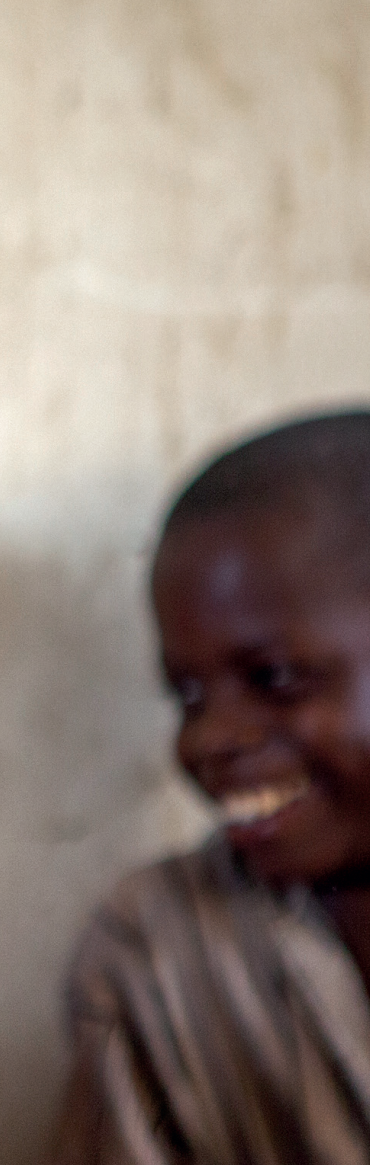




unicef 
for every child

Nigeria





Despite gains in the situation facing Nigerian children and women in recent years, much remains to be done. Too many children are being left behind.

UNICEF's programme for Nigeria is based on the principle of equity. As an advocate for children, UNICEF supports the Government of Nigeria in placing children's rights at the centre of its decision-making, social budgeting, planning and programme processes.

Reaching the hardest to reach with proven, high-impact interventions and partnering with civil society organizations and communities, UNICEF continues to promote a society in Nigeria where the best interests of children are ensured. This document

provides a glimpse into the organization's new country programme, and what it will achieve by 2022.

UNICEF is committed to realizing the rights of all children to help them build a strong foundation and have the best chance of fulfilling their potential. We believe children's rights begin before birth: from ensuring mothers have access to good neonatal care and deliver in a clean, safe environment, to reaching adulthood as responsible, healthy and informed parents to the next generation. This journey relies on a child having access to shelter, good nutrition, clean water and sanitation, health care and education.

UNICEF programmes target those children who are the most deprived, including those living with disabilities, in fragile contexts, and affected by rapid urbanization and environmental degradation.

We work with powerful decision-makers and specialist partners at the grassroots level to advocate for children to be protected from conflict, exploitation and common childhood diseases and to be educated and treated equally, so they can live with dignity and become responsible citizens of their country.





More than half of Nigeria's 198 million people live in poverty, most of them in the north of the country, where children face the biggest risks to their health and education.

Nigeria has the world's highest number of out-of-school children, and one of its highest rates of maternal, child and infant mortality, with 34 per cent of under-five mortality occurring within the first 30 days of life. It has the fourth highest HIV burden in the world and tens of millions of Nigerians still do not have access to clean water and proper sanitation. Nigeria also has the second highest number of people who practise open defecation worldwide: 47 million.

More than 4 million children are unimmunized, putting them at risk of disease.

Diseases like pneumonia, diarrhoea, and malaria – combined with underlying malnutrition – are responsible for most deaths of infants and children.

Nigeria's burden of stunted growth among children is the second highest in the world, with 12 million affected, and the burden of severe acute malnutrition is high, with over 2 million children severely acutely malnourished.

Nigerian children experience a wide range of abuses and harmful practices. An estimated 3 in 5 children have suffered one or more forms of violence before reaching 18, with over 70 per cent experiencing multiple incidents of violence. Nigeria has the second largest number of child brides in the world, with 23 million girls and women married as children. At 27 per cent, the prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) among girls and women aged 15–49 years is lower than in many countries where the practice is carried out, but Nigeria still has the third

highest absolute number of women and girls (19.9 million) who have undergone FGM/C worldwide. It is more commonly practised in the south of the country.

The humanitarian crisis in Nigeria's north-east is now in its tenth year.

It has spilled over into the Lake Chad region and is one of the most severe in the world today, with 7.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2019 in the worst-affected states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe.

With millions displaced, already significant challenges in health care; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and education have all been intensified. While accurate, up-to-date data is difficult to obtain in a fluid situation where so many millions have left their homes,



one thing is clear: this crisis is first and foremost a protection crisis for children, who have been acutely affected by the turmoil.

In order for Nigeria to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, we must invest in long-lasting institutional and community-based systems and policies for children's survival, growth and development.

In partnership with the Government of Nigeria, UNICEF has determined that investment and progress in the following four areas can have the greatest impact for children:

Enrolment of children, especially girls, in early learning and primary school at the right age to promote psychomotor and cognitive development in order to reduce the number of out-of-school children; strengthen gender

equality in and through education; and improve the quality of learning for retention;

Routine immunization, including against polio, for all children by 1 year of age and support for women to make informed and empowered decisions, including during pregnancy, to promote child survival and well-being;

Feeding, hygiene and sanitation practices to reduce high levels of stunting and prevent and treat severe acute malnutrition in under-five children;

Reduce the high prevalence of violence against children through promotion of positive attitudes and practices and addressing gender norms at all levels of society.

HEALTH

Challenges



1 in 3 babies is delivered in a health facility.



1 in 4 children is fully vaccinated.

Objectives

Every child, adolescent and woman has equitable access to quality health interventions, including routine immunization and services to prevent and treat HIV.

NUTRITION



About **50%** of child deaths are related to malnutrition.



32% of children under 5 are stunted.

Every child is exclusively breastfed in the first 6 months of life and has a diet that promotes their growth and development, and access to treatment in case of malnutrition.

WASH



90% of households use water that is contaminated.



24% of the population defecate in the open.

Every child and family has access to clean water and a clean environment.

EDUCATION

PROTECTION

INVESTMENT

Challenges



1 in 3 children do not complete primary school.



In the north, only **53%** of primary school age children attend formal schooling.



3 in 5 children experience some form of violence.



Only **30%** of children under 5 are registered at birth.



The proportion of social sector spending is steadily **declining**.

Objectives

Every child has access to and completes quality education in a safe environment, gaining skills and knowledge for lifelong learning.

Every child grows and thrives in safety and security and has an identity.

Every child is covered by a comprehensive social protection system and benefits from social spending.



Country context



198 million
current estimated total
population



93 million
estimated to be
children (under 18)



1 million
children under 5
die every year

Situation in numbers



12 million
stunted children under 5



1.9 million
people living with HIV



More than
10 million
children out of school



23 million
girls married as children



155 million
people without access to
improved sanitation

Our guiding principles

Non-discrimination



All rights apply to all children without exception. It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.

This means that the Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis – children have a right to be actively protected against all forms of discrimination.

Best interests of the child



All actions concerning the child shall take full account of his or her best interests. The State shall provide the child with adequate care when parents, or others charged with that responsibility, fail to do so.

This means that the best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. This principle aims to amend the low priority often given to children's interests when there are strong and competing interests.

Survival and development



Every child has the inherent right to life, and the State has an obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.

Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily. Children have the right not just to life, but more specifically they have the right to the maximum available resources that are necessary to support them to achieve their maximum possible potential.

The child's opinion



The child has the right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child. When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account. This does not mean that children can now tell their parents what to do. The Convention encourages adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making.



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