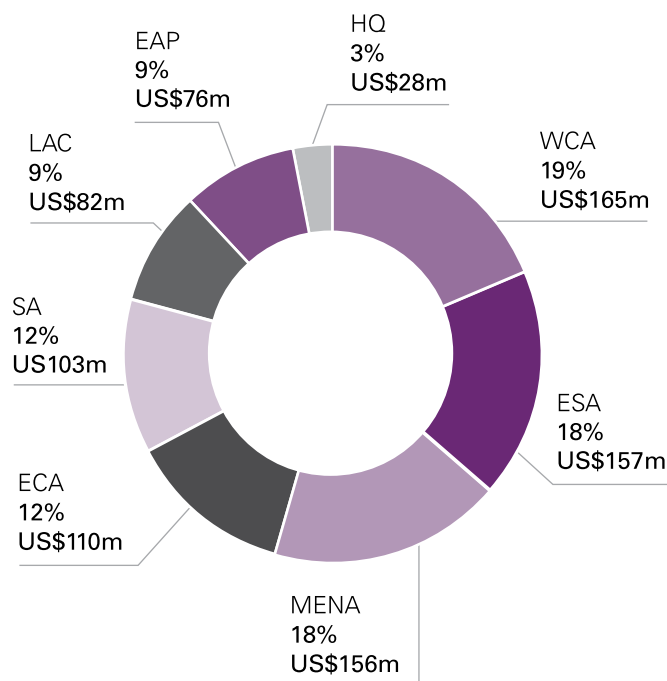
Note: Due to rounding, the totals may differ slightly from the sum of the columns. EAP: East Asia and the Pacific; ECA: Europe and Central Asia; ESA: Eastern and Southern Africa; HQ: Headquarters; LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA: Middle East and North Africa; SA: South Asia; WCA: West and Central Africa.

FIGURE A1-11: Comparison of regional expenses for child protection, by region, 2021–2022 (US$ millions)
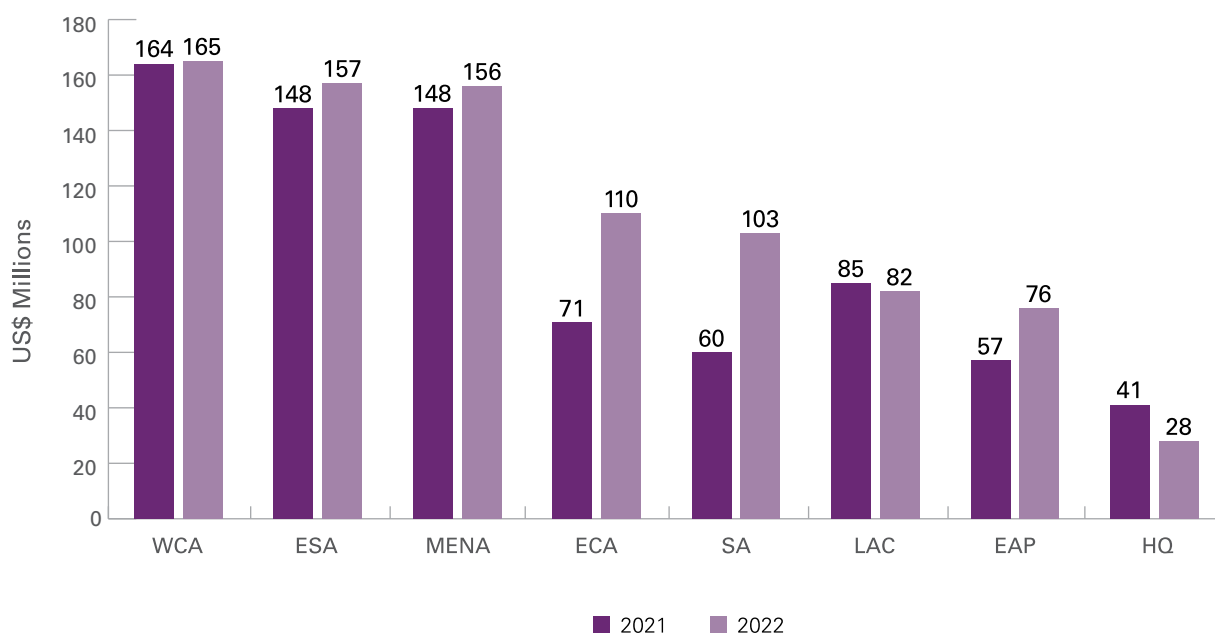
Note: Due to rounding, the totals may differ slightly from the sum of the columns. EAP: East Asia and the Pacific; ECA: Europe and Central Asia; ESA: Eastern and Southern Africa; HQ: Headquarters; LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA: Middle East and North Africa; SA: South Asia; WCA: West and Central Africa.

Three UNICEF regions increased their child protection expenses significantly in 2022. Expenses in the South Asia Region increased most substantially, by 72 per cent compared to 2021 (*see Figure A1-11*). Programming in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan accounted for almost 92 per cent of total expenses in 2022. In Europe and Central Asia, the response to the war in Ukraine represented the largest increase in expenses – more than double the level of spending compared to 2021. The substantial increase in spending in East Asia and the Pacific (by 51 per cent) is largely attributed to a scale-up of humanitarian programming. This includes, for example, in Myanmar in response to the situation in Rakhine and the ongoing Rohingya crisis.

TABLE A1-4: Child protection expenses by top 10 country offices, 2021–2022 (US$ millions)

Country Offices	2021	2022	Change
Ethiopia	**26.7M**	**41.5M**	**55%**
Afghanistan	**16.3M**	**41.3M**	**152%**
Democratic Republic of Congo	**24.6M**	**40.6M**	**65%**
Lebanon	29.5M	28.2M	-4%
Ukraine	**12.1M**	**26.4M**	**119%**
Bangladesh	18.8M	25.9M	38%
Somalia	25.1M	25.5M	2%
Iraq	24.5M	24.0M	-2%
Yemen	20.5M	22.3M	9%
Nigeria	21.7M	21.2M	-2%

Afghanistan
2021 16.3M — 152% — 2022 41.3M

Ukraine
2021 12.1M — 119% — 2022 26.4M

Democratic Republic of Congo
2021 24.6M — 65% — 2022 40.6M

**Ethiopia**
2021 26.7M — 55% — 2022 41.5M
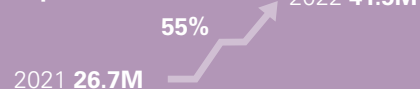
In 2022, 10 country offices accounted for 34 per cent of total child protection expenses. The scale-up of multisectoral programming to address the humanitarian situations in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Ukraine resulted in a significant increase in spending in each of these countries (*see Table A1-4*). In 2022, the largest source of funding for 7 of the top 10 spending country offices was ORE, whereas Bangladesh and Iraq relied more on ORR. UNICEF Nigeria is the only country office in the top 10 spenders that drew the majority of its funding from regular resources (49 per cent) in 2022.

The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, has included prevention and response programming for children in humanitarian contexts across its three strategic outputs. In 2022, expense trends by funding type reflect this approach (*see Figure A1-12*).

For example, there was an increase in ORE expenses for strategic output 3.2, increasing as a proportion of total output expenses from 10 per cent in 2021 to 35 per cent in 2022. This is because of the integration of targets to scale up UNICEF mental health and psychosocial support and programming to address the separation of children in humanitarian contexts within this strategic output area (*see Figure A1-13*).
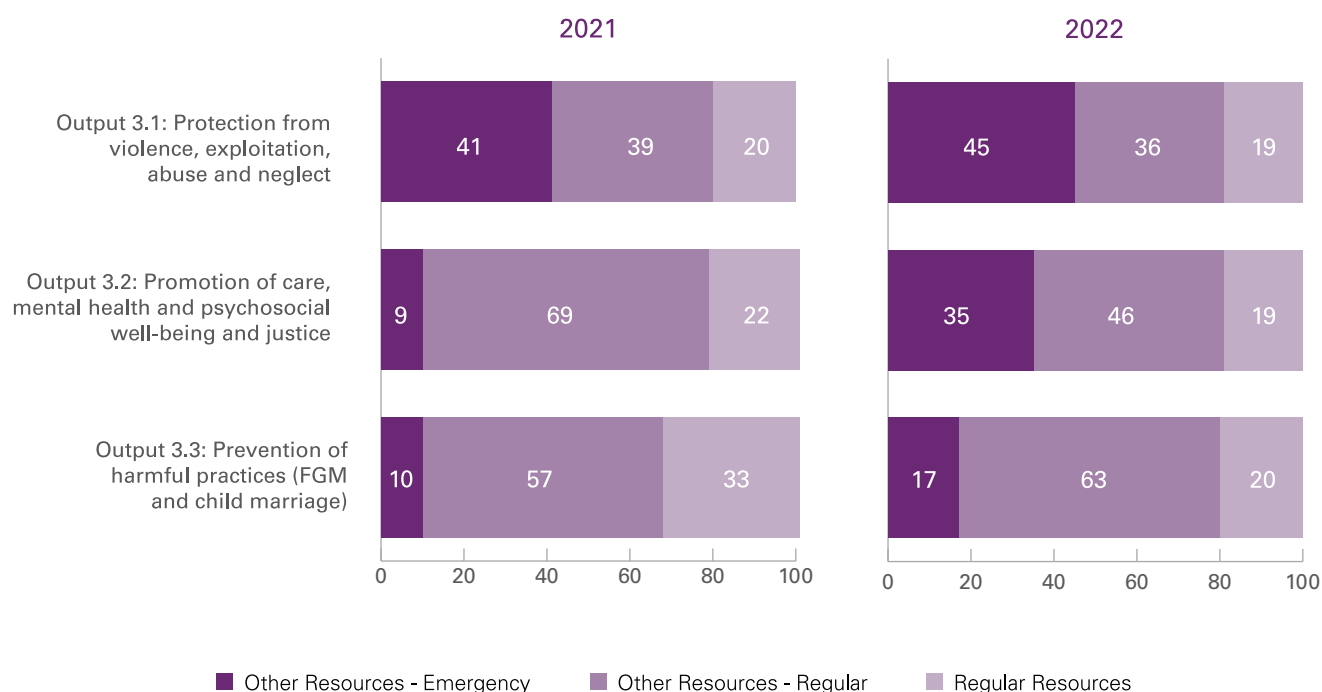
The distribution of expenses by funding type related to preventing harmful practices also shifted, with an increase in the proportion drawn from ORE (from 10 per cent in 2021 to 17 per cent in 2022) and a decrease in expenses drawn from RR from 33 per cent in 2021 to 20 per cent in 2022.

FIGURE A1-12: Proportion and amount of child protection expenses by strategic output, 2022 (% and US$ millions)

7% 62M
30% 264M
63% 551M
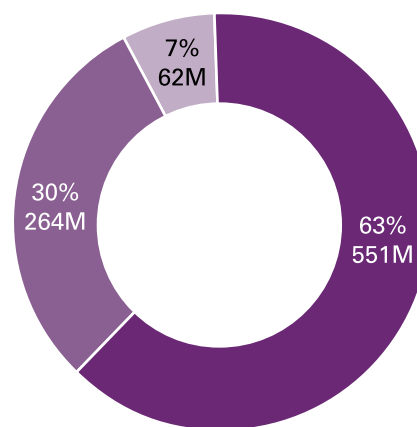
■ Output 3.1: Protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect

■ Output 3.2: Promotion of care, mental health and psychosocial well-being and justice

■ Output 3.3: Prevention of harmful practices (FGM and child marriage)

2021

2022

Output 3.1: Protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect

2021: 41 | 39 | 20
2022: 45 | 36 | 19

Output 3.2: Promotion of care, mental health and psychosocial well-being and justice

2021: 9 | 69 | 22
2022: 35 | 46 | 19

Output 3.3: Prevention of harmful practices (FGM and child marriage)

2021: 10 | 57 | 33
2022: 17 | 63 | 20

■ Other Resources - Emergency   ■ Other Resources - Regular   ■ Regular Resources
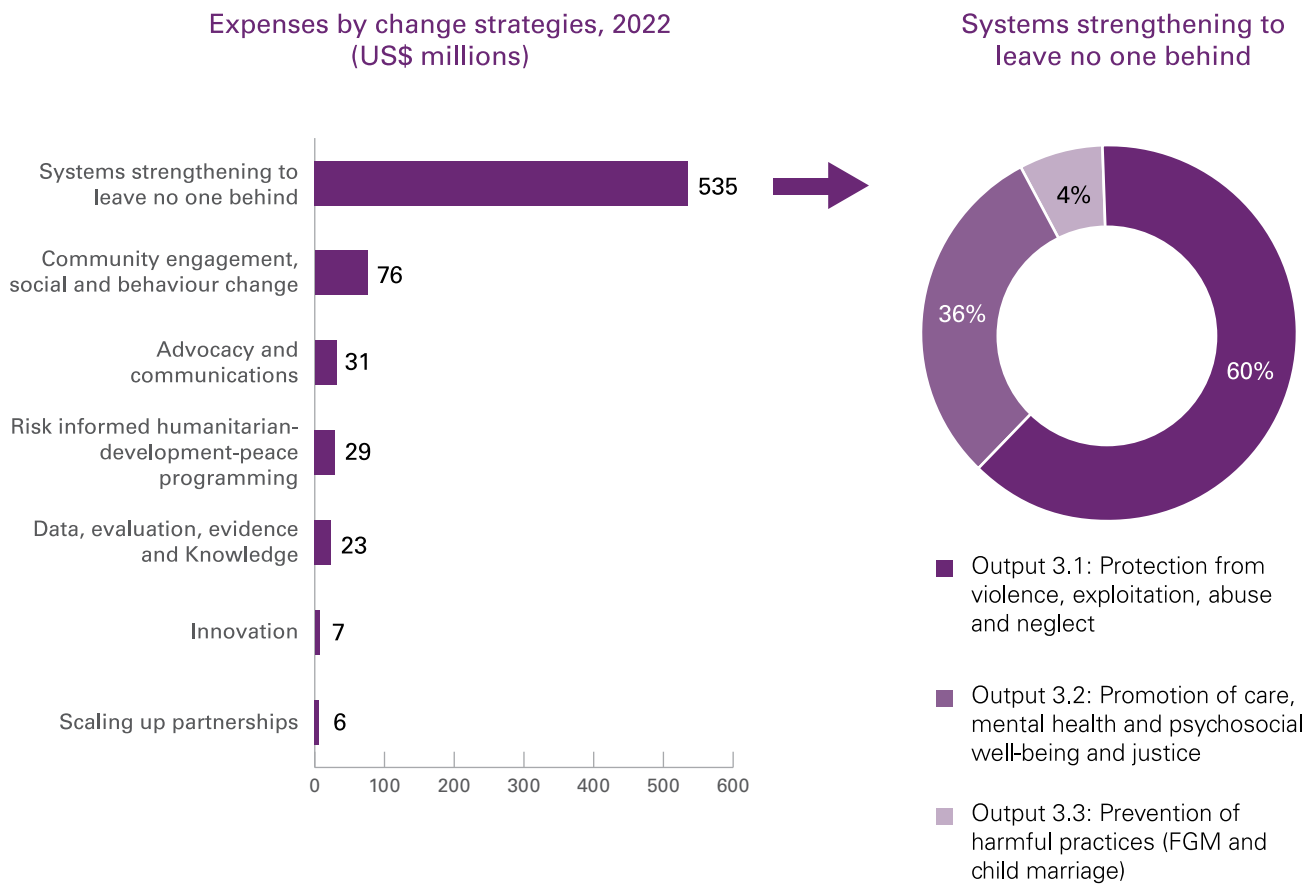
To achieve its 2022–2025 strategic targets, UNICEF is guided by a set of 'change' strategies, designed to drive cost-effective, evidence-based interventions that maximize equitable results, increase programme efficiencies and effectiveness to deliver results at scale, and bring about sustainable and transformational impact.

Significant steps are already being taken in the first year of the new strategic plan to design and implement sustainable solutions and drive the momentum for change to achieve results for children. All of the change strategies are mutually reinforcing, working hand in hand to deliver results across child protection thematic priorities.

UNICEF is committed to ensuring no child is left behind, by strengthening child protection systems that are more effective and inclusive, including for those children in humanitarian settings, children on the move, those engaged in child labour, and children with disabilities. In 2022, an analysis of expenses across UNICEF's 151 partner countries costed against each of the 9 change strategies indicated that child protection systems-strengthening was a major expense source, accounting for US$535 million of total child protection expenses in 2022 (*see Figure A1-14*). Most of these expenses were apportioned to systems- strengthening programming to prevent and respond to violence against girls, boys and women across development and humanitarian contexts (strategic output 3.1), representing a 60 per cent share of total Goal Area 3 spending for 2022.
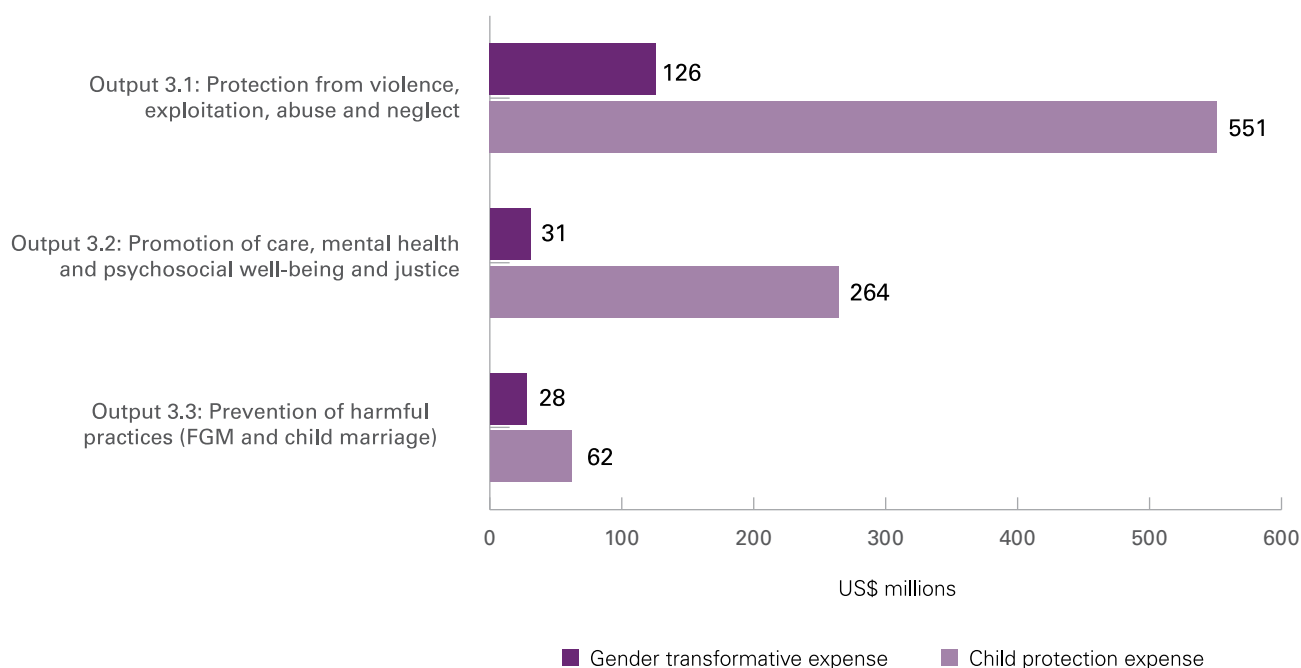
Expenses by change strategies, 2022 (US$ millions)

Change strategy	US$ millions
Systems strengthening to leave no one behind	535
Community engagement, social and behaviour change	76
Advocacy and communications	31
Risk informed humanitarian-development-peace programming	29
Data, evaluation, evidence and Knowledge	23
Innovation	7
Scaling up partnerships	6

Systems strengthening to leave no one behind

- 60% — Output 3.1: Protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect
- 36% — Output 3.2: Promotion of care, mental health and psychosocial well-being and justice
- 4% — Output 3.3: Prevention of harmful practices (FGM and child marriage)

In 2022, expenses related to gender-transformative programming across strategic output areas were well aligned with the level at which gender-transformative results are mainstreamed in Goal Area 3. The largest proportion of this trend in spending relates to the scale-up of UNICEF work to prevent harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM (strategic output 3.3), with 54 per cent of total expenses attributed to gender-transformative programming (*see Figure A1-15*).

FIGURE A1-15: Gender-transformative and child protection expenses, 2022

Output 3.1: Protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect — Gender transformative expense: 126; Child protection expense: 551

Output 3.2: Promotion of care, mental health and psychosocial well-being and justice — Gender transformative expense: 31; Child protection expense: 264

Output 3.3: Prevention of harmful practices (FGM and child marriage) — Gender transformative expense: 28; Child protection expense: 62

US$ millions

■ Gender transformative expense   ■ Child protection expense

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i **Core Resources for Results (RR):** RR is funding without restrictions, to be used flexibly for children wherever and whenever the need is greatest. RR is foundational to delivering results across the Strategic Plan, enabling UNICEF to achieve the greatest impact for children by: ensuring expert staff across all programme areas; scaling up proven solutions and best practices for children globally; leading and pioneering new ideas to respond effectively to complex children's issues; meeting children's needs throughout childhood and adolescence; being there before, during and after an emergency.

Other Resources (regular) (ORR): ORR are contributions earmarked by UNICEF donors for specific purposes, such as a particular country, geographic region, theme, project, sector, or any other category agreed upon by UNICEF and the donor. Allocated for non-emergency programmes and UNICEF strategic priorities, these funds offer donors increased engagement in programming, while facilitating comprehensive monitoring and reporting of outcomes and cost-effectiveness.

Other Resources (emergency) (ORE): ORE are funds earmarked for specific emergency response needs and projections. Sources of humanitarian funding include public

and private sector partners, and humanitarian pooled funds managed by OCHA, such as the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF).

Thematic funding: Thematic funding provides partners an opportunity to achieve large-scale results in the UNICEF Strategic Plan through flexible, softly earmarked, multi-year funding. Thematic funding is flexible funding for a cause, a mechanism which aligns donors' passions or institutional objectives with UNICEF's mission, fostering a synergistic relationship that strengthens the systems children and their communities depend on, creating sustainable and collective impact. There are 11 thematic pools, one for each of the most pressing issues facing children around the world, including child protection. Resource partners can select the pool that best reflects their passion or mandate and choose to have their funds used either globally or targeted to a specific country. Partners can also invest at the regional level, with the choice of supporting either development or humanitarian work in a particular region of the world.

Annex 2: Selected country highlights utilizing global thematic funding

A UNICEF supported parenting programme session in Venezuela promotes positive parenting from the outset.

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Senegal
US$200,000

UNICEF undertook a gap assessment of the social service workforce, with findings feeding into the development of a 2023 road map for action. UNICEF also strengthened case management protocols and guidelines for relevant ministries, and related sectors such as education and health. This resulted in equipping almost 21,000 professionals from various sectors, including front-line workers in 25 district-level child protection committees with enhanced skills. In 2022, almost 3,000 child survivors of violence (45 per cent girls) received case management support and were referred for services.

Egypt
US$150,000

UNICEF provided ongoing support to strengthen justice systems as part of our broader child protection system-strengthening agenda. To promote child-friendly justice systems, a model child court and child-sensitive rooms inside family courts were successfully piloted for scale-up to provide children in contact with the law with a friendly, safe environment. UNICEF helped to draft guidelines on child-sensitive interviewing techniques. UNICEF also works to ensure children in contact with the law are provided with legal/social services; in 2022, 12 per cent of these children were reached with non-custodial alternative measures.

Tajikistan
US$150,000

UNICEF provided important technical support to a number of policy reforms for child protection, including improved service linkages to social protection and justice. Of note is the revision of the Targeted Social Assistance programme which is strengthening cash transfer mechanisms for vulnerable children and families. Further, focus was placed on developing the social service workforce, including enrolling the first 100 paraprofessional social work students. UNICEF supported the government to develop the second phase of the national Juvenile Justice System Reform Programme (2023–2027), alongside developing a set of indicators to monitor implementation of two states' programmes on justice for children.

Zambia
US$290,000

UNICEF supported the government's strengthening of the regulatory framework for the protection of children. This included the adoption of the Children's Code Act, the Social Worker's Act, and the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, plus the launch of a Juvenile Justice Strategy, among others. In pilot districts, 42 per cent of child offenders were diverted in 2022. Minimum Standards on Protection of Child Survivors/Witnesses were also launched and piloted in 16 districts, impacting more than 600 child related court cases. A UNICEF-supported Prosecutor's Handbook for Addressing Sexual Violence was also rolled out, impacting the response to over 200 cases of GBV against women and girls; twice as many cases as the previous year.

Cambodia
US$191,763

UNICEF accelerated interventions aimed at strengthening the child protection system at national and subnational levels. UNICEF continued to support the roll-out of national diversion guidelines; in 2022, 20 per cent of children in conflict with the law had their cases diverted or were granted non-custodial sentences. UNICEF continued to support the scaling up of the social service workforce. Almost 3,000 social service workers (>50 per cent women) undertook case management training, with a focus on improving referral processes. In 2022, 16,000 children who experienced violence were referred for specialized services.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
US$116,000

UNICEF supported partners' efforts to strengthen access to, and the quality of, specialized child protection services in 24 states and 152 municipalities, alongside improving delivery of protection services in four major hospitals and communities in border areas, as well as in vulnerable urban communities. As a result, up to 600 vulnerable children per month were receiving specialized referrals. UNICEF also aided the development of a protocol for the psychosocial care of children and adolescent survivors of sexual abuse and other forms of GBV. Overall, almost 759,000 children, adolescents and adults received child protection and related services in 2022, including almost 32,000 children, adolescents and women survivors of GBV.

Endnotes

1. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Strategic Collaboration Framework between The United Nations Children's Fund and The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees', UNICEF and UNHCR, New York, 2022. <www.unicef.org/emergencies/unicef-unhcr-strategic-collaboration-framework>, accessed 3 May 2023.

2. United Nations Children's Fund, 'The United Nations Children's Fund and International Office of Migration sign a New Strategic Collaboration Framework to strengthen child protection systems that are inclusive of the needs of migrant children', Press Release, UNICEF, New York, May 2022, <www.unicef.org/press-releases/iom-and-unicef-sign-new-strategic-collaboration-framework>, accessed 3 June 2022.

3. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (DIPAS) 2022–2030', UNICEF, New York, December 2022, <www.unicef.org/media/134511/file/An%20inclusive%20world,%20starts%20with%20me,%20with%20you,%20with%20all%20of%20us.pdf>, accessed 3 June 2023.

4. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Child Marriage on the rise in Horn of Africa as drought crisis intensifies', Press Release, UNICEF, New York, June 2022, <www.unicef.org/press-releases/child-marriage-rise-horn-africa-drought-crisis-intensifies>, accessed 3 June 2023.

5. United Nations, 'The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child', General Assembly resolution 44/25, United Nations, New York, 20 November 1989, <www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>, accessed 3 June 2023.

6. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Prospects for Children in the Polycrisis: A 2023 Global Outlook', UNICEF, New York, January 2023, <www.unicef.org/blog/outlook-2023-tackling-polycrisis>, accessed 2 May 2023.

7. United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children 2023: Overview', UNICEF, New York, 2023.

8. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 'Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022', UNODC, Vienna, 2022, <www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTiP_2022_web.pdf>, accessed 13 April 2023.

9. For the latest data on internally displaced persons, visit the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre's website at: <www.internal-displacement.org>, accessed 3 June 2023.

10. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Child Marriage on the rise in Horn of Africa as drought crisis intensifies', Press Release, UNICEF, New York, June 2022, <www.unicef.org/press-releases/child-marriage-rise-horn-africa-drought-crisis-intensifies>, accessed 9 May, 2022.

11. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Child Poverty', <www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty>, accessed 2 May 2023.

12. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Prospects for Children in the Polycrisis: A 2023 Global Outlook', UNICEF, New York, January 2023, <www.unicef.org/blog/outlook-2023-tackling-polycrisis>, accessed 2 May 2023.

13. United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Child Protection Strategy 2021–2030', UNICEF, New York, July 2021, <www.unicef.org/documents/child-protection-strategy>, accessed 3 May 2023.

14. United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025', UNICEF, New York, January 2022, <www.unicef.org/reports/unicef-strategic-plan-2022-2025>, accessed 3 May 2022.

15. The Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) are the core UNICEF policy and framework for humanitarian action. They are at the heart of our work on upholding the rights of children affected by humanitarian crises. Guided by international humanitarian and human rights law, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, the CCCs apply in all countries and territories, in all contexts, and to all children affected by humanitarian crisis. They also contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and include

explicit strategies to link humanitarian and development action, strengthen local capacity and systems and build resilience at all stages of humanitarian action.

16. Data for the Child Protection Latest Data visual was drawn from a range of sources: United Nations Children's Fund, Child Protection Strategy 2021–2030, UNICEF, New York, 2021; World Health Organization, Violence against women Prevalence Estimates, 2018. Global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women. WHO: Geneva, 2021, accessed 13 April 2022; World Health Organization, 'Violence Against Women: Key Facts', Last modified 9 March 2021, <www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>, accessed on 22 March 2023; International Labour Office and United Nations Children's Fund, Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2021; United Nations Children's Fund, Children's experiences of online sexual exploitation and abuse in 12 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa and Southeast Asia, <www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/DH-data-insight-1_Final%281%29.pdf>, accessed 2 May 2023; United Nations Children's Fund, 25 Years of Children and Armed Conflict: Taking Action to Protect Children in War, UNICEF 2022, < https://www.unicef.org/reports/25-years-children-armed-conflict>, accessed 2 May 2023; Action on Armed Violence, 'AOAV's Explosive Violence Monitor', <https://aoav.org.uk/explosiveviolence/>, accessed 2 May 2023; United Nations Children's Fund, 'A statistical update on birth registration in Africa', <https://data.unicef.org/resources/a-statistical-update-on-birth-registration-in-africa/>, accessed 2 May 2023; United Nations Children's Fund, 'Birth Registration for Every Child by 2030: Are we on track?', UNICEF, New York, 2019; Nowak, Manfred, The United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, United Nations, New York, 2020 United Nations Children's Fund, 'Children in alternative care', <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/children-alternative-care/>, accessed 2 May 2023; United Nations Children's Fund, 'Impact of COVID-19 on poor mental health in children and young people 'tip of the iceberg,' press release, <www.unicef.org/eap/press-releases/impact-covid-19-poor-mental-health-children-and-young-people-tip-iceberg-unicef>, accessed 2 May 2023; United Nations Children's Fund, Is an End to Child Marriage within Reach? Latest trends and future prospects. 2023 update, UNICEF, New York, 2023; United Nations Children's Fund, Female Genital Mutilation: A New Generation Calls for Ending an Old Practice, UNICEF, New York, 2020, https://data.unicef.org/resources/female-genital-mutilation-a-new-generation-calls-for-ending-an-old-practice/, accessed 2 May 2023; Cappa, Claudia, Luk Van Baelen, and Els Leye. 2019. 'The Practice of Female Genital Mutilation across the World: Data Availability and Approaches to Measurement'. Global Public Health 14(8):1139–52. doi: 10.1080/17441692.2019.1571091; United Nations Children's Fund, Female Genital Mutilation: A new generation calls for ending an old practice, UNICEF, New York, 2020.

17. A mature system will have laws/policies, governance structures, dedicated financial and human resources, oversight mechanisms and reliable data for it to operate flexibly, adapt based on demand, surge or scale-down (or contract), withstand shocks and remain resilient, including during humanitarian situations. Children's meaningful participation – the right to be heard – and the active engagement of communities are essential to guarantee that the system promotes and protects the rights of all children based on the best interests of the child (as the vulnerability of children is often a lack of power and status rather than capacity).

18. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Measuring the Maturity of Child Protection Systems: A Guide on How to Use the CPSS Benchmarks', UNICEF, New York, 2022, <www.unicef.org/documents/child-protection-systems-strengthening>, accessed 3 June 2023.

19. Ibid.

20. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Strategic Collaboration Framework between The United Nations Children's Fund and The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees', UNICEF and UNHCR, New York, 2022, <www.unicef.org/emergencies/unicef-unhcr-strategic-collaboration-framework>, accessed 3 May 2023.

21. United Nations Children's Fund, 'The United Nations Children's Fund and International Office of Migration sign a New Strategic Collaboration Framework to strengthen child protection systems that are inclusive of the needs of migrant children', Press Release, UNICEF, New York, May 2022, <www.unicef.org/press-releases/iom-and-unicef-sign-new-strategic-collaboration-framework>, accessed 3 June 2022.

22. A country is assumed to have a quality assurance system in place if a series of criteria are fulfilled, including helping governments to define the social service workforce and increase their capacities and competencies in child protection while ensuring adequate supervision, oversight and resourcing. UNICEF assesses a country's progress using these criteria to determine the level of the quality assurance system in place for a country's social service workforce – i.e., a well-developed quality assurance system; mid-level development; early development; or no development. See United Nations Children's Fund, 'Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection', UNICEF, New York, 2019, <www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/Guidelines-to-strengthen-social-service-for-child-protection-2019.pdf>, accessed 3 June 2023.

23. Pereira, K.C., and F. Araújo, 'Integrating social protection and child protection services for better outcomes for children in the Middle East and North Africa', Research

Report, No. 84, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, Brasília, and UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, Amman, 2022, <www.unicef.org/mena/media/20631/file/RR84_Integrating_social_protection_and_child_protection_services.pdf.pdf>, accessed 3 May 2023.

24. Global Social Service Workforce Alliance and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Proposed Guidance on Developing Minimum Social Service Workforce Ratios', GSSWA and UNICEF, New York, October 2022, <www.unicef.org/documents/proposed-guidance-developing-minimum-social-service-workforce-ratios>, accessed 3 May 2023.

25. Global Social Service Workforce Alliance and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Proposed Guidance and Tool for Costing the Social Service Workforce', GSSWA and UNICEF, New York, October 2022, <www.unicef.org/documents/proposed-guidance-and-tool-costing-social-service-workforce>, accessed 3 May 2023.

26. Primero is an inter-agency initiative that brings together a broad group of partners to ensure coordinated and effective implementation. In 2022, Primero was implemented with the direct support of Save the Children, Terre des Hommes (Lausanne), UNHCR, UNFPA and IRC.

27. The child protection information management system (CPIMS+) is designed to support the case management process for child protection programmes as well as family tracing and reunification; the monitoring and reporting mechanism information management system (MRMIMS+) is designed to document, store and analyse grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict; and the gender-based violence information management system (GBVIMS+) is designed for incident monitoring and case management for survivors of violence.

28. For further information about the programme, visit the Primero website at <https://openfn.github.io/primero-progres/>, accessed 3 May 2023.

29. World Health Organization, 'Violence against women prevalence estimates, 2018: global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women', WHO, Geneva, 2021. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO, <www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256>, accessed 3 June 2023.

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48. Barnahus (derived from the Icelandic word for 'children's house') is a child-friendly, multidisciplinary and inter-agency model for responding to child violence and witnesses of violence. The purpose of Barnahus is to offer each child a coordinated and effective child protection and criminal justice response, and to prevent traumatization and re-traumatization during investigation and court proceedings.

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70. UNICEF's renewed focus on prevention is informed by human rights conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the 2019 United Nations General Assembly Resolution and the 2021 Day of General Discussion on alternative care.

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76. The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, moved beyond a one-dimensional view of migration as a child protection issue, towards a more integrated intersectoral approach across all UNICEF Goal Areas, in all contexts, from fragile to high-income. (*To read more on our 2022 results across each of these Goal Areas, see Goal Area 1, Goal Area 2, Goal Area 4, Goal Area 5.*)

77. Children on the move are defined by the Inter-Agency Group on Children on the Move (formed in 2011) as "children moving for a variety of reasons, voluntarily or involuntarily, within or between countries, with or without their parents or other primary caregivers, and whose movement while it may open up opportunities might also place them at risk (or at an increased risk) or economic or sexual exploitation, abuse, neglect and violence". The Inter-Agency Group includes ILO, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, Plan International and Save the Children, among others.

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