

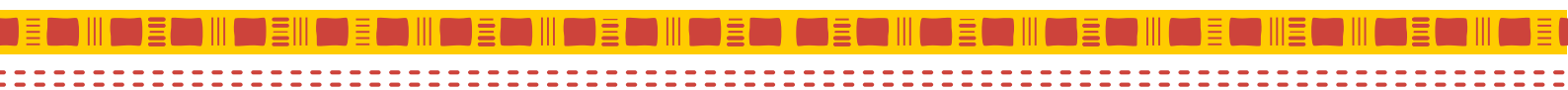


**UNICEF Nigeria**  
**Highlights 2018-2022**  
**KEY RESULTS FOR CHILDREN**



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# PREFACE

Over the last five years, UNICEF has worked to guarantee children's rights. We worked, especially for the children that are most left behind. Working at national, state and local levels, we were able to promote policy change and strengthen local capacity, through strong partnerships with the Federal and State Governments, local authorities, international humanitarian and development actors and a diverse group of key partners from different sectors of society. Our work has proven the impact and affordability of sustainable systems and policies in favour of children's survival, growth and development.

This programmatic cycle has achieved significant advances despite contextual changes such as the COVID-19 pandemic and rising humanitarian needs. For instance, we supported the development of a proven and cost-effective models that significantly raise children's learning outcomes in primary school which, when taken to scale, can help lift Nigeria out of the ongoing learning crisis.

Programme integration can ensure cost-effective service delivery that leaves no one behind. To this end, UNICEF worked with the Government to carefully link birth registration services with immunization, making the right to a legal identity more accessible to children across the country. A key feature across many social services has been the digitalization of management systems. This has shown great potential for increasing the efficiency, quality and outreach to underserved populations.

Yet more remains to be done. While progress is being made, the population of Nigeria continues to rise, placing pressure on existing basic services. The protracted conflict in the north-east required an intense and massive humanitarian response, where we attended women and children, while at the same time we responded to the growing hostilities in the northwest that devastate the lives of civilians. Together with partners, we developed an evidence-based "zero-dose strategy" for scaling up immunization coverage in the most underserved areas in the country. Learning gaps persist but, with an evidence-based, scalable model for primary enrolment and retention, Nigeria is primed to bring even more girls into school and to provide quality education for all.

We carved the path of this five-year country programme with our all our partners. Our successes, as well as lessons learned, are joint accomplishments made possible by the generous contributions of a wide range of supporters across the world.



**Cristian Munduate**  
Representative  
UNICEF Nigeria



## CHAPTER 1 CONTEXT

Newly released data show that the situation of children, adolescents and women in Nigeria has improved compared to previous years, but the pace of progress will have to be accelerated to reach Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets by 2030.<sup>1</sup>

With a population above 200 million, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, projected to grow to 375 million and become the third largest in the world by 2050.<sup>2</sup> About half the population is below 18 years of age, and every third Nigerian is an adolescent or young adult aged 10-24 years.

The economy is in recovery, with a gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 3.6 per cent in 2021 and 2.3 (year-on-year) in the third quarter of 2022.<sup>3</sup> Inflation reached 21 per cent in November 2022 (year-on-year)<sup>4</sup> and monetary poverty is high: almost half of all children in Nigeria (47 per cent) live below the national poverty line of 376.5 Nigerian Naira per day.<sup>5</sup> Among children under five years, 6 out of 10

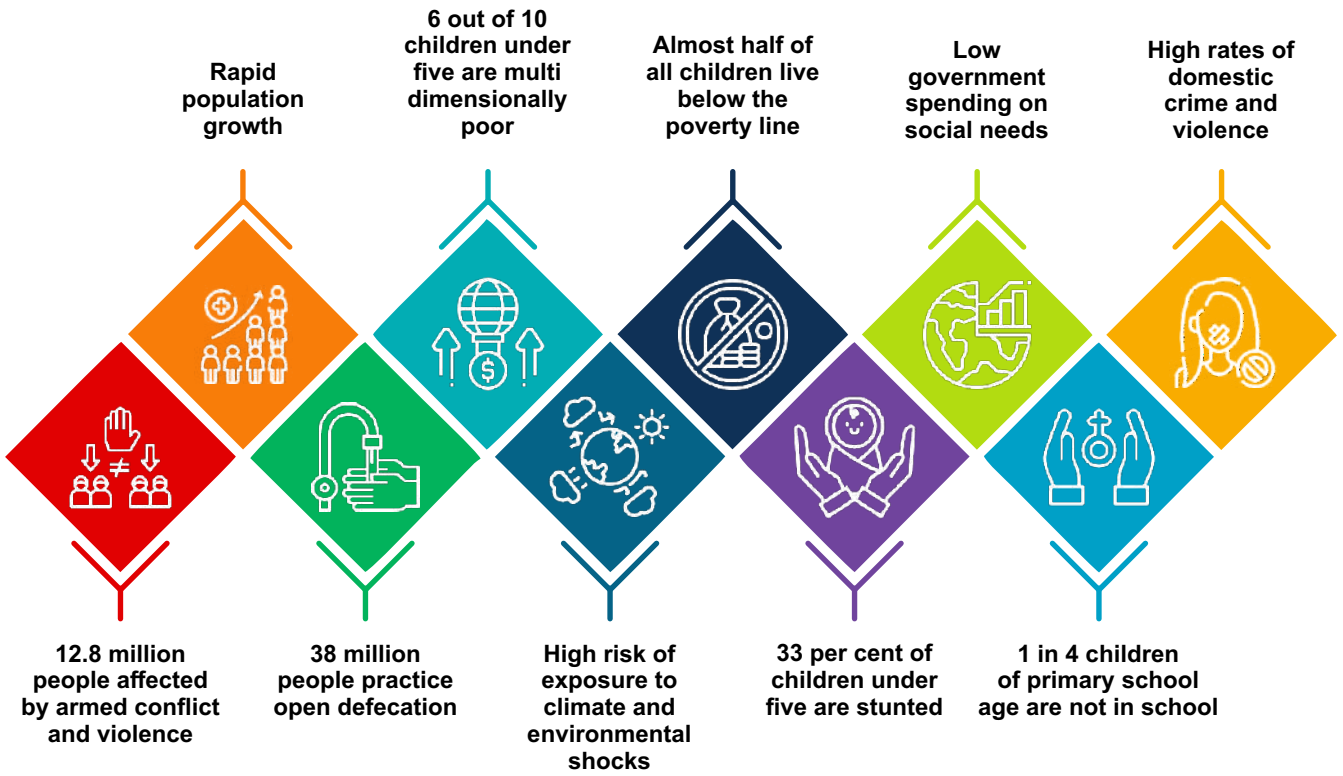
are multidimensionally poor.<sup>6</sup>

Despite these profound needs, public spending in general as a percentage of GDP is among the lowest in the world, despite increasing from 11 to 13 per cent from 2020 to 2021. It is particularly low in social sectors, where public spending per person is only US\$22 for education and \$15 for health, equivalent to 1.2 and 0.8 per cent of GDP, respectively.<sup>7</sup>

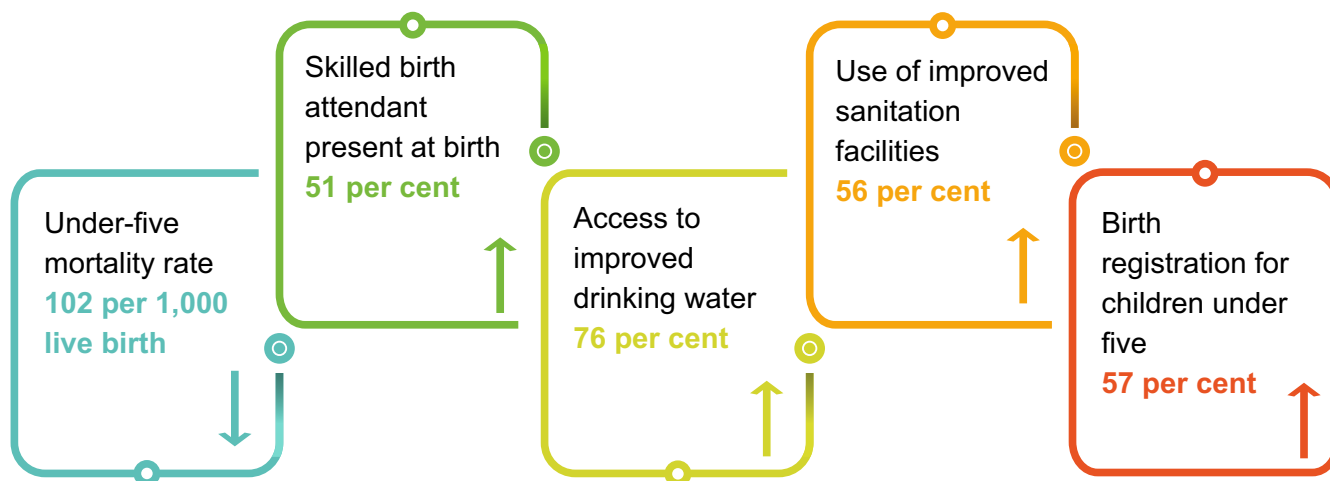
Insecurity continues to affect the well-being of children in Nigeria, with high levels of domestic crime coupled with regionally based violent attacks by non-state armed groups. The protracted conflict in the north-east and growing hostilities in the north-west have caused alarming levels of food insecurity and malnutrition. At the beginning of 2022, an estimated 12.8 million people, including 8.1 million children, were affected by conflict and violence in north-east and north-west Nigeria.<sup>8</sup>



# OUR CHALLENGES



# NATIONAL PROGRESS FOR CHILDREN IN NIGERIA



Nigeria's birth registration efforts are now showing progress, with 57 per cent of children under age five registered (about 19.6 million children), compared with only 47 per cent in 2016/17. National data reveal no gender disparity in these numbers; however, children are less likely to be registered if they live in rural areas or poor households. In addition, there is large variation across states, with birth registration rates ranging from 27 to 92 per cent.

The under-five mortality rate is 102 per 1,000 live births, a notable reduction from 120 in 2016/17 but still far from the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. One-third of these deaths (34 per 1,000 live births) occur within the first 28 days of life. While skilled birth attendance at the time of delivery increased from 43 per cent in 2016/17 to 51 per cent in 2021, access to this important life-saving intervention is still very limited.

According to the preliminary report of the 2022 National Food Consumption and Micronutrient Survey, 33 per cent of all children under five are stunted, compared with 37 per cent in 2018.<sup>9</sup> This, however, also differs by state with stunting being highest in the north-west (48 per cent) and the

north-east (35 per cent). Additionally, severe acute malnutrition affects 3 per cent of all children under five.<sup>10</sup>

Access to improved water and sanitation is progressing. About 76 per cent of the population now has access to an improved drinking water source, compared with 64 per cent in 2016/17. The use of improved sanitation facilities has also increased considerably, from 36 per cent in 2016/17 to 56 per cent in 2021. Many still do not have any of these facilities, and open defecation is practised by over 38 million people.

The out-of-school rate for primary-level education saw limited improvement, dropping from 27.2 per cent in 2016/17 to 25.6 per cent in 2021.<sup>11</sup> Again, vast differences exist between states: seven states have rates above 50 per cent and only 15 states are below 10 per cent. Nationally, 58 per cent of children from the poorest households are out of school. The majority of school children, both girls and boys, transition to lower secondary school (84 per cent), which is a significant improvement from 67 per cent in 2016/17. However, only 67 per cent of girls and 69 per cent of boys complete lower secondary education.

While many indicators of children's well-being do not display strong gender differences nationally, Nigeria ranked 123 on the Global Gender Gap Index in 2022.

## **NIGERIA HAS THE THIRD HIGHEST PREVALENCE OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN THE WORLD WITH A NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 15 PER CENT AMONG 15–49-YEAR-OLD GIRLS AND WOMEN**

Adolescent girls face harmful practices and gender-discriminatory social norms that limit their agency and bodily autonomy. Nigeria has the third highest prevalence of female genital mutilation in the world, with a national average of 15 per cent among girls and women aged 15-49 years. Adolescent girls lack modern employment skills and lag behind in internet access and use (21 per cent compared with 38 per cent for boys). Child marriage is declining: in 2021, 34 per cent of women aged 20-49 were married before the age of 18, compared with 44 per cent in 2016/17. However, given Nigeria's rapid population growth, UNICEF predicts that early marriage will affect 29 million girls and young women by 2050.

Children in Nigeria have an extremely high risk of exposure to climate and environmental shocks.<sup>13</sup> In 2022, the country experienced the worst flooding in a decade, affecting an estimated 1.9 million children in 34 out of the 36 states. In the north-east and north-west, the floods exacerbated pre-existing humanitarian needs.







## CHAPTER 2

# HOW UNICEF CONTRIBUTED TO THE LIVES OF CHILDREN: 2018-2022

For the past five years, the work of UNICEF to fulfil the rights of children in Nigeria was guided by the 2018-2022 country programme document signed with the Government of Federal Republic of Nigeria and derived from the UN Sustainable Development Partnership Framework, and the Humanitarian Response Plan for Nigeria. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus has been on post-COVID recovery, consolidating programming, harnessing private sector partnerships and applying lessons and innovations from the pandemic response. This was all carried out with a longer-term vision towards 2030. To accelerate SDG achievement, the United Nations agencies partnered as “One UN” to provide joint strategies for common results and robust support to the Federal Government of Nigeria. Together we build on each other’s efforts under the global Spotlight Initiative to prevent abuse and strengthen response systems for children and women.

Nigeria faces challenges in quality service delivery and human resource capacity across sectors, against a backdrop of environmental shocks, violence, the protracted conflict in the north-east and growing hostilities in the north-west. This operating environment of shifting emergency and development contexts requires a flexible approach. Fulfilling its dual mandate to uphold children’s rights in both humanitarian and development contexts, UNICEF Nigeria assumed a flexible and responsive approach to ensure consistent delivery of results for children.

What follows are the major contributions UNICEF made to achieve positive change for children in Nigeria.



# WITH PARTNERS WE CONTRIBUTED TO THE LIVES OF CHILDREN: 2018-2022



**57 PER CENT**  
Children vaccinated against five life-threatening diseases

**ZERO-DOSE STRATEGY**  
To reach underserved children in the 100 most deprived local government areas in 18 states

**58 million**  
Children vaccinated against polio



**90 million**  
COVID-19 vaccines procured, distributed, and administered together with Gavi, CEPI, WHO, Global Fund, and development partners

**23 million**  
Children received two doses of Vitamin A in 2022

**600,000**  
Children reached with life-saving nutrition treatment in 2022



**1.5 million**  
Girls entered school using a new evidence-based approach

**5 million**  
Children continued learning using radio, television and home-based materials

**7,500**  
Community learning hubs established in 16 states

**1.75 million**  
Children with improved literacy and numeracy skills



**1.3 million**  
Conflict-affected children accessed formal and non-formal education

**120,000**  
Users on the Nigeria Learning Passport

**15,000**  
Curriculum-aligned materials on the Nigeria Learning Passport

**34,000**  
Teachers trained to provide psychosocial support



**34**  
States adopted the Child's Rights Act

**116,573**  
child survivors of violence reached with child protective services in 2022

**226,263**  
children received child protective services



**3.6 million**  
Children aged under one year had their birth registered in 2022

**19,827**  
Children affected by sexual violence accessed child protection services



**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**  
KEY RESULTS

**20 million**  
People living in communities that are certified as open defecation free

**2.4 million**  
People reached with hygiene messages to encourage positive behaviour change

**2 million**  
People gained access to basic drinking water services

**2.4 million**  
People in humanitarian situations accessed life-saving water, sanitation and hygiene services and supplies

**91**  
Schools and 32 primary health care centres gained access to gender-sensitive and climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene services



**15**  
States developed social protection policies

**24.7 million**  
Children recorded in the National Social Register and eligible for benefits

**190,000**  
Households participated in cash transfer programmes in six northern states



**100 million**  
People reached through UNICEF social media platforms

**20 million**  
People engaged with UNICEF posts and tweets

**16,000**  
Mentions in the national news



## 2.1 HEALTH AND NUTRITION



UNICEF has worked to increase child survival by combating the lagging immunization rates among children in Nigeria. With the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, GAVI, the World Health Organization, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, we developed a “zero-dose” strategy to reach children in the 100 most deprived local government areas in 18 states, laying the foundation for targeted intervention. Strengthening the health care system, expanding access to underserved populations, and focusing on primary health care – including newborn, child, adolescent, maternal and reproductive health – were key to reaching children and their families.

Gains were made by strengthening the health system through focus on

- Primary health care
- Reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health
- Expanding access to underserved populations



Over the past five years, one major accomplishment has been the increase in Penta-3 vaccinations. Administered to children under one year to protect them from five life-threatening diseases, Penta-3 coverage rose from 33 per cent to 57 per cent, reaching 7.9 million children. Another major success was the 84 per cent decrease in cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 in 2022. Despite an outbreak of the disease, the number of children vaccinated against polio tripled to 58 million thanks to joint efforts with partners.

### FOCUS ON VACCINATION HAS BEEN A GAME CHANGER

**57 per cent of children receive Penta-3 vaccination during their first year of life, protecting them from five life-threatening diseases**

**Targeted interventions through the zero-dose strategy are set to reach underserved children in 18 states**

In keeping with UNICEF's global nutrition strategy, the emphasis has shifted from the treatment of malnutrition to its prevention. Vitamin A supplementation is one key preventive intervention that promotes child development and lowers the risk of cognitive delays and child mortality due to malnutrition. For the first time in five years, two rounds of Vitamin A supplementation were successfully completed in Nigeria in 2022: 35 million children received one dose and 23 million children received two doses of Vitamin A. This constitutes a massive increase from the 9.8 million reached with only one round of vitamin A supplementation in 2021. This achievement was made possible with the State and National Primary Health Care Development Agencies and by utilizing campaign



platforms, integrating Vitamin A supplementation with immunization services, and bringing together stakeholders at different levels – such as Nutrition International in 7 states, Helen Keller International in 4 states, and Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria with World Bank International Development Assistance in 13 states.

UNICEF stresses that integrating health, nutrition and child protection campaigns accelerates the achievement of results for children. To capitalize on this approach, routine immunization, COVID-19 vaccines, Vitamin A supplementation, and birth registration campaigns were conducted in 25 states reaching over 30 million children.

Expanding cold chain capacity also ensured the availability of vaccines at all levels. This translated to supporting the administration of over 90 million COVID-19 vaccines in 2022, resulting in 63 million Nigerians being fully vaccinated.

UNICEF is also vigorously promoting outreach and mobile strategies in nutrition to ensure greater

accessibility to nutrition services for populations that live far from the fixed sites to increase admissions. UNICEF supported the State Primary Health Care Development Agency in setting up 485 outreach sites in the Northeast and 162 in the Northwest states.

## **INTEGRATED CAMPAIGNS REACHED 30 MILLION CHILDREN IN 25 STATES WITH ROUTINE IMMUNIZATIONS, COVID-19 VACCINES, VITAMIN A AND BIRTH REGISTRATIONS**

UNICEF supported the National Primary Health Care Development Agency to scale up services

nationwide under the “one functional primary health care centre per ward” strategy. After expanding this approach to eight new states, UNICEF is now integrating this scheme in 14 states. Jointly with the Nigerian Governors' Forum, UNICEF launched the Primary Health Care Leadership Challenge Fund, providing an opportunity for all states to improve health care systems and health services and to compete against each other for performance awards.

UNICEF's emphasis on innovation was critical in leveraging COVID-19 prioritization and investment in oxygen systems to address the chronic oxygen gap for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health needs. The UNICEF Oxygen System Planning software was piloted and adopted nationwide to determine the placement of procured oxygen equipment and investment plans at the national level and in 14 states. In 2023, UNICEF will assess oxygen plant and power supply product innovations as part of the model to increase oxygen access.

UNICEF supported international procurement,

logistics, equitable distribution, and administration of over 90 million COVID-19 vaccines for Nigerians. This was done with Gavi,<sup>16</sup> CEPI,<sup>17</sup> WHO, Global Fund<sup>18</sup> and development partners, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.<sup>19</sup> UNICEF remains strategically positioned as lead of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement in Nigeria and co-lead of the Development Partners Group on Social Protection to substantively advance policy, programming and multi-sector legislative frameworks.

To address the crucial nutritional needs of infants and young children, UNICEF launched the “Zero Water” Campaign, which contributed to increasing exclusive breastfeeding rates from 24 per cent (2017) to 34 per cent (2021). In response to the low level of dietary diversity among children 6-23 months in Nigeria, a pilot initiative focused on improving complementary feeding through social and behavioural change was implemented. Ongoing multi-sectoral research on key child survival and nutrition practices in the first 1,000 days of life will continue to shape the national social behaviour change strategy.



## WINNING THE BATTLE AGAINST MALNUTRITION

→ **Vitamin A supplementation**

→ **35** million children received one dose

→ **23** million children received two doses

→ **Scaling the mid-upper arm circumference approach at the community level**

→ **96** per cent of children were cured of severe acute malnutrition

Due to ongoing conflict, UNICEF worked to ensure access to quality health care for children and families in humanitarian contexts in the north-east region of Nigeria, supporting more than 5 million medical consultations in 2022. Recently, that work was extended to the north-west to respond to the growing needs of displaced populations. For example, six states in the north-east and north-west were supported by UNICEF, the Government and partners to diagnose the risk of acute malnutrition: a simple measurement of the arm enabled families to diagnose malnutrition at home and follow-up with treatment at the community level.

To meet the increased need for ready-to-use therapeutic food, UNICEF enabled and expanded private sector partners to locally produce ready-to-use therapeutic food. As a result, the pipeline for the life-saving commodities was secured and lead times were shortened. In 2022, almost 600,000 children were reached with life-saving nutrition treatment, achieving a 96 per cent recovery rate for severe acute malnutrition.

Major contributions to evidence generation were made, including the release of the 2021 MICS findings; the preliminary report of the National Food Consumption and Micronutrients Survey; and a barrier analysis on the causes of low iron and folic acid consumption rates.

In addition to advocacy at state and federal levels,

UNICEF leveraged its role as Co-Chair of the Scaling up Nutrition Development Partners Group and as a member of the National Council of Nutrition to unlock financing, resulting in the government's release of \$1.8 million in 17 focal states.

To improve nutrition and food security, UNICEF, FAO and WFP continued to support the Government in implementing commitments from the 2021 Food Systems Summit and Nutrition for Growth Summit. To improve access and uptake of HIV services, UNICEF worked closely with WHO, UNFPA and UNAIDS through the Joint United Nations Team on AIDS for high-level advocacy and technical support.



**Lessons Learned: Game changer strategies for increasing immunization coverage were integrating delivery methods, mobilizing communities and strengthening the vaccine supply chain.**

**Lessons Learned: UNICEF is applying lessons learned to ensure a ready supply of raw materials and an uninterrupted flow of ready-to-use therapeutic food.**



## 2.2 EDUCATION



Ensuring children's access to education and achieving SDG 4 has resulted in a greater push to break down social barriers, improve learning quality, and to address issues around safety.

For example, UNICEF has dedicated significant resources to increase the number of children in school or with access to learning, and the quality of education and learning received.

### EDUCATION - STRENGTHENING THE BUILDING BLOCKS

- **Government commitment to allocate \$3.7 billion to education in the next four years**
- **National Policy on Gender in Basic Education localized in five states**
- **Functional education management information systems in 21 states and the FCT**
- **Crisis and gender-responsive costed plans for the education sector in 33 states and the FCT**
- **National frameworks to reduce out-of-school children and organize enrolment drives**
- **Participation in a key international learning assessment programme in 2024**

Through UNICEF's system strengthening efforts, the national Government adopted a framework to increase enrolment and localized the National Policy on Gender in Basic Education in five states. During the 2018-2022 country programme, thirty-three states and the Federal Capital Territory developed crisis and gender-responsive costed plans for the

education sector. In 2022 the Universal Basic Education Commission developed a national framework to reduce the number of out-of-school children.

Efforts were oriented to developing an evidence-based, scalable model for primary enrolment and retention, including community enrolment drives, unconditional cash transfers, peer education, foundational learning methods, and grants to improve school infrastructure. A rigorous and independent evaluation showed that this approach was instrumental in bringing 1.5 million girls into school. Social norms on girls' education shifted, halving the rates of early marriage and childbearing in six north-west states.

Providing alternative and distance learning opportunities has mitigated learning loss, supported school re-entry, and increased the resilience of children and the education system. During the course of the country programme, five million children continued learning via home-based materials, radio and television programming; 7,500 community learning hubs were established with civil society organizations in 16 states; and 14 states launched the Nigeria Learning Passport, a digital learning platform with 15,000 curriculum-aligned materials and over 120,000 users.

In 2022, UNICEF supported 1.3 million conflict-affected children (659,000 girls) to access formal and non-formal education in the three north-east states affected by conflict. During the 2018-2022 programme cycle, 688 classrooms and 408 temporary learning spaces were constructed; 1.75 million children were supported with literacy and numeracy interventions; and over 34,000 teachers received training on psychosocial support, reaching 2.7 million conflict-affected children. In addition, high-level advocacy contributed to the adoption of the National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools. The Ministry of Education

has established the Minimum Standards for Safe Schools, which is being implemented in 11 states.

Nigeria is experiencing a severe learning crisis, with 3 out of 4 children in basic education unable to read with comprehension or solve simple math problems. In 2021, only 23 per cent of children in grades 2-3 and 5-6 achieved minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics.

To tackle these learning gaps, UNICEF has developed access to play-based, pre-primary education and a cost-effective (\$8 per child) and scalable model to achieve foundational literacy and numeracy for learners in grades 1-6. Over the past five years, UNICEF trained 155,069 teachers on formative assessments; play-based, inclusive pedagogy; foundational literacy and numeracy;

leadership; school records keeping; and psychosocial support. An impact assessment of recent programme interventions showed that the percentage of Grade 2 girls achieving basic literacy in the Hausa language increased from 2.8 per cent in 2014-2015 to 22.8 per cent in 2022. This high-impact approach has now been expanded to 13 states.

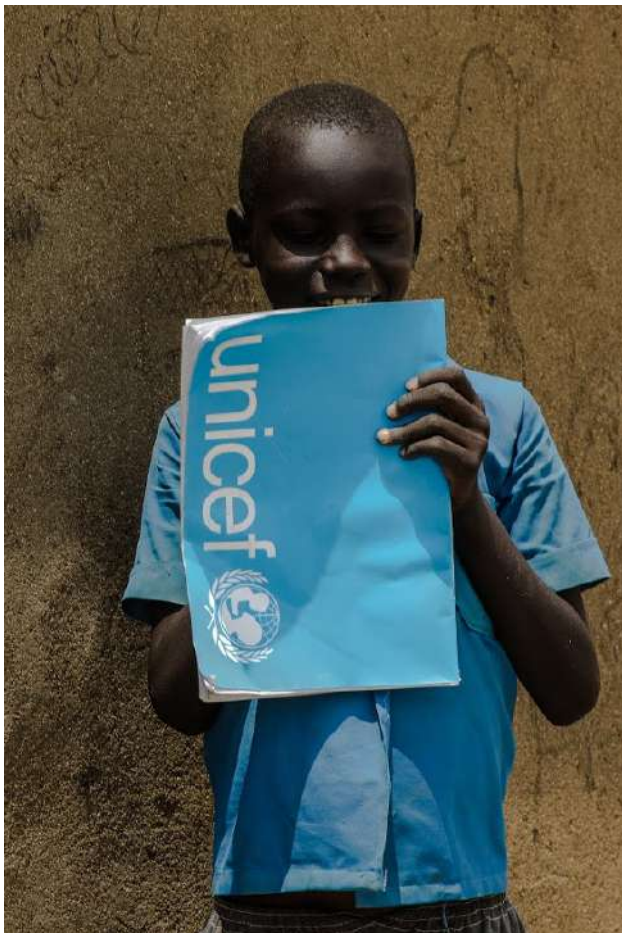
UNICEF and state partners have also invested in integrating foundational literacy and numeracy into Qur'anic schools. By training school facilitators, rehabilitating infrastructure through small grants and providing instructional materials to learners, foundational literacy improved from 4 per cent in 2017 to 29 per cent in 2022, outperforming children in Nigerian public schools.





Two key digital interventions have strengthened state education systems. An education management information system is present and functioning in 21 states and the Federal Capital Territory. In addition, an Individualized Learner Unit Record Information Tracking System, which tracks admission, attendance, movement and progress, was piloted across 18 local government areas in four north-west states in 2022.

UNICEF is utilizing partnerships to harness innovation and deliver results with and for adolescents and young people. With over 65 million young people aged 10–24 years, Nigeria has one of the youngest populations in the world and represents an extraordinary opportunity for development and growth. Through UNICEF Generation Unlimited Nigeria, 12 private sector partners, including Jobberman, Google and Facebook, have provided upskilling and youth engagement opportunities on the Youth Agency Marketplace (YOMA) digital platform.



UNICEF U-Report polls provide Nigerian youth opportunities to share their opinions, needs and aspirations. It also directs young people to the skills and engagement opportunities on the YOMA platform and youth-friendly HIV prevention services. In 2022, 1.1 million new U-Reporters were registered, bringing the total number of U-Reporters to just over 5 million, 38 per cent of whom are female.

Collaboration with private sector partners such as IHS and Airtel increased digital access by expanding broadband internet coverage to over 400 underserved communities and connecting 207 schools to the internet. This also resulted in the white-listing of the Nigerian Learning Passport and YOMA. With this improved access, the 122,000 Nigerian Learning Passport users and 115,000 YOMA users are expected to expand significantly.

Connectivity and digital access are enablers of the new adolescent girls' strategy. As such, initiatives such as “Building Back Equal” are undertaken in the north-west to address the gender gap for digital and financial inclusion, advance education and child protection strategies, and promote girls' agency and leadership.



**Lesson Learned: Success of the cost-effective (\$8 per child) and scalable model to achieve foundational literacy and numeracy for learners in grades 1-6.**

**Lesson Learned: Providing alternative and distance learning opportunities has mitigated learning loss, supported school re-entry and increased the resilience of children and the education system.**

## 2.3 CHILD PROTECTION



In 2022, we witnessed exceptional achievements in states adopting and localizing the 2003 Child's Rights Act. This law explicitly prohibits all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation against children, and was recently enacted in four northern states, some of which face humanitarian and security challenges. In total, 34 states have localized the Child's Rights Act, a significant accomplishment given that only 19 states had passed it at the beginning of the country programme in 2018.

Two important milestones were reached in advancing children's rights in humanitarian situations: the signing of the Handover Protocol between the Federal Government of Nigeria, the United Nations System in Nigeria and UNICEF Nigeria to prevent and reduce the detention of children encountered by military and security forces during armed conflict, and the launch of the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict.<sup>23</sup>

Over the course of the five-year country programme, 226,263 children (44 per cent girls) received child

protection services, amounting to 97 per cent of the target. The number of child survivors of violence that have received child protection services nearly doubled in 2022, totaling 116,573 children<sup>24</sup> (41 per cent girls), including children in emergency situations. In addition, over one million children in street situations (46 per cent girls) were traced across 13,172 Almajiri<sup>25</sup> learning centres and identified as needing child protection services.

Through the global Spotlight Initiative, which is a joint effort between the Government and UN agencies with the support of the EU, UNICEF strengthened state coordination and connections with referral centres and harmonized the registration process to report, process and support cases of violence against children. The development, use and expansion of an online information management system have been critical to this achievement. The launch of "The Movement for Good"<sup>26</sup> to end female genital mutilation positioned Nigeria as one of the few countries globally to have



initiated this approach. During the 2018-2022 country programme, UNICEF garnered over 300,000 online pledges to “say no” to female genital mutilation, enrolled youth-led organizations as champions of the cause, and built on previous achievements within the United Nations Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation, jointly led by UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund, to combat this harmful practice.

More than 3.6 million children (1.6 million girls), or 50 per cent of children under one year of age, had their birth registered in 2022. While this achievement falls short of the ambitious Key Results for Children target of 84 per cent, it represents an increase over previous years. Out of 19.9 million birth registrations, UNICEF contributed directly to registering about 7.4 million children under the age of five. To promote and expand birth registration, UNICEF is piloting an electronic civil registration and vital statistics innovation that meets international standards and can handle Nigeria's large population

**The 2003 Child Rights Act prohibits all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation against children. By 2022, 34 states have localized this law, including states facing humanitarian and security challenges**

**In 2022, more than 3.6 million children (1.6 million girls) under one year of age had their birth registered**



## 2.4 WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE



Safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are fundamental to improving people's living standards.<sup>23</sup> Yet vulnerable populations have lower access to improved WASH services and associated behaviours. Improved WASH is therefore central to reducing poverty, promoting equality, supporting socioeconomic development and ensuring lives are lived with dignity.

UNICEF has championed strategic interventions to promote sanitation, including innovative marketing approaches for community-led total sanitation, construction of cost-effective toilets, and engaging youth in social and behavioural change activities. During the programme cycle, about 2.4 million people were reached with important messages to encourage and sustain improved hygiene practices, and over 2 million people (900,000 females) gained

access to basic drinking water services.<sup>24</sup> An additional 186,423 people accessed safely managed water services.<sup>25</sup> Both results contributed to ongoing progress at the national level, where access to basic drinking water increased by four percentage points from 2018 to 2022. Nationwide, access to basic sanitation increased from 41 per cent in 2017 to 43 per cent in 2022. In addition, UNICEF also provided access to gender-sensitive and climate-resilient WASH services in 91 schools and 32 health care facilities using standard models that can be scaled up by the Government.

The Village Level Operation and Maintenance Strategy was launched to boost rural water supply and has now been established in 12 states. This strategy has been critical to improving the functionality and sustainability of water services,



building the capacity of community members, and ensuring community involvement and maintenance of water facilities. During the 2018-2022 country programme, UNICEF also instituted the WASH National Outcome Routine Mapping, a mechanism for sector learning, monitoring and evaluation. Data collected through this mechanism identifies gaps in the WASH Sector and provides evidence to advocate strategically for increased government and private sector investments. The WASH Information Management System has been expanded to 12 additional states.

The contribution of UNICEF to the open defecation free (ODF) drive in Nigeria has led to substantive results. In 2022, Jigawa was the first state to be declared ODF; contributing to an additional 7.8 million people living in newly certified ODF communities, exceeding the Key Results for Children target of 5 million. During the 2018–2022 programme cycle, UNICEF support led to an estimated 20 million people living in ODF-certified communities.



In two states, UNICEF pioneered innovative financing for the construction of improved toilets by the private sector. This resulted in the construction of an estimated 95,113 household toilets. In addition, over \$1.2 million was mobilized from revolving loans, sanitation pool funds, and household self-financing. Lessons from this innovative financing approach are being assessed for replication in WASH and other sectors.

Evidence-based advocacy has successfully raised the level of government funding for the WASH sector in several states. UNICEF has strengthened the Government's capacity for WASH response at the federal and state levels, especially for emergency coordination and cholera emergency preparedness. Between 2018 and 2022, UNICEF supported the Government in responding to cholera outbreaks, flooding disasters, and conflict-induced humanitarian situations in 23 states, reaching over 2.4 million people with life-saving WASH services and supplies. UNICEF also successfully supported the development of the Nigeria Roadmap to Hand Hygiene for All and the organization of the first World Toilet Summit in Nigeria.



**Lessons Learned: Innovative financing, such as revolving loans, sanitation pool funds and household self-financing had positive results and are being assessed for replication.**



## 2.5 SOCIAL POLICY



Through joint efforts with our partners, Nigeria now has monetary and multidimensional child poverty measurements, both previously unavailable. UNICEF supported the development of a trend analysis of Nigeria's public expenditure, revealing an increase in government allocation for social sectors since 2021 in health (from 3.8 to 5.8 per cent of the total budget) and education (from 7 to 8.8 per cent).

A new budget code to track child-related public expenditure for children ages 0-18 years is being piloted in Lagos State. This innovative approach will identify gaps and provide evidence on where children directly benefit from public spending. The results derived from this budget code have the potential to inform government allocations. This budget code is anticipated to expand nationally, and other UNICEF country offices have already

expressed interest in learning about this tool.

The National Social Protection Policy was revised and validated and now includes a costed implementation strategy.<sup>27</sup> We supported 15 states in developing their social protection policies and 24.7 million children (an increase of 10 percentage points from 2021) are now covered in the National Social Register. Over 190,000 households have benefited from UNICEF-led cash transfer programmes in six northern states.

In 2022, the SDG Joint Fund Programme on Social Protection was successfully completed with UNICEF as the lead agency, with the participation of the UN World Food Programme, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme. The programme is being considered for scale-up, taking into account lessons learned. UNICEF actively participated in the Humanitarian Coordination Team in the north-east and north-west ensuring a concerted humanitarian response, where we have a coordinating role in multiple sectors.



**Lessons Learned: Using a new budget code to track child-related public expenditure for children ages 0-18 can identify gaps and provide evidence on where children benefit from public spending.**



## LOOKING AHEAD

The vision of the 2023-2027 country programme is that every child in Nigeria, especially the most excluded, survives, thrives, learns, is protected, and develops to her or his full potential, free from poverty, in a safe and sustainable climate and environment. As Nigeria faces pivotal issues such as rapid population growth, rising food insecurity, high levels of child poverty and climate change, UNICEF will continue positioning itself to deliver change for children and adolescents. This requires strengthening health, nutrition, WASH, education, child protection and social protection services at the national and subnational levels. Leveraging the lessons we have learned over the past five years, UNICEF aims to ensure programmatic integration across sectors, geographical convergence, and incorporation of innovation and digital transformation to accelerate the achievement of programmatic results at scale. By focusing on the most underserved areas, UNICEF will work tirelessly to ensure children's rights are realized across Nigeria.

We never give up.



# BY THE END OF 2027, WE AIM TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING

## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- Roll out the One Primary Health Care Centre Per Ward strategy to achieve universal health coverage
- Strengthen routine immunization coverage across the country and continue polio eradication
- Support the National Plan of Action on Food and Nutrition to reduce stunting and wasting
- Focus on the first 1,000 days of life, including support to pregnancy and nutritional programmes



## EDUCATION

- Increase the quality of learning through teacher professional development, curriculum reforms, mother tongue instruction, management information systems, and the active engagement of parents and communities
- Scale up flexible and alternative learning pathways to include children with disabilities, married and pregnant girls and children in integrated Qur'anic schools
- Boost vocational, employable and transferable skills for youth



## CHILD PROTECTION

- Scale up birth registration for children under five through a digital birth registration system that is connected with the health system
- Support national social norms change to end violence against children, including harmful practices
- Ensure children in humanitarian situations have access to quality preventive and responsive services



## WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

- Strengthen community approaches to total sanitation and efforts to eradicate the practice of open defecation
- Ensure the sustainability of water services in rural communities
- Develop and implement policies and equitable and gender-responsive access to water, sanitation and hygiene services



## SOCIAL POLICY

- Support social transfers (cash and in-kind support) to facilitate access to health services and girls' education
- Conduct the MICS PLUS survey and provide real-time data to inform policy, programmatic and management decision





# THANK YOU

*We thank all our partners for their unwavering support and direct contributions towards the development and humanitarian response efforts aimed at creating a positive and lasting impact on the lives of children in Nigeria.*

## FEDERAL MINISTRIES

Federal Ministry of Education  
Federal Ministry of Environment  
Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning  
Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning (Budget and National Planning Arm)  
Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Federal Ministry of Health  
Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development  
Federal Ministry of Information and Culture  
Federal Ministry of Water Resources  
Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

## STATES

Abia State  
Adamawa State  
Akwa Ibom State  
Anambra State  
Bauchi State  
Bayelsa State  
Benue State  
Borno State  
Cross River State  
Delta State  
Ebonyi State  
Edo State  
Ekiti State  
Enugu State  
Gombe State  
Imo State

Jigawa State  
Kaduna State  
Kano State  
Katsina State  
Kebbi State  
Kogi State  
Kwara State  
Lagos State  
Nasarawa State  
Niger State  
Ogun State  
Ondo State  
Osun State  
Oyo State  
Plateau State  
Rivers State  
Sokoto State  
Taraba State  
Yobe State  
Zamfara State

## PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS

Airtel  
Belgium  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Canada  
Children's Investment Fund Foundation  
China  
Cisco  
Clinton Health Access Initiative  
Dangote Foundation  
Education Above All Foundation



Education Cannot Wait Fund  
Eleanor Crook Foundation  
Eleva Foundation  
End Violence Against Children Fund  
European Union  
France  
Gavi The Vaccine Alliance  
Germany  
Global Partnership for Education  
IHS Towers  
Int'l Organization for Migration  
Italy  
Japan  
Jobberman  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
Kuwait  
LIXIL  
Luxembourg  
MANA Nutrition  
Mexico  
Microsoft  
MTN  
National Philanthropic Trust  
Norway  
Novacyt  
Nutrition International  
Prudential Foundation  
PWC  
Republic of Korea  
Rotary International  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
The Netherlands  
The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International  
Tony Elumelu Foundation  
UN Foundation  
UN Women  
UNAIDS  
UNDP  
UNFPA  
Unilever  
United Arab Emirates  
United Kingdom  
United Nations Multi Partner Trust  
United States  
UNOCHA  
VIIV Healthcare  
WHO  
World Bank  
UNICEF National Committees

**Huge thanks to all our international and national non-government organization partners for their continued support.**



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> All data in this section are from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2021 and MICS 2016/17) unless otherwise noted. Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2021, Survey Findings Report, NBS and UNICEF, Abuja, Nigeria, August 2022.

Source: National Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Children's Fund, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016-17: National Survey Finding Report, NBS and UNICEF, Abuja, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> UNDESA, World Population Prospects, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, Nigerian Gross Domestic Product Report Q3 2022.

<sup>4</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, Consumer Price Index November 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning and UNICEF, Monetary Child Poverty in Nigeria, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Federal Republic of Nigeria, Multi-Dimensional Child Poverty in Nigeria: Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA), 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Nigeria Public Finance Review, November 2022.

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF, Nigeria Humanitarian Action for Children, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> National Population Commission (NPC) [Nigeria] and ICF, Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018, NPC and ICF, Abuja, and Rockville, Maryland, 2019. Note: There is no recent comparable data from the National Food Consumption and Micronutrient Survey.

<sup>10</sup> National Food Consumption and Micronutrient Survey, 2022. See also: Federal Ministry of Health, Health Sector Recommendations for Nutrition Indicators Collected Nationally in Nigeria, Abuja, August 2022.

<sup>11</sup> MICS 2021.

<sup>12</sup> World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF, Children's Climate Risk Index, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> The Humanitarian Response Plan for Nigeria is developed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

<sup>15</sup> Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type b (i.e., Hib, which causes against meningitis).

<sup>16</sup> Gavi the Vaccine Alliance is a public-private global health partnership with the goal of increasing immunization access to the world's most vulnerable children.

<sup>17</sup> CEPI is an innovative global partnership working to accelerate the development of vaccines against epidemic and pandemic threats.

<sup>18</sup> The Global Fund is a worldwide movement that brings together all stakeholders involved in the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria for effective investment.

<sup>19</sup> The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is a private American foundation working to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, the Foundation focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty.

<sup>20</sup> Costed sector plans are roadmaps that outline how to get from a strategy to implementation over the lifecycle of a programme. It also outlines interactions with other programmes, cross-sectoral cooperation and holistic policy approaches.

<sup>21</sup> MICS 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Formative assessment is a way to monitor, identify and address gaps in students' knowledge, skills development, strengths and needs. Formative assessment enables teachers to gather this information and adjust their instruction to help move each student towards their learning goals.

<sup>23</sup> The Group of Friends is an informal platform whereby the local diplomatic community shares information on the impact of conflict on children, raises awareness, supports fundraising initiatives, and undertakes joint strategic advocacy actions to prevent and end grave violations against children in Nigeria.

<sup>24</sup> The Key Results for Children target is 120,000.

<sup>25</sup> Under the Almajiri system, parents send their children, mostly boys aged 4-12, to distant locations to acquire Qur'anic education. Many are rural and poor families who can't afford formal schooling and benefit from the learning that is provided free of charge. However, Almajiri children are often forced to beg in the streets to fund their education.

<sup>26</sup> Aiming to reach 5 million people from every corner of society, "The Movement for Good" will mobilize affected communities for concrete action at the household level to protect girls at risk of FGM.

<sup>27</sup> Improvements include better physical health, protection of the environment, better educational outcomes, time savings and convenience, and equal treatment for females and males.

<sup>28</sup> 'Basic drinking water' is defined as being less than 30 minutes away and is piped, packaged or delivered or comes from boreholes, tubewells, protected dug wells or springs. Source: World Bank Metadata Glossary.

<sup>29</sup> 'Safely managed water' is defined as being from an improved water source accessible on the premise (accessibility), available when needed (availability) and free from contamination (quality). Source: World Bank Metadata Glossary.

<sup>30</sup> WHO and UNICEF define 'basic sanitation' as including flush/pour flush to piped sewer systems, septic tanks or pit latrines; ventilated improved pit latrines, composting toilets or pit latrines with slab. 'Improved sanitation' is not shared with another household. Source: World Bank Metadata Glossary.

<sup>31</sup> Costed implementation plans can help determine requirements for human, financial and technical resources, as well as for commodities and equipment. It is one component of the costed sector plan.





