

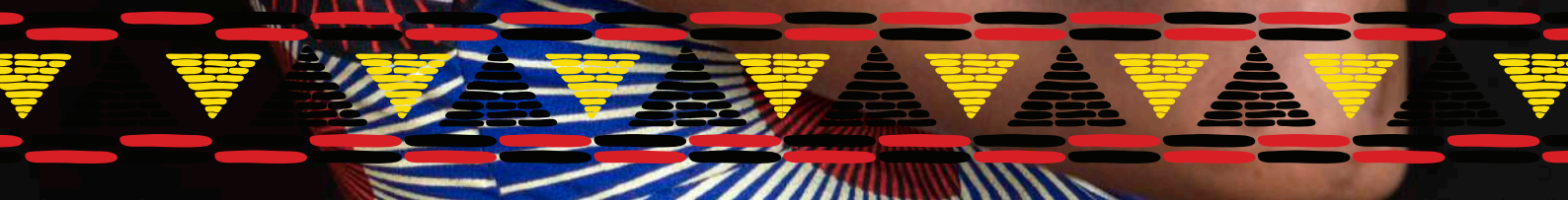
Country Programme Summary 2026–2030

unicef 
for every child

Uganda



Accelerating implementation of
child rights in Uganda



Cover page: © UNICEF/UNI838933/Tibaweswa. Janine Mafie, 15, poses with her baby at their home in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, Kikuube District, western Uganda, on July 16, 2025. Having arrived at the settlement alone and pregnant, Janine now receives support through a programme that combines cash assistance, mentorship, and access to healthcare—helping her rebuild her life and care for her child.

UNICEF Uganda Country Programme Summary 2026-2030

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© UNICEF/UNI820730/Mwebembezi. The children are always excited to receive water from the trucking system and the arrival of the truck is a source of joy, as they are able to drink, bathe, wear clean clothes and have food prepared for them on time.



Country Programme Summary 2026–2030



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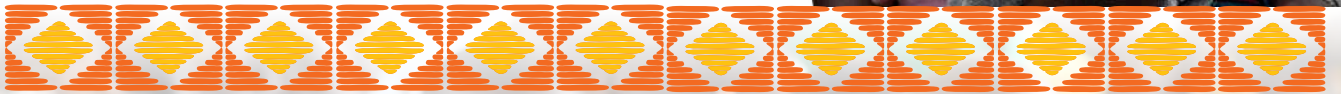




Uganda has a youthful population, more than half of which are children under the age of 19. Children in Uganda face significant challenges including poverty, poor health and nutrition, inadequate access to quality education, and experience violence.

Guided by the 2026–2030 Country Programme, UNICEF will work with the Government of Uganda, local communities, children, adolescents, young people and other partners, to address these challenges and to ensure every child survives, thrives, and grows to their full potential. UNICEF’s work will focus on advocating for better education, health and nutrition services, greater access to safe, climate-resilient water and sanitation and protecting children from violence, poverty and abuse.

© UNICEF/UNI838939/Tibaweswa. Emily Kasongo, 19, poses for a portrait in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement market, Kikuube District, western Uganda, on July 15, 2025.



© UNICEF/UNI822030/Wamala. Pupils in primary one at Kakoni Wisdom Primary School in Kyaka II refugee settlement in Kyegegwa District cheer up during an English lesson.

Uganda has made steady progress in key areas of development and has met the UN least developed country graduation criteria.

But challenges still remain:

1 IN 3 CHILDREN



suffer from malnutrition

ONLY 1 IN 4 CHILDREN



aged 3–5 years is enrolled in Early Learning programmes

1 IN 4 CHILDREN



aged 6–17 is out of school

1 IN 4 CHILDREN



continue to live in poverty

OVER 134,000 CHILDREN HAVE NEVER RECEIVED A VACCINE

and more than 83,000 have missed one of the recommended vaccines



ONLY 3 OUT OF 10 PUPILS



complete the full seven-year primary school cycle

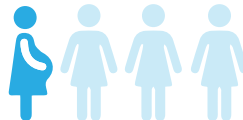
with many girls dropping out due to teenage pregnancy and child marriage

50% OF GIRLS AGED 15-19



experience sexual violence before the age of 15

1 IN 4 GIRLS



GIVES BIRTH BEFORE AGE 18



6 OUT OF 10 OF CHILDREN UNDER 5 lack legal identity

DISEASES LIKE MALARIA, DIARRHOEA, HIV/AIDS, AND RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS CONTINUE TO DRIVE CHILD MORTALITY

Children are also increasingly affected by climate induced disasters and public health emergencies



There are limited social protection mechanisms covering more than

460,000 CHILDREN

aged 2–17 years living with disability



NEARLY 1 MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE

enter the labour market each year, but many lack the skills employers need and cannot be employed



Social protection mechanisms are highly inadequate to address multidimensional child poverty.



© UNICEF/UNI821777/Abdul. Allen Namugenyi (middle), headgirl Kalwana Primary School and her friends stand behind a mounted tap facility at their school.





Programme priorities and partnerships

Promoting the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the 2026-2030 Country Programme was developed in partnership with the Government of Uganda, civil society organisations, development partners, the United Nations, and most importantly, with children and young people. It is aligned to Uganda's National Development Plan IV and to the UN system Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Uganda.



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The Programme is guided by a theory of change that recognises that in order for children's rights to be realized it requires:



Investment in human capital development and basic social services that are child-friendly and inclusive



Adoption of positive behaviours and norms among caregivers and communities that support children's well-being



Strengthened implementation and adequate financing of policy and regulatory framework to reduce poverty and inequality



Active participation of children and adolescents in decision making that affects them



© UNICEF/UNI820811/Abdul. Children attend class at Kyamulibwa Baptist Primary School in Kalungu District, one of Uganda's major coffee-producing regions and a target area for efforts to eliminate child labour.



To achieve results, UNICEF will focus on the following strategies:

- **Support Government to strengthen national and local systems** so that every child is reached with quality social services
- **Support the health, education, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sectors** to work together and deliver quality services including during emergencies
- **Use evidence, data, innovation and digital tools**, to influence better policies and track results, enhance service delivery
- **Strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders**, including civil society, cultural and faith-based organisations, development partners and UN sister organisations to ensure complementarity
- **Enhance emergency preparedness and response**, and strengthen the resilience of systems and communities
- **Support community and children's participation** in programme implementation
- **Promote positive behaviour change and challenge harmful social norms**
- **Support climate-smart solutions** to make families resilient and able to withstand economic and climate-induced shocks and natural disasters
- **Support the exchange of knowledge and resources** between Uganda and other developing countries

© UNICEF/UNI863147/Rutherford. A mobile Early Childhood Development centre entertains children in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement where permanent centres are unavailable. These mobile units provide essential stimulation and play activities, strengthening children's development and providing a vital service within refugee communities.

UNICEF will continue to provide assistance in the refugee response, by providing both refugee and host communities with essential services.





Core priorities of the Country Programme

The Uganda Country Programme is structured around **five key priorities**:





1. Health, HIV and nutrition

Over the next five years, UNICEF will work with the Ministry of Health and partners to ensure more women, newborns, children and adolescents can access quality health services.

PRIORITIES

A) SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT TO DELIVER BETTER CARE FOR MOTHERS AND THEIR NEWBORNS

- Support the Ministry of Health (MoH) to strengthen health systems and institutionalize stronger integrated care models, combining maternal, newborn health, HIV and nutrition services
- Promote integrated community health services for all children, adolescents and women and the integrated management of child and newborn illnesses
- Advocate for adequate domestic funding of community health services delivered by a sustainable and motivated community health workforce

B) PROMOTE IMMUNIZATION FOR EVERY CHILD

- Support the Uganda National Expanded Programme on Immunization and empower communities to demand immunization and health services
- Advocate for greater government investment in immunization
- Support the Ministry of Health to strengthen routine immunization services

C) FIGHT MALNUTRITION AND CHILD FOOD POVERTY

- Promote exclusive breastfeeding, quality feeding practices and strong parenting and counselling programmes
- Advocate for micronutrient supplementation to address anaemia in pregnant women and nursing mothers and prevent low birthweight and chronic malnutrition in children

- Advocate for child-focused healthy food environments to address the triple burden of chronic and acute malnutrition and overweight among children
- Work with government and the private sector to support interventions to protect and promote diets, services and practices that support optimal nutrition, growth and development for children, adolescents and women
- Empower communities to prevent, detect and manage acute malnutrition among children

D) ADDRESS TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND PROMOTE ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- Work with adolescents and partners to address teenage pregnancies and ensure improved access to integrated age-appropriate health, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, mental health and gender-based violence services, especially for adolescent girls
- Reinforce social and behaviour change strategies to curb negative social norms and support positive health, HIV and nutrition practices

E) SUPPORT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Support the Ministry of Health and local governments in preparing for and rapidly responding to public health and nutrition emergencies, including through enhanced community surveillance

© UNICEF/UNI671309/
Balikuddembe. Masudid
Harriet pays attention during
a Group Ante Natal Care/
Post Natal Care session for
adolescent girls and young
women at Dzaipi health
centre III, Adjumani District.



2. Learning and skilling

UNICEF's focus during 2026–2030 is to support the Ministry of Education and Sports to build stronger and resilient education and learning systems that improve school attendance, retention and completion and enhance quality learning outcomes and support transition from learning to gainful employment.

PRIORITIES

A) SUPPORT GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) SERVICES

- Advocate for the implementation and adequate financing of the ECD strategy and to identify community led solutions to enable children to access quality pre-primary education

B) PROMOTE QUALITY TEACHING AND FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING

- Support the Ministry of Education and Sports to strengthen the quality of teaching and foundational learning to improve retention in primary education and transition to secondary education
- Support the Ministry of Education and Sports to complete the transition to competency-based learning and classroom assessment that prepares students for successful transition to work
- Advocate for the operationalization of a robust system to track data on enrolment, retention, completion and transition, that will inform sector reforms and funding decision (EMIS - Education Management Information System)

- Work with Ministry of Education and Sports to address barriers to school retention and completion, including school fees, corporal punishment, teenage pregnancies, and child marriage

C) PROMOTE DIGITAL LEARNING AND INNOVATION

- Support the government to operationalize the Education Digital Agenda Strategy (2021–2025) to ensure access to quality education even in remote areas
- Develop partnerships with the private sector to promote on-the-job training opportunities for young people
- Support the Ministry of Education and Sports to re-engage vulnerable adolescents in education and skilling programmes

© UNICEF/UNI821884/Wamala. Edison Tayebwa, 11 years is a beneficiary of the Catch-Up and remedial approach in primary one at Ngangi Primary school Kyegegwa District.



© UNICEF/UNI821885/Wamala. Nyamahunge Jennet, a Primary One teacher implementing the Catch-Up and remedial teaching approach at Ngangi Primary School, Kyegegwa District assists learners during a literacy one lesson.



3. WASH, climate action and the environment

From 2026 to 2030, UNICEF will advocate for access to safe water and sanitation services, while promoting hygiene practices and working with communities to strengthen their resilience to environmental and climate change challenges.

PRIORITIES

A) ADVOCATE WITH GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

- Support the Ministry of Water and Environment to develop policies that promote climate-resilient solutions to WASH challenges
- Advocate for community engagement in planning for and maintaining WASH facilities in communities, homes and health facilities
- Collaborate with local governments in areas prone to water scarcity and flooding to ensure that safe water is readily available and is used efficiently

B) PROMOTE HYGIENE AND HEALTHY PRACTICES

- Promote access to handwashing facilities in schools and health facilities and support menstrual hygiene management

- Promote behaviour change campaigns that encourage healthy and sustainable hygiene practices including ending open defecation
- Promote sustainable options for large-scale investments in WASH services for healthcare facilities and schools powered by climate-smart technologies

C) ADVOCATE FOR CLIMATE-RESILIENT SERVICES

- Advocate for strengthened child-focused, climate-resilient policies and programmes across all social sectors, to support national climate commitments
- Promote meaningful participation of children and adolescents in initiatives to reduce environmental degradation and identify local, adolescent led climate resilience solutions

© UNICEF/UNI644529/
Tibaweswa. A young boy walks by the stagnant floodwaters in Rukoora 1 village, Ntoroko District, on September 3, 2024, as he fills his jerrycan with water.

© UNICEF/UNI535687/
Rutherford. Lillian Yavura (R) and Drateru Esther wash their hands outside the new latrine constructed at Tutu HCII in Terego District.



4. Child protection

Over the next five years, UNICEF will work with the government, families, schools, and communities to build a stronger system to protect children from violence and ensure access to justice and birth registration services.

PRIORITIES

A) ADVOCATE FOR A STRONGER CHILD PROTECTION WORKFORCE

- Advocate to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) to professionalize and expand the social workforce
- Advocate that more trained welfare officers, social workers, and counsellors are available at district and community levels
- Support the training of police, judiciary and health workers on child protection

B) PROMOTE ACCESS TO CHILD-FRIENDLY JUSTICE

- Promote access to fair and timely justice for children and adolescents
- Promote alternatives to detention, such as counselling and mediation
- Advocate for strengthening of witness protection programmes

C) PROMOTE PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

- Work with Ministry of Education and Sport and Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to transform schools into safe places, free from violence and offering child-friendly counselling and peer support
- Work with communities, faith leaders, and parents to promote positive social norms and positive discipline practices

D) SUPPORT STRENGTHENING BIRTH REGISTRATION AND LEGAL IDENTITY

- Support the strengthening of civil registration systems so that every child is registered at birth

© UNICEF/UNI840674/
Watsemba. A visit to BT
Kasorora Primary and
ECD School in Kamwenge
District, where UNICEF
Uganda supports
WASH initiatives,
hands-on skills training,
and infrastructure
development.

© UNICEF/UNI849623/Abdul.
Eunice, 10, outside her
classroom block at Kasimeri
Primary School in Moroto
District.



5. Social policy and social protection

Over the next five years, UNICEF will support Uganda to reduce the proportion of children living in poverty and support families to become more resilient.

PRIORITIES

A) ADVOCATE FOR BETTER DATA FOR CHILDREN

- Support the Uganda Bureau of Statistics in filling data gaps related to children
- Use data on poverty and child well-being to inform government policies and budget decisions

B) ADVOCATE FOR BUDGET EFFICIENCIES

- Support the Government in analyzing social sector expenditures for better targeted investments in Human Capital development and children
- Promote private sector engagement and financing in delivering quality services for children

C) ADVOCATE FOR STRENGTHENED SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

- Advocate with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) to strengthen the national social protection system
- Advocate for children to have access to health, education, nutrition, WASH and child protection services in an integrated manner, with a focus on the most vulnerable: girl child, children with disabilities, teenage mothers, etc'

© UNICEF/UNI863207/
Rutherford. Natukunda
Leticia with her baby Treasure
(8 months) at a disability
screening at Kyangwali
Health Centre IV. Using tools
to detect problems related to
seeing and hearing, village
health team moves within the
communities and refers any
cases to the health centre.

© UNICEF/UNI840683/Watsemba.
A visit to Rwengobe Primary School
and ECD community centre in
Rwengobe Village, Kamwenge
District.

UNICEF will embed social and behaviour change, gender equity, and disability inclusion into all programme interventions, along with innovation and digital technologies, and will strengthen community resilience and emergency preparedness.

The Country Programme will be implemented in support of the Government of Uganda national development priorities and coordinated jointly with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The Country Programme contributes to several clusters and programmes of Uganda's National Development Plan IV as well as all three strategic pillars of the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework.

To increase effective implementation of the Country Programme and manage risks, UNICEF will:

- **Leverage resources and partnerships** to address persistent child deprivations and achieve impactful results.
- **Work in agile ways** and adapt to challenges such as influx of refugees, economic and climate related shocks, public health emergencies and potential insecurity.
- **Ensure good stewardship, effectiveness and efficiency** in the utilization of funds for the most pressing needs of children.
- **Establish accountability measures that enable communities to hold UNICEF and partners accountable**, and protect children from exploitation and abuse.
- **Conduct regular reviews with the government** to identify risks, adapt in agile ways and keep the programme relevant to emerging priorities and needs of children.
- **Enforce robust internal and external control mechanisms**, including measures to mitigate fiduciary risks, prevent the diversion of funds, and prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.



UNICEF will track progress on programme implementation through monitoring activities, results, and resource utilization by conducting studies, evaluations and annual reviews, and through community feedback. Working with other UN agencies and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, UNICEF will strengthen national data systems to produce detailed child-related data.

In partnership with the Ugandan Government, the Uganda Human Rights Commission and child rights organizations, UNICEF will also monitor children's rights and report on progress towards national, regional, and global commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the African Union's Agenda 2063. UNICEF will support efforts to build capacity of partners, and will work with key government agencies to conduct strategic country-led evaluations.



© UNICEF/UNI822044/Wamala. Pupils in primary one at Kakoni Wisdom Primary School in Kyaka II refugee settlement in Kyegegwa district try out spelling and drawing during the English lesson.



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