Delivering Change for Children
Building the foundations for a better future

Challenges in Chin State

Chin State is one of the smallest states in Myanmar, with a land area of 13.9 thousand square miles and a population of around 478,000 including more than 221,000 children. It is home, chiefly, to a number of main Chin ethnic groups and around 50 subgroups, with many residents living in high mountain hamlets that are difficult to access. Underdevelopment and poverty make the state one of the most deprived parts of Myanmar. More than 7 people in 10 are under the poverty line. In a 2015 survey, almost 80 percent of households reviewed had poor or borderline food security. One in 10 children are not expected to live to age five. The state recorded the highest rate in Myanmar of child stunting (41 percent) in 2015, and 17 percent of children are underweight. Only 15 percent of children are born in a health facility.

How we help

UNICEF’s work in Chin State supports state and national development policies addressing child deprivation and exclusion, helping to build the core systems that can deliver better outcomes for all.

Boosting Health and Nutrition

Expanding vaccinations, building the health system, improving nutrition. More children in hard to reach areas are receiving vaccinations against life-threatening diseases as a result of an expanded cold chain system, including more township-based solar-powered storage refrigerators. Trainings for basic health staff, including appropriate books and materials, are helping to boost maternal and child health. UNICEF supports improved rural health facilities, including facilities for births and newborn care. UNICEF also provides emergency kits and drugs to people at IDP camps in Paletwa Township. Mothers are learning about optimal child nutrition using local foods, as well as receiving fortified baby food for their infants. Thousands of mothers are receiving cash transfers to boost child and maternal health through the Maternal and Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) Programme. MCCT is a flagship Government-led social protection programmes that started in Chin State in 2017 with technical support from UNICEF.

Improving Water and Sanitation

Safer schools and health centres. UNICEF and partners are working to upgrade WASH facilities in 136 schools in Tedim Township, after an assessment found
only 14 percent of targeted schools had sufficient water. Community-led projects introducing improved latrines, facilities for menstruating girls, hand-washing stations and hygiene education to schools reduce the spread of disease and promote child attendance.

Expanding Child Protection  
**Keeping children safe.** UNICEF and partners are supporting the expansion of the Government’s social work case management system under the National Social Protection Strategic Plan to keep children safe from violence, abuse, neglect and harm. Together with partners, UNICEF also works to provide emergency support to children affected by outbreaks of armed conflicts near the border with Rakhine State and those affected by natural disasters such as floods and landslides.

Raising Education Outcomes  
**Improving foundations of teaching and learning.** Primary school attendance is very high but drop-outs are common at more advanced grades. Many schools suffer a lack of facilities. A shortage of qualified teachers and the multiplicity of local languages add additional complexity to teaching and learning. UNICEF works with the Government to strengthen the education system, with, among others, continual in-service teacher education, new learning materials including in local language, provided 7,350 roofing sheets to renovate schools damaged by storms and improved school buildings.

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 Chin 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 Chin State team is based in the state capital, Hakha. Many staff members are Chin locals who are deeply familiar with local conditions and how to overcome challenges such as operating between multiple languages and across difficult terrain.

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**Results for children in 2019**

- **30,523** pregnant and lactating women and mothers of children under 2 received Infant and Young Child feeding (IYCF) counselling and Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM)
- Over **900 basic health staff** completed 6 days training in community based IYCF, as well as IMAM
- The ability of the health system to extend vaccination to hard-to-reach areas was strengthened, with **33 solar refrigerators installed** or due to be installed in 2020
- **455 teachers** received in-service training, through UNICEF’s collaboration with the State Education Department, which included several rounds of training of trainers in 2019
- A big story book for early learners was developed in **nine** Chin ethnic languages and distributed to **37 early learning centres**, benefiting an estimated **900 children**
- **7,350 roofing sheets** were provided to schools in Paletwa Township affected by the spillover of the conflict in Rakhine State WASH improvement plans were developed in **92 schools**
- **3,3918 women** received cash input every two months under the Maternal and Child Cash Transfer scheme
- UNICEF continued its **engagement with Members of the State Parliament** to advocate on children’s issues and build alliances, with a focus on calling for the extension of services for children in hard-to-reach areas