

Spotlight on the Global Education Thematic Fund

2025

Cover photo: Divine, 9, poses for a portrait at Government Primary School Hospital Road in Eket, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. She was among the girls in her class who received the HPV vaccine.



UNICEF works across 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to bring about positive change for children. The Global Education Thematic Fund makes vital contributions to SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

1. UNICEF's Global Education Thematic Fund: Promoting every child's right to learn

Every child has the right to learn. Yet for far too many, that right remains unfulfilled. Learning is delayed, disrupted and denied for millions of children. Poverty, environmental shocks, conflict, displacement, disability, harmful gender norms and discrimination continue to keep children out of school. Girls and other vulnerable children are disproportionately impacted, particularly in emergency contexts. An estimated 273 million children remain out of school globally, and two thirds of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries still cannot read with comprehension.

UNICEF works to ensure that every child and young person can realize their right to education and fulfill their potential, partnering with governments around the world, with a particular focus on supporting the most disadvantaged children and those living in low-income and crisis-affected contexts. At the heart of this work is the **Global Education Thematic Fund**, UNICEF's most strategic vehicle for advancing quality education at scale. Powered by flexible, multi-year contributions, the Fund enables UNICEF to strengthen education systems, support national reforms, respond to emergencies and expand proven solutions for the children most at risk of being left behind. This flexibility allows UNICEF to invest where needs are greatest and opportunities for impact are strongest.

2025 marked the final year of UNICEF's 2022–2025 Strategic Plan. Across 147 countries, UNICEF and

partners helped 178 million out-of-school children and adolescents access education over the Strategic Plan period. Advances were most evident in education sector planning, learning assessment, digital learning infrastructure, and the resilience to respond to humanitarian crises. UNICEF's Global Education Thematic Fund, with generous contributions from public and private sector partners, has been instrumental in achieving this impact.

Investments in the Global Education Thematic Fund help countries strengthen education systems, improve learning outcomes and advance progress across multiple Sustainable Development Goals. As UNICEF transitions into its 2026–2029 Strategic Plan – with a new goal of enabling 350 million more children and young people to learn and acquire skills for life and work – flexible thematic resources will remain essential to sustaining and scaling what works.

UNICEF extends sincere thanks to the governments of Norway, Sweden and Luxembourg for their continued, multi-year support to the Fund. UNICEF furthermore thanks private sector partners – including Chery Automobile and easyJet – among the corporate supporters of UNICEF's Global Education Thematic Fund in 2025. Finally, UNICEF appreciates the generous contributions received through the UNICEF National Committees.

2. Global Education Thematic Fund in Action

Today's learning crisis is defined not only by unequal access, but also by disparities in learning, opportunity and resilience. In 2025, Global Education Thematic Fund investments supported countries to strengthen education systems, improve learning outcomes and expand opportunities for children most at risk of being left behind. The following examples illustrate how flexible funding translated into tangible results across diverse contexts.

Achieving results for systems strengthening and better learning outcomes

In 2025, flexible thematic funding played a catalytic role in UNICEF's strategic education investments, contributing to the following education results at scale:

- In 2025, 27.8 million out-of-school children and adolescents accessed education through UNICEF-supported programmes, bringing the total reached during the 2022–2025 Strategic Plan period to 178 million.
- In 2025 alone, UNICEF reached 9.1 million crisis-affected children, including 4.5 million girls.
- In 2025, UNICEF provided 24.5 million children with learning materials, contributing to a total reach of 143 million children across the Strategic Plan period.
- By the end of 2025, UNICEF-supported programmes had reached 126 million children through digital learning platforms while supporting countries to advance digital learning and the responsible use of AI.
- Across the Strategic Plan period, the share of UNICEF-supported countries with evidence-based education sector plans increased from 48 to 78 per cent, effective learning assessment systems from 39 to 63 per cent, and institutionalized holistic skills development systems from 21 to 48 per cent.

Ethiopia

The earthquakes in Awash, the Afar region, are destroying schools and displacing thousands of children and their families. UNICEF and its partners are addressing the urgent needs of the community and helping children go back to the classroom.



Robust and resilient education systems

When education systems are strong, with digital connectivity, quality learning materials and an equal, safe and inclusive environment, children can continue learning even during crises:

- In 2025, 46 per cent of UNICEF-supported countries had resilient education systems that can respond to humanitarian crises, up from a 30 per cent baseline in 2021 (nearly achieving the 49 per cent Strategic Plan target).
- The share of countries with systems for digital learning solutions rose to 29 per cent, up from just 9 per cent in 2021 – exceeding the 26 per cent target. In 2025 alone, 13.6 million children (54 per cent girls) in 71 countries accessed education through digital platforms such as the Learning Passport.
- The share of UNICEF-supported countries with effective learning assessment systems rose to 63 per cent in 2025, up from a 39 per cent baseline in 2021, nearly reaching the 67 per cent target.

Flexible funding helped drive tangible results in 2025, as illustrated by the following country examples:

- In **Myanmar**, community-based education reached over one million children, including through temporary learning centres for internally displaced and conflict-affected children.
- In **South Sudan**, UNICEF supported over 325,000 children to access education while improving teacher accountability.
- In **Nepal**, school safety frameworks and risk-management plans, combined with investments in teacher development, benefited over 195,000 children (56 per cent girls) in safer, more protective learning environments.
- In **Bhutan**, Nepal and eleven other countries, between 2021 and 2025, over 2 million children, particularly those with disabilities, gained access to adapted learning materials with the Accessible Digital Textbooks initiative.
- In **Mozambique**, over 1,000 reinforced classrooms, temporary learning spaces and disaster-preparedness measures sustained learning for more than 235,000 children through temporary learning spaces and rehabilitated classrooms.
- In **Afghanistan**, over 442,000 children (65 per cent girls) accessed learning through community-based classes.

- In **Ukraine**, digital platforms enabled over 800,000 students and teachers to continue learning despite ongoing attacks on schools.
- In **Gaza**, learning centres offered a package of learning, protection, well-being, nutrition and WASH support to help children continue to learn and thrive.
- In **Sudan**, the number of operational schools more than doubled, from 5,500 in 2024 to over 13,000, supported by school grants reaching three million students and expanded digital learning in inaccessible, unsafe areas.
- In **Malawi**, expanded access to assistive devices and resource centres helped raise enrolment among children with disabilities by 11 per cent, supporting over 215,000 children (48 per cent girls).

Afghanistan

A student walks home after attending classes at the Community-Based School in Joshanak village, Yakawlang district, Bamyan province. Access to education close to home is helping children in remote communities continue their learning, build confidence and develop the skills they need to pursue their dreams and contribute to their communities.



Laws and policies

Strong education systems require laws, policies and budgets that guarantee every child's right to learn. UNICEF works hand in hand with governments on national education sector plans and programmes and the pioneering of education policies that are disability inclusive, gender transformative, violence-free and climate resilient.

- In 2025, 78 per cent of UNICEF-supported countries had evidence-based education sector plans that address inequities and align with the SDGs, up from a 48 per cent baseline in 2021 – exceeding the 63 per cent Strategic Plan target.
- By the end of 2025, 118 UNICEF-supported countries had laws and policies prohibiting corporal punishment in schools, up from 104 at the start of the Strategic Plan period.

Thematic funding was pivotal in enabling context-sensitive programming at country level:

- In **South Sudan**, UNICEF supported development of a Girls' Education Bill to promote retention and protection of girls in school.
- In **Bhutan**, environmental and climate education was integrated into the early learning curriculum, part of wider early-childhood system reform.
- In **Uganda**, government approval of a national Early Childhood Education and Care policy contributed to expanded access for over 200,000 children (52 per cent girls).
- In **Sierra Leone**, violence prevention and response is now embedded within education sector laws and policies, including the Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act and the Comprehensive School Safety Policy.
- **Bolivia** advanced a comprehensive framework that connected national policies, peer violence prevention measures and school-based action.

Early learning and foundational learning

Learning begins long before primary school and depends on what happens in the earliest grades. UNICEF supports countries to strengthen early childhood education and foundational literacy and numeracy through system-level reform – curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and teacher support – so that access translates into learning.

- The share of countries with effective learning assessment systems rose to 63 per cent in 2025, up from a 39 per cent baseline in 2021, approaching the 67 per cent Strategic Plan target. Yet the share of countries where at least 60 per cent of children reach minimum proficiency in early grades improved only modestly, from 35 to 42 per cent – stronger measurement has not yet been matched by stronger learning.

Thematic funding helped advance early and foundational learning:

- UNICEF contributed to strengthened early learning systems in 75 per cent of 125 reporting countries in 2025, up from 63 per cent in 2022, supporting just over 11 million children to access pre-primary education between 2022 and 2025.
- In **Serbia**, over 95 per cent of preschool educators were trained in a new child-centred curriculum, benefiting approximately 235,319 children (48.5 per cent girls).
- In **Ghana**, the scale-up of level-appropriate teaching raised English scores from 53 to 60 per cent and improved mathematics scores by 20 percentage points – evidence that proven pedagogies deliver when embedded in national frameworks.
- In **Jordan**, structured pedagogy adapted for crisis-affected learners improved reading skills for 73 per cent of Syrian participants.
- Global coalition-building brought 39 governments and 38 organizations to endorse the Commitment to Action on Foundational Learning, up from 16 in 2022.



Teacher workforce development

Quality education highly depends on effective teachers. UNICEF supports educators around the world with sustainable, high-quality professional development that responds to local needs, enabling them to enhance learning, making education more inclusive, equitable and accessible.

- The share of countries with effective teacher development systems rose to 30 per cent in 2025, up from a 17 per cent baseline in 2021 – this remains below the 75 per cent Strategic Plan target, reflecting how much further teacher-system reform must go.

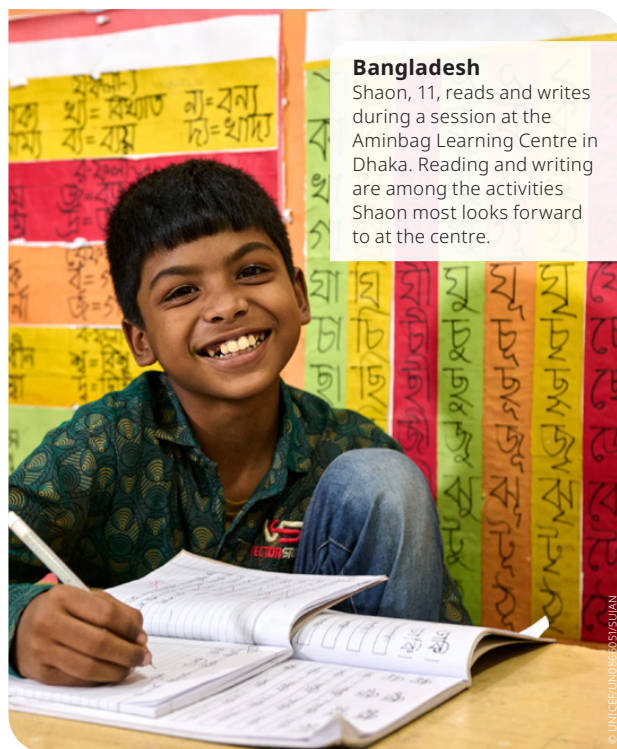
Thematic funding helped advance quality teaching and subsequent learning outcomes:

- In **Senegal**, the Reading Corners initiative supported teachers to integrate structured and self-directed reading into daily instruction, reaching over 133,000 children across 300 schools in eight regions at an estimated cost of just US\$1.60 per child – a strong example of how modest, well-targeted investment can support scalable gains in foundational learning.
- **Lao People's Democratic Republic** and **Myanmar** are among the six new countries participating in the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) assessment, which is informing curriculum reforms, teacher training materials and the use of artificial intelligence in assessment design across the sub-region.
- In **Viet Nam**, teacher professional development was embedded within national competency-based education reforms, reaching over 1.3 million educators nationwide. This contributed to high levels of foundational learning, with 66 per cent of learners reaching advanced reading proficiency; 88 per cent in mathematics.
- In **Bangladesh**, system-level reforms integrated digital literacy and climate resilience within national programmes, to be delivered by more than 100,000 teachers trained and national digital platforms designed to reach millions of learners.
- Tools such as the Superstar Teacher Toolbox, now used in nine countries (Armenia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Kenya, Montenegro, State of Palestine, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Zimbabwe), support teachers in applying digital pedagogy and mobile learning approaches and are reaching thousands of educators through scalable, school-based use.
- In **Ghana**, implementation research contributed to improvements in teacher practices and increased participation of girls in STEM, alongside measurable literacy and numeracy gains following the scale-up of level-appropriate teaching approaches.

Secondary education and skills

Expanding access to secondary education and strengthening skills development are pivotal for equitable and sustainable development. UNICEF works with governments to expand pathways for adolescents through more flexible and inclusive learning opportunities, including through digital education. This supports access to skills development and transitioning to employment. UNICEF's greater emphasis on linking learning to employment pathways helps strengthen technical and vocational education systems and facilitate transitions into work.

- The share of UNICEF-supported countries institutionalizing holistic skills development increased from 21 per cent to 48 per cent, exceeding the target.
- 3.5 million adolescents and young people across 58 countries gained transferable skills for life and work, demonstrating how system-embedded, school-based and digital approaches can deliver skills at scale.
- Digital initiatives such as Tinkering with Tech and AI initiative reached over 16,500 learners directly (52 per cent girls) and more than 330,000 indirectly since the launch in 2024, supporting skills development for the future of work with digital literacy, computational thinking and problem-solving.
- By 2025, 99 countries integrated climate literacy and green skills into education systems, more than doubling since 2021. UNICEF's Generation Unlimited supported over 2,000 youth-led green enterprises (68 per cent led by young women).



Flexible funding was critical to achieve:

- In **Tajikistan**, innovation labs and employment pathways strengthened transferable skills and work-readiness for over 22,000 young people. The country integrated career guidance across 152 schools and 83 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and launched an AI-enabled platform that attracted 14,000 users, with 70 per cent completing career interest assessments and 45 per cent creating digital portfolios. Hundreds of young people secured jobs or internships, 18 businesses were launched. Discussions with Asian Development Bank are underway for financing for scale.
- In **Nigeria**, the National Policy on Skills Development expanded access to technical, vocational and transferable skills, supporting over 580,000 learners – 46 per cent girls. With Generation Unlimited, 2.3 million young people benefited from digital learning, employability skills and livelihoods opportunities. Learning Passport expanded to close to 2.5 million users (47 per cent girls). Over 300,000 young people connected skills development with civic engagement and green economy opportunities through Green Rising.
- In **Syria**, 150,000 adolescents and young people (57 per cent girls) gained pathways to income generation and improved livelihoods with skills development, entrepreneurship and life skills programmes.
- In **Jordan** learning-to-earning pathways reached close to 34,500 young people (57 per cent women and 35 per cent refugees), as part of a broader portfolio supporting 90,497 adolescents and young people with skills development, employment pathways and civic engagement opportunities. 2,827 young people gained digital skills and 275 secured income-generating freelance opportunities and 20 per cent of participants in Job Search Clubs transitioned into employment or paid internships. Digital skills and career guidance reached 1300 refugee young people. The partnership with the Vocational Training Corporation is strengthening systemic and inclusive pathways to decent work.
- In **Bangladesh**, more than 69,000 adolescents and young people benefited from school-to-work transition programmes, with verified pathways to employment at scale. Skill-Focused Literacy for Out-of-School Adolescents programme linked 82 per cent of nearly 7,000 participants to jobs and Passport to Earning recorded 50,000 course completions, 2,500 job connections and partnerships with 331 companies. The Government scaled the Skill-Focused Literacy for Out-of-School Adolescents programme to 100,000+ Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) adolescents in 16 districts and introduced ICT education for nearly 400,000 university students annually.

Digital learning

Digital tools can extend learning where systems are stretched, teachers are scarce and crises interrupt schooling – but only when governance, pedagogy and equity move together. UNICEF's Digital Education Strategy 2025–2030 shifts away from fragmented, technology-led initiatives towards system-level approaches in which digital tools strengthen teaching, learning and education management.

- The share of countries with effective digital learning systems reached 29 per cent in 2025, up from a 9 per cent baseline in 2021 and exceeding the 26 per cent target – the strongest proportional gain across all system indicators, and yet from the lowest starting point of any of them.

Flexible funding was critical to advance digital transformation and digital learning:

- Over the Strategic Plan period, 126.4 million children accessed education through digital platforms, doubling from a 63.1 million baseline but short of the 148.6 million target.
- The Learning Passport, developed with Microsoft, reached 12.5 million registered users across 51 countries, expanding into crisis-affected, remote and low-connectivity environments.
- The Learning Cabinet, showcasing high-quality, evidence-based EdTech tools, reviewed over 1,100 digital learning tools against safety, scalability, and real learning impact, with only 48 meeting quality standards.
- In **Malaysia**, a government-led AI-enabled early warning system reached 5 million children and supported the return of over 8,000 out-of-school children (36 per cent girls).



Cameroon

Through tree planting and reforestation initiatives, U-Reporters create sustainable environments that promote food security, education, and child protection.

3. Financial results

A smaller, but still catalytic pool of flexible funding

In 2025, the Global Education Thematic Fund received US\$12.1 million in flexible, catalytic funding from committed public and private partners – a decrease of about 31 per cent from the US\$17.5 million received in 2024, and down from US\$39.4 million received in 2022. This decline mirrors a broader, multi-year contraction in flexible thematic funding for education: UNICEF's total Goal Area 2 thematic contributions fell to US\$32 million in 2025 (4 per cent of Other Resources).

These figures demonstrate an overall sharp decline from the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan period, when the Global Education Thematic Fund had received US\$412.3 million. The itemized contributions table below reflects the donors and amounts recorded specifically against the Education Global Thematic Fund pool.

Norway, Sweden and the Finnish Committee for UNICEF were the three largest 2025 contributors. Public sector partners contributed 65 per cent (US\$7.9 million) of 2025 Fund income, while private sector partners – channeled primarily through National Committees for UNICEF – contributed 35 per cent (US\$4.3 million). The public share grew relative to 2024, driven mainly by a sharper decline

in private contributions: private sector income to the Fund fell by about 51 per cent year-on-year, compared with an 11 per cent decline in public sector income.

“Thanks to your generous contributions, children, especially those who are most marginalized now have the opportunity to learn, grow and develop the skills they need to build their future. The Global Education Thematic Fund demonstrates how flexible, long-term funding strengthens education systems, sustains equitable learning, and scales proven solutions for children in both development and crisis settings.”

Kitty van der Heijden, Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, UNICEF



Education Global Thematic Fund Pool, Contributions Received in US\$, 2025

Resource Partner	Donor	Contributions Received
Public Sector	Norway	4,974,629
	Sweden	2,163,332
	Luxembourg	725,938
Private Sector	Finnish Committee for UNICEF	823,905
	Japan Committee for UNICEF	787,574
	Swedish Committee for UNICEF	521,843
	Portuguese Committee for UNICEF	364,658
	Spanish Committee for UNICEF	348,371
	Dutch Committee for UNICEF	312,525
	Norwegian Committee for UNICEF	277,888
	Korean Committee for UNICEF	241,381
	United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF	106,561
	United States Fund for UNICEF	106,424
	Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF	101,412
	Danish Committee for UNICEF	100,252
	Luxembourg Committee for UNICEF	44,297
	French Committee for UNICEF	31,968
	Committee for UNICEF Switzerland and Liechtenstein	31,968
	Italian Committee for UNICEF – Foundation ETS	31,968
	German Committee for UNICEF	18,648
Grand Total		12,115,543

Note: Numbers may not add up due to rounding. Source: UNICEF GARR 2025 Financial Annex, Table A2 – Education Global Thematic Fund Pool, Contributions Received, 2025.

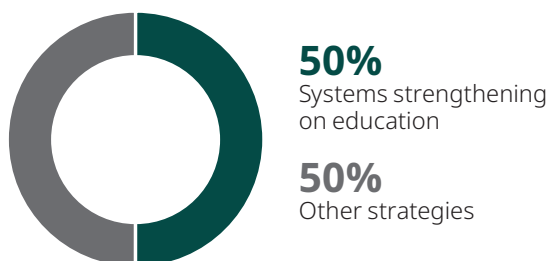
Why flexible funding matters

Every flexible dollar helps bring the world closer to inclusive, quality education for every child. In Senegal, UNICEF's Reading Corners initiative demonstrated how modest investments can deliver measurable literacy gains, at an estimated cost of just US\$1.60 per child.

Flexible funding gives UNICEF the ability to invest strategically across priorities and over time, helping countries strengthen education systems and accelerate progress towards SDG 4.

In 2025, UNICEF spent US\$15.8 million in flexible thematic funding through the Education Global Thematic Fund pool – a decrease of about 29 per cent from the US\$22.2 million spent in 2024, matching the decline in contributions. Allocations reached 42 countries in 2025. These investments advanced foundational learning reforms, early learning systems, skills development, education in emergency and crisis contexts, gender equality and disability inclusive education and the development of resilient, green and digitally enabled learning environments.

UNICEF expense by programme strategy, 2025



A call to scale what works

The future is being shaped in today's classrooms. As technology, climate change and shifting labour markets redefine the skills needed for tomorrow, education systems must evolve to prepare the next generation. UNICEF works with governments and partners to scale evidence-based solutions that improve learning and help build more resilient, inclusive and future-ready education systems. As UNICEF enters its 2026–2029 Strategic Plan, the Global Education Thematic Fund will remain critical to expanding proven approaches. Continued flexible funding will help countries translate evidence into large-scale results for children.

The UNICEF's Transparency Portal

UNICEF has a strong financial transparency record, including for thematic funding. We encourage UNICEF partners to the Global Education Thematic Fund to visit the [Transparency Portal](#) and access real-time information on spending in the countries receiving funds.



***Flexible funding.
Direct reach.
Real results for children.***



Madagascar

Aimélia during a History class in her classroom at the Reference Secondary School of Manakara, Manakara District, Fitovinany Region.

4. The Global Education Thematic Fund's worldwide reach

The Global Education Thematic Fund creates impact across the world by investing at three interconnected levels. At the country level, it strengthens systems and expands opportunities for children most at risk of being left behind. At the regional level, it builds capacity, encourages collaboration and advances policy and practice. At the global level, it supports UNICEF's technical leadership, enabling the development of tools, evidence and innovations that help scale results worldwide.

Education Global Thematic Fund Pool, Expenses by Region, 2025

Region	Expenses (US\$)	Share of total
Eastern and Southern Africa (ESAR)	3,135,013	20%
East Asia and the Pacific (EAPR)	2,227,363	14%
South Asia (SAR)	2,162,771	14%
West and Central Africa (WCAR)	2,148,062	14%
Middle East and North Africa (MENAR)	2,101,691	13%
Headquarters	1,837,846	12%
Latin America and the Caribbean (LACR)	1,093,291	7%
Europe and Central Asia (ECAR)	1,060,227	7%
Total	15,800,000	100%

Source: UNICEF GARR 2025 Financial Annex, Figure A9 – Education Global Thematic Fund Pool, Expenses by Region, 2025. Percentages rounded and may not sum to 100.

Eastern and Southern Africa showed the highest level of 2025 Fund expenditure, consistent with the region's stronger, more consistent gains in foundational education-system elements noted elsewhere in UNICEF's 2025 results reporting.

The **Global Thematic Fund for Education** contributed to:



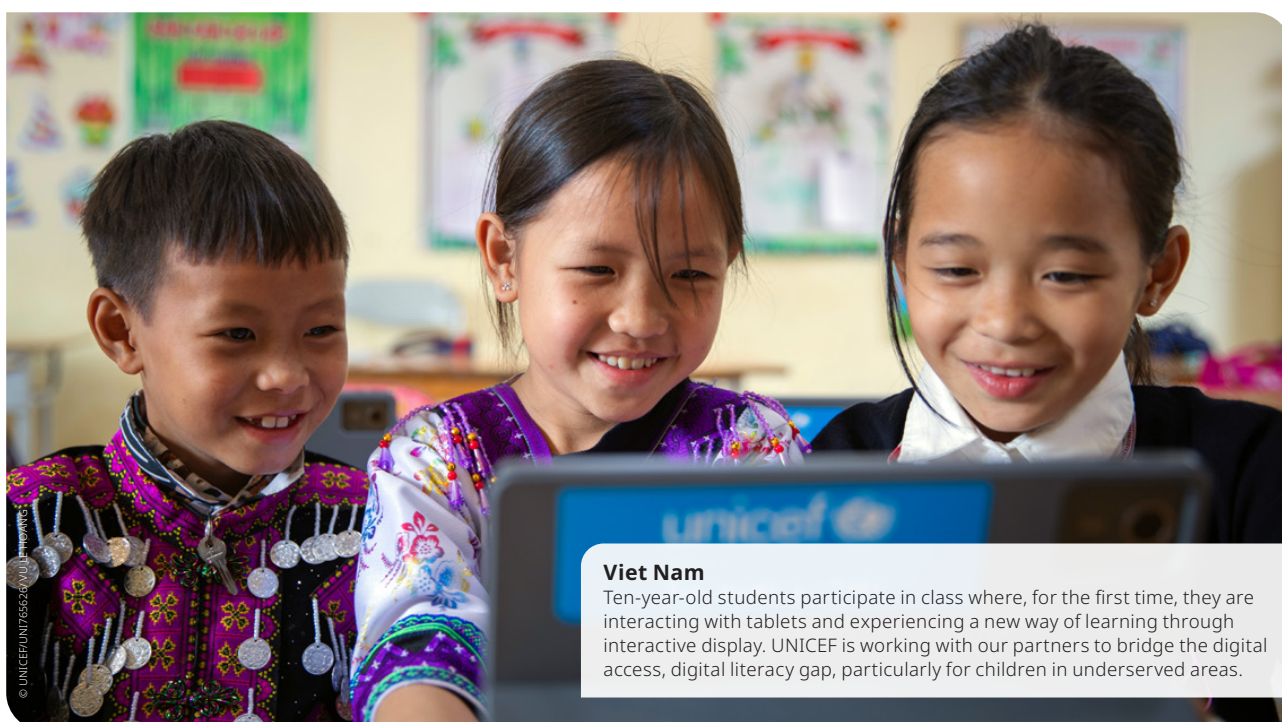
Nearly **178 million out-of-school children** and adolescents accessed education during the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan period.



Nearly **144 million children** were provided with learning materials across the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan period.



Nearly **126 million children** were reached through digital learning platforms.



Viet Nam

Ten-year-old students participate in class where, for the first time, they are interacting with tablets and experiencing a new way of learning through interactive display. UNICEF is working with our partners to bridge the digital access, digital literacy gap, particularly for children in underserved areas.

Education Global Thematic Fund Pool, Top Allocations by Country, 2025

1 Myanmar \$120,486

Despite severe resource constraints, thematic funding contributed to expand community-based education to over one million children, including internally displaced and conflict-affected children.

2 Tajikistan \$115,000

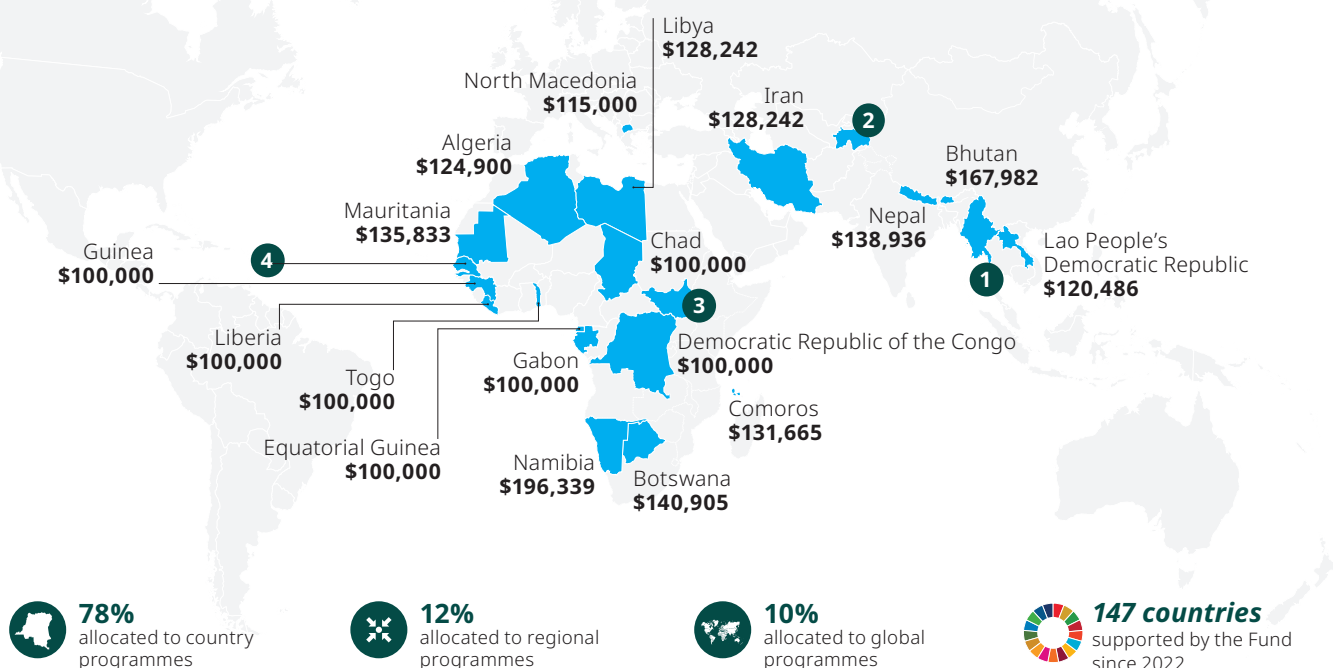
Flexible funding was critical in establishing innovation labs and skills development and work-readiness programmes that reached over 22,000 children, while generating evidence of successful employment pathways for potential future scale-up.

3 South Sudan \$101,172

Thematic funding enabled UNICEF to support over 325,000 children in accessing education, improve teacher accountability, and provide technical assistance for the development of a girls' education bill aimed at promoting school retention and protecting girls in school.

4 Senegal \$100,000

The Reading Corners initiative supported teachers to integrate structured and self-directed reading into daily instruction, reaching over 133,000 children across 300 schools.



COUNTRY-LEVEL ALLOCATION CRITERIA

Prioritizing low-income countries

Addressing learning recovery at scale

Seizing opportunities to accelerate progress on the priorities of UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022–2025 and Global Education Strategy 2019–2030



5. Impact story

Learning through crisis: sustaining Sudan's education system on flexible funding

When conflict escalated in Sudan in April 2023, the country's already fragile education system collapsed, leaving an estimated 16–17 million children out of school by early 2025 – one of the largest single-country education emergencies in the world.

By the end of 2025, the number of out-of-school children had fallen to approximately 8 million – a significant, though fragile, recovery. UNICEF and partners supported 3.2 million children to access formal and non-formal education. The number of operational schools more than doubled, from 5,500 in 2024 to over 13,000. This was supported by school grants reaching three million learners and expanded use of digital learning, including through tablet-based structured e-learning for displaced children like those at the

As-Senniya child-friendly space in Port Sudan, part of an integrated response spanning education, child protection, health, nutrition, WASH and community engagement.

Despite this progress, around 8 million children remain out of school, teachers remain unpaid, and girls face heightened risks of dropout, early marriage and violence. Severe funding gaps continue to constrain the sustainability of gains.

Flexible, thematic funding has been critical to maintaining access and system functionality under extreme pressure. UNICEF's role in coordinating partners, maintaining operational presence and supporting national systems highlights the importance of sustained, system-level engagement to prevent reversals in access and learning. Without sustained financing – including through flexible mechanisms like the Global Education Thematic Fund – these gains risk being rapidly reversed.



Sudan

A girl uses a tablet for structured e-learning inside the UNICEF-supported child-friendly space at As-Senniya Internally Displaced People site, Port Sudan.

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6. Together with our donors and partners

Norway and UNICEF: Advancing quality education through flexible investment

In 2025, Norway again stood as UNICEF's leading public sector partner to the Global Education Thematic Fund, contributing US\$4.97 million and delivering flexible, innovative support to advance inclusive, quality education, especially in fragile contexts. By investing in UNICEF's mandate through strategic thematic funding, Norway enables system-wide change that reaches the most marginalized children.

Norway's multi-year contributions have been catalytic in addressing learning losses, expanding access for out-of-school children and strengthening equitable education systems. This approach – prioritizing national capacity-building and scalable solutions – exemplifies the power of thematic funding to drive cross-sectoral impact across education, child protection, health and gender equality.

As UNICEF closes out its 2022–2025 Strategic Plan and moves into the 2026–2029 cycle, its partnership with Norway stands as a model for achieving lasting gains in education access, retention and learning – demonstrating how schools can become transformative spaces of inclusion, safety and opportunity.

National Committees for UNICEF: the backbone of private sector support

In 2025, National Committees for UNICEF collectively remained the primary channel for private sector contributions to the Global Education Thematic Fund, together contributing US\$4.3 million – 35 per cent of total Fund income. The Finnish Committee for UNICEF was the single largest private sector contributor (US\$823,905), followed by the Japan Committee for UNICEF (US\$787,574) and the Swedish Committee for UNICEF (US\$521,843).



Senegal

Two learners sit in a Reading Corner at Ataba Tabarta Ba School in Ziguinchor, an example of a cost-effective, thematic fund relevant foundational literacy model referenced in section 4.



Spotlight on the Global Education Thematic Fund

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