

NIGER

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

unicef 
for every child





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DEAR FRIENDS

The year 2019 was an exciting one for us. UNICEF and the Government of Niger launched a new three-year country programme for the period 2019–2021.

To maximize results for children, the country programme marks the beginning of a strategic shift from a predominantly service delivery mode to more important investments in systems strengthening and capacity building. This spirit also permeates the UNICEF humanitarian response, with sustainable solutions pursued to contribute to national and local development plans.

Our programmatic focus is on the whole child, and particularly on the most marginalized, such as nomadic children, children with disabilities, and those affected by humanitarian emergencies. A new programme component has also been added to place adolescent and youth agency and participation in the spotlight.

At the same time, we embarked upon a festive year of celebrations to mark 30 years of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC30). This anniversary has created a momentum for Niger to step up its efforts to make children thrive, and to renew its commitment to protect and promote children's rights.

The year-long CRC30 celebration was an opportunity for UNICEF and partners to engage stakeholders in the full implementation of the CRC, raise greater awareness of the situation of children, and build strategic alliances with celebrities, influencers and young people to advocate for children's rights.

In the last decades, Niger has come a long way in advancing children and women's rights. Today, children are less likely to die from preventable diseases than in the past. Being able to go to school is now a reality for many more children. But we still see a staggering number of children in Niger suffering from multiple deprivations to their well-being, and we will not rest until every child has the same chance to fulfil their full potential.

As we look forward to accelerating results for children – in health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, child protection, humanitarian response, social inclusion and adolescent development – we know we cannot do this alone. UNICEF appreciates the tremendous support from our donors and partners in building a better Niger for all children, and we hope to continue working with you for the next two years and beyond.



Félicité Tchibindat

UNICEF Representative in Niger



A SNAPSHOT OF 2019 ACHIEVEMENTS



Integrated Community Case Management of Childhood Illnesses was expanded from 28 districts in 2018 to 43 in 2019 to improve children's access to health care at the community level.



584 communities (362,380 residents) and one entire municipality, were fully certified as open defecation free.



A vaccine-derived polio outbreak in Zinder, Maradi and Diffa was stopped and declared over in December 2019.



The new Education and Professional Training Transitional Sector Plan, the Education and Training Sector Partnership Framework and the Girls' and Women's Education and Training National Strategy (with a five-year action plan) were developed with UNICEF support.



12,000 girls in 198 villages in Maradi, Tahoua and Zinder regions were reached with **child marriage prevention and care interventions,** bringing the total number of adolescents reached close to 50,000.



400 adolescents and youths from all regions of Niger engaged with local authorities, community elders and religious leaders on issues affecting youth, after having been trained on the new UNICEF advocacy guide.



100,000 people were provided with food relief, **61,000 with non-food items and 18,000 with clean water and sanitation** through the Rapid Response Mechanism, which is technically coordinated by UNICEF.



The Government of Niger publicly renewed its commitment to the full implementation of the CRC, following a series of communication initiatives undertaken by UNICEF and its partners.



More than 872,000 women were trained to screen and detect malnutrition in their children.

KEY RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

UNICEF worked to achieve the four **Key Results for Children (KRC)** – identified as major drivers to improve child well-being and support Niger's efforts towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Significant progress was made, with Niger on track or exceeding targets for three of the four KRCs.

KRC1: Immunization

The immunization of pentavalent 3 reached 98 per cent in 2019 compared to 95 per cent in 2018 (the target was 84 per cent). Measles vaccination of children under the age of 1 reached 97 per cent, well above the target of 80 per cent.

KRC 2: Stunting

UNICEF contributed to stunting prevention by increasing the coverage of infant and young child feeding interventions from 46 health districts in 2018 to 51 in 2019 – out of a total of 72 health districts. Vitamin A supplementation coverage reached close to 95 per cent of the expected target.

KRC4: Improved learning outcomes

To improve learning outcomes and skills, more than 200,000 children benefitted from individual education/early learning materials, more than 50,000 of whom were affected by emergencies (exceeding the target of 40,000).

KRC6: Child marriage

Building on the government's commitment to end child marriage, UNICEF and its partners continued to support the implementation of the national strategic action plan to end child marriage. In addition, UNICEF supported the process leading to the institutionalization – by presidential decree – of child protection committees. This was a major achievement in addressing child marriage and promoting positive social norms that protect children's rights.



Babies are kept warm with a skin-to-skin technique known as Kangaroo Care at a UNICEF-supported hospital in Maradi, in central Niger.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Every child has the right to survive and thrive

OUR WORK

Every child has the right to survive and thrive. This is why UNICEF supports the Government of Niger to increase the coverage and quality of maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, immunization and HIV services, particularly in the most underserved areas, including those affected by emergencies.

OUR RESULTS IN 2019

UNICEF support to health systems strengthening helped to advance the reform of the government health supply chain according to the 'Last Mile' strategy. A well-functioning **Last Mile delivery system** is one that reaches the patient and point-of-care. However, in Niger, national and sub-national supply chains often struggle to get medicines and supplies to the health facilities and people who need them most. A model to deliver health and nutrition supplies up to the last mile was developed and will be piloted in Maradi region in 2020.

To improve the management and quality of health care data, the Health Information Management System (HMIS) in Niger is evolving with the introduction and gradual scale-up of the District Health Information System (DHIS-2) platform. In 2019, a roadmap for **community health information systems** was integrated in the overall roadmap for DHIS-2 scale-up, and a pilot project was started in one district using mobile health technology.

UNICEF also provided technical support to develop the **Strategic Plan for Universal Health Coverage**, encompassing both service delivery and financial protection components and ensuring that nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) were recognized as key determinants of health.

To improve children's access to health care, high-impact community-based strategies were modelled in 2019.

THE ISSUES

1 in 12 children dies before their fifth birthday.

1 in 196 women dies in pregnancy or during and after childbirth.

Only 39% of birth deliveries are assisted by a health worker.

Fewer than 4 in 10 children have been fully vaccinated before the age of 1 year.

Source: Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation; Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group; National EPI data.

“A child without vaccines is a loss for the country. A malnourished child is a stumbling block for the family. A vaccinated child means progress for a community, for Niger, and for the world.”

HOUMALAN AHAMED, HEALTH MOBILIZER AT MADAOUA DEPARTMENT, TAHOUA.

One of these initiatives – **Integrated Community Case Management of Childhood Illnesses** – was expanded from 28 districts in 2018 to all 43 targeted districts. In line with the commitment to leave no child behind, case management at health centre level of potentially severe bacterial infections was piloted in seven districts – an expansion from three in 2018.

UNICEF continued to support approaches to vaccinate every child in every community. An emergency **immunization campaign** was organized to address measles outbreaks that swept through 33 health districts. More than 317,000 children under the age of 14 were vaccinated. Measles vaccination of children under the age of 1 reached 97 per cent, well above the target of 80 per cent. An outbreak of vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2, which had affected Zinder, Maradi and Diffa regions since 2018, was stopped and declared over in December 2019. In addition, 98 per cent of children were vaccinated with pentavalent 3 while 95 per cent of Niger’s health districts achieved immunization coverage well above the 80 per cent target. Advocacy forums to promote vaccination in Tahoua and Diffa regions brought together political leaders, regional authorities, traditional and religious leaders, and members of civil society around commitments to accelerate immunization in the regions.

To respond to **health emergencies**, UNICEF supported essential health interventions in conflict-affected Diffa in the Lake Chad area, Tillabéri across the Malian border, and flood-affected areas. Mobile clinics provided health care for 18,193 children in three districts. ■

A mother with her twin babies waiting for their turn to be weighed and measured in a health centre in Maradi, in central Niger.



UNICEF continued to support approaches to vaccinate every child in every community.

A baby is being vaccinated at the health centre in Zermou, a village in central Niger.



THANK YOU!

UNICEF is grateful to donors who are supporting health interventions in Niger with flexible and unearmarked funding such as the Governments of Denmark, Germany, Italy and Sweden. We also thank the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, GAVI, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Rotary Club for their support in helping UNICEF strengthen the national immunization programme.



A boy waits to be vaccinated at the health centre of Tamroro, a village in central Niger.



This little girl is being weighed and measured in a health centre in Maradi region.

NUTRITION

Every child has the right to good nutrition

OUR WORK

Every child has the right to good nutrition. In Niger, UNICEF works with the government to reduce childhood stunting and other forms of malnutrition so that girls and boys under the age of 5, especially those who are marginalized and affected by humanitarian crises, can grow up healthily and thrive.

OUR RESULTS IN 2019

At the national level, UNICEF continued to place investments in preventing malnutrition at the forefront, in support of the implementation of the National Strategy for Nutritional Security. Support was provided to the **Nigériens Nourish Nigériens** initiative to conduct a nutrition budget analysis which tracked allocations for nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions. UNICEF also helped to develop a roadmap to integrate the management of severe acute malnutrition into the national budget. Along with advocacy from the European Union, this led to the creation of a budget line of US\$1.5 million in the 2020 national budget for the procurement of ready-to-use therapeutic food.

In partnership with the European Union and acting as the nutrition sector lead, UNICEF played a key role in **revitalizing the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement** in Niger. A clear roadmap was established following Niger's participation in the SUN global gathering in Nepal.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to implement two rounds of **vitamin A supplementation**, coupled with deworming. These interventions, which were delivered through the integrated polio campaigns, were instrumental in reaching 5.3 million children in each of the two rounds (97 per cent and 98 per cent of the annual target for the first and second rounds, respectively).

The home fortification programme to **prevent anaemia in children** was scaled up to 14 health districts – up from 10 health districts in 2018. To keep pregnant women

“I had three children, but one died. I arrived here with my little child, Kabir. He is 13 months old. He started losing his appetite a few days ago when he stopped eating. I was not sure what to do. I didn't really know how to breastfeed properly so I brought him to the closest health centre in our village. ”

SARATU, 20, A MOTHER OF TWO WHO WAS ABLE TO GET TREATMENT FOR HER ACUTELY MALNOURISHED SON, KABIR, IN MARADI REGION.

THE ISSUES

46% of children under 5 are stunted.

2.7% of children under 5 suffer from severe acute malnutrition, above the WHO critical threshold.

61% of children under 5 and 49% of women of reproductive age are anaemic.

Only 5.7% of young children between the ages of 6 months and 2 years receive a minimum acceptable diet.

Source: National Nutrition Survey, 2019; SMART 2019.

and their unborn children healthy, iron and folic acid were provided to more than 76,300 pregnant women. However, because of under-funding, this represented only a quarter of the annual target. Close to 418,000 caregivers were sensitized on infant and young child feeding practices, which will help to **prevent stunting** that takes root in the early years of a child's life.

UNICEF and the government continued to make every effort to respond to the needs of children with severe acute malnutrition in order to prevent excess mortality. Niger has one of the highest numbers of severely malnourished children with medical complications in the Sahel region. Through a network of 1,233 health facilities supported by NGOs and UNICEF, **more than 414,200 children with life-threatening severe acute malnutrition** received treatment and care. Performance indicators were well in line with SPHERE standards: 109 per cent of the annual target, covering the period January–December 2019.

To sustain **community efforts to identify cases of acute malnutrition**, UNICEF, the Ministry of Health, the World Food Programme and ALIMA continued to implement the MUAC-by-mothers approach in Maradi region. Within this framework, more than 872,000 women were trained to screen and detect malnutrition in their children. Thanks to UNICEF support, Niger's 2019 seasonal malaria chemoprevention campaign integrated malnutrition screening. Approximately 3.9 million children under 5 were screened every month between July and October. ■



THANK YOU!

Thanks to the support of the Governments of Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland and Spain, the UK Department of International Development (DFID), the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Food for Peace, ECHO, Nutrition International, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Skala Foundation, UNICEF has been able to support Niger's nutrition programme, which keeps children alive and healthy.



Women are made aware of the importance of breastfeeding in Zengon-Bougage, a village in central Niger.



Bahija, a 10-year-old girl, leaves a toilet in the village of Sabon Gari Kolta, in central Niger. Only 14 per cent of the population has access to basic sanitation services.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Every child has the right to live in a safe and clean environment

OUR WORK

Every child has the right to live in a safe and clean environment. To ensure this happens in Niger, UNICEF supports the government's efforts to increase access to safe water and sanitation and to promote hygiene in communities, schools and health care facilities.

OUR RESULTS IN 2019

The year saw greater consideration given to decentralization, climate change and the humanitarian and development nexus in the **implementation of the national WASH sector programme (PROSEHA)**, which is supported by UNICEF and other partners. Sector coordination also improved at national and regional levels and the sector basket fund registered three new adherents (Netherlands, European Union and UNICEF). The government forecasts a tripling of its contribution to the funding of the WASH sector in the 2020 budget. The Ministry of Water and Sanitation also supported the development of municipal WASH plans for 107 municipalities, contributing to the operationalization of the decentralization process.

With two-thirds of its surface covered by desert, Niger experiences frequent droughts and water scarcity resulting from climate change. This makes it vital to provide communities with **climate resilient water supply infrastructure**. In 2019, around 642,000 additional people were provided with access to safe drinking water in rural areas, with more than 23,500 reached directly by UNICEF-supported services that include solar-powered water supply systems.

UNICEF also provides **schools with safe drinking water, improved sanitation facilities and hygiene education.**

THE ISSUES

Only 50% of the population in Niger has access to basic water supply services, with 84% in urban areas and 44% in rural areas.

Only 14% of the population has access to basic sanitation services, with 43% in urban areas and 8% in rural areas.

68% of the population practices open defecation.

Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme, 2019.

“The water tap in the medical centre was already installed when Omar, my last son, was born in November 2018. He was the first baby in the village who enjoyed clean water from the beginning. It helped during the birth.”

AICHA, A MOTHER FROM BAMO, MARADI REGION.

During the year, more than 10,700 school children gained access to clean water when 36 schools were connected to existing piped systems. Of these, more than 4,300 girls and boys saw their learning environment become more gender-friendly through the construction of separate female/male latrine blocks in 16 schools. In addition, 306 schools benefited from community-built latrines as a result of UNICEF support. Moreover, menstrual hygiene management activities were launched in 901 primary school.

The availability of WASH services is essential to quality of care and **infection prevention and control in health care facilities**. In Niger, UNICEF supported the upgrading of 18 health care facilities with water supply and adequate sanitation, up from five facilities in 2018.

With nearly 7 in 10 Nigerians practicing open defecation, UNICEF supported the government to finalize and disseminate the national implementation guide for Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), an initiative that mobilizes communities to **end open defecation**. An orientation note on CLTS in emergencies and for people with disabilities was also developed.

An additional 584 communities with 362,380 residents and one municipality were fully certified as open defecation free (ODF) in 2019. This achievement was made through the UNICEF-supported ODF municipality approach that is being implemented in 10 municipalities.

Implementation of **CLTS in emergencies** in 47 communities affected by floods or located in cholera hotspots led to 29 communities, with a total population of 30,000, certified as ODF. This was an increase from the 15 communities triggered in 2018.

In 2019, the security situation deteriorated in Tahoua, Tillabéri and Maradi regions, leading to significant population displacement. In addition, Niger also faced severe floods with close to 260,000 people affected. As the WASH cluster lead, UNICEF coordinated partner efforts to provide **emergency WASH assistance** to people affected by humanitarian crises. Through direct UNICEF support, more than 139,800 people gained access to safe drinking water. This was achieved through water trucking, household water treatment and construction and rehabilitation of water supply systems, including nine solar-powered systems. In addition, more than 493,500 people were reached by hygiene promotion. ■

Children have fun and refresh themselves with water at a well in the village of Zermou, in central Niger.



THANK YOU!

Social and economic development is not possible without access to clean water and adequate sanitation for children and families. UNICEF would like to thank the Governments of the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, as well as DFID, CERF, ECHO and Direct Aid for their generous contributions that have helped UNICEF strengthen the national WASH programme.



Women and girls collect water at a well in the village of Guidan-Alou in Maradi region.



School children revise their class work in the playground of their school in Guidon-Alou village, Maradi region.

EDUCATION

Every child has the right to learn

OUR WORK

Every child has the right to learn. To make this a reality in Niger, UNICEF supports the government to improve access to, and quality of basic education for girls and boys in a safe and secure learning environment.

OUR RESULTS IN 2019

As the chair of the education sector's Technical and Financial Partners Group, UNICEF continued to engage in **high-level dialogue to promote education priorities and build sector capacity**. Support was provided to the annual sector review in March, and to the management of large-scale partnerships including Education Cannot Wait.

UNICEF and other education sector partners also played a strategic role in the development of a **new Education and Training Transitional Sector Plan** for 2020–2022. Among other things, the plan outlines what needs to be done to set the stage for improvements in access to and quality of education. In addition, UNICEF supported the government to finalize a new Girls' and Women's Education and Training National Strategy, as well as coordinating eight sub-sectoral studies to reinforce the evidence base for the sector plan.

The finalization of the education sector plan enabled Niger to apply for a new **Global Partnership for Education grant**, unlocking US\$85 million for education and prioritizing interventions in early learning in key regions. In addition, UNICEF worked to **strengthen statistical capacities in the education sector**, including the annual statistics revision, with other sector partners providing capacity development, and the design of the Education Management Information System. School-level 'report cards' were designed for primary and secondary schools to support school-level planning.

In December 2019, a **new declaration on pre-primary education** was signed by the government and the education sector's Technical and Financial Partners Group. This affirms the significant contribution of pre-

“It's not always easy for them. But I know that these little ones will at least be integrated back into the formal system after a few months... they can learn the basics and therefore be more comfortable with their classmates in the regular school.”

MADAME AMINA, WHO TEACHES AT THE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CENTRE IN DIFFA. THE CENTRE CATERES FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO ENTER THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM ON TIME.

THE ISSUES

2.5 million children and adolescents are out of school.

11.9% of children are enrolled in preschool.

Less than 8% of children have acquired acceptable literacy and numeracy skills at the end of primary school.

Only 46% of primary school students enter secondary school.

Only 20% of adolescents complete lower secondary education.

Source: UNICEF, Country Programme Document, Niger, 2019; UNICEF Country Office Annual Report, 2019.

primary education to a child's development and commits Niger to reaching a gross pre-primary enrolment rate of 20 per cent by 2030 (up from the current 12 per cent). UNICEF also supported 2,165 children to enrol in preschool, with 51 school management committees trained on child nutrition and how to stimulate brain development.

In response to the learning crisis in Niger, the Ministry of Primary Education **updated and pared down the primary school curriculum**. Supported by UNICEF, all the country's 21,867 school directors and 1,656 educational supervisors were trained on this renovated programme and the differentiated pedagogical strategies. They are now better equipped to train and support the nation's teachers, which will ultimately lead to better educational outcomes for children. The results of this 'upgrading' programme were already promising, with the percentage of students under the benchmark falling from 60 to 44 per cent (benchmark adjusted for grade level).

Providing **education to marginalized children** such as those from nomadic communities and children with disabilities is one of the most challenging and pressing issues for Niger. In 2019, UNICEF continued to develop and implement inclusive and alternative education models for these children. In Bermo, Maradi region, 632 nomadic children, of whom 272 were girls, were supported to go to school, while 53 schools in rural Agadez were assisted to educate close to 2,000 children through the nomadic school model. More than 4,150 children with disabilities in the capital, Niamey, and Dosso, Zinder, Tahoua and Maradi regions were reached with inclusive educational activities. In Tillabéri and Maradi, 624 girls were provided with vocational training in agricultural production.

To **improve school governance and make schools safe**, UNICEF supported the capacity development of more than 5,270 community bodies, including school management committees and student governments. They were trained in school management, positive behaviour management, and prevention of gender-based violence. A total of 1,266 teachers, parents and children in the crisis-affected Tahoua region were trained to promote peace and non-violence. Under the Spotlight Initiative, which aims to eliminate violence against women and girls, 120 schools in 25 villages developed action plans against gender-based violence.

To provide out-of-school adolescents with an opportunity to return to education, 30 **centres for alternative education** were opened in Zinder, providing

844 children with a second chance at learning and gaining skills. Teachers received training and necessary materials to run an accelerated programme in the centres. Three of these centres piloted the successful Teaching at the Right Level numeracy programme that is now being scaled up to 20 centres in Diffa and Zinder.

Several **innovations** in 2019 continued to boost quality education. Six hundred children in 10 schools in five regions are using tablets to boost their basic literacy and numeracy skills under the Connect My School pilot. Results show an increase in their scores in mathematics and French by almost 50 per cent at the primary level. Another innovation – Distance Support to Teachers (SADE) – reached 15 schools, helping to increase contact between pedagogical advisors and teachers through digital technology. Best practice lessons were filmed and 10 short films were produced to support the pedagogical development of teachers. The teachers were also coached through WhatsApp and Skype in Diffa region.

The worsening security situation, particularly in the regions of Tillabéri and Tahoua, had a **considerable impact on the education sector**. At least 106 schools remained closed, including three in Diffa, due to direct threats against communities and schools. UNICEF continued to lead the humanitarian education cluster and worked closely with regional authorities and implementing partners to find solutions to the situation. More than 42,000 children were able to continue their education through the provision of learning kits, the training of teachers in psychosocial support, and the development of school-specific risk reduction plans. A new strategy is being developed to increase the resilience of the education sector to security threats. ■

THANK YOU!

UNICEF would like to thank the following donors for their support to the education programme in Niger: the Governments of Canada, Denmark, Japan, Norway and Sweden, Education Cannot Wait, Global Partnership for Education, CERF and Clé de Beauté. We would also like to thank the Government of Niger for its leadership of the sector, and other major education sector partners, whose collaboration was instrumental in achieving these results.



Students using tablets to access educational content such as French, Wikipedia and Khan Academy in a school in Niamey.



Girls are sensitized to prevent child marriage in the village of Tamroro, in central Niger.

CHILD PROTECTION

Every child has the right to be protected from violence, abuse and exploitation

OUR WORK

Every child has the right to be protected from violence, abuse and exploitation. In Niger, UNICEF protects children in a holistic manner. Partnering with the government, civil society, NGOs and other stakeholders, UNICEF helps to build stronger child protection systems – from policy and legislation, right down to service provision and community engagement in areas such as ending child marriage, prevention and response to violence against children, justice for children, and birth registration.

OUR RESULTS IN 2019

Eliminating child marriage is a major focus for UNICEF in Niger. Working with communities, families, governments and partners, UNICEF helps to identify and address the social and economic factors that fuel this child rights violation. The event on the commitment of the First Ladies of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to end child marriage was held on the sidelines of the African Union summit in July 2019 in Niamey. It presented an opportunity for all partners to rally together to end child marriage.

In 2019, an additional 12,000 girls in 198 villages in Maradi, Tahoua and Zinder regions benefitted from child marriage prevention and care interventions, bringing the total number of adolescents reached close to 50,000. In addition, UNICEF supported the process leading to the institutionalization – by presidential decree – of child protection committees. This was a major achievement in addressing child marriage and promoting positive social norms that protect children's rights.

UNICEF worked to **shift social norms on child marriage and gender-based violence** by actively involving traditional leaders to mobilize more than 260,000 parents in 67 communities through community dialogues. In

THE ISSUES

76% of girls are married before the age of 18 and 28% before the age of 15.

80% of children aged 2–14 experience violent discipline at home.

Only 6 in 10 children have a birth certificate.

Source: UNICEF, Country Programme Document, Niger, 2019.

“My job is about making sure that children get their birth certificates. When children lack a birth certificate, they can't carry on in school, they can't be protected from child labour, child trafficking, or child marriage. Without it, children are invisible in their own country.”

MODOU MIKO, A CIVIL REGISTRAR AT THE EUROPEAN UNION AND UNICEF-FUNDED PAREC PROGRAMME (SUPPORT PROGRAMME TO NIGER'S CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM REFORM).

addition, 40 radio stations covering the whole of Niger organized a large campaign to prevent child marriage and promote child rights. More than 1 million young people were exposed to radio forums, adverts and interactive radio programmes on gender norms and harmful practices.

Significant results were also achieved in strengthening the child protection system. The **new civil registration policy and law** were adopted by Parliament, contributing to the achievement of universal birth registration. UNICEF continued to support civil registration services to ensure that every birth is notified, registered, and a certificate is granted. More than 361,700 children under the age of 1, most of them from rural areas, obtained their birth certificate in 2019, amounting to 47 per cent of expected births in the year.

UNICEF support to **government protection services** allowed close to 13,600 children, including more than 5,700 girl victims of violence and children on the move, to access services. For children on the move, an innovative approach to child protection services was developed through the establishment of four one-stop social welfare shops in Agadez region. The rehabilitation of the temporary transit centre in Agadez for unaccompanied child migrants was also completed.

Protection services for **children in conflict with the law** were strengthened in 2019 through the provision of socio-professional training for children in detention in Niamey, Maradi, Zinder and Agadez. A mechanism for reintegration and alternatives to detention was set up. UNICEF continued to support the implementation of a government-United Nations memorandum of understanding for the protection of children allegedly associated with armed groups, ensuring their handover to protection and reintegration services.

The **child protection emergency response** assisted crisis-affected children in Diffa, Tillabéri and Tahoua regions, and in villages hosting refugees in Maradi region, following population displacement from the Nigeria border. Close to 7,900 girls and boys were reached with psychosocial support. A total of 643 registered unaccompanied and separated children benefitted from family-based care or alternative care arrangements. More than 24,800 children affected by population movements were sensitized on child protection and assisted by 70 community-based child protection mechanisms in Diffa, Tillabéri and Tahoua regions.

The partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was strengthened to manage the **transit centre for temporary care of unaccompanied children** returning from Algeria and Libya. Moreover, operational links between the one-stop social welfare shops and IOM teams in Assamaka, Arlit and Dirkou permitted social workers to use IOM centres and logistics facilities for temporary care of unaccompanied children.

The UNICEF and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Joint Global Programme to End Child Marriage was strengthened and the Spotlight Initiative expanded to include UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The ongoing partnership with Studio Kalangou – comprising more than 35 media, with coverage of over 80 per cent of Niger's population – amplified messages on the rights of adolescent and the practices that violate these rights such as child marriage. ■

A total of 643 registered unaccompanied and separated children benefitted from family-based care or alternative care arrangements.

THANK YOU!

UNICEF would like to thank its partners, the Joint Global Programme to End Child Marriage, the Spotlight Initiative, the Governments of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, as well as the European Union, ECHO, DFID, CERF and UN Peacebuilding Funds, for helping to protect children in Niger.



A young boy sells fruit at the market of Zengon-Bougage, a village in central Niger.



Children in the village of Sabon Gari Kolta, in central Niger.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Every child deserves an equal chance in life

OUR WORK

Every child deserves an equal chance in life. To reduce the multiple disadvantages that keep many children in Niger locked in a cycle of inequality and poverty, UNICEF supports the government to make policies, programmes and budgets more inclusive of children and women's needs. In addition, UNICEF strengthens the country's statistical systems to produce evidence and data for child-centred policies. Increasing children's access to sustainable social protection is also a key priority.

OUR RESULTS IN 2019

Niger's fiscal space is constrained by a structurally low tax base at less than 18 per cent of gross domestic product. In response to cross-border strife, the Government of Niger increased security spending while flat-lining or decreasing spending on major social sectors. An analysis of the 2020 national budget showed that social programmes at the centre of UNICEF advocacy for their high impact potential either remain largely underfunded, depend mostly on international donors or are not yet integrated in programme budgets.

Government's efforts to increase **budget transparency and accountability** continued in 2019. UNICEF and the World Bank supported the Ministry of Finance to increase access to, and analysis of budget data. This was done by updating the BOOST database and training a network of core specialists in 13 social sector ministries, members of the court of audit, and parliamentarians.

A tracking system for social programmes put in place in late 2019, the ongoing World Bank public expenditure review, and the upcoming evaluation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2017–2021, offer **opportunities for policy dialogue** on prioritizing and scaling up high-impact interventions for children and women.

Following the adoption of the National Social Protection Policy in 2011, Niger has struggled to establish a **social protection system** at scale. To address the lack of

THE ISSUES

Nearly 6 in 10 Nigeriens are children.

41% of children under 5 suffer from multidimensional poverty, deprived in all five areas of deprivation.

Niger ranked last on the Human Development Index in 2019.

Source: UNICEF, Country Programme Document, Niger, 2019; UNICEF Country Office Annual Report, 2019.



Friends at the playground of their school in Gourou Kirey, a suburb of Niamey, the capital of Niger.

demand for formal social protection, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Population to launch an inventory and diagnostic of the scope and functionality of traditional solidarity-based social protection mechanisms in the three pilot regions of Agadez, Maradi and Dosso.

Progress was made with adoption of the Law on the Fundamental Principle of Social Protection, the finalization of a cash transfer pilot with linkages to early warning and climate information systems, and renewed steps to establish a National Social Register.

Key measures to **advance the decentralization agenda in social sectors** included the adoption of the Law on Territorial Public Service and its decree of application. The measures also involved the adoption of the User Guide for Public Water Services and the scaling up of local plans for water and sanitation. An academic inspector was posted in each municipality, and pooled funds in education and WASH sectors (to which UNICEF contributes) were ready for disbursement to

municipalities through the National Financial Agency for Local Governments.

However, more remains to be done to decentralize resources in the health and nutrition sectors. Gaps in the capacity of municipalities to handle their new responsibilities and a weak accountability mechanism remain critical concerns. These are being addressed through pilots supported by UNICEF to improve inclusive participation, local resource mobilization and citizens' accountability.

Availability and quality of data to inform policy decision-making for children and women remain a concern, with persistent challenges in governance. Nevertheless, the dialogue around information systems between the National Institute of Statistics and the Ministry of Planning, as well as the migration of the national database to a newer platform started in 2019 with support from UNICEF, are a welcome sign. ■

Mamadou, a 7-year-old boy, and his friends in class at their school in Maradi region.





A happy child in a primary school in Niamey, the capital of Niger.



Girls cycle to school with their new bikes in the village of Gangara, in central Niger.

ADOLESCENTS AND SOCIAL NORMS

Every adolescent has the right to reach their full potential

OUR WORK

Every adolescent has the right to reach their full potential. To support adolescents, especially girls, and to promote their voices and agency, UNICEF partners with the government, communities, religious leaders and other stakeholders to change harmful social norms and increase adolescent participation in community life.

OUR RESULTS IN 2019

The government, with support from UNICEF, began to **implement the youth development roadmap called *Paroles des Jeunes*** (Voices of Youth). Key results from the first year of implementation include the launch of the National Strategy for Youth Entrepreneurship in September 2019; the revision of the National Youth Policy (to be approved in 2020); and the revision of the 2020 programme budgets of the four youth-focused ministries, to take into account the aspirations of youth and the constraints faced by marginalized young people.

With UNICEF support, the Ministry of Youth developed a **participatory intergenerational dialogue** strategy. The strategy is being piloted in four municipalities in Tahoua, Niamey, Tillabéri and Zinder regions to include youth in local planning and decision-making processes.

An important aspect of **adolescent development** is leadership programming, which involves training young people to advocate for positive change in their communities. Starting with a national youth camp, 400 adolescents and youths from all regions of Niger were trained on the new UNICEF advocacy guide. This enabled them to engage with local authorities and community elders on issues affecting the youth, as well as helping to inspire their peers to take action.

“My dream is to have a large, well-known restaurant in Zinder. This will give me the means to take care of my future family, and ensure a good life for us.”

ASSALAMA, 15, A STUDENT AT THE ARENE CENTRE FOR TRAINING IN ZINDAR, CREATED IN 2013 TO TRAIN GIRLS FROM UNDERPRIVILEGED BACKGROUNDS IN VOCATIONAL TRADES, AND IN BASIC NUMERACY AND LITERACY.

THE ISSUES

76% of girls are married before the age of 18.

36% of adolescent girls aged 15–19 have given birth or are pregnant.

27% of girls compared to 50% of boys are literate.

6 in 10 women think that a man is justified in beating his wife under certain circumstances.

Source: UNICEF, Country Programme Document, Niger, 2019.

As part of the **Generation Unlimited** challenge, 32 youths were identified and trained to become ambassadors of the challenge. At the launch of the initiative, 100 adolescents and young people actively engaged in the process.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports trained 270 adolescents and members of nine youth brigades in four different regions. They used their newly acquired skills in communication, advocacy and peacebuilding to have intra-generational dialogues on key youth themes. In addition, a citizenship camp, organized in Tillabéri region, saw 100 adolescents and young people go through an intensive three-day workshop on life skills, peacebuilding and active citizenship. ■

An important aspect of adolescent development is leadership programming, which involves training young people on how to advocate for positive change in their communities.

Girls in the village of Gorou Kyrie, a suburb of Niamey, the capital of Niger.



PARTNERING WITH TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Traditional and religious leaders from across Niger committed themselves to promoting the rights of children to education, health and protection in a nationwide forum, supported by UNICEF, in December 2019.

Hundreds of imams, chiefs of canton, Alkali, pastors, reverends and other religious figures spent five days discussing what they can do to improve opportunities for children. The participants identified key areas around which they will work at community level to advocate for children and women's rights. These include: increasing educational opportunities for children; raising awareness of protection issues; and advocating for access to basic social services that include health care, nutrition and WASH.

In Niger, traditional and religious leaders have deep and trusted relationships with their communities. They are particularly well connected with the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members. As such, they are well placed to address social norms, behaviours and practices that limit children and women's access to services or fuel discrimination and deprivation.



Children playing in the village of Gangara, in central Niger.

HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Children continue to be disproportionately affected by insecurity, natural disasters and recurring disease epidemics in Niger. In 2019, the protection of close to 633,000 children was at risk, and more than 437,200 people were displaced from their home communities. Six in 10 internally displaced people are children.

UNICEF and its partners responded swiftly to the needs of crisis-affected children and their families. UNICEF was designated the technical lead of the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), an emergency response modality for delivering humanitarian aid to vulnerable people, including children.

In 2019, RRM, which is implemented by humanitarian partners, was able to:

- **Conduct more than 130 humanitarian needs assessments among newly displaced populations;**
- **Serve more than 100,000 people with food assistance;**
- **Provide 61,000 people with non-food items such as clothes, blankets, carpets, cooking tools, soap, water containers, menstrual hygiene management kits and baby care items;**
- **Reach more than 18,000 people with safe water and adequate sanitation.**

UNICEF was also responsible for RRM procurement, transport and pre-positioning of contingency response stocks. In 2019, UNICEF procured 13,200 non-food item kits, 1,000 baby non-food item kits and 10 health centre kits.

In addition 4,900 families, including 19,700 children, who were victims of floods in Diffa were provided with essential household items as well as WASH, health and nutrition assistance by the National Red Cross, a UNICEF partner.

UNICEF continued to strengthen national capacities to respond to emergencies. Staff from the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Catastrophes Management and the Civil Protection were trained in preparedness and emergency response.

Finally, UNICEF continued to pilot RapidPro in Diffa region. RapidPro is an SMS-based tool used to monitor emergency education, WASH and nutrition interventions. The system provided updated information on the functioning of services in emergency areas, as well as alerts on interruption of service delivery such as breakdowns in water infrastructure or nutrition supply stockouts.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The Government of Niger publicly renewed its commitment to the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), following a series of communication initiatives undertaken by UNICEF and its partners. Niger ratified the CRC in 1990. The country has made significant progress in advancing children and women's rights but more needs to be done.

The year-long celebration of the 30th anniversary of the CRC (CRC30) saw strategic alliances forged with celebrities from the arts, music, academia, technology, sports and community-based organizations. They actively participated in the Champions for Children initiative, in which they were all invited to raise their voices to advocate for children's rights.

Children, adolescents and young people were at the forefront of the CRC30 celebrations. They participated in a wide range of communication and advocacy initiatives and campaigns to strongly advocate for their rights. UNICEF and partners provided them with video, photo and storytelling workshops where they gained skills to amplify their voices and share their experiences. Media content produced by the children was widely disseminated on World Children's Day.

Niger has made significant progress in advancing children and women's rights but more needs to be done.



Girls having fun at the playground of their school in the village of Tamoro, in central Niger.




Here are some of the outreach highlights of the year:

- **Through a series of TED Talks**, UNICEF brought together a group of young change-makers from across the country to deliver captivating and powerful speeches about 'The Niger They Want'.
- **Through a 'Flashing Back, Flashing Forward' design-thinking workshop**, a group of young people looked back at the last 30 years to see the progress made for children and youth in Niger and the challenges that persisted, and to articulate their hopes for the next 30 years.
- **In celebration of CRC30**, Niamey, the capital city, turned blue throughout the year. UNICEF ran a billboard campaign to raise awareness on child rights and to remind stakeholders of their responsibilities.
- **UNICEF also partnered with national and regional media outlets** to give children a platform to share their experiences. A national media competition called 'CRC30 Media Prize' was held to encourage journalists to report on child rights in Niger.
- **A photography exhibition in Niamey showcased photographs taken by children** who had participated in a UNICEF training. UNICEF brought together 23 children in a storytelling workshop entitled 'Hopes and Fears'. The children also wrote formal letters to decision-makers and national stakeholders, sharing their concerns and dreams for the future.
- **UNICEF strengthened youth-led advocacy efforts in 2019**, which included Niger's participation in the African Union Youth Summit and #YouthConnekt initiatives.
- **UNICEF and partners continued to support the national competition e-Takara** and the newly created e-Takara Junior programme to promote the co-creation of solutions for challenges faced by young people and children.
- **UNICEF and partners collaborated with the National Federation of Football** to keep breaking gender stereotypes through the highly media-exposed national tournament for young girls.
- **UNICEF's fanbase on social media almost doubled over the year**, growing from 42,000 in 2018 to more than 71,400 in 2019. Overall, 4.5 million people were reached by stories on CRC30 and other children's issues.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

PROGRAMME BUDGET, 2019, US\$

PROGRAMME	REGULAR RESOURCES (RR)	OTHER RESOURCES REGULAR (ORR)	OTHER RESOURCES EMERGENCY (ORE)	TOTAL ALLOCATED
 HEALTH	3,726,547.79	4,627,647.81	343,712.73	8,697,908.33
 NUTRITION	3,273,706.63	1,170,790.19	13,518,474.35	17,962,971.17
 WASH	1,405,626.89	1,516,989.06	1,849,164.90	4,771,780.85
 EDUCATION	2,989,244.63	7,758,954.08	773,562.13	11,521,760.84
 CHILD PROTECTION	2,725,179.24	2,344,893.98	1,385,022.42	6,455,095.64
 SOCIAL POLICY	1,252,575.24	88,895.88	608,306.25	1,949,777.37
 PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS	7,117,466.94	1,000,322.55	3,365,523.65	11,483,313.14
 ADOLESCENTS AND SOCIAL NORMS	194,851.82	-	-	194,851.82
 OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS	18,855.63	-	-	18,855.63
TOTAL	22,704,054.81	18,508,493.55	21,843,766.43	63,056,314.79



Children with school bags provided by UNICEF in Guidan-Alou in central Niger.

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