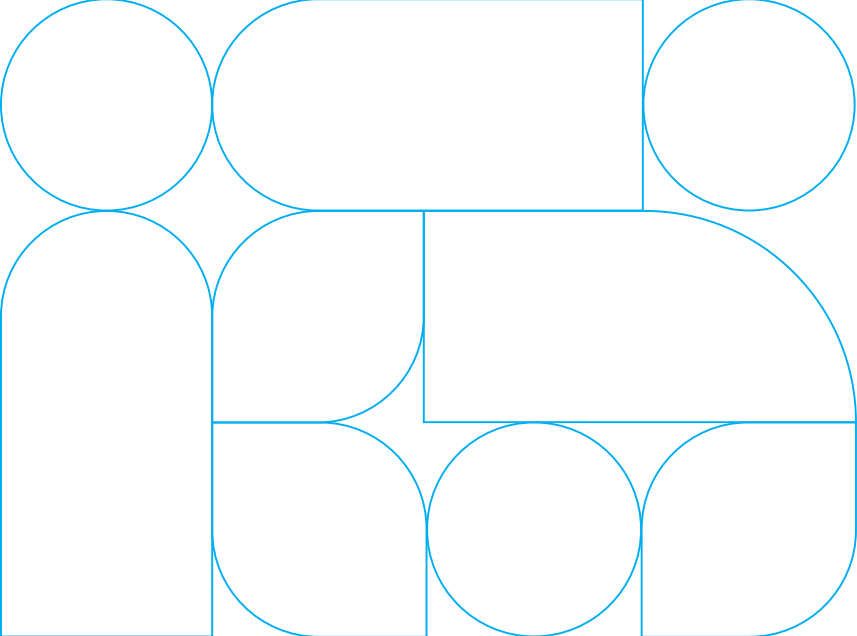




UNICEF in Oman

2022 - 2025

Achievements and Key Results
Moving Forward to 2026 – 2030





UNICEF *in* Oman 2022 - 2025

Achievements and Key Results
Moving Forward to 2026 – 2030

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Acronyms

BFHI – Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative

BLC – Business Leadership Circle

CFA – Children First Association

CLAC – Climate Landscape Analysis for Children

CPD – Country Programme Document

CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child

ECD – Early Childhood Development

EA – Environment Authority

EMTCT – Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission

GenU – Generation Unlimited

GCC – Gulf Cooperation Council

IECD – Integrated Early Childhood Development

ILO – International Labour Organization

MCSY – Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth

MENA – Middle East and North Africa

MENARO – Middle East and North Africa Regional Office

MHPSS – Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

MoE – Ministry of Education

MoF – Ministry of Finance

MoH – Ministry of Health

MoI – Ministry of Information

MoSD – Ministry of Social Development

NCSI – National Center for Statistics and Information

PIRLS – Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

SBC – Social and Behaviour Change

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SPF – Social Protection Fund

ToT – Training of Trainers

U Report – UNICEF's digital platform for youth engagement

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

WHO – World Health Organization



Foreword

An Enduring Partnership for Children in the Sultanate of Oman

Since 1971, the Government of Oman and UNICEF have collaborated closely to advance the rights of children, sparked by the foundational vision of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, who recognized early on that a nation's true prosperity begins with its children. While initial programming in those early decades focused on a traditional child survival and development agenda, the Sultanate's graduation to a "high-income" economy in 2007 prompted a strategic evolution in our shared mission. UNICEF adjusted its approach to undertake targeted, upstream interventions designed to address the nation's remaining priorities, focusing specifically on the quality and financing of services, the strengthening of institutional capacity, and the transformation of behavioural and social norms. This journey has seen the partnership's scope expand gradually and profoundly, moving from establishing evidence to the full-scale operationalization of high-impact systems that safeguard the rights of every child. Furthermore, Oman is championing children's rights at the global level through its leadership role in UNICEF's Executive Board.

Under the guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Sultanate has translated these plans into historic legislative policy changes that serve as the bedrock of our current results. The 2023 Social Protection Law and the School Education Law have

successfully introduced notable measures, such as providing universal child benefits and enshrining the right of every child to access pre-primary education. This momentum was further bolstered by the 2023 Labour Law, which enhanced working conditions for families through expanded maternity and paternity leave, as well as the issuance of the 2025 Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Oman, further enhancing the inclusion of the Sultanate's most vulnerable group in society.

Alongside the Government of Oman and our civil society and private sector partners, UNICEF is dedicated to a brighter, more resilient future for Oman's children. Our roadmap is clear: we are aligning Oman Vision 2040 with international benchmarks, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Together, we are building a system that protects the rights and potential of every child in the Sultanate.

Sumaira A Chowdhury
Representative to the Sultanate of Oman
UNICEF



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Executive Summary



This report presents results achieved under the Government of Oman-UNICEF Country Programme across the 2022–2025 period, with particular emphasis on progress made in 2025, the final year of implementation. It highlights system-level outcomes, policy advancements and institutional strengthening that have contributed to sustainable and equitable results for children and adolescents. The Country Programme contributed to Oman's transition from post-pandemic recovery to accelerated, development-oriented progress, aligned with Vision 2040, the Sustainable Development Goals and international child rights commitments.

During this period, **Oman adopted and operationalized major legislative frameworks that enhanced the national environment for children**, including the Social Protection Law, the School Education Law, amendments to the Labour Law and the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Collectively, these advancements enabled the establishment of a rights-based social protection system; the introduction of universal child cash benefits; the legal guarantee of every child's right to enroll in pre-primary education; expanded maternity leave and the introduction of paternity leave; and strengthened legal protection and inclusion for persons with disabilities.

UNICEF Oman contributed to the development and use of evidence to inform policy-makers' decision making, with a particular emphasis on child focused policies and services. Progress was made in enhancing data systems and knowledge products across sectors,

contributing to a more robust national evidence base to guide planning, monitor progress and support effective implementation in various areas, including education, health and climate change, among others.

Moreover, systems delivering services for children were strengthened across sectors, including early childhood development, education, health, child protection and social protection. Integrated and coordinated approaches improved the coherence of service delivery, supporting more inclusive and responsive services for young children, adolescents and vulnerable groups, including children with disabilities.

Furthermore, positive social norms, child participation and partnerships strengthened the enabling environment for children. UNICEF supported national efforts to promote positive parenting, while strategic engagement elevated children's voices in national dialogue. Partnerships across government entities, the United Nations system, civil society, academia and the private sector expanded reach, strengthened collective accountability, and positioned Oman as a platform for regional learning and exchange on child-focused social development.

The results achieved during 2022–2025 demonstrate the impact of sustained government leadership and system strengthening in advancing children's rights in Oman. Building on these achievements, the 2026–2030 Country Programme will adopt a life cycle approach, ensuring that every child in Oman survives, thrives and reaches their full potential.

I. Programme Context

Between 2021 and 2025, the Sultanate of Oman made notable progress across multiple socio-economic dimensions, reflecting the country's longstanding commitment to investing in human capital development, strengthening social protection and advancing economic resilience. While 2021 marked the beginning of recovery from the pandemic, the years leading to 2025 show a clear acceleration in improvements, enhanced institutional performance and expanded opportunities for children, adolescents and families. This is demonstrated in Oman's progress vis-a-vis the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), achieving a national progress score of 82.2 per cent in the 2024 Voluntary National Review¹.

Oman achieved a national progress score of **82.2%** in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in **2024**



Youth participating at a roundtable discussion ©UNICEF Oman/Trago/2022

¹ Ministry of Economy, Voluntary National Review, 2024

Age Distribution

31%

Children and youth under 19

31%

Population Growth

5.4M ↑+20%

From 4.5M in 2021 to 5.1M in 2024

Gender Ratio

2024

101

Male per 100 Females

Omani

308

Male per 100 Females

Expatriates

2021

102

Male per 100 Females

Omani

360

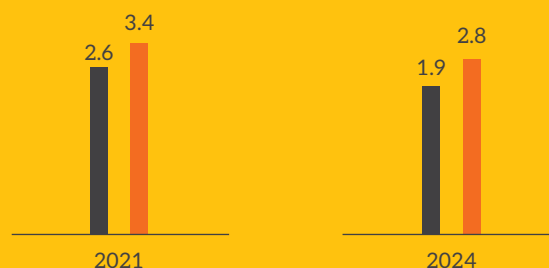
Male per 100 Females

Expatriates

Fertility Rate Trends

1.9 ↓-27%

National Fertility Rate in 2024
(from 2.6 in 2021)



■ National Fertility Rate
■ Omani women Fertility Rate

Disability Statistics

69.2K ↑+62%

Persons with disability (from 42.6K in 2021)

1.5%

Omani Children

Society remained distinctly youthful, with children and youth under 19 constituting 31 per cent of the population². The population increased from 4.5 million in 2021 to 5.4 million by early 2026, driven both by natural growth and expatriate presence, which represented 43.3 per cent of the total population. Gender balance among Omanis remained stable, shifting only slightly from 102 males per 100 females in 2021 to 101 in 2024 while among expatriates, the ratio declined from 360 to 308 males per 100 females, reflecting the changing structure of Oman's labour market³. Changes in fertility patterns also illustrate the country's demographic transition. In 2021, Oman's total fertility rate stood at 2.6, with Omani women registering a higher rate of 3.4. By

2024, the national rate declined to 1.9 and the rate for Omani women to 2.8, signaling a move toward smaller household sizes amid shifting socioeconomic dynamics⁴. Oman recorded 42.6 thousand persons with disabilities in 2021, rising to 69.2 thousand by 2025⁵ (including 1.5 per cent of Omani children⁶), reflecting perhaps the reduced stigma driven by Social Protection reforms.

2 E-census: <https://www.ecensus.gov.om/web/#/ar/population>, accessed 24 March 2026
3 National Center for Statistics and Information (NCSI), Statistical Yearbook, 2022 and 2025
4 NCSI, op.cit
5 E-census, op.cit.
6 NCSI, Children with Disabilities Statistics, 2025

GDP per capita increased from USD 19,403 in 2021 to USD 20,285 by 2024⁷, reflecting improved productivity and stronger fiscal consolidation measures. In 2021, GDP growth was recorded at 2.58 per cent, supported by the initial rebound from pandemic related disruption and renewed confidence in the economy. By 2024, growth stood at 1.63 per cent, showing a more moderate but steady trajectory as the country continued reforms and diversification efforts. Together, these trends show that over the four year period Oman moved from recovery to stabilization, positioning itself for longer term economic transformation.

GDP per capita increased from **USD 19,403** in 2021 to **USD 20,285** by 2024

Health indicators show some of the most striking improvements. In 2021, health outcomes still reflected pandemic related stresses, with maternal mortality at 45.7 per 100,000 live births and under five mortality at 10.3 per 1,000 live births. By 2024, maternal mortality had dropped sharply to 15.8 per 100,000 live births and under five mortality decreased to 9.9, indicating major improvements in maternal care and emergency obstetric services. Infant mortality remained relatively stable, with only a minor fluctuation from 8.1 to 8.0 deaths per 1,000 live births⁸. However, some challenges remain in terms of nutrition, with stunting at 11.4 per cent, wasting at 9.3 per cent and obesity at 4.2 per cent, based on the Oman National Nutrition Survey (2017).

By 2024, maternal mortality had dropped sharply to **15.8** per 100,000 live births and under five mortality decreased to **9.9**

Education also witnessed marked expansion in the area of early childhood education: the gross enrollment ratio increased from 62.4 per cent in 2021 to 75.1 per cent in 2023⁹, demonstrating strong national efforts to expand early learning opportunities.

Oman sustained universal primary school enrollment with full gender parity. School environments remained stable, with average class sizes of 26 and a teacher to student ratio of 1:13¹⁰. Learning outcomes, as reflected in Oman's PIRLS 2021 average score of 429 points¹¹, indicate that foundational literacy remains an area requiring targeted intervention.

Gross education enrollment ratio increased from **62.4%** in 2021 to **75.1%** in 2023

Increasing awareness on child protection resulted in reported cases rising, a crucial first step in addressing child rights violations. In 2025, Child Protection Committees handled 4,199 cases, more than double the 1,650 cases recorded in 2021. Similarly, the national child protection 1100 hotline received 2,072 calls in 2025, representing more than a threefold increase compared to 610 calls in 2021. Across both reporting mechanisms, neglect accounted for more than half of all cases, followed by physical abuse, psychological abuse and sexual abuse¹². A recent Public Prosecution Annual Conference announced that over 3,610 cases involving abuse and exploitation of minors, including 1,246 cases of sexual harassment, 1,212 cases of physical or psychological abuse, 846 cases of exposing minors to delinquency, and 106 cases of child rape, among other offences, had been registered¹³. Taken together, these figures confirm Oman's approach in terms of continued investment in coordinated prevention and response mechanisms, alongside strengthened case management, social services and family based support to address underlying risk factors and reduce children's exposure to harm.

In 2025, Child Protection Committees handled **4,199** cases, **more than double** the 1,650 cases recorded in 2021.

7 World Development Indicators (WDI) portal, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>, accessed 24 March 2026

8 Ministry of Health, Annual Health Report, 2024

9 NCSI, <https://data.gov.om/wmvjdr/pre-school-and-school-education>, accessed 24 March 2026

10 NCSI, Statistical Yearbook, op.cit.

11 PIRLS 2021, International Results in Reading, [PIRLS 2021 International Results in Reading – About PIRLS 2021 – PIRLS 2021](https://www.pirls.org/2021/International-Results-in-Reading-About-PIRLS-2021-PIRLS-2021), accessed 24 March 2026

12 2021 data source: Ministry of Social Development, Statistical Report, 2021; 2025 data source: 'Oman reports 4,199 child abuse, 39 human trafficking cases', Muscat Daily, 1 April 2026, accessed 9 April 2026

13 'Public Prosecution reveals 19% surge in legal cases during 2025 annual briefing', <https://www.muscatdaily.com/2026/02/02/public-prosecution-reveals-19-surge-in-legal-cases-during-2025/>, Muscat Daily, 2 February 2026, accessed 24 March 2026



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Overall, Oman has long upheld strong fundamentals in child wellbeing, such as universal birth registration and high vaccination coverage, underpinned by an enabling legal environment.

While in 2021 Oman's social protection system relied on a mix of contributory schemes and targeted safety nets, by 2025 the country had transitioned to a unified national framework that guarantees financial support for all children. This shift was anchored by the introduction of universal child benefits, rolled out in early 2024 under the **Social Protection Law** (which in turn built on the **2023 Labour Law**), marking a major step toward a rights-based and inclusive social protection system. Other major legislative breakthroughs included the endorsement of the **Law of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** in 2025, of a comprehensive rights based framework for persons with disabilities. In addition, a major legislative breakthrough was reached in 2023 with the passage of the **School Education Law**, which for the first time guarantees every child in Oman the right to enroll in a preprimary programme. This historic policy shift signaled the Government's commitment to expanding early learning opportunities as a cornerstone of human development.

Climate change is increasingly recognized as one of the most significant global challenges of this generation, with profound implications for the wellbeing and future prospects of children worldwide. Like many countries in the Middle East region, Oman is particularly vulnerable due to its arid climate and limited freshwater resources. Projections indicate rising temperatures, more frequent heatwaves and an increased occurrence of cyclones. Past events, including Cyclone Gonu in 2007 and Cyclone Shaheen in 2021, underscore the urgency of strengthening climate adaptation, mitigation and disaster preparedness systems. In response, the Government of Oman has taken proactive steps through its National Strategy for Adaptation and Mitigation to Climate Change, which prioritizes building resilience across key sectors, as well as a commitment to "Net Zero" carbon emissions by 2050, made by His Majesty in 2022.



In summary, during the 2022-2025 Country Programme period, Oman transitioned from a phase of post-COVID recovery to one of accelerated development. The country's sustained investments in maternal health, early learning, disability inclusion and social protection reflect a national vision that firmly places children and adolescents at the heart of sustainable development. The progress achieved over this period underscores Oman's strong, future focused commitment to ensuring that every child grows up protected, empowered and equipped to participate meaningfully in a diversified, knowledge-based economy, in line with the Vision 2040.



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II. Key Achievements and Results

Over the period 2022–2025, UNICEF Oman worked alongside the Government of Oman and national partners to strengthen the systems that shape children’s lives, from nutrition and early learning to protection, social inclusion, and climate resilience. The

main goal of the 2022-2025 Country Programme was to assist the Government in empowering all children in Oman to realize their rights and participate equitably in building a knowledge-based society and competitive economy through two components:

01

Strengthened evidence-based policies

Strengthening evidence-based policies for children, so that improved public finance analysis, data and evidence are used to inform social policies and programmes for children, adolescents and young people, and progress towards the realization of the SDGs.

02

Enhanced social services & systems

Enhancing systems and services for children, adolescents, and young people, so that all children, adolescents, and young people in Oman, including those with disabilities, benefit from improved social service systems and services.

This work is guided by a Programme Management Group – chaired by the Ministry of Social Development and comprising representatives from the Ministries of Education and Health, the Social Protection Fund and the National Centre for Statistics and Information – which oversees implementation, monitoring and follow-up of joint activities under the Country Programme.

This report outlines the activities completed from January 2022 to December 2025 (with a particular emphasis on the last year of the country programme). It further provides an overview of the new Country Programme (2026-2030).



Representatives from UNICEF and MOSD during the quarterly PMG meeting ©MOSD/2025



Girls drawing on the whiteboard at the booth©UNICEF Oman/AIHarthy

COMPONENT

01

Evidence
Based Policies



Component 1: Evidence-Based Policies

Improved Policies and Financing for Children

Oman continued to advance its social sector financing during the country programme cycle, building on earlier fiscal space analysis and public finance strengthening efforts. A major milestone was reached when technical teams from *Estidamah* (the National Programme for Fiscal Sustainability), the MoH and the Ministry of Education (MoE) agreed on a **unified approach to financing the social sectors**. Central to this agreement was the recognition that robust, predictable and well targeted public spending is essential for sustaining strong health and education outcomes. The teams emphasized the need for adequate budget allocations from the Ministry of Finance (MoF), alongside efficiency improvements within the sectors. Importantly, they agreed that efficiency savings generated in MoH and MoE will be reinvested directly into health and education services, rather than reverting to the MoF, helping to sustain funding for children.

Throughout this period and building on the fiscal space analysis conducted in 2021, UNICEF worked closely with the MoF's MacroFiscal Unit and *Estidamah* to help ensure that social sector budgets remain both protected and optimized. This collaboration supported the development of a **financing model** grounded in two core principles: spending enough to meet children's needs and spending smartly to maximize the value of every rial invested. The work also deepened national understanding of public finance management processes, allocative efficiency and the adequacy and predictability of financing for health and education.

As part of this technical engagement, UNICEF delivered



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capacity building sessions for the MoF's MacroFiscal Unit. These sessions strengthened staff skills in analyzing fiscal data, understanding macroeconomic dynamics between revenues and expenditures, monitoring key fiscal indicators and applying simplified macrofiscal models to project social sector spending under varying fiscal constraints. Participants also gained tools for assessing how alternative economic and fiscal scenarios may affect health and education budgets. Through this support, UNICEF helped build a more capable and confident cadre of professionals able to strengthen fiscal planning

and safeguard investments in child focused services.

UNICEF worked closely with the MoF's MacroFiscal Unit and *Estidamah* to help ensure that social sector budgets remain both protected and optimized.

Increased Availability of Evidence

UNICEF worked with partners on **knowledge products** to document Oman's progress, capture practical lessons learned and share good practices that can inform national policy dialogue and programme design.

An important development was the comprehensive **evaluation of the Child Friendly Education (CFE)** approach which examined the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability and impact of the Ministry of Education's national initiative to become more child centered, equitable, accessible and responsive to the needs of every learner. The evaluation adopted a child centered and participatory approach: children's voices were brought forward through focus groups and school visits in selected governorates, while teachers, school leaders, parents and caregivers contributed through interviews. This ensured that findings reflected diverse perspectives on what truly makes a school child sensitive. The evaluation produced actionable recommendations to enhance quality and equity in learning environments and to guide nationwide scale up of child friendly standards. These insights will directly inform the 2026 programme cycle, helping ensure that all children – including those with disabilities, children from low income households, and those living in remote areas – can learn, participate and thrive in supportive and inclusive schools.

UNICEF also worked with MoE to participate in the regional **Heat Survey**, which examines the effects of heat and air quality on children's learning and wellbeing. Findings expected in early 2026 will help inform national policies

to design more climate resilient schools and protective learning environments.

Furthermore, UNICEF collaborated with the Environment Authority (EA) to conduct a **Climate Landscape Analysis for Children (CLAC)** to examine how climate change affects child wellbeing by assessing current policy frameworks, identifying gaps and proposing strategic, child responsive climate interventions. The study utilized a decentralized and participatory approach to ensure that the lived experiences, concerns and priorities of children and youth up to age 24 were meaningfully captured, including community led initiatives for coping with climate impacts. The CLAC findings are organized across key sectors, including education, health and social protection, mapping the current situation and offering a set of actionable recommendations. In 2026, these recommendations will be translated into a **time bound, cross sectoral action plan** to ensure that national climate policies and programmes are firmly aligned with the needs and realities of children and young people.

In recognition of the Sultanate being the first country in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to receive international certification for the **dual elimination of mother to child transmission (EMTCT) of HIV and syphilis** in 2022, MoH, working with UNICEF and supported by WHO, completed a comprehensive documentation of Oman's EMTCT journey. This achievement reflects long term investments in resilient health services, strong outreach and robust monitoring and surveillance systems. The report captures the full pathway





from prevention strategies and community engagement to advanced surveillance and monitoring, and serves as a practical best practice model for countries pursuing elimination goals.

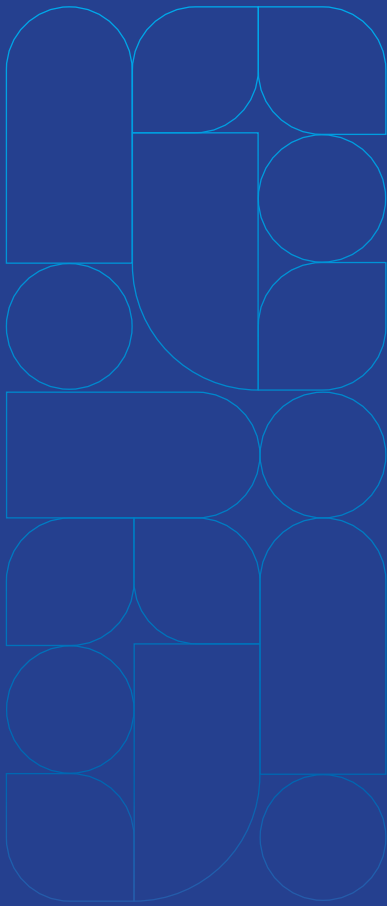
In addition, UNICEF provided technical support to explore the establishment of Oman as a regional **Primary Health Care Innovation Hub**. In line with the national vision to strengthen Oman's role as a regional logistics and innovation hub, UNICEF worked with a stakeholder advisory group to draft a comprehensive business plan to guide the hub's establishment, operational model and future expansion. This concept remains available for future consideration as national priorities evolve.

The education and skills landscape in Oman entered a pivotal phase during the programme cycle, marked by a shift from foundational policy changes to the national scaling of inclusive, high quality learning systems. UNICEF and UNFPA jointly completed a **Situation Analysis of Adolescents and Youth** which examined education quality, mental health, school to work transitions, gender norms, digital readiness and young people's access to career guidance and life skills training. Using mixed methods, the study combined quantitative data with qualitative insights from focus group discussions with youth, teachers and parents, conducted across the country, providing a holistic understanding of the realities shaping young people's lives. These outputs were shared with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MCSY) to guide ongoing youth programming and the development of Oman's

emerging youth strategy.

Furthermore, UNICEF supported the **"Generation Unlimited (GenU) landscape analysis"**, Oman's first comprehensive assessment of the skills ecosystem for adolescents and young adults. The analysis reviewed the education system, labour market trends and young people's readiness to participate in a rapidly changing economy. It mapped existing programmes, identified gaps in digital and transferable skills and highlighted opportunities for private sector engagement. Importantly, the GenU analysis underscored the need for stronger pathways that link schooling with employability, entrepreneurship and civic participation—laying the foundation for a more coordinated national approach to youth development. UNICEF completed the GenU analysis and developed a roadmap and implementation plan outlining priority interventions across the four GenU dimensions: Education and training, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Engagement and equity.

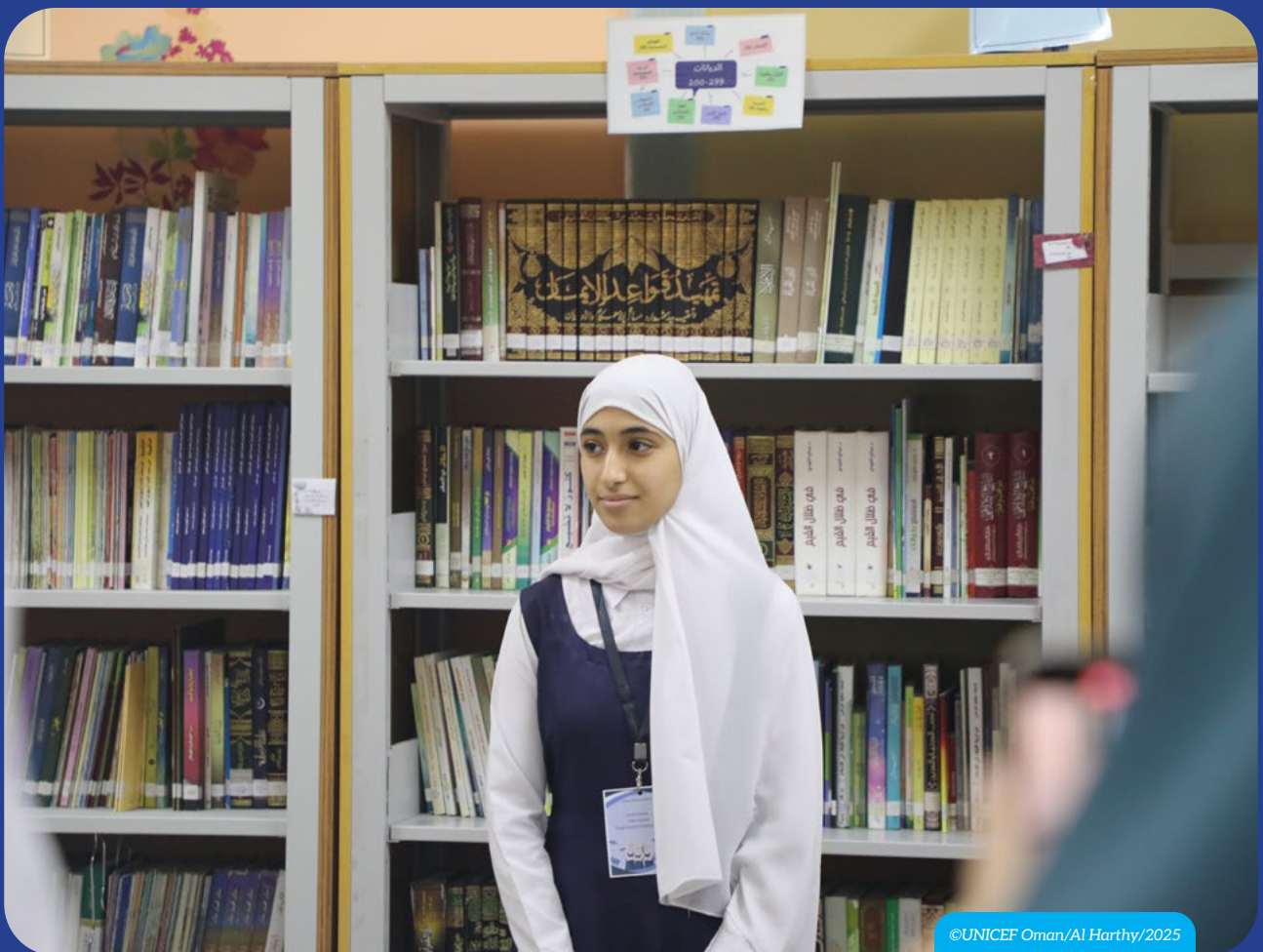
As a contribution to expanding the national evidence ecosystem, UNICEF collaborated with the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), Faculty of Education, to issue a call for papers for a **special journal edition focusing on children and mothers**. This initiative aims to generate actionable research and encourage evidence based dialogue on emerging issues affecting children and families in Oman. Currently, publication is planned for 2026 as part of a celebration of 55 years of UNICEF presence in the country.



Promotion of Knowledge Exchange

Oman played an active role in regional dialogues. With UNICEF's support, an official delegation participated in the **'Arab Gulf Countries' Policy Dialogue on Child Wellbeing'** in 2023, joining counterparts from across the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) to exchange experiences and innovations in child protection. Oman contributed to discussions on inclusive and universal protection services, the role of fathers, digital safety, policy frameworks and safeguarding cultural values. The event concluded with country focused recommendations to strengthen child protection systems, and Oman's strong engagement highlighted its growing leadership in advancing coordinated and inclusive child protection across the region.

In 2024, UNICEF collaborated with ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNESCO to facilitate **Oman's participation in a high level regional meeting on Youth**, focused on strengthening learning, skills development, and transitions to decent work, particularly for girls and young women. The delegation, which included representatives from MCSY, the Youth Centre and an Omani member of the Youth Advisory Group, ensured that youth perspectives were meaningfully integrated into the regional discussion.



©UNICEF Oman/Al Harthy/2025



Brainstorming exercise during the GCC Ministries of Social Development conference in Abu Dhabi ©UNICEF Oman/2023

In 2025, UNICEF supported the participation of a high level Omani delegation, comprising representatives from the MoH, Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), and the Social Protection Fund (SPF), in **GCC roundtable on childhood overweight and obesity**. This regional dialogue enabled Oman to engage with Gulf counterparts, review policy and programme experiences and identify priorities for integrating health, education and food systems to better protect child wellbeing. These initiatives are particularly important given that 4.2 per cent of children in Oman had previously been identified as overweight or obese, underscoring the need for proactive, multisectoral strategies that respond to the country's evolving nutritional landscape.

As part of ongoing efforts to share Oman's rich experiences with other countries, UNICEF hosted various "network meetings" in Muscat, bringing together specialists from across the MENA region to exchange experiences and agree on collective priorities. From the **Health and Nutrition and Climate Change Network Meetings** in 2023, through **the Social Protection Network Meeting** in 2024 to the Communications and Advocacy Network Meeting in 2025, Oman's selection as host country reflected that it is recognized as a regional champion for the rights of children. Through presentations, field visits, and technical exchanges, delegates gained valuable insights into the Sultanate's programmes.

Together, these initiatives jointly contributed to a robust evidence base for children's rights in Oman.

COMPONENT

02

Systems
and Services



Component 2: Systems and Services

Early Childhood Development, Nutrition and Education



The first eight years of a child's life are the foundation of human development – years in which the brain develops most rapidly, identities take shape and the seeds of future potential are planted. This period therefore represents a powerful window of opportunity to nurture the Sultanate's future leaders, innovators and citizens. Recognizing this, UNICEF has worked closely with the Government of Oman to ensure that Early Childhood Development (ECD) is elevated as a shared national priority.

UNICEF has worked closely with the Government of Oman to ensure that Early Childhood Development (ECD) is elevated as a shared national priority

Under MoE leadership, and in close coordination with key ministries including MoSD, national efforts began to translate this legal commitment into action. Partners worked together to explore various rollout scenarios, develop a comprehensive costing and financing strategy and provide the Government with flexible, evidence based options for implementing universal preprimary education. These collaborative efforts culminated in early 2025 with the completion of a detailed roadmap toward **universal preschool access by 2040**. The costed plan outlines incremental milestones, guiding policymakers on how to scale services sustainably while building the case for increased, long term public investment.

This collaboration culminated in a landmark achievement: the completion of a comprehensive

study to establish **Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Centers** across Oman. With UNICEF's technical support, partners designed a model where families can access health, nutrition, protection and early learning services under one roof. The centers are tailored for children aged 0–6, with extended services for children up to eight years old with disabilities—ensuring access to specialized rehabilitation and inclusive support. The MoE and MoH played pivotal roles in defining standards for early learning, nutrition and disability inclusive services, providing the technical backbone for a holistic and accessible model. By 2025, these collective efforts crystallized into a clear national roadmap for the establishment of a flagship Center of Excellence in Muscat, setting the benchmark





Group photo at UNICEF Tunisie during a study tour with delegates from the Ministries of Education, Health and Social Development ©UNICEF Oman/2024

for quality and integrated service delivery. This will be followed by the gradual expansion of up to 20 regional IECD centers by 2040. Importantly, these centers are intentionally designed to be inclusive, reaching children with disabilities, children from low income families, and those living in remote areas, ensuring that every child in Oman has the opportunity to thrive.

Under the leadership of the MoH, UNICEF contributed to the revival of the **Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative**. Renewed efforts under this initiative aim to create a more supportive environment for breastfeeding mothers and newborns by strengthening

maternity practices, promoting early initiation of breastfeeding and improving facility level standards of care. To date, two hospitals in Oman have been accredited as Baby Friendly: Khoula Hospital and Al Buraimi Hospital, marking an important step toward expanding quality maternal and newborn services nationwide.

Furthermore, UNICEF organized a **study tour to Tunis** for representatives from MoE, MoH, and MoSD. The delegation observed Tunisia's approaches to achieving high early education enrollment, the structure and curriculum of its ECD centers, disability inclusion

practices, the child protection case management system and social protection mechanisms. The visit supported cross country learning and helped inform recommendations for strengthening child welfare services in Oman.

To date, two hospitals in Oman have been accredited as Baby Friendly: Khoula Hospital and Al Buraimi Hospital.

Child Protection

The Sultanate of Oman has a clear commitment to child protection, as clearly reflected in the Child Law of 2014. Guided by a system strengthening approach, UNICEF supported the government to connect legal frameworks, professional social work practice and community level prevention under one coordinated system, ensuring that no child is left behind in cases of violence, neglect or abuse.



Group photo during the launch of the Child Protection Manual ©UNICEF Oman/2025

At the request of MoSD, starting in 2023, UNICEF facilitated strategic bilateral engagements with the Ministries of Social Development, Health, and Education as well as with the police, judicial authorities, and other actors to update the **Child Protection Manual** and establish a unified procedural framework for all child protection stakeholders. In mid 2025, the MoSD launched the updated manual, which now serves as the architecture for a coordinated and multisectoral response. It clearly defines integrated referral pathways, categorizes levels of abuse based on international good practices, and aligns procedures with the existing structures and mandates of each ministry.

Recognizing that standardization must be matched with front line capacity, a nationwide **Training of Trainers (ToT)** programme was

launched for 40 social workers across all governorates, including practitioners from MoSD, MoE and MoH. The training focused on the practical application of the manual, strengthening the identification, reporting and management of abuse cases. Using a learning-by-doing methodology, participants gained hands-on experience in case management and applying national protocols. This first cohort lays the foundation for nationwide expansion in the next programme cycle. Looking forward, efforts are underway to **automate the child protection case management system** through the enhancement of an integrated electronic platform. This automation will enable faster identification of at-risk children, improved data sharing across sectors and more reliable followup by multi sectoral Child Protection Committees,

representing a major step toward a technology enabled child protection system.

Moreover, in the area of **mental health as part of child protection**, UNICEF supported the Ministries of Health, Education, and Social Development in rolling out a nationwide programme to strengthen the delivery of mental health and psychosocial support for children (MHPSS), adolescents and parents. Building on UNICEF's development of a core group of trainers, a national cadre of 28 certified trainers provided MHPSS training and support across schools and communities. Initially launched in response to the impacts of covid-19 on children's mental wellbeing, this programme is contributing to a more resilient, responsive and child centred care environment nationwide.



Group photo during CP Training ©UNICEF Oman/2025



©UNICEF Oman/AlHarthy/2025

Social Protection for Vulnerable Groups

In 2023, the Sultanate of Oman introduced a landmark policy shift with the endorsement of the Social Protection Law (52/2023), a transformative step that unified contributory and noncontributory schemes into a single, comprehensive national framework. This law marked a historic shift toward a universal, rights based social protection system designed to ensure that no child's future is limited by their circumstances. Implementation began in 2024 with the rollout of universal child cash benefits, universal old age benefits, and specialized disability benefits, alongside targeted entitlements such as extended maternity and newly introduced paternity leave. Notably, maternity leave was expanded to 98 days and paid paternity leave of up to 7 days was introduced, promoting a more equitable start for newborns and supporting women's participation in the workforce.

The enactment of Social Protection Law also led to the establishment of the "Social Protection Fund", mandated to oversee implementation and ensure that benefits are delivered

efficiently and equitably. With these significant policy developments, **UNICEF, together with the ILO is supporting SPF in documenting Oman's progress to inform regional and global learning.** This effort systematically captures the policy shifts, institutional innovations and implementation experiences that shaped the adoption of the Social Protection Law, highlighting key lessons learned, emerging good practices and insights to guide future policy development.

In 2023, the Sultanate of Oman introduced a landmark policy shift with the endorsement of the Social Protection Law (52/2023)



Social Protection Fund CEO Dr. Faisal Al Farsi presents Dr. Bilal Kiswani, UNICEF Programme Manager with a token of thanks ©UNICEF Oman/2025



TRANSFORM training done in collaboration with ILO for the Social Protection Fund in 2025 ©UNICEF Oman/AIHarthy/2025

Given the scale and complexity of these shifts, strengthening systems and capacities remains essential. UNICEF and the ILO are supporting SPF in developing an **integrated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system** that consolidates cross sectoral data into a unified platform, enabling the government to track results, adjust programmes and assess long term return on investment. An additional joint initiative is the rollout of **specialized TRANSFORM trainings** to enhance the capacities of the social protection workforce. Covering legal frameworks, beneficiary identification, programme administration, governance, information management systems, financial management and M&E, the trainings equipped practitioners and policy-makers with the skills needed to manage a modern, multisectoral social protection system.

In the area of **disability inclusion**, UNICEF provided extensive technical assistance to strengthen both policy and system capacities. This included developing eligibility criteria for persons with disabilities and supporting the creation of a functional disability classification system. A total of 88 social workers from MoH, MoE, MoSD and related entities were trained on the Functional Disability Determination Tool and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. This ensures that disability benefits are tailored to individual functional needs, connecting families to therapies, assistive devices and essential services that support children's wellbeing.

Building on these foundations, Oman is advancing toward adopting a **Cash Plus model**, recognizing that financial transfers have greater impact when complemented by social services.

The model under development aims to systematically link beneficiaries—particularly children and persons with disabilities—to essential health, nutrition, education and early childhood development services. Full design and operationalization of the Cash Plus system is planned for completion in 2026.

UNICEF and the ILO are supporting SPF in developing an integrated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system

Social Behaviour Change

Oman continued to advance national efforts in Social and Behavioural Change (SBC), building on the **National SBC Strategy** approved in early 2021. The strategy prioritizes 23 behaviours related to IECD, the elimination of violence against children and the inclusion of children with disabilities. Designed for rollout in seven stages over three years, initial progress was made in 2022 through the review of the monitoring and evaluation framework and the development of a phone based survey tool to generate baseline data for forthcoming behaviour change campaigns. However, despite these technical preparations, the full rollout of the phone survey has been delayed, to be taken forward in subsequent phases, aligned with Government priorities.

Oman's longstanding commitment to **Positive Parenting** advanced significantly during the 2023-2025 period. In 2024, to celebrate **"Parenting Month" in June**, UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Information (MoI) to promote positive parenting and the critical role of families in ECD. The campaign delivered messages on health, nutrition, child protection, early learning and disability inclusion. Community leaders, technical experts and social influencers contributed to the initiative, generating strong engagement on Instagram.

Building on the National Strategy, UNICEF and the MoH rolled out Positive Parenting training for health educators and social workers, equipping front line providers with practical guidance on responsive feeding, early stimulation and positive discipline. These trained facilitators have become community champions, delivering individualized counselling to parents and caregivers across the country and strengthening the role of families and communities as central pillars of child wellbeing.



A notable achievement is the incorporation by MOH of **parenting awareness monitoring into the national *Al Shifa* platform**. This enabled systematic registration and reporting of awareness sessions delivered by health workers. By mid-2025, data recorded through the platform showed that 1,321 beneficiaries received individual counselling on early stimulation and responsive care, including 572 mothers (43.3 per cent), 734 fathers (55.6 per cent), and 15 caregivers (1.1 per cent).

Expansion of the Positive Parenting programme continued through Training of Trainers (ToT) initiatives with both the MoE and MoSD. The MoE ToT focused on school based priorities such as bullying prevention, children's mental health and promoting positive discipline in learning environments. The MoSD ToT strengthened the social welfare dimension of the initiative, equipping social workers to better support vulnerable families, identify early risks and promote nurturing care across community settings.

To further reinforce the community and cultural foundations of positive parenting, UNICEF and the Ministry

of Endowments and Religious Affairs conducted a **study tour to Al Azhar Al-Sharif University** in late 2025. The visit introduced religious leaders to parenting methodologies grounded in Islamic principles, helping to ensure that child protection and nurturing care messages resonate deeply with Omani families.

Throughout the year, UNICEF also produced a wide range of SBC messages on child protection, destigmatizing disability, nutrition and other key social issues, including **disaster preparedness**. During the early part of 2022, UNICEF also continued its risk communication and community engagement work related to covid-19. As case numbers declined following successful vaccine rollout, UNICEF collaborated with the MoH to promote good hygiene and prevention measures through social media content. A notable partnership with the MoI and MoSD in 2024 focused on disaster risk reduction for children, raising awareness about the dangers of flooding in wadis during the rainy season. UNICEF also supported MoSD's community engagement efforts during the Khareef season in Salalah to raise awareness on protecting children from climate related hazards in the south of Oman.

III. RESULTS ENABLERS

Over the course of the 2022-2025 country programme, UNICEF's results for children were shaped by communications, advocacy and partnerships working together to mobilize a wide range of stakeholders around a shared vision for children. Specifically, communications strengthened public engagement and participation; advocacy supported sustained policy dialogue and influence; and partnerships expanded the reach and sustainability of results. Together, they helped connect national reforms with people's everyday experiences and ensured that progress for children was widely understood and supported.

a) Elevating Children's Perspectives through Strategic Communications

Across the programme period, UNICEF strengthened its communications to engage the public and create platforms for participation.

At the start of the country programme, efforts focused on improving visibility through digital platforms, media outreach and the launch of accessible Arabic content, making information on children's issues more widely available. A particular area of focus has been the fundamental importance of elevating and listening to children's voices; UNICEF sought to facilitate platforms where children and young people could express their views, share their experiences and contribute to conversations about their future. This reflects the understanding that progress for children depends on inclusive processes that place them at the centre.

In 2022, UNICEF Oman appointed Qusai Mansoor as a "Child Rights Advocate" to strengthen child participation and engagement. Leveraging his profile as a media personality, Qusai amplified children's voices across platforms, moderated discussions directly with children and contributed to a range of content and public engagements. Through events, campaigns and digital products, he created spaces for children to express their views and perspectives, reinforcing the importance of listening to children and their contribution to dialogue and decision-making.





Qusai Mansoor, UNICEF Oman Child Rights Advocate during a school visit ©UNICEF Oman/AIAbdali/2022

A day FOR children, BY children



Children's participation became a defining feature of UNICEF's engagement approach, particularly through World Children's Day. Celebrations evolved into a national platform where children and young people could engage directly with decision-makers and share their perspectives on issues that matter to them.

Over the programme period, **11 roundtable discussions involving over 100 children** were held across six different governorates in addition to

Muscat, each focusing on local priorities and ensuring inclusive representation. These dialogues brought together children and government officials at the highest levels (notably Ministers, Governors and Walis) in structured discussions, where children led conversations on topics such as education, safety, mental well-being and digital life. Many of the discussions were conducted in partnership with the Children First Association (CFA) and other champions of children's rights, such as the Oman Human Rights Commission.

These engagements provided valuable insights that informed advocacy and strengthened the relevance of national initiatives. They also reinforced the importance of listening to children as active contributors to society. Discussions centred around inclusion, climate change and access to services.

"I am eager to continue my education, just like other students, and I hope my studies won't be limited to the ninth grade. I sincerely request that the Ministry of Education carefully consider my appeal."

Sabaa, 15 from Nizwa, expressing her desire for inclusion as a person with an intellectual disability.



By creating safe and consistent spaces for dialogue, UNICEF contributed to embedding children's voices within national conversations and strengthening a culture of participation.

"I am very proud to participate in this discussion, which articulates that the Sultanate of Oman is interested to know about our dreams and aspirations, and it encouraged me to express my opinion about things that matters to me, which I think will reflect positively in my future as it got me thinking about my future"

Fatma, 17, from Salalah, on her experience with the dialogue with the Governor of Dhofar.



©UNICEF Oman/Targo/2022

HH Dr. Muna Fahad Al Said with participant during 2022 roundtable at the Children's Library



©UNICEF Oman/2025

Group Photo at 2025 Ibri Roundtable



©UNICEF Oman/2023

Girls during Sohar Roundtable 2023

Girl being given certificate at Nizwa RTD



©UNICEF Oman/2024

Girl during Roundtable in Nizwa with Governor and OHRC



©UNICEF Oman/2024

Male student with disability speaking to Minister at 2022 MOE roundtable



©UNICEF Oman/Targo/2022

Boys during Sur roundtable 2024



©UNICEF Oman/Targo/2022

Group picture with students who participated in the 2022 MOSD roundtable discussion

©UNICEF Oman/2024



UNICEF delivers a lecture at the College of Economics and Political Science at SQU on behavioural change from the perspective of non-profit organizations ©UNICEF Oman/AIHarthy/2024

To ensure that climate policy reflects the perspectives of young people, UNICEF introduced the **UReport platform** in 2023. More than 500 young people participated in climate focused polls, with most respondents aged 14–19 highlighting the importance of local, nature based solutions, such as vegetation and tree planting, to enhance rainfall patterns and strengthen community resilience. These findings informed **UNICEF’s engagement at COP28**, where, at the invitation of the Government, UNICEF participated in a panel session under the theme “Climb to the Future: Youth Empowerment in Climate Brilliance”. The event provided a key platform to engage with youth delegates, government entities, civil society and other stakeholders, and to elevate evidence from UReport to advocate for children’s voices in climate policy.

At the request of the MoSD, UNICEF explored regional models for establishing sustainable youth engagement structures through a cross sectoral **Child Parliament initiative**. A learning exchange involving government representatives and UNICEF offices from Iraq and Morocco provided valuable insights into advanced mechanisms for enabling children’s direct participation in national dialogue.

To enhance the representation of children in the public sphere, UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Information, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), and SABCO Media to train over 50 media professionals in **ethical and child-sensitive reporting**. This initiative contributed to building a network of media practitioners better equipped to safeguard children’s rights across digital and traditional platforms. A second round of media training, delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Information in late 2025, further strengthened national capacity on ethical reporting and the protection of children’s rights online.

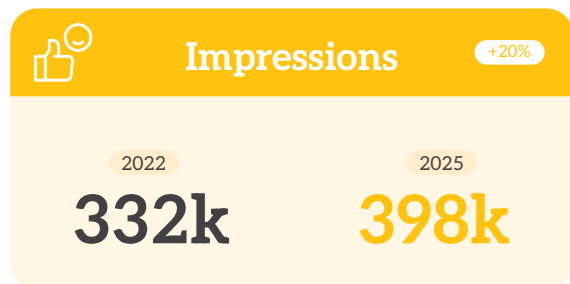
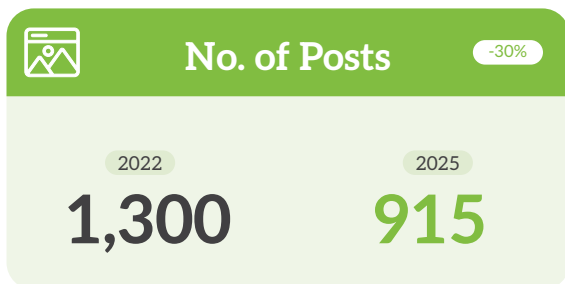
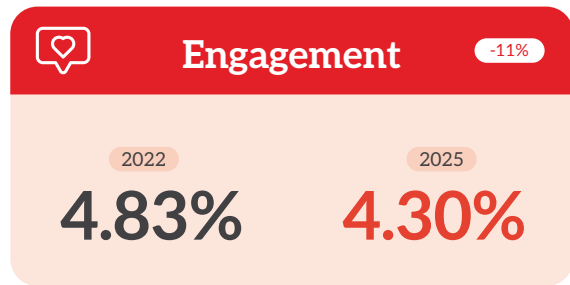
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Public engagement was strengthened through national awareness initiatives such as **#OurChildrenOurPriority** which alone reached an estimated 3 million people between March and August 2023, demonstrating strong public interest in child well-being. The **“Listen to the Future”**, campaign also leveraged social media, radio and influencers to promote child safety, early learning and positive parenting. **Community outreach** was further amplified through UNICEF’s presence at highly attended public events, including the Muscat International Book Fair in 2025 and national childhood conferences in 2023 and 2025. These platforms enabled direct engagement with thousands of children and caregivers through interactive sessions on child rights, digital safety and inclusion.



Social Media Growth Jan 2022-2025



b) Leveraging Global and Regional Expertise for National Advocacy

Advocating consistently and collectively for the rights of children is at the core of UNICEF's mandate.

A major milestone was the explicit inclusion of **children in Oman's First Update of the Second Nationally Determined Contribution**, drawing on UNICEF's technical contributions, ensuring that child health, education and protection are formally recognized within the national climate response.

With the last **Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)** having been conducted in 2014, UNICEF has continued to advocate for a new round as a timely opportunity to track trends and update the national evidence base. Building on Oman's previous MICS experience in 1995 and 2014, UNICEF advocated for the implementation of MICS7, a tool designed to capture a substantial set of SDG indicators that require household survey data and offers an important opportunity to assess the situation of children



UNICEF former Regional Director Adele Khodr during a meeting with BLC members ©UNICEF Oman/Trago/2023

and women in the post COVID context. UNICEF intensified high level engagement with NCSI and sectoral ministries, emphasizing MICS7's value for SDG reporting and national planning, and establishing an updated baseline to inform child focused programmes.

UNICEF also strategically leveraged **high-level visits and regional engagements** to strengthen advocacy and visibility. The official visit of the UNICEF MENARO

Regional Director in May 2023 reinforced ongoing high-level dialogue with national counterparts and underscored the strength of the partnership across all levels. Beyond bilateral engagements, the visit created opportunities to amplify key messages on children's priorities through targeted media interactions and stakeholder briefings.



UNICEF accompanies a delegation to the UNICEF Supply Division in Copenhagen in 2024 ©UNICEF Oman/2024



UNICEF Global Lead on Disability and Development Mr. Gopal Mitra visits the institute for the blind in 2025 ©UNICEF Oman/AlHarthy/2025

Efforts were also made to ensure that partners and interested stakeholders had regular access to UNICEF’s **global expertise**. This included hosting briefing sessions, closed-door meetings and virtual engagements that provided updates on regional crises, UNICEF’s humanitarian response and its role on the ground. These sessions also served to highlight UNICEF’s work in Oman, offering snapshots of progress across key areas and reinforcing transparency, trust and continued engagement with partners.

In the context of heightened regional crises, these engagements were particularly important. Meetings and media briefings with global and regional spokespersons helped

communicate UNICEF’s role in delivering humanitarian assistance and solutions for children affected by conflict. Local partners and stakeholders were engaged in these discussions to strengthen understanding of UNICEF’s work beyond Oman and to reinforce solidarity with children in crisis settings.

Together, these efforts positioned Oman as a platform for dialogue and exchange, both within UNICEF and across the region, while strengthening national understanding of global child rights challenges and UNICEF’s role in addressing them.

Together, these efforts positioned Oman as a platform for dialogue and exchange, both within UNICEF and across the region



Group photo during the celebration of 80 years of the UN, hosted by Oman's Foreign Ministry and attended by UN Secretary General António Guterres ©UNICEF Oman/2025

c) Partnerships that Expand Reach and Impact

Partnering with all those (across the private sector, civil society and elsewhere) who share a commitment to the rights of children is a fundamental strategy.

At the forefront of UNICEF Oman's partnership initiatives is the **Business Leadership Circle**, a network of committed business leaders and influencers, coming together for children as individuals, as a council and through their network and organizations, to drive results for children, society and business. It has evolved into an influential advisory platform on children's issues, supporting several high-visibility initiatives, such as a 2023 photography exhibition at the National Museum that showcased children's perspectives on their surroundings; a video series advocating for children's rights in 2024; and a "takeover" of eight major private sector entities as part of World Children's Day in 2025. Individually, BLC members also supported advocacy on issues such as family-friendly policies,

facilitating a Memorandum of Understanding with the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in one instance. These efforts contributed to promoting practices such as maternity leave and workplace childcare in alignment with the Labour Law introduced in 2022.

In addition, a **high-level delegation from Oman**, including government officials, strategic partners and members of the Business Leadership Circle, visited UNICEF's Supply Division in Copenhagen in 2024. The visit provided first-hand insight into UNICEF's global supply and logistics operations, at the world's largest humanitarian hub, including how procurement, innovation and partnerships enable rapid and equitable delivery for children worldwide. It also strengthened engagement with private sector partners and reinforced the role of Oman-based stakeholders in supporting global efforts.

Private sector engagement also supported nationwide awareness efforts. Key partnerships enabled the dissemination of child-focused messages through SMS campaigns and digital platforms in partnership with Ooredoo, the nation's second largest telecom provider, as well as outdoor advertising across Muscat, in partnership with JC Decaux, and aligned with the "Our Children, Our Priority" campaign. These efforts helped reinforce key messages on digital safety and positive parenting at scale.

Beyond large-scale initiatives, smaller partnerships contributed meaningfully to UNICEF's work. Private sector and community collaborations supported events, awareness campaigns and advocacy platforms through in-kind contributions such as venues, services and outreach. These engagements also created opportunities to introduce new partners to UNICEF's work and expand support for children's issues.

Work across **the development community** strengthened UNICEF's ability to deliver results and amplify impact. Collaboration extended across the United Nations system, particularly with the ILO, UNFPA and WHO, ensuring alignment and efficiency. The joint celebration of the UN@80 was a notable event.

A significant moment in 2024 was the Government of Oman's generous contribution to support UNICEF's work for children in Palestine. This was followed by additional contributions from private donors, alongside increased online giving linked to advocacy and digital campaigns. These developments reflect growing public trust and engagement with UNICEF's humanitarian work.

UNICEF sought to contribute to **the growing philanthropic sector** in Oman through a dedicated visit from a UNICEF philanthropy expert who led a workshop for family foundations focusing on sharing global best practices, partnership models and lessons learned from UNICEF's international network. This engagement contributed to strengthening relationships with local philanthropic actors while also supporting capacity building



Sayyid Khalid Al Busaidi, Chairman of SABCO Group and Sumaira Chowdhury during a signing ceremony in 2023 ©UNICEF Oman/Harhi/2024

and encouraging more strategic giving aligned with children's priorities.

Collaboration with **civil society organisations** was further strengthened. For example, UNICEF engaged with the Oman Human Rights Commission in the development of the CLAC, participation in system level child protection dialogue (including the review of the updated Child Protection Manual) and high level engagement with UNICEF senior leadership on child rights priorities.

As the leading civil society organization for children in Oman, **CFA** remained a key partner throughout the programme period. UNICEF supported CFA's landmark

two national childhood conferences with sessions provided by national and global experts. CFA also played a crucial role in facilitating children's participation in national and global processes. This included supporting children's engagement in Oman's 2024 Voluntary National Review, as well as organizing youth dialogues and roundtables across governorates. These platforms enabled more consistent and meaningful engagement with children and young people.

Looking forward, UNICEF will seek to maintain this rich network of partners, while also seeking further alliances, for example with the academic community.



Group photo during a BLC meeting in 2024 ©UNICEF Oman/AIHarthy/2024



Various government stakeholders gathered during the Strategic Moment of Reflection session planning for UNICEF's 2026 - 2030 country programme ©UNICEF Oman

IV. Looking Ahead: the 2026-2030 Country Programme

As the 2022-2025 Country Programme comes to a close, it marks a transition toward a new phase of partnership between UNICEF and the Sultanate of Oman. Building on progress to date, lessons learned and consultations with partners across sectors, UNICEF has developed a new programme of work. Identified priorities reflect both the country's achievements and the opportunity to further strengthen systems, participation and inclusion to ensure that every child benefits from continued development.

The 2026-2030 Country Programme is guided by a clear vision: a future where all children and adolescents in Oman realize their rights, thrive, and contribute to national development. The programme is structured around two windows of opportunity where investment has the greatest impact, complemented by special support for vulnerable children. Specifically,

Adolescence programming will prioritize equipping young people with the skills required for a knowledge-based and evolving economy. This includes strengthening education systems, expanding opportunities for digital literacy, critical thinking and entrepreneurship, and creating platforms for meaningful youth participation. Supporting adolescents to engage in shaping their future will remain central to this outcome.

Life cycle support will deepen efforts to reach the most vulnerable children across all ages. UNICEF will work with partners to strengthen Social Protection systems that link to integrated services through "cash plus" models complemented by strengthened Child Protection systems to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and neglect. Children with disabilities will remain an area of focus throughout.



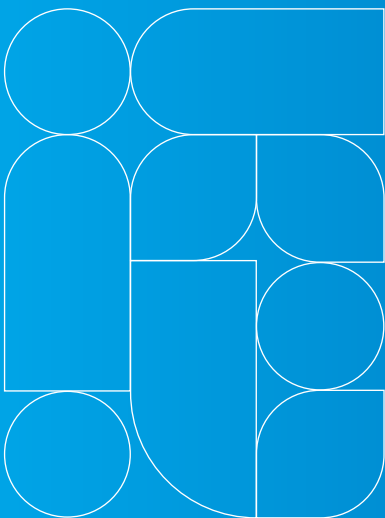
©UNICEF Oman/AlHarthy/2024

Early years programming will focus on the earliest years of life, where investment has the greatest long-term impact. Efforts will expand access to quality, integrated services across health, nutrition, education and protection, while strengthening early childhood education. Greater emphasis will also be placed on supporting parents and caregivers, ensuring that children receive the nurturing care needed to reach their full developmental potential.

Across all outcomes, the programme will strengthen the use of data, research and evidence to inform decision-making, while expanding partnerships with government, civil society, academia and the private sector. New technologies and digital platforms will be leveraged to improve service delivery, enhance participation and better target support for those most in need. UNICEF will continue to play a strategic role as a partner to the Government of Oman, providing technical expertise, supporting implementation and facilitating dialogue across sectors.

UNICEF remains a dedicated partner to the Government and the people of Oman. By ensuring children are healthy, educated, and protected today, we are securing a prosperous future, aligned with Vision 2040. The next country programme reflects a shared commitment to ensure that every child is healthy, educated, protected and empowered to contribute to the nation's continued progress.

V. Expression of Thanks



UNICEF Oman is grateful to the Government of the Sultanate of Oman for its continued and generous support, as well as encouragement and guidance of UNICEF Oman work in advancing the rights of children in Oman.

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