

## China

### Update on the context and situation of children

China is home to the world's second-largest child population (aged 0–17 years), with an estimated 298 million\* children, including 158 million boys and 139 million girls (2020 Census). China's demographic changes are reshaping its society in many ways and profoundly impacting children and their families.

In response to the continued decline of the total fertility rate and an ageing population, the Government of China (GoC) released the three-child policy in 2021 and introduced supportive measures including affordable early childhood care (ECC), parental leave, and family friendly workplaces, among others. Yet these measures have not seen immediate results. The number of births further dropped to 9.02 million in 2023, and China has experienced negative annual population growth since 2022. Under the *Guiding Opinions on Further Improving and Implementing Active Fertility Supporting Measures*, in 2023, many local governments explored parental leave policies, subsidies for childcare services, and personal income tax deductions to reduce the costs of child-birth, child-rearing, and education. China has also stressed 'high-quality population development' and further investment in health and education services.

China's urbanization rate reached 66.2 per cent in 2023, exceeding the 14th Five Year Plan (FYP) target of 65 per cent. Rapid urbanization has been accompanied by massive internal migration, with growing concern over the living conditions and well-being of 71.09 million migrant children and 66.93 million children left behind. In December, the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) with 14 other government agencies released the *Three-year Action Plan on Improving the Quality of Care (Protection) Services for Rural Children Left Behind and Vulnerable Children*.

To put children first in urbanization, China has pushed forward the building of Child Friendly Cities (CFC). In 2023, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD), the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), and the National Working Committee on Children and Women (NWCCW) jointly released the *Implementation Handbook for the Guideline on Building Child Friendly Spaces*, further specifying requirements for child-oriented planning, design, construction, and adaption of public spaces.

China remains an upper-middle-income developing country. China's reported GDP growth rate was 3.0 per cent in 2022 and has risen to 5.2 per cent in 2023. Local governments' fiscal space has shrunk due to an economic downturn and local governments' debt burdens. Government expenditure in health, education, social security and employment collectively accounted for 8.1 per cent of GDP in 2022, a slight increase from 7.9 per cent in 2021.

In 2023, the GoC continued to pursue the Common Prosperity and Rural Revitalization strategies. Ten Government ministries jointly issued the *Opinions on Strengthening Dynamic Monitoring of Low-income Population and Improving Targeted Social Assistance System*, aiming to prevent vulnerable populations from relapsing into poverty. The GoC has also accelerated efforts to improve the equalization of basic public services. The *National Basic Public Service Standards (2023 edition)* was released, with more service items and expanded coverage. Local governments were called to strengthen capacities and allocate adequate resources for implementing the national standards.

China has achieved targets set for child mortality in SDG 3, and the neonatal mortality rate (NMR) and under-five mortality rate (U5MR) have continuously declined, reaching 3.1 per thousand live births and 6.8 per thousand live births in 2022. Yet disparities exist, with the NMR and U5MR in rural areas

2.0 times and 1.9 times that of urban areas. China has seen increased needs in maternal care, early and essential newborn care (EENC), ECD, infant and young child feeding (IYCF) and adolescent mental health, but it is facing insufficient investment, uneven distribution in services, and a shortage of high-quality services. Additionally, about 45 million children are affected by childhood overweight and obesity, and the rates are increasing, posing challenges to achieving SDG 2.

China has realized universal compulsory education and has significantly improved access to senior secondary education. But challenges remain to achieve SDG 4. Approximately 3.16 million children at the age of senior secondary education (aged 15-17) were out of school. Correspondingly, the attendance rate of children aged 15-17 was also relatively low (92.4 per cent), and much lower among rural adolescents aged 19, at 58.2 per cent. The unemployment rate for urban youth aged 16–24 in China hit a record high of 21.3 per cent in mid-2023. For pre-primary education, resources are inadequate to ensure affordability and quality, especially for rural areas. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) in pre-primary education was 89.7 per cent in 2022, still far from universal access.

In 2023, China achieved a milestone in child online protection with the release of the *Regulations on Child Online Protection*. The *Law on Building Barrier Free Environments* was also approved, laying out inclusiveness requirements for facilities, communication, and social services to protect the rights of people with special needs, including children. These have provided a favourable environment for UNICEF's advocacy. The Government has established a three-tiered child protection network, with full coverage of 651,000 child directors at the village level and 50,000 child supervisors at the township level. County child welfare institutions are transitioning to minor protection centres, with clearer roles and responsibilities in child protection. The GoC is leading efforts to increase the number of social workers and achieve full coverage of social workstations by the end of 2025. Challenges including significant gaps in investment, persistent traditional norms, and unequal service capacity remain. The lack of representative data on violence against children (VAC) hinders monitoring of SDG 16.

The growing risk of extreme weather caused by climate change was evident in China in 2023, with unprecedented heat waves and frequent torrential rains hitting most parts of the country. Disasters caused by natural hazards including droughts and floods have caused direct economic losses of over RMB 300 billion. China set up goals to reach peak carbon emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. To live up to the national commitment, the GoC has further prioritized climate change mitigation and adaptation while transitioning into low-carbon economy, including engagement in South-South cooperation.

## Major contributions and drivers of results

Building on over 40 years of cooperation with the GoC, UNICEF continued working towards realizing the rights of vulnerable girls and boys as outlined in the Country Programme Document (2021-2025). In 2023, UNICEF worked with 25 implementing partners in 217 counties/districts across 31 provinces/autonomous regions/municipalities to achieve results for children.

### **Child Health and Development**

UNICEF further strengthened the health care system and reduced preventable maternal and child mortality and morbidity. Early essential newborn care (EENC) trainings were attended by 747,710 health professionals. UNICEF supported the development of China's first national maternal nutrition services guideline and counselling cards in health facilities. On the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B (EMTCT), five provinces passed the NHC-led provincial validation - a milestone towards nationwide triple validation. UNICEF procured emergency supplies

worth \$1.1 million for rural hospitals in 18 counties of 8 provinces or autonomous regions including Xizang (Tibet) against potential COVID-19 surges, safeguarding the lives of 1.7 million children and their caregivers.

To enhance the capacity of health policymakers in addressing the challenges faced by adolescents, UNICEF initiated the Adolescent Mental Health and Development Programme, in which a service package and a peer-support toolkit are being tested in 100 pilot schools from 10 provinces, aiming to reach over 100,000 students by 2025. UNICEF also jointly launched with partners the Road Traffic Injury Prevention Pilot Project, covering six high prevalence counties of Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan.

Community health workers are now more able to deliver high-quality early childhood development (ECD) services. UNICEF supported the development of three national guidelines and a training package for the National ECD Scaling-up Programme. Over 110 provincial trainers were certified to conduct cascading training, reaching over 95,000 community health workers. 290,174 community health workers in 1,212 counties were trained to provide skilled infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counselling. UNICEF directly supported trainings in the autonomous regions of Xizang and Xinjiang to ensure quality service delivery for vulnerable communities. Additionally, textiles became the fourth industry to adopt family-friendly workplace policies following UNICEF's advocacy. A new programme was initiated with the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) to strengthen ECD services for children at risk of disability.

UNICEF continued working with partners to create a healthy food environment for children through co-developing the Nutrient Profiling Model (NPM) – a benchmark to identify food high in salt, sugar, or fat. The NPM opened new opportunities for UNICEF engagement in regulating food marketing with partners. UNICEF engaged adolescents in creating healthy food environments through the 'Fix My Food' campaign. Views and proposed solutions of 1,300 young people, such as using AI to create healthy and personalized menus, were synthesized and shared with NHC and the Chengdu City Government.

UNICEF supported the development of the beta-version of an online platform for sharing and visualizing Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI) and the drafting of China's first report on children's environmental health. The GoC has adopted recommendations from UNICEF-supported research on antimicrobial resistance (AMR). UNICEF expanded testing of more climate-resilient water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) models, while supporting the development of the China Water and Sanitation Technology Catalogue (WASH-CAT).

On South-South cooperation, more than 400 health professionals from 29 countries were trained through the UNICEF-supported Learning Platform, while delegates from 5 ASEAN and 11 African countries attending a study visit on maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH). The UNICEF-supported Rural Sanitation Clinic trained 90 officials from Cambodia and South Africa.

## **Education**

UNICEF and its partners continued to strengthen the education system and improve the quality of education, focusing on equitable access to learning and skills development, and on supporting education policies, standards and strategies. Three national level frameworks - the *Social and Emotional Competency Framework*, the *Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Competency Framework*, and the *Life Skills Framework for China* - are being developed, validated and tested, together with the *Professional Competency Standards for Managers and Trainers of County-level Teacher Training Institutions*. The frameworks and standards are expected to be adopted by the GoC to inform the development and implementation of education policies and programmes, and contribute to a high-quality and child-friendly education system in China.

UNICEF also supported enhancing the capacity of the local-level teacher training institutions that provide training and ongoing technical guidance for frontline teachers. More than 1,000 provincial and county-level experts and teacher trainers were trained in 13 capacity-building workshops, and they subsequently delivered more than 300 training sessions at the local level with support from UNICEF and its national technical partners.

UNICEF continued supporting testing of innovative and practical models to improve the quality of teaching, learning and parental support by developing the capacity of teachers and principals in kindergartens and by advancing family support and responsive care services. These included an online competency-based self-assessment system to support individualized training for teachers, resource centres for children with disabilities in regular schools, and a play kit with a mobile app containing 100 games to facilitate early stimulation and learning. UNICEF also continued supporting scalable models by addressing the learning needs of children with disabilities through inclusive education in kindergartens and primary schools, holistic skills development including life skills and social and emotional skills, and STEM for adolescents, including rural girls. The programme contributed to protecting children from violence and bullying by introducing positive disciplining resources and capacity development initiatives.

To ensure the quality of interventions, UNICEF developed and supplied a series of training and learning resources including the play kits and the app mentioned above, kindergarten principal training resources, and adaptive toys with children's books in kindergartens. Anti-bullying and positive discipline training materials for primary and secondary schools, digital SEL resources, and life skills learning modules including green-skills and digital skills for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in seven thematic areas were also provided, tested and delivered.

By the end of 2023, UNICEF and GoC education cooperation projects accumulatively have directly benefited 1,171,839 children and 74,074 teachers or caregivers across China.

In partnership with other UN agencies, UNICEF supported the Situation Analysis on Youth Development in China and jointly initiated a communication campaign on 'Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World' to recognize the influential role of young people in shaping a green future.

## **Child Protection**

UNICEF supported preventive and responsive child protection systems at the national and local levels. Two important governance changes - the shift of the coordinating role of MCA to the National Working Committee for Children and Women (NWCCW) and the transfer of the Social Work Department of the MCA to the Central Communist Party - affected some activities and represented a set-back for the consolidation of the child protection system.

Despite these changes UNICEF continued advocating for the inclusion of child rights in the national legal framework, and a key milestone was the adoption of the Law on Building Barrier Free Environments. The new partnership with National People's Congress (NPC) has informed child protection legal reform through research and sharing of international good practices.

Through partnership with the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) and the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), UNICEF continued strengthening child-friendly justice mechanisms, with emphasis on child sexual abuse and juvenile justice. An example is the standard operating procedures (SOP) to support child victims of abuse, which is likely to be approved in early 2024 and will standardize procedures for 2,053 one-stop service centres.

UNICEF and the MCA/China Centre for Child Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA) completed the first

phase of implementation of the Integrated Child Protection Model (ICPM) - supporting the modelling of a county child protection system in 12 counties of 4 provinces (Jiangxi, Guangxi, Ningxia and Shandong). A mid-term documentation of the model was completed, which will inform expansion to two more provinces and 17 counties in the next two years of the Country Programme and beyond. Through enhanced capacities of child protection frontline workers (2,011 child directors, 156 supervisors and 607 social workers), child protection services were improved for 2,152,426 children (including 46,807 girls and 48,906 boys as registered vulnerable children).

UNICEF maintained a dialogue with the new Department of Social Work to identify the most suitable channels for future cooperation. In the meantime, approximately 80,000 social workers and para social workers registered for the UNICEF-supported courses on online training platforms. UNICEF also worked with MCA on the professionalization of child directors (barefoot social workers), including through the submission of an application for child directors to be considered a formal occupation.

To strengthen preventive efforts on VAC, UNICEF's positive parenting programmes reached 8,306 parents and caregivers across 15 counties. UNICEF also launched the second phase of its VAC campaign in partnership with the China National Centre for Children (CNCC) and CCCWA. The campaign garnered 90 million impressions.

Child online protection continues gaining momentum in the political agenda, as marked by the adoption of the Regulations on Child Online Protection in 2023, which identify different roles and accountabilities for online safety. UNICEF has informed the development of an industry standard on AI for children to guide the technology sector on the design and use of AI products for children. The first adaptation of the Global Kids Online toolkit was implemented in China and provided important insights for programming in this area.

## **Social Policy**

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the GoC social assistance reform policies, which has contributed to the development of national guidelines. Technical assistance, provided in the areas of ECC services and CFC have contributed to increased funding and policy enhancements.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) and nine other government agencies jointly issued a national guideline on strengthening the dynamic monitoring of the low-income population and building a tiered and classified social assistance system to prevent them falling back into poverty. UNICEF's technical support to the MCA through policy analysis and piloting the 'Cash Plus Service' model has informed the newly released national guideline on low-income population monitoring and the social assistance system. It is now more child sensitive, gender and shock-responsive, with improved targeted support to the multi-sectoral and gender-specific needs of children of beneficiary families.

UNICEF continues to support the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), MOHURD, NWCCW and more than 30 municipalities and counties in policy development, capacity building and technical consultations for CFC planning. Due to the expanded collaboration with national policymakers and technical support for more local governments, more children are benefiting from improved accessibility of child-friendly spaces and facilities, increased provision of services for children, and more investment and resource allocation for projects and activities for children.

In 2023, the NDRC and nine departments issued the new National Basic Public Service (BPS) Standards to ensure equitable access to BPS. Through analysis on the progress of 51 BPS pilots, UNICEF provided support to NDRC to draft an operational guide for the standardized construction of BPS at the local level. Through the organization of a national BPS forum and the provision of on-site training courses on BPS standardization and equalization, UNICEF supported NDRC to enhance local government officials' capacity to implement the new standards and reach the most vulnerable children.

In close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance (MOF), evidence-based advocacy on fiscal policies for family-friendly policies led to new budget allocation of \$14 million for each province for affordable and inclusive early childcare services. The ongoing study with MOF on Basic Public Health Services (BPHS) is expected to provide evidence for MOF to update BPHS to integrate nurturing and caregiving in the BPHS package and allocate budget to meet the emerging public health needs of children.

UNICEF generated a global evidence synthesis based on impact evaluations of family policies and developed context-specific policy recommendations for China. Recommendations on developing family policies with gender-responsive workplaces, equitable parental and child benefits, and high-quality care services were raised and discussed with key policymakers and gained their interest. This led to further research related to childcare services, social protection schemes and financing and enabled policy debate to inform comprehensive family policies. UNICEF raised awareness on addressing multi-dimensional child deprivations and advocated for adopting multi-dimensional approaches in policymaking by initiating dialogues with NDRC and policy think tanks. This resulted in policymakers and researchers of national think tanks applying the multi-dimensional approach in the assessments of the FYP by NDRC and vulnerabilities of children in low-income household monitoring by MCA.

### **Partnership and Engagement**

Effective public-facing communication and advocacy in 2023 strengthened UNICEF's brand, increased public awareness on children's rights, and advanced advocacy on key issues for children. UNICEF carried out campaigns on violence against children/positive parenting and healthy weight. These campaigns leveraged media, social media and celebrity partnerships to deliver key messages and influence policy and behaviour change. This year's World Children's Day campaign featured a child-led event themed on building a child-friendly society for all, highlighting children and youth voices. The flagship event in Beijing was attended by 600 guests and livestreamed to more than 1.1 million people. At the same time, 49 cities and counties across China lit buildings in blue, the highest number to date.

New and existing platforms and partnerships were leveraged to inform large public audiences about UNICEF programmes for children in China. This included an X/Twitter channel targeting an international audience and partnership with Xinhua News Agency, which was renewed for an additional three years. As a result, UNICEF reached approximately 800 million people, including 6.1 million followers, on various social media channels. On traditional Chinese media, there were over 24,000 articles mentioning UNICEF.

South-South Cooperation (SSC) with the GoC's aid actors, line ministries, and national institutions was strengthened to leverage support from China in its multilateral and bilateral aid for achievement of child-centered SDGs in other countries. The partnership with CIDCA has been strengthened to prioritize children in China's international development cooperation. In 2023, CIDCA provided support for Timor-Leste, and approved a project in Afghanistan. Engagement with the China Academy of International Trade and Economic cooperation (CAITEC) expanded to cover foreign aid architecture and programme areas. UNICEF advocated for climate-resilient social services, protection of the rights of vulnerable groups including women and children, and it amplified the voices of youth in China's cooperation with ASEAN and Mekong countries in environmental and water resources cooperation.

Demand-driven technical exchanges in MNCH, ECD, nutrition, DRR, WASH, and climate change were organized to enhance mutual learning on progress and challenges in achieving the SDGs,

benefiting over 600 participants from 31 countries. The Climate Innovative Network with MEE and the Rural Sanitation Clinic SSC training facility with MARA were strengthened to build capacities on climate-resilient, inclusive, and rights-based international norms and practices, benefiting practitioners from China and 14 other developing countries. UNICEF initiated climate-resilient WASH SSC pilot projects with Cambodia and South Africa.

Engagement with inter-governmental cooperation platforms such as ASEAN and the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism enhanced support for incorporating child-rights in their practices and business models. UNICEF enhanced cooperation with MDBs and China-based policy banks including AIIB, ADB, NDB and EXIM in applying a child rights lens, including exploring an innovative project on WASH and health in Nigeria to enhance social impact for children.

## UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

UNICEF continued to play a proactive role in the UNCT, as the Chair of the Operations Management Team, and as the Co-Chair of Programme, Monitoring, and Evaluation Group, the People and Prosperity Result Group and the UN Theme Group on Youth (UNTYG).

UNICEF collaborated with UNFPA and ILO on developing the *Situation Analysis on Youth Development in China*, which mapped existing policies on youth development to inform UNTYG's long-term programme planning. UNICEF co-led the 2023 International Youth Day celebration with UNFPA, UNDP, and ILO, featuring a campaign on green skills for youth development. With technical support of WHO and UNAIDS, UNICEF and NHC jointly conducted field assessments of six provinces that applied for subnational EMTCT validation. UNICEF collaborated with WHO on developing a Nutrient Profile Model for preventing childhood overweight and obesity. UNICEF, with UNFPA and NCWCH, co-organized a South-South cooperation roundtable on MCH in Beijing, receiving 27 delegates from 11 African countries. Through UNICEF's Joint Data Project with UNFPA and NBS, new data products were produced and disseminated, including *What the 2020 Census Can Tell Us About Children in China – Facts and Figures*, and *China's Population Census: Experiences and Innovations*.

UNICEF expanded the scope of public partnerships to reach more children. Two new government partners, the National People's Congress and the Ministry of Water Resources, signed workplans with UNICEF. A partnership with the National Healthcare Security Administration (NHSA) was also established, with a two-year workplan prepared for signature. UNICEF signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the China Chain Store and Franchise Association to advocate for the adoption of child-friendly measures in its member companies, and with Special Olympics East Asia to enhance social inclusion for children with disabilities through sports. UNICEF had active programme cooperation agreements (PCA) with two CSOs in 2023, the Shenzhen Women and Children Development Foundation for the implementation of the FFW pilot, and Vital Strategies for children's environmental health monitoring. There are four more PCAs in the pipeline. UNICEF enhanced partnerships with government-affiliated think tanks and influential academic institutions including Tsinghua University, Beijing Normal University, East China Normal University, and the Chinese Academy of Fiscal Sciences.

UNICEF leveraged the potential of the private sector and individual donors. Shared value partnerships including with LEGO, Kimberly-Clark, and Johnson & Johnson not only contributed financial resources to UNICEF but also engaged in UNICEF's programme activities and advocacy initiatives. UNICEF also influenced businesses' policies, practices, and investment to accelerate results for children, such as advancing child rights in the workplace through gender-responsive family friendly workplace policies in the apparel and garment sector and the ICT sector.

## Lessons Learned and Innovations

2023 marks the halfway point of the Country Programme (2021-2025) and was the first full year of activities since the end of COVID-19 restrictions. UNICEF conducted a Mid-term Strategic Reflection (MTR) to take stock of progress achieved so far and upcoming priorities. Strategic adjustments in programmes were made, including the identification of two priority areas: gender and climate change. UNICEF affirmed its commitment to further expand programme coverage and focus on addressing needs of the most vulnerable children in western provinces.

With the economic downturn, securing the government's financial resources for scaling up UNICEF's flagship programmes has become more difficult. More than ever, UNICEF needs to **strengthen**



**programme monitoring and evaluation** to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of our approaches to secure governmental buy-in for replication and to benefit more children. A Country Programme Evaluation will be conducted in 2024 and will build on the MTSR completed in 2023. It will closely engage with counterparts to review progress and identify more effective ways of working.

UNICEF's ability to generate **robust evidence** on issues of common interest with government counterparts is critical for influencing child-sensitive policy and legal reforms. One good example is the flagship data brochure that UNICEF jointly developed with NBS, *What the 2020 Census Can Tell Us About Children in China – Facts and Figures*. It provides authoritative estimates on the child population and children's situation, contributing to a series of child-related SDG indicators. The brochure has been used by a wide range of stakeholders including government, CSOs, academia, and media, and it has sparked discussions among policymakers on children affected by migration.

UNICEF tapped into its strong global network to mobilize cutting-edge **technical expertise both in-house and externally**. In post-COVID times, government partners have shown stronger interest in learning about international experiences. In 2023, UNICEF played a valuable role as a knowledge broker for international good practices. CCO supported EAPRO to organize a CFC study tour in Finland and Spain for four countries in the region, where high-level government officials from NDRC and NWCCW, both being key players of China's CFC initiative, were brought together to exchange experiences with other countries.

With China's remarkable progress on achieving SDGs, there is strong demand from countries in the global South for sharing of China's experiences. Through **South-South cooperation and multilateral cooperation** for realizing SDGs globally, UNICEF is supporting initiatives including a trilateral partnership for climate-resilient WASH with the governments of China, Cambodia and South Africa, and it is exploring a quadrilateral partnership on MNCH with CIDCA, NHC, and three priority African countries (Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania).

UNICEF needs to constantly seek **innovative solutions** to lead in emerging areas of child rights, such as digital technology and climate change. UNICEF has engaged in ongoing discussions around AI and supported the drafting of an industry standard on AI for children. UNICEF tested climate-resilient sanitation systems using water and energy-saving technologies in health facilities and schools in Qinghai and compiled a catalogue of water and sanitation products for testing.

**Partnering wide with a diversified range of partners** including CSOs, academia and the private sector is necessary to reach more children. For instance, UNICEF leveraged the expansive membership network and rich training resources of the China Maternal and Child Health Association (CMCHA), the country's largest MCH professional organization, to support the scaling-up of the EENC project. In advocating for positive parenting and child online protection, UNICEF has taken a multi-sectoral partnership approach involving not only government partners, but also internet companies, media, and academics. This has greatly increased UNICEF's entry points to work on sensitive issues. Looking inward, **cross-sectoral collaboration within UNICEF** is critical, as demonstrated by the huge success of the World Children's Day event, the positive parenting campaign, and the 'Fix My Food' healthy weight campaign.

**Digital transformation** is amplifying UNICEF's impact. UNICEF produced self-paced online courses across various projects on early nutrition, ECD, responsive caregiving, and social emotional learning, targeting health workers, community volunteers, teachers, and rural social workers. The digitalization of training material greatly increased access and brought better results. For example, in the IYCF project, health workers are requested to complete the online modules before attending on-site training, so that they come prepared. UNICEF strengthened its signature Health Family App (HFA), with increased application functionality and support services on IYCF and maternal nutrition. The app currently has 2941 health facilities and over 960,000 users registered, including users from vulnerable

areas such as Xinjiang, Ningxia, Gansu, and Xizang.

**Meaningful child and adolescent participation continued to be fostered across programmes.**

UNICEF made efforts to engage children and adolescents as changemakers in both programme and advocacy initiatives. In the adolescent mental health and development programme, 300 adolescents, aged 10-19 years and a balance of genders were involved in the pretesting of the adolescent mental health service package and the peer support toolkits. Their experience, feedback and comments on the topics, format and delivery modality were incorporated in the revision of these technical materials. Furthermore, a gender-balanced youth consultation group of six adolescents aged 15-19 worked with national experts in reviewing, revising, and testing the peer-support toolkits. Their inputs made the toolkit relevant and appealing to adolescent users. At the National Forum on Mental Health, representatives of six youth mental health clubs introduced their efforts on peer-support and shared suggestions to the Vice Minister of NHC.

**\*All statistics are from China's official sources or UN global estimates, unless otherwise stated.**