



unicef   
AUSTRALIA  
for every child

FOR EVERY CHILD

Two girls smile and enjoy a singing activity in a UNICEF-supported Child Friendly Space Lao PDR. © UNICEF/UN0232097/Nazer

# UNICEF around the world

**WHO we are** - UNICEF is the United Nations Children's Fund, a leading global humanitarian and development agency that works to uphold the rights of every child. Established in 1946 in the aftermath of World War II, we now operate in 190 countries and territories. Our work aims to help all children — especially the most disadvantaged and marginalised— to lead safe, healthy lives and realise their full potential.

**HOW we work** - UNICEF work to uphold the rights of children through –

- Long term international development programs
- Responding to Humanitarian Emergencies
- Advocating for children to influence policy and guide decision makers

**WHERE does UNICEF get their funding from** - UNICEF is funded entirely through voluntary contributions. The main sources of income are individuals, trusts, businesses, government, community organisations and student fundraising through schools.

## WHY UNICEF -

**Access** - As the only inter-governmental agency in the world devoted exclusively to children, UNICEF is uniquely positioned to bring together international, national, regional, and local leaders to **identify and find sustainable solutions for the world's children**. Such a comprehensive, partnership-based approach allows UNICEF to always keep the world's children on the global agenda.

**Reach** - UNICEF has a proven track record of helping children in need, and the know-how and resources to get the job done. **With nearly 85 percent of UNICEF's personnel working in the field and one of the largest supply networks in the world, UNICEF uses whatever means necessary to provide help and support to children.**

**Expertise** - **UNICEF has an extraordinary level of technical expertise that is backed by a network of highly skilled field staff** and teams of professionals in public health, disease prevention, logistics, political systems, human rights, education and emergency response.

**Leadership** - **UNICEF's commitment to global partnerships** means that we coordinate efforts for children to ensure there is no duplication of service, while filling in the gaps for other organizations. Since 1990, the global under five mortality rate has dropped 53 percent — proof that progress for children is possible even in poor countries. In real numbers that's a decrease from 12.7 million child deaths in 1990 to 5.6 million in 2016.

**Scale** - As an organization that works at scale, **UNICEF is able to provide high impact, low cost solutions for children** that address all of the challenges faced by families in the developing world. Working at this scale means that UNICEF can provide holistic services and deliver them to ensure that children are not protected from one cause of suffering only to be victimized by another. For instance, when UNICEF workers deliver a much-needed vaccine to a child, they often also provide nutritional interventions, deworming medications, vitamin A boosters and other health solutions.

**Efficiency** - While it is a United Nations agency, UNICEF receives no funding from membership dues to the United Nations. On average **75 cents of every dollar spent** goes to programs that help children. **In an emergency 90 cents of every dollar** goes to the crisis.

## Child Health - Vaccinations

**Since 1946, UNICEF has been there for children.** UNICEF was there for the children of Europe in the years after the war, providing food, clothing and medicine for those facing famine and disease. UNICEF was there for all children in 1959, helping to adopt the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and in 1982, spearheading the first child survival and development revolution, ultimately increasing vaccination coverage for children from an average of less than 25 percent to more than 80 percent. And UNICEF is there for children today, working relentlessly to save and improve the lives of children in 190 countries and territories at the local, state, regional, national and international levels. Because of this — and so much more — UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization.

**Working with countless local and global partners around the world, UNICEF is unique in its ability to convene, lead and coordinate a massive effort for children, providing the access, reach, resolve, efficiency and innovative spirit needed to safeguard millions of young lives.** UNICEF prides itself on partnering with organizations doing similar work, ensuring that services are well coordinated in both emergency and non-emergency situations. UNICEF has been consistently recognized, including with the 1965 Nobel Peace Prize, for its collaborative approach that both compliments the work of other organizations and stands out for consistently keeping the rights and basic needs of children on the world's agenda.

**Vaccinations are one of the most efficient ways to save lives, and UNICEF is the global leader in procuring and providing vaccines to the world's children.** UNICEF supplies vaccines that reach 45 percent of the world's children under five while saving millions of dollars by purchasing at high volume and securing donated vaccinations worth hundreds of millions each year.

**Despite all of the progress, many children still lack access to the protection offered by basic immunizations. For instance, even though an inexpensive vaccine has existed for almost a century, a newborn child dies approximately every 15 minutes from neonatal tetanus. UNICEF, with the support of organizations like Kiwanis International, is leading a global initiative to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT) globally.** For only about one dollar per dose, this deadly disease can be neutralized with a series of three tetanus toxoid immunizations for pregnant and prospective mothers that also protect their future newborns.

*“A few years ago, I was looking into the history of vaccination coverage. In 1980 less than 20 percent of children worldwide received the vaccinations for diseases including measles, diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough (pertussis) that children in rich countries were receiving. Less than 15 years later, in 1995, vaccination rates had been raised to over 70 percent. Just this year I finally got around to learning why there was such a huge increase. The Executive Director of UNICEF at the time, Jim Grant, led the way... Jim Grant's achievement is the greatest miracle of saving children's lives ever.” - Bill Gates*



*A health worker vaccinates a child in Papua New Guinea, 11 March 2019. © UNICEF/UN0292644/Holt*

## Early Childhood Development

The first years of a child's life set the stage for everything that comes next.

A child born today in Papua New Guinea faces tremendous obstacles. By her eighteenth birthday, she can expect to complete just 8.2 years of school; worse, the quality of her education means that she is likely to read and write at no more than a fourth-grade level. There is a 50 percent chance that she will suffer from chronic malnutrition. And as a result, it is estimated that she will achieve just 38 percent of the economic productivity that she could if she benefited from adequate health care and 12 years of quality education.

In the Solomon Islands, a newborn child faces similar prospects: by the time he turns 18, he can expect to complete nine years of school and reach the literacy level of a fifth-grader. He has a 33 percent chance of suffering from chronic malnutrition and is likely to achieve only 44 percent of his potential economic productivity.

### ***Supporting early childhood development can change this narrative.***

At UNICEF Australia, we are proud of our special commitment to our neighbours in Asia and the Pacific. We have identified five countries in the region – Laos, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu – where funding for early childhood development (ECD) programs will accelerate progress and drive a significant improvement in national outcomes.

In the first few years of life, babies' brains form more than one million new neural connections each second, a pace that is never matched again. These connections are shaped both by genes and by life experiences, including nutrition, protection, and interaction with caregivers. Yet too many children are still missing out on the 'eat, play, love' that they so urgently need to develop. Put simply, we don't always care for children's brains the way we care for their bodies.

ECD programs fill this gap by promoting health and nutrition services, early learning opportunities, and protection from violence, abuse, neglect and environmental hazards. Together, ECD initiatives help ensure that all children have the foundation they need to succeed.

The evidence is clear: the most effective investments in human capital are those made earliest in the life cycle. A 2016 study found that ECD programs deliver a 13.7 percent rate of return, primarily through building a better-educated, healthier workforce with higher individual earnings. A 20-year study published in 2014 showed that children from poor households who benefited from high-quality stimulation in their early years earned an average of 25 percent more as adults than those who did not have these opportunities. Yet ECD continues to be one of the most under-resourced areas of international development.



Young preschoolers eager to start classes at an Early Learning Centre, Papua New Guinea. © UNICEF/UN0260360/Chambers

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in schools and medical facilities

One in four health care facilities today lacks access to safe drinking water, affecting more than two billion people, while one in five has no sanitation, affecting some 1.5 billion people. A 2016 study of schools revealed that 340 million children worldwide had no drinking water, over 410 million children had no access to sanitation services, and some 650 million children had no access to soap for handwashing or menstrual hygiene management.

In industrialised countries, it is easy to take access to water, sanitation and hygiene for granted. But for hundreds of millions of people around the world, these services are limited or non-existent – placing health, education and livelihoods at risk, and undermining the essential human right to privacy and dignity.

**The World Health Organization estimates that every \$1 invested in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs can lead to economic returns of \$2 for water and \$5.50 for sanitation.**

The benefits of improved WASH are reaped through saved medical costs, increased productivity at work, improved cognitive abilities at school, increased school attendance that can lead to better learning outcomes, and increased job opportunities and learning potential. In rural areas, the return on investment has been shown to be even higher.

It has been estimated that 10 percent of the total global burden of disease could be prevented by improvements to WASH services. For example, 88 percent of diarrhoea cases worldwide can be attributed to inadequate WASH facilities, leading to 1.5 million preventable deaths each year, primarily among children. Hygiene promotion, which underpins all WASH programs at UNICEF, is the most cost-effective health intervention available.

In schools, the establishment of safe water sources has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to increase access and improve learning outcomes. In addition to personal and environmental hygiene, access to water has been associated with improved cognitive abilities and the retention of girls and female teachers in school. These interventions pay dividends for generations to come: each year of secondary school for girls, for instance, increases their eventual earnings by up to 25 percent.

“Water, sanitation and hygiene services in health facilities are the most basic requirements of infection prevention and control, and of quality care. They are fundamental to respecting the dignity and human rights of every person who seeks health care and of health workers themselves.” *António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General*



Children wash hands around a handwashing station at school in Myanmar. © UNICEF/UN035544/UNICEF/UNI193997/Gilbertson V