



Delivering Change for Children

Supporting the most vulnerable, and helping build systems to deliver a better future for all

Challenges in Rakhine State

Children, who make up 37% of the total population of more than 2 million people, have suffered devastating impacts amid the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State. Together with partners, UNICEF supports the humanitarian needs of around 300,000 children, as well as long term needs of all children and communities struggling with multiple hardships as a result of chronic underdevelopment and conflict. Health, nutrition, education and child protection outcomes are in very many cases lower in Rakhine State than in other parts of Myanmar. Nearly 80 percent of households are living below the poverty line. The under-five mortality rate is 58 deaths per 1,000 live births. Immunization coverage is amongst the lowest in the country, with 52 percent of children not having received basic vaccinations. Nearly 14 percent of children are wasted and 38 per cent are stunted; surveys indicate that both wasting and stunting are highest in northern townships. Just over 40 percent of children are estimated to be out of school. A total of 68 percent of people do not have access to safe drinking water.

How we help

Through its Rakhine Response Plan, UNICEF is working to ensure that critical services in child protection, health and nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene and social protection are delivered where they are needed most. Providing leadership for humanitarian responses, UNICEF

co-leads coordination mechanisms for Education in Emergencies (EiE) WASH, Nutrition and Child Protection. In addition, we support the state and national governments to build the long-term systems that can deliver sustainable, peaceful development for all communities.

Improving Health and Nutrition

UNICEF is working with the Government and partners to deliver humanitarian health and nutrition services and support the long term raising of health outcomes across all of Rakhine State, particularly among the most vulnerable children among all communities. Our support for increased child vaccination included the construction of a cold chain sub-depot in the state capital, Sittwe, and training of cold chain personnel. Through the Rakhine Health System Strengthening initiative, integrated management of neonatal and childhood illnesses is taking place across all townships. In central and northern areas, where armed conflicts periodically restrict access, UNICEF and local partners continue to advocate for access to provide basic health support to all women, children and communities in need.

Boosting Water and Sanitation

UNICEF and partners implement vital humanitarian WASH initiatives and provide basic supplies in IDP camps, while working with Government counterparts on longer term development agendas, including introducing community-led water and sanitation facilities in central and southern villages. In 2019, UNICEF provided water, sanitation and

hygiene services to people living in IDP camps in Central Rakhine, as well as those displaced by fighting between the Arakan Army and the Tatmadaw, with nearly 85,000 accessing safe water.

Raising Child and Social Protection

UNICEF's programme seeks to provide protections for all most vulnerable children in the State. In 2019 UNICEF supported nearly 43,000 vulnerable people to access psychosocial support and just over 2,300 adolescents were provided with life skills. UNICEF continued supporting the Government to expand the social work case management system and continued its joint lead role in the UN Country Task Force on the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on the six Grave Violations against Children under UN Security Council Resolution 1612 on Children in Armed Conflict.

Expanding Social Protection to reach the most vulnerable children and their families

Supporting the Rakhine State Government to implement its universal Mother and Child Cash Transfer programme, to improve nutritional outcomes for mothers and children in the critical first 1,000 days of life. In 2019, 120,000 mothers and children were reached in Rakhine. Support was also provided for the roll out of Universal Birth Registration, which will be taken forward in 2020.

Ensuring Education Opportunities

UNICEF's Education in Emergencies (EiE) initiative with Save the Children and Plan International supports access to education, including non-formal education for adolescents, to children affected by displacement and conflicts. We support the provision of essential teaching learning supplies for children affected by natural disasters. UNICEF also focuses on supporting education system-strengthening in Rakhine State with inclusiveness and equity, including by supporting head teacher and teacher training, provision of school materials, school construction, non-formal primary education for out of school children. In 2019 nearly 27,000 children aged 3 to 17 years old who were affected by conflict were supported to access primary, pre-primary and post-primary learning opportunities.

COVID-19 Response

Since the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Myanmar on 23 March 2020, the number of cases has risen daily. Given the trend in other countries, there is a high risk that the number of cases will soar and community transmission seems unavoidable. With limited health facilities and personnel, in particular in rural and/or conflict-affected townships in Rakhine State, there is limited capacity to deal with a major disease outbreak.

Overcrowding, movement restrictions and blocks on humanitarian aid leave IDPs, many of whom have underlying medical conditions, especially vulnerable to a virus outbreak.

The existing health, social and economic vulnerabilities of children and families living in conflict-affected areas will be further compounded by exposure to the pandemic.

UNICEF is working with Ministry of Health and Sport, Department of Rural Development, Department of Social Welfare and other Government and NGO counterparts with a focus on Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), as well as provision of essential life-saving services and supplies to fill critical gaps in delivery. This includes local procurement and distribution of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and WASH supplies, as well as technical assistance to local authorities and frontline staff.

Our team

UNICEF's team in Rakhine State works out of offices in the state capital, Sittwe, and in Maungdaw in the north, near the border with Bangladesh. We focus on addressing longstanding as well as shifting patterns of needs facing the most vulnerable in broadly four situations; children living in northern townships; children living in IDP camps in central townships; children affected by recent outbreaks of armed conflict in central and northern townships; and children living in communities in central and southern areas.

Results for children in 2019



63,873 children and women provided with access to health care services in emergency situations while 5,465 children aged 9-18 months were immunized against measles.



Over 9,700 provided with access to health care services in emergency situations while 5,465 children aged 9-18 months were immunized against measles.



7,339 pregnant or lactating women receiving micronutrient supplementation



27,621 children aged 6 to 59 months received Vitamin A supplementation



84,599 people accessed sufficient quality water for drinking cooking and personal hygiene



589,967 people provided with essential hygiene and sanitation items



15,011 people accessing appropriate toilets and washing facilities



42,778 people with access to psychological support and 265 children in conflict with the law received legal and other forms of support



469 children accessing appropriate child protection case management services



23,350 children aged 3-10 years accessing pre-primary or primary learning opportunities

Find Out More:

For further information on our work in Rakhine State and Myanmar, visit www.unicef.org/myanmar/.