



GOAL AREA 4

Every child lives in a safe and clean environment

Global Annual Results Report 2025

unicef 
for every child

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In the canton of Shushufindi, Sucumbíos Province, Ecuador, UNICEF and its partners installed four climate-resilient drinking water systems, providing 661 families in the communities of Allipamba, El Carmen, Tierras Orientales and El Paraíso with access to safe drinking water. Supported by Banco Pichincha's *Sumar Juntos* initiative, this project addresses persistent water challenges affecting children in the Amazon by upgrading infrastructure to withstand droughts, extreme rainfall and other climate hazards. The systems are powered by sustainable energy, including solar power, and are complemented by community training in water conservation, system maintenance and sustainable local management led by women and young people. The project is improving children's health, strengthening dignity and creating greater opportunities for development by bringing safe water to homes and schools. It also demonstrates how private sector partnerships can help transform the lives of thousands of children by expanding access to essential services.

Expression of thanks: © UNICEF/UNI980092/Iyakaremye

Students at Nyabihanga Technical Secondary School in Rusizi District, Rwanda, wash their hands using a water tap provided by UNICEF. The school benefits from improved access to water, helping to promote hygiene and create a healthier learning environment for students.



Expression of thanks

UNICEF works to ensure that every child lives in a safe, clean and sustainable environment – an essential foundation for child survival, development and resilience. This work is made possible through the voluntary support of millions of people around the world and, critically through strong partnerships with governments, civil society and the private sector. Together, these partnerships enable UNICEF to deliver on its mandate to protect children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand opportunities for every child to reach their full potential.

UNICEF expresses its deep appreciation to all partners for their support and continued trust, commitment and collaboration. Their contributions are instrumental in advancing high-impact, scalable solutions across water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and the climate, environment, energy and disaster risk reduction (CEED) programming. In 2025, UNICEF is particularly grateful to the following government partners for providing the largest contributions to WASH and CEED programmes across UNICEF globally: The Netherlands, the European Commission, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, the World Bank via the Government of Madagascar, Denmark, UNOCHA - Central Emergency Response Fund, and Japan. These investments have been critical in strengthening systems, accelerating climate-resilient services and reaching the most vulnerable children in fragile and high-risk contexts.

UNICEF also extends special thanks to partners providing thematic and flexible funding, notably Sweden, which enables longer-term planning and continuous improvement in the quality and sustainability of interventions. UNICEF further acknowledges the Government of the Netherlands for its financial and technical support to the Accelerating Climate-Resilient Sanitation and Water Supply for All (ASWA) multi-country programme, which is advancing integrated and climate-resilient WASH solutions across diverse context in Africa.

Support from the private sector and foundations remains vital to driving innovation and expanding reach. UNICEF gratefully acknowledges the ongoing contributions of LIXIL and the Gates Foundation, whose support continues to advance progress in sanitation and hygiene, particularly for underserved populations.

UNICEF also recognises the sustained, generous support of the following partners in contributing to UNICEF's climate action and sustainability agenda: The United Kingdom (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office), Germany (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development [BMZ] and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau [KfW]), The Prudential Foundation and the Republic of Korea (Korea International Cooperation Agency [KOICA]).



In the Boregaina community in Papua New Guinea, children and families are increasingly affected by severe droughts and floods. Through the KOICA-UNICEF 'Climate Action for the Last Mile' programme, UNICEF, in partnership with Rigo District Administration and the Central Provincial Administration, is strengthening climate-smart and more resilient water, sanitation and wider social services in targeted communities. To date, UNICEF has reached 8,000 people in Papua New Guinea with climate-resilient WASH services, contributing to the programme's aim of directly reaching 30,000 people.

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Abbreviations

AA	Anticipatory action	FST	Field Support Team
AIP	African Investment Programme	GADRRRES	Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector
AQA	Accountability and Quality Assurance	GCF	Green Climate Fund
ASWA	Accelerating Climate-Resilient Sanitation and Water Supply for All	GHG	Greenhouse gas
CATI	Case-Area Targeted Interventions	GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
CCA	Climate change adaptation	GLAAS	UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation
CCRI-DRM	Children's Climate Risk Index-Disaster Risk Models	GMC	Global Menstrual Collective
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	GSN	Global Strategic Network
CEED	Climate, environment, energy and disaster risk reduction	GWC	Global WASH Cluster
CEH	Children's Environmental Health	GWL	Global Water Programme
CEHI	Children's Environmental Health Indicators	GWSRI	The Global WASH Sector Resilience Index
CERF	UN Central Emergency Response Fund	HCF	Health care facility
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation	HEHC	Healthy Environments for Healthy Children
COP	Conference of the Parties	HFSE	Health Facility Solar Electrification
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019	HoSI	Heads of State Initiative
CRIBS	Climate-Resilient Infrastructure for Basic Services	IDP	Internally displaced person
CSI	Core Standard Indicator	ILE	International Learning Exchange
CSSF	Comprehensive School Safety Framework	IPC	Infection prevention and control
CTK	Coordination Toolkit	IRC	International Water and Sanitation Centre
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey	JMP	WHO–UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene
DRR	Disaster risk reduction	JSR	Joint Section Review
EAPRO	East Asia and Pacific Regional Office	LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office	LCOY	Local Conference of Youth
ESS	Environmental and Social Standards	LDCs	Least Developed Countries
EW4All	Early Warnings for All	LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
EWS	Early warning systems	LMICs	low- and middle-income countries
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	LNA	Local and National Actors
FCDO	United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office	MH-DAY	Menstrual Hygiene Day
FRLD	Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage	MHH	Menstrual health and hygiene
		MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management

MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	SRSP	Shock-responsive social protection
MINEE	Ministry of Water and Energy	SVP	<i>Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar</i>
M-SMOSS	Monitoring Safely Managed On-Site Sanitation	SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
NAP	National Adaptation Plan	SWSC	Sector Wide Sustainability Check
NCP	National Coordination Platform	TTI	Today and Tomorrow Initiative
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution	TWG	Technical Working Group
ODF	Open Defecation Free	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
PDNA	Post Disaster Needs Assessment	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
PHC	Primary health care centre	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
PM2.5	Particulate matter (particles 2.5 micrometers or smaller)	UNGM	UN Global Marketplace
PPP	Public-Private Partnership	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ROK	Republic of Korea	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
RUTF	Ready-to-use therapeutic food	UNU	United Nations University
SANAA	National Water and Sewerage Service	VET	Vocational education and training
SBC	Social and Behaviour Change	WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
SCAP	UNICEF Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan	WASH BAT	WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal	WASH FIT	Water and Sanitation for Health care Facility Improvement Tool
SE4All	Sustainable Energy for All	WCAR	West and Central Africa region
SES	Social and Environmental Safeguarding	WFP	World Food Programme
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	WHO	World Health Organization
SIDS	Small Island Developing States	WIA	WASH Insecurity Analysis
SIE	Safe injection equipment	WinS	WASH in schools
SIWI	Stockholm International Water Institute	WMO	The World Meteorological Organization
SMS	Safely managed sanitation	WSPs	Water Safety Plans
SP	Strategic Plan	YuWaah	UNICEF India's Youth Generation Unlimited



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Executive summary

Sev Phym, mother of Chanthou, used to spend up to three hours per day waiting at an overcrowded local well for her turn to collect water. UNICEF has supported the Ministry of Rural Development in installing a community piped water supply system in a rural Indigenous Jarai village in Ratankairi province, helping communities access clean, climate-resilient piped water at home. The system uses solar power to ensure the water continues to flow day and night. It is designed to withstand extreme weather events such as flooding and drought.

In 2021, UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022–2025 committed to actions for every child, including adolescents, to have access to safe and equitable water, sanitation and hygiene services, and to live in a safe and sustainable climate and environment. Through Goal Area 4, UNICEF delivers on three results areas: 1) safe and equitable WASH services and practices; 2) WASH systems and community empowerment; and 3) climate change, disaster risks and environmental degradation.

Results areas 1 and 2 (WASH): Access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is foundational to human rights, public health, climate resilience and sustainable development. As the 2030 Agenda enters its final phase, the WASH sector is at a critical inflection point. While service coverage has expanded over the past decade, progress remains uneven and insufficient to meet growing demand. Deep inequalities persist, climate-related shocks are intensifying risks; and systemic constraints, particularly in financing and institutional capacity continue to limit sustainable and inclusive service delivery, particularly in fragile and low-income contexts.

Recent global monitoring highlights both progress and the scale of the remaining challenge. Between 2015 and 2024, access to safely managed drinking water increased from 68 to 74 per cent, safely managed sanitation from 48 to 58 per cent, and basic hygiene from 66 to 80 per cent. However, population growth, urbanisation and fragility have outpaced service expansion in many settings. As a result, absolute number of people without access remains stark: 2.1 billion people lack safely managed drinking water, 3.4 billion lack safely managed sanitation, and 1.7 billion remain without basic handwashing facilities with soap and water, underscoring the scale and urgency of the unfinished agenda¹.

Structural bottlenecks continue to constrain progress. Despite widespread adoption of national WASH policies aligned with the SDGs, implementation remains weak as evidenced by the 2025 State of systems for WASH (GLAAS) report², jointly released by WHO and UNICEF. A persistent financing gap – estimated at 46 per cent – combined with stagnant public expenditure and declining official development assistance, limits the ability of countries to translate commitments into results. These challenges underscore the urgent need to shift from incremental service delivery gains to systemic transformation, with stronger institutions, sustainable financing models and improved accountability.

Climate change is further reshaping the WASH landscape, amplifying vulnerabilities and exposing the fragility of existing systems. The UNICEF Executive Board special session on climate resilient WASH, held in September 2025, elevated WASH as a frontline climate adaptation priority. The session brought together Member States, youth advocates, private sector partners, global influencers and UNICEF leadership, spotlighting how climate-resilient WASH solutions, anchored in cross-sectoral partnerships are driving impact.

Against this backdrop, UNICEF continued to scale both its operational reach and its systems leadership. In 2025, UNICEF invested over \$950 million in WASH across almost 100 countries, with approximately half of this expenditure directed to humanitarian contexts. Through support for safe WASH services (GA4 RA1), UNICEF supported over 34 million to safe water, over 17 million with access to at least basic sanitation services, and over 15 million with basic hand hygiene. In emergencies, UNICEF reached over 36 million people with water, sanitation or hygiene services in 2025, responding to large scale crises and disease outbreaks, including cholera, across high-risk settings.

Beyond service delivery, UNICEF strengthened WASH systems in social infrastructure, supporting over 5,500 schools and over 2,750 health care facilities to reach at least a basic WASH service level. In collaboration with WHO, UNICEF fulfilled its mandated role in reporting global progress on WASH in Health Care facilities to the UN SG. The report highlighted that progress remains constrained by the limited development, financing, and implementation of costed national roadmaps, underscoring a critical systems gap with direct implications for health outcomes and reinforcing the urgent need to strengthen WASH in health care facilities.

Advancing gender equality and menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) remained central to UNICEF's WASH agenda. In 2025, nearly 9 million women and adolescent girls benefitted from MHH interventions contributing to improved health, dignity and participation in education and society. Beyond service delivery, UNICEF strengthened gender-responsive WASH systems by supporting countries – particularly through the Netherlands-supported Accelerating Climate-Resilient Sanitation and Water for All' (ASWA) initiative – to integrate gender landscape analyses and actionable plans into sector planning, monitoring and budgeting processes.

UNICEF further advanced the agenda by finalising a guidance note on transformative programming principles for gender-equitable wash systems and services offering a practical, systems-level roadmap for governments and partners to leverage policies, platforms, partnerships, to address structural gender inequalities and deliver inclusive, resilient services. Together with WHO, UNICEF also led the 2025 Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) gender-focused reporting, emphasising the critical need to advance gender-specific indicators and monitoring frameworks to drive evidence-based actions.

UNICEF also deepened its focus on strengthening WASH sector systems and mobilising sustainable financing. Support to national WASH finance strategies and sector planning contributed to measurable progress, while the forthcoming Strategic Plan (2026-2029) underscores the need for increased flexible funds and strengthened country capacity. The transition toward a UNICEF Global WASH Practice reflects a strategic shift towards greater prioritisation of system strengthening scalability and impact.

Climate-resilient WASH programming expanded significantly. In 2025, UNICEF supported over 9 million people in 59 countries with climate-resilient water services and over 3.2 million people in 45 countries with climate-resilient basic sanitation service. More than 1,700 solar-powered water systems were supported across 70 countries. Overall, UNICEF delivered climate resilient WASH services (including schools and healthcare facilities) in 82 countries. Over the course of the Strategic Plan period, an additional 39 countries achieved the triple criteria of having a Climate Rationale for WASH, ensuring WASH is reflected in key national climate and/or WASH documents and implementing or monitoring climate resilient WASH services.

Integrated approaches across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus continued to gain traction, with 35 Countries embedding nexus programming in WASH. This approach positions water and sanitation services as critical entry point for strengthening resilience, fostering social cohesion and supporting recovery and peacebuilding in fragile and conflict affected settings.

Innovation remained a key driver of sector transformation. In 2025, UNICEF advanced initiatives in sanitation, groundwater mapping, real-time data integration and predictive analytics, including AI enabled drought forecasting. These innovations are helping to address persistent gaps in service delivery, data visibility and system performance.

Finally, UNICEF reinforced its role as a global WASH thought leader by generating and disseminating evidence-based guidance on priority areas, including on Monitoring WASH contribution to community resilience under climate change³; Area-wide programming approaches for safely managed sanitation⁴; Hand Hygiene in Community Settings⁵; Menstrual product access models⁶; Climate-resilient WASH in schools⁷ and WASH Service Delivery Models⁸, strengthening the sector's capacity to translate knowledge into scalable and sustainable actions.

Looking ahead, the path to achieving SDG 6 requires a decisive shift – from fragmented interventions to integrated, system-wide transformation; from short-term outputs to long-term resilience; and from incremental progress to accelerated, equity-driven results. UNICEF remains committed to supporting governments and partners to deliver inclusive, climate-resilient and sustainable WASH services for all.

Result area 3 (CEED): UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022–2025 and Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan 2023–2030 positioned climate resilience, environmental protection, sustainable energy and disaster risk reduction (DRR) as central to children's rights and development. By 2025, UNICEF supported 129 governments to strengthen the climate resilience and adaptive capacity of child-essential social services, up from 37 in 2021. Climate resilience priorities were integrated into at least one sector in 128 countries, while child-sensitive DRR interventions were implemented with governments in 110 countries.

Stronger data, analytics and risk-informed decision-making underpinned this progress. In 2025, 89 country offices

conducted multi-sector climate and environmental studies. UNICEF also developed the Global Child Hazard Database to analyse children's exposure to 10 climate-specific and climate-related hazards across all programme countries. These investments helped governments identify children most at risk, prioritize adaptation and preparedness measures, and strengthen climate-resilient programming.

In 2025, UNICEF expanded cross-sector programming to protect the services children rely on, with 89 countries implementing climate-resilient policies and programmes across at least two sectors. Sustainable energy solutions were implemented in 121 countries, helping maintain service continuity in health care facilities, schools and water systems. UNICEF also supported 99 countries to integrate green skills and content on climate action, environmental management and DRR into education systems and curricula.

Preparedness, early warning systems, anticipatory action, DRR and disaster risk financing became increasingly central to UNICEF's work. UNICEF supported governments in 59 countries to strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems and to establish 19 anticipatory action frameworks for cholera, droughts, floods and cyclones.

Through innovative financing approaches, UNICEF helped unlock faster, more predictable funding before and after climate-related shocks, enabling more timely, cost-effective and child-focused responses. A key example is the UNICEF Today and Tomorrow Initiative cyclone insurance payouts, which reached 516,000 people, 110,000 of whom were children.

UNICEF also advanced child-responsive climate and environmental policy at national, regional and global levels. By the end of 2025, 99 countries had updated climate, environmental or disaster risk management policies. Additionally, in 141 countries, 23 million young people engaged in climate and environmental action through various volunteer initiatives, Eco Clubs and school classroom activities – demonstrating the growing role of children and young people as agents of climate action.

Sustainability was strengthened across UNICEF's operations and programming. UNICEF reduced operational emissions by 33 per cent and increased the share of sustainable energy use to 59 per cent. It also finalized and launched its Policy and Procedure on Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) in Programming, along with its revised Policy on Safeguarding. By the end of 2025, 54 of 129 country offices were applying ESS in their programmes, reinforcing UNICEF's commitment to environmentally responsible results.

Looking ahead, protecting children from climate impacts and environmental hazards will require more integrated and risk-informed action at scale. UNICEF will continue working with governments, civil society, UN agencies, public- and private-sector partners, research institutions, children and young people to strengthen the resilience of the social services children rely on and to advance climate and environmental action for every child.

2022-25 Strategic plan indicator summary table

TABLE 1: Summary of Goal Area 4 results under the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022 – 2025

Goal Area 4: Every child, including adolescents, has access to safe and equitable water, sanitation and hygiene services and supplies, and lives in a safe and sustainable climate and environment					
Safe and equitable water, sanitation and hygiene services and practices					
Result area 1: Sustained access to and use of safe water, sanitation and hygiene practices for all children and adolescents, particularly the most disadvantaged and those living in humanitarian and fragile contexts.					
Output Indicators	Baseline	2022 value	2023 value	2024 value	Target (2025)
4.1.1 Number of people reached with at least basic sanitation services through UNICEF-supported programmes (cumulative)	Milestones	7,500,000	20,000,000	35,000,000	60,000,000
	0	26,035,782	47,502,424	65,550,444	82,862,889
4.1.2 Number of people reached with at least basic water that is safe and available when needed, through UNICEF-supported programmes (cumulative)	Milestones	7,500,000	20,000,000	35,000,000	60,000,000
	0	30,633,449	66,568,160	99,945,411	134,648,867
4.1.3 Number of people reached with at least basic hygiene services through UNICEF-supported programmes (cumulative)	Milestones	7,500,000	20,000,000	35,000,000	60,000,000
	0	23,628,850	47,827,843	69,382,583 ¹	85,310,321
4.1.4 Number of schools reached with basic WASH services, through UNICEF-supported programmes (cumulative)	Milestones	4,500	12,000	21,000	50,000
	0	32,939	40,492	49,169	54,930
4.1.5 Number of health care facilities reached with basic WASH services, through UNICEF-supported programmes (cumulative)	Milestones	2,250	6,000	10,500	20,000
	0	10,827	14,076	17,903	20,700
4.1.6 Number of women and adolescent girls reached whose menstrual health and hygiene needs are addressed through UNICEF-supported programmes (cumulative)	Milestones	6,000,000	16,000,000	28,000,000	40,000,000
	0	17,517,751	25,443,677	37,382,171	46,345,766
4.1.7 Number of people in humanitarian contexts reached with appropriate drinking water services, through UNICEF-supported programmes (non-cumulative)	Milestones	35,000,000	35,000,000	35,000,000	35,000,000
	33,300,000	39,404,612	42,425,830	41,014,300	36,198,556
4.1.8 Number of people in humanitarian contexts reached with appropriate sanitation services, through UNICEF-supported programmes (non-cumulative)	Milestones	10,000,000	12,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000
	8,400,000	9,247,390	10,956,228	9,413,629	7,018,870

¹ In the 2024 report this number was inadvertently under reported as 68,822,230. It has been corrected in this report.

Goal Area 4: Every child, including adolescents, has access to safe and equitable water, sanitation and hygiene services and supplies, and lives in a safe and sustainable climate and environment

Water, sanitation and hygiene systems and empowerment of communities

Result area 2: Strengthened and resourced water, sanitation and hygiene systems and empowered communities for gender-equal, inclusive, affordable and sustainable services to meet the rights of all children and adolescents, particularly the most disadvantaged and those living in humanitarian and fragile contexts.

Output Indicators	Baseline	2022 value	2023 value	2024 value	Target (2025)
4.2.1. Number of countries that have prepared and implemented a costed and inclusive national WASH financing strategy, with UNICEF support	Milestones	10	15	20	25
	8	9	11	13	21
4.2.2. Number of countries with increased annual sector expenditures from different funding and financing sources resulting from UNICEF support	Milestones	25	35	45	60
	17	15	21	24	27
4.2.3. Number of countries with national monitoring systems incorporating sustainability in previous two years, with UNICEF support	Milestones	3	8	14	20
	0	4	6	10	19
4.2.4. Number of countries that have developed a climate rationale for the impact of climate change and water scarcity on WASH services	Milestones	16	25	36	50
	11	13	27	40	50
4.2.5. Number of countries integrating a humanitarian development-peace nexus approach on WASH programming through the participation of affected populations	Milestones	15	20	25	30
	13	16	18	22	35

Results Area 3: Increased and enhanced child-sensitive programmes to address climate change, disaster risks and environmental degradation that meet the rights of all children and adolescents, particularly the most disadvantaged and those in humanitarian and fragile contexts

Output Indicators	Baseline	2022 value	2023 value	2024 value	2025 value
4.3.1. Number of countries engaged in child-sensitive interventions that enhance the climate and disaster resilience of children, reduce environmental degradation and promote low carbon development and environmental sustainability, with UNICEF support	37	69	68	119	129
4.3.2. Number of countries engaging children, adolescents and young people in action and advocacy to address climate change, disaster risk, unsustainable energy use and/ or environmental degradation, with UNICEF support	50	68	78	102	108
4.3.3. Number of countries in which UNICEF supported the implementation of government disaster preparedness and/or anticipatory action to be child-responsive at the national and/or local levels	50	64	85	104	110
4.3.4. Number of countries engaged in sustainable energy initiatives for improved health care, education, water and sanitation services and/or systems, with UNICEF support	N/A	New Core Standard Indicator (CSI) introduced in 2024		19	27



Results Area 1:

Safe and equitable water, sanitation and hygiene services and practices

"I have been working here for one month, bringing clean water and filling the water tankers in the camp. There are ten water tankers, and each holds 1,000 liters of water. I fill them three to four times a day," says Sayed Rahman, a driver working with a UNICEF partner, trucking water to camp sites in Sawki Zor Kali Camp for people displaced by the earthquake in Kunar province, Afghanistan.

The camp is amongst many in the province where families displaced by the earthquake have been living. Access to safe water and sanitation remains a critical need for earthquake-affected families. Over a month, UNICEF and partners scaled up WASH efforts – delivering safe water, emergency toilets, hygiene supplies and health information. To reduce reliance on water trucking, solar-powered systems and new boreholes are being installed.

Advancing child-centred WASH amid accelerating global shocks

The global pursuit of universal access to WASH is increasingly shaped by a convergence of systemic shocks - climate change, protracted conflict, fragility, environmental degradation, and economic volatility, including declining development financing. These interconnected pressures are not only slowing progress but reshaping development trajectories, deepening inequalities and eroding hard won gains.

Children bear the greatest burden of this crisis. Those living in fragile, low-income and climate-vulnerable contexts face disproportionately high risks, as they depend on systems that are least resilient and most likely to fail under stress.

Despite progress, global WASH deficits remain substantial and uneven. As of 2025, approximately 2.1 billion people lack safely managed drinking water, 3.4 billion people lack safely managed sanitation and 1.7 billion are without basic hand-washing facilities at home.¹ These deficits are starkest in fragile and conflict-affected settings, where systems are least resilient to shocks. For children, inadequate WASH services directly undermine survival, health, nutrition, education and protection – effects increasingly compounded by climate change.

Climate and water: A structural child risk

Climate change is fundamentally altering water availability, quality and reliability. Droughts, floods, and extreme events are no longer episodic but systemic, disrupting WASH services and heightening risks to children's health and wellbeing. Nearly one billion children live in areas of high-water stress, often compounded by poverty, population growth and weak infrastructure.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reports that recent years have been among the warmest on record, with rising global temperatures accelerating glacier loss, altering rainfall patterns and increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events.⁹

Across regions, climate impacts are driving a consistent pattern of service disruption, displacement, and increased disease risk. Climate-related water impacts in 2025 had direct and measurable consequences for children:

- **South Asia:** Intense monsoon rains and flooding damaged water and sanitation infrastructure, displaced families and contaminated drinking-water sources. In Pakistan, floods in 2025 caused nearly 1,000 deaths, including over 250 children, while repeatedly interrupting WASH services in homes, schools and health facilities.¹⁰ Flood-related contamination significantly increases risks of diarrhoeal disease, acute malnutrition and school closures, particularly for children under five.
- **Eastern and Southern Africa:** Climate extremes continued to drive large-scale displacement and water insecurity. An estimated 8.8 million children were displaced by weather-related disasters between 2017 and 2023, with similar patterns persisting into 2025.¹¹ El Niño-related drought across countries including Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Namibia severely constrained water availability, undermining hygiene practices, nutrition outcomes and access to safe WASH services for children.
- **West and Central Africa:** Seasonal flooding combined with inadequate sanitation systems fuelled the spread of waterborne diseases. In mid-2025, UNICEF warned that approximately 80,000 children were at high risk of cholera across 12 countries in the region, driven by contaminated water sources, displacement and overstretched WASH services – particularly in urban informal settlements and fragile contexts.¹²
- **Middle East and North Africa:** Extreme heat and chronic water scarcity continued to intensify pressure on already fragile water systems. Rising temperatures, prolonged drought and infrastructure damage limited access to safe water for drinking and hygiene, increasing risks of dehydration, heat stress and disease for children – especially in conflict-affected settings.¹³
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Prolonged drought in parts of the Amazon basin disrupted river-based water access for hundreds of thousands of children, cutting communities off from safe water, sanitation, education and health services. At the same time, extreme rainfall and flooding damaged WASH infrastructure in Central America and the Caribbean, increasing exposure to waterborne and vector-borne diseases.¹⁴

These regional impacts illustrate a broader global pattern: climate change is not only increasing water scarcity but also destabilising water quality and sustainability of infrastructures, eroding the reliability of WASH services that children depend on every day.

Conflict, fragility and epidemics: accelerating system collapse

Conflict remains a critical risk multiplier, systematically degrading WASH infrastructure and disrupting essential services. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, damage to water networks, treatment systems and energy supply increasingly leaves communities without safe water for drinking, hygiene or health care.

The consequences are immediate and severe. In 2025, multiple countries experienced widespread WASH systems failure, contributing to major cholera outbreaks and increased child mortality risks.¹⁵ Children are particularly vulnerable to their higher exposure to waterborne disease and greater risk of severe dehydration. Systemic weaknesses extend to essential services: over one-third of healthcare facilities in fragile settings lack basic water services, and more than half lack basic hygiene facilities. This undermines safe childbirths, infection prevention and epidemic preparedness – reversing gains in maternal and child health.¹⁶

These dynamics reaffirm WASH as a cornerstone of both humanitarian response and public health security.

Environmental degradation: compounding system stress

Beyond climate and conflict, environmental degradation is amplifying WASH-related risks. Pollution of the air, water, and soil interacts with inadequate sanitation and weak management systems to further undermine child health. Air pollution remains the leading environmental health risk to children globally, contributing to respiratory illness, impaired cognitive development and increased susceptibility to infection – particularly in contexts where unsafe water, poor sanitation and inadequate waste management coexist.¹⁷

In addition, toxic exposure – including lead contamination from industrial processes and unsafe waste recycling practices, continues to affect millions of children, with lifelong consequences for cognitive development and health.¹⁸ These risks are most acute where WASH services are weakest, compounding existing inequities.



On 10 July 2025, residents navigate through flooded roads in Munshirhat, Fulgazi, Feni, as heavy rainfall inundates the area, making movement difficult for many.

In Bangladesh, frequent floods caused by monsoon rains and river overflows severely disrupt daily life, especially in low-lying regions like Feni. Schools often close temporarily, and children miss out on crucial learning days. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation becomes limited, and families are forced to use contaminated sources, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases.

UNICEF, in collaboration with local authorities, supports emergency WASH interventions in flood-affected areas – providing safe drinking water, portable toilets, and hygiene kits to ensure that children and families remain healthy and protected during crises.



UNICEF visited Analapangitse village in the Androy region of Madagascar to assess water infrastructure, identify repair needs and strengthen the long-term durability of the water system. The photo shows a water reservoir supplying a plantation through a drip irrigation system. With support from partners, UNICEF has played a key role in addressing drought-driven food insecurity in southern Madagascar by improving access to safe water, nutrition, health care and education. These efforts have been made possible with funding from the Government of Japan.

Disruption to education and human capital

The impacts of climate- and water-related shocks extend well beyond health, with profound implications for education. Climate hazards – including heatwaves, floods, storms and drought – disrupted schooling for an estimated 242 million students across 85 countries in the most recent reporting period. Heatwaves alone accounted for nearly half of these disruptions.¹⁹

Schools without reliable water, sanitation and hygiene services are more likely to close during climate shocks and disease outbreaks, disproportionately affecting girls, children with disabilities and those in fragile contexts. Climate-resilient WASH in schools is therefore not only a health intervention but a prerequisite for safe, inclusive and continuous learning.

Water insecurity as a systemic global risk

Emerging global analyses underscore that water insecurity is no longer solely an environmental or sectoral concern, but a systemic risk with economic, social and geopolitical implications. The United Nations University (UNU) 2026 flagship report describes the world as having

entered an era of “global water bankruptcy”, in which long-term overuse, pollution and climate impacts have pushed many freshwater systems beyond sustainable limits.²⁰ Approximately 75 per cent of the global population now lives in countries facing significant water insecurity, with depleted aquifers, shrinking lakes and degraded ecosystems undermining resilience.

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2026²¹ identifies water-related risks as deeply interconnected with climate instability, food and energy insecurity, economic shocks and geopolitical tensions. Water scarcity and variability are increasingly recognised as risk multipliers that can destabilise supply chains, increase food prices, drive displacement and exacerbate inequality – dynamics that disproportionately affect children.

For UNICEF, this evolving risk landscape reinforces the need to move beyond incremental solutions. Addressing “water bankruptcy” requires integrated approaches that strengthen WASH systems, protect water resources, build climate resilience and prioritise equity – particularly for children and communities furthest behind.

Implications for UNICEF's global WASH role

Against this backdrop of escalating climate extremes, conflict, epidemics and systemic water risk, UNICEF's role in the global WASH landscape is both more challenging and more critical than ever. UNICEF operates across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, delivering life-saving WASH services in emergencies while supporting national and local systems to provide sustainable, equitable and climate-resilient services over the long term.

Over the Strategic Plan (SP) period 2022-2025, UNICEF continued to deliver results under Goal Area 4, expanding access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene for millions of children and their families, strengthening WASH services in schools and health care facilities, and integrating climate resilience into infrastructure design, service delivery and governance. In 2025 UNICEF initiated an internal transformation of the way it can deliver technical assistance to the governments and partners and this is being rolled out in the new SP (2026-2029).

As this Global Annual Results Report demonstrates, WASH is a foundational investment in child survival, development and dignity. In a world defined by accelerating climate change, conflict and environmental degradation, UNICEF remains committed to ensuring that every child, everywhere, has access to safe, sustainable and climate-resilient WASH services.

Access to safe water supply

Progress towards universal access to safe drinking water continues, yet significant gaps persist. Millions of people still rely on inadequate or unsafe services, and gains increasingly undermined by climate change, conflict, displacement, economic pressure and weak service delivery systems. These pressures are most pronounced in fragile and crisis-affected contexts, where service continuity, water quality and affordability are hardest to sustain. In this context, UNICEF's water programming prioritises progressively improving service levels, with a strong focus on reaching children and communities facing the greatest vulnerabilities.

Access to safe drinking water is a fundamental human right²² and a critical foundation for child survival, health, nutrition, education and resilience, generating benefits that extend well beyond the water sector. UNICEF's programming approach goes beyond counting infrastructure outputs, emphasising water services that are safe, reliable and available when needed, and that progressively align with higher service standards.

The “Basic+2”²³ minimum service level established under UNICEF's Water Game Plan²³ remains an important operational benchmark, bridging basic access and safely managed services. This approach is particularly relevant in fragile and humanitarian settings, where systems are under stress and delivery models must balance scale, equity and sustainability.

UNICEF's Results in water

Service delivery

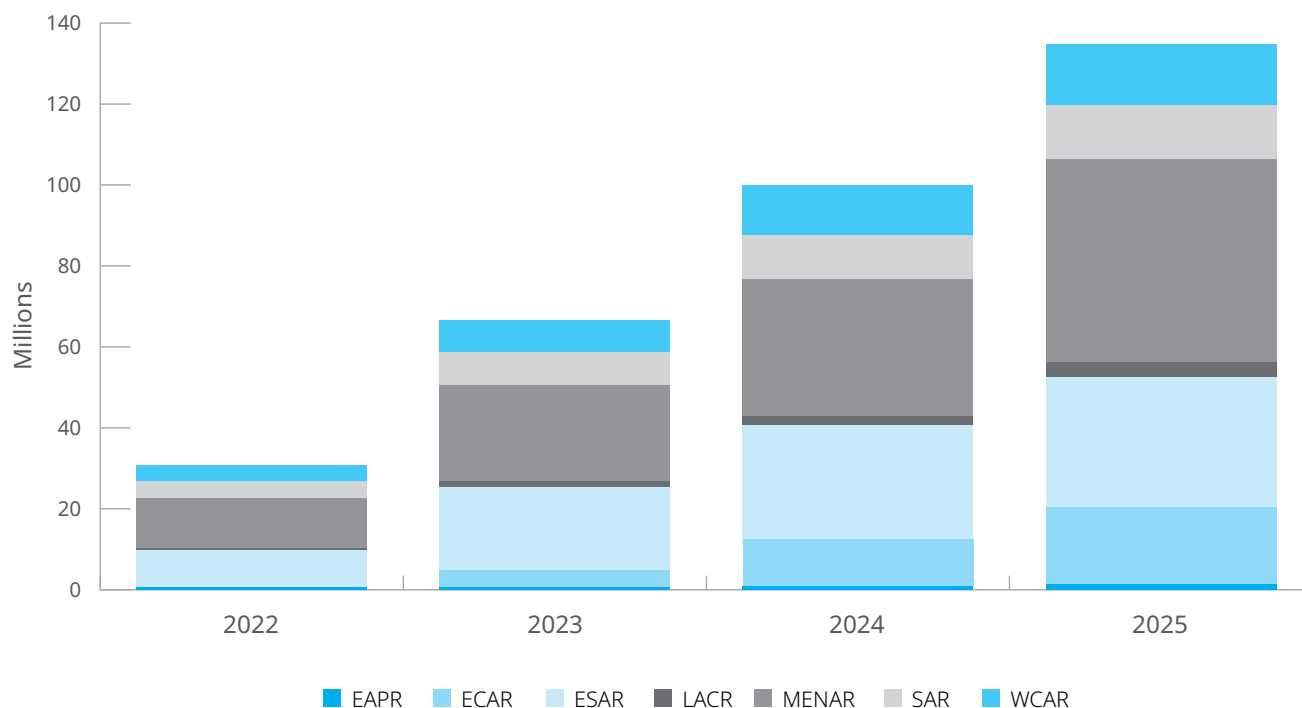
In 2025, UNICEF-supported programmes enabled 34.7 million people across 73 countries to gain access to safe water supply. This represents a modest increase compared with 2024 and brings the cumulative total for the 2022–2025 Strategic Plan period to 134.6 million people (Figure 1), over double the SP target (Table 1).



A lack of safe drinking water in the dusty, rural village of Musa Jasser in Umerkot, Sindh Province, Pakistan, meant that 12-year-old Farzana would walk 7 kilometers with her mother to the nearest clean water source, up to three times a day, to collect water for her family. As a result, she missed four years of school. Following the floods, Musa Jasser was one of many communities supported by UNICEF and partners to ensure vulnerable populations have access to safe water and sanitation. With funding from the Government of Japan, a new hand pump provided villagers with their dream of having fresh, clean water every day. The pump was built on a raised platform to help withstand future climate shocks. Farzana is now back at school.

2 In UNICEF's [Water Game Plan](#) (2020), “Basic+2” service level is a service that: 1) Meets the JMP basic service levels (an improved water source; collection time not exceeding 30 minutes round trip including collection), and 2) also has +2 of the three components of a safely managed service (free from fecal and priority chemical contamination; and available when needed).

FIGURE 1: Cumulative number of beneficiaries reached with at least basic water that is safe and available when needed (Basic+2) by year and region.



The scale and distribution of these results reflect UNICEF's continued ability to deliver water services in the most complex contexts. Based on 2025 country reporting, approximately 74 per cent of annual results were achieved in fragile or extremely fragile contexts (Figure 2), as classified by the OECD fragility index, confirming that the water portfolio remains strongly concentrated in places where public systems are weakest and where humanitarian-development linkages are most critical. This pattern reinforces UNICEF's comparative advantage in sustaining essential water services during crisis while supporting governments and partners to preserve pathways towards more resilient and sustainable service delivery.

In programmatic terms, as illustrated in Figure 2, the 2025 results were achieved through a balanced mix of development and humanitarian action. Approximately 19.3 million people were reached through development-focused interventions, while 15.2 million were reached through durable water solutions in humanitarian

settings. This distribution shows that UNICEF's water portfolio is not only responding to immediate needs but also investing in longer-term systems and service strengthening. At the same time, the near parity between the two modalities underscores how central protracted crises and displacement continue to play in shaping global water results.

As shown in Figure 2, the largest annual results in 2025 were reported in the Middle East and North Africa (16.5 million), Europe and Central Asia (7.6 million), and Eastern and Southern Africa (3.8 million). From a cumulative 2022–2025 perspective (Figure 3), the largest contributions came from Middle East and North Africa (50.3 million), Eastern and Southern Africa (32.0 million) and Europe and Central Asia (19.1 million). This distribution reflects a portfolio shaped both by large-scale, conflict-affected urban responses and by sustained large-scale investment in African countries facing high rural needs and structurally fragile delivery systems.

FIGURE 2: Number of direct water beneficiaries in 2025 – by UNICEF regions and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) fragility index classification (34.7 million people)

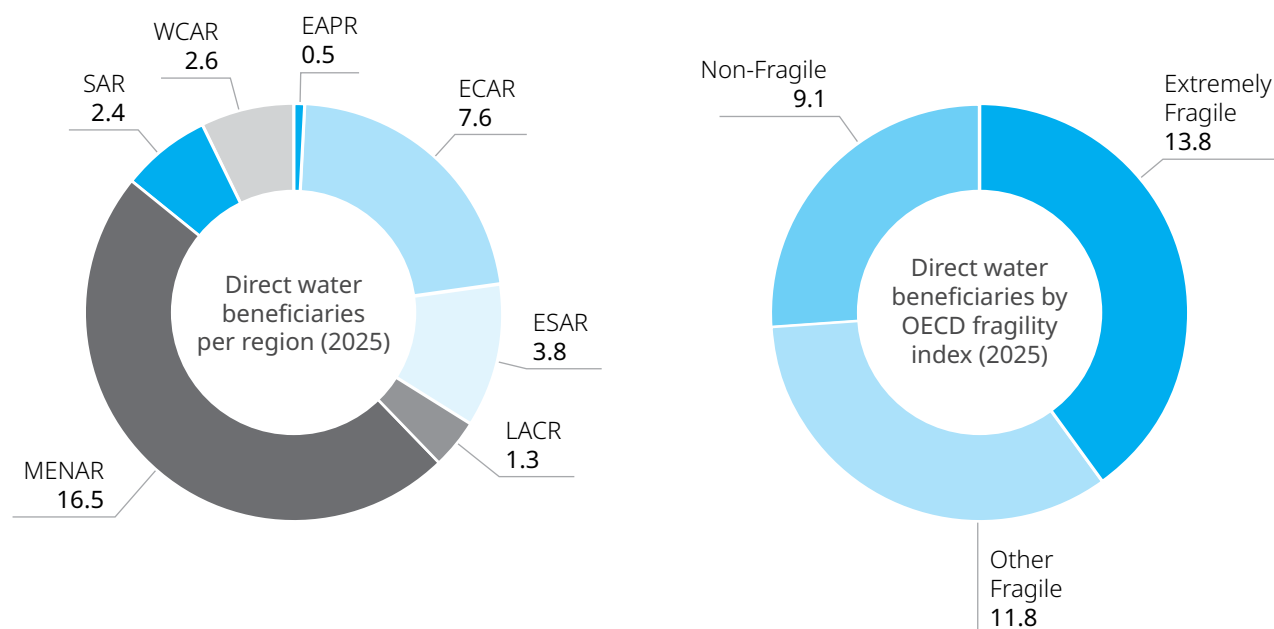
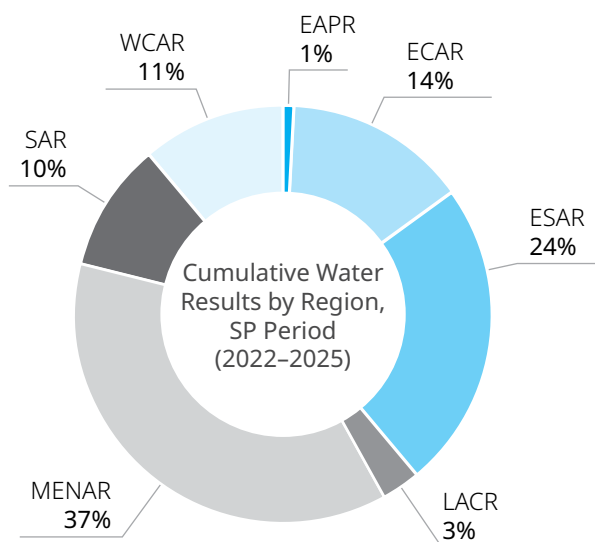


FIGURE 3: Percentage of direct water beneficiaries reached during the SP period (2022-2025)



Overall, the largest number of people reached in 2025 were in contexts affected by protracted humanitarian crises, including Ukraine, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, the State of Palestine, Afghanistan, Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria. These results were achieved through a combination of emergency service continuity and more durable systems support.

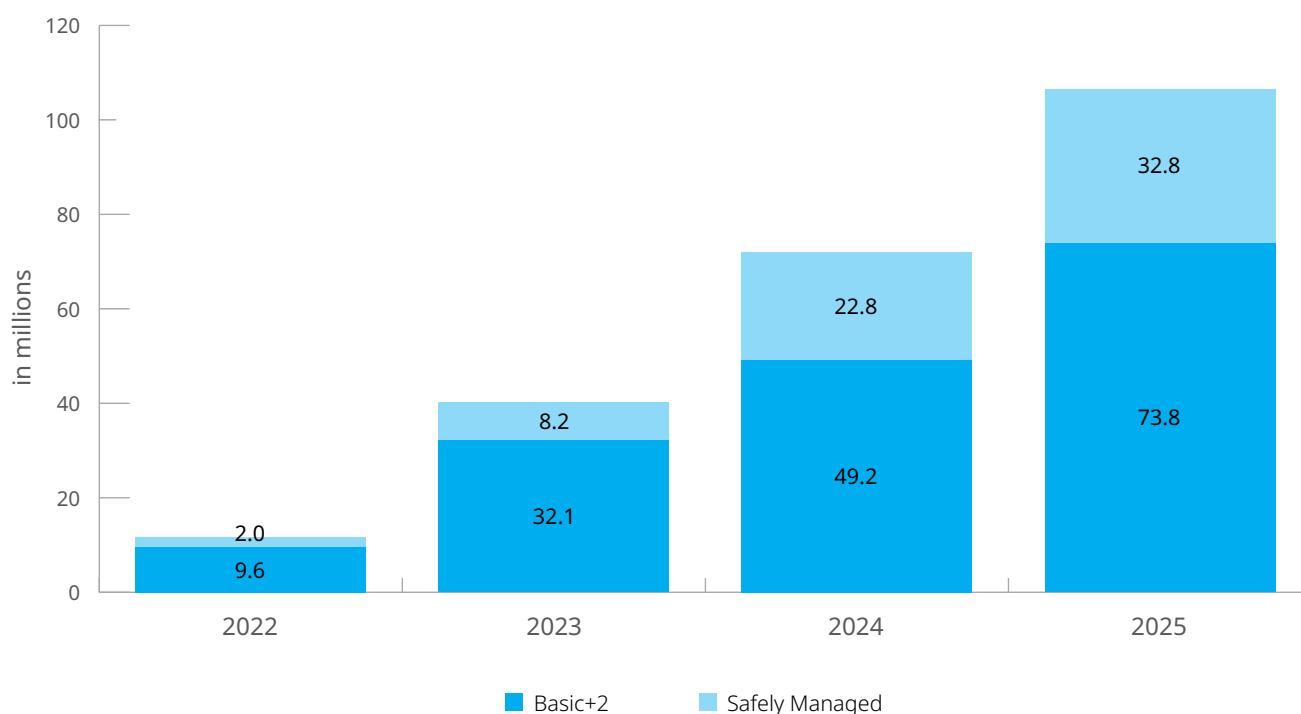
For example, in Yemen²⁴ more than 1.16 million people gained access to at least basic water through a mix of new construction, rehabilitation and expansion of water systems, while in Nigeria²⁵ climate-resilient programming and systems strengthening enabled over 940,000 people to gain access to basic water and 322,000 to safely managed services.

Service levels, equity and resilience

The 2025 results show continued progress along the service ladder. Of the 34.7 million people reached in 2025, 24.6 million were reached with basic water services that are safe and available when needed (Basic+2) and 9.9 million with the higher standard of safely managed services. Cumulatively, by 2025 UNICEF-supported programmes have reached 73.8 million people with

Basic+2 services and 32.8 million with safely managed services since the beginning of the SP in 2022 (Figure 4). This is a strong result, especially given the concentration of UNICEF's work in difficult settings, but it also points to the gradual progress in shifting more programmes towards higher service levels, stronger water quality assurance and more sustainable service provision.

FIGURE 4: Cumulative Number of Beneficiaries Reached by Service Level and Year (SP Period)



The data further indicate an increasing share of water results delivered through climate-resilient approaches. In 2025, 9.1 million people were reached under the climate-resilient category, bringing the cumulative total for 2022–2025 to 26.6 million. This is an encouraging trend, particularly as climate shocks are increasingly affecting water availability, infrastructure performance, groundwater recharge and service reliability.

From an equity perspective, 2025 results show near gender parity, with approximately 17.7 million females and 16.8 million males reached. 2.4 million persons with disabilities were reached in 2025, and 6.5 million cumulatively since 2022. This is important, as it demonstrates a growing effort to make water programming more inclusive, although disability-

disaggregated programming and monitoring remain areas for further improvement to ensure that UNICEF programming does not leave anyone behind.

Since 2024, urban water results have exceeded those in rural areas, signalling a gradual increase in urban programming. In the 2025 annual country data, reported values suggest 17.0 million urban and 12.6 million rural beneficiaries, while the cumulative 2022–2025 summary still shows a larger total in rural areas (61.0 million) than in urban areas (56.7 million). These numbers suggest that UNICEF is increasingly active in urban and peri-urban water programming, particularly where conflict, displacement and infrastructure damage affect networked systems, while continuing to maintain a strong rural portfolio.

Country-level reporting from 2025 further illustrates these dynamics. In the Sudan, results were driven by the continued operation of major urban water-treatment plants, rehabilitation and solarisation of water systems²⁶, and emergency water supply in displacement sites and outbreak hotspots. In Ethiopia, urban programming expanded access to basic water in communities and schools²⁷ while strengthening safely managed urban services, and in Somalia more than one million people gained access to basic water through the construction and rehabilitation of water systems nationwide²⁸.

Sustainability, systems strengthening and water quality

As UNICEF's water portfolio continues to expand in fragile and climate-stressed environments, greater attention is needed to the institutional, financial and technical conditions that allow services to remain functional over time. This includes stronger operation and maintenance arrangements, better utility and local government capacity, improved financing for recurrent costs, and greater use of service sustainability tools and monitoring approaches, to ensure resilience of WASH systems.

Country reporting in 2025 points to a stronger emphasis on sustainability, sector strengthening and financing. In South Sudan, UNICEF activated seven national and state-level coordination committees, supported the South Sudan Urban Water Corporation and the Bor Urban Water Utility²⁹, and trained utility staff on operation and maintenance, leakage control, internet-enabled billing, asset management and customer care. In Mozambique, the expansion of a revolving fund model for small-town water supply was identified as a scalable approach to financial sustainability. In Vietnam, UNICEF supported the drafting of national circulars on unit costs for rural water investment and operation and maintenance, helping to strengthen the sustainability and scalability of rural services.

Water quality and water safety also featured more prominently in country programming in 2025, although the available examples relate more strongly to bacteriological quality, system safety and risk management than to chemical contamination. In Tanzania, updated climate-resilient Water Safety Plans (WSPs) and Drinking Water Quality Monitoring Guidelines, combined with training on WASHFIT and infection prevention and control, strengthened national capacity to manage climate-related risks and improve water quality planning with commercial utilities. In Angola³⁰, water quality monitoring included the mapping of 2,597 water points in hotspot communities and training of owners and managers on chlorination. In Somalia, UNICEF coupled the construction and rehabilitation of water systems with oversight of water quality standards and training of



Istiglal collects water at a water point installed with UNICEF support at Almatar internally displaced camp in Kassala state, Sudan. Displaced from Sinja, Istiglal and her family of six have lived in the camp since December 2023.

The camp is home to over 16,000 displaced people who fled fighting from Sinja, Sennar, and Khartoum. Here, children, women and caregivers housed in new shelters are forging a life amidst the harsh realities of war and displacements. Through five distribution points installed across the camp, children and families can always access water. As part of its emergency response, UNICEF is also investing in durable water solutions to increase the water supply for the displaced families and host communities. In Almatar, UNICEF has solarized a nearby borehole that is connecting safe water to the camp.

161 water management committees, while in the Sudan monthly monitoring of water quantity and quality was reportedly achieved across all 18 states for the first time.

Although bacteriological contamination continues to be the major area of concern and focus of UNICEF water quality and safety interventions, there is growing emphasis on other chemical contaminants. At least 140 million people in 50 countries are drinking water containing arsenic at levels above the WHO provisional guideline value of 10 µg per litre³¹. Arsenic prevention and mitigation programmes in countries like Bangladesh³² or Cambodia have contributed to reduce the exposure of this contaminant via awareness raising campaigns, water quality monitoring, creation of alternative water points or treatment. Similarly, 200 million people drink water with concentrations above the 1.5 mg per litre guideline for fluoride; with countries like India contributing to reduce fluoride exposure. Lead in drinking water is also a toxic metal of growing concern in both rural and urban areas and low, middle and high-income countries. In 2025, UNICEF - together with partners - continued to raise awareness about this issue with a broad range of stakeholders.

Scaling-up chlorination with GiveWell in Somalia, Nigeria and Madagascar

Through its partnership with [GiveWell](#), UNICEF is demonstrating that water quality interventions – particularly chlorination can be among the most cost-effective life-saving investments in WASH programming. GiveWell's support is grounded in rigorous analysis of efficiency, impact and value for money, making it a strategic partner in advancing interventions that deliver measurable public health gains at scale and low cost.

In Nigeria, Somalia and Madagascar, UNICEF is working with GiveWell to support urban chlorination of piped water supplies, focusing on interventions that are practical, scalable and affordable in challenging contexts. This partnership shows how targeted donor financing, combined with UNICEF's operational reach, technical expertise and government engagement, can turn a relatively modest investment into a high-impact response for reducing exposure to waterborne disease.

As articulated in [UNICEF's water game plan](#), the effectiveness of water quality interventions such as chlorination is especially compelling because of its potential to deliver rapid and equitable results when embedded within stronger systems for operations, dosing, supply chains and water quality monitoring.

UNICEF's work in Somalia, Nigeria and Madagascar goes beyond the provision of chlorine to strengthen institutional and technical conditions required for sustained impact. This includes reinforcing routine chlorination practices, improving dosing and supply chains, and strengthening water quality monitoring in collaboration with utilities, service providers and public authorities. By embedding chlorination within stronger operational systems, the partnership is helping build the evidence and operational experience needed to demonstrate that chlorination is not only a rapid “quick win”, but also a smart investment in public health, service reliability and value for money.

From Assets to institutions – Strengthening Urban Water Services through integrated Utility Reform in South Sudan

In 2025, UNICEF addressed critical urban WASH bottlenecks in South Sudan by deliberately linking infrastructure investment with institutional and utility reform. Support focused on strengthening sector governance and service delivery capacity, including the revitalisation of seven coordination committees, institutional strengthening of the South Sudan Urban Water Corporation, formalisation of the Bor Urban Water Utility, and targeted capacity development for utility staff in maintenance, leakage control, billing, asset management and customer care.

These governance and operational reforms were implemented alongside the completion and handover of the [Bor Urban Water Project](#), enabling the expansion of climate-resilient urban water services for approximately 99,000 people in Bor and Juba. By pairing physical infrastructure delivery with institutional and utility strengthening, the programme addressed both immediate access gaps and longer-term service sustainability.

This experience illustrated how service expansion and system strengthening can be pursued in parallel - even in highly fragile settings to improve reliability, financial viability and resilience of urban water services. It reinforces UNICEF's strategic approach of coupling infrastructure investments with institutional capacity-building, ensuring that capital investments translate into sustained, equitable service delivery over time.

Conclusion

The 2025 water results confirm that UNICEF is delivering at substantial scale and with sustained impact in some of the world's most difficult operating environments. With 34.7 million people reached in 2025 and 134.6 million cumulatively since 2022, UNICEF surpassed its Strategic Plan milestone by 74 million people. These results also show a portfolio that is simultaneously humanitarian and developmental, increasingly attentive to climate resilience, and progressively moving people towards higher service levels. The evidence from 2025 further suggests that UNICEF's comparative advantage lies not only in extending access, but also in helping governments and service providers keep systems functioning in fragile, climate-stressed and rapidly urbanising contexts.

Across contexts, stronger and more sustainable results are increasingly associated with a combination of service delivery and systems strengthening. Examples include utility reform and capacity strengthening in South Sudan, water-treatment plant rehabilitation and water quality monitoring in the Sudan, climate-resilient design and risk-informed programming in Pakistan and Tanzania, and large-scale construction and rehabilitation in Somalia and Yemen.

Taken together, these results demonstrate UNICEF's ability to translate global commitments on equity, resilience, safety and sustainability into concrete results on the ground.

Sanitation

There is a critical need to accelerate investment in household sanitation services. To reach universal access to safely managed sanitation (SMS) by 2030, a sixfold increase in the current global rate of progress is required, while the rate for basic sanitation must increase threefold, according to WHO/UNICEF JMP¹. The report highlights profound inequalities; low-income countries are particularly far behind, with access to at least basic sanitation at only 27 per cent. To achieve universal basic access by 2030, these countries would require a staggering 18-fold increase in their current rate of progress.

Simultaneously, climate change increasingly threatens the functionality of sanitation services through adverse events like flooding and collapsing pits, which release untreated waste into the environment. In this context, both safely managed and climate resilient sanitation fall under a risk informed programming lens – SMS primarily focused on health risks, while climate allowing for a broader perspective on adverse conditions, emissions and environmental services. The work on climate continues to build on the foundations of the UNICEF Gameplan and the work with WHO on the 8 steps to SMS³³. Global advocacy initiatives such as Climate Resilient Sanitation Coalition aim to raise awareness of the centrality of sanitation within the climate discussion (see Climate Resilient Sanitation section).

UNICEF's Results in sanitation

Service delivery

Over 17 million people in 73 countries gained access to at least basic sanitation services with UNICEF direct support. 94 per cent (16.2 million) of sanitation beneficiaries were in fragile contexts, with the majority reached in West and Central Africa in 2025 (Figure 5). Nigeria had the highest number of beneficiaries, representing about 23 per cent of the global total, while considerable progress was made in Lebanon, Syria and the State of Palestine, which together represented 29 per cent of beneficiaries provided with at least basic sanitation services. Progress was greater in rural areas, where there is often less access to basic sanitation than in urban settings and interventions are most needed. Most urban sanitation interventions are in fragile countries such as Lebanon, Syria and the State of Palestine. In 2025, 37 per cent of the people reached with at least basic sanitation services via direct UNICEF support were in urban areas.

Through UNICEF direct support, an additional 6.4 million people in 31 countries were reached with SMS services, with the majority in the Middle East and North Africa and West and Central Africa regions (Figure 6). There was a noticeable increase in the number of people reached with SMS services in 2025 compared to 2024 (4.3 million), indicating that more countries are accelerating efforts to address the full ambition of SDG 6.2 targets.

FIGURE 5: Number of beneficiaries reached with at least basic sanitation through UNICEF direct support, by region and fragility index in 2025 (17.3 million people)

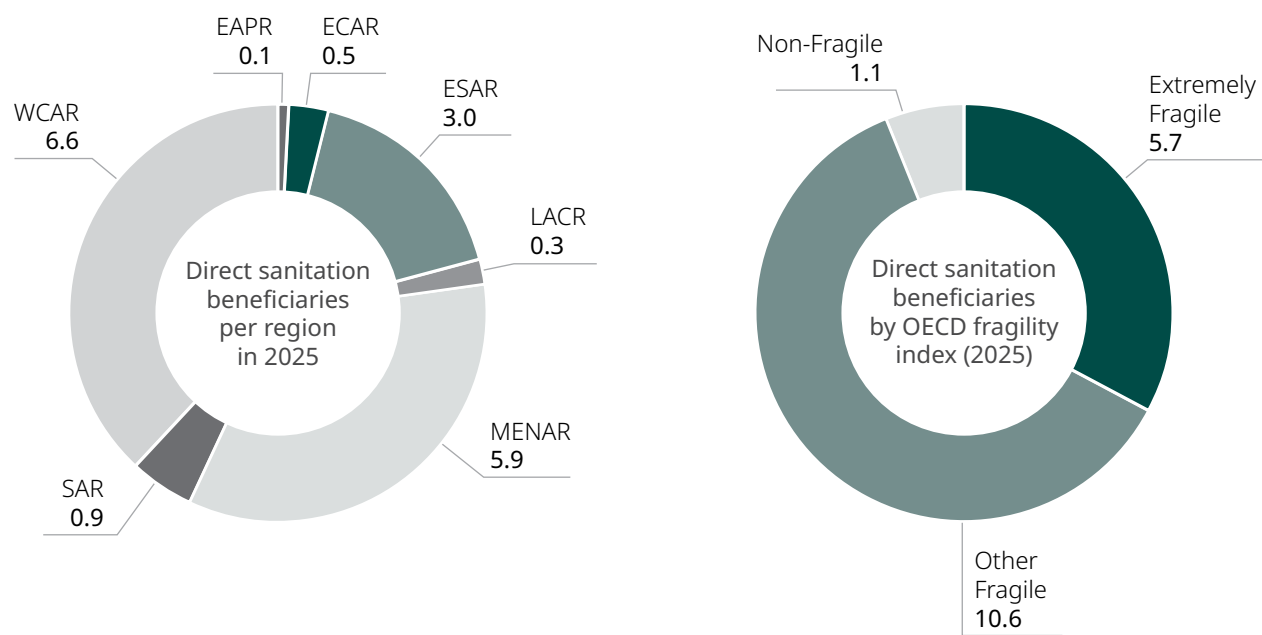
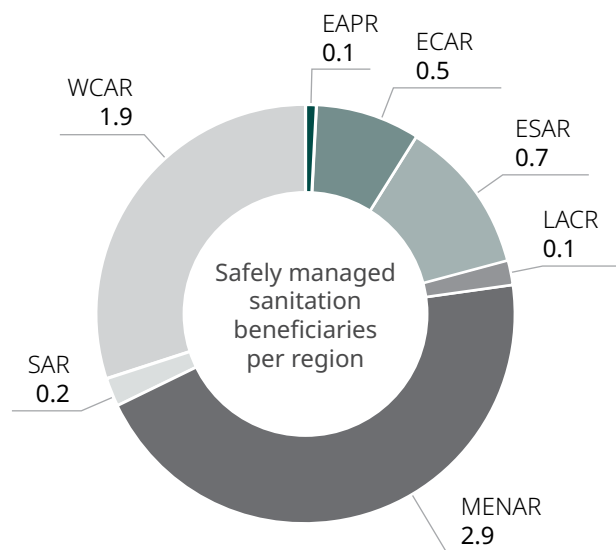


FIGURE 6: Number of direct SMS beneficiaries per region in 2025 (6.4 million people)



Community-led total sanitation in São Tomé and Príncipe

In São Tomé and Príncipe, sanitation efforts in 2025 focused on the continued implementation and expansion of Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach to promote behaviour change and eliminate open defecation at community level. These interventions contributed to strengthened local leadership and the elimination of open defecation in 15 communities, benefiting 500 households. The CLTS approach was further expanded to the Autonomous Region of Príncipe, where communities, following the triggering phase, began constructing their own latrines to improve sanitation and hygiene practices. In parallel, WASH improvements in 65 schools and 6 health facilities, including the installation of handwashing facilities, contributed to safer and more enabling learning and care environments while reducing infection risks.



Implementation of CLTS activities to promote behaviour change and eliminate open defecation at community level.

Systems strengthening

A coherent national sanitation policy framework

In 2025, UNICEF contributed to steady progress toward establishing coherent national sanitation policy and governance frameworks where governments are in the lead, institutions hold clear mandates, regulators are strengthened, and political commitment is elevated.

At the policy level, numerous governments advanced or finalised national sanitation policies, often with UNICEF's direct technical support. Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo integrated climate-resilience principles into their updated National Sanitation Policies, while Ghana completed its Environmental Sanitation Policy and related investment and action plans. In several countries, including Kenya, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Timor-Leste, Uganda and Guinea, UNICEF supported the revision, endorsement, dissemination and operationalisation of newly developed sanitation policies, strategies and costed plans, ensuring alignment with national development priorities and SDG 6.

UNICEF also strengthened sector coordination, a core condition for sustainable sanitation systems. In Kenya, UNICEF strengthened sanitation coordination through 47 country sanitation hubs and 2 at national level, improving planning and data systems, while in Kiribati, UNICEF supported government leadership through quarterly technical coordination meetings. The result is improving institutional clarity and stronger, more predictable governance of sanitation services.

Progress was also notable in regulatory strengthening, particularly in Ghana, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. Malawi and Kenya advanced tools such as monitoring Safely Managed On-Site Sanitation (M-SMOSS) that strengthened national data systems with relevant, risk-informed indicators. Cameroon's investment in building regulatory capacity in partnership with Ministry of Water and Energy (MINEE) sits alongside efforts to elevate sanitation from a sub-directorship to a full directorship within the MINEE. These regulatory gains are essential for strengthening accountability and enabling governments to mitigate risks to public health across the sanitation service chain.

Taken together, these achievements illustrate UNICEF's growing role in supporting governments to establish coherent national sanitation frameworks. Although many structural barriers remain, particularly fragmented mandates, underfunding and uneven regulatory capacity, the trajectory clearly shows stronger government leadership and a more systemic, nationally owned approach to achieving safe, equitable, and climate-resilient sanitation.

A financially viable sanitation sector

Across UNICEF country programmes in 2025, there was solid progress toward a more financially viable sanitation sector with country offices increasingly mobilising public resources, unlocking new innovative financing modalities, and strengthening market systems. UNICEF supported the development of safely managed sanitation roadmaps and national sanitation financing strategies, laying the groundwork for long-term investment flows. During this SP period, 17 countries developed urban and rural sanitation financing strategies, while a further 6 countries developed rural sanitation financing strategies. For example, work began toward a national sanitation finance strategy in Ghana, while Zimbabwe, Fiji, Burundi and

Timor-Leste advanced costed roadmaps that integrate climate-resilient and safely managed sanitation targets. These upstream efforts, rooted in evidence from WASH accounts, JMP and GLAAS analyses, and investment diagnostics, provided ministries with clearer visibility of financing gaps and investment needs, enabling stronger budgeting and prioritisation.

Innovative financing mechanisms gained traction, responding to the chronic underfunding that has long constrained progress. Microfinance models for household sanitation were scaled or piloted in multiple contexts, including Madagascar, where a new microfinance guarantee fund increased loan access for low-income families. In Rwanda, UNICEF and the Bank of Kigali launched a new WASH financing product, with additional banks preparing sanitation loan vehicles to stimulate household and SME investment. In Bolivia, a pre-investment study positioned the municipality to secure Inter-American Development Bank financing for decentralised sanitation solutions, demonstrating how upstream work can catalyse large-scale capital flows.

Market-based sanitation accelerated across regions, helping to mobilise private investment. Countries strengthened sanitation supply chains, supported artisans



Students gathering water at the public primary school of Gouélé, in the West of Côte d'Ivoire. Children from the public primary school in Gouélé in the Biankouma department of Côte d'Ivoire are perpetuating the achievements of the 3-star approach relating to access to water, hygiene and sanitation for better education through healthy hygiene practices and adequate management of their drinking water point, their latrines and the environment.

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A WASH sales booth in Ankirikirika, Amboasary Sud District, Anosy Region, Madagascar, offering SATO toilets, reusable sanitary pads and soap to promote improved sanitation and hygiene.

and small enterprises, and expanded market-development partnerships. Bangladesh and Côte d'Ivoire advanced national sanitation marketing programmes and trained local artisans, helping sanitation markets grow while reducing costs for households.

UNICEF's leadership in climate finance working groups, such as in Kenya, and its support to governments to develop climate-resilient sanitation designs and adaptation plans helped position sanitation within national climate priorities. Workshops and training across multiple countries-built government capacity to access climate funds and apply risk-informed investment planning, enabling sanitation to benefit from broader climate-adaptation financing pipelines.

Despite progress, many countries continue to confront declining sanitation budgets, limited private-sector engagement, and insufficient investment for safely managed sanitation. Yet the year's achievements illustrate a clear trend: UNICEF's systems strengthening support helped countries move from fragmented, short-term funding toward more sustainable, diversified, and equitable financing systems for sanitation.

Developing a skilled, protected workforce

In 2025, UNICEF accelerated global progress toward safely managed sanitation by strengthening institutions and the sanitation workforce. Across regions, governments and utilities expanded the skills, tools, and regulatory frameworks needed to professionalise the sanitation workforce, ensuring safer working conditions, clearer mandates, and stronger accountability throughout the sanitation service chain.

A key focus during the year has been on system-wide capacity development, with countries increasingly adopting national sanitation policies, roadmaps, and strategies that explicitly recognise workforce development and occupational health as prerequisites for sustained services. From subnational health officers to community artisans, thousands of personnel were trained in the design, planning and monitoring of climate resilient, safely managed sanitation services, including child-sensitive public financial management.

Government-led sanitation data systems and performance monitoring

Across regions, UNICEF accelerated country progress toward establishing government-led, reliable sanitation data systems capable of monitoring the entire sanitation service chain. For example, in Malawi, access to key datasets, such as the draft Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), SMART surveys, and the M-SMOSS system, were expanded to improve targeting of underserved populations. Similarly, Kenya strengthened its national data architecture through 47 county sanitation hubs and two national hubs, improving the quality and completeness of sector data feeding into national performance monitoring.

National institutions also took important steps to consolidate fragmented sector data and formalise cross-ministerial coordination around monitoring. In Fiji and Kiribati, UNICEF strengthened coordination platforms through regular National Water and Sanitation Committee meetings, enabling government-led data review and evidence-based decision-making at country level.

Countries also advanced specialised sanitation monitoring and benchmarking initiatives. In Ghana, UNICEF supported key studies on safely managed sanitation, including capacity assessments and supporting dialogue on the role of sanitation regulation, providing an evidence base for sector reforms and decentralisation of sanitation oversight. Mozambique progressed in integrating climate-resilient sanitation indicators into national systems, following national dialogue and technical workshops on CRS.

A growing number of countries began linking sanitation monitoring frameworks with climate-risk assessments and national adaptation planning. In Côte d'Ivoire, over 585 sector actors were trained in climate-resilient sanitation, climate finance, and the WASH Facility Improvement Tool, strengthening capacities to collect, interpret, and act on climate-related sanitation risks.

Efforts to connect sanitation data with financing and performance improvements also gained traction. In Chad, evidence from WASH accounts and JMP processes helped advocate for increased public sanitation financing and more transparent resource allocation.

Key partnerships and thought leadership

UNICEF continued to foster and expand strategic partnerships at regional and global levels to harmonise approaches and leverage resources for SMS. For example, in collaboration with WHO and WaterAid, UNICEF supported the organization of 6 webinars offering practical guidance and real-world examples to help governments, development partners, and practitioners advance progress towards safely managed sanitation for all addressing key topics like governance, financing, and climate resilience through interactive sessions.

UNICEF continues to support market strengthening for sanitation through a global partnership with LIXIL across six countries in different contexts. The Make a Splash! partnership brings together UNICEF's deep sector expertise and LIXIL's product innovation to unlock real, lasting change in diverse sanitation markets³⁴. The partnership advances the global 'market-based sanitation' approach, ensuring the private sector in each country is operating under formal oversight from the mandated authority. The partnerships are generating valuable lessons on market strengthening, understanding the required policies, financing, supply chains, and local capacities that help families move from unimproved solutions to safely managed sanitation across Ethiopia³⁵, Kenya³⁶, Tanzania, India, Indonesia, and Nigeria³⁷.

UNICEF carried out a baseline study to understand how far UNICEF country programmes had progressed in shifting from direct 'open-defecation free' services, which faces challenges with ongoing sustainability, to areawide, government-led safely managed sanitation programming. The baseline establishes a clear starting point for monitoring the Game Plan to 2030, track systemic change, identify gaps in the enabling environment to guide programming, and make evidence-based adjustments needed to delivery impact.

UNICEF also collaborated with WaterAid on a CRSMS Resource Mobilisation Workshop in Africa. The workshop aimed to strengthen participants' understanding of climate-resilient, safely managed sanitation, foster collaboration between sanitation and climate sectors, and equip participants with knowledge and resources to integrate CRS into national policies and funding proposals.

UNICEF also partnered with the Gates Foundation to strengthen sector capacity for climate-resilient sanitation services. The report Monitoring Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Sanitation Systems in Mozambique and Nigeria³⁸ provides clear guidance on how to estimate national greenhouse gas emissions from sanitation service chains, particularly on-site systems. It helps address critical knowledge gaps, as emissions from sanitation are often underrepresented in national inventories and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Unfinished business

UNICEF continues to provide strategic guidance and advocacy to accelerate progress on climate-resilient safely managed sanitation and support the roll-out of the 8 Steps to reach universal access to climate-resilient SMS. As part of this effort, UNICEF is actively documenting lessons learned from implementing climate-resilient sanitation systems- and market-strengthening approaches to inform refinement and scale-up across countries and contexts. This work includes embedding a risk-based approach into government-led sanitation programmes, such as context-specific risk assessments to prioritise investments and sustain service delivery for vulnerable populations in the face of ongoing climate breakdown.

Hygiene

Hand hygiene is one of the most cost-effective health investments, reducing diarrhoea by 30 per cent and acute respiratory infections by 17 per cent, with large, measurable gains for population health³⁹. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the benefits and need for hand hygiene became increasingly apparent. Yet data from 2024 indicate that 1.7 billion people still lack hand washing facilities with soap and water at home, including 611 million with no facility at all¹. Meanwhile, 33 per cent of schools and 43 per cent of health care facilities are without these basic services.⁴⁹

UNICEF's Results in hand hygiene

In 2025, UNICEF reached 15.9 million people with basic hand hygiene services, across 76 countries. Nearly half

(8 million people) were served in development contexts, while the remaining 7.8 million people reached were in humanitarian settings (Figure 7).

In development contexts, UNICEF provided the greatest support to achieve basic hygiene in households in West and Central Africa (4.3 million people), followed by East and Southern Africa (2.3 million people). Compared this to humanitarian contexts, where 2.6 million people reached with basic hygiene services in the Middle East and North Africa, followed by 2.2 million people in East and Southern Africa and 1.5 million people in West and Central Africa. Regardless of region, most people (78 per cent) reached lived in rural areas.

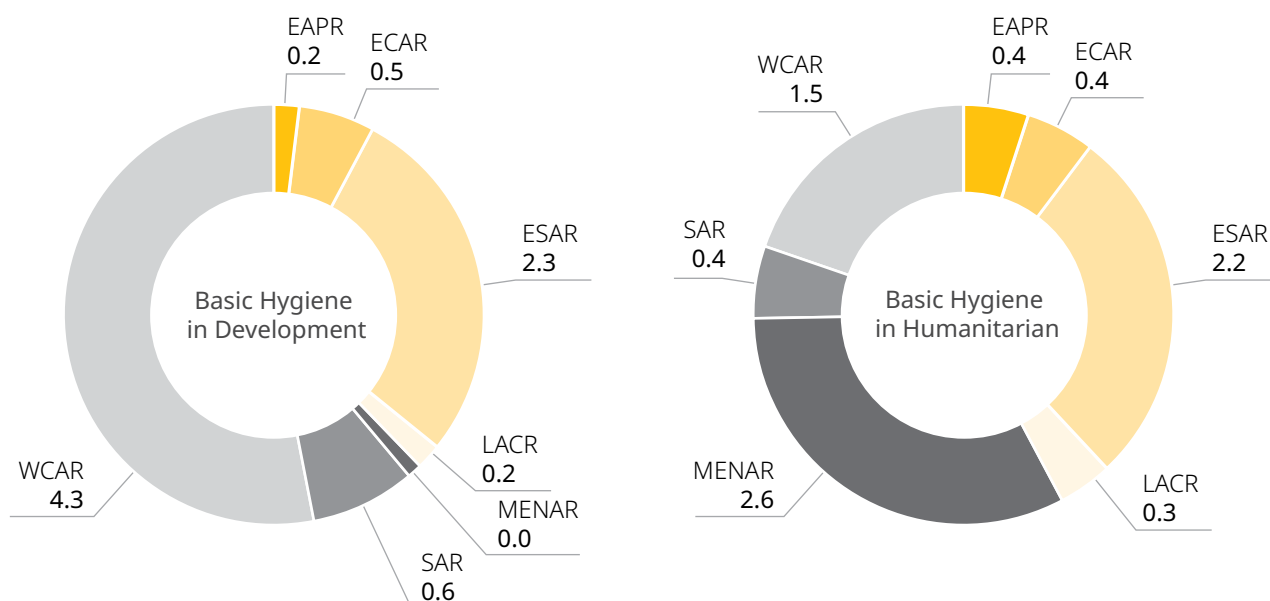
UNICEF also continued to raise the profile of hand hygiene through Global Handwashing Day celebrations.



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Teacher smiling, helping Learners wash hands at WASH station at ECD GS Murambi, Rwanda.

FIGURE 7: Number of hand hygiene beneficiaries reached in development and humanitarian programming in 2025, per region (15.9 million)



Angola's handwashing campaign to combat the cholera outbreak

By October 2025, Angola's cholera outbreak had already affected 29,850 people and claimed 824 lives, with active transmission reported in 18 of the country's 21 provinces. As the outbreak escalated, rapid adoption of preventive behaviours, particularly handwashing with soap became a critical pillar of the public health response.

Handwashing is one of the five key practices for contain prevention, proven to reduce transmission during epidemics and strengthen community resilience.

At the community level, local health promoters played a central role. Rosalina Graciano, a community agent from the ADECOS (Community and Health Development Agents) group in Cacuaco, Luanda, worked door to door with colleagues to promote hygiene practices, such as proper handwashing, household water treatment, and early symptom recognition.

"When the cholera outbreak began, many families did not know what to do, she explained. "Today, we focus mainly on teaching women and children how to treat water, wash their hands properly, and recognise the first symptoms,".

Schools were also identified as critical platforms for cholera prevention and behaviour change. In response to the outbreak, UNICEF supported hygiene promotion activities in [schools](#) across the most affected provinces. In partnership with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, launched the "Safe Back to School" campaign, aiming to protect children's health while ensuring continuity of learning during the crisis.

The initiative reached 113 schools in provinces including Cabinda, Zaire, Uíge, Lunda Norte, Cuanza Sul, Huíla, and Namibe, benefiting 173,333 children, including 84,102 girls. Campaign activities included installing mobile handwashing stations, distributing soap and disinfectants, and raising awareness among students and teachers about cholera prevention.

From behaviour change to systems impact – Scaling hand hygiene programming in Bangladesh

In 2025, UNICEF empowered communities across Bangladesh to take action and ownership to improve hygiene through large-scale behaviour-change and systems-oriented programming, community-based hygiene promotion activities strengthened knowledge, practices and local accountability, contributing to illness prevention, improved attendance in schools and broader public health gains.

Handwashing messages reached over 1.5 million people, including 683,000 children. UNICEF-supported courtyard and dedicated MHM dialogues reached over 1.3 million people across 2,328 communities. These efforts translated into sustained behaviour change, with individuals and communities independently installing 184,400 handwashing devices benefiting 846,132 people, demonstrating the effectiveness of demand-driven, community-led action.

Global Handwashing Day served as a critical platform for both direct community engagement and national advocacy. UNICEF Supported government leadership campaigns and events, reaching 52,836 people including schoolchildren, teachers, government officials, and parents, and reinforcing hand hygiene as a shared public responsibility.

Beyond service delivery and behaviour change, UNICEF worked to embed hand hygiene within national education systems. Support to the Ministry of Primary Education enabled the inclusion of a dedicated WASH chapter in the five-year development plan for schools, strengthening policy commitment to inclusive, sustainable, gender and disability-friendly WASH facilities. This integrated approach illustrates how community-level behaviour change, institutional ownership and policy reform can reinforce one another to achieve lasting hygiene outcomes at scale.



In March 2025, Rahim, a 10-year-old boy with disabilities, happily washes his hands with soap while his mother looks on encouragingly in Begumganj Union, Noakhali District, Bangladesh. His family was among those affected by the devastating floods that struck the country in 2024. The floods, the worst in 34 years, affected approximately 5.8 million people, including more than 2 million children, across the districts of Feni and Noakhali. In response, UNICEF provided emergency supplies to affected communities, including water purification tablets, oral rehydration salts, antibiotics, hygiene kits and educational materials to help address urgent health, sanitation and learning needs.



In Kenya, with UNICEF and other partners' support, the Ministry of Health coordinated Global Handwashing Day celebrations in 8 counties, reaching 1.37 million people with hygiene promotion messages through joint radio spots and social media. In addition, household visits, community gatherings, and school events shared the importance of handwashing and provided handwashing resources for community members.

Systems strengthening

In 2025, UNICEF worked with governments to strengthen WASH systems to increase access to hand hygiene services and promote hand hygiene practices. Fourteen countries UNICEF supported the inclusion of hygiene in financing strategies; 11 of these countries began implementing these strategies in 2025. Several countries, such as Zambia, focused on developing a roadmap for universal access to hand hygiene. Meanwhile in Zimbabwe, a broader strategy on sanitation and hygiene addressed plans for scale up over the next five years. Additionally, UNICEF supported 39 governments to collect nationally representative data on access to hand hygiene over the past two years. Lastly, UNICEF advocacy influenced greatest investment in hand hygiene by governments in 20 countries, donors in 24 countries and the private sector in 9 countries.

Global Guidance on Hand Hygiene in Community Settings

In October 2025, UNICEF and WHO released the first-ever global Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Community Settings⁵ to support governments and practitioners in

promoting effective hand hygiene outside health care – across households, public spaces and institutions. The Guidelines were commissioned in response to expressed demand from Member States and partners for global guidance to governments on how to improve hand hygiene in community settings. Framing hand hygiene as a public good and a government responsibility, the Guidelines translate evidence into ready-to-adopt actions that enable sustainable access to effective hygiene services, reducing preventable diseases, strengthening public health systems and emergency preparedness, including outbreaks like cholera.

Key partnerships and advocacy

UNICEF has been a long-time steering committee member of the Global Handwashing Partnership, supporting advocacy and collective action on hand hygiene. In 2025, following the closure of USAID, FHI360 sunset their role as Secretariat of Global Handwashing Partnership. UNICEF and WHO, along with fellow steering committee members and partners, are now working together to reassess the hand hygiene landscape post-COVID-19 and the shift in international development over the past year, with a plan to re-establish a handwashing partnership that is fit for purpose in 2026 and beyond.

Unfinished business

In the coming year, UNICEF will work with WHO, WaterAid and other partners to pilot the implementation of the new global guidelines on hand hygiene in community settings. This will include tailored recommendations for specific settings (e.g., schools, households), as well as tools to support both national and subnational activities. UNICEF will work with governments to integrate hand hygiene into existing initiatives and programmes (e.g., nutrition, school health) while increasing the prioritisation of the issue through policies and sustainable programming.

Menstrual Health and Hygiene

UNICEF continued its work in the area of MHH, working with partners at global and regional levels and supporting programmes across all regions. MHH programming is a core part of the overall WASH programme, and one of the five goals in the UNICEF *Gender Action Plan*⁴⁰ for the 2022–2025 period.

UNICEF's interventions in MHH are wide-ranging, including direct support for increased access to MHH products and services, strengthening national systems, advocacy, de-stigmatising programmes, and the development of innovative programming approaches.

UNICEF's Results in menstrual health and hygiene

Service delivery

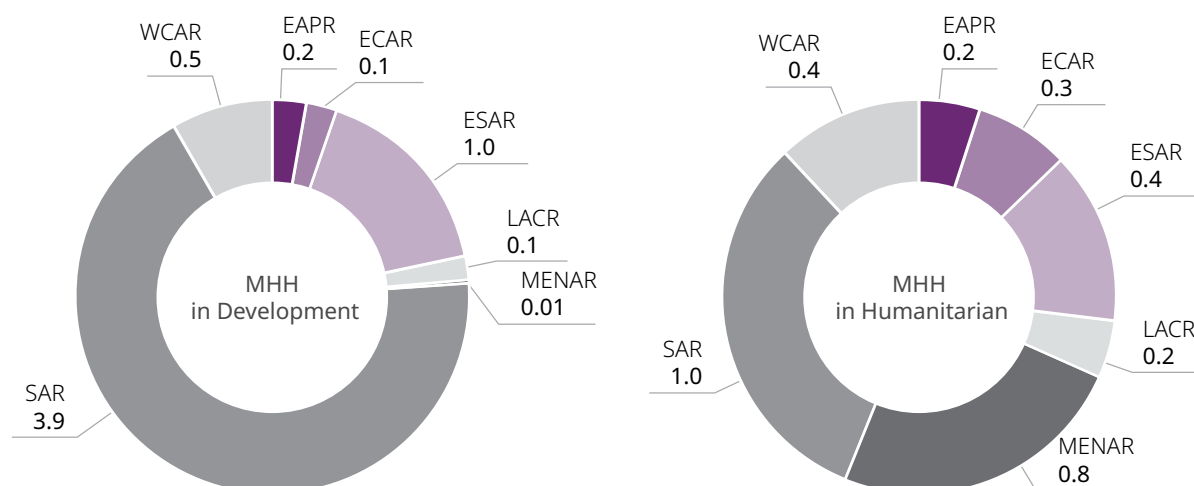
UNICEF directly supports with MHH programmes in both development and humanitarian contexts, and in most cases involves multiple interventions combining the distribution of menstrual pads and other supplies⁴¹ (especially in emergencies) with improvements to infrastructure (such as WASH facilities in schools) along with education and messaging. Many programmes target institutions including schools, health centres and camps, while others – notably information campaigns – cover communities and public spaces.

In 2025 a total of 8.96 million women and girls were reached with MHH direct support in 90 countries, 5.78 million in development and 3.18 million in humanitarian context (Figure 8). Out of this, the majority (60 per cent) is reached with communication and messaging on menstrual health.

In development contexts, more than half of beneficiaries that received services were girls reached through programming in schools, while 33 per cent were reached in households and communities (Figure 9). In emergency contexts, the majority (76 per cent) were women and girls reached in households, camps and communities. These figures exclude beneficiaries reached through communication activities only.

The largest numbers of beneficiaries reached through services and information programming were reported in SAR and ESAR for development contexts, and in SAR and MENAR for humanitarian contexts (Figure 8).

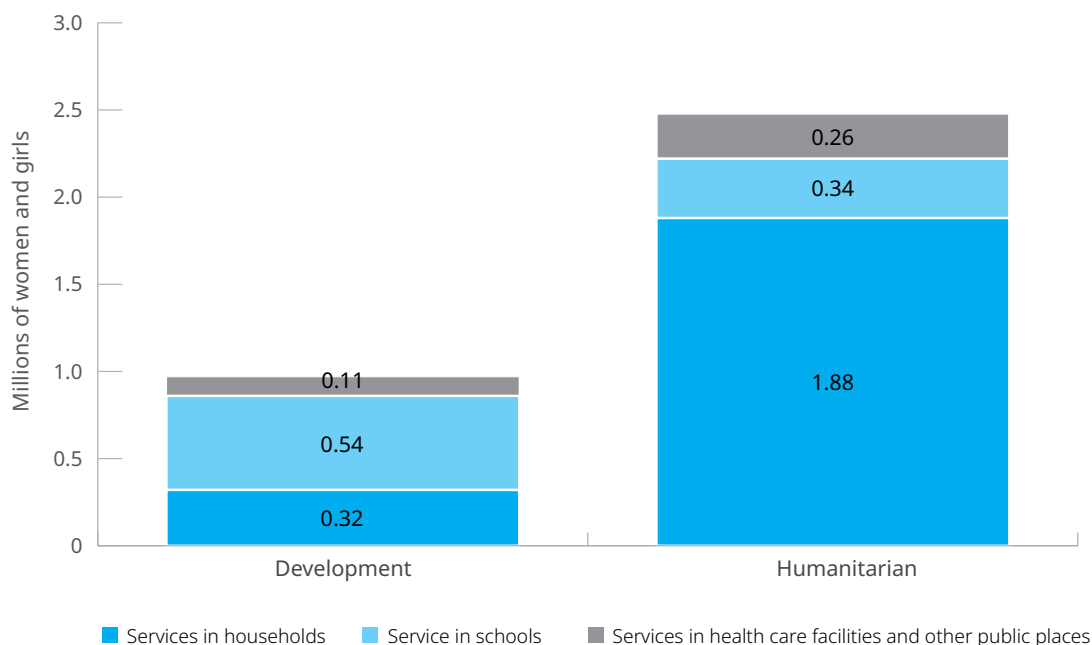
FIGURE 8: Number of direct beneficiaries receiving information and services on MHH in development and humanitarian settings, per region in 2025 (8.96 million people)



At the country level, the largest emergency MHH intervention programmes included responses in Afghanistan, the State of Palestine, Republic of

Mozambique, Ukraine and Sudan; while India, Malawi, Tanzania, Nigeria and Viet Nam had the biggest reach through development programmes.

FIGURE 9: Number of women and girls reached with MHH services only, in both development and humanitarian settings, in households, schools, HCFs and public places in 2025 (total 3.46 million)



The overall SP target of reaching 40 million women and adolescent girls with menstrual health and hygiene was exceed by 6.3 million. Over the past five years, the majority (71 per cent) were reached in development context. Nearly half of those reached across both development and humanitarian context were in South Asia region, while 30 per cent were in Eastern and Southern Africa Region.

Systems strengthening

UNICEF strengthens national systems for MHH through advocacy and policy support while also addressing harmful norms and practices that drives discrimination against adolescent girls.

In 2025, UNICEF continued work to strengthen national systems and financing for MHH. In Ethiopia, building on earlier tax reforms, UNICEF generated price-trend evidence and advocacy that contributed to securing full tax exemption on menstrual products, endorsed during the National MHH Advocacy Event – marking measurable progress toward menstrual equity. In Pakistan, UNICEF supported provincial leadership in Balochistan to allocate

US\$1.7 million to address MHH as a strategy to keep girls in school. In following endorsement of the national MHH Monitoring Assessment Report, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education developed a National MHH Coordination Roadmap with a clear workplan and coordination structure, bringing together key ministries and partners to strengthen cross-sectoral planning, monitoring and implementation of MHH nationwide. In Guyana, evidence generated through an MHH Needs Assessment in Hinterland dormitory schools filled critical data gaps and informed the Ministry of Education's forthcoming national MHH programme.

Health and education systems increasingly embedded MHH into standards, guidelines and service delivery. In Tanzania, new MHH Guidelines advanced gender-responsive standards and strengthened national capacity. In South Africa, menstrual hygiene management (MHM) was integrated into national WASH in Schools guidelines. In India, state-level MHM policies, action plans and standard operating procedures were developed and support for roll out is ongoing, alongside large-scale establishment of MHM corners in schools and training of teachers and health functionaries.

UNICEF also expanded service delivery and infrastructure to make schools more period friendly. In Ethiopia, MHH initiatives supported 114 schools and reached over 52,000 girls, including the establishment of dedicated MHH rooms and reusable menstrual materials. In Burundi, gender-segregated, disability-inclusive latrines and MHM spaces were constructed or rehabilitated in schools and health centres. In Kenya, over 54,000 adolescent girls received menstrual hygiene kits and education sessions to reduce absenteeism and improve dignity.

Public education and digital engagement further challenge stigma and harmful norms. In Indonesia, the Oky app and school-based programming reached thousands of girls and boys with accurate menstrual health information, contributing to increased knowledge and supportive attitudes. In Kyrgyzstan, over 18,000 girls actively used the Oky period tracker to better understand and manage menstruation. In Greece, menstrual health education reached more than 61,000 children across 475 schools, engaging boys alongside girls to promote dignity and bodily autonomy.



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On 20 March 2025, Karen, Vilma, and Rosita stand outside the bathroom facilities at the Quebrada Nacimiento Carojá Rural Mixed School in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, during the UNICEF-supported Clean Hands Festival. In many rural areas, schools lack basic infrastructure. This creates unsafe and unhygienic environments, making teaching and learning difficult. The absence of adequate facilities affects the quality of education and limits opportunities for students, especially girls.

Girls face additional challenges related to menstruation, as the lack of privacy and access to menstrual hygiene products worsens the situation. Without proper bathrooms or access to products like sanitary pads, many girls are forced to miss school during their menstrual cycle, contributing to absenteeism and, in some cases, school dropout.

Thanks to UNICEF's support, girls now receive a menstrual hygiene kit that includes reusable sanitary pads, information about menstruation, instructions on how to use, wash, and even make them, a pair of underwear, and a bar of soap.

Strengthening national systems for MHH in Tanzania

In 2025, Tanzania took a transformative step toward advancing gender equality through the launch of its [first National MHH Guideline](#), developed by the Government with support from UNICEF and partners. The guideline establishes a unified, multisectoral framework to ensure that every girl and woman can manage menstruation with dignity, safety and confidence.

The framework is accompanied by six standardised toolkits covering: menstrual materials and products, MHH facilities and services, Training of Trainers, Social and Behaviour Change (SBC), integration with sexual and reproductive health, and monitoring, evaluation and sustainability. Together, these tools elevate MHH from fragmented, project-based programming to a nationally coordinated priority, embedded across education, health, WASH, gender and youth systems.

To operationalise the guideline, UNICEF supported national and sub-national capacity-building for more than 100 government officials, coalition members and sector focal points, strengthening institutional ownership and readiness for coordinated rollout. Complementary school and community-based WASH and MHH initiatives further demonstrated scalable models for improving knowledge, behaviours and service delivery – laying the foundations for sustainable, system-wide impact.

By institutionalising national standards, strengthening cross-sector coordination and building capacity at scale, Tanzania is setting a precedent for rights-based, evidence-driven MHH programming – showing how integrated WASH and MHH action can accelerate progress toward gender equality, education and health outcomes.



Children and adolescents from a school located in Tucupita, Delta Amacuro state, Venezuela, participate in an activity to learn about menstrual hygiene and how to make recyclable sanitary pads.

Key partnerships, innovations and thought leadership

UNICEF continued its efforts on global advocacy and fundraising through the Global Menstrual Collective (GMC)⁴², serving as an active core group member and leading its advocacy efforts, including coordination of high-level initiatives and events for the menstrual health sector. Furthermore, UNICEF co-authored an article on the linkages between climate change and MHH⁴³ which was published in *Frontiers in Global Women's Health*, and several 'fireside chat' webinars co-hosted with the GMC.

Jointly with the GMC and its members, UNICEF has stepped up its leadership in the sector and has initiated a global advocacy initiative: the Shared Agenda for Action on MHH. Through this coordinated, evidence-based advocacy initiative, a global coalition is mobilising to elevate MHH as a development and policy priority. The Shared Agenda will present a compelling, evidence-driven case for MHH as critical to gender equality and human rights; identify key policy priorities and advocacy opportunities at global, regional, and national levels; and encourage greater, more diverse, and sustained investments in MHH. The official launch of the Shared Agenda is expected on Menstrual Hygiene Day (MH-day) 2026.

UNICEF and WASH United once again supported the global MH-Day under the theme "Period Friendly World", including global webinars to support country and regional preparations. Engagement reached a record of 971 million people across UNICEF, WASH United and other sector partners⁴⁴. On the MH day, UNICEF co-hosted the North American premiere of the movie *Impure*⁴⁵, a film highlighting menstrual stigma, exclusion, and shame

faced by millions around the world. The premiere⁴⁶ was followed by a panel discussion⁴⁷ about menstrual health and the role of storytelling in breaking stigma and taboos.

UNICEF continued its advocacy during several high-level events, and co-convened dedicated sessions on MHH at the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) jointly with the Kingdom of the Netherlands, at the UNC Water and Health Conference and during the third WASH in Schools International Learning Exchange for Africa.

Together with WaterAid and Menstrual Health Action for Impact, UNICEF published a report and design brief on decentralised menstrual product access models⁶. These offer a complementary approach to commercial markets and free distribution by bringing production and sales closer to users. The guidance highlights how decentralised models can improve access to MH-products and strengthen menstrual health education in emerging markets in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

UNICEF's West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) published a study on how UNICEF interventions targeting menstrual health contribute to education, health, child protection and psychosocial outcomes for women and girls in the region, through case studies in Benin, Niger, and Senegal⁴⁸.

Unfinished business / strategic shifts

In 2026, UNICEF will continue its sector leadership to advance the global advocacy work on the Shared Agenda for Action on MHH, with a launch of the agenda expected on MH Day 2026.

WASH in institutions

UNICEF's results in WASH in schools

There is need to accelerate investment in WASH in schools. For both water and sanitation, a two-fold increase is needed to reach universal access by 2030, while for hygiene, a 4-fold increase is required.⁴⁹ The same report highlights strong regional disparities. Low-income countries are far behind, with access to basic water and sanitation at only 49 per cent and basic hygiene at 28 per cent.

Simultaneously, climate change increasingly impacts access to and functionality of WASH services in schools. In this context, UNICEF launched a strategic framework for implementing climate resilient WASH in Schools (WinS)

in 2025⁷. The framework aims to bring education, WASH and climate sectors together, and create a common understanding of climate resilient WASH in schools.

Service delivery

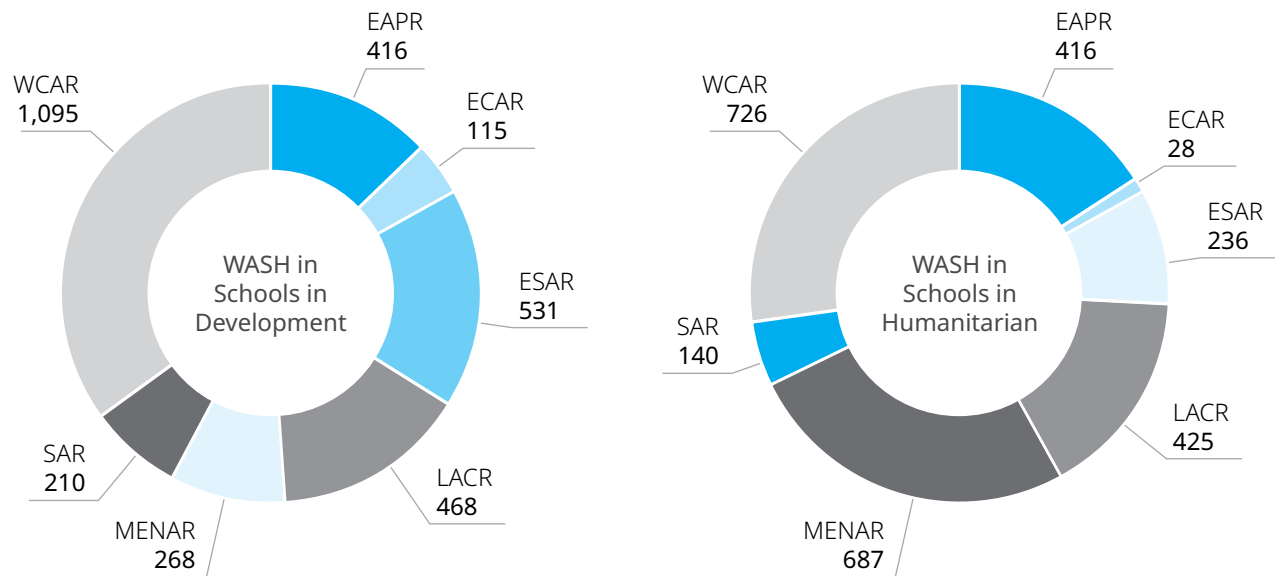
UNICEF continued to work with governments and partners to increase the number of schools with access to basic WASH services and climate-resilient WASH through direct service delivery. In 2025, an additional 5,761 schools in 87 countries gained access to the full complement of WASH services with UNICEF providing access to nearly 4,000 schools with basic water, over 3,400 with basic sanitation, and more than 3,550 with basic hygiene services. Of these, the majority (72 per cent) were in rural areas.

Just over half of the schools (54 per cent) were reached through development programming across all UNICEF regions, with the largest numbers of schools reached in the West and Central Africa region for both contexts (Figure 10).

At the country level, the largest emergency WinS programmes in 2025 included responses in Iraq, Cuba, Senegal and Myanmar; while Chad, Egypt, Nigeria, Brazil and Burkina Faso had the biggest reach through development programmes.

The overall SP target of 50,000 schools with access to basic WASH services was surpassed by 4,930 schools, with majority of schools (66 per cent) reached in humanitarian context in the last 5 years. Nearly half of schools (49 per cent) reached during the SP across both development and humanitarian context were in South Asia region. Most schools reached under the SP received basic hygiene services in line with JMP standards, although the overall proportion was significantly influenced by large-scale COVID-19 response activities in India in 2022.

FIGURE 10: Number of schools supported to gain access to a full complement of WASH services in 2025, by region (development and humanitarian)



The WASH Three-Star Approach program in Chihuahua, was developed to improve sanitary, water and hygiene infrastructures in schools in Mexico, favoring social behavioral change. Through the program, children learn how to better protect their health through using and maintaining sanitary services, as well as drinking water.

Systems strengthening

Guided by UNICEF's WASH in Schools Acceleration Framework⁵⁰, systems strengthening for WinS through UNICEF support continued to evolve in 2025, with a strong focus on climate resilience, data integration, gender responsiveness and institutionalisation of national standards.

UNICEF plays a leading role in providing technical assistance, capacity building and related support to governments to strengthen national systems to deliver WinS. This kind of indirect support reaches more schools than is possible with direct support alone.

Ensuring policies are supported with costed plans and funding is an important part of the WinS systems strengthening agenda. In 2025, 16 countries have reported that schools are included in a national WASH financing strategy, or there is a stand-alone WinS financing strategy in place. UNICEF country offices have

leveraged funding from multiple stakeholders for WinS: 27 countries leveraged from governments, 23 from donors and 12 from the private sector.

At country level such as in Tajikistan, the Government endorsed the landmark policy, the 2030 Climate-Adaptive WASH in Schools Strategic Plan, with UNICEF providing critical technical expertise in its design and costing. This policy creates a long-term operational pathway for equitable, climate-resilient access to WASH services in schools.

Across the Pacific, UNICEF supported strengthening WinS monitoring and standards. For example, in Vanuatu, UNICEF supported the development and launch of the national WinS policy in 2025, along with the integration of WinS indicators into Vanuatu Education Management Information System (VEMIS), strengthening coordination between education and WASH sectors and improving routine data reporting. In Solomon Islands, a nationwide WinS survey covering more than 1,000 schools provided



Vihan Gaekwad, the Health Leader at Rangpur Primary School in Gujarat, India, helps ensure that waste is properly composted and that the resulting fertilizer is used to nourish the school's kitchen garden, promoting health, hygiene, and sustainability. The school, which has achieved a five-star rating under the Saksham Shala Programme, is an example of student-led resilience and environmental responsibility. Saksham Shala, a pioneering initiative in India, is built around four pillars – Clean, Green, Safe and Sustainable – and goes beyond basic WASH to promote climate resilience, water conservation, safe sanitation, inclusion, disaster risk reduction, child protection and other sustainability-related topics.

evidence to inform the validation of the National WinS Policy, aiming to leverage renewed commitment and resource mobilisation for WinS. In Kiribati, UNICEF supported the revision and digitisation of the WASH survey for the Kiribati Education Management Information System, to strengthen data driven planning. In Fiji, review of the WinS policy and Minimum Standards is ongoing along with the implementation of the 3-star approach to support school improvements.

In Kenya, UNICEF strengthened institutional systems by supporting harmonised policies, joint planning between Ministries of Education and Health, and operationalised the national WASH in Institutions agenda through the joint School and Health Care Facilities Technical Working Group. This platform strengthened multi-sectoral planning and enabled harmonised rollout of policies, standards, and reporting tools across counties. UNICEF further supported the development of 2026 annual workplans for MHM, WinS and WASH in health care facilities. A new WinS online reporting tool (Kobo-based) was launched to harmonise partner reporting and reinforce national data systems.

In India, UNICEF leveraged over US\$2 million from state governments and the private sector respectively, to scale WASH in Schools and MHM, demonstrating increased

domestic financing and private sector engagement for sustainability. Capacity-building efforts included training thousands of stakeholders and teachers across multiple states on climate-resilient WinS approaches.

Gender-responsive and inclusive approaches were further institutionalised. In Uzbekistan, UNICEF supported gender-responsive WinS standards embedding menstrual health into policy and practice. In Guinea-Bissau, schools were supported with inclusive latrine construction, ensuring accessibility for children with disabilities and facilities responsive to girls' menstrual hygiene needs. In South Africa, development of national WinS guidelines integrating menstrual hygiene management was supported by UNICEF and approved by government. These guidelines align with UNICEF/WHO JMP standards.

Climate resilience and youth engagement also gained momentum. In the Philippines, the Climate-Resilient WASH in Schools initiative deepened youth engagement in climate action, reaching almost 5,000 children and adolescents through SBC strategies. Climate change and WASH concepts were integrated into the curriculum through self-learning modules. Across the Pacific, climate-resilient WinS efforts focused on scalable, localised and school led improvement action planning.

From pilot to policy - Catalysing national scale through India's Clean & Green School Rating system

India's transformation of WASH in Schools was catalysed by the Prime Minister's 2014 call to ensure functional, safe toilets in all schools under the Swachh Bharat Mission. In response, the Ministry of Education launched *Swachh Bharat-Swachh Vidyalaya* and, in 2016, introduced the Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar (SVP) – a national school rating system inspired by the global 3-Star Approach for WASH in Schools.

With technical support from UNICEF, the SVP assessment framework, operational guidelines and digital platform were developed, alongside national and state-level training and verification processes. Building on the original 3-star model, India expanded the framework into a 5-Star rating system, incorporating behaviour change communication and operation and maintenance requirements to create a comprehensive quality benchmark for WASH in schools. The model rapidly gained scale and in its first cycle, nearly 285,000 schools self-registered on the online platform. Subsequent rounds in 2017 and 2022 saw participation rise to 45 per cent of all schools nationwide, demonstrating strong government uptake and sector-wide adoption.

In 2025, with [technical support from UNICEF](#), the Ministry further evolved the initiative into the [Swachh evam Harit Vidyalaya Rating \(SHVR\)](#) – rebranded as the Clean and Green School Rating. The updated framework integrates climate-resilient and environmental sustainability components, reinforcing alignment with national climate and education priorities. The system is now fully institutionalised and managed by the Ministry's own informatics centre, ensuring long-term sustainability and government ownership.

This journey demonstrates how targeted, catalytic technical assistance can enable digital innovation, institutional leadership and nationwide scale. By embedding progressive, sustainable, climate-resilient WASH standards across India's education systems, India has demonstrated a replicable pathway for translating global norms into sustained national impact.

Key partnerships, innovations and thought leadership

In collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and WinS Network partners, UNICEF co-convened the third African International Learning Exchange (ILE) on WinS⁵¹, hosted by the Government of South Africa, bringing together 115 delegates (including government and other sector stakeholders) from 18 African nations. Participants endorsed the following priorities for governments in the region to accelerate WinS: a) governance: clear leadership and shared responsibility; b) financing: adequate resources for sustainable services; c) monitoring and data: information that leads to action; and d) integration: aligning sectors for impact.

UNICEF continues to partner with Emory University to strengthen capacities of staff and partners through the WASH in Schools Distance-Learning Course⁵². Participants for the 2025 cohort represented 20 countries and included 46 international professionals (of which 27 were affiliated with UNICEF and 22 were sponsored by UNICEF directly). The WinS 101 course is now in its 14th year of operation.

At the global level, UNICEF participated in several high-level events, including a session at Stockholm World Water Week to launch UNICEF's Climate Resilient WASH in Schools Framework, and a session at the UNC Water and Health Conference to launch the start of a review process to identify and prioritise advanced indicators for WASH in Schools.

The collaboration with UNESCO and WHO continued on the global school health and wellbeing agenda. Via this platform, UNICEF contributed to the development and launch of a global handbook on integrating school health and well-being into education policy and planning⁵³ and briefing note on transforming education through health and well-being⁵⁴, which includes WASH in schools and menstrual health and hygiene.

In 2025, UNICEF has signed global partnerships with Unilever and the Eleva Foundation to support the roll out of the WinS acceleration framework in three countries, Türkiye, India and Viet Nam. The partnership aims to strengthen national WinS systems through policy, planning, budgeting, capacity development, and advocacy efforts. This is done in collaboration with GIZ, who is implementing a similar partnership in South Africa and The Philippines, with support from Unilever.

Unfinished business and strategic shifts

Learning from the achievements of the previous SP, UNICEF will continue to roll out the WinS Acceleration Framework and the Climate Resilient WinS Framework,



At the Tanga Urban Health Centre in Nola, Central African Republic, a new borehole provides safe water through three taps, strengthening hygiene practices and supporting the delivery of quality health services. The centre also conducts malnutrition screening as part of the programme, linking safe water, hygiene and nutrition services to improve health outcomes for children.

through country led collaboration and technical assistance to government and partners, and at global level through continued coordination and thought leadership. Together with the WHO/UNICEF JMP, the work on defining and prioritising advanced WinS indicators will continue to inform future improved monitoring of WASH in schools.

UNICEF's results in WASH in health care facilities

Access to safe, sustainable and resilient WASH services is foundational to quality health care provision, and UNICEF is committed to help countries reach universal coverage of WASH in health care facilities (HCFs). Yet thousands of HCFs around the world are without these necessities. In the Least Developed Countries, the situation is particularly dire: 1 in 3 HCFs lack basic water services, 4 out of 5 facilities lack basic sanitation services and 2 out of 3 facilities lack basic hygiene¹⁶. Every year, more than 16 million babies are born in HCFs in the Least

Developed Countries with inadequate WASH, putting them and their mothers at greater risk of infection. To strengthen maternal, newborn and child health, to combat antimicrobial resistance, and to prepare for future outbreaks and pandemics, access to WASH services must be in place in HCFs everywhere.

Service delivery

In 2025, 2,797 HCFs across 80 countries gained access to the full complement of WASH services through UNICEF support. The support was targeted towards primary health care, where the need is greatest: 77 per cent of the facilities were non-hospitals (e.g., health centers) and 82 per cent were located in rural areas (Figure 11).

UNICEF's humanitarian response accounted for 46 per cent of all HCFs, across 54 countries, while in development settings, WASH services were supported

in 1,510 HCFs across 67 countries (Figure 12). In both contexts, the greatest support was provided in West and Central Africa region, followed by East and Southern Africa and the Middle East and Northern Africa (Figure 12).

Countries continue to utilise the Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool (WASH FIT)⁵⁵ to drive incremental and sustainable improvements of WASH services in HCFs. In 2025, UNICEF implemented WASH FIT in more than 40 countries, alongside providing WASH supplies and training on WASH and infection prevention and control (IPC) to an additional 6,985 HCFs.

Efforts are underway to move towards climate-resilient services in HCFs, with 36 per cent of UNICEF-supported facilities benefiting in 2025. Two country examples are Cambodia and Belize, where sanitary inspections in HCFs, schools and communities helped identify climate-resilient WASH solutions and catalysing investment.

FIGURE 11: The percentage of HCFs reached with the full complement of WASH services in 2025, disaggregated by urban and rural areas and by hospitals and non-hospitals

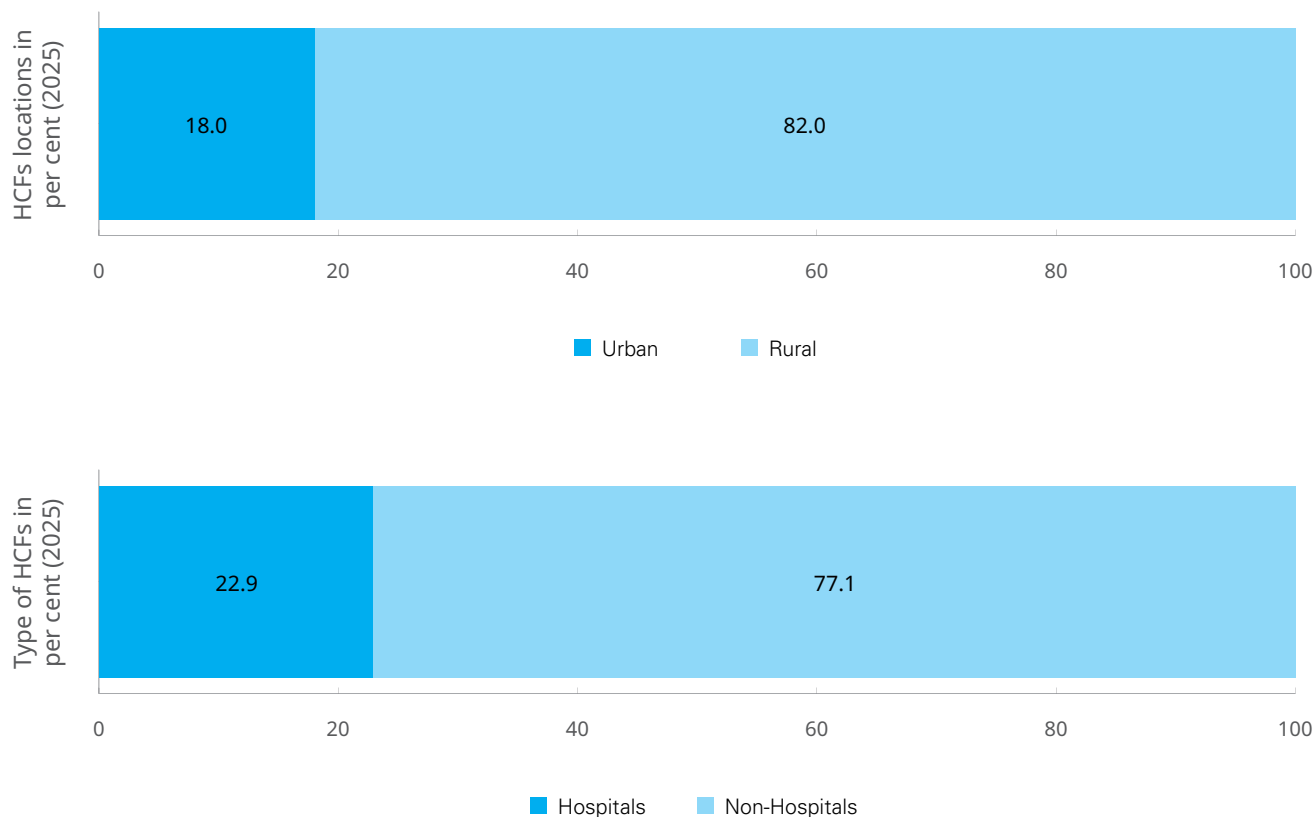
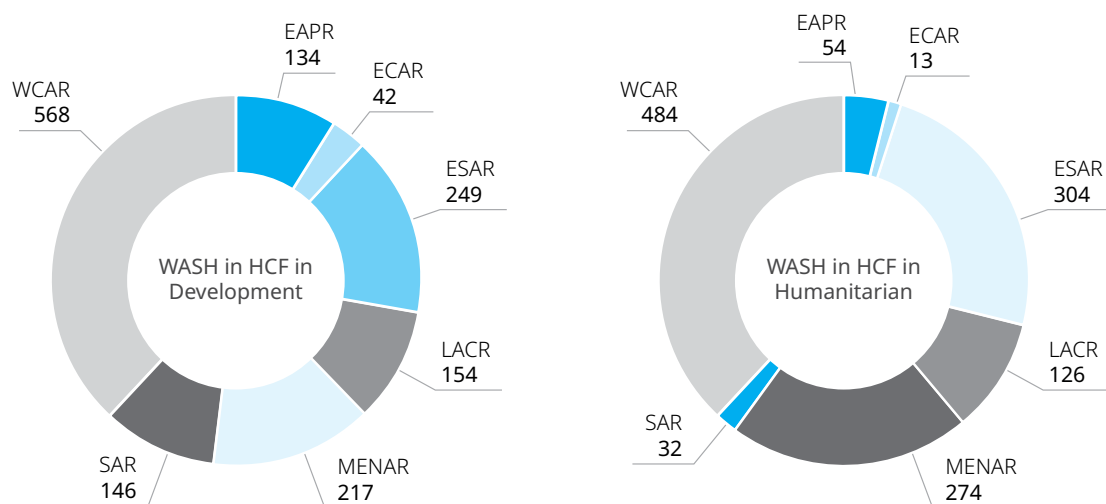


FIGURE 12: A total of 2,797 health care facilities were reached with basic WASH services in 2025, by region



Climate-smart WASH in health care facilities – Delivering safer care and resilient systems for children in Cambodia

Two years ago, Pros Saloy gave birth to her second daughter at [Srae Chis Health Centre in rural Cambodia](#) under conditions that undermined dignity and safety: no clean water, failing sanitation, unreliable electricity and deliveries conducted in the dark. When she recently returned for a check-up with her newborn, Sreynit, the experience was markedly different. The facility now has clean, functional spaces, running water and reliable power.

“Much, much better than before,” she said - relieved by a transformation that has reshaped both care quality and trust in the health system.

This change did not come from quick fixes, but from a coordinated effort to overhaul basic systems. In 2025, funding from the Republic of Korea supported the installation of new piped water systems, safe toilets, and a constructed wetland for wastewater treatment – replacing contamination risks with resilient, environmentally sound infrastructure. Complimentary support from Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade enabled the installation of solar panels, ensuring uninterrupted power for water pumps, delivery rooms, and essential medical equipment.

The results were immediate and measurable: patients visits to the health centre tripled, operational costs fell sharply – with electricity expenses reduced by 90 per cent, and staff who once worked by flashlight now proudly served their community with confidence and proper tools.

“Now, with the light, I can see clearly,” says midwife Meng Sokhen. “I can provide better care.”

The benefits extend beyond the facility walls. Neighbouring schoolchildren collect clean drinking water from the centre’s clean taps, and patients like elderly Natt Han can recover in a safe, dignified environment.

Building on this success, UNICEF, with continued support from the Republic of Korea, is scaling this integrated model to six larger HCFs across Cambodia, reaching over 400,000 people. The success of Srae Chis shows what’s possible when the basics – clean water, safe toilets, and steady power – are not only available but designed to work together. For families like Saloy’s, it means that the difficult journey to seek care is no longer a risk, but a reliable pathway to safer childbirth and healthier futures.

System strengthening

To ensure that WASH services are sustainable, UNICEF in partnership with WHO developed the Eight Practical Steps for improving WASH in health care facilities⁵⁶. These steps serve as a framework for evidence-based national actions and are articulated in the 2023 UN General Assembly on WASH, waste and electricity in health care facilities⁵⁷.

In 2025, UNICEF supported 20 governments in their efforts to address these steps. This includes undertaking a national assessment of WASH services in HCFs in Tanzania and Zambia, which provide the evidence base for planning; establishing the first guidelines on WASH and waste in HCFs in Chad; developing costed roadmaps to achieve universal coverage in Bangladesh, Fiji, and Benin to guide investment; and integrating WASH indicators into health management information systems in Uganda to ensure WASH services are routinely monitored.

Key partnerships

UNICEF's largest global partnership to-date on WASH in HCFs has been with the Republic of Korea⁵⁸, through the Maintaining and Strengthening Health Services through ACT-A programme, which was launched in 2023. This partnership has had widespread impact, with more than \$17M in investment for WASH in HCFs in 34 countries across all seven regions. It is also the largest joint WASH-health global programme to-date, leveraging the comparative advantages of each partner. In the first six months of 2025, the ACT-A programme supported 113 health facilities serving nearly 1 million people with WASH services, with a focus on climate resilience, and trained more than 5,000 health facility staff in WASH FIT and IPC.

Global advocacy and coordination

Over the past decade, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres has issued a Call to Action (2018)⁵⁹ and the Member States have adopted both a World Health Assembly resolution (2019)⁶⁰ followed by a UN General Assembly resolution (2023) on WASH in HCFs⁵⁷. UNICEF and WHO co-lead global coordination and advocacy on the issue, including the oversight of global monitoring, provision of technical tools, and development of strategic guidance with global and national partners.

Last year UNICEF and WHO, in consultation with the UN Secretary-General's office, launched the 2025 Global Progress Report on WASH, Waste and Electricity in Health Care Facilities, which provided updates on the implementation of the resolution based on inputs from 101 countries¹⁶. This unprecedented response from countries demonstrated the significant political momentum behind this issue. The report found that countries are undertaking baseline assessments and taking action to strengthen standards and regulations for WASH and waste.



At Kirivong Referral Hospital in Takeo Province, Cambodia, Dr. Socheat Heng, an obstetrician, gynaecologist, and neonatal care specialist, shows her three-year-old daughter how to wash her hands at a UNICEF-supported handwashing station. With support from UNICEF and funding from the Republic of Korea, the hospital now has a newly established neonatal care unit (NCU), renovated bathrooms, handwashing stations, a wastewater treatment system and a solar-powered water heater.

However, significant gaps remain and limited progress has been made to develop, resource and implement costed roadmaps for WASH, waste and electricity in HCFs, and to integrate harmonised indicators into health management information systems. Less than half of countries have a costed plan, and less than 1 in 10 counties have sufficient financial and human resources to fund their national plans.

In addition, UNICEF and WHO coordinate the Global Strategic Network (GSN) on WASH, waste and electricity, a global leadership group which was set up in 2024. In 2025, the GSN hosted the first UN General Assembly event on WASH in HCFs in partnership with the UN Group of Friends. This event highlighted country progress made since the adoption of the resolution as well as showcase best practices for scaling-up universal WASH, waste and electricity services along with the clear synergies with efforts on Primary Health Care and Universal Health Coverage.

Unfinished business

The findings of the 2025 Global Progress Report indicate a further need to support countries in achieving the eight Practical Steps⁵⁶, with a particular focus on developing costed roadmaps and advocating for their financing. In addition to strengthening the health system to sustain WASH, UNICEF will also work with governments and partners to transition to climate-resilient solutions for WASH services within health care facilities¹⁶.

WASH in emergencies and fragile contexts

Between 2021 and 2025, global humanitarian needs expanded sharply, driven by overlapping crises including violent conflict, climate-related disasters, pandemics, economic instability, and large-scale population displacement. The period was marked by the continued expansion of needs first seen in 2020, when global humanitarian caseloads reached 235 million people, the highest in decades - driven largely by conflict, COVID-19, climate disasters and displacement. This drove a record expansion in UNICEF's operational footprint, with responses across 455 humanitarian situations in 152 countries.

Humanitarian crises became increasingly protracted and multidimensional, marked by escalating conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, the Sahel, Myanmar, Ethiopia, and later Gaza, Sudan, Lebanon, Haiti, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. OCHA analysis indicated growing levels of suffering, widespread violations of international humanitarian law, and intensifying constraints on humanitarian access and worker safety. By 2024, over 470 million children – 1 in 6 globally – lived in or were fleeing conflict zones⁶¹.

Displacement reached unprecedented levels throughout this period. By mid-2024, an estimated 122.6 million people were forcibly displaced, with one-third linked to climate-driven crises, reflecting the increasing influence of heatwaves, floods, droughts, and extreme weather on population movements and service disruptions⁶². Crises were lasting longer – averaging 10 years – intensifying declines in health, nutrition, and education outcomes, while increasing risks of famine and disease outbreaks.

WASH remains central to emergency response efforts. The launch and rollout of the WASH Roadmap 2020–2025⁶³ highlighted global efforts to strengthen WASH sector capacity, quality, coordination, and preparedness. The WASH Roadmap underscored the need for predictable, accountable, and resilient WASH systems capable of delivering at scale “anywhere and anytime,” and guided sector transformation through strategic initiatives on capacity, financing, and partnership.

Outbreaks of cholera, mpox, and other epidemic-prone diseases surged alongside climate-driven floods and droughts, increasing demand for emergency WASH services. UNICEF adapted its programming to increasingly protracted and complex contexts, operating across both acute emergencies and transition settings through humanitarian–development–peace approaches, while upholding its leadership role as Global WASH Cluster Lead Agency.

Together, these dynamics define 2020–2025 as a period of rapidly growing humanitarian complexity, characterised by simultaneous large-scale emergencies, rising vulnerabilities among children, escalating climate shocks, and persistent underfunding. WASH interventions remained indispensable for preserving health, dignity, and stability in crisis settings, reinforcing the critical importance of sustained global investment and coordinated action.

WASH in Emergencies remained guided by UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children⁶⁴, with continued emphasis on conflict sensitivity, neutrality, and contributions to social cohesion where possible.

UNICEF's Results in WASH emergency response

In 2025, UNICEF provided safe drinking water for nearly 36.2 million people in humanitarian contexts across 75 countries meeting the 2025 target (Figure 13). Over 7 million people were reached with emergency sanitation services across 62 countries, which is below the 2025 targets (15 million), while 7.1 million people were reached with critical hygiene services across 61 countries³. Over the SP period, UNICEF exceeded its cumulative milestones for safe water provision, while progress in sanitation remained below planned targets (Figure 14). Funding cuts have significantly impacted the ability to achieve results, contributing to the unmet sanitation targets. In addition to reduced funding, shifting priorities such as taking over complex urban water supply systems on request from the WASH Cluster also played a role. Water supply continues to be accorded top priority by respective governments, which UNICEF supports, while sanitation needs are increasingly led by partners, including in context such as Sudan.

UNICEF continued to deliver cost-efficient humanitarian WASH responses, primarily through interim solutions such as water trucking and temporary shared sanitation, while progressively increasing the use of durable solutions to support longer-term recovery. Hygiene interventions reached at least 5.4 million people through the provision of kits, soap and/or handwashing facilities, tailored to context and aligned with WASH Cluster standards. UNICEF also supported schools and HCFs with WASH and IPC services, highlighting the critical role of IPC in reducing transmission risks and responding to public health emergencies.

3 As humanitarian hygiene is not a standalone output indicator, unlike Water 4.1.7 and Sanitation 4.1.8, the number used were based on the combined data points for humanitarian hygiene basic and humanitarian hygiene limited from the 2023 and 2024 CSIs. For the same reason, no specific target was established for humanitarian hygiene that combined both basic and limited services.



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The Diaba Peulh displacement site, located in the rural commune of Fakala, Sofara cercle, Mopti region, Mali, hosts displaced families. UNICEF is implementing an integrated approach to strengthen the resilience of the families living on the site as well as that of the host communities. Activities in education, health, nutrition, WASH and protection support more than 1,500 children through a comprehensive, coordinated humanitarian response centred on their essential needs, while also strengthening the resilience of individuals and communities. The activities on site are carried out as part of the GIZ, UNICEF and WFP Partnership for Resilience in the Sahel, funded by German Development Cooperation (BMZ).

In 2025, UNICEF pursued the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach in its WASH programming in 35 countries, exceeding the SP target (30 countries), through participation of affected populations in conflict analysis, multi-stakeholder collaboration between humanitarian and development actors and using strategies that have specific goals to promote social cohesion and peace. Overall, UNICEF pursued the nexus approach in 41 countries throughout the SP period.

UNICEF has implemented significant WASH responses to ongoing emergencies and acute crises across all regions (Figure 13). UNICEF's largest reach with humanitarian WASH response in 2025 was in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, driven by major responses in Sudan, Palestine (including Gaza), Lebanon and Syria, followed by the response in East and Central Asia (ECA) region.

FIGURE 13: Number of beneficiaries reached with humanitarian water services (36.2 million people) and sanitation services (7.1 million people) in 2025, by region

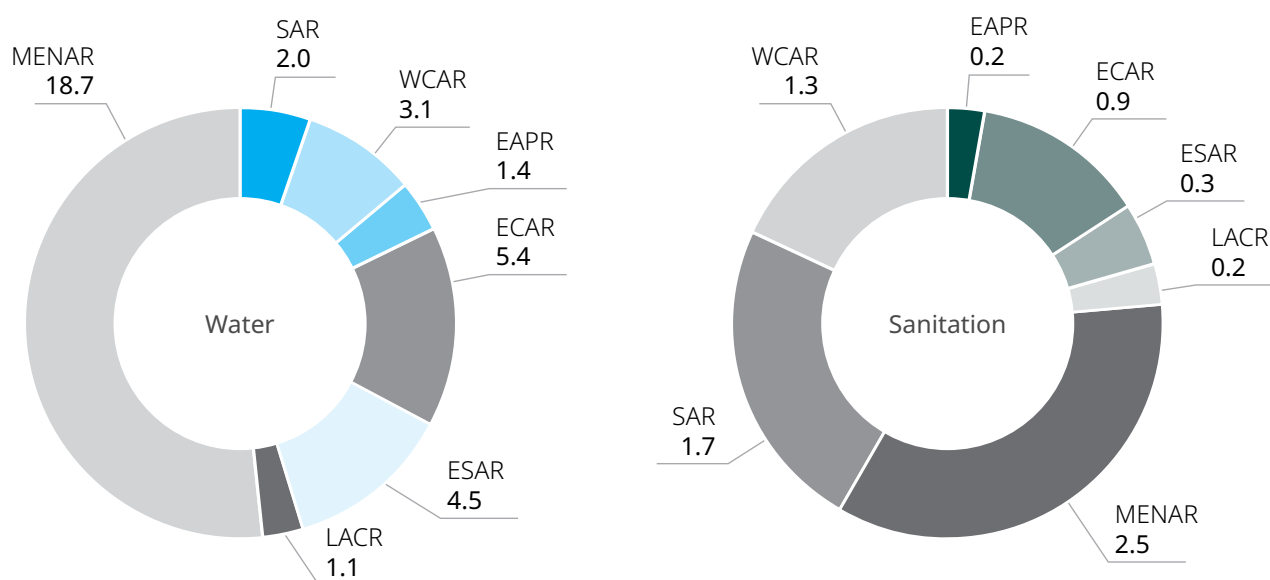
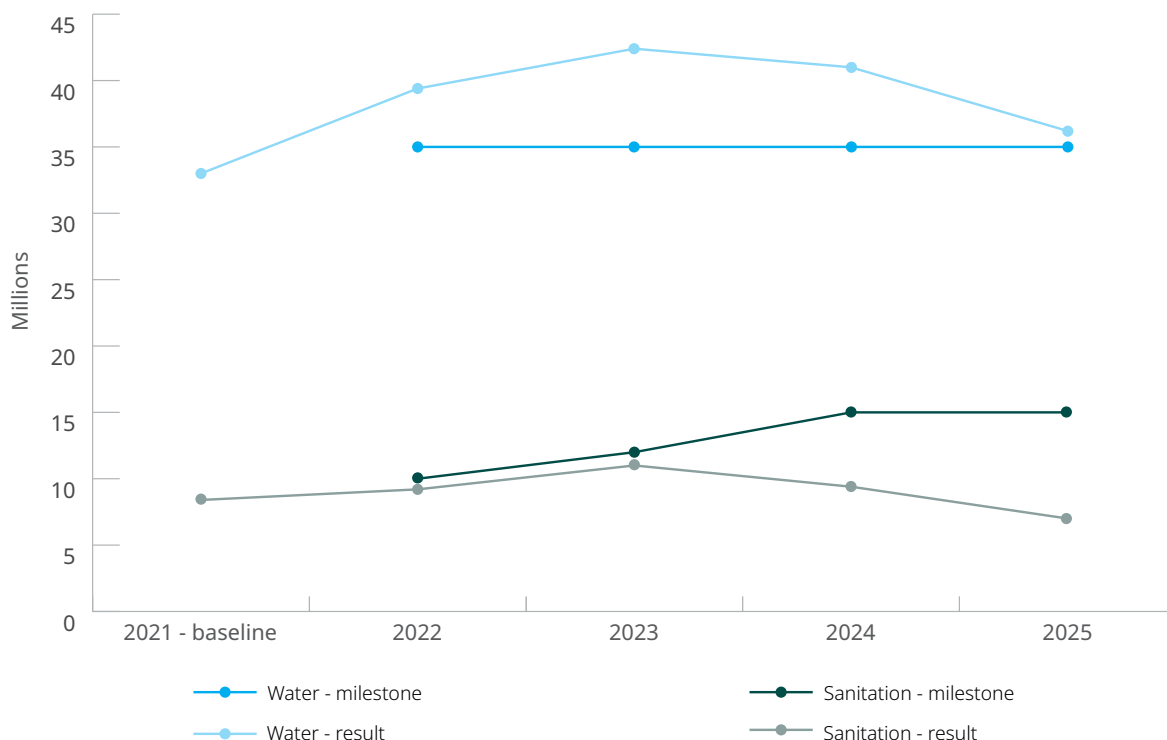


FIGURE 14: UNICEF Emergency Water and Sanitation Beneficiaries: 2021 Baseline, and Milestones vs. Results During the SP Period



At the country level, following the late 2024 ceasefire in **Lebanon**, 2025 marked a year of partial stabilisation yet continued humanitarian needs. Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) gradually attempted to return home, while others remained in collective shelters due to destroyed housing. UNICEF restored essential water systems⁶⁵ with the capacity to provide safe water for over 4 million people (69 per cent of the national population) and expanded wastewater management to support 13 systems serving over 1 million people. In parallel, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Energy and Water to develop a Strategic Plan for Wastewater and a comprehensive database of ongoing water and wastewater projects covering until 2027. A capacity building effort enabled the national Water Establishments to take over wastewater treatment plants starting in 2026. As a co-chair of the humanitarian WASH sector, UNICEF played a pivotal role in the collective efforts of achieving the Water Sector Recovery Plan which aims for the financial independence of the four regional Water Establishments by 2026.

Sudan continued to face one of the world's largest humanitarian and WASH crises. With displacement exceeding 12 million people, recurrent cholera⁶⁶, and collapsing public infrastructure, UNICEF maintained one of its largest global WASH responses. UNICEF provided

safe drinking water⁶⁷ to nearly 15 million people through sustained operation of major water treatment plants in urban centres, rehabilitation and solarisation of water systems and emergency water supply in displacement sites and outbreak hotspots. Sanitation and hygiene interventions focused on high-risk settings, including IDP sites, flood-affected areas, and cholera hotspots. UNICEF supported access to sanitation services for nearly 300,000 people through construction, rehabilitation and desludging, complemented by large-scale hygiene promotion with handwashing and infection prevention messaging. While sanitation coverage remained constrained by funding and access limitations, targeted investments reduced open defecation and mitigated outbreak risks in priority locations.

UNICEF's sector leadership enabled a rapid scale-up during cholera surges, supported WASH-Health joint planning, improved real-time monitoring and information sharing, particularly in Darfur and Kordofan where access was most limited.

The humanitarian catastrophe in **the State of Palestine** continued into 2025 with near-total collapse of WASH services⁶⁸. UNICEF continued to function as the primary WASH responder alongside Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, the Palestine Water Authority and other WASH cluster partners.

In Gaza, UNICEF sustained water provision for drinking and domestic use for 1.6 million people, out of which 1 million people resided in hard-to-access areas through water trucking. Furthermore, UNICEF played a critical role in securing the entry of over 5 million litres of fuel, water treatment chemicals and spare parts, and in connecting major desalination plants to the electricity grid. Sanitation services reached 1.4 million people each month through community-level services, and rehabilitation of wastewater and sewage pumping stations. UNICEF's sanitation interventions mitigated public health risks at overcrowded facilities and from flash floods during winter. Additionally, UNICEF installed over 700 accessible latrine add-ons and distributed hygiene and dignity supplies by prioritising persons with disabilities. UNICEF's support also extended to 93 temporary learning centres and 29 health facilities with basic WASH services and WASH upgrades.

In Syria, UNICEF continued focusing on continuity of service delivery with safe water⁶⁹ for 4.1 million people and with sanitation services for 1.6 million people through water system repairs, public network maintenance, and supporting internally displaced persons. In partnership with the Ministry of Energy and Water, UNICEF focused on strengthening institutional capacity amid political transition, which enabled reform and evidence-based decision making for humanitarian WASH response and recovery programming. UNICEF delivered training for 30 engineers, providing IT tools, and establishing a centralised database for all WASH facilities.

Public health emergencies

Cholera and other public health emergencies

Cholera disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations lacking access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities, a situation exacerbated by factors such as conflict, population displacement, and the impacts of climate change.

From 1 January to 28 December 2025, a cumulative total of 614,828 cases and 7,598 deaths were reported from 33 countries, representing the first decline in the number of cases since 2022 (-23.6 per cent compared to 2024, as reported in the annual WHO multi-country cholera outbreak external situation report⁷⁰), but with an increase in the number of deaths (+30.9 per cent). Despite the overall decrease in the number of cases, several countries were severely affected in 2025, including Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Between 1 January and 28 December 2025, Angola reported a total of 36,293 cases and 895 deaths. Cases were reported from 18 of 21 provinces, with four provinces accounting for 49 per cent of cases: Luanda (7,047 cases), Benguela (4,731), Bengo (3,075), and Cuanza Sul (2,884). UNICEF WASH team in Angola supported the National Water Directorate (DNA) by co-leading the national WASH coordination through dedicated expertise



Fatima, 8, Sarah, 6, and Aisha, 1.5, bring clean water in Al Hol camp, Northeast Syria.

Displaced families and children in Al Hol Camp, Northeast Syria, continue to face significant challenges, with limited access to basic needs. To support these vulnerable communities, UNICEF is providing water trucking assistance as a temporary measure to ensure an adequate supply of clean and safe drinking water.

With the heightened risk of waterborne diseases, including cholera, especially during the summer months, this initiative aims to improve overall hygiene and sanitation conditions in the camp, ultimately enhancing the health and quality of life for families and children.

(WASH Sector Coordinator and Information Management Specialist). UNICEF implemented a targeted WASH approach and conducted more than 2,000 CATI (Case-Area Targeted Interventions) across nine provinces. In addition, the bucket chlorination intervention, which promotes sustained safe water use and handwashing through a rewards-based approach, has been implemented in all provinces where UNICEF intervenes. To enhance coordination, monitoring, and data-driven decision-making across the WASH response, UNICEF has been actively registering key infrastructure into the Solstice information management platform, which by the end of 2025 included 3,058 water points for municipal and community water distribution systems and 29 CTCs, Cholera Treatment Units, and Oral Rehydration Points.

Between 1 January and 28 December 2025, the Democratic Republic of Congo reported a total of 71,147 cases and 2,071 deaths, the worst epidemic the country has seen in 25 years. A total of 21 of the country's 26 provinces were affected. Water quality programming activities were implemented with PNECHOL, the National Program for the Elimination of Cholera, and the US CDC

in the cities of Goma and Kalemie, two large urban areas heavily affected by cholera in the east of the country. WASH and IPC interventions have also been implemented in cholera treatment facilities, particularly in Kinshasa, and UNICEF is working to strengthen WASH facilities in schools, health centres and communities. More than 21,500 CATI interventions were carried out in 2025 to implement rapid and targeted actions among households living near a confirmed case.

UNICEF is also a key participant in regional and global coordination and reference bodies for cholera control. In Africa, UNICEF leads the WASH pillar of the Cholera Incident Management Support Team, the coordination body set up to respond to the current outbreak. At global level, UNICEF has chaired the Global Task Force on Cholera Control WASH Working Group since September 2023 and continues to support the development of priority products by the members of the group, including guidelines for WASH response during outbreaks, on WASH and IPC in treatments structures, and for water quality monitoring.

In 2025, UNICEF's WASH team was also critical in responding to the Ebola Virus Disease outbreaks in Uganda (January-April 2025, 14 cases including 4 deaths) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (September-December 2025, 64 cases including 45 deaths).

Each year, Vector-borne diseases account for more than 17 per cent of all infectious diseases globally, causing more than 700,000 deaths annually. Vector-borne diseases include malaria, dengue, schistosomiasis, human African trypanosomiasis, leishmaniasis, etc. and climate change, conflicts and human displacement are all growing in scale, increasing the spread of mosquito-borne diseases. UNICEF WASH has partnered with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Mentor Initiative to develop training material on vector control for WASH practitioners. A 4-day course was organised for UNICEF WASH staff and partners in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2025.

At global level, UNICEF continued its collaboration with WHO to develop guidelines and technical products related to WASH and Public Health Emergencies including

- A joint guidance was published with WHO, IOM and UNHCR on “safe and supportive care in community care centres for individuals with mild mpox in camps for internally displaced persons or refugees”⁷¹.
- Four WHO technical publications on Mpox
 - a practical manual for designing, setting up, and assessing health facilities in the context of mpox outbreaks⁷²
 - an IPC and WASH rapid assessment tool user guide for health facilities⁷³
 - A call to action to prioritise hand hygiene across communities and healthcare facilities during mpox disease outbreaks⁷⁴ and;

- a rapid assessment tool user guide for IPC and WASH in health facilities during Ebola or Marburg disease outbreaks⁷⁵.

UNICEF WASH continues to co-lead the WASH in Public Health Emergencies Network with WHO, providing a platform for technical exchange and coordination for approximately 60 individuals representing 35 organizations active in this field. Moving forward, WHO and UNICEF will use the umbrella of the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network to host the WASH in PHE Network.

Global analytics and thought leadership (2025)

The Global WASH Sector Resilience Index

UNICEF concluded the Global WASH Sector Resilience Index (GWSRI) exercise and report. The GWSRI is a global tool that gives countries by the resilience status of their WASH Sectors and will be critical for advocacy, informing decisions, prioritising programming and guiding investments. UNICEF is now rolling out the Resilience Analysis at country level starting with Madagascar and the expected outcome will be in the form of a roadmap for strengthening the WASH Sector resilience.

Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)

While the PDNA experts group meets several times a year to discuss development of guidelines as well as on-going PDNAs in various countries, a face-to-face expert group meeting is held once a year. UNICEF is part of the whole process. Due to Travel restrictions, in 2025, all meetings were attended online. The PDNA WASH guidelines are already revised and submitted (waiting final approval along with guidelines from other sectors). The on-going/planned PDNA processes in Sri Lanka, Cabo Verde, Gaza, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Jamaica were also discussed.

UNHCR-UNICEF Strategic cooperation framework

UNICEF and UNHCR strengthened joint WASH delivery for refugees through harmonised procurement and co-developed guidance. In 2025 five new Letters of Understanding were agreed, for Thailand, North Macedonia, Syria, Pakistan, Albania. The joint Community of Practice initiative remains a cornerstone of technical excellence and is building on the experiences of the R-WASH programme⁷⁶ jointly implemented by UNICEF and UNHCR in East Africa.

In addition, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP have come together in partnership to develop the guideline “Circular Economy principles in infrastructure projects: A guideline to enhance efficiency in humanitarian settings”⁷⁷.



A water chlorination point installed by UNICEF on the shores of Lake Kivu in Shasha, North Kivu province, DR Congo.

In response to the surge in suspected cholera cases in Shasha, Case-Area Targeted Intervention (CATI) teams have been deployed. These teams conduct active case finding, disinfect affected households, distribute water treatment and storage supplies, and raise awareness among families on appropriate hygiene practices. The installation of 16 water chlorination points has strengthened these efforts, contributing to the protection of nearly 100,000 people against cholera since the return of families to the area.

CATI response teams are supported by the European Union, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, and the Government of the Republic of Korea.

Capacity strengthening

In view of the increasing number of public health situations, UNICEF delivered several global and regional trainings on cholera response, vector control and other public health situations including in Myanmar, West and Central Africa Region and globally to UNICEF and counterparts' staff totalling around 150 WASH staff.

Humanitarian coordination - Global WASH cluster

The year 2025 marked one of the most significant shifts in the humanitarian system in over a decade. The Humanitarian Reset – launched to address severe funding gaps, declining trust, a legitimacy crisis and persistent inefficiencies – resulted in streamlined structures, the consolidation of clusters, and a much stronger prioritisation of assistance toward the most life-threatening needs.

These system-wide reforms coincided with intensifying global humanitarian needs and unprecedented financial pressures on the WASH sector. At the beginning of 2025, around 305 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance and protection globally⁷⁸. By mid-2025, 161 million of these people had been hyper prioritised for support under the Humanitarian Reset⁷⁹. Among them, 75.8 million people required life-saving WASH assistance in contexts affected by complex and protracted conflict and displacement, climate-related disasters and shocks, and large-scale public health emergencies - with 33.8 million reached. The humanitarian WASH sector experienced one of the sharpest funding contractions on record, with only USD 624 million (19 per cent) secured against a USD 3.2 billion funding requirement for the year. As a result, WASH programmes were suspended in over 30 countries, leaving an additional 70 million people without access to life-saving and essential services. This followed an already low 37 per cent funding level in 2024, compounded by more than USD 72 billion in global funding cuts⁷⁹.

Despite this environment, the Global WASH Cluster (GWC) operated in an exceptionally challenging environment shaped by the Humanitarian Reset. The GWC remained focused and committed to uphold excellence in effective and accountable humanitarian WASH coordination for the people most affected by and vulnerable to crises throughout the year. In 2025, the GWC continued to provide strategic leadership, completing the final review of the GWC's Strategic Plan 2022–2025⁸⁰ and conducting a priority-setting exercise that informed the 2026 Bridging Strategy, designed to strengthen collective action among GWC members and National Coordination Platforms (NCPs). In May, the Cluster convened the hybrid 29th GWC Annual Meeting⁸¹, which brought together more than 80 participants from 43 organizations and 15 NCPs to reflect on the implications of the Humanitarian Reset and the unprecedented changes reshaping the humanitarian landscape. In this period of widening gaps between needs and available resources, the GWC also played a critical role in advocacy through its global strategic leadership and contributions to the 2025 Call to Action for Survival and Resilient WASH⁸², emphasising the urgency of protecting WASH services given their centrality to health, stability, and dignity in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

The GWC made strong progress in providing over NCPs with robust operational field support, capacity and learning, knowledge management, evidence-based advocacy, and performance monitoring. In 2025, the GWC's Cluster Advocacy and Support Team⁸³ and the Field Support Team (FST)⁸⁴ provided operational support to 28 NCPs through 12 deployments in 11 countries for 18 months and an additional 37 months of remote support in 28 countries. For instance, in the State of Palestine, the FST Assessment Specialist was deployed to strengthen needs assessment efforts in the framework of the Gaza response. In Myanmar, an FST Cluster Coordinator provided dedicated remote coordination and capacity-strengthening support to the in-country team in response to an Acute Watery Diarrhea outbreak within a complex context. In Cameroon, an FST Information Management Officer was deployed to Maroua and continued providing remote support in response to rapid-onset flooding in the north. The GWC also convened 11 global support clinics, webinars and online sessions on key thematic, including transition, inter-cluster collaboration, emergency preparedness, activity tracking, Accountability and Quality Assurance (AQA), and Humanitarian Needs Response Plans⁸⁵. In addition, to incorporating support for the AQA initiative, with support to seven countries, including Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, South Sudan and Yemen – where pilots continued throughout the year.

Despite travel restrictions and funding constraints, the GWC maintained a minimal but strategically targeted level of capacity-strengthening activities in 2025, with a strong emphasis on remote and low-cost learning modalities, reaching a total of over 182 participants. Priority was given to ensuring baseline support for new, junior, and double-hatting WASH coordination staff through two facilitated

remote inductions, complemented by structured coaching and mentoring support for seven field staff, delivered with the technical support of the FST. In parallel, the GWC expanded access to thematic learning by developing and delivering online training on Cluster Transition, and Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus reaching over 12 Cluster Coordinators and Information Management Officers globally. In addition, in-country preparedness trainings were delivered by the Field Support Team in Niger and Nigeria, reaching 60 coordination staff and key partners at national and subnational levels.

The Coordination Toolkit (CTK)⁸⁶ continued to serve as the main resource for guidance, tools, and field examples on the core functions for coordination, information management and assessments to support the humanitarian WASH sector with more than 2,500 visits. In addition, the Resource Center⁸⁷ has been enhanced and updated to provide operational research and evidence resources for WASH practitioners. This collaboration emphasised the practical application of operational research to increase the WASH sector's capacity to conduct, monitor, and evaluate WASH outcomes in humanitarian settings.

In 2025, the GWC, UNICEF and Tufts University completed a multi-country research initiative across Central Africa Republic, Colombia, DRC, Northeast Nigeria and Yemen, generating the strongest evidence to date on what drives effective humanitarian WASH coordination⁸⁸.

Aligned with the GWC's localisation agenda, targeted localisation trainings were delivered to Local and National Actors (LNAs) members of WASH Clusters in the DRC, Mali, and Somalia, with a specific focus on strengthening the institutional capacity of Women-Rights Organizations and Women Led Organizations (WRO/WLO), reaching 66 participants. A series of tailored workshops were rolled out to promote leadership and partnership with LNAs within coordination mechanisms. These sessions fostered structured two-way exchanges, twinning arrangements, and mentoring between international and national actors, contributing to more inclusive and context-appropriate coordination practices. To expand access to core guidance, the GWC launched an artificial intelligence-enabled translation feature for the CTK with accessible resources in Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Ukrainian, helping to reduce language barriers that limit participation in coordination processes.

The GWC also finalised the Localisation Monitoring Framework⁸⁹, the first comprehensive, evidence-based analysis of the state of localisation across the WASH sector at both global and country levels. The framework establishes a baseline to systematically track progress, identify persistent gaps, and highlight structural and operational barriers that hinder the meaningful representation, participation, and leadership of LNAs in coordination mechanisms.

Key collaborations

The WASH Insecurity Analysis (WIA)⁹⁰ continued to consolidate and expand its role in 2025, translating the strategic positioning and methodological development established in 2024 into tangible operational uptake. Throughout the year, the WIA strengthened its position as a practical, subnational analytical framework that supports WASH coordination, preparedness, and response in humanitarian and fragile settings. It is increasingly recognised by NCPs as a valuable decision-support tool that complements and streamlines existing cluster analysis processes. Over the past year, country-level analyses in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and South Sudan were completed, outreach for twenty additional analyses in 2026 was conducted, advocacy and communications efforts rolled out, including two high-level webinars with DG ECHO, and the development of a new snapshot reporting template guided by the needs of NCPs and operationalisation of a standardised WIA methodology and finalisation and dissemination of a consolidated Methods Reference Document.

The GWC has continued to reinforce inter-cluster/sector collaboration⁹¹ between global clusters, such as Food Security, Health, and Nutrition through the re-launch of the updated inter-cluster matrices of roles and accountabilities and the accompanying guidance note, consolidated from multiple technical resources, such as Joint Operational Frameworks and relevant WASH Compendia and systematically classified according to the 6+1 core functions and crisis typologies. The update of the GWC indicator bank and alignment with key analytical frameworks, such as the WASH-Fit, HWISE, JMP/GLAAS, SanQol was completed. This was complemented by lessons learned and recommendations to support more effective humanitarian response. New dimensions such as WASH in Institutions, facility-level, and system-level considerations, were incorporated to strengthen the analytical depth and relevance. The roll out of four webinars with NCPs to inform practitioners on key updates and facilitate the exchange lessons learned.

Cross-cutting: WASH and gender equality

Gender equality is a central enabler of UNICEF's mission to realise the rights of every child and a core accelerator of results under the UNICEF Strategic Plan. In the WASH sector, persistent gender inequalities - shaped by intersecting factors such as age, disability, poverty, displacement and climate vulnerability - continue to undermine access to safe, equitable and sustainable services.

Women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid water collection and care work, face heightened protection risks when accessing sanitation, and experience systemic barriers to participation and leadership across WASH institutions and service delivery systems. Inadequate MHH services further constrain girls' education, women's health, dignity and economic participation.

Guided by the UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2022-2025⁴⁰, UNICEF positions gender equality not as a stand-alone outcome, but as a cross-cutting driver of effective, resilient and inclusive WASH systems. In 2025, UNICEF advanced gender-transformative WASH programming⁹² across development, humanitarian and fragile settings, strengthening agency, voice and outcomes for women and girls.

UNICEF's Results in gender

In 2025, UNICEF supported programmes continued to improve coverage and close gender gaps in access to WASH for girls and women:

- 9 million gained access to basic sanitation through UNICEF-supported programmes incorporating gender-responsive design, inclusive infrastructure and behavior change approaches.
- 17 million benefitted from basic water services that was safe and available when needed for women and girls to access within their reach.
- 8.9 million women and girls were also reached with basic hygiene services including access to improved MHH services across schools, health care facilities, public spaces and humanitarian settings, strengthening health, education and protection outcomes.
- In humanitarian and fragile contexts, UNICEF reached 36 million people with appropriate drinking water with 50 per cent females and gender- and age-responsive sanitation services that reached 3.5 million women and girls with prioritised safety, dignity and GBV risk mitigation, aligned with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

Gender-transformative systems strengthening

Consistent with the Gender Action Plan's emphasis on shifting systems, norms and power relations, and the opportunity that the Dutch funded ASWA programme provided in advancing gender equality in UNICEF's WASH

work across eight countries in Africa, UNICEF focused on embedding gender equality within national and sub-national WASH systems. Key outcomes included:

- **Policies, strategies and planning:** Finalised a 'Transformative WASH Principles'⁹² guidance paper in support of UNICEF Country Offices and governments to integrate gender equality and MHH into national WASH policies, sector investment plans and climate adaptation frameworks, strengthening institutional accountability.



- **Institutional capacity and governance:** Finalised Gender Landscape Assessment tools that were rolled out in eight ASWA countries helping build the capacity of ministries, utilities and local authorities to apply gender analysis in planning, budgeting and programming and operationalise gender-responsive service delivery.
- **Advocacy and thought leadership:** Led the coordination of UN World Water Day 2026 Campaign alongside with UN Water and UN Women, promoting women's participation, leadership and representation across the WASH policies and decision making and community-level governance structures.
- **Data, evidence and accountability:** Expanding the use of sex- and age-disaggregated data, qualitative insights and feedback mechanisms to inform adaptive programming and results-based management by mapping national WASH monitoring Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS/DHS) against JMP gender priorities across the ASWA countries.

Partnerships and thought leadership

UNICEF exercised global leadership on WASH and gender through strategic partnerships aligned with Strategic Plan commitments on collaboration, convening and influence. In 2025, UNICEF:

- **Driving global advocacy and policy coherence on gender equality in WASH:** UNICEF worked across UN entities, civil society and governments to strengthen global and national momentum in promoting gender equality and human rights as foundational enablers of health, education and development outcomes for girls and boys. In this role, UNICEF provided leadership and coordination for major global advocacy moments, including preparation for the World Water Day 2026, dealing with WASH and gender. The campaign strategically positioned gender equality as integral to achieving universal and sustainable WASH services, reinforcing global commitments and elevating gender-responsive WASH within international policy dialogue.
- **Translating evidence and lived experience into policy reform:** In 2025, UNICEF deepened collaboration with women-led, youth-led and feminist organizations, as well as academic institutions, to ensure that lived experience, robust evidence and innovation inform WASH policy and practice. These partnerships strengthened UNICEF's ability to influence structural reforms. In Ethiopia, building on earlier tax policy engagement, UNICEF evidence and advocacy contributed to securing full tax exemption on menstrual products, expected to reduce prices and improve affordability for millions of girls and women.
- **Scaling innovation for inclusive and gender-transformative impact:** UNICEF continued to promote and scale innovative menstrual health solutions, inclusive sanitation models and digital tools that enhance affordability, accessibility and safety. Digital and product innovations, for example OKY period tracker app have transformed the menstrual health and hygiene landscape by expanding access to accurate information and reducing stigma across counties demonstrating how digital public goods can support gender-transformative WASH outcomes at scale (for more information please refer to the MHH section above).

Unfinished business

Despite notable progress, significant challenges remain. Gender inequalities in WASH access and decision-making persist, driven by harmful social norms, underinvestment in gender-responsive systems, limited sex-disaggregated data, and constrained institutional capacity - particularly in fragile, humanitarian and climate-vulnerable contexts. Menstrual health remains insufficiently financed and inadequately institutionalised across sectors.

Looking ahead, UNICEF will prioritise the following strategic shifts, aligned with the Gender Action Plan:

- Transitioning from gender-responsive to gender-intentional WASH, addressing power relations, agency and social norms.
- Strengthening financing, accountability, data and evidence for gender equality and MHH within WASH systems.

- Deepening integration of gender, climate and fragility within WASH programming, recognising compounding risks for women and girls.
- Scaling evidence-based models and strengthening learning to accelerate sustainable impact.

Advancing gender equality in WASH is essential to delivering on UNICEF's Strategic Plan commitments, and to ensuring that WASH systems work for every child, especially girls.



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For women and girls in Mwansabombwe District, Zambia, a visit to the health centre was once filled with anxiety. Mothers arriving to give birth, adolescent girls attending check-ups and other patients all faced the same challenge: toilets that were not functioning, overcrowded and unsafe. Without adequate sanitation facilities or running water, these conditions undermined women's dignity and compromised hygiene at a time when they needed care most.

With funding from the German Government through KfW, UNICEF, in collaboration with district authorities, constructed modern, safe sanitation facilities at Chipunka, Salanga and Mukamba Rural Health Centres. Designed with women in mind, the new facilities provide privacy, space and cleanliness, and include bathing areas, showers and handwashing stations. The improved facilities have strengthened infection prevention and hand hygiene practices, made it easier for health workers to provide quality care, and restored dignity for women and mothers accessing health services.

Cross-cutting: WASH and disability

About one in six people globally live with a disability⁹³. For children, disabilities affect critical aspects of development, including learning, social interaction, participation and inclusion in daily life. Children with disabilities are more likely than their peers to have limited access to WASH services, as multiple barriers limit access to safe and dignified facilities.

Inaccessible WASH facilities can contribute to reduced school attendance, poor hygiene practices, reduced privacy and increased stigma, and may expose children and women with disabilities to increased risks of abuse and exploitation. These challenges are further intensified in fragile and crisis-affected contexts, where persons with disabilities are among the most marginalised.

Despite these barriers, persons with disabilities have equal rights to WASH, as reflected in the SDGs commitment to “leave no one behind”.⁹⁴ Disability-inclusive WASH programming is therefore essential to advancing health, education, dignity and social inclusion. UNICEF continues to strengthen inclusive, accessible and rights-based WASH

approaches, supporting communities to address both physical and social barriers and ensure that all children can realise these fundamental rights.

UNICEF's Results in disability-inclusive WASH

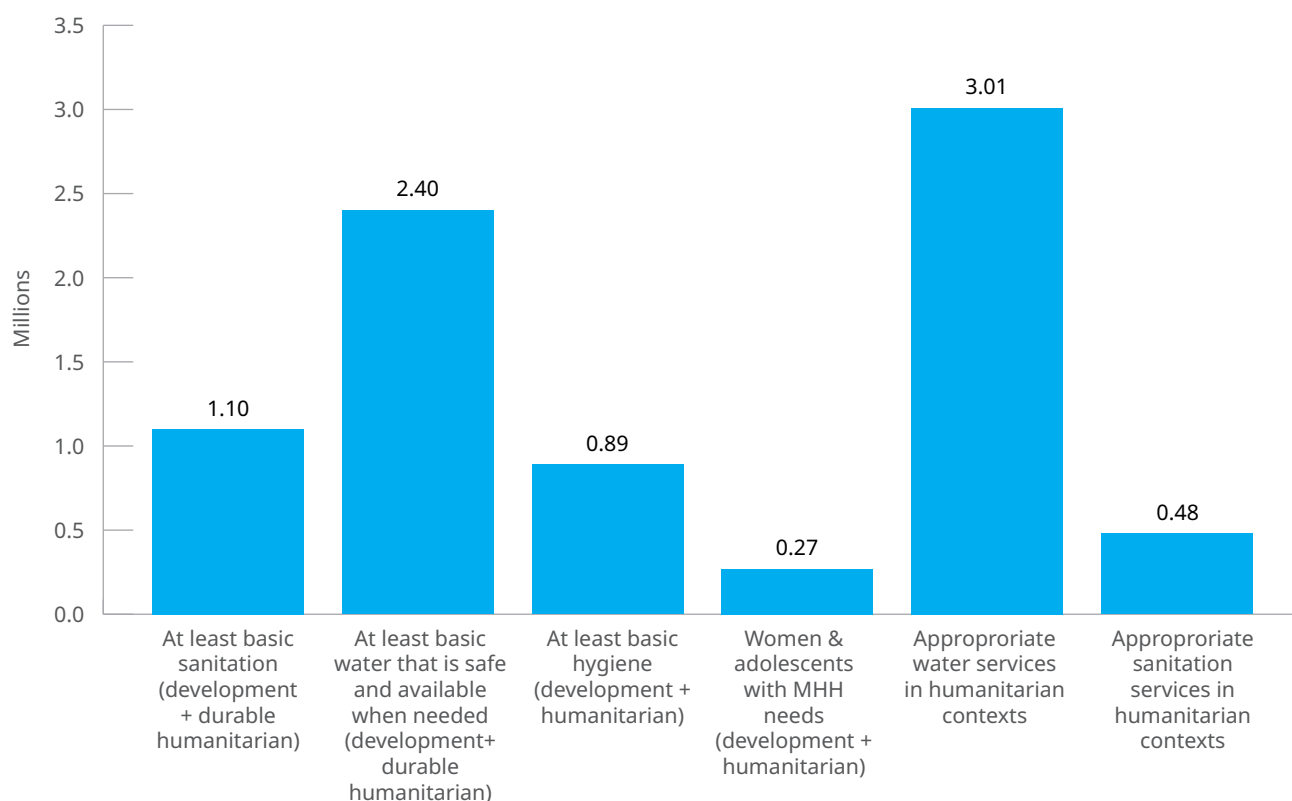
In 2025, UNICEF continued to strengthen disability-inclusive WASH programming across the full spectrum of interventions, including water, sanitation and hygiene programming in development and humanitarian contexts, combining service delivery with systems strengthening and policy engagement.

UNICEF reached more than 2.4 million people with disabilities through at least basic water services that were safe and available when needed across development contexts and durable solutions in humanitarian settings. In humanitarian contexts, including immediate and temporary response solutions, more than 3 million people with disabilities were reached (Figure 15).



Yuliana Dai Bala, helps her daughter, Febriari Uba Sisa, 14, who has multiple disabilities, to enter the bathroom in her house in Adonara Island, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

FIGURE 15: Number of people with disabilities directly reached with WASH services in development and humanitarian contexts in 2025



At country level, for example in the State of Palestine, UNICEF supported WASH services in institutions, reaching 93 temporary learning centres and upgrading 29 health facilities with disability-inclusive and water-saving measures. More than 700 accessible latrine add-ons were installed, alongside the distribution of hygiene and dignity supplies to 50,000 people, including disability kits and cushioned toilet chairs. In Gambia, UNICEF supported the Zero Out-of-School Children initiative, reaching nearly 75,000 children. The construction of 108 disability-inclusive sanitation facilities in schools contributed to improved attendance and dignity, particularly for girls and children with mobility challenges.

UNICEF also supported inclusive and climate-resilient WASH services in Burundi, including the construction or rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure in 74 schools and

34 health centres, with gender-segregated and disability-inclusive latrines and menstrual hygiene management spaces. In Bangladesh, UNICEF supported the integration of inclusive WASH into national education planning, while in the Pacific region, disability inclusion was further mainstreamed through data collection (MICS), systems strengthening, accessible infrastructure and gender-based violence programming inclusive of women and girls with disabilities, and disability-sensitive climate resilience programming.

Key partners included the Government of the Republic of Korea, which supported UNICEF in Indonesia to advance disability-inclusive advocacy and systems strengthening, helping make health facilities more accessible for persons with disabilities through improved WASH services and IPC measures, including during climate hazards⁹⁵.

Whispers of water, echoes of hope – Restoring dignity through inclusive WASH in Kutupalong Refugee Camp, Bangladesh

In the midst of protracted crisis, Rohingya children in Kutupalong Refugee Camp find resilience and hope through access to safe, inclusive WASH services.

Caring for [Hasina](#) has never been easy. Unable to move or speak for nearly two decades, she depends entirely on her family for every aspect of her daily life. During her menstrual cycles, the burden of care intensifies – marked by additional washing, heightened discomfort, and constant worry for her safety and dignity.

Her sister Ayesha, who also lives with a disability, stays close, helping their mother through the quiet, unrelenting routines of care. “I have to wash her clothes again and again,” their mother Shahjan says softly. “And taking her outside to use the toilet hurts us both.” Each trip once meant lifting Hasina and navigating uneven ground, turning a necessity into a painful and exhausting journey.

With support from the UNICEF and partners, the family's circumstances changed. A disability-inclusive latrine was installed inside their shelter, along with nearby water access and tailored hygiene supplies. These simple yet transformative changes have eased daily routines bringing greater safety, dignity and comfort to a family that had long gone without.

For Hasina and her caregivers, access to inclusive WASH services is more than infrastructure – it is dignity regained, care made safer, and hope quietly sustained, even in the most fragile of settings.



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Noor Ayesha fills a bottle from a jerry can. Once dependent on others to carry water across long distances, she now has easy access to safe drinking water.



© UNICEF/UN1972847/Palazón

Results Area 2: WASH systems-strengthening

Portrait of a young child Omar taken from above as he sits on a degraded agricultural land in Basti Balani, Chak Lassa, Rajanpur, Pakistan.

The dry ground beneath Omar's feet tells a story of water scarcity, a harsh reality for countless children and their communities, often exacerbated by climate change. Lack of water impacts everything: health, nutrition, agriculture, and the simple joys of childhood. UNICEF works in regions like these to provide access to safe water, implement drought-resistant solutions, and support families in building resilience against environmental challenges, striving to ensure that children like Omar can look towards a more secure future.

Climate resilient WASH

While global surface air temperatures in 2025 did not reach those recorded in 2023 or 2024, 2025 continued the trend of increasing temperatures since 2015 and has been confirmed as the third warmest year on record (after 2023 and 2024)⁹⁶. The global average air temperature was 1.47°C above the 1850-1900 (pre-industrial levels), narrowly lower than the 1.5°C threshold established by the Paris Agreement⁹⁷. However, the three-year average (2023-2025) surpassed the 1.5°C threshold⁹⁸. Of particular concern in 2025 was the concentration of higher temperatures in polar regions, which resulted in near record low levels of sea ice⁹⁹.

2025 also witnessed a range of extreme events including drought, flooding, cyclones (including 20 major tropical cyclones), heatwaves and wildfires, all of which impact the access to, and quality of, WASH services, with a direct impact on the health and development outcomes of children.

UNICEF's Results in climate resilient WASH services

For WASH programmes, 2025 was a record year for climate resilient WASH planning, programming, service delivery and monitoring, as well as climate finance and capacity development.

In terms of service delivery in 2025, 9.1 million people were provided with a climate resilient Basic Water+2 service in 59 countries (Figure 16), representing the highest annual achievement since recording started in 2019, where average figures have been approximately 6 million people per year, and equates to 26 per cent of the total beneficiaries of a Basic+2 water service. Over the course of 2025, almost 3.3 million people were provided with a climate resilient Basic Sanitation service in 45 countries, representing 19 per cent of the total Basic Sanitation beneficiaries. The annual progress on climate resilient Basic Water+2 and Basic Sanitation is given in Figure 16 and the cumulative progress over the SP period is given in Figure 17.

Over the course of 2025, progress continued to be made in the delivery of climate resilient WASH services in both schools and healthcare facilities. Over the year, climate resilient WASH services were provided to 1,951 schools in 65 countries, in addition to 998 healthcare in 50 countries. In total, climate resilient services (including Basic Sanitation, Basic+2 Water, schools and healthcare facilities) were provided in 82 countries over 2025.



UNICEF staff visit the first solar-powered drinking water treatment plant in Aswan, Upper Egypt, established through a partnership between UNICEF and the Aswan Water Company. Located in the Takook area, the plant is one of three main facilities providing safe drinking water to approximately 365,000 people in Aswan. In Egypt, while water companies are responsible for the public water infrastructure, households must pay for the connection from the main network to their homes – a cost that many families cannot afford. To help address this barrier, UNICEF, in partnership with the Minya Water Company, established Egypt's first interest-free revolving fund.

In 2025, 1,767 solar-powered water systems were installed in 70 countries. While this represents a slight decrease from both the 2023 and 2024 totals, it is higher than the annual average since 2019 and remains a significant achievement over the course of the SP period, as given in Figure 18.

FIGURE 16: Number of beneficiaries reach with climate-resilient water and sanitation per year (non-cumulative over the SP period)

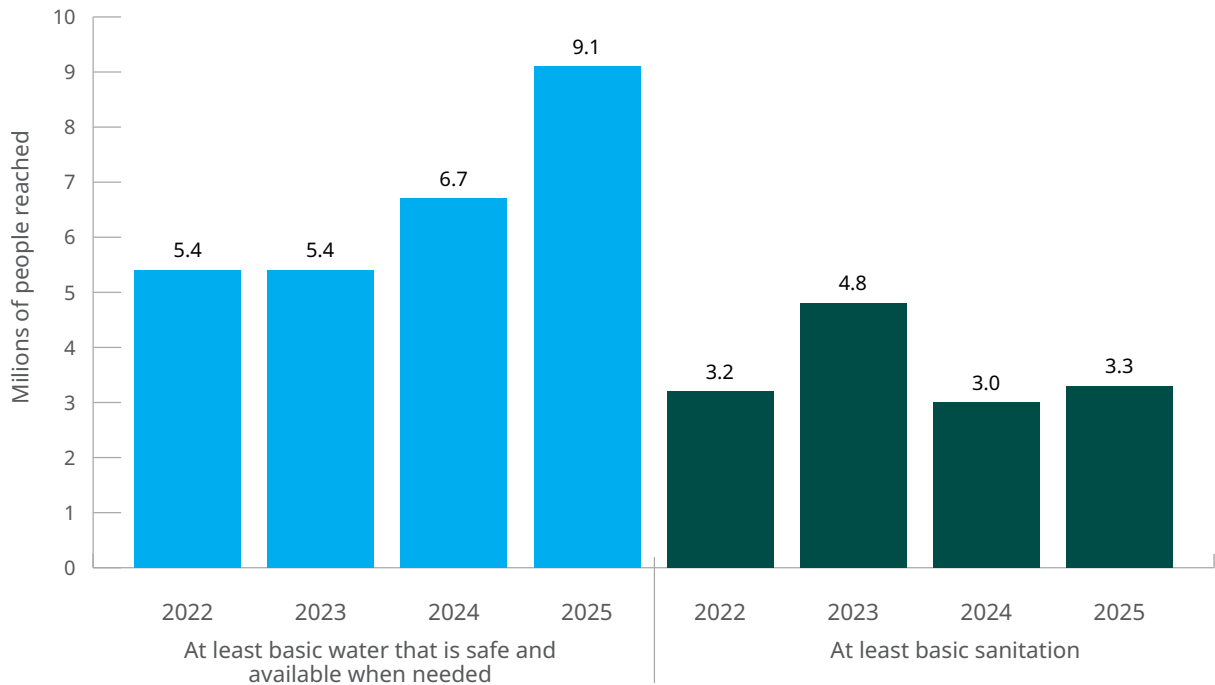


FIGURE 17: Number of beneficiaries of climate-resilient water and sanitation services versus total number of beneficiaries of water and sanitation services (cumulative over the SP period)

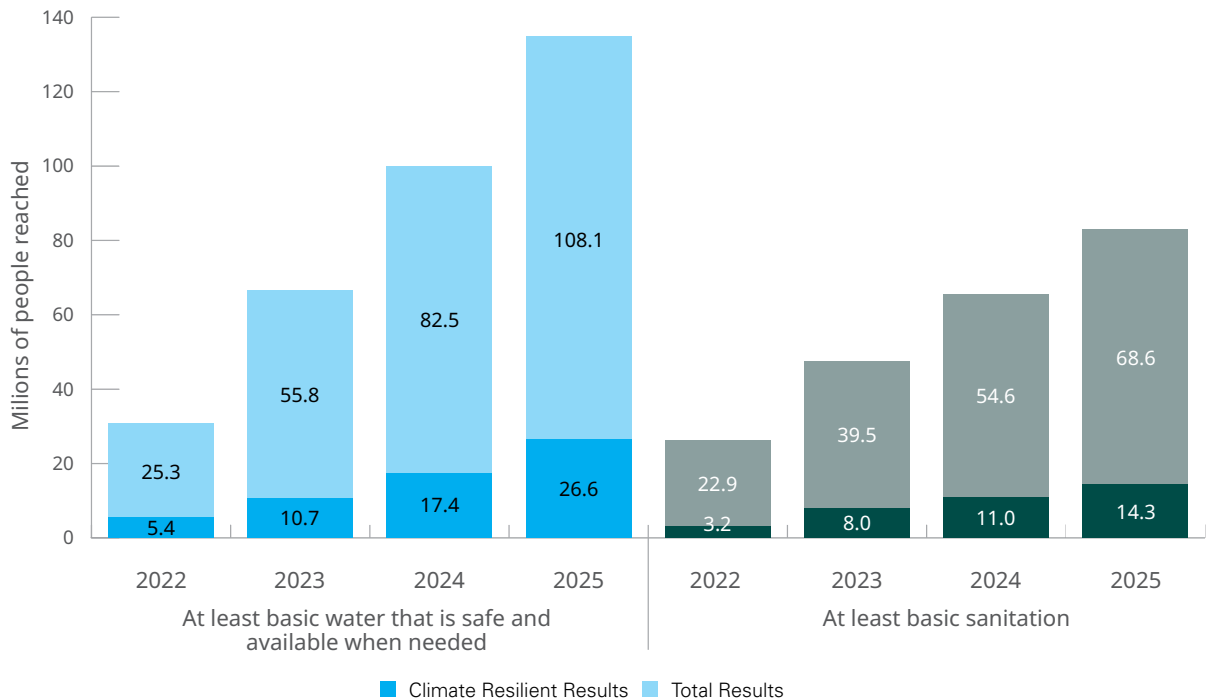
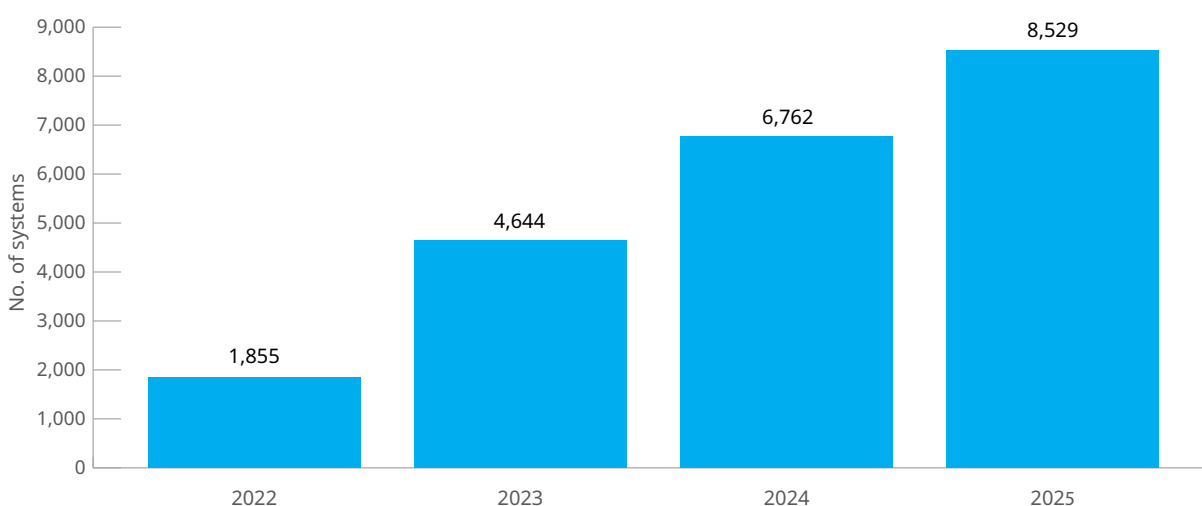


FIGURE 18: Number of solar-powered water systems installed by year over the SP period (cumulative)



Systems strengthening for climate resilient WASH

To complement the drive for climate resilient WASH services, UNICEF supported national governments across all regions to strengthen systems for climate resilient WASH through a range of initiatives at different scales. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, UNICEF supported the review of the National Sanitation Policy ensuring that climate considerations were included. In Liberia, support was provided to develop the WASH Development Plan (2026-2030) and establish a national WASH Policy Framework which embedded climate resilient planning into national strategies. In Zimbabwe, climate resilient WASH planning was integrated into national frameworks, in addition to district-level planning. In Nepal, UNICEF supported the development of WASH plans and the revision of a technical manual which integrated climate resilient standards, water safety protocols, and gender- and disability-inclusive designs. In South Africa, UNICEF supported the development of the National Climate Resilient WASH Framework which includes procurement standards and economic analysis to drive investment in resilient services. In Uzbekistan, UNICEF supported the provision of advice on standards, costing and implementation models to support a government-led shift towards climate resilient WASH service delivery.

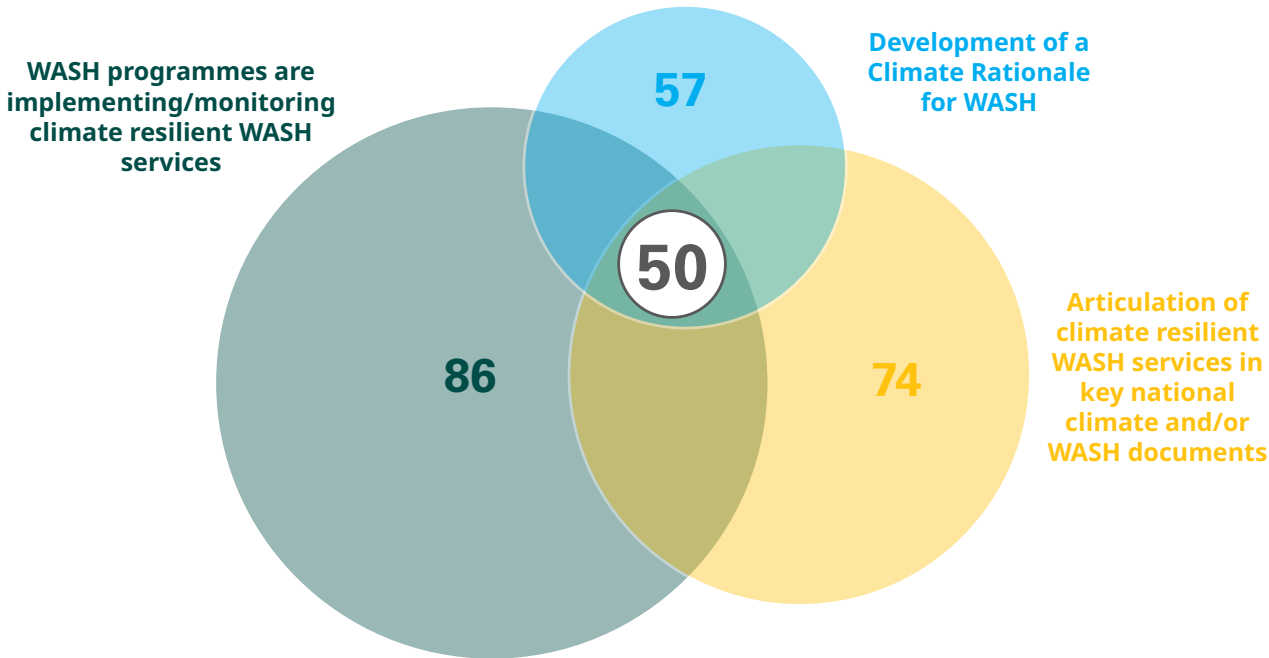
In Indonesia, the National WASH Climate Resilience Framework was widely disseminated and was integrated into national guidelines such as the City Sanitation Strategy and environmental health risk assessments. In Mexico, UNICEF supported strengthened inter-sectoral climate-risk informed WASH strategies in Chihuahua and Chiapas and developed and tested climate resilient WASH infrastructure models for inclusion into educational infrastructure catalogues.

Establishing the Climate Rationale

In 2025, 57 countries reported that the Climate Rationale⁴ was developed for the WASH sector, with 14⁵ additional countries developing one over the course of the year (including Afghanistan, Bolivia, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Pakistan, Cameroon, Senegal, Timor Leste and Venezuela) (Figure 19). Likewise, 74 countries reported that the risks posed by climate change on WASH services were included in key national climate and/or WASH documents, representing 14⁶ additional countries over the course of 2025. For the final criteria, 86 countries reported that they were implementing and/or monitoring climate resilient WASH services, an increase of nine countries⁷ in 2025. Combining all of these achievements together, a total of 50 countries met the triple criteria⁸ for this indicator, enabling the ambitious WASH SP target of 50 countries to be achieved, representing enormous progress from the baseline of 11 in 2021, and an increase of 10 in 2025.

- 4 The Climate rationale is a specific narrative which outlines the current and projected changes in climate, the associated impact on WASH services and identifies potential technical and programming solutions to mitigate and adapt to these.
- 5 While the net increase was 11 however, 14 countries newly reported that they had developed the Climate rationale in 2025 (three countries went backwards).
- 6 While the net increase was 13 however, 14 countries newly reported that the risks posed by climate change on WASH services was reflected in key national climate and/or WASH documents in 2025 (one country went backwards).
- 7 While the net increase was eight, however, nine countries newly reported that they were either implementing and/or monitoring climate resilient WASH services in 2025 (one country went backwards).
- 8 The three criteria to meet this target are: a) a Climate Rationale has been developed; b) the risks posed by climate change on WASH services are clearly articulated in national climate and/or WASH documents and c) the UNICEF WASH programme is implementing and/or monitoring climate resilient WASH services.

FIGURE 19: Number of country offices meeting the three criteria for the Climate Rationale SP indicator



Community members and children are using the new solar-powered smart water kiosk in Erdenebulgan, Arkhangai.

Solarizing WASH facilities strengthens climate-resilient systems, enhances service reliability, and ensures children continue to access safe water in Mongolia. Supported by UNICEF UK and the Eleva Foundation, UNICEF Mongolia will continue expanding the project to 21 provinces, bringing lasting change to thousands of rural families.

Advancing climate-resilient WASH at scale - Strengthening governance, planning and service delivery in Pakistan

In 2025, UNICEF supported the Government of Pakistan to strengthen WASH governance, expand climate resilient service delivery and accelerate climate adaptation across all provinces. Through a combination of policy reform, sector planning, capacity development and risk-informed infrastructure investments, UNICEF helped establish a coherent pathway for climate resilient WASH systems at national and subnational levels.

Key achievements included supporting Punjab Province to launch its 10-year Climate Resilient WASH Sector Development Plan (2025–2035), supporting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province to review and strengthen implementation of the KP Water Act 2020, and support to Balochistan Province's Public Health and Engineering Department to develop a Climate Resilient WASH Sector Plan, Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation Plan, and district-level climate-risk profiles. Building on the national Climate Rationale for the WASH Sector, UNICEF facilitated the development and validation of four Provincial Climate Resilient WASH Action Plans and corresponding Capacity Development Plans, creating a clear pathway for scaling climate resilient WASH programming.

At the service delivery level, UNICEF strengthened climate resilient basic water and sanitation services through risk-informed design standards and infrastructure adaptation, reaching more than 425,000 people with climate resilient basic water services and more than 55,000 with climate resilient sanitation services. KP applied UNICEF's Climate Resilience Evaluation Framework (CREF) to assess climate performance across 30 water schemes, while Punjab Province scaled the UNICEF-piloted floating wetlands and decentralised wastewater treatment models to 400 villages.

Together, these efforts illustrate how integrated governance reform, climate-informed planning and resilient infrastructure investments can accelerate national progress on climate resilient WASH – positioning Pakistan to better protect vulnerable populations while strengthening the sustainability of water and sanitation services in a changing climate.

Nationally Determined Contributions

Many countries submitted their NDCs in advance of the UNFCCC COP30. UNICEF supported a number of governments with the revision of their NDCs, ensuring that the risks posed by climate change on WASH services were recognised and clearly articulated in their NDCs, often for the first time, including in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Fiji, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Iraq, Laos, Liberia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Madagascar, Pakistan, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe. In a number of countries, UNICEF also supported the simultaneous revision of the NDCs and the development of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), including in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda.

Climate Resilient Sanitation

While the impact of climate change and extreme events is clear on both water and sanitation services, efforts to identify and adapt sanitation services to these risks, and to reduce the associated emissions, are significantly behind

water services. To address this, in 2022, UNICEF co-initiated the Climate Resilient Sanitation Coalition to mobilise the WASH sector on the importance and potential of sanitation services for both mitigation and adaptation efforts, which culminated in the 2024 release of the Practical Guidelines For Designing Climate Resilient Sanitation Projects.¹⁰⁰ Since then, one major focus has been embedding climate resilient sanitation into national and sub-national policies, strategies and plans, as well as NDCs and NAPs. In India, climate resilient sanitation was promoted through the development of 51 climate-adaptive sanitation and waste management designs which were integrated into state planning processes. In Bangladesh, UNICEF supported the development of a Climate Resilient Sanitation Masterplan for Dhaka, which is expected to act as a model for other large climate-vulnerable urban centres in the region and beyond. In Mozambique, national climate resilient sanitation indicators were developed through high-level institutional workshops which helped create a unified framework for climate-risk-informed sanitation programming. In Fiji, UNICEF supported a costed Rural WASH Masterplan which incorporated climate resilient sanitation as a national commitment, while UNICEF supported the embedding of climate-risk analysis into

sanitation planning at the county level in Kenya. In Ghana, a national capacity assessment was undertaken which led to the design of a Climate Resilient Safely Managed Sanitation Standards Framework. Lao PDR established national strategies and guidelines for equitable and climate resilient sanitation while in Viet Nam, climate resilient sanitation technologies were embedded into provincial adaptation strategies. This global momentum is being reinforced through regional engagement, including the hybrid Pan-Africa Climate Resilient Sanitation Workshop in December 2025 which brought together teams from across the continent. A new collaboration with the World Bank is providing additional support to Caribbean countries facing severe coastal risks from inadequate sanitation.

To complement the strengthened enabling environment, UNICEF supported a number of capacity building initiatives including the training of public and private sector officials in Mali and Nepal. At Stockholm World Water Week, a training programme for the Practical Guidelines For Designing Climate Resilient Sanitation Projects was launched and will help drive the development of a strong Climate Rationale to ensure climate resilient sanitation is included in priority WASH projects and to mobilise financing for climate resilient WASH services, including sanitation. In Namibia, support was provided to strengthen capacity among local entrepreneurs to deliver climate-adaptive sanitation products, while in India, training and technical assistance for urban bodies to improve faecal sludge and septage management and climate resilient sanitation operations was supported.

Water resource management

A key component of climate resilient WASH services is sustainable water resource management. Throughout 2025, UNICEF supported a range of interventions to support this, including the finalisation of a National Roadmap on Integrated Water Resources Management in Afghanistan. In Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, and in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney and the British Geological Survey, a groundwater atlas and hydrogeological mapping roadmap were developed, enabling governments to better design climate resilient water services, reducing the risk of saline intrusion and safeguarding limited water resources. In Malawi, UNICEF provided technical support to the Department of Water Resources to leverage geospatial data and machine learning to enhance groundwater mapping and inform climate resilient water resource planning. In Madagascar, UNICEF piloted and expanded potential climate resilient water solutions in drought-prone areas, including sand dams, baobab water harvesting and deep groundwater assessments.

Complementing the work on climate resilient sanitation and integrated water resource management, UNICEF scaled-up the implementation of Climate Resilient Water Safety Plans including in El Salvador, Honduras, Jordan (including in refugee camps), Lao PDR, Nigeria, Tanzania and Viet Nam.

Knowledge products on climate-resilient services and youth engagement in MENA

UNICEF MENA published two regional knowledge products to support country offices, governments and partners to integrate climate resilience, WASH and youth engagement into programming and advocacy:

- [Young Climate Activists Toolkit – Volume V](#): Water scarcity for young people: A youth-friendly module explaining water scarcity, its impacts in the MENA region, and actions young people can take.
- [Green schools and healthcare facilities](#): A compendium of climate and disaster-resilient infrastructure and operation measures for schools and health care facilities in MENA, published in June 2025. The document provides practical technical guidance for UNICEF programmes and governments on mitigation and adaptation options for schools and health care facilities.

Global Water Leadership programme

The UK-supported Global Water Leadership (GWL) programme, which was implemented in 11 countries across four regions, ended in June 2025 after more than four years. The GWL programme supported the implementation of the Climate Shift¹⁰¹ and acted as a blueprint and inspiration for many other countries

and sectors, including Health, Nutrition and Education, to engage on climate resilient programming. By the end of the GWL programme, most milestones had been exceeded significantly. In each country, the GWL programme supported the development of the Climate Rationale, the mobilisation of the WASH sector on climate resilient WASH services and the recognition of climate

resilient WASH services in key national documents. Importantly, costed national climate resilient WASH plans were developed in 10 countries and multi-sector stakeholder consultations on groundwater monitoring were undertaken in six countries. The GWL grant also supported a number of capacity building interventions on Environmental and Social Standards (ESS), including one online workshop for Chad and four in-person workshops in Sierra Leone, Pakistan, Malawi and Madagascar. The five workshops proved to be of strategic importance to UNICEF as they provided extensive feedback and recommendations on the application of ESS to UNICEF

programming and future capacity building initiatives. An evaluation of the GWL programme concluded in December 2025 and is expected to be released in May 2026. Preliminary evaluation findings on the impact, effectiveness, replicability, efficiency and sustainability of the GWL programme were highly positive. The evaluation also developed a Case Study on Chad and two Deep Dives (on Nepal and Sierra Leone).

Through support from the GWL programme, UNICEF supported the government of Uganda to develop the world's first WASH NAP.

Key steps to develop the world's first WASH NAP in Uganda

1. An analysis of existing WASH policies, environmental risks and the climate financing landscape was undertaken
2. Vulnerability and climate risk assessments of WASH services were undertaken
3. A Stakeholder's Task Force and Technical Review Committee were established to oversee planning and development of the NAP
4. The WASH NAP process was launched
5. Extensive consultations with key stakeholders took place, including with communities in remote locations
6. The Climate Rationale was drafted
7. The WASH NAP was drafted and circulated

Read more about how Uganda is leading the world with the first climate adaptation plan for water and sanitation [here!](#)



Community consultation on the WASH NAP in Uganda.

Youth engagement

Many WASH programmes also supported the engagement of adolescents and youth representatives in national climate discussions to inform the NDC revision, including Bangladesh, Chad, Lao PDR and Tunisia.

UNICEF also engaged youth in the integration of climate change into a number of WASH initiatives, including in Zambia and Bhutan. In South Africa, to complement the drafting of the National Framework for Climate Resilient WASH, large-scale capacity building of more than 15,000 children and 2,700 youth on water quality monitoring was undertaken, in addition to the mentorship of eight youth-led WASH businesses.

Youth engagement in Chad

The Chad country office supported the engagement of over 400 associations and organizations supporting adolescents and young people across Chad's 23 provinces to inform the revision of Chad's NDC. This included a qualitative survey of 87 associations, as well collecting responses from more than 39,000 youth through the U-Report. This process also supported advocacy for the adoption of a Youth Declaration on Climate (process is ongoing).

Youth empowerment in Ukraine

UNICEF supported youth-friendly digital storytelling on key WASH topics including water conservation, waste reduction and safe practices. UNICEF also supported youth and public engagement for energy and climate resilient WASH systems through the development of models combining environmental education, behavioral change and infrastructure resilience, empowering young Ukrainians as active agents in sustainable water management.

Climate finance

Reflecting the drive for climate resilient WASH programming and the recognition of WASH as an emerging national climate priority, coupled with UNICEF's accreditation to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in late 2024, the interest in climate finance within UNICEF and across the sector, accelerated. Over the course of the year, seven region-specific climate finance webinars were designed and delivered to countries in six regions, in English and French. These sessions were designed to ensure that WASH country teams understand the requirements of climate finance and the steps to be taken in the conceptualisation and development of a viable WASH climate finance proposal to reduce the risk of investing in proposals with limited chances of funding. In-person capacity building on the principles of climate finance was also undertaken for UNICEF staff and key government stakeholders in Malawi and Pakistan in June 2025, as part of the GWL programme. In Mali, 150 young people were trained on climate finance and contributed to the conceptualisation of eight projects which were aligned to the NDCs. In November 2025, UNICEF convened a resource mobilisation workshop with key ministries and partners in Sierra Leone, initiating Sierra Leone's first Concept Note for climate resilient WASH services. UNICEF supported an additional three countries (Chad, the State of Palestine and Benin) to develop GCF Readiness projects, all of which were approved in 2025. A WASH project from the Central African Republic (CAR) was selected

as UNICEF's first Full Proposal to be submitted to GCF. The Full Proposal, including all of the complex annexes, was developed in near record-time and submitted in September 2025, and is expected to be reviewed by the GCF Board in 2026. The Chad WASH team submitted a revised proposal to the African Development Bank's Climate Adaptation Window which was approved in late 2025. Over the course of the four-year GWL programme, climate finance proposals in excess of US\$1 billion were developed, of which, over US\$130 million have been approved or are at the latter stages of an approval process.

Climate resilient WASH plans at sub-national level

While international climate finance offers enormous potential to the WASH sector to leverage much-needed resources, many WASH teams supported national governments to integrate climate resilient WASH into plans and budgetary allocations at the national and sub-national levels. In Malawi, UNICEF supported the development of strategic tools such as WASH Accounts and Budget Briefs to facilitate evidence-based planning and resource allocation. In Pakistan, the government committed more than US\$2.8 billion for improvements to urban WASH services in 58 cities and allocated more than US\$55 million to expand climate resilient cluster-based rural water services in under-served districts. In Kenya, UNICEF contributed to a national climate finance analysis and chaired the Climate Finance Working Group, headed by

the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation. In Serbia, UNICEF strengthened local level governance systems through the provision of technical guidance/mentoring of local governments and facilitating multi-stakeholder and youth-driven consultations, resulting in the inclusion of climate resilient WASH measures into the 2026 local budgets. In Cuba, UNICEF supported negotiations on climate finance and debt swap mechanisms and in Madagascar, UNICEF continued to work with the government to identify opportunities to leverage carbon credits as a modality to act as long-term provider of resources for WASH services.

Complementing the increasing drive for climate resilient sanitation services, UNICEF supported a number of countries to mobilise investments and financing mechanisms to support climate resilient household sanitation systems. In Ghana, UNICEF supported the government to convene a three-day Climate Financing workshop to build stakeholder capacity on climate resilient sanitation and accessing climate financing. In Bangladesh, UNICEF supported the integration of WASH into emerging carbon market framework sessions and advanced investment planning for low-carbon sanitation through its carbon decommissioning baseline and wastewater reuse initiatives.

Innovative financing for climate resilient water services in Cambodia

UNICEF collaborated with United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) to establish the “[WISE JP](#)” [project](#), an initiative funded by the Joint SDG Fund. The project established a revolving blended finance facility, designed around local financing institutions, to help Cambodia meet its SDG 6 and SDG 13 targets by financing climate resilient water infrastructure. The programme blends private/commercial financing with concessional capital from development partners to lower commercial lending rates for private water operators.

Importantly, the project also provides technical assistance to both private water operators and banks to strengthen investment readiness and operational efficiency. It is also enhancing the capacity of a national entity to extend credit guarantees to the water sector, addressing barriers linked to high collateral requirements and limited access to affordable finance. Through the project, UNICEF is assuming a ground-breaking convening and market-shaping role, bridging government, financial institutions and private operators to mobilise blended capital (with a leveraging ration 1:8) for climate resilient water services.

Monitoring of climate resilient WASH

To further support the ongoing advocacy on the impact of climate change and extreme events on WASH services and the communities which depend upon these, monitoring of the impact of climate change on WASH services significantly increased in 2025 with 16 countries reporting that they were monitoring climate resilient WASH services. In The Philippines, UNICEF supported the institutionalisation of a monitoring framework to ensure that public investments are assessed on climate resilient WASH outcomes, instead of focussing only on physical completion. In Georgia, UNICEF supported the development of an electronic climate resilient WASH monitoring tool which was integrated into a nationwide IPC/WASH assessment of medical facilities. In Pakistan, UNICEF supported the inclusion of climate resilient WASH and MHH into the curricula for Community Health Inspectors in Punjab. Furthermore, UNICEF also supported the provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Ministry of Climate Change to conduct a methane

emissions inventory for sanitation systems, informing low-carbon WASH technologies. Bangladesh established the first sector-wide baseline to track sanitation's carbon footprint. In Mozambique, support was provided to introduce national climate resilient sanitation indicators to ensure greater consistency in WASH monitoring. For the first time ever, questions on climate resilient WASH and water scarcity were integrated into national MICS in Nepal, Bangladesh and Sierra Leone.

Advocacy

At the global level, UNICEF supported a number of initiatives to advocate for the importance of climate resilient WASH services within the sector, and with national governments. UNICEF supported the revision of the sector-wide definition of a climate resilient WASH service, in partnership with Sanitation and Water for All (SWA), and which now provides a menu of potential options for climate resilient WASH services. UNICEF continued to support the Global Goal on Adaptation through support from JMP in the development of climate-resilient WASH

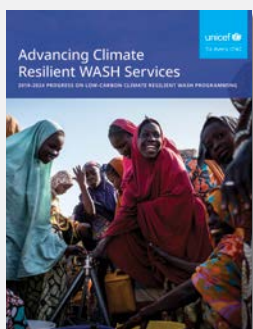
indicators, with a UNICEF (JMP) staff member appointed as a Technical Advisor to Member States to refine the indicators.

For the first time ever, a special session on climate resilient WASH was delivered to UNICEF's Executive Board in September. The session aimed to highlight the risks posed by climate change on WASH services and children. The session also showcased some of the strategic interventions UNICEF is implementing to assess, mitigate, adapt to and monitor climate risks on WASH services. To complement the session, a paper on the importance of climate resilient WASH services¹⁰² and a second paper on the results achieved since 2019¹⁰³ were developed.

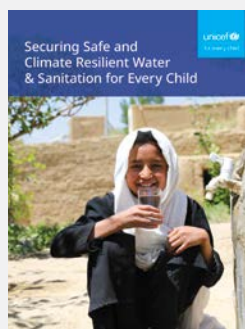
Partnerships

Over the course of the year, UNICEF continued its partnership with the WMO to strengthen the sector's capacity to extract and interpret climate science to inform the type, design and location of climate resilient WASH services. In 2025, UNICEF established a new partnership with IVL, a Swedish environmental company, to support country offices and governments to implement the Climate Shift, taking over from SIWI. UNICEF continued to co-chair the SWA Climate Task Team and continued to co-lead and support the Climate Resilient Sanitation Coalition.

UNICEF's publications on Climate Resilient WASH for the UNICEF Executive Board Special Session in September 2025



[Advancing Climate Resilient WASH Services: Brief Progress Overview | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene](#)



[UNICEF Climate Resilient WASH Paper | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene](#)

Policy and strategy

UNICEF continued to support governments in strengthening climate-resilient, child-sensitive WASH systems through policy development, evidence generation and system strengthening.

In 2025, UNICEF, together with WHO, contributed to global monitoring of progress towards SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2 through the release of updated WASH estimates, confirming that meaningful advances were achieved in global WASH coverage between 2015 and 2024. UNICEF and WHO also released the 2025 GLAAS report, which highlighted persistent structural constraints, including limited implementation capacity and insufficient financing. In parallel, UNICEF elevated climate-resilient WASH on the global agenda through a dedicated Executive Board special session, highlighting how climate-resilient WASH solutions, anchored in cross-sectoral partnerships, are driving impact.

At the country level, UNICEF provided technical leadership in policy and strategy development across multiple countries. In Bangladesh, UNICEF supported the development of Bangladesh's NDC 3.0, integrating priorities across sectors including WASH, health and education. Key policy milestones included the finalisation of national WASH Regulatory framework, WASH in HCF Strategy and investment plans, alongside a nationwide WASH baseline survey across 10,000 institutions, generating evidence to inform planning and budgeting.

In Cambodia, UNICEF strengthened WASH systems through improvements in data, service quality and financing. National consultations and the launch of the updated JMP country file strengthened SDG 6 monitoring. To address financing gaps in HCFs, UNICEF supported the

development of a costed national WASH-in-HCF roadmap (2025–2030) and climate-resilient design standards, alongside capacity-building through WASH FIT in 15 facilities and the rollout of MHH modules in 26 schools. UNICEF also advanced climate-resilient WASH financing and market-shaping efforts, contributing to regulatory reform and the approval of the Water Infrastructures and Smart Energy (WISE) United Nations Joint Programme to mobilise private capital for climate-resilient water systems.

In Burkina Faso, UNICEF supported WASH Accounts exercises and a climate rationale to guide access to climate funding, while ensuring the inclusion of children's needs in NDC 3.0 revisions. In Cameroon, UNICEF supported the launch of a National Water Policy and related sector frameworks, including sanitation policy and climate rationale development. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF supported the integration of climate resilience into sanitation policy, strengthened coordination and capacity, and advanced progress towards open defecation free (ODF) status.

Across the Pacific, UNICEF strengthened governance, planning, financing and service delivery systems, supporting policy development, coordination mechanisms and national adaptation processes across Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Fiji. Efforts included the endorsement of policies and costed plans, such as WinS policies, NAPs, water and sanitation master plans, and ODF roadmaps, alongside the development of climate-resilient water strategies and the integration of WASH data into national information systems. Monitoring systems were strengthened through groundwater mapping and improved data systems to support climate-resilient planning.

Institutional arrangements

Partnerships

Achieving SDG 6 requires strong, multidisciplinary and multisectoral partnerships, especially in the context of the global climate crisis and the increasing scale of humanitarian emergencies and fragility. UNICEF works with hundreds of organizations every year, including governments at national and subnational levels, donors (both public and private), civil society organizations, other United Nations agencies and external support agencies such as development banks, academia and the private

sector, among others. UNICEF continues to support the UN Sector Wide Strategy on Water and Sanitation and contributed in 2025 to the Collaborative Implementation Plan, as well as supporting UN-Water initiatives on multiple occasions, especially in relation to preparations for the 2026 UN Water Conference.

UNICEF implements its activities through different modalities: via government partners, via civil society organizations, or through direct implementation, including procurement of goods and contracting of services locally and internationally. In addition, UNICEF collaborates with

a wide range of organizations through coalitions and coordination forums, or by publishing and disseminating knowledge in conferences and scientific journals.

UNICEF proactively contributes to several global sectoral partnerships, often in leading or chairing roles. These include, but are not limited to, UN-Water, SWA, GWC, JMP, GLAAS, the Global Handwashing Partnership, the Toilet Board Coalition, the Climate Resilient Sanitation Coalition, WASH4Work, the CEO Water Mandate, the African Investment Programme, the Heads of State Initiative, the Global Task Force on Cholera Control, the Rural Water Supply Network, the toxic metals working group, and the WASH in Schools and WASH in Health care Facilities global networks. In Africa, UNICEF supported AMCOW by providing major technical and strategic contributions to the Third Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water, a high-level continental forum jointly convened by the African Union Commission and AMCOW to advance water security, sanitation, and climate-resilient water management.

Country-level experience in 2025 showed that partnerships were used not only to mobilise resources, but also to bring specialised expertise to specific sector bottlenecks. In Ghana, UNICEF leveraged contributions from multiple development partners to provide technical assistance on urban water, urban wastewater, rural water, WASH in health care facilities, and rural sanitation and WASH in schools. In Ethiopia, a partnership with the Government of Denmark secured US\$14 million to improve access to safe water for vulnerable low-income urban communities¹⁰⁴. These examples illustrate UNICEF's convening role in aligning complementary capacities behind nationally led WASH priorities.

Heads of State Initiative

The Heads of State Initiative (HoSI)¹⁰⁵ has expanded significantly in 2025, with more countries signing presidential compacts and demonstrating measurable progress in WASH, including major budget increases and cross-ministerial collaboration. Launched at the UN 2023 Water Conference and co-convened by UNICEF, SWA, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and IRC WASH, HoSI has grown into a platform through which political leaders can drive systemic reforms and make WASH a national priority.

One year after signing its Presidential Compact, South Sudan increased its annual WASH budget allocation fourteen-fold, while Indonesia mobilised six ministries to implement commitments under its Presidential Instruction. These examples illustrate how HoSI can accelerate action, align investments and support institutional reforms.

In Nigeria, the government launched a revised Presidential Executive Order on Open Defecation-Free Nigeria on World Toilet Day 2025¹⁰⁶, reaffirming sanitation as a fundamental human right. The campaign has already verified over 150 Local Government Areas as

open-defecation free, with millions of toilets constructed and 23 million Nigerians gaining access to improved sanitation since 2019. The new Executive Order strengthens legal and institutional frameworks, expands private sector participation, and sets a renewed national target of 2030.

At the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville, Nepal officially joined HoSI. Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli emphasised that WASH is enshrined in the country's constitution as a fundamental right and highlighted progress toward 96 per cent basic water supply coverage. Nepal's commitment signals strong political will to accelerate universal WASH access, backed by collective investment in infrastructure and institutional capacity.

Together, these examples demonstrate how HoSI is becoming a global political movement:

- Driving systemic reforms through presidential compacts and executive orders.
- Mobilising cross-ministerial collaboration to embed WASH across government agendas.
- Increasing budgets and investments to close equity gaps.
- Expanding membership with new countries like Nepal, while reinforcing commitments in Africa, Asia, and beyond.

HoSI is proving that when heads of state elevate WASH as a national priority, progress accelerates, institutions strengthen, and millions gain access to safe WASH.

African Investment Programme

The African Investment Programme (AIP)¹⁰⁷ is a flagship initiative of the African Union, adopted by Heads of State in 2021, designed to mobilise investments that drive sustainable development and economic growth across the continent. Anchored in AU climate and infrastructure strategies, the AIP seeks to bridge the US\$30 billion annual investment gap needed to achieve SDG 6 by unlocking private sector finance, leveraging blended investment mechanisms, and improving efficiencies in the use of existing resources. By 2030, the programme aims to reach 250 million people with climate-resilient water and sanitation services, while creating 1 million direct jobs and 4 million indirect jobs. Progress by 2025 demonstrates its catalytic role: the AIP has already leveraged between US\$10-12 billion for water and sanitation investments, with more than 40 countries initiating national or transboundary investment programmes¹⁰⁷. Key mechanisms include the High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa, the Water Investment Scorecard to track accountability, and gender-transformative approaches to ensure inclusive benefits. UNICEF continues to serve on the AIP high-level panel alongside the African Union Commission, AUDA-

NEPAD, UNDP, the Development Bank of South Africa, the African Ministers' Council on Water, and the Global Water Partnership. These achievements underscore the AIP's growing role as a driver of investment and transformation, paving the way for a prosperous and sustainable future for Africa.

Coordination

UNICEF hosts two important partnerships that contribute to sector coordination: SWA - a global partnership with over 400 members, and the GWC, which provided sector coordination in 29 humanitarian contexts. GWC focuses on enhancing and strengthening effective and accountable humanitarian WASH coordination to ensure timely, predictable and high-quality outcomes for those most affected by and vulnerable to crises. At country level, UNICEF supports governments through coordination or stakeholder leadership roles in the WASH sector. This can include the WASH cluster, donor partner groups, joint sector reviews (JSR) and pooled WASH fund mechanisms, or the organization of specific forums and thematic meetings. These may be sectoral or sub-sectoral mechanisms, at national and subnational levels, and either stand-alone or linked to other sectors such as health, nutrition and education. In 2025, UNICEF led or co-led WASH sector coordination in 87 countries: in both development and humanitarian settings in 56 countries, only humanitarian coordination in 21 countries, and only development sector coordination in 10 countries.

Country examples from 2025 show the importance of strengthening coordination mechanisms and clarifying institutional roles. In South Sudan, UNICEF helped activate seven national and state-level coordination committees, up from one in 2022, while supporting five operational urban water utilities. UNICEF also provided technical assistance to the South Sudan Urban Water Corporation, supported the formal handover of the Bor Urban Water Utility¹⁰⁸, and advised on reforms to improve operations and financial management. In Guinea, UNICEF supported policy dissemination, Water Safety Planning and the integration of WASH priorities into national climate commitments in coordination with sector ministries, decentralised authorities and climate partners. At the same time, reporting from Bangladesh highlighted how overlaps in mandates across water and sanitation, health, education and child protection can complicate coordination and undermine sustainability, reinforcing the need for stronger institutional alignment.



Before the conflict, more than 30,000 people in the Marjan community, Al Jazirah State, Sudan, relied on six boreholes for their daily water needs. Several of these were damaged during the war, severely reducing the availability of safe water. UNICEF has since rehabilitated the boreholes and upgraded them into a solarized water system, increasing water supply and improving quality through daily chlorination. The restored system now provides clean and safe water to surrounding communities, local schools, and the nearby Marjan Al-Amal Primary Health Care Centre.

UNICEF through its partner Building Foundation for Development is implementing the new and unique programme delivered with support from the Government of the United Kingdom. Through the programme, UNICEF and partners are addressing the high levels of malnutrition through combining nutrition interventions with hygiene education and connecting clean and safe water to health facilities and neighbouring communities by rehabilitating boreholes previously damaged during the conflict.

Strengthening coordination and urban utility governance in South Sudan

South Sudan offers a strong 2025 example of how institutional arrangements can translate into more effective sector performance. UNICEF focused on three major bottlenecks: weak coordination mechanisms, limited capacity of urban water utilities, and slow progress in policy and standards development. During the year, seven national and state-level coordination committees were activated, compared with only one in 2022. UNICEF supported the South Sudan Urban Water Corporation, the formal handover of the [Bor Urban Water Utility](#), and reforms to improve operational and financial management. Governance and sustainability were further strengthened through support to the Bor Urban Water Committee and training for 30 utility staff on operation and maintenance, leakage control, asset management, customer care, and internet-enabled billing. These institutional improvements helped underpin more reliable, climate-resilient urban service delivery.



Senior officials from the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Dutch Embassy, UNICEF and Jonglei State cut the ribbon to the water plant in Bor Town.

© UNICEF/K-Pesa

Regulation and accountability

Regulation and accountability are essential for sustaining service quality, clarifying institutional responsibilities and strengthening public confidence in water and sanitation systems. In 2025, UNICEF supported countries to advance policy reform, strengthen monitoring and accountability systems, and develop practical regulatory instruments adapted to national contexts.

Several countries reported concrete progress, and in Cameroon, a National Water Policy was launched¹⁰⁹, targeting universal urban water access and 85 per cent rural access by 2030, alongside the establishment of a dedicated rural water fund. In Burundi, legislation governing the organization of public drinking water and liquid sanitation services was adopted, signalling a step towards greater efficiency, accountability and sustainability. In Viet Nam, UNICEF supported the drafting of two national circulars on unit costs for rural water investment and operation and maintenance, helping strengthen the sustainability and scalability of rural water services. In Cote d'Ivoire, UNICEF partnered with the national statistics agency on a sector-wide sustainability check (SWSC) and analysis of WASH

data-management mechanisms. In India, government programme monitoring systems were strengthened to help ensure that WASH services met quality, accessibility and sustainability standards.

UNICEF also supported countries to strengthen risk-based regulation and accountability through Water Safety Planning and related monitoring systems. In Ghana, UNICEF provided technical and institutional support for the development and validation of a Water Safety Plan, dissemination of the National Sanitation Policy, and completion of a scheme for audits and certification to enhance Water Safety Plan regulation. In Indonesia, UNICEF supported systemic reforms by integrating fragmented water quality data, completing a Water Quality Data Integration Study for the National Planning Commission, BAPPENAS, supporting revision of the National Water Quality Strategy, and accelerating Water Safety Plan adoption. In Angola, the National WASH Sector Coordination Platform (FONAS) convened high-level dialogues on key regulatory frameworks, including water resources use, water quality, and water supply and wastewater sanitation regulations, helping identify systemic bottlenecks and priority reforms.¹¹⁰

A revolving fund model for small-town water supply in Mozambique

Mozambique illustrates how institutional arrangements in sector financing can help strengthen sustainability. In 2025, strategic investments in small-town water schemes and the expansion of an innovative revolving fund mechanism significantly increased household connections, helping ensure a more sustainable and safely managed water supply for underserved communities. The mechanism had already been implemented in 25 small towns and was reported to have strong potential for national scale-up, including for households with limited financial capacity. Country reporting also highlighted plans to expand the revolving fund model further, given its promise as a practical approach to improving the financial sustainability of the WASH sector while supporting service expansion.

Sector finance strategies

Developing national WASH financing strategies

A cornerstone of the UNICEF Strategic Plan (2022–2025) is the systemic reduction of national WASH financing gaps, ensuring sustainable service delivery for all children. To achieve this, UNICEF emphasises the preparation of comprehensive, costed national financing strategies to provide the necessary framework to attract and deploy diverse resources needed to achieve universal access to WASH.

A review of the performance during the period 2022–2025 revealed that UNICEF's technical assistance is effectively driving more comprehensive and equitable national financial planning. The details are as follows:

- Since 2022, there has been consistent growth across all indicators. Most notably, the number of countries meeting all five criteria (Table 2) has more than doubled, increasing from approximately 8 in 2021 to 21 in 2025.
- By the conclusion of 2025, 21 countries had developed and were implementing the WASH finance strategies with UNICEF assistance. This

progress represents an 84 per cent achievement toward the established goal of supporting 25 countries (Figure 20). These include Benin, Cambodia, Eswatini, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Moldova, Mozambique, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Lao People's Democrat republic, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Solomon Islands and Togo.

- **Advancements in Equity:** There is a significant acceleration in inclusive finance strategies (reaching vulnerable groups) with this indicator registering 34 countries by 2025.

Extensive efforts are currently underway to assist countries in operationalising this indicator. To ensure sustained progress, a dedicated team through the CoE has been established to oversee the development and implementation of national WASH finance strategies.

An analysis of the sub-indicators for the period 2022 to 2025 shows an overall upward trend across all five sub-indicators, based on performance across the four reporting years (Table 2).

FIGURE 20: Number of countries that have prepared a costed and inclusive national WASH financing strategy, progress against milestones

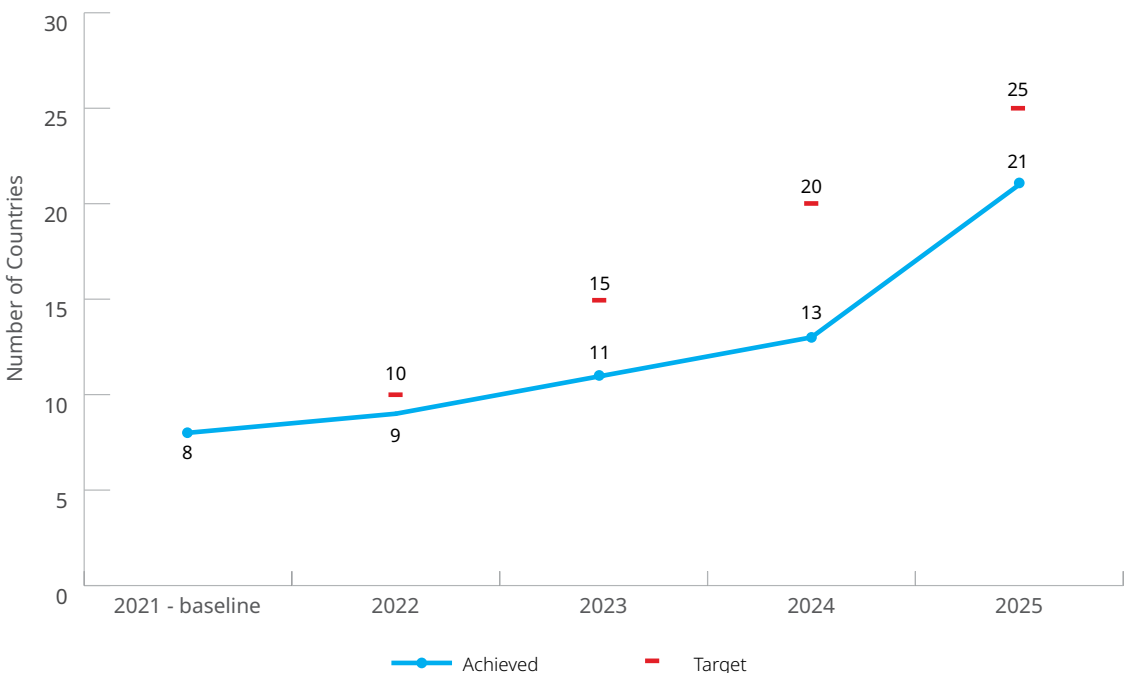


TABLE 2: Progress on the development and implementation of costed and inclusive finance strategies (CSI 4.2.1)

Indicator Criteria	Baseline (2021)	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of countries where national WASH targets have been costed for some or all WASH sub-sectors	36	37	45	38	40
Number of countries able to state % of financial resources available to reach national WASH targets	16	16	17	29	32
Number of countries that have developed a WASH finance strategy	16	18	23	23	32
Number of countries implementing the developed WASH finance strategy	15	13	18	20	28
Number of countries where the WASH finance strategy is inclusive of reaching vulnerable groups	23	16	20	26	34
Number of countries where all five criteria have been met	8	9	11	13	21

The following have been put in place/are planned for 2026 to support country offices in achievement on the development of WASH Finance strategies and financial leveraging:

- A three-year roster of individual consultants (English and French speaking) for WASH Finance strategy development was put in place in quarter 3 of 2025 to facilitate timely engagement.
- A three year LTA of individual consultants to support the development of WASH finance strategies and various financial leveraging efforts using varying financing modalities (Increasing resource mobilisation for the WASH sector through improved budget allocations/taxes, tariffs, or self-supply (Household Investment), Public-Private Partnership (PPP), climate financing, Utilising blended finance (combining public or concessional capital to attract private investment), other new financing instruments – green bonds, social impact bonds
- Comprehensive Capacity building of WASH staff and key partners including government on finance strategies and financial leveraging using various financing modalities

Notable examples of UNICEF WASH finance strategies include Brazil, where in 2025, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the National Indigenous Health Secretariat, specifically the Department of Environmental Determinants in charge of the WASH sector within Indigenous territories, to develop the first National Indigenous WASH Program, including a costed plan leading to universal coverage until 2040. Within this framework, UNICEF also supported with the creation of a national indigenous WASH network, bringing together

188 organizations. The process of developing a Financing Strategy for the sector has also begun in Cuba, with the agreement and participation of national authorities in the sector. In Kenya, a WASH financing strategy is under development with support from UNICEF and other partners.

Leveraging financial resources for WASH

Our systems programming focuses on catalytic financing, leveraging UNICEF's influence to mobilise substantial external investment into the broader WASH sector. Based on Figure 21 and Table 3 on CSI 4.2.2, the performance reflects a significant transition period followed by a steady recovery and upward trend in leveraging WASH sector finance.

- There was Initial downturn from 2021–2022 across nearly all sub-indicators. This likely aligns with the transition to the new UNICEF Strategic Plan (2022–2025) and revised reporting criteria.
- Since 2022, there has been a sustained positive trajectory in all sub-indicators.
 - Direct Impact: The number of countries where UNICEF support led to an increase in funding grew from 35 in 2022 to 42 by 2025.
 - Indirect Results: The reporting of indirect WASH results shows the strongest growth, reaching 52 countries, indicating broader systemic influence.
 - The number of countries meeting all four criteria also rose, from 15 in 2022 to 27 in 2025.

However, in spite of the foregoing, the current reporting period shows an achievement of 45 per cent (27 out of 60 target countries). This shortfall is partly attributable to the following:

- **Methodology issues:** The current methodology tracks leveraging results on an annual basis whilst the target is cumulative. Cumulative results would see an achievement level of 40 countries
- **Quantification of Linked Criteria:** While linking leveraging directly to beneficiary reach is desirable, it makes quantification challenging. Without this requirement, the number of successful countries would increase to 51.

Highlighting the gaps and adjustment to the methodology reveals more progress on this indicator compared to the registered progress. These measurement and reporting standards will be updated in the upcoming 2026–2029 Strategic Plan.

Furthermore, as highlighted in the previous section, HQ together with the CoE is launching a comprehensive support package to accelerate the execution of Country Office finance strategies and subsequent implementation to support financial leveraging. Key deliverables include a strategic implementation roadmap, the rollout of high-leverage financing initiatives, and a targeted capacity-building program.

FIGURE 21: Number of countries with increased annual WASH sector expenditures from different funding and financing sources, progress against milestones

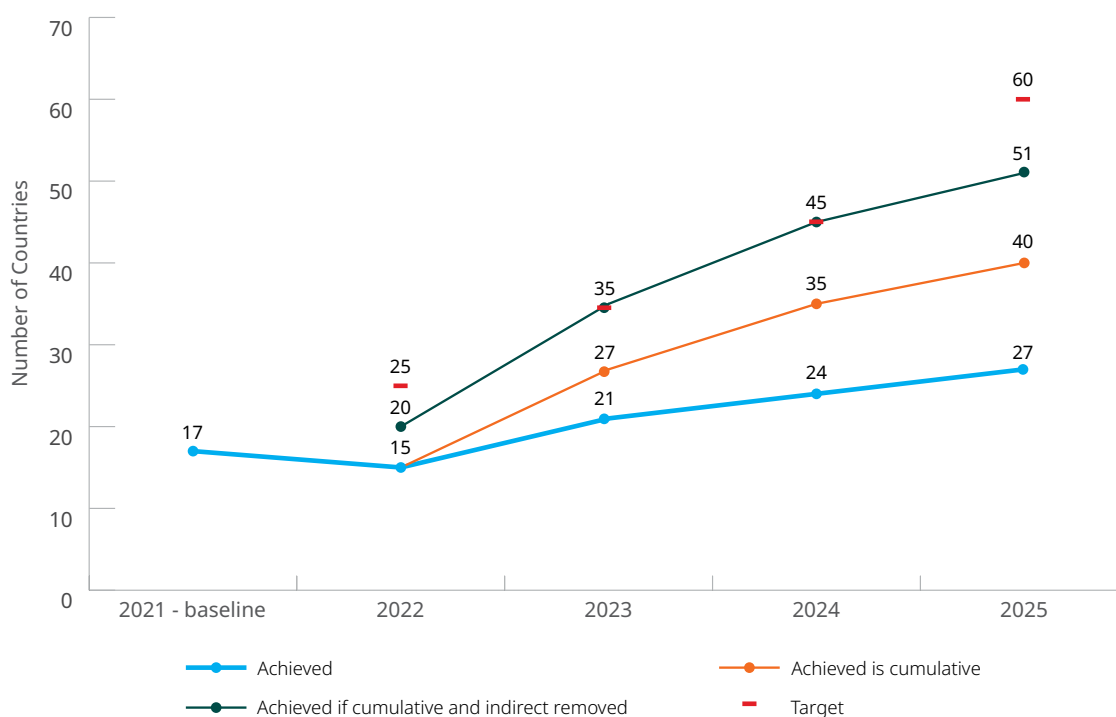


TABLE 3: Progress on leveraging additional financial resources for the WASH sector CSI 4.2.2

Indicator Criteria	Baseline (2021)	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of countries where UNICEF support led to an increase in funding	56	35	38	45	42
Number of countries that defined the source of leveraged funds and WASH sub-sector	99	34	39	44	42

Indicator Criteria	Baseline (2021)	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of countries that reported a specific amount of funds leveraged	67	21	26	32	40
Number of countries reporting indirect WASH results	61	39	48	52	52
Number of countries where all four criteria have been met	17	15	21	24	27

Notable examples of UNICEF WASH financial leveraging work, and associated future actions, include:

Cambodia: UNICEF influenced private investment through a pilot project aiming at leveraging nearly USD 300,000 from impact investors. Based on this a new blended financing facility is set up and expected to leverage a minimum of USD 20 M from 2026. UNICEF strategically leveraged private-sector finance by partnering with impact investors to strengthen the investment readiness of private water operators. From an initial pool of 10 operators, four were shortlisted for tailored technical assistance to improve business planning, climate resilience, and renewable energy integration. In 2026 there will be match-making for these selected private water operators with impact investors for concessional lending (with leveraging ratio 1:5). This work directly influenced the design and successful approval, by the Joint SDG Fund, of the WISE Joint Program (Water Infrastructure and Smart Energy, in partnership with UNCDF) Cambodia's first blended-finance facility dedicated to climate-resilient water and renewable energy services. Through WISE, UNICEF is assuming a ground-breaking convening and market-shaping role, bridging government, financial institutions and private operators to mobilise blended capital (leveraging ratio 1:8) for climate-resilient water systems powered by renewable energy, particularly solar. These results reflect a UNICEF contribution, crowding in private finance beyond UNICEF resources and establishing a scalable financing model to expand sustainable services for children.

Guatemala: UNICEF supported policy updates and planning for expanding WASH and climate resilient services at the national and local levels and played a key role in leveraging \$16 million for WASH municipal investments in the department of San Marcos, benefiting over 69,700 people in nine municipalities.

Pakistan: As a results of UNICEF advocacy in Punjab, government committed USD 2.89 billion for urban WASH improvements across 58 cities and allocated an additional

USD 55.36 million to expand climate-resilient cluster-based water supply systems in underserved districts. To institutionalise SBC, UNICEF leveraged the Sindh People's Housing Foundation's US\$150 million WASH investment by developing SBC strategies and building capacity of SPHF's implementing partners to improve community behaviour on WASH & MHH.

Ukraine: UNICEF was officially appointed by the Government as the lead technical agency for the transformation of the water supply and sanitation sector, supporting its transition from emergency response to an EU-aligned recovery. Through regulation reform, monitoring, capacity development, UNICEF unlocked recovery pledged funds (\$ 115 million from EIB) and led energy resilience (\$52.8 million solarisation operations), ensuring water and heating access for children amid war.

Nigeria: With UNICEF's strategic advocacy for WASH, partnership and engagement, about NGN 2.2B was leveraged through advocacy to government and private sector for cash contributions and investment for capital and operational projects in WASH.

Rwanda: UNICEF leveraged funding for the WASH sector by supporting innovative financing approaches. Four local banks were engaged to design loan products, with the Bank of Kigali launching its WASH loan product, and three additional banks finalising similar products for private WASH operators, small and medium enterprises, and households.

Burundi: With support from UNICEF and in coordination with other technical and financial partners, the WASH sector funding in the national programme budget increased significantly. Allocations rose from BIF 55.3 billion in 2024/2025 to BIF 83.9 billion in 2025/2026. This reflects successful strategic advocacy with key donors and government stakeholders, which catalysed a substantial rise in domestic WASH budget allocations.

Planning, monitoring and review

Planning, monitoring and review remained central to UNICEF's WASH programming in 2025. Across regions, country offices strengthened national monitoring systems, improved the quality and use of sector data, and translated evidence into more risk-informed and sustainability-oriented planning. The examples reported in 2025 point to a clear shift from measuring access alone towards tracking service quality, safety, functionality and resilience.

Global level

The WHO/UNICEF JMP is responsible for global monitoring of SDG WASH targets 6.1 and 6.2. In August 2025, the JMP launched a global progress update on WASH in households with a special focus on inequalities¹. The JMP produced statistical snapshots for all standard regional groupings (SDG, LDC, LLDC, SIDS, Fragile, WHO, UNICEF and Income) and contributed to WASH data and analysis to a number of global flagship publications including Secretary General's 2025 SDG Progress Report¹¹¹ prepared for the High-Level Political Forum in July. In December 2025, the JMP prepared updated country estimates for WASH in schools and WASH in health care facilities and circulated these to WHO and UNICEF regional and country offices for a two-month period of country consultation with national stakeholders. The JMP team prepared guidance notes and held a series of regional webinars to explain the methods used to produce national estimates, as well as bilateral meetings with individual countries to discuss national data sources.

During 2025, the JMP provided technical assistance to multiple WHO and UNICEF country offices involved in strengthening national monitoring of SDG targets related to WASH in households, schools and health care facilities. The JMP led technical sessions on monitoring at a series of international meetings, including World Water Week in Stockholm, the International Learning Alliance on WASH in Schools in South Africa and COP31 in Brazil. The JMP team supported the finalisation and rollout of updated indicators, questionnaires, guidance manuals, analysis scripts and data tables for the new MICS7 WASH module in all UNICEF regions. This included direct technical and financial support for the integration of water quality testing in over 30 countries and the integration of a new complementary module on MHH in 10 countries. In July, the JMP convened 7 countries with experience of data collection on menstrual health to review experiences and identify priorities for indicator refinement, scale-up and data use. The JMP also completed Phase 2 piloting of new tools for M-SMOSS in 10 countries and finalised technical guidance materials including an offline training package.



Agness collects data and inspects a household toilet to assess safely managed sanitation, supporting accurate reporting and better hygiene practices in Zambia.

The WHO/UNICEF JMP and GLAAS teams are collaborating on a joint review of opportunities for enhanced monitoring of climate-resilient WASH with support from an academic consortium (University of Leeds, University of Technology Sydney, University of Bristol and Oxford University) and a Technical Working Group (TWG). Following a public consultation on the long list of indicators in May, the JMP and GLAAS teams worked intensively with the consortium and TWG members to produce a short list of indicators. The review findings and emerging short list were also presented for feedback at Stockholm World Water Week and UNC Water and Health Conference. Following a second public consultation in November 2025, the JMP and GLAAS teams produced a short list of indicators to monitor climate-resilient WASH¹¹² to be taken forward for piloting during 2026 and 2027. The JMP also contributed to UN Water submissions in support of the UAE-Belem work programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation.

The GLAAS 2025 report² and key findings were completed in December 2025 and officially launched on 26 January 2026 at the High-Level Preparatory Meeting for the 2026 UN Water Conference in Dakar, Senegal by the Chair of UN-Water. 105 countries and 21 development

partners participated in the GLAAS 2024/2025 cycle. The report examines the status of key components of WASH systems: policy, plans, institutional arrangements and national targets; monitoring, review and use of data for decision-making; regulation and surveillance; human resources; and finance. The report provides an expanded analysis of the two SDG 6 means of implementation targets and indicators: (6.a) international cooperation and capacity-building support and (6.b) local participation. It also includes sections on development partner support and leaving no one behind as well as on WASH and climate. In addition to the GLAAS 2025 report, the GLAAS team also prepared a key findings document that summarises results from the report. The key findings are available in English and French. For the first time, interactive GLAAS report key findings are featured online on the GLAAS data portal¹³. This new product includes nearly 40 interactive charts and tables that allow users to explore the results in depth, by selecting regional groupings (WHO, UNICEF, SDG regions) and World Bank income categories to customise and tailor their analysis.

National monitoring systems and evidence generation

In 2025, UNICEF supported countries to strengthen the data systems, surveys and institutional arrangements needed for better monitoring and planning. In Rwanda, UNICEF supported upgrades of the WASH Management Information System, integration of water quality testing into the Labour Force Survey, and groundwater exploration in five districts using geographic information systems and remote sensing. UNICEF also supported the DHS and helped build a pipeline of young evaluators, contributing to a stronger evidence culture and to better use of data for national planning.

In South Sudan, UNICEF supported the National Bureau of Statistics to customise MICS7 data collection tools, configure the computer-assisted personal interviewing application, finalise tabulation plans, clean and analyse datasets, and complete water quality analysis. This support helped strengthen the national evidence base while also improving the analytical products needed for sector decision-making.

Country reporting also shows growing attention to filling long-standing evidence gaps in water quality and WASH in institutions. In Bangladesh, UNICEF conducted a comprehensive water quality assessment in 213 hospitals to establish national baseline data on drinking water and water use in high-risk clinical areas. In Cambodia, UNICEF and the national statistics system integrated water quality testing into the national Socio-Economic Survey for the first time, addressing the lack of nationally representative drinking-water quality data. In that country, 97 water supply operators were reporting on water quality monitoring following UNICEF-supported regulatory alignment and performance assessments, marking an important shift from monitoring access to monitoring safety.

Digitalisation and data integration also became more prominent in 2025. In Indonesia, digital platforms, including the Surabaya water quality system and the East Nusa Tenggara WASH dashboard, improved real-time monitoring and data-driven planning. UNICEF also supported a water quality data integration study for Bappenas and advanced reforms to address fragmented water quality information systems. In Ukraine, UNICEF-supported partnerships enabled nationwide water quality testing and piloted the MICS Link initiative, which connects household survey data with education administrative systems. Together, these examples suggest that UNICEF is increasingly supporting countries not only to generate data, but also to make data more timely, integrated and useful for sector management.

Strengthening national WASH evidence systems in Rwanda

Rwanda provides a strong example of how monitoring support can serve both national planning and global reporting. In 2025, UNICEF supported improvements to the national WASH Management Information System, preparation of updated household WASH estimates for the JMP, inclusion of water quality testing in the Labour Force Survey, and technical and financial support to the DHS7. This helped address a long-standing gap in understanding water quality at the point of consumption, rather than only at the point of production. UNICEF also supported groundwater exploration in five districts using GIS and remote sensing and invested in building a pipeline of young evaluators. Taken together, these efforts show how a country office can combine administrative systems, household surveys, groundwater analysis and capacity-building to support more evidence-based planning.

Sustainability monitoring and adaptive planning

In 2025, UNICEF supported countries to move from one-off assessments towards more institutionalised approaches to sustainability monitoring and adaptive planning. In Côte d'Ivoire, UNICEF reinforced national WASH data systems and collaborated with the National Statistical Agency to SWSC survey. The programme also supported the Government in analysing WASH data management mechanisms and initiating related studies to better understand and address sustainability constraints.

Nepal reported important progress in institutionalising sustainability monitoring. The water safe community sustainability check mechanism was introduced in eight additional municipalities, enabling regular monitoring of functionality, operation and maintenance, water quality and community management. UNICEF also supported the approval and launch of Water Safe Community Guidelines and the review of National Water Quality Surveillance Guidelines, helping to embed routine monitoring more firmly in national systems.

Several countries used policy and guideline processes to strengthen the planning environment for sustainable services. In Tanzania, UNICEF supported the finalisation of the SWSC, as well as the development of water policies for Mainland and Zanzibar, updated climate-resilient Water Safety Plan guidelines, revised National Drinking Water Quality Monitoring Guidelines, and contributed to the development of a White Paper on Water Security. In Viet Nam, UNICEF supported the drafting of two national circulars on unit costs for rural water investment and operation and maintenance, strengthening the basis for sustainability and future scaling of rural services.

In Mali, a WASH Sustainability Compact for 2025–2034 was developed to involve government and sector actors more systematically in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of WASH activities.

UNICEF also supported more localised, climate-informed planning approaches. In Afghanistan, the Community-Based Climate Resilient Water Supply Planning and Management module was implemented across 40 EU-funded projects, helping communities identify climate-related hazards and take locally driven measures to sustain water availability and operation and maintenance. In Lao People's Democratic Republic, district WASH plans were developed in four districts, alongside climate-resilient water safety planning training and support to WATSAN committees on tariffs, fee collection, fund management and water safety planning. These examples show that sustainability monitoring is increasingly being linked to planning tools, financing considerations, climate resilience and institutional capacity, rather than treated as a stand-alone assessment exercise.

The results of Table 4 show steady progress across all four components of national WASH monitoring systems during the Strategic Plan period. By 2025, 65 countries had data on WASH coverage less than two years old, 54 had published WASH data in a public government report within the previous two years, 46 had completed a UNICEF-supported joint sector review, and 22 had completed a SWSC. Importantly, the number of countries meeting all four criteria increased from 4 in 2022 to 19 in 2025, indicating that more countries are moving beyond individual monitoring activities towards more comprehensive and institutionalised national monitoring systems that can support evidence-based planning, accountability and sustainability.

TABLE 4: Progress on national monitoring systems incorporating sustainability (Strategic Plan output indicator 4.2.3 with sub-components)

Indicator criteria	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of countries that have data on WASH coverage that are less than two years old	39	36	56	65
Number of countries that have published data in a public government report within the last two years	34	36	50	54
Number of countries that completed a joint sector review (JSR) with UNICEF technical and/or financial support	26	37	39	46
Number of countries completing an SWSC during the Strategic Plan period (2022–2025)	8	9	17	22
Number of countries where all four criteria have been met	4	6	10	19

Evaluation, review and learning

Country reporting contains fewer references to formal WASH evaluations than to monitoring and planning work, but the available evidence still suggests that review and evaluative learning played an important role in 2025. In Honduras, UNICEF completed an evaluation of initiatives implemented between 2022 and 2024 at municipal level, including emergency preparedness and response plans, WSPs and child-centred climate action. The office also used this work to support the scaling of climate-resilient WSPs through an agreement with the National Water and Sewerage Service (SANAA), development of an implementation guide, and training of 17 key officials.

In Zimbabwe, UNICEF supported a review of emergency WASH service delivery which identified disparities between reported access and the actual availability of safe water, especially in urban areas affected by rationing, non-revenue water, power outages and shortages. This is a useful example of how review processes can help move from output reporting to a more realistic understanding of service continuity and quality. In Palestine, UNICEF supported a review of WASH BAT and linked this to wider work on water safety planning, hydro-informatics and modelling, and service delivery reform. In Indonesia, knowledge-management products such as the Water Safety Plan Field Note¹¹⁴ helped shorten WSP development timelines from nine months to three months, demonstrating how operational learning can accelerate uptake of improved planning approaches.

Using evaluation to drive climate-resilient WASH scale-up in Honduras

In 2025, UNICEF completed a strategic evaluation of municipal-level initiatives implemented during 2022–2024, examining efforts in emergency preparedness and response planning, WSPs and child-centred climate action. The evidence generated practical evidence on what worked, why it worked, and how successful approaches could be expanded sustainably.

UNICEF actively leveraged these findings to support national and sub-national scale-up. This included signing a formal agreement with SANAA/CONASA to promote climate-resilient WSPs, supporting the development of a national implementation guide, and strengthening institutional capacity by training 17 key government officials. These activities have contributed to scale-up access to services at community level. For instance, the coordination with municipalities and investments in permanent chlorination and climate-resilient water safety planning improved safe water access for 23,698 people in surrounding communities.

Conclusion

The 2025 evidence suggests that UNICEF's contribution to planning, monitoring and review is becoming more systematic, more risk-informed and more closely tied to sustainability. Across countries, support extended from upgrading management information systems and strengthening survey design, to integrating WASH indicators into national data collection, institutionalising

sustainability checks, updating guidelines, and using evaluation and review processes to inform scale-up. The strongest 2025 examples also indicate an important shift in the sector: from monitoring infrastructure or access alone towards tracking safety, functionality, continuity and resilience. That direction is particularly important in fragile, climate-stressed and rapidly changing contexts, where better evidence is essential for more adaptive and sustainable WASH programming.

Knowledge management

Knowledge management remains a cornerstone of UNICEF's thought leadership in the WASH sector and a critical enabler of progress towards SDG 6. In 2025, UNICEF further strengthened its ability to generate, curate and apply evidence, innovation and field experience to improve results for children. Through targeted investments in digital platforms, cross-regional learning, strategic partnerships and staff capacity development, UNICEF ensured that knowledge increasingly informs policy dialogue, programme design and implementation, while contributing to more sustainable and resilient WASH outcomes.

UNICEF's knowledge management approach bridges global norms and country realities - translating evidence into practical guidance, amplifying learning from diverse contexts, and reinforcing UNICEF's role as a trusted technical authority and convenor across the WASH sector.

UNICEF publications

In 2025, UNICEF continued to expand and strengthen its portfolio of WASH knowledge products, with a strategic focus on developing and updating global guidelines, frameworks and practical tools to support country-level implementation. Overall, 73 knowledge products and resources¹¹⁵ were published across priority thematic areas (Table 5). The reduced output compared to previous years reflects a shift under the Future Focus Initiative, as well as a greater emphasis by the WASH team on producing fewer, higher-quality and more impactful knowledge products. Some of the key publications includes the guidance on hand hygiene in community settings⁵,

menstrual product access models⁶, climate-resilient WASH in Schools framework⁷, and the WASH Service Delivery Model tool⁸.

The production and dissemination of context-specific knowledge products at regional and country levels remains a key strength of UNICEF's contribution to the sector. In 2025, regional and country offices produced 18 WASH publications using UNICEF WASH templates, including technical papers, field notes and discussion papers. These resources addressed a wide range of priority issues, such as climate resilience, gender equality, MHH and sanitation, reflecting both global sector priorities and locally derived lessons learned. Together, they strengthened peer learning, supported adaptive programming, and informed policy dialogue. The Box below highlights selected examples of good practice and innovation from the field.

At the global level, UNICEF deepened strategic collaboration with partners. In partnership with WHO, UNICEF finalised new guidance on WASH, health care waste management and electricity in health care facilities¹⁶, reinforcing integrated approaches to quality and safety in health service delivery. UNICEF also collaborated closely with WHO on the release of the JMP report in 2025, with a special focus on inequalities¹, providing critical evidence to guide equity-focused action.

Reinforcing its leadership on climate resilience, UNICEF, through the SWA Climate Task Team, published a shared definition of climate-resilient WASH services¹¹⁶ and released the Securing Safe and Climate-Resilient Water and Sanitation guidance¹⁰², further positioning UNICEF at the forefront of sectoral efforts to address climate-related risks to WASH systems.

Examples of WASH Knowledge Products from the field

- [WASH Rapid Response Mechanism \(RRM\) Implementation – Ethiopia Experience](#)
- [Blended Financing for WASH in Small Towns, Mozambique](#)
- [Leveraging WASH Sector Finance: Experiences from UNICEF Country Programs](#)
- [Transitioning from Open Defecation to Safely Managed Sanitation: The Sierra Leone Pathway](#)
- [Unlocking Sanitation Gaps Towards a Sustainable Future for Children and Young Iraqis](#)
- [27 Ideas to build on CLTS: An idea-book - West and Central Africa Focus](#)
- [Determinants of community resilience to climate change and the contribution of water, sanitation and hygiene in East Asia and the Pacific](#)
- [Implementing Environmental and Social Standards: Lessons from Eastern and Southern Africa](#)

TABLE 5: UNICEF WASH Publications in 2024 and 2025

Publication type	2024	2025	Total
Flagship and joint reports	14	11	25
WASH evaluations	10	7	17
Study reports	64	36	100
WASH templated publications	27	18	45
Peer-reviewed articles	10	1	11
Total	115	73	198

Digital knowledge platforms

UNICEF continued to leverage digital platforms to expand access to WASH knowledge, promote global learning and facilitate the uptake of evidence-based guidance. In 2025, the UNICEF.org/WASH¹¹⁷ website attracted more than 200,000 visitors, while the WASH landing page on Knowledge@UNICEF¹¹⁸ (K@U) recorded over 22,400 views from across the globe, demonstrating sustained demand for authoritative guidance, tools and resources.

More than 80 WASH resources were shared through the K@U platform in 2025, with the WASH Terminology guide¹¹⁹ ranking among the most accessed and cited resources. Two new thematic WASH microsites were launched - the WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool¹²⁰ and the WASH In Health Care Facilities¹²¹ site. Both quickly became some of the most visited WASH microsites, alongside established platforms on Gender and WASH¹²², and WASH for Peace¹²³. Together these digital assets support more consistent application of standards, facilitate analysis and decision-making, and strengthen global alignment.

Sharing WASH stories from the field

UNICEF continued to amplify learning and impact through storytelling, ensuring field experience and applied knowledge inform global understanding and advocacy. In 2025 more than 500 WASH-related stories were published

on UNICEF.org, highlighting results, innovations and lessons from diverse context. Stories such as a tap of hope¹²⁴, delivering on a promise¹²⁵, and no more bush business¹²⁶, illustrate how WASH programming translates into tangible improvements in dignity, health and resilience for children and their communities.

UNICEF also leveraged global WASH-related observance days to promote awareness, learning and advocacy. Events such as World Water Day, World Hand Hygiene Day, Menstrual Hygiene Day and World Toilet Day provided platform for country offices and partners to highlight challenges, solutions and progress. These efforts were amplified through UNICEF's global WASH bulletins¹²⁷ reaching a wide range of partners, showcasing country-led initiatives linked to these observances, such as promoting the benefits of handwashing¹²⁸, launching World Toilet Day Call for Action¹²⁹, World Water Day with new clean water systems¹³⁰, and young people commit to demystifying taboos around menstrual hygiene¹³¹.

Beyond dissemination, these knowledge resources, platforms and country experiences serve as critical entry points for learning, professional development and capacity strengthening across the WASH workforce. Building on this robust knowledge ecosystem, UNICEF continued in 2025 to invest in strengthening WASH capacity globally, ensuring that evidence and experience are systematically translated into improved policies, programmes and outcomes for children.

Capacity development

In 2025, UNICEF continued to strengthen WASH capacity at global, regional and national levels as a core pillar of its system-strengthening and sustainability agenda. Through a diverse portfolio of learning initiatives, UNICEF supported both its own workforce and national and global partners to build the technical, institutional and leadership capacities required to deliver equitable, climate-resilient and safely managed WASH services at scale.

Capacity building efforts were delivered through complimentary learning modalities, including e-learning, webinars, workshops and in-person training – allowing UNICEF to reach diverse audiences while responding to different learning needs and contexts. At the same time, UNICEF maintained and expanded strategic partnerships with academic institutions, UN agencies, and sector partners, ensuring that learning content reflects the latest evidence, innovations and best practices and remains aligned with evolving global agendas, including climate action, health system strengthening and gender equality.

E-learning through the Agora platform

UNICEF continued to expand access to flexible, self-paced learning for both UNICEF staff and external partners through the Agora learning platform¹³², with 76 per cent of course completions completed by non-UNICEF staff over the SP period (Figure 22).

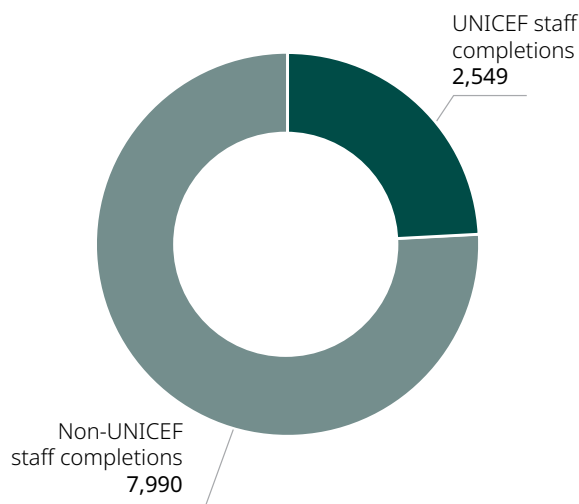
In 2025, a dedicated WASH Learning Channel¹³³ was launched on Agora, consolidating all UNICEF WASH-related course in a single, accessible space strengthening visibility and uptake of learning opportunities across the organization and the wider sector.

The WASH e-learning portfolio spans a broad range of technical and cross-cutting topics, including Core WASH principles, humanitarian WASH coordination, climate-resilience, systems-strengthening approaches and inclusivity.

In 2025:

- More than 12,200 participants enrolled in 27 WASH-related courses.
- The most popular courses were Introduction to WASH¹³⁴, Introduction to Humanitarian WASH Coordination¹³⁵, Taking action to achieve inclusive WASH¹³⁶, WASH Foundational Course¹³⁷, Integrating Climate Change in UNICEF's Planning and Programming¹³⁸ and Strengthening Enabling Environment for WASH¹³⁹, each recording between 1,000 and 2,500 enrolments, reflecting sustained demand for foundational and thematic learning.
- Participants included both UNICEF staff and a wide range of external sector professionals, demonstrating the platform's role in supporting global knowledge dissemination and workforce development beyond the organization.

FIGURE 22: UNICEF WASH professional development course completion, UNICEF and non-UNICEF staff (2022-25)



UNICEF Internal webinars and trainings

To strengthen the skillset of UNICEF WASH staff and foster a culture of continuous learning, UNICEF organised a series of webinars, workshops and in-person trainings at global, regional and country levels. These initiatives emphasised practical problem-solving, peer exchange and the application of learning to real-world programming and policy contexts.

At the global level, more than 15 webinar sessions were delivered in 2025, many comprising of multiple modules to enable deeper engagement with complex topics. Priority areas included financial inclusion for safely managed sanitation, inclusive urban sanitation, managed aquifer recharge, and cross-cutting areas such as transformative gender approaches and strategic partnerships in WASH.

UNICEF worked with a broad range of partners and academic institutions – including LIXIL, Finish Mondial, Dresden University, WHO and the World Bank to co-design and deliver high-quality learning content, reinforcing cross-sector collaboration and innovation. In addition, webinars were organized around key UN observance days related to WASH, such as Global Handwashing Day and Menstrual Hygiene Day, further linking learning with advocacy and global momentum.

These global learning events facilitated peer exchange across regions, strengthened networks or practice, and supported translation of emerging evidence into operation approaches.

Regional capacity development initiatives

In parallel with global efforts, UNICEF supported a wide range of regionally tailored capacity development initiatives in 2025, responding to region-specific priorities, risks and opportunities.

In South Asia, capacity-building initiatives focused on climate-resilient WASH, WASH FIT and IPC in HCFs. Large-scale Trainings of Trainers for sanitation workers were also conducted, with a strong emphasis on occupational safety, mechanisation and workers' rights, contributing to more professionalised and dignified sanitation service delivery.



At Kasorora Primary and Early Childhood Development School in Kamwenge District, Uganda, UNICEF, with support from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is helping create a safer and more inclusive learning environment through improved WASH services, infrastructure development and hands-on skills training.

In West and Central Africa, UNICEF organised trainings and workshops on sanitation vouchers, innovative financing mechanisms, climate-resilient sanitation and cholera response, reaching participants from more than 18 countries. These initiatives supported country efforts to strengthen financing, preparedness and resilience in high-risk contexts.

In East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF hosted a refresher training on NDCs and NAPs to strengthen country engagement in national climate policy processes and promote peer learning. UNICEF EAPRO also co-organized, with the University of Technology Sydney – Institute for Sustainable Futures (UTS-ISF), the first EAP Groundwater Webinar, enhancing technical capacity on sustainable groundwater management across the region.

Together, these global, regional and country-level capacity development initiatives strengthened the WASH workforce, supported systems-level change and reinforced UNICEF's role as a global leader in building the capabilities required to achieve sustainable, inclusive and climate-resilient WASH outcomes for children and their communities.

Regional and country-level WASH-FIT capacity-building events to support safer and more climate-resilient HCFs in MENA

In 2025, UNICEF MENA and WHO EMRO expanded regional collaboration on WASH in HCF. Around 200 professionals (118 women, 82 men) from governments, UNICEF, WHO and partner organizations were trained to support country-level roll-out and institutionalisation of the WASH-FIT tool and accelerate progress on the [Eight Practical Steps for WASH in HCFs](#).

Key trainings included:

- **Iran:** [National WASH-FIT ToT in Tehran](#), organized by MoHME, WHO and UNICEF, with 40 environmental health experts from universities of medical sciences across 25 provinces.
- **Lebanon:** [National WASH-FIT ToT in Beirut](#), organized with MoPH, WHO Lebanon and UNICEF Lebanon, training 25 MoPH staff leading WASH-FIT implementation, including a field visit at Karantina Primary Health Care Center
- **Morocco:** National WASH-FIT ToT in Casablanca with 25 Ministry of Health participants.
- **Libya:** National WASH-FIT ToT, for 25 Ministry of Health participants, held in Tunisia.
- **Regional IFRC/WHO/UNICEF ToT:** Held in Amman with 35 [Red Cross and Red Crescent](#) representatives from 11 countries across the region.
- **State of Palestine:** Continuous online trainings for around 50 partners, including MoH, MoWASH and WASH and Health Cluster partners, on WASH, waste management, environmental cleaning, climate resilience and data collection in HCFs.



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Results Area 3: Climate change, disaster risks and environmental degradation

Heavy rains and floods affected children and their families in the Ucayali region of Peru in 2025.

Scaling climate and environmental action for children

Children worldwide already face accelerating impacts of climate change, disasters and environmental degradation. Extreme weather events that were once rare are becoming a regular feature of childhood, undermining children's health, safety and well-being. Climate-related hazards are increasing in frequency and severity, while shifting disease patterns, biodiversity loss, economic pressures and social tensions are compounding risks. At the same time, air pollution and exposure to lead and other toxic chemicals are damaging children's health and development.

In response, UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022–2025¹⁴⁰ and Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan (SCAP) 2023–2030¹⁴¹ have positioned climate resilience, environmental protection, sustainable energy and disaster risk reduction (CEED) as central to children's rights and development. This commitment is carried forward in UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2026–2029,¹⁴² which introduces a dedicated results area on climate resilience and environmental protection for children.

Under Impact Result 5, UNICEF and its partners aim to protect 500 million children from disasters and climate and environmental risks by 2029. This includes protecting 300 million children through climate-resilient water, sanitation, health, and education systems, and 200 million through solutions that reduce the risks of climate-related disasters and environmental hazards.

Working alongside the Strategic Plan, the SCAP has built momentum for a more ambitious climate and environmental agenda for children. It has strengthened organizational capacity, accelerated investment in data and evidence, and enabled more integrated, child-responsive, climate-focused programming across UNICEF.

In 2025, UNICEF, in partnership with governments and a broad range of stakeholders, delivered climate and environmental results at scale across sectors and regions. These partnerships spanned civil society, United Nations agencies, public and private sector entities, youth groups and research institutions.

Progress in UNICEF results from 2021 to 2025 shows how the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025 and SCAP have expanded the scale, integration and reach of climate, environment, energy and DRR programming for children (see Figure 23). The graph highlights the changes from the 2021 baseline:

- Young people participated in key climate resilience-related policy development, entrepreneurship and advocacy in **141 countries**, up from 75 in 2021 (an increase of 88 per cent).

Key results

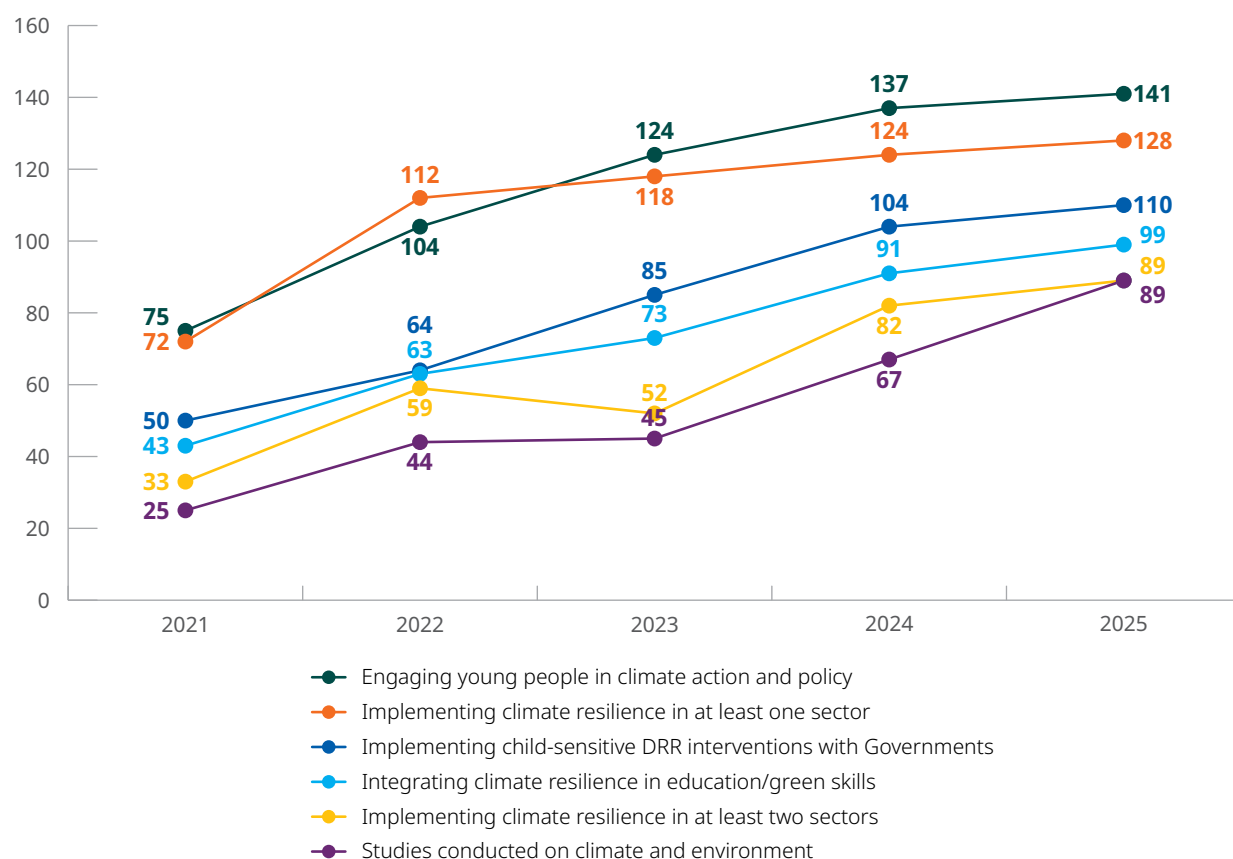
In 2025, UNICEF supported **129 country governments** in strengthening the climate resilience and adaptive capacity of child-essential social services, up from 119 countries in 2024.

Resilience is the ability of a system to anticipate, prevent, withstand, manage and overcome cumulative stresses and shocks.

Adaptive capacity is the ability of a system to adjust to climate change, moderate potential damage, take advantage of opportunities or cope with the consequences.

- Climate resilience priorities were integrated into at least one critical social sector in **128 countries**, up from 72 in 2021 (an increase of 77.8 per cent).
- Child-sensitive DRR interventions were implemented with governments in **110 countries**, including disaster preparedness, forecast-based anticipatory action and multi-hazard early warning systems, up from 50 in 2021 (an increase of 120 per cent).
- The integration of climate, energy, environment and DRR into education and green skills grew to **99 countries**, up from 43 in 2021 (an increase of 130.2 per cent).
- Climate-resilient programming expanded to **89 countries** implementing cross-sector policies and programmes in at least two sectors, including health, education, nutrition, child protection, social protection and water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH), up from 33 in 2021 (an increase of 169.7 per cent).
- Multi-sector climate and environment studies were conducted in **89 countries**, up from 25 in 2021 (an increase of 256 per cent).

FIGURE 23: Climate, environment and DRR action



Source: Data compiled from UNICEF reporting mechanisms, including Core Standard Indicator tracking.

Using data and evidence to inform climate-resilient programming

Key results

- **89 country offices** conducted multi-sector climate and environment studies, up from 25 in 2021
- UNICEF co-developed **8 CCRI-DRM tools**, bringing the total to 12 completed and 18 more in development
- UNICEF country offices developed **9 Climate Landscape Analysis for Children (CLAC)**¹⁴³ reports, bringing the global, cumulative total to 78

UNICEF invests in data, analytics and evidence to support governments and partners in identifying vulnerabilities, anticipating risks and targeting interventions where children face the greatest climate- and disaster-related risks.

In 2025, UNICEF developed the Global Child Hazard Database¹⁴⁴ which provides comprehensive, reliable hazard data essential to safeguarding children's rights and well-being worldwide. The database analyses children's exposure to 10 climate-specific and climate-related hazards across all programme countries. It enables governments to identify high-risk areas for children and prioritize disaster preparedness, programme planning, policy change and the allocation of climate finance to the most pressing adaptation needs.

Climate, disaster and environmental risks increasingly affect children at the local level, including in areas disconnected from social services, requiring planning data that reflect sub-national realities. In 2025, UNICEF co-developed sub-national Children's Climate Risk Index-Disaster Risk Models (CCRI-DRMs)¹⁴⁵ for Bangladesh, Fiji, Madagascar, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South

Sudan, Tajikistan and Vanuatu. These models provide child-specific climate risk data for decision-making, from national policy development to targeted infrastructure investments, and are increasingly accessible online. CCRI-DRMs are developed through a consultative process involving governments, children, young people and other stakeholders.

UNICEF also developed the SunSavvy tool¹⁴⁶ to design and cost solar systems for health care, education and water facilities. The tool uses geospatial data and facility-level inputs to generate technical specifications and cost estimates for solar system procurement, including operations and maintenance requirements. By the end of 2025, 15 UNICEF country offices across three regions had used the tool more than 300 times to support programme planning and implementation.

Leveraging climate and disaster risk financing to strengthen the climate resilience of child-critical social services

UNICEF continued working with partners to access, sequence and combine financing for CEED programming. The efforts strengthen systems that reduce predictable humanitarian impacts and build long-term resilience for the benefit of children and their families.

This includes child-centered disaster risk financing mechanisms, such as **parametric climate risk insurance** under the Today and Tomorrow Initiative (TTI) and the expansion of pre-arranged financing for **anticipatory action** ahead of predictable climate disasters. UNICEF also supported governments to integrate risk financing mechanisms with national climate and disaster management strategies to protect children and essential social services from accelerating climate impacts and environmental hazards.

An example of climate adaptation financing that was catalyzed by UNICEF for the benefit of children was the approval in November 2025 of a **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** project which was developed in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Under this project, UNICEF in partnership with UNEP aim to strengthen early warning and shock-responsive social protection systems in Azerbaijan to reduce the impacts of climate hazards on children.



Children play during high tide in Lilisiana Village on Malaita Island, Solomon Islands. As high tides become more frequent due to climate change, coastal communities face increasing challenges.

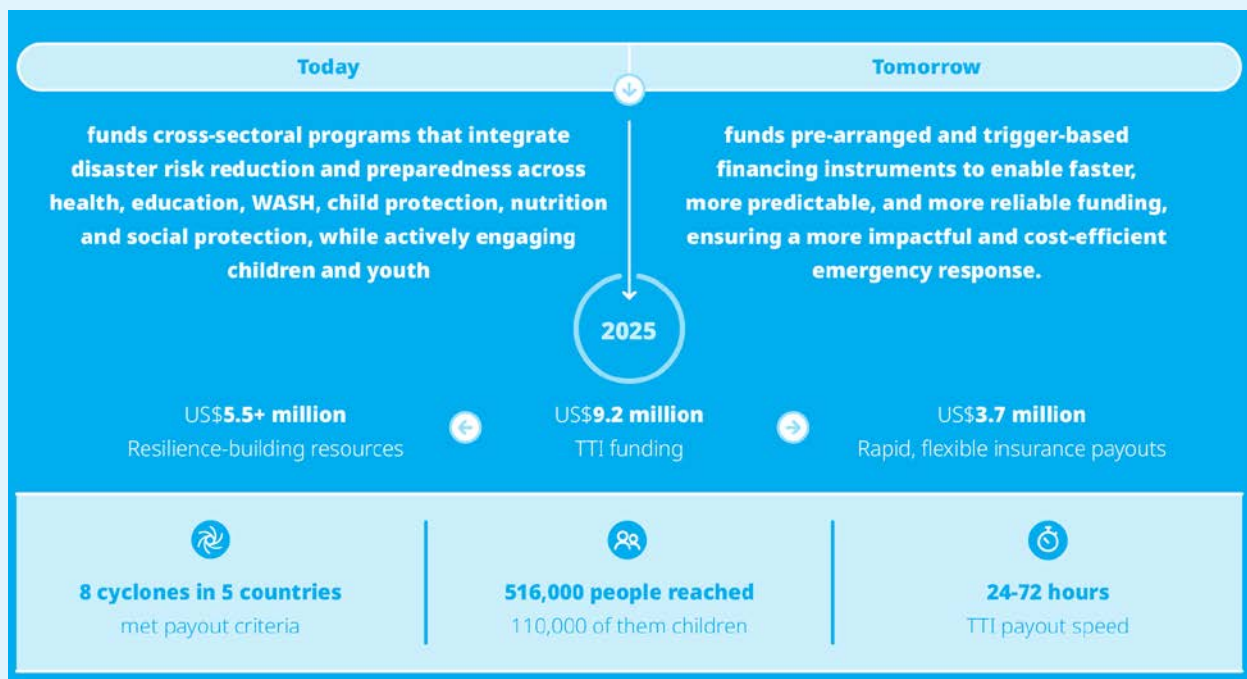
The **Adaptation Fund** has also approved projects with UNICEF as a key executing partner. In Kenya, the national government, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) will implement US\$20 million in climate financing focusing on climate-resilient WASH systems and services. In Pakistan, the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), UNICEF and UN Women will support the government to implement a US\$10 million climate-resilient WASH and ecosystem-based adaptation initiative.

UNICEF also advanced innovative financing approaches. In 2025, UNICEF completed a pre-feasibility assessment of 20 cross-sectoral projects in Eastern and Southern Africa to evaluate their potential for carbon credit certification under voluntary carbon market frameworks. Focusing on micro-scale solar energy and WASH initiatives, the assessment identified six projects as financially viable at a conservative carbon price of US\$15 per tCO₂e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent).

Spotlight: Innovating climate and disaster risk finance for children with the Today and Tomorrow Initiative (TTI)

TTI is active in eight pilot countries: Bangladesh, Comoros, Fiji, Haiti, Madagascar, Mozambique, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. From 2023 to 2025, TTI released over US\$11.5 million in 'Tomorrow' insurance payouts in response to 25 cyclones across the 8 pilot countries, including some that received no other humanitarian resources. The innovative finance component is supported by the Government of Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland through the Global Shield Financing Facility.¹⁴⁷

The payouts have been complemented by approximately US\$18.8 million – including private-sector funds – for disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation across the eight countries. These efforts have reached over 1.5 million children and their families, half of whom are women and girls. With payouts released within 24 to 72 hours after payout confirmation, UNICEF ensures timely, life-saving assistance when disasters strike.



Country examples: 'Today' funding

In **Comoros**, UNICEF used TTI 'Today' funds to adapt early warning messages and communication tools to the needs of children, including those with disabilities. It reached over 10,000 students through disaster management awareness sessions that provided essential knowledge on cyclones, emergency actions and first aid.

TTI funding also strengthened evidence for decision-making and capacity-building. In **Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu**, UNICEF TTI 'Today' funds supported the development of sub-national Children's Climate Risk Index-Disaster Risk Models.¹⁴⁸ In **Fiji**, TTI funded a school-based disaster risk reduction handbook for school-level planning, as well as a checklist tool to guide child-safe planned relocation processes. The checklist will be rolled out to 46 communities identified by the Government of Fiji for climate-related relocation.

Across the Pacific, UNICEF installed sustainable energy and climate resilient systems, including solar power at a health care facility in **Solomon Islands** – providing 4,000 people with reliable 24/7 energy – and a rehabilitated water system in **Vanuatu**, ensuring safe water access for 7,000 people.

Country examples: 'Tomorrow' funding

In **Haiti**, following Hurricane Melissa, UNICEF used the 'Tomorrow' payout to implement critical WASH and emergency interventions. More than 4,200 people benefited from safe drinking water, hygiene information, hygiene kits and emergency sanitation facilities constructed after the cyclone, all of which helped reduce the risk of cholera and other waterborne diseases.

In **Madagascar**, UNICEF – in coordination with the National Office for Risk and Disaster Management and other relevant actors – mounted immediate, multi-sector responses after Tropical Cyclones Dikeledi, Elvis, Honde and Jude made landfall. The payouts supported 361,982 people, including 211,958 children. The speed of TTI 'Tomorrow' funding was especially critical for safe water access, including decontaminating water points, repairing pipelines and distributing WASH kits before waterborne disease could take hold.

In **Southern Madagascar**, where malnutrition was already critical, TTI funding provided life-saving nutrition services, repaired health centre services to restore access, and rapidly delivered emergency education supplies and classroom repairs. It also provided child-friendly spaces and protection services, ran behavioral change activities to ensure life-saving multi-sector messages reached people during the most critical phase of the response, and registered households in the national social registry – strengthening the foundation for faster crisis response in the future.

The TTI 'Tomorrow' payouts in Madagascar supported: 91,000 people with safe water access, 450 decontaminated water points, 36,874 households with WASH kits, 94,063 children under five with nutrition support, 7,200 people with health services access, 27,000 students with education continuity, 5,000 children and caregivers with protection access, 13,429 people with emergency message access and 14,971 vulnerable households by being added to national social protection registries.



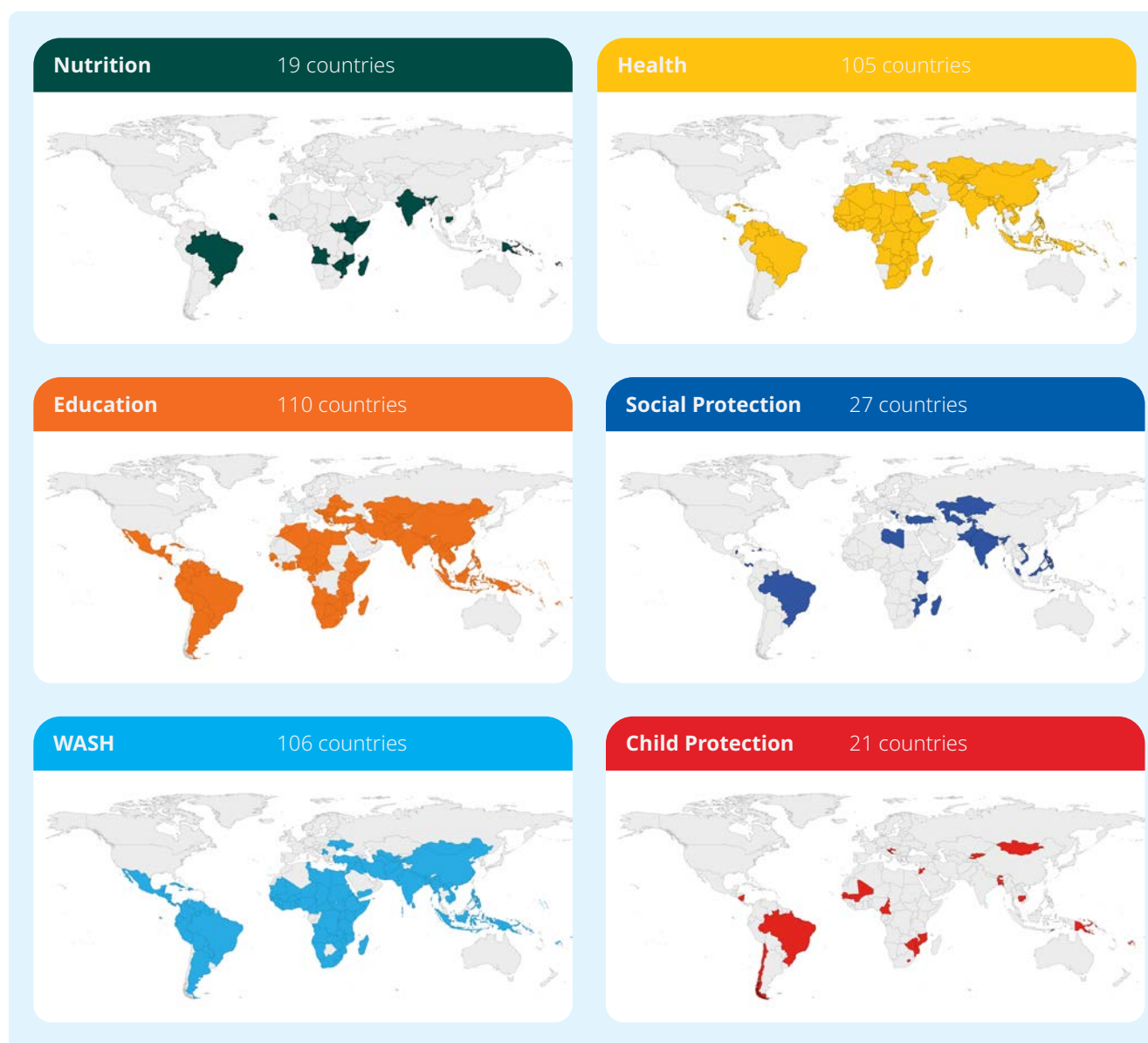
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Children take a break from studying in Madagascar. In March 2025, Tropical Storm Jude struck the Grand Sud region, causing the deaths of five people and affecting more than 26,000 others, including the displacement of over 12,500 people. The UNICEF Today and Tomorrow Initiative cyclone insurance payout and resources from other funders supported Temporary Learning Space tents that serve as classrooms while schools' permanent buildings were rehabilitated in coordination with local authorities.

Protecting children through climate-resilient social systems and services

UNICEF's climate resilience efforts spanned multiple social sectors in 2025, with the largest uptake in health, education and WASH. In each of these sectors, UNICEF supported initiatives in over 100 countries.

FIGURE 24: Countries integrating climate resilience in child-critical social sectors



Source: Data compiled from UNICEF reporting mechanisms, including Core Standard Indicator tracking, as well as from Country Office Annual Reports. The boundaries and names displayed on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Ensuring healthy environments for healthy children

Key results

- **45 countries** addressed environmental health risks with UNICEF support
- **70 countries** strengthened climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health care facilities
- **11,624 health facilities** were improved through solarization, WASH enhancements and waste management
- **1,834 health professionals** from 120 countries completed the UNICEF, WHO and CEH e-Course since its launch in 2024

During the Strategic Plan period (2022–2025), UNICEF made significant strides in integrating children's environmental health into primary health care systems worldwide. This progress was supported by UNICEF's global advocacy initiatives, including *Clean Air, Healthy Children*¹⁴⁹ and the goal of Ending Childhood Lead Poisoning by 2040.¹⁵⁰

With UNICEF support, 45 countries implemented measures to address environmental health risks, including air pollution and lead exposure. This is up from 18 countries in 2021 (a 150 per cent increase), reflecting strengthened national engagement.

In 2025, 70 countries strengthened climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health care facilities, up from 56 in 2021. UNICEF and partners supported improvements in 11,624 facilities through solarization, WASH enhancements and strengthened waste management – a 21 per cent increase in facilities reached since 2024.

Complementing this expanded reach, UNICEF strengthened national capacity on children's environmental health by training over 25,000 health workers during the strategic plan period. This included 1,834 professionals from 120 countries who completed the UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO) and Children's Environmental Health (CEH) e-Course,¹⁵¹ equipping them to identify environmental hazards and prioritize prevention. The course is part of the Children's Environmental Health Collaborative,¹⁵² a multi-stakeholder initiative UNICEF helped launch in 2023 as a founding partner.



© UNICEF Bangladesh

A health worker prepares to collect a blood sample from a young child during the 2025 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2025) in Bangladesh, capturing vital data on lead exposure among children in their most critical years of development. Bangladesh is among the countries most affected by lead exposure, with an estimated 21 million children under the age of 5 having high blood lead levels above 5 µg/dL – the threshold set by the World Health Organization. MICS 2025 published findings from testing over 11,000 children aged 12-59 months and over 2,000 pregnant women. It was the first time a MICS had included lead and heavy metal testing in Bangladesh.

Countries also strengthened environmental health data systems. With UNICEF technical support, China launched its first national monitoring platform (see Spotlight: Mongolia and China). Brazil developed a platform to track climate change and environmental hazard indicators, improving the availability and use of evidence for policy and planning.

UNICEF supported governments to integrate children's environmental health into national climate policy. For instance, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India and Kyrgyzstan incorporated child-focused health evidence and actions into their updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), advancing the inclusion of children's needs within national climate commitments.

In 2025, UNICEF published *Fragile Beginnings*,¹⁵³ a global guidance document that outlines children's heightened vulnerability to toxic and climate-related exposures during critical stages of development. With over 1,100 readers and a citation in a peer-reviewed article in *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*,¹⁵⁴ the publication strengthened the global evidence base for child-focused environmental health programming.

Spotlight: Mongolia and China

CHIP, an innovative air pollution initiative, grows from pilot to policy in Mongolia

Air pollution poses a severe threat to children's health in Mongolia, particularly in *ger* districts. Here, 60 per cent of the urban population relies on coal-burning stoves during winters that can fall below -40°C. In Ulaanbaatar, PM2.5 levels regularly exceed WHO standards. Pneumonia is now the second leading cause of death among children under age five.

In response, the Government of Mongolia and UNICEF launched the Cooking, Heating and Insulation Products (CHIP) initiative in 2019. Designed for *ger* households, CHIP combines clean electric heating and cooking with improved insulation and ventilation to reduce reliance on coal. Evidence from the CHIP pilot informed national policy action, including Mongolia's 2019 raw coal ban in Ulaanbaatar, clean air action plans and updated building codes.



Bayan, 8, warms his hands on a CHIP device in his grandmother's ger in Ulaanbaatar. Powered by electricity, the device improves indoor air quality, helping protect his health and that of his family.

By 2025, CHIP had reached more than 6,000 households and 25 kindergartens across 13 provinces and Ulaanbaatar districts. UNICEF mobilized over US\$800,000 from municipal and provincial partners, enabling expansion to an additional 1,391 households. In 2025, the initiative was updated to improve thermal performance and reduce costs for low-income households. As part of this expansion, 1,434 households received synthetic insulation packages, 62 adopted heat pump systems and 306 installed upgraded electric heaters (see *Working towards cleaner air for children in Mongolia*¹⁵⁵).

China launches its first national platform to track children's environmental health

Despite major gains in child survival and well-being, environmental risks remain a significant threat to children's health in China. These include air pollution, unsafe water and exposure to toxic chemicals.

In August 2025, China launched its first national Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI) platform.¹⁵⁶ It was developed by the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration and the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, with UNICEF support. The platform consolidates government data into a single, accessible national system for monitoring environmental health risks affecting children.

Built on a review of more than 7,500 studies, the platform tracks 19 indicators covering air pollution, heavy metals such as lead exposure and other environmental hazards. Embedded within the China CDC system, the platform strengthens national ownership and enables policymakers, health professionals and the public to access and use data. It provides a foundation for integrating child-specific evidence into environmental health policy and decision-making.

Delivering sustainable energy solutions across sectors

Key results

UNICEF implemented sustainable energy solutions in **121 countries**, including:

- **70 countries** provided solar solutions in health care facilities, up from 66 countries in 2024. This included **652 health care facilities** through the HFSE initiative, which totals **3.26 MW** installed in 2025
- **70 countries** installed solar-powered water systems, up from 69 in 2024, implementing over **1,767 solar-powered water stations**
- **45 countries** implemented sustainable energy solutions in schools, compared with 15 in 2024

In 2025, UNICEF supported child-critical facilities and social services to maintain reliable, efficient and sustainable energy during climate-related disruptions while integrating child rights into long-term infrastructure planning.

UNICEF's sustainable energy programme expanded significantly in the **health sector**. This was driven in part by the Health Facility Solar Electrification (HFSE) initiative and sustained demand for decentralized energy solutions in fragile and low-resource settings. UNICEF strengthened the climate resilience and adaptive capacity of health care facilities in 70 countries. Support included:

- Solarizing medical equipment,
- Improving water, sanitation and hygiene services through solar-powered systems, and
- Deploying solar cold chain equipment to strengthen immunization and essential health services for pregnant women, children under age five and newborns.

The expansion of solar-powered water systems reflects increased recognition of the role of sustainable energy in strengthening climate-resilient **WASH services**. Solar investments reduced reliance on fossil-fuel-powered pumping while improving the reliability, affordability and continuity of safe water supply.

Support for sustainable energy in the **education sector** also expanded. UNICEF improved infrastructure and strengthened capacity on energy efficiency in operational facilities. Energy audits were conducted in schools to



Midwife Sharon Akullo holds a newborn in the labour suite at night at Amomwa Health Centre III in Uganda in late 2025. She remembers using a torch for deliveries, as poor lighting made procedures risky. New solar lighting has helped improve night shift safety and maternal care. The Gavi-funded HFSE project, implemented by UNICEF, the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization, is solarizing hundreds of Ugandan health facilities to boost immunization and healthcare

identify cost-effective, energy-efficient and climate-resilient retrofit measures. Interventions also addressed rising climate-related risks, including extreme heat and heatwaves.

In 2025, UNICEF strengthened integrated sustainable energy planning. It provided technical assistance, market-shaping support and operational tools to accelerate high-quality solar deployment across country programmes. UNICEF also partnered with Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All),¹⁵⁷ the World Health Organization and the World Bank's Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme on a 'Cost of Inaction' study.¹⁵⁸ The research is assessing the economic costs of not sustainably electrifying schools and health centres in the Global South.

Technical experts from UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa, Western and Central Africa and Eastern Asia and Pacific Regional Offices supported country offices and partners. They provided online training, data analysis to develop proposals, technical reviews of solar installations and South-South learning exchanges.

Spotlight: Yemen

UNICEF expands solar-powered water systems, bringing safe water to 240,000 people

UNICEF in Yemen implemented 54 water projects and installed 29 solar-powered water systems across 13 districts to address energy constraints and climate-related disruptions. The systems benefit 240,000 people, produce 9.6 million litres of water daily, and operate with a combined installed capacity of 685 kW.

At least 15.2 million people in Yemen – including 4.1 million girls and 4.3 million boys – require urgent access to water and sanitation services. This is due to the combined impacts of conflict, natural hazards, food insecurity and disease outbreaks. Needs are particularly acute in areas such as Al-Makha, where water and sanitation services are severely limited.

Here, UNICEF, with Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) support, constructed solar-powered water systems and 56 km of distribution networks across five locations in Al Makha, restoring safe and reliable water access for 18,150 vulnerable people. The upgraded infrastructure, including high-capacity tower tanks integrated with solar-powered pumping systems, replaced time-intensive manual water collection with consistent and sustainable access closer to households.



Mohammed, 11, returns home with safe water from a recently installed solar-powered water point in Al-Makha, Taizz.

Advancing climate-resilient education and green skilling systems

Key results

- **99 countries** were supported to integrate green skills and content on climate action, environmental management and DRR into education systems and curricula, up from 43 in 2021
- **42 country offices** advanced teacher development on climate literacy and sustainability

With national governments and development partners, UNICEF is expanding its focus on resilient and adaptive education systems and green skilling. The support aims for education services to continue during and after climate shocks. Attention on green skilling prepares young people for green and circular economies.

In 2025, UNICEF implemented resilient schools' initiatives in Bolivia¹⁵⁹ and Ecuador¹⁶⁰ in primary and secondary schools and supported green vocational education and training (VET) in North Macedonia.¹⁶¹ UNICEF's Today and Tomorrow Initiative¹⁶² also strengthened education system resilience. Through its innovative financing mechanism, TTI investments restored safe classrooms, embedded risk-informed curricula and improved disaster preparedness within ministries of education. These results demonstrate how child-focused risk finance mechanisms can deliver both immediate protection and longer-term resilience for children.

To ensure safe, equitable and continuous access to quality education, UNICEF supported governments and school authorities to implement the Comprehensive School Safety Framework,¹⁶³ endorsed by 85 countries. This work is backed by a UNICEF-developed compendium that supports governments and partners in making schools and health care facilities safer and more resilient.¹⁶⁴

UNICEF developed evidence, data and guidance for country offices and their partners to assess, prioritize and manage the environmental and social risks of climate-



Melanie tends her school garden in Ecuador as part of the Resilient Schools Programme. Inclusive of ancestral knowledge, it improves sustainable energy use, access to safe water and sanitation, rainwater harvesting practices, agronomic skills and climate education. The programme reached 85,000 children, teachers, parents, caregivers and other community members in 2025.

resilient education programming. This included a climate-resilient education results framework¹⁶⁵ that guides the integration of climate resilience and green skills into curricula, teacher training and school operations. The framework builds on findings from the *Under Pressure* report¹⁶⁶ on climate impacts on education.

UNICEF also published a handbook on learning for a green future, which country offices and partners are using to strengthen the climate-resilience and adaptive capacity of education systems.¹⁶⁷

Spotlight: Nigeria

UNICEF and government partners construct safer learning and health structures for children

UNICEF and its partners are strengthening the resilience of child-critical health, education and WASH services in Kano and Jigawa states. These investments enable facilities to withstand climate shocks, maintain operations and adapt to long-term climate risks.

In 2025, UNICEF and its partners implemented the **Climate-Resilient Infrastructure for Basic Services (CRIBS)** programme. Using an evidence-based approach, the programme upgrades existing facilities and adds climate-resilient infrastructure. Improvements reached 45 schools, benefiting 56,153 students. At 39 primary health care centres (PHCs), upgrades benefit more than 1 million people in surrounding communities.

At each school and primary health care centre, UNICEF, government counterparts, facility authorities and communities identify local infrastructure risks. They use a standardized assessment tool and evidence-gathering methodology. The tool combines secondary data, site observations and interviews with staff, students and community members to assess vulnerabilities and prioritize climate risks.

The tool enables stakeholders to understand how specific hazards affect each facility – such as flooding, heat or water stress – and to identify targeted adaptations.

Using data from the analysis and local input, UNICEF and its partners select low-cost, evidence-based and scalable solutions that offer a high return on investment. These solutions are tailored to address specific climate risks at each facility. Technical upgrades include solar-powered water pumps with deep boreholes, improved drainage systems, raised toilet and borehole platforms, natural ventilation, heat-reflective roofing, and trees used as windbreaks.

In December 2025, UNICEF trained 45 engineers on the CRIBS approach to climate-resilient infrastructure. These engineers will assess facilities in six additional states, which UNICEF, its partners and FCDO will support in 2026. These investments are already improving service delivery. Enhanced ventilation and roofing have cooled classrooms and reduced heat stress on students, teachers and equipment. This has created safer and more effective learning environments.

Upgrades in health facilities have maintained 24/7 maternal and child health services. They have also strengthened infection prevention, reduced heat-related risks and improved the timeliness and quality of care. Across schools and primary health care centres, climate-resilient infrastructure – particularly reliable water and sanitation – ensures that services continue during and after heatwaves and floods. This has reduced disruptions to both learning and health care.



Musa, 14, expressed joy over newly planted trees, a solar-powered borehole, and upgraded classrooms at his school in Kano State.

Reducing the risks of climate-related hazards, shocks and threats

Safeguarding children from growing disaster risks

Key results

In 2025, UNICEF collaborated with and supported governments in **110 countries** to strengthen disaster risk reduction, including 13 fragile and conflict-affected countries

- **78 countries** used child-centred, multi-hazard risk analysis in disaster risk management planning
- **66 countries** developed disaster-resilient infrastructure for child-critical social services
- **74 countries** developed, updated and/or implemented national or local frameworks for preparedness
- **39 countries** developed and implemented recovery and reconstruction measures and/or frameworks, which included elements to reduce future disaster risks

In 2025, UNICEF supported governments and partners to scale up disaster risk reduction initiatives. Programming efforts included:

- Using risk data and weather forecasts to trigger anticipatory action ahead of floods, droughts and cyclones;
- Pre-positioning essential supplies ahead of predicted climate impacts;
- Strengthening disaster preparedness plans for schools, health care facilities and communities; and
- Supporting cash transfers, nutrition, WASH and child protection assistance to children and families in hazard-prone locations ahead of impending crises.



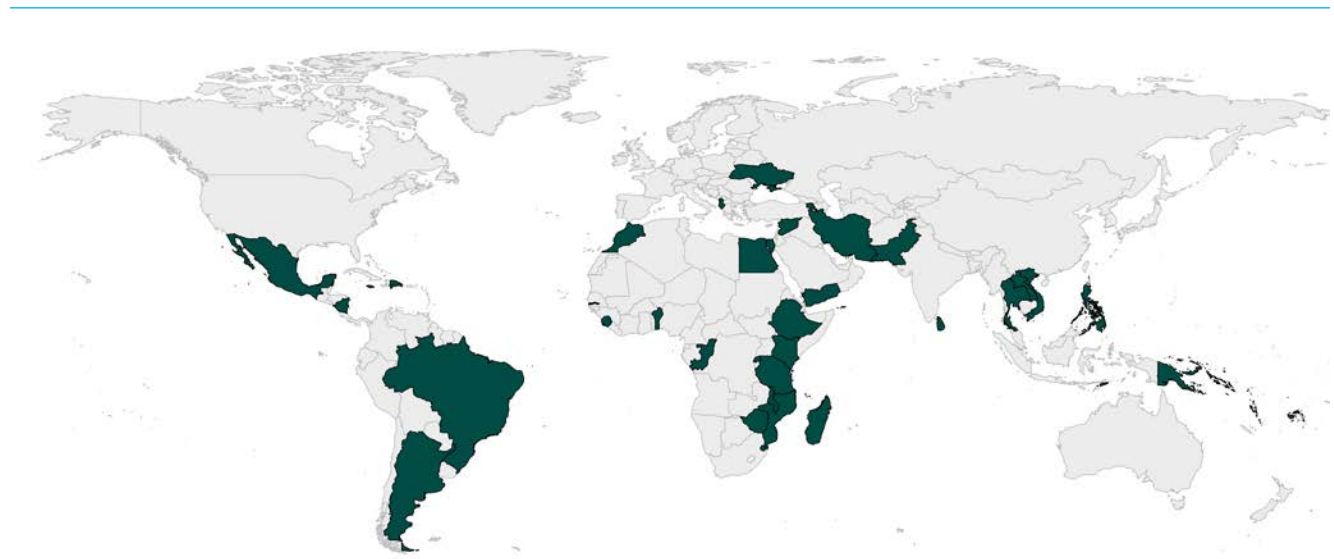
In November, UNICEF and the Malaysian Ministry of Education conducted a DRR training that involved 200 children from 30 schools across the state, including Ameera (12). During the session, each student received a “GoBag” emergency backpack to help keep them safe during floods. The packs included first-aid kits, hygiene supplies, whistles, mosquito repellent and life jackets. The training was part of ongoing efforts to strengthen school and community preparedness in flood-prone areas.

UNICEF worked with governments and local partners to strengthen community-based DRR initiatives. These efforts ensured that children's needs are integrated into disaster management planning, evacuation procedures, preparedness activities and emergency response systems. Initiatives included targeted measures for children with disabilities.

UNICEF's commitment to **Accountability to Affected Populations** (AAP)¹⁶⁸ remained central to this work. It strengthened engagement with communities, including children, and contributed to reduced vulnerability, increased resilience and stronger social cohesion.

UNICEF helps governments recover and rebuild after disasters in ways that make children safer from future shocks. This includes providing flood-resistant, solar-

FIGURE 26: 39 countries supported to build back better after disasters



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Spotlight: Mozambique

Pre-arranged finance and resilient classrooms lower children's risk of cyclone impacts

In March 2025, UNICEF, the government, UN agency partners and the Nacional de Gestão e Redução do Risco de Desastres (INGD) activated an interagency anticipatory action framework after Cyclone Jude reached trigger thresholds two days before landfall.

Through the framework, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) released US\$6 million in 13 minutes. These funds enabled the pre-positioning of critical supplies and early action. They supported evacuated populations and the delivery of life-saving services immediately after landfall, such as water, sanitation, food assistance and primary health care.

UNICEF Mozambique also received a US\$2.5 million payout through the parametric insurance mechanism of the Today and Tomorrow Initiative, which releases rapid funding following the onset of cyclones. Together, these resources enabled a fast, coordinated emergency response across WASH, health, child nutrition, child protection and education sectors, with a focus on reaching children and women in hard-to-reach communities.

Additionally, UNICEF and government partners supported WASH, education, and child health and nutrition services in Mozambique to better withstand and recover from climate and disaster shocks, while also adjusting infrastructure and delivery models to address escalating disasters. Doing so was part of an integrated set of efforts to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of child-critical social services.

Against this backdrop, UNICEF supported the construction or upgrading of 188 climate-resilient classrooms for 18,836 students in 2025, bringing the total to 1,645 classrooms built or improved since 2022, reaching 210,560 students. Ensuring education continuity after disasters protects children's learning, safety and well-being, including for children with disabilities who face heightened risks of exclusion, violence and permanent dropout. For all students, schools are often the primary entry point to safe water and toilets, nutrition, psychosocial support, health outreach and child protection referrals. School access is especially critical for girls, who face increased risks of dropout, early marriage and violence when schools remain closed.

These efforts are complemented by school-based emergency preparedness planning and training. In 2025, more than 580 children in over 80 schools were directly engaged in school-based emergency planning as part of their school committees. In Sofala Province, UNICEF also worked with the National Disaster Risk Management Authority to initiate youth participation in community-level DRR committees.



More than 150,000 children (out of 276,000 people) benefited from prompt TTI parametric insurance payouts after Cyclones Chido, Dikeledi and Jude, enabling the swift delivery of temporary learning spaces, school kits, and nutrition, WASH and health services. This includes Nhamo Juma, 13, who was able to quickly return to school after Cyclone Chido.

Supporting anticipatory action for children

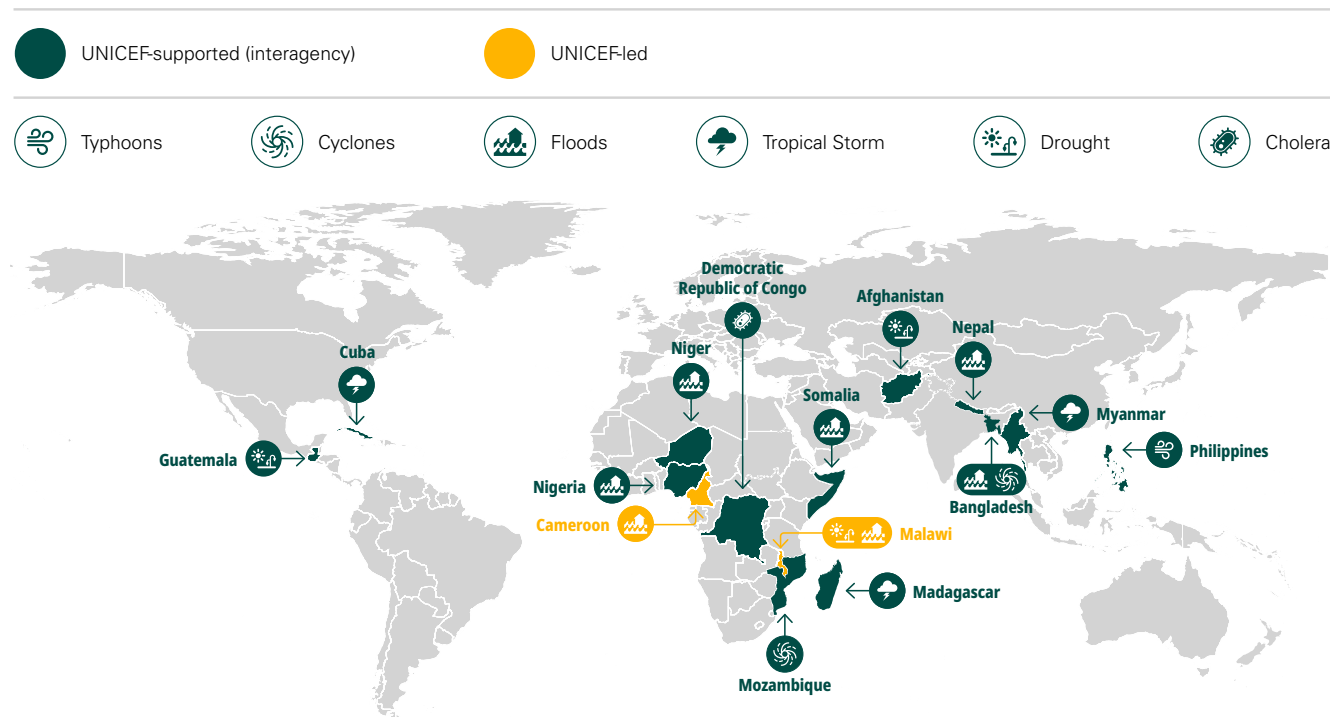
Key results

Globally, governments established **19 anticipatory action frameworks** for cholera, droughts, floods and cyclones, with UNICEF support

UNICEF supports governments to establish anticipatory action frameworks. The efforts strengthen the resilience and preparedness of child-critical social services ahead of predictable climate hazards, complementing longer-term climate adaptation measures. In 2025, 19 AA frameworks reached over 460,000 children through forecast-based interventions in nutrition, health, education, child protection, social protection and WASH sectors.

UNICEF also developed an Anticipatory Action Strategy for 2026-2029, which outlines UNICEF's vision, principles, and priority actions to institutionalize and scale up anticipatory action.¹⁶⁹ The strategy focuses on seven strategic priorities to embed AA across programme planning and financing, partnerships and advocacy.

FIGURE 27: 19 anticipatory action frameworks supported by UNICEF in 15 countries



Source: Data compiled from UNICEF reporting mechanisms. Note that Malawi has 1 multi-hazard framework covering floods and drought, Bangladesh has separate flood and cyclone frameworks, the Democratic Republic of Congo has 2 frameworks for cholera, Mozambique has 2 frameworks for cyclones and Niger has 2 frameworks for floods. The boundaries and names displayed on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Spotlight: Guatemala

Anticipatory action protects children's nutrition and health services from drought impacts

Triggered by national forecasts of below-average seasonal rainfall, UNICEF implemented anticipatory actions in the Dry Corridor of Eastern Guatemala in late 2025, with funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). In coordination with the Ministry of Health, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF triggered the rapid deployment of integrated health and nutrition brigades in advance of an impending drought to safeguard children's nutrition.

Once early warning thresholds were reached, brigade activities were triggered. Brigades visited 18 drought-vulnerable communities ahead of below-average seasonal rains to provide nutritious supplementary foods, micronutrient supplements and infant and young child feeding counseling, alongside water and sanitation activities, to help prevent malnutrition. The brigades successfully reached 36,024 people with nutrition services to protect children and limit the impact of the drought.

Health and nutrition brigades also screened children and women for acute malnutrition for rapid referral and treatment to aid quick recovery. Altogether, teams screened 6,116 children and 3,878 women for acute malnutrition. To reduce the impact of the imminent drought and build community resilience to future climate shocks, UNICEF strengthened the capacities of over 1,000 community leaders, health personnel, municipal commission members and mothers to use mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) screening.

This has enabled early detection of malnutrition among pregnant women and young children resulting from drought-related disruptions in food production. Early detection keeps prompting rapid treatment and recovery, helping to avert long-term impacts on children's growth and development (see the *Acting before the crisis* video¹⁷⁰).

Additionally, as part of the AA approach to reduce the risk of waterborne diseases under anticipated drought conditions, UNICEF rehabilitated 10 communal water points (including climate-resilient water and sanitation systems) in three health facilities. These anticipatory WASH services enabled access to safe water for 38,669 people (16,723 children) from drought-prone communities, along with measures such as safe water treatment, water harvesting and community training on WASH preparedness and responses in humanitarian situations.



In Chiquimula in December, a brigade team conducted screenings for children under age five to enable the early identification of acute malnutrition and provide timely, comprehensive care before drought.

Expanding early warning systems

Key results

UNICEF worked with governments in **59 countries** to strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems

UNICEF is an Advisory Panel member of the UN Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative.¹⁷¹ It supports three of the four technical working groups with a child-focused perspective to strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems to better prepare essential social services from imminent hazard impacts.

In 2025, under the Disaster Risk Knowledge Working Group, UNICEF integrated child-disaggregated risk analysis into national early warning assessments. This included the Children's Climate Risk Index and Disaster Risk Models.¹⁷² Under the Warning Dissemination and Communication Working Group, UNICEF ensured alerts were age-appropriate and accessible, including for children with disabilities. Under the Preparedness and Response Capabilities Working Group, UNICEF enhanced child-critical social services, schools and community readiness to enable families to act on early warnings.

UNICEF also championed inclusive EWS for vulnerable and displaced populations at key fora¹⁷³ and supported national EW4All rollouts through stakeholder workshops, roadmap drafting and gap analysis.

FIGURE 28: 59 countries where UNICEF has collaborated with governments to strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems in 2025



Source: Data compiled from internal UNICEF reporting mechanisms, including Core Standard Indicator tracking and the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience. The boundaries and names displayed on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Advancing policies that address children's needs and rights in a changing climate

Influencing global policy action

Key results

- **99 countries** have updated climate, environmental or disaster risk management policies
- **70% of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** are child-responsive (up from 49% in 2024). UNICEF supported 68 of 99 NDCs (69%) through advocacy and technical support
- **19 of 28 National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)** submitted were considered child-responsive (68%)
- **11 countries** endorsed the Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action
- **50 countries** developed climate-resilient WASH service rationales

In 2025, UNICEF engaged in policy processes at national, regional and global levels, mainly through country offices with governments and line ministries in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This included supporting the development of child-responsive and youth-informed Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs 3.0) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), as well as engagement on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.¹⁷⁴

These efforts strengthened UNICEF's strategic influence in disaster- and climate-related diplomacy at the 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) and the 2025 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2025).

Governments actively sought out UNICEF's expertise on child-focused data, evidence and policy solutions, building on proven programmes and policies. At COP30, technical assistance to government delegations helped to integrate child-responsive measures across the negotiations.

Several COP decisions included child-responsive mandates, including new requirements for age- and gender-disaggregated data, paving the way for

continued progress through COP31 and beyond. By the end of 2025, 77 countries had endorsed the **Intergovernmental Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action**,¹⁷⁵ launched at COP25 in Madrid, with 11 new signatories over the course of 2025.

UNICEF convened the **Group of Friends for Children and Climate Action** at the 62nd session of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB62)¹⁷⁶ under the UNFCCC, and again during COP30. The group brought together supportive Parties from diverse regions and negotiating groups. This included the COP30 Presidency Lead Negotiator. UNICEF presented how the Global Child Hazard Database¹⁷⁷ could be used within the UNFCCC process to inform and strengthen national climate policy planning and implementation.

Parties expressed strong support for elevating attention to the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children across the intergovernmental process, in line with recommendations from the 2024 UNFCCC Expert Dialogue on Children and Climate Change.¹⁷⁸ They also supported stronger action at the national level, anchored in child-responsive commitments in their NDC 3.0 and National Adaptation Plans.

At GP2025, UNICEF and partners influenced the **Geneva Call for Disaster Risk Reduction**¹⁷⁹ to include children and youth as key stakeholders in implementing the Sendai Framework for DRR in its final five years, through 2030. The Geneva Call for DRR includes the **Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF)**¹⁸⁰ as a key approach for disaster-resilient education systems. It also commits to strengthening disaggregated data collection by age, sex, disability and income, and endorses the Children and Youth Declaration on Building Resilience for a Sustainable Future.¹⁸¹ UNICEF, alongside the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), supported 96 children and youth to serve as session moderators and members of national delegations at GP2025.

As part of the **United Nations Senior Leadership Group on DRR for Resilience**,¹⁸² UNICEF co-leads a UN-wide commitment to scale up and systematise child-responsive DRR and climate change adaptation (CCA). It does so with UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). UNICEF and partners also supported governments to integrate DRR and CCA into policies and programmes across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. These efforts help protect children and communities in complex and protracted crises.

FIGURE 29: 99 countries where UNICEF supported governments to strengthen environment or disaster policies or plans



Source: Data compiled from internal UNICEF reporting mechanisms, including Core Standard Indicator tracking and the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience. The boundaries and names displayed on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Catalyzing national policy action

Key results

- UNICEF provided technical assistance to over **72 countries** to develop and strengthen their NDCs 3.0 to be child-responsive
- UNICEF provided technical assistance to over **30 countries** in developing, updating and implementing NAPs
- UNICEF supported **78 countries** in developing, updating and implementing national DRR strategies, policies and plans in alignment with the Sendai Framework for DRR
- UNICEF engaged with **34 countries** for Loss and Damage

In 2025, UNICEF worked closely with governments to ensure that children's rights and needs are recognized and addressed in policies, including:

Nationally Determined Contributions: An increasing number of NDCs now include children and child-responsive, multisectoral commitments, which represents significant progress compared to previous rounds of submissions.¹⁸³ In 2025, UNICEF engaged in global advocacy on NDCs, partnering across the UN system and civil society to cohost webinars and strengthen internal and external capacity. The efforts guide governments in integrating child rights in national climate policy development and implementation.

National Adaptation Plans: UNICEF provided technical assistance to the formulation of multi-sectoral NAPs, focusing on targeted adaptation priorities and investments in child-critical sectors. In 2025, UNICEF engaged with intergovernmental bodies to shape new global guidance on NAPs adopted at COP30, providing technical support to policymakers and practitioners and delivering dedicated capacity-strengthening sessions for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Loss and Damage: UNICEF advanced child-responsive Loss and Damage action worldwide, addressing the economic and non-economic harms climate impacts are already causing to children and their communities (see the Child-responsive Loss and Damage: Policies, Finance and Action report).¹⁸⁴ UNICEF also engaged in the Warsaw International Mechanism Executive

Committee (WIM ExCom),¹⁸⁵ the Santiago Network¹⁸⁶ and the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD),¹⁸⁷ providing evidence-informed technical assistance to intergovernmental decision-making.

National DRR strategies: UNICEF supported governments to implement disaster risk management strategies that prioritize children's needs, providing

technical assistance in risk assessments, policy and planning, and the integration of child-responsive approaches. It also delivered guidance and training and strengthened national capacity, coordination and institutional systems for DRR.

Accelerating results through innovation and child and youth engagement

Harnessing innovation and technology for climate resilience

UNICEF uses innovation and technology to develop and deploy practical, co-designed climate and environment solutions that are effective, contextually relevant, sustainable and scalable over time. It works with governments communities, youth, private sector and research institutions. Activities include:

- Advancing integrated, child-centered early warning systems that combine climate data, digital infrastructure and community action;¹⁸⁸
- Supporting green entrepreneur fairs and incubator events, such as in Angola¹⁸⁹ and through the BeGreenAfrica¹⁹⁰ initiative;
- Strengthening the evidence base for innovation, including research with the Cambridge Judge Business School on materials that reinforce natural barriers and reduce flood and storm impacts;¹⁹¹ and
- Applying technologies to build climate resilience and reduce risk.¹⁹² For instance, UNICEF advances and supports youth-led climate and DRR solutions for the 21st century through the African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA) at the Malawi University of Science and Technology.¹⁹³ Solutions include using drones, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other technologies to reduce disaster, climate and environment risk.¹⁹⁴

In 2025, the use of **AI and machine learning** expanded across programmes, improving data systems, climate forecasting and early warning processes. These advances increased the speed, accuracy and efficiency of decision-making and service delivery for the children

and communities UNICEF serves. As an example, UNICEF and its partners are using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and geospatial technologies to bridge data gaps on climate, displacement and children.¹⁹⁵

From 2023-2025, UNICEF's Venture Fund¹⁹⁶ invested in a **Climate Action Cohort**¹⁹⁷ of eight startups. The cohort's organizations – from Uruguay, Mali, Cameroon, Timor Leste, India, Uganda, Albania and Trinidad and Tobago – benefited from UNICEF financing, hands-on technical assistance and mentorship. Half of the cohort was women-founded or -led, and three operated in fragile or conflict-affected settings.

In 2025, launched **Climate Ventures**.¹⁹⁸ This new investment initiative is a five-year programme that aims to support up to 60 climate-resilience ventures over its lifetime. In October, UNICEF's Climate Innovation Challenge¹⁹⁹ helped map the climate tech landscape and shape future Climate Ventures investments. It screened over 1,200 startups, with five receiving mentorship.²⁰⁰

UNICEF's **Spark Accelerator**²⁰¹ helps later-stage startups and social enterprises accelerate their growth and impact. In 2025, UNICEF selected five transformative initiatives (out of 146 submitted) for funding and mentorship to address health care, climate change, environmental degradation and disasters. These included a youth-led early warning system initiative in Libya²⁰² and the Map Action²⁰³ programme. Map Action is an open-source platform that lets communities report environmental hazards via mobile photos or offline. The data can help decision-makers allocate resources and enact proactive measures based on local evidence, including reports from children and young people. UNICEF deployed Map Action in Mali in 2025.

Country spotlight: India and Rwanda

Meri LiFE Mobilizes 11.6 million young people for climate action

UNICEF and YuWaah²⁰⁵ have supported India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to develop Meri LiFE,²⁰⁶ a digital platform that enables young people to build green skills, climate awareness and leadership to reduce climate risks. The platform aligns with Mission LiFE, launched by the Prime Minister of India in 2021 to promote sustainable lifestyles and individual action on climate change.

In 2025, the Meri LiFE web portal and mobile application engaged **11.6 million young people** in climate action. They installed solar panels, rainwater harvesting systems and waste segregation facilities in schools and communities; planted millions of saplings in public spaces; conducted water and energy audits; and led large-scale clean-up campaigns that removed over 5 million kilograms of waste.

Meri LiFE brings together public, private and youth partners to advance climate action. It engages 78 ministries and departments of the Government of India, alongside private sector and civil society partners and young people.



Youth in Kerala search the Meri Life app for volunteer activities.

Youth-led climate action mobilizes over one million people for a greener future

Through the Green Rising initiative, UNICEF supported youth-led climate action in schools and communities across Rwanda. Climate-focused activities led by multiple youth organizations mobilized **1.06 million people**, including 572,400 women and girls.

In 2025, they planted over 120,000 trees and supported 709 youth-led green businesses. In addition, UNICEF's Greening Schools initiative reached 12,225 students in 2025 through environmental clubs that embedded climate education in learning environments.



A young person showcases eco charcoal briquettes from Youth Proud, a social enterprise committed to youth employment and skills development.

Driving impact for children through sustainable operations and supply chains

Prioritizing sustainability within UNICEF operations and programming

Key results

- UNICEF reduced operational emissions by **33%** and increased sustainable energy usage to **59%**, driven by improvements in energy efficiency and reduced reliance on fossil fuel-powered vehicles and generators
- By the end of 2025, **54 out of 129 country offices (42%)** are applying Environmental and Social Standards in their programmes

Sustainability is central to UNICEF's mandate and embedded across programmes, operations and supply chains. The agency aligns its efforts with the UN 2030 target to reduce internal emissions by 45 per cent and scale renewable energy to 80 per cent.

UNICEF implements sustainability initiatives across its operations, including energy efficiency, smart energy management systems, solar photovoltaic installations, water conservation, waste reduction, sustainable fleet management and green building practices. Across offices, **Green Teams** promote sustainable practices by reducing waste and plastic use, strengthening recycling, supporting biodiversity conservation and lowering operational emissions. UNICEF Global Headquarters in New York achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification.

In 2025, UNICEF finalized and launched its **Policy and Procedure on Environmental and Social Standards (ESS)** in Programming,²⁰⁷ along with its revised Policy on Safeguarding.²⁰⁸ UNICEF also developed a **Procedure on Complaints and Feedback Management**, scheduled to be released May 2026. Together, these documents institutionalize principles that underpin a comprehensive Social and Environmental Safeguarding (SES) framework, which is currently being rolled out globally (with 17 Country Offices already trained, over 50 scheduled for 2026, and all remaining offices to be reached by 2028). The framework is also supported by implementation tools at different stages of development and ongoing integration with programme management systems.

Embedding sustainability measures in supply chains

In 2025, UNICEF Supply Division advanced sustainability across procurement and supply systems. It translated Scope 3 greenhouse gas (GHG)²⁰⁹ baseline and hotspot analysis into concrete actions. These included reducing single-use plastics in insecticide-treated nets²¹⁰ and piloting lifecycle assessments and GHG inventory work with vaccine suppliers. UNICEF also refined ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) formulations to support local, resilient and climate-aligned production.²¹¹

UNICEF strengthened sustainability in cold chain systems through climate-friendly refrigerator long-term agreements, supplier carbon reduction commitments and enhanced equipment monitoring. UNICEF also expanded circularity and product innovation. Through initiatives such as Project Play,²¹² packaging materials were repurposed for community use. These measures enhanced reliability and reduced waste.

At the same time, UNICEF scaled solarized solutions for public institutions. UNICEF's approach to solar and sustainable energy extends well beyond cold chain applications, and solar and energy storage systems support a broad range of programmatic areas, including education and WASH. Locally generated sustainable energy solutions enable the delivery of essential services for children and mothers in remote areas, whether off-grid or in locations where the electricity supply is unreliable. In 2025, this included the implementation of 530 off-grid energy systems across 13 countries.

To embed sustainability across the procurement cycle, UNICEF strengthened risk-based tools, hotspot methodologies and sustainability criteria through its Sustainable Procurement Guidance. Procurement practices also evolved. In 2025, 236 UN Global Marketplace²¹³ notices integrated requirements on environmental sustainability, disability inclusion, safeguarding and life-cycle costing.

UNICEF expanded supplier engagement through industry consultations, sustainability surveys and targeted support on Net Zero commitments. These efforts were recognized at the UN Procurement Awards 2025, where UNICEF received the Sustainable Procurement and Supply award for leveraging procurement to achieve sustainability in the Safe Injection Equipment market.

Strengthening climate and environment capacities and growing knowledge

UNICEF is strengthening its internal capacities on climate, DRR and environmental action by providing training on climate science, climate financing, climate policy and adaptation planning in key technical sectors. In 2025, partnerships with leading academic institutions – such as the Columbia Climate School – and with private sector and specialized training partners were established to

expand and professionalize in-person and digital training courses on climate-specific issues. The UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office also launched an online course on climate resilience, climate action and sustainability for self-paced training.

To reach a public audience, UNICEF generated knowledge across sectors through publications available on the site 'Knowledge at UNICEF'.²¹⁴ UNICEF has dedicated pages with resources on climate action, environmental protection, sustainable energy and DRR. See examples of publications in Box 1: Examples of 2025 publications.

Box 1: Examples of 2025 publications

- [Child-responsive loss and damage policies, finance and action](#)
- [Children displaced in a changing climate](#)
- [Climate, poverty and children: Latin America on alert; Spanish](#)
- [Contingency actions and analysis of pre-arranged financing for shock-responsive social protection](#)
- [Fragile beginnings: children face unique vulnerabilities to environmental hazards at every stage of life](#)
- [Framework for child nutrition and climate action](#)
- [Gender-transformative climate action](#)
- [Green schools and health care facilities](#)
- [Green transformation: guidance for climate-resilient education](#)
- [Securing safe and climate-resilient water and sanitation for every child](#)
- [Stories of impact on protecting children from disaster, climate and environmental risk](#)
- [Strategic framework for climate-resilient WASH in schools](#)
- [Toolkit to end childhood lead poisoning](#)
- [Under pressure: the impacts of climate change on education](#)
- [Weathering the future: the growing crisis of child displacement](#)

Publications developed for and with children and young people:

- [A toolkit for young climate activists: gender and climate change](#)
- [If we contribute: the complete guide to Nationally Determined Contributions](#)
- [Young Caribbean minds: game & activity book on climate change, natural disasters and mental health](#)

Country examples

This section presents some representative examples which illustrate how UNICEF and its partners have translated climate, environment, energy and DRR priorities into concrete programming and policy change in 2025.

The examples span regions, sectors and policy contexts, demonstrating the range and diversity in UNICEF's efforts to deliver children-responsive climate action and environmental protection.

Data and evidence

Cambodia	Used the sub-national CCRI-DRM as a data source for 401 local community members to better understand the climate risks facing children in their areas. This included young people and ethnic communities in seven provinces. As a result, 20 of the highest-risk communes developed child-centred climate action plans based on local risks. These plans are now included in local three-year investment plans, helping communities access public funding to act for and with children.
Costa Rica	Supported the Ministry of Public Education to develop the Comprehensive Safety and Risk Education Plan. The plan, called SEGURED, is a national school safety platform that reached over 1 million students in 4,462 public schools in 2025, covering 90 per cent of schools with risk diagnostics and 76 per cent with actionable safety plans. The Ministry has embedded SEGURED into its national monitoring system, ensuring schools can diagnose their unique vulnerabilities and create tailored safety plans
El Salvador	Involved 32 institutions and more than 7,300 adolescents and youth in developing a new Climate Landscape Analysis for Children report.
Uzbekistan	Led the first nationwide Comprehensive School Safety Assessment of 1,100 schools (10 per cent of the national stock), generating evidence to inform climate-resilient infrastructure upgrades, preparedness planning and policy reforms.

Sustainable energy

Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu	Upgraded 137 health facilities, 118 schools and 30,000 households with climate-resilient infrastructure and solar energy solutions.
Pakistan	Installed solar-powered lighting and fans that improve ventilation during heatwaves and extreme heat days, benefitting more than 150,000 children in 1,093 schools.
Ukraine	Supported 133 utilities and trained 1,867 professionals in solarization, energy efficiency and gender-sensitive infrastructure, helping institutionalize national resilience. These system-strengthening efforts contributed to more reliable access to safe water and heating for millions of people, particularly benefiting children during times of conflict.

Climate-resilient education and green skilling systems

Pakistan	Supported provincial governments and education institutes and authorities to train around 509 educators, 150 master trainers and 3,200 community members in formal and non-formal education settings across Pakistan. Education and skills-building on disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and emergency preparedness reached 96,230 children (43 per cent girls) and 23,538 adolescents (38 per cent girls).
Papua New Guinea	Trained 5,775 teachers at 1,900 schools in hazard mapping, flood mitigation and climate education and action, reaching over 230,000 students. Through mangrove restoration, recycling and awareness activities, children develop green skills that help them protect their school, home and community environments.
Viet Nam	Supported curriculum review and faculty development to embed DRR, climate and green skills in teacher in-service and pre-service programmes, including at universities. The teacher capacity-strengthening efforts reached over 10,000 in-service teachers, over 6,000 pre-service teachers and over 400,000 students through strengthened classroom and extracurricular learning.
Uzbekistan	Supported climate integration into ongoing national curricula and assessment reforms, with 6.5 million students benefiting from the updates.

Disaster risk reduction

Cuba	Implemented school-based DRR and climate-resilience programming in 89 schools with 6,172 children and adolescents (3,130 girls), including 324 children with disabilities. Actions included integrating disaster and climate change topics into curricula, creating scientific clubs, developing multi-risk maps and implementing evacuation drills and first-aid exercises.
Nepal	Supported the expansion of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework, with 26 per cent of schools nationwide implementing climate-smart safety measures to protect one million children.
Tajikistan	Trained over 1,100 teachers and caregivers – with the Committee of Emergency Situations and non-government organization partners – in inclusive DRR, produced tailored DRR materials for children with visual and hearing impairments, and adapted emergency drills that engaged approximately 1,600 children with disabilities.

Anticipatory action

Bangladesh	Supported authorities to integrate anticipatory action for disaster preparedness into divisional health systems in two divisions to improve health care resilience and strengthen cyclone preparedness. Representatives from 37 cyclone-prone sub-districts, called <i>upazilas</i> , developed costed, upazila-level health sector preparedness action plans that included activation trigger mechanisms based on cyclone forecasts.
Kenya	Worked with the Kenyan Government to reach 4,416 households with cash-based anticipatory action before the full impacts of a drought were felt. The initiative used early warning data to trigger three months of cash assistance and enhanced maternal and child nutrition support. The government has committed to scaling the approach to at least five additional counties by 2030.

Early warning	
Brazil	Expanded early warning systems to benefit more than 26,000 people in Indigenous territories.
Libya	Supported the youth-led Roaya Foundation in expanding Libya Mozn, ²¹⁵ the country's first early warning system for climate hazards that delivers real-time alerts. In 2025, Mozn scaled its social media reach to 1 million followers, giving communities, families and first responders a critical head start before floods and other climate shocks arrive.
Madagascar	Supported resident training in 42 flood-prone districts on the community-based <i>Système d'Alerte Précoce Communautaire</i> (SAP-C). Residents learn to collect data, monitor risk indicators and share alerts through agreed channels, such as sirens, radios, mobile phones and community meetings.

Climate and DRR policy action	
Armenia	Advised on Armenia's Law on Disaster Risk Management and Population Protection, which embeds child- and disability-inclusive provisions, including for pregnant women. The law mandates risk assessments every five years and requires high-risk institutions for children (e.g., schools, health facilities) to develop disaster risk management plans.
Egypt	Supported nearly 8,700 youth to engage in the climate-focused Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) and the Egypt Sustainability Summit, enabling them to influence national and regional climate policies ahead of COP30.
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan	Embedded costed climate-resilient education and child-responsive measures into NDCs 3.0 for all five countries. The potential to mobilize an estimated US\$5 billion in climate finance targeting the education sector across the five countries is now included in updated NDCs, targeting 24 million children, 72,000 teachers and 24,000 education facilities, with measurable reductions in energy consumption and emissions.

Innovation and technology	
Laos	Deployed an open-source, AI-powered air quality monitoring system – through the Lao PDR's Air for Tomorrow initiative ²¹⁶ – that integrates real-time readings from 148 monitoring locations into a single government platform. ²¹⁷
India	Strengthened local governance systems for risk resilience by deploying an AI-driven disaster risk management platform across 75 <i>panchayats</i> (government councils), enabling precise, data-driven planning, working through a multi-agency UN initiative.

Child and youth engagement	
Egypt	Supported 1,750 young people, through Green Rising, to transition from climate- and environment-related action to employment.
Tajikistan	Supported the establishment of 100 Eco Clubs across schools and universities, often embedded in student councils to ensure ownership. ²¹⁸ These clubs used a national climate education toolkit to train 1,954 adolescents (1,157 girls) as climate champions, who reached an estimated 12,000 peers. Student-led projects ranged from 'Life of Plastics' awareness sessions to waste segregation, recycling and school greening. Pre- and post-activity assessments indicated knowledge and behavior change at 76–80 per cent.

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Financial annexⁱ

Glossary of key terms

Income, revenue and contributions received

- **Income:** Income includes contributions received in a given year from public sector partners (governments, including the European Commission, inter-organizational arrangements, global programme partnerships, and international financial institutions) and revenue from private sector partners. UNICEF uses income to prepare the financial framework, which forms part of the UNICEF Strategic Plan. Income is not part of the audited UNICEF financial statements.
- **Revenue:** UNICEF recognizes revenue for the full contribution agreement value when the partner agreement is signed in line with requirements of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). This includes multi-year contribution agreements reflecting the full commitment of our partners for current and future years.
- **Contributions received:** Cash and contributions in kind received from resource partners within a calendar year.

Expenses and expenditures

- **Expenses** are recorded according to the International IPSAS and are accrual based. These are used for official financial reporting.
- **Expenditures** are recorded on a modified cash basis. They are used for budget reporting as they are aligned with cash disbursements and goods receipts (the way budgets are consumed).

Financial overview

Resources by type of funding

UNICEF has several funding modalities that work together to contribute to lasting impact; these include core and other resources, which include softly earmarked thematic funds, as well as tightly earmarked funds.

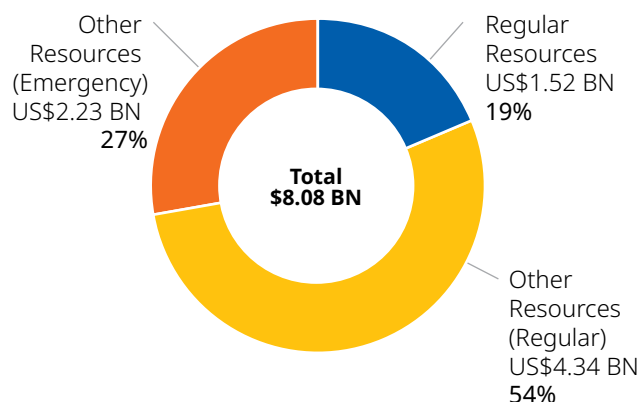
- Core Resources (RR) – contributions without restrictions within the framework of the Strategic Plan, to be used flexibly for children wherever and whenever the need is greatest.
- Other Resources Regular (ORR) – contributions that are earmarked by UNICEF partners for development programming. These can include flexible thematic funding at global, regional and country level. They can also be further earmarked for specific programmes or projects.
- Other Resources Emergency (ORE) – contributions that are earmarked by UNICEF partners for humanitarian programming. These can include flexible thematic funding for global, regional or country level humanitarian action. They can also be further earmarked for specific emergency responses.

In a challenging economic climate, UNICEF's total income continued to decline, reaching US\$8.08 billion in 2025, a 2 per cent decrease compared to 2024 and a 13 per cent decrease since 2022. These resources entrusted to UNICEF represent a spectrum, from funding earmarked to specific programmes to flexible funds given without any restriction to address the most pressing needs of children and to invest strategically in programming for scale, sustainability and resilience. The contributions from the public sector decreased by \$547 million compared to 2024, while private sector contributions increased by \$363 million.

In 2025, Core Resources (RR) – UNICEF's most flexible funding – decreased by \$67 million to a total of \$1.52 billion, representing 19 per cent of total income.

The Funding Compact commitment of member states to increase core funding as share of the overall public sector and member states income fell short of the 30 per cent target in 2025. UNICEF is continuing to encourage partners to increase RR contributions as part of a broader portfolio approach across all funding types, ensuring the organization's presence globally and its ability to bring about systemic change to meet the needs of every child, everywhere.

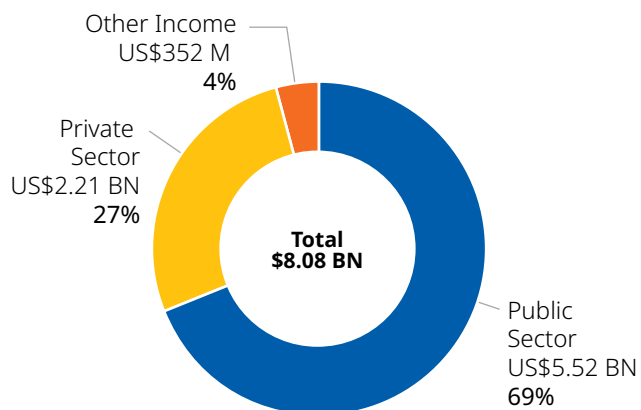
FIGURE A1: Income by type of funding, 2025ⁱⁱ



Resources by type of resource partner

In 2025, public sector income was \$5.52 billion, and made up 69 per cent of UNICEF's total income. Private sector income amounted to \$2.21 billion in 2025, which was 27 per cent of UNICEF's total income. Other income – including income from interest, procurement services and other sources – amounted to \$352 million or 4 per cent of UNICEF's total income.

FIGURE A2: Income by type of resource partner, 2025



ii Figures are based on 'income' which here represents contributions received from public sector, revenue from private sector and other income. See 'Revenue, Contributions and Income' on page 118.

Thematic funding

Thematic funds are softly earmarked pooled funds categorized as Other Resources (OR) and designed to support the achievement of results at country, regional and global levels. For partners, contributing to UNICEF's thematic funding pools enables them to champion the principles of good multilateral resource partnerships. Thematic funds deliver a higher return on investment for results for children, as their lower indirect cost recovery allows a greater share of funding to be directed toward programming, while also benefiting from transactional efficiencies compared to more tightly earmarked contributions. Thematic funding contributions continued to decline in 2025, from a record high of \$1.20 billion in 2022 (primarily driven by private sector funding for the Ukraine crisis) to \$361 million in 2024, down to \$331 million in 2025, constituting only 5 per cent of total OR. Thematic funding as a proportion of total OR from member states specifically decreased from 8 per cent in 2022 to 2 per cent in 2025, below the Funding Compact target of 15 per cent by 2027.

Private sector contributions – representing 60 per cent (\$197 million) of total thematic funding in 2025 – came from National Committees, Country Offices and additional individual donors, including through online donations. Public sector contributions were provided by governments and accounted for 40 per cent of thematic funding contributions in 2025 (\$134 million).

Apart from the spike in contributions in 2021 and 2022, largely from humanitarian private sector giving, the average level of thematic funding over the past decade has never reached more than 10 per cent of total OR contributions. UNICEF encourages partners to channel more contributions through these softly earmarked funds to allow maximum flexibility at the global, country and regional levels to strengthen results for children.

FIGURE A3: Thematic contributions received by resource partner, 2025: Public vs private

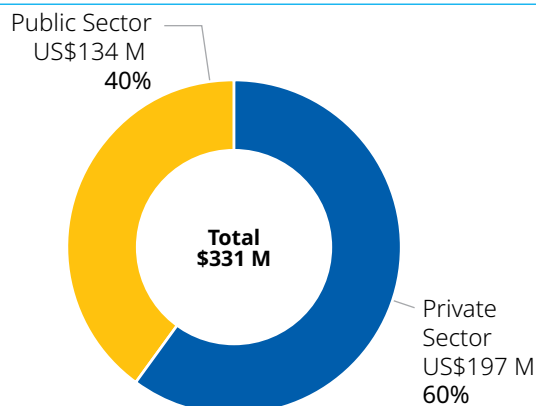
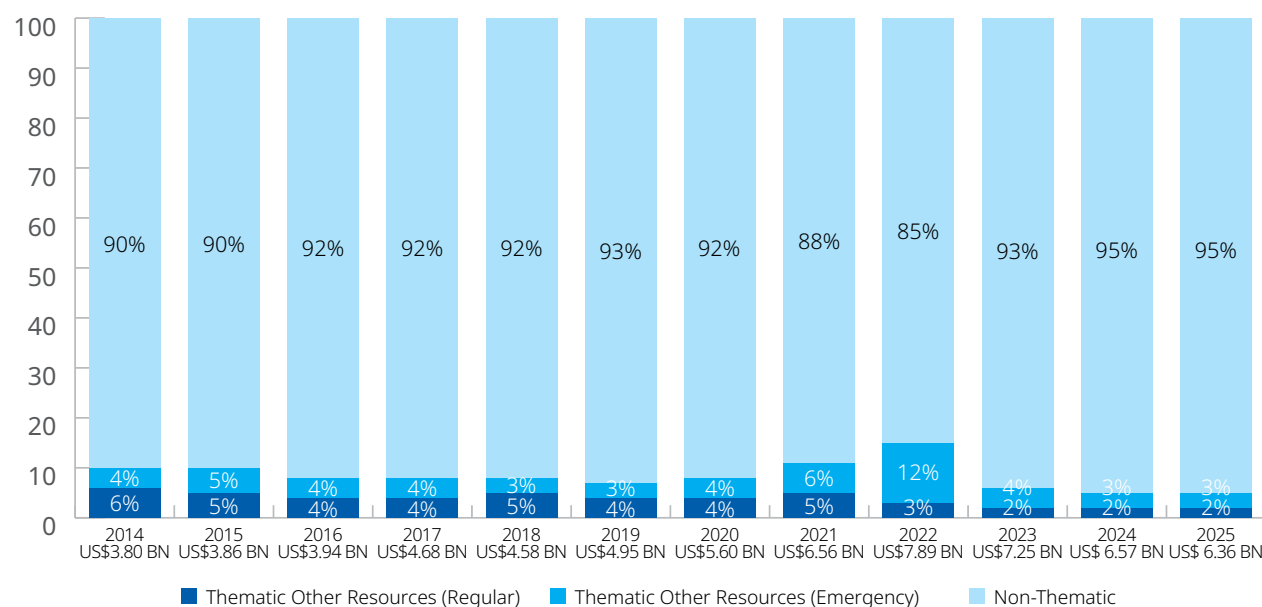
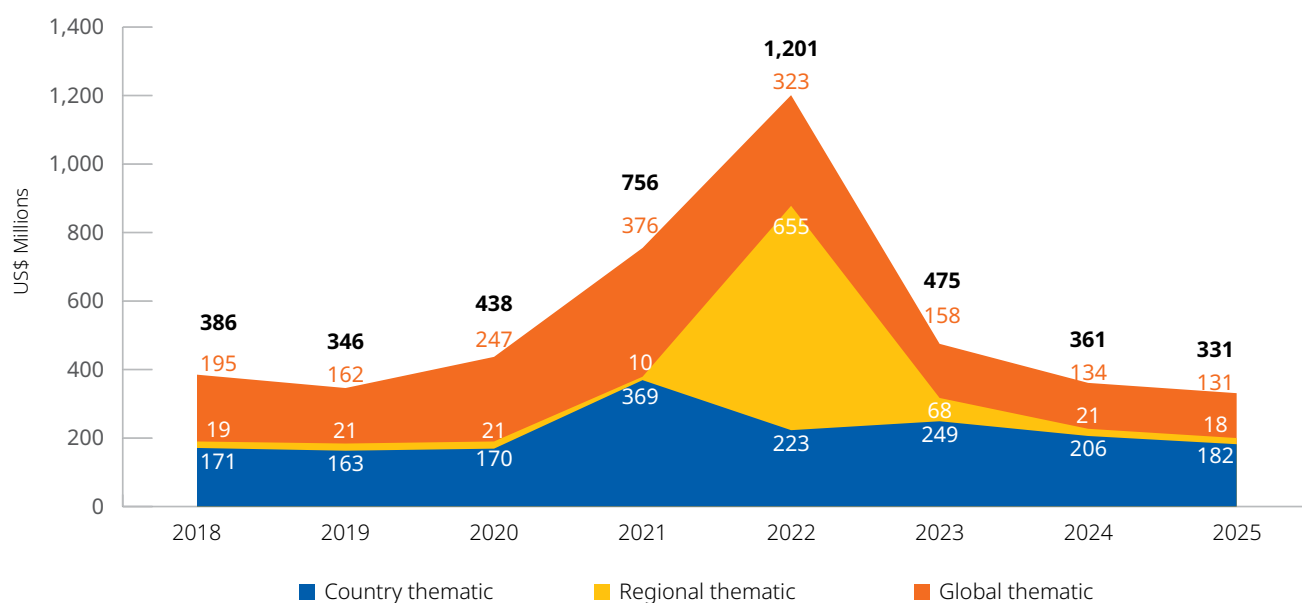


FIGURE A4: OR contributions received by type of funding, 2014-2025: Thematic vs non-thematic



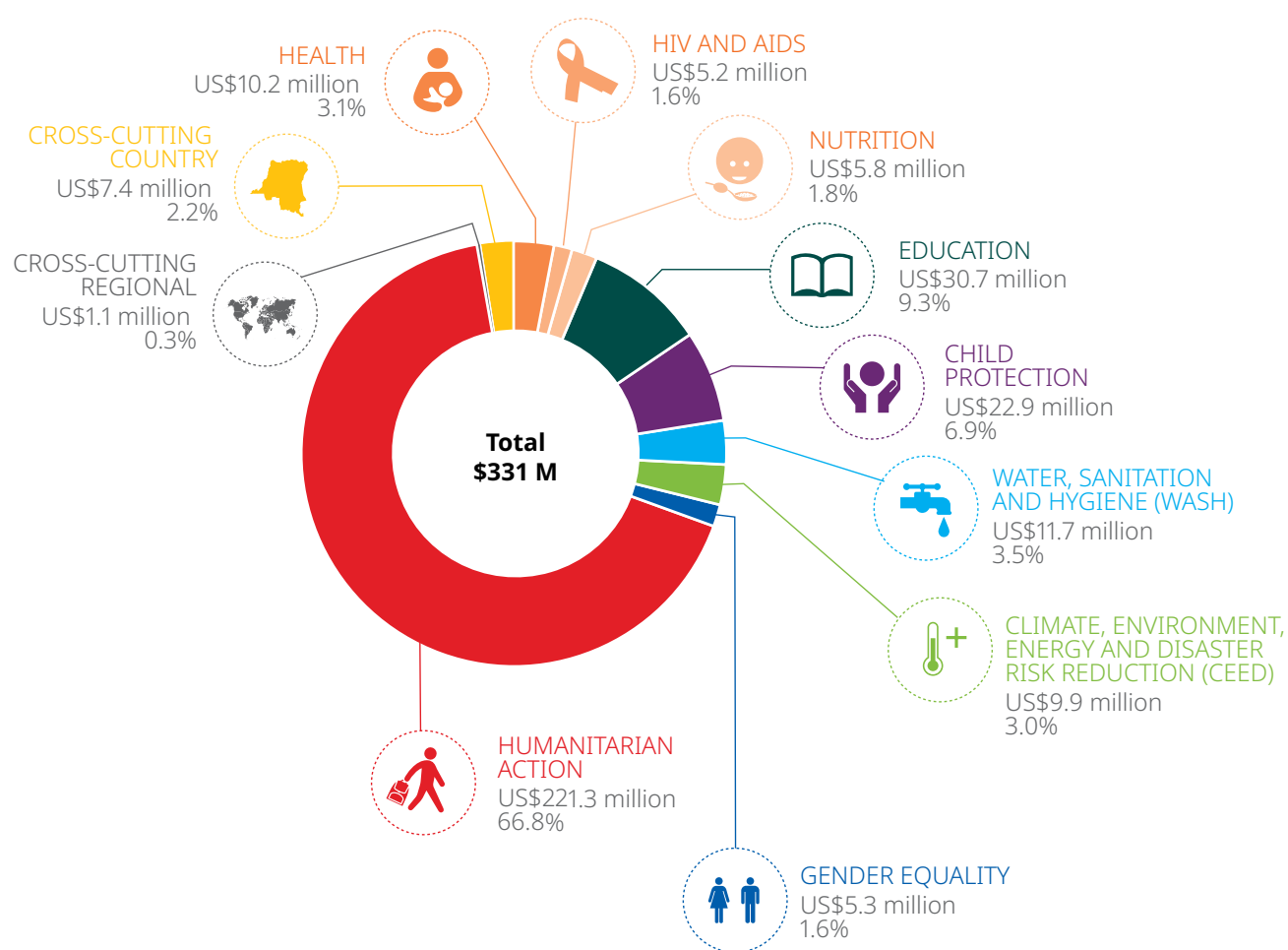
In 2025, 55 per cent (\$182 million) of thematic funding was received through country-level pools, and 40 per cent (\$131 million) through global thematic funding and 5 per cent (\$18 million) through regional thematic funding.

FIGURE A5: Thematic funding contributions received by type, 2018-2025



In 2025, the greatest amount of thematic funding received – 67 per cent – was for UNICEF’s humanitarian response. The increasing trend towards tightly earmarked resources in development programming erodes the sustainability and predictability UNICEF needs to contribute to long-term impact for children in line with the SDGs.

FIGURE A6: Thematic contributions by funding pool, 2025



Donor Recognition

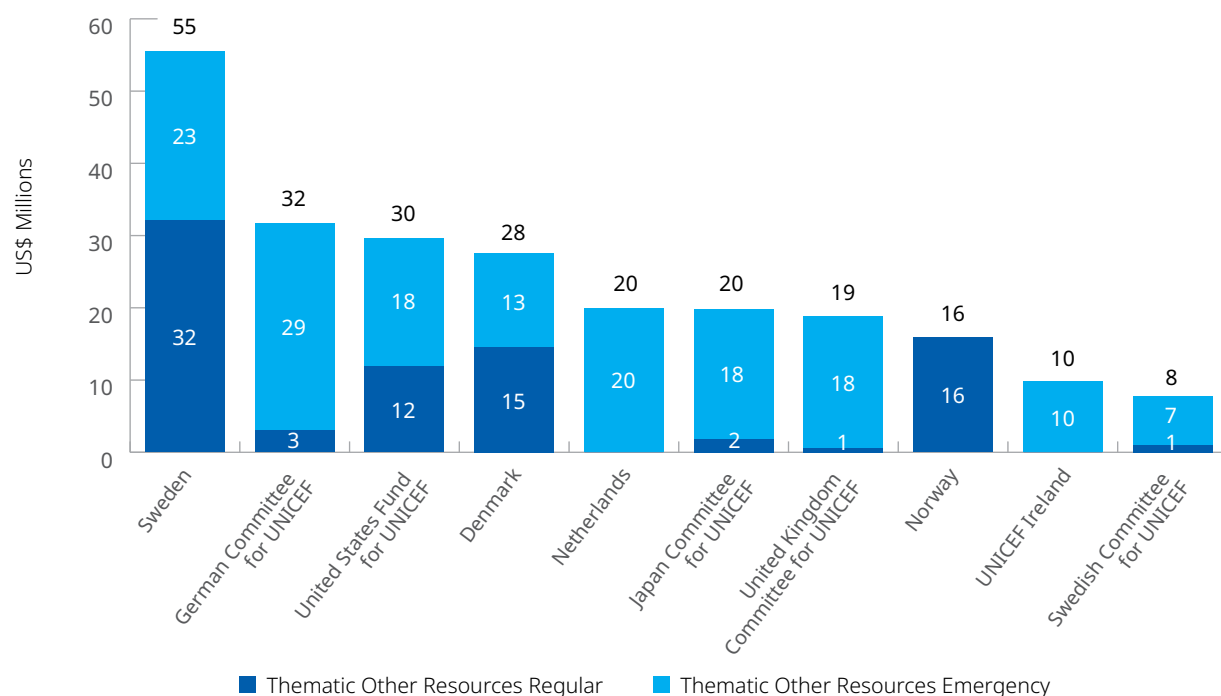
UNICEF programmes are funded entirely through the voluntary support of millions of people around the world and our partners in government, civil society and the private sector. Voluntary contributions enable UNICEF to deliver on its mandate to protect children's rights, help meet their basic needs and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. We take this opportunity to thank all our partners who contributed so generously in 2025 to our work for children around the world.

UNICEF would like to convey special appreciation to partners that have provided thematic contributions. This support enables UNICEF to respond effectively by strengthening systems across priority areas of work and promotes sustainability to achieve the greatest impact for children.

UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 included the goal of doubling thematic funding as a share of all Other Resources. UNICEF is calling for member states to fulfill their Funding Compact commitment, and for all donors to increase flexible funding as a proportion of their overall portfolio of giving to UNICEF.

In 2025, the top 10 thematic funding resource partners contributed \$237 million, or 71 per cent of the total thematic contributions to UNICEF (see Figure A7). These partners provided 74 per cent of the total thematic funding for UNICEF's non-humanitarian thematic pools, and 70 per cent of the total humanitarian thematic funding. The top three thematic funding partners in 2025 were Sweden, the German Committee for UNICEF and the United States Fund for UNICEF. UNICEF would like to convey its sincere thanks to these partners for their ongoing and steadfast commitment to providing flexible support to the organization. These three partners alone contributed 35 per cent, or \$117 million, of UNICEF's total thematic funding in 2025.

FIGURE A7: Top 10 Resource Partners to Thematic Funding Pools, 2025, by Contributions Received



**Excluding UNICEF Country Office Private Sector Fundraising*

UNICEF would also like to recognize partners who have supported the new thematic modality of Country Programme funding for the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025. The Country Programme Document (CPD) thematic window, or flexible country window, allows maximum flexibility for UNICEF country offices to address challenges holistically, and supports an integrated approach, funding areas of work that may not be covered under other thematic grants or earmarked funding.

UNICEF is especially grateful to the United States Fund for UNICEF, Sweden and the Canadian UNICEF Committee, which were the top 3 contributors to this thematic modality in 2025. In 2025, these donors contributed \$5 million for CPD thematic funds, amounting to 75% of funding received for this modality. Overall, 32 countries benefited from CPD thematic funds in 2025. Sweden in particular has been a stalwart supporter of this modality, having contributed \$50 million during the period of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, amounting to 68% of contributions to CPD thematic funds.

In addition, UNICEF would like to recognize its private sector partners that are increasingly supporting the flexible country window. In 2025, the CPD thematic window received contributions from 16 National Committees, which, together, contributed \$5 million: the United States Fund for UNICEF, the Canadian UNICEF Committee, the Portuguese Committee for UNICEF, the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, the Korean Committee for UNICEF, the German Committee for UNICEF, the Polish National Committee for UNICEF, the Australian Committee for UNICEF Limited, the Spanish Committee for UNICEF, the Slovenia Foundation for UNICEF, the Turkish National Committee for UNICEF, the Committee for UNICEF Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the Czech Committee for UNICEF, the Belgian Committee for UNICEF, the New Zealand National Committee for UNICEF, and the Luxembourg Committee for UNICEF.

Financial information by Goal Area and/or sectorⁱⁱⁱ

Goal Area 4: Safe and clean environment

In 2025, UNICEF received a total of \$350 million in OR for Goal Area 4, of which development contributions (ORR) made up 74 per cent of total contributions. Public sector partners contributed 87 per cent of overall funding while private sector partners contributed 13 per cent.

FIGURE A8: Goal Area 4 - OR contributions received by fund type, 2025

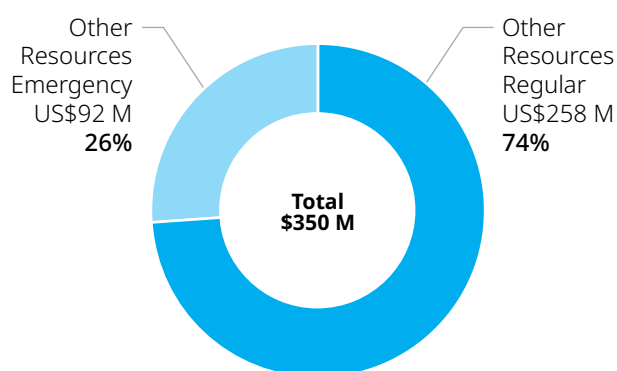
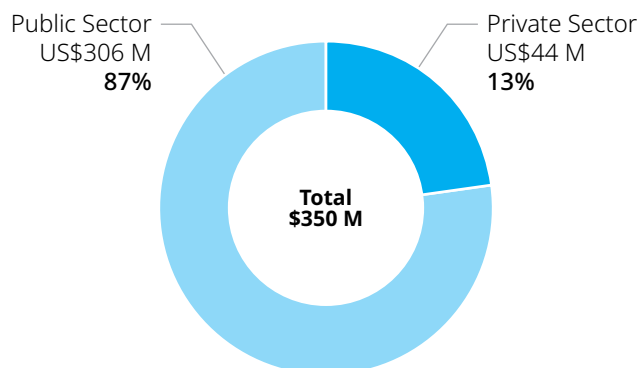


FIGURE A9: Goal Area 4 - OR contributions received by resource partner, 2025



In 2025, Goal Area 4 received a total of \$22 million in thematic contributions, or 6 per cent of total OR contributions, up from 5 per cent in 2024. Strictly earmarked funding hampers UNICEF in its effort to respond quickly and effectively to emerging priorities, as well as to ensure sustainable and predictable funding for under-resourced programmes.

FIGURE A10: Goal Area 4 - OR contributions received by type of funding, 2016-2025: Thematic vs non-thematic

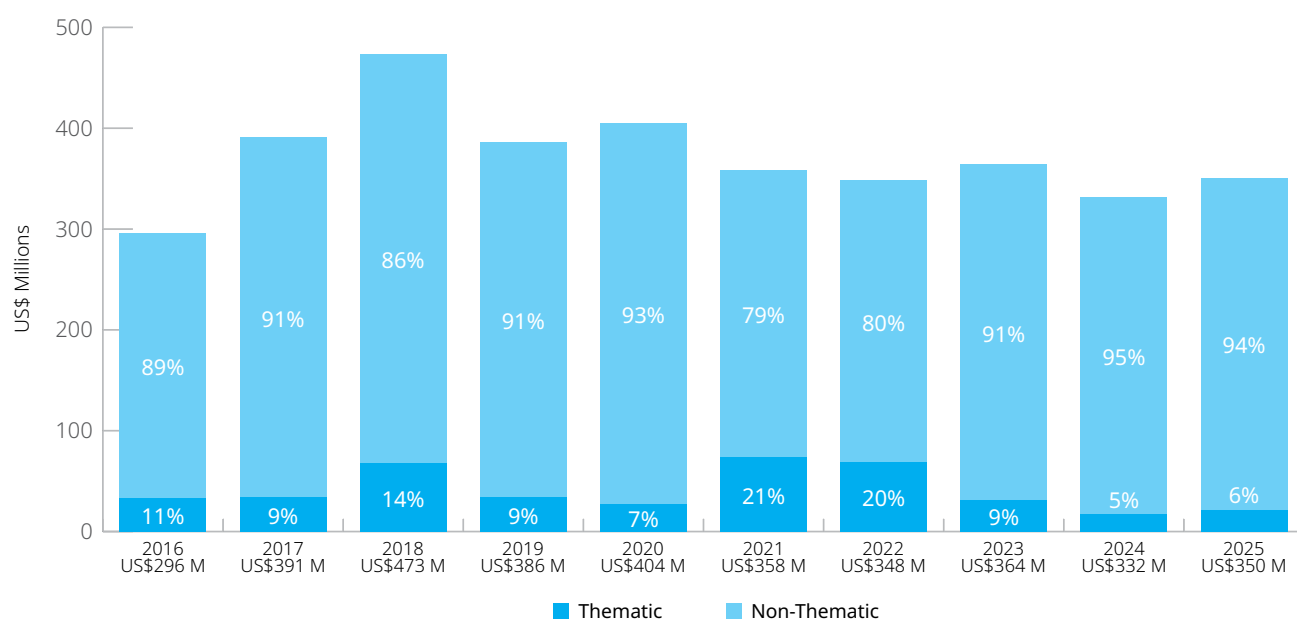


TABLE A4: Top 20 Resource Partners to Goal Area 4 by Total Contributions in US\$

Rank	Resource Partner	Contributions Received, 2025
1	Netherlands	44 M
2	European Commission	43 M
3	Germany	43 M
4	United Kingdom	23 M
5	Republic of Korea (the)	21 M
6	Sweden	17 M
7	Madagascar*	15 M
8	Denmark	14 M
9	UNOCHA - Central Emergency Response Fund	14 M
10	Japan	12 M
11	United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF	8 M
12	United States Fund for UNICEF	8 M
13	United States	7 M
14	United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO)	5 M
15	China	5 M
16	UNOCHA - Other	5 M

Rank	Resource Partner	Contributions Received, 2025
17	Democratic Republic of the Congo*	5 M
18	Australian Committee for UNICEF Limited	4 M
19	Switzerland	4 M
20	Canada	3 M

*Contributions received from Madagascar include \$15.1 million related to The World Bank. Contributions received from the Democratic Republic of the Congo include \$4.5 million related to The World Bank.

Expenses for Goal Area 4 totalled \$1.242 billion during 2025 across its three Result Areas. Of this, \$601 million was ORE or 48 per cent of total expenses.

FIGURE A11: Goal Area 4 - Expenses by Result Area, 2025

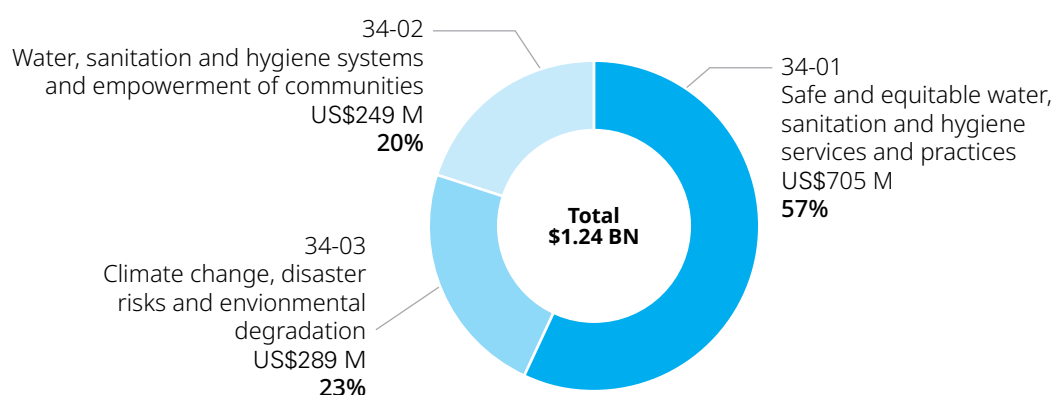
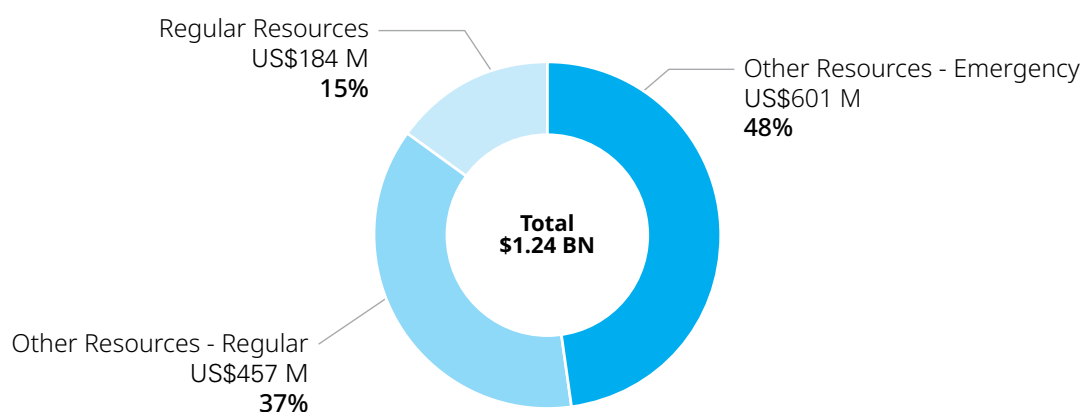
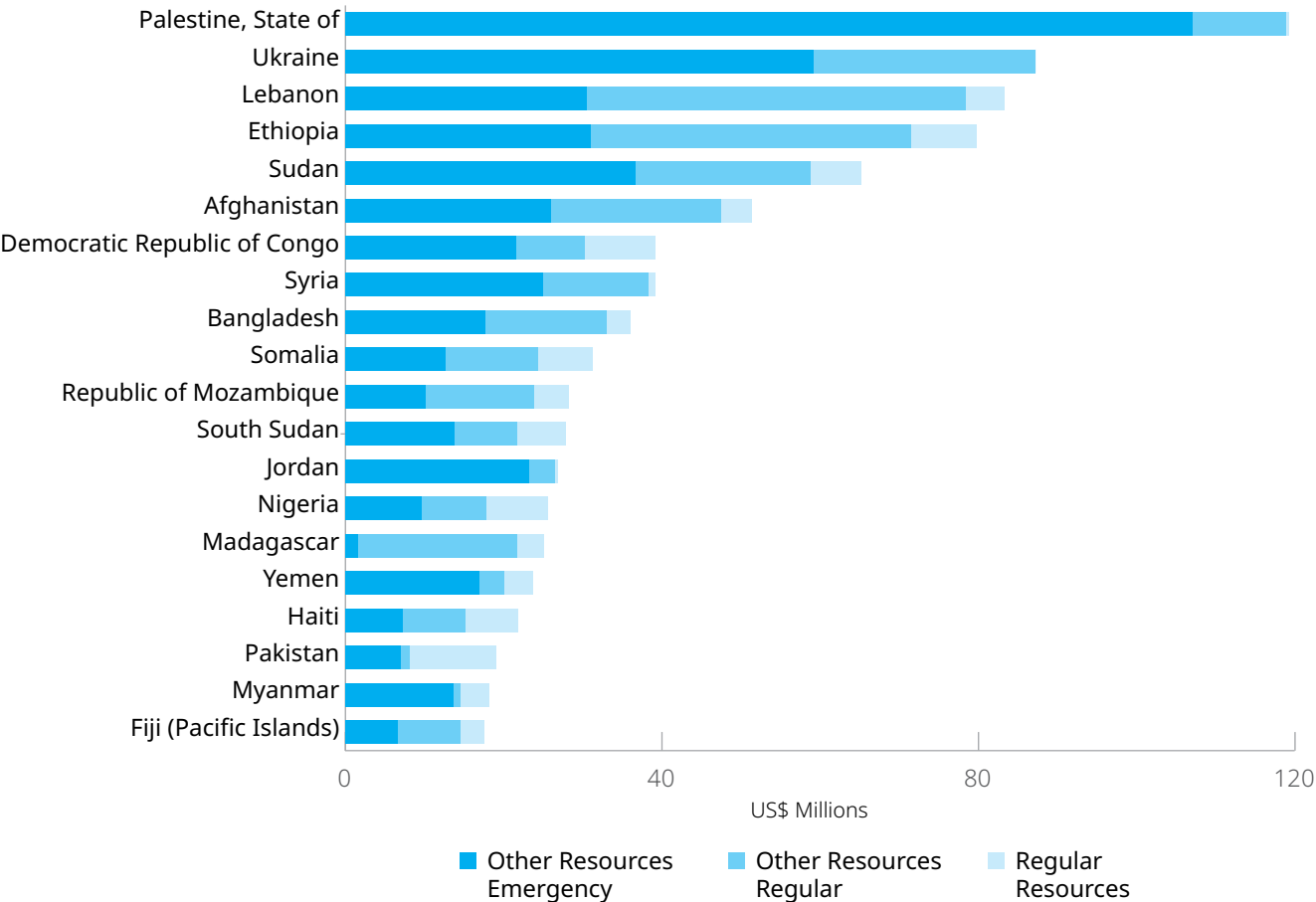


FIGURE A12: Goal Area 4 - Expenses by Fund Type, 2025



In addition, the greatest amount of funds in 2025, US\$119 million, were spent in the State of Palestine.

FIGURE A13: Goal Area 4 - Expenses by fund type and top 20 countries, 2025



Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

Within UNICEF's Goal Area 4, WASH remained the largest portfolio with a total of \$322 million in OR contributions, of which development contributions (ORR) made up 72 per cent. Public sector partners contributed 88 per cent of OR funding, while private sector partners contributed 12 per cent.

FIGURE A14: WASH - OR contributions received by fund type, 2025

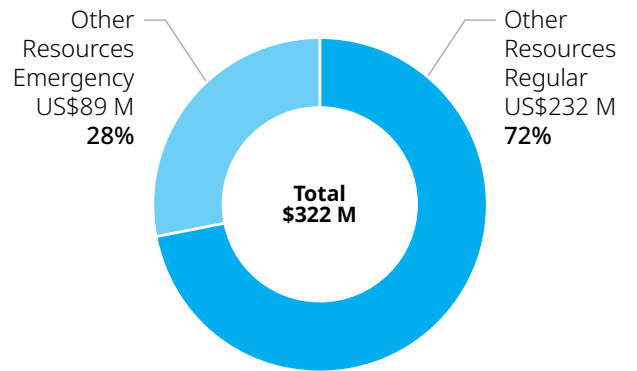
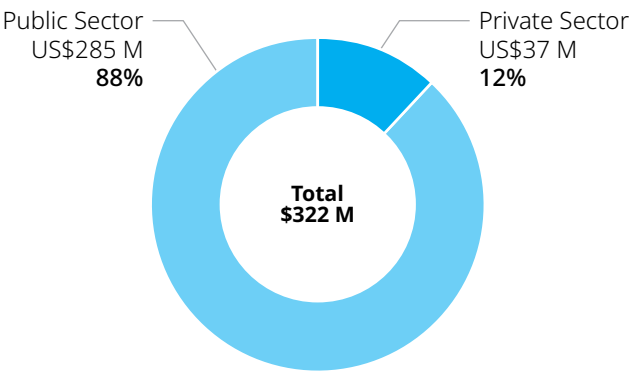


FIGURE A15: WASH - OR contributions received by resource partner, 2025



In 2025, UNICEF's WASH programme received a total of \$12 million in thematic contributions. This accounts for 4 per cent of total OR contributions, which is marginally greater than 2024 but represents a decrease of nearly three-quarters since the first year of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025. This reduction limited UNICEF's ability to respond effectively to emerging priorities as well as to ensure predictable funding for under-resourced programmes.

FIGURE A16: WASH - OR contributions received by fund type, 2016-2025: Thematic vs non-thematic

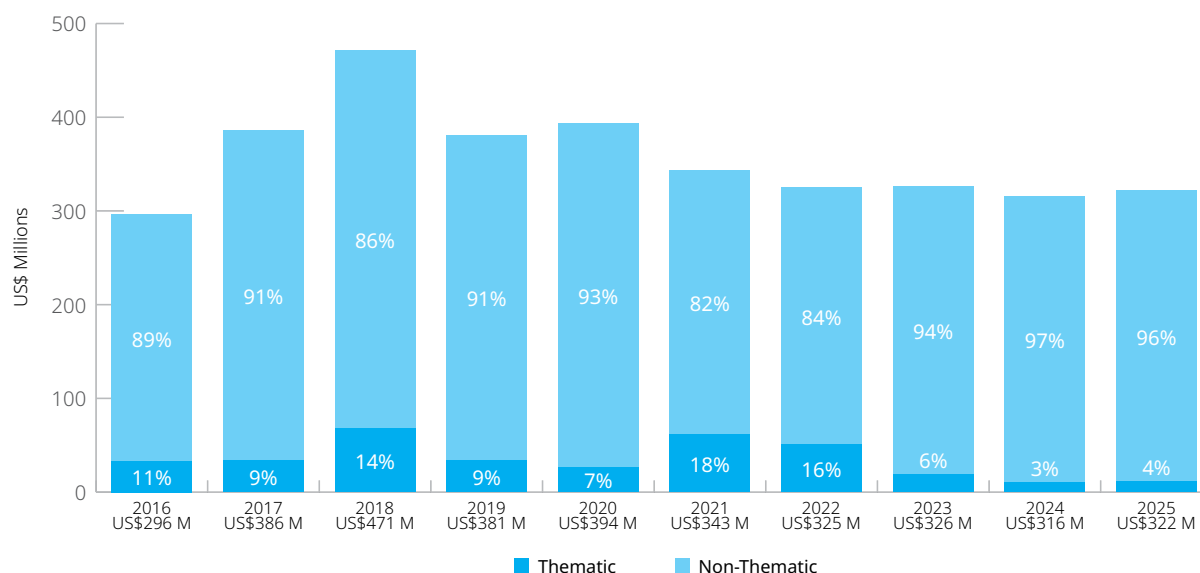


TABLE A5: Top 20 Resource Partners to WASH by Total Contributions in US\$

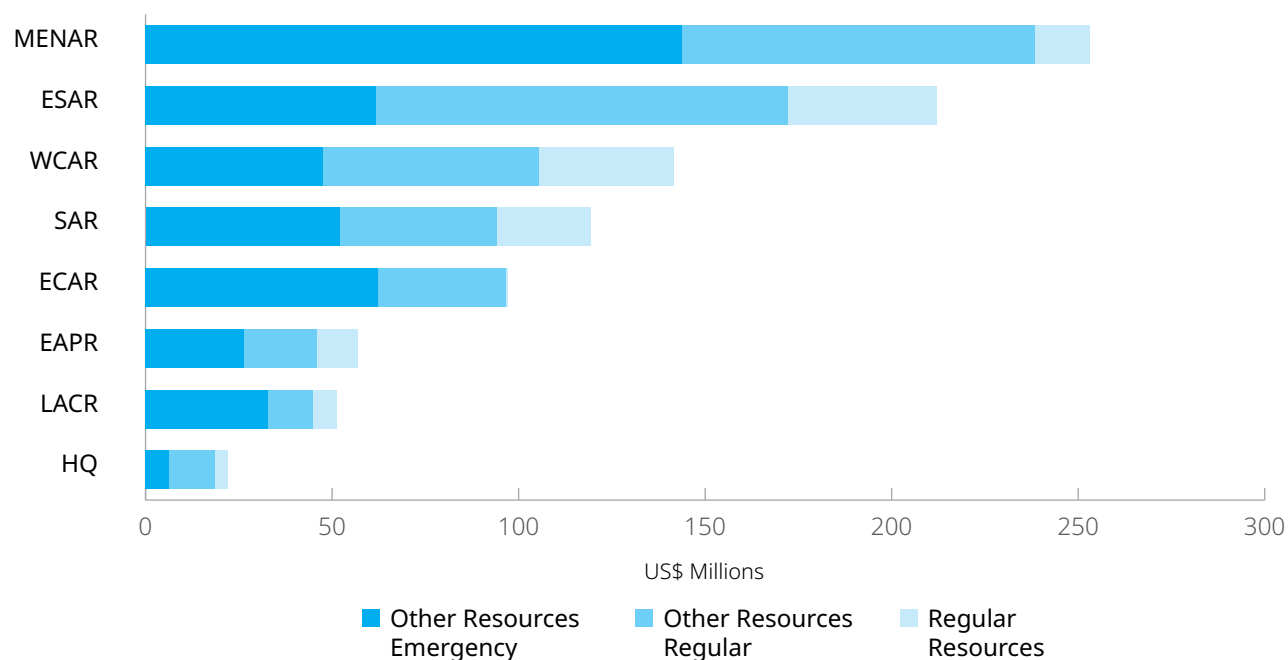
Rank	Resource Partner	Contributions Received, 2025
1	Netherlands	44 M
2	Germany	43 M
3	European Commission	43 M
4	Republic of Korea (the)	21 M
5	United Kingdom	19 M
6	Madagascar*	15 M
7	UNOCHA - Central Emergency Response Fund	14 M
8	Denmark	14 M
9	Japan	12 M
10	United States Fund for UNICEF	8 M
11	Sweden	8 M
12	United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF	7 M
13	United States	6 M
14	UNOCHA - Other	5 M
15	Democratic Republic of the Congo*	5 M

Rank	Resource Partner	Contributions Received, 2025
16	United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO)	4 M
17	Australian Committee for UNICEF Limited	4 M
18	Switzerland	4 M
19	China	3 M
20	Spanish Committee for UNICEF	3 M

*Contributions received from Madagascar include \$15.1 million related to the World Bank. Contributions received from the Democratic Republic of the Congo include \$4.5 million related to the World Bank.

Expenses for UNICEF's WASH programme totalled \$953 million during 2025, covering both development and humanitarian activities. In 2025, the largest expenses for WASH across all fund types were in the Middle Eastern and North Africa, while Latin America and the Caribbean and UNICEF headquarters had the lowest proportion of WASH expenses.

FIGURE A17: WASH - Expenses by fund type and region, 2025^{iv}



Among UNICEF's thematic funding pools, Global Thematic Funds (GTF) are a key lever to invest in countries that are furthest behind Strategic Plan results and the SDGs and facing equity gaps.

In 2025, UNICEF received contributions amounting to \$8.7 million to its WASH GTF pool, and allocations were made to 16 countries. Total expenses amounted to \$5.3 million, with the greatest expenses occurring in West and Central Africa.

TABLE A6: WASH Global Thematic Fund Pool, Contributions Received in US\$, 2025

Resource Partner	Donor	Contributions Received
Public Sector	Sweden	6.79 M
	Luxembourg	0.78 M
Private Sector	Spanish Committee for UNICEF	0.36 M
	Canadian UNICEF Committee	0.33 M
	Belgian Committee for UNICEF	0.13 M
	German Committee for UNICEF	0.11 M
	United States Fund for UNICEF	0.08 M
	Portuguese Committee for UNICEF	0.07 M
	Slovenia Foundation for UNICEF	0.04 M
	Danish Committee for UNICEF	0.02 M
	Korean Committee for UNICEF	0.02 M
Grand Total		8.73 M

FIGURE A18: WASH Global Thematic Fund Pool, Top Allocations by Country, 2025^v

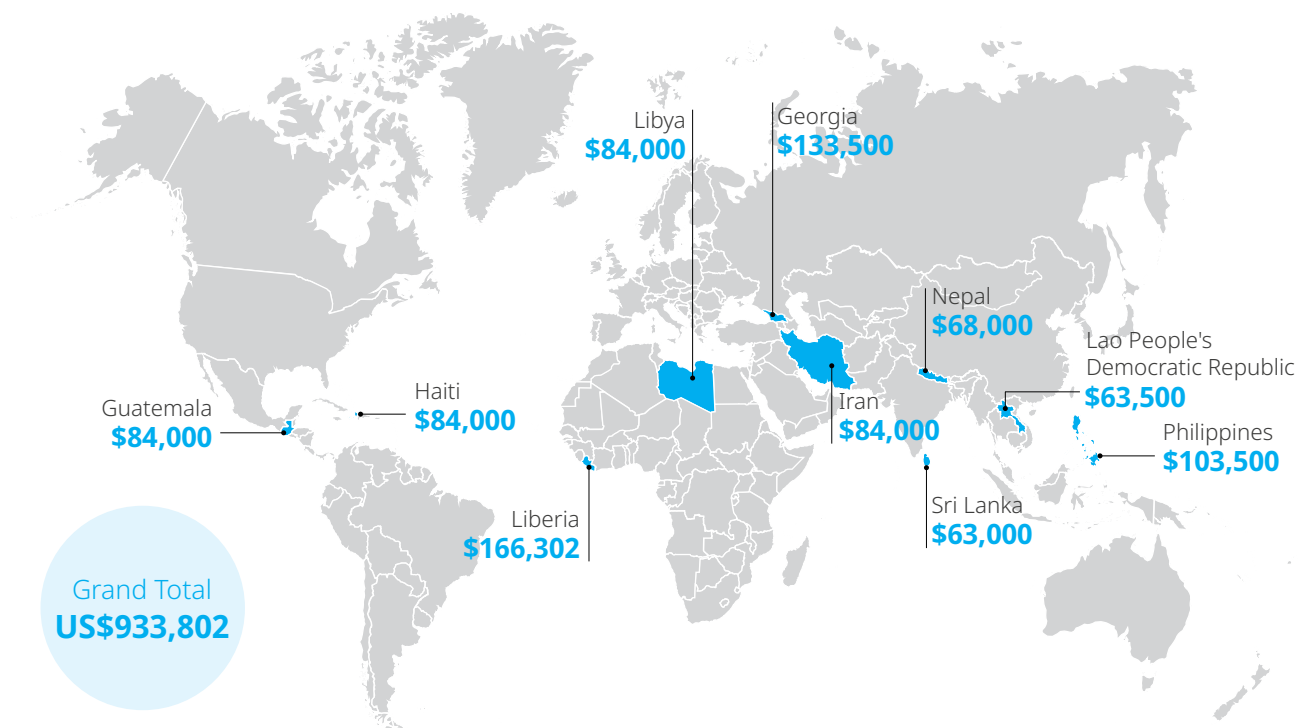
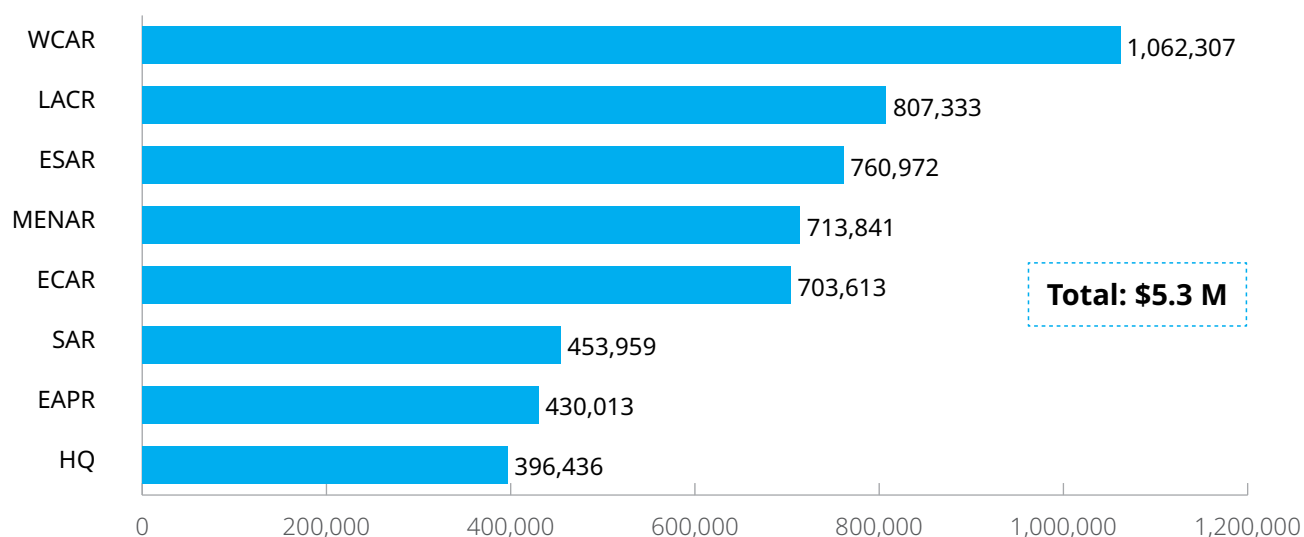


FIGURE A19: WASH Global Thematic Fund Pool, Expenses by Region, 2025^{iv}



Climate, Environment, Energy and Disaster risk reduction (CEED)

Within UNICEF's Goal Area 4, in 2025 the CEED programme received a total of \$29 million in OR contributions, of which development funding (ORR) made up 89 per cent of total contributions. Public sector partners contributed the largest share of this funding at 76 per cent, while private sector partners contributed 24 per cent.

FIGURE A20: CEED - OR contributions received by fund type, 2025

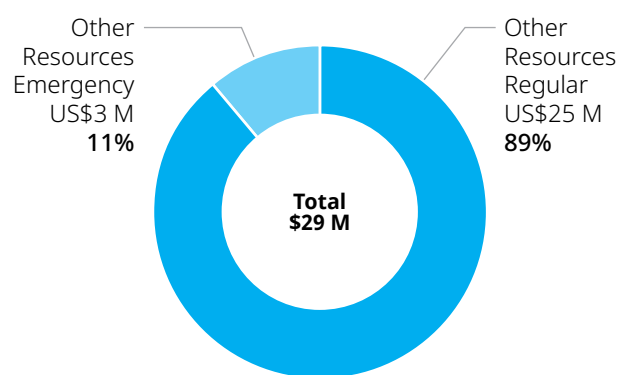
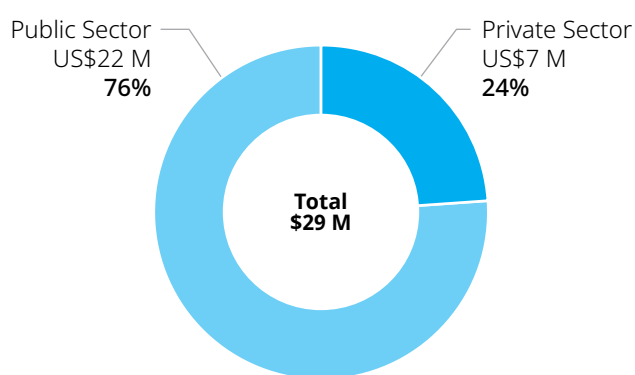


FIGURE A21: CEED - OR contributions received by resource partner, 2025



In 2025, the UNICEF CEED programme received a total of \$10 million in thematic contributions, accounting for 35 per cent of total OR contributions, representing a 10 percentage point decrease compared with 2024. Nearly two-thirds of contributions remained tightly earmarked, limiting UNICEF's ability to be innovative, respond effectively to emerging priorities, and ensure predictable and sustainable funding for under-resourced programmes.

FIGURE A22: CEED - OR contributions received by fund type, 2018-2025: Thematic vs non-thematic

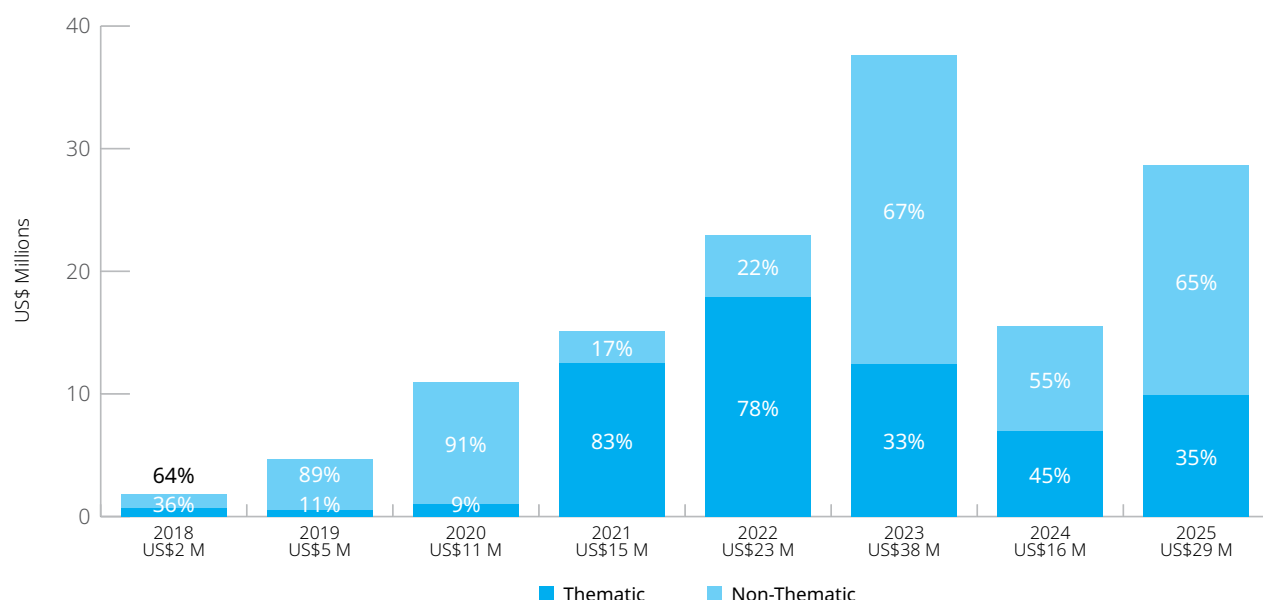


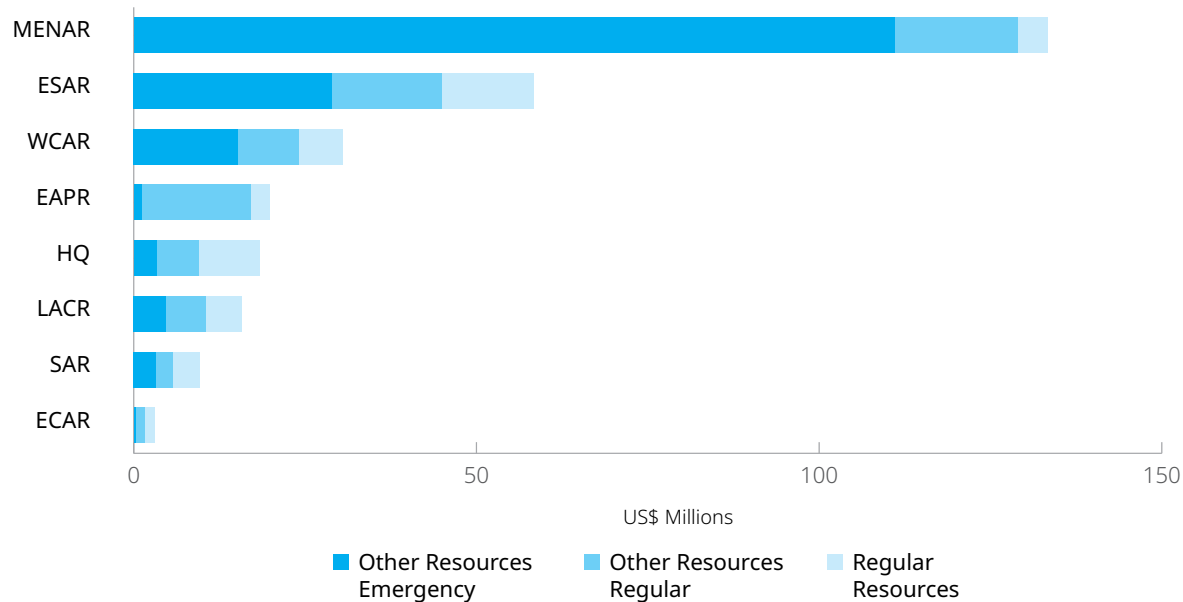
TABLE A7: Top 20 Resource Partners to CEED by Total Contributions in US\$

Rank	Resource Partner	Contributions Received, 2025
1	Sweden	9 M
2	United Kingdom	4 M
3	Canada	3 M
4	Korean Committee for UNICEF	2 M
5	China	1 M
6	FAO - Food and Agriculture	1 M
7	French Committee for UNICEF	1 M
8	Mongolia	0.69 M
9	United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO)	0.68 M
10	German Committee for UNICEF	0.60 M
11	United States	0.57 M
12	Dutch Committee for UNICEF	0.48 M
13	Norwegian Committee for UNICEF	0.40 M
14	European Commission	0.37 M
15	United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF	0.36 M
16	Japan Committee for UNICEF	0.29 M
17	Denmark	0.20 M
18	UNICEF Ireland	0.19 M
19	Andorran Committee for UNICEF	0.12 M
20	Italian Committee for UNICEF - Foundation ETS	0.12 M

Excluding UNICEF Country Office Private Sector Fundraising.

Expenses for UNICEF's Strategic Plan Result Area on climate change, disaster risks and environmental degradation totalled \$289 million during 2025, covering both development and humanitarian activities. In 2025, the largest expenses for CEED across all funding types were in the Middle East and North Africa, while Europe and Central Asia had the lowest share of CEED expenses.

FIGURE A23: CEED - Expenses by fund type and region, 2025^{iv}



Among UNICEF's thematic funding pools, Global Thematic Funds (GTF) are a key lever to invest in countries that are furthest behind Strategic Plan results and the SDGs and facing equity gaps.

In 2025, UNICEF received contributions amounting to \$9.7 million to its CEED GTF pool, and allocations were made to 12 countries. Total expenses amounted to \$4.5 million, with the greatest expenses occurring in the Middle East and North Africa.

TABLE A8: CEED Global Thematic Fund Pool, Contributions Received in US\$, 2025

Resource Partner	Donor	Contributions Received
Public Sector	Sweden	9.40 M
	Japan Committee for UNICEF	0.10 M
Private Sector	Korean Committee for UNICEF	0.07 M
	Spanish Committee for UNICEF	0.06 M
	Finnish Committee for UNICEF	0.05 M
	Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF	0.04 M
	UNICEF Hungarian Committee Foundation	0.01 M
Grand Total		9.73 M

FIGURE A24: CEED Global Thematic Fund Pool, Allocations by Country, 2025^v

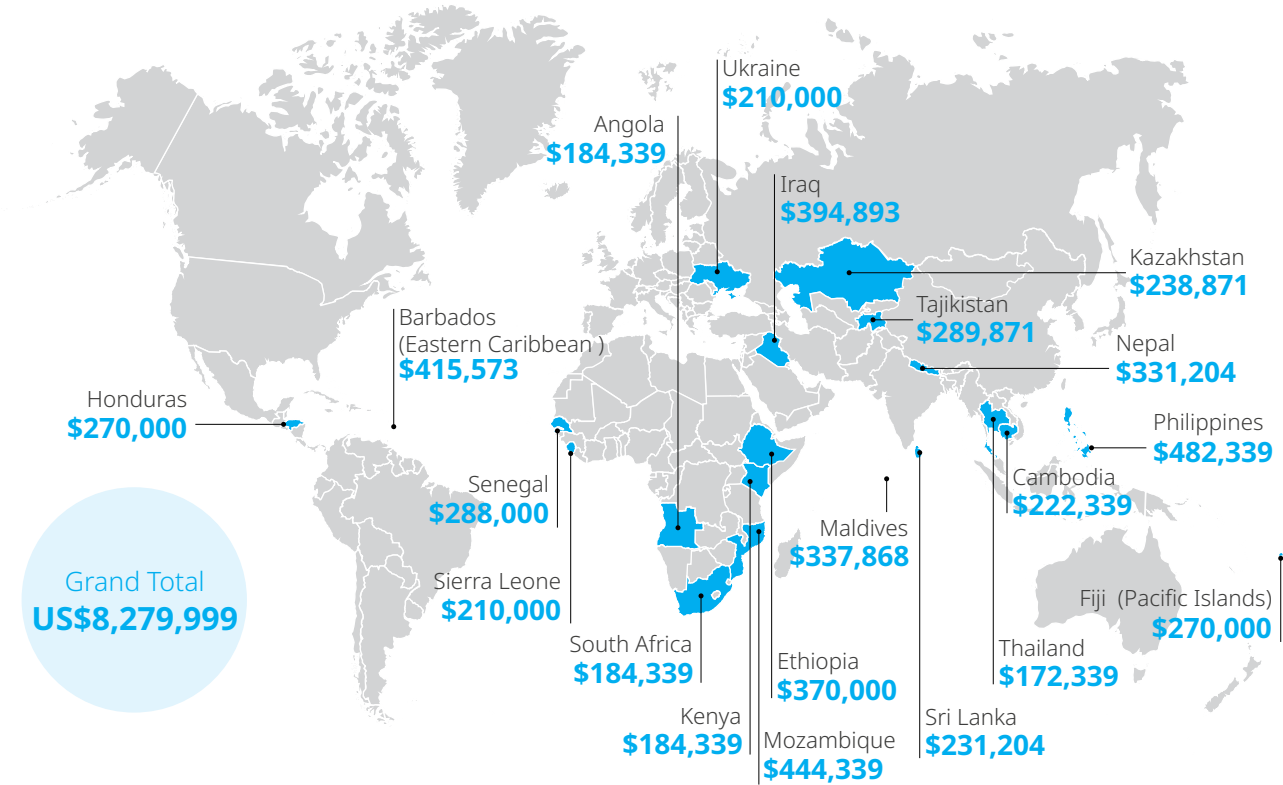
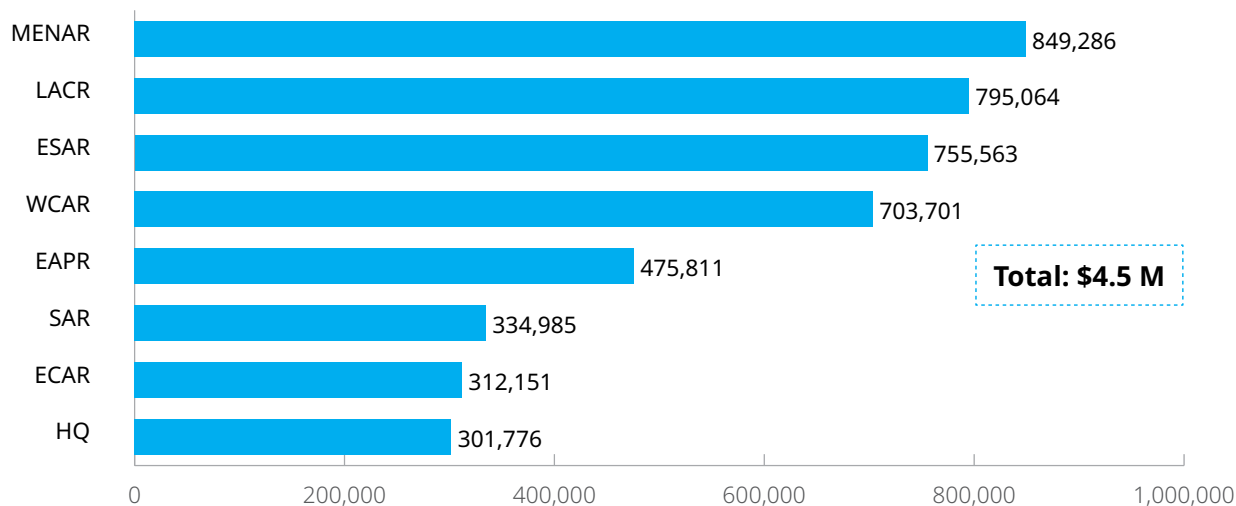


FIGURE A25: CEED Global Thematic Fund Pool, Expenses by Region, 2025^{iv}



i Aside from OR contributions received for specific Goal Areas of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, sectors and gender equality, other OR contributions were received for two or more Goal Areas and/or sectors. In total, \$2.22 billion was received as cross-sectoral OR contributions in 2025, of which 64% was for humanitarian response.

iii All figures in this chapter have been rounded and may not add up to the totals.

iv ECAR = Europe and Central Asia region, EAPR = East Asia and the Pacific region, LACR = Latin America and the Caribbean region, HQ = Headquarters, SAR = South Asia region, MENAR = Middle East and North Africa region, WCAR = West and Central Africa region, ESAR = Eastern and the Southern Africa region.

v This map displays the countries having received the largest allocations from this GTF pool in 2025, as well as in the fourth quarter of 2024. The total allocated amount displayed includes all country allocations from this GTF pool during the same period.

for every child

Whoever she is.

Wherever he lives.

Every child deserves a childhood.

A future.

A fair chance.

That's why UNICEF is there.

For each and every child.

Working day in and day out.

In more than 190 countries and territories.

Reaching the hardest to reach.

The furthest from help.

The most excluded.

It's why we stay to the end.

And never give up.

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