

In 2024 UNICEF efforts led to significant investments to bolster social protection systems in all contexts, expand humanitarian cash transfer programs and catalyze crucial public and private sector commitments to child-sensitive policies, all enforced to tackle multidimensional child poverty and disparities. UNICEF supported national public finance efforts, strengthening social sector budgets for greater and better investments in children.

### **Expanding inclusive and shock responsive social protection**

UNICEF focused on expanding the coverage of social protection, strengthening its systems, and ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable populations through integrated and inclusive programs. Efforts were directed at enhancing the scope and adequacy of child benefits, disability-inclusive programs, and gender-responsive policies, including promoting family-friendly policies, linking social protection to essential services such as education and health, and advancing care systems. Additionally, UNICEF worked with partner agencies to integrate displaced populations into national social protection frameworks and fostered policies that support unpaid care work, empowering families and reducing gender inequality.

In 2024, UNICEF supported governments scale up child benefits, to tackle child poverty and yield wider positive social and economic impacts. Over 170 million children across 102 million households were reached with cash transfers supported by UNICEF, in both development and humanitarian contexts. This included a nearly 80% increase in the number of children with disabilities from 2023 and more than double the number of children on the move compared to 2023. Child benefits were acknowledged as a [proven solution for children](#)<sup>i</sup>. Jointly with ILO and Save the Children, UNICEF launched the [Child Benefit Tracker](#), an online platform to monitor children's access to social protection and identify coverage gaps.

### **Tackling child poverty in humanitarian and fragile contexts**

In 2024, an estimated 183.5 million children required humanitarian assistance. Together with partners, UNICEF responded to 448 emergencies in 104 countries, delivering humanitarian assistance in accordance with its Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and humanitarian principles.

Focusing on risk-informed strategies, UNICEF removed financial barriers to essential services, meeting urgent humanitarian needs at scale while building resilience. Through its multi-sectoral mandate and using both national systems and direct delivery, ensuring timely, needs-based support, UNICEF ensured vulnerable children and families receive immediate support in nutrition, healthcare, education, water, sanitation, and child protection.

Leveraging its unique position to address both immediate and long-term challenges faced by children in conflict and crisis, in 2024 UNICEF effectively delivered humanitarian cash transfers, improving outcomes for children in fragile contexts. UNICEF continued to scale the use of cash-based assistance in fragile and

humanitarian settings with \$689 million USD delivered to 3.5 million families, covering 15.5 million children, in 48 countries.

UNICEF reached 900,000 children on the move with cash transfers as part of humanitarian and development programming and collaborated with Governments to address de jure and de facto barriers for children on the move by integrating displacement considerations into the key building blocks of social protection institutionalization within government. The increasing number of UNICEF offices reporting on the state of inclusion of migrant and displaced populations in national social protection systems highlights both the relevance and the progress in this area.

### **Human capability development – addressing the non-income forms of poverty.**

In most countries UNICEF supports national analysis of the multiple deprivations the most disadvantaged children experience, in areas such as health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and housing – and strengthening social sectors to reach families with children, living in poverty.

In 2024, non-income forms of poverty were tackled and addressed in all regions of the world. With UNICEF support over 18 million people gained access to at least basic sanitation services, over 33 million to safe water, and over 21 million to basic hygiene. The organization's direct support resulted in 6.7 million people using climate-resilient water systems, up from 5.4 million in 2022.

In addition, 26 million out-of-school children and adolescents gained access to education through UNICEF support, including 9 million in humanitarian settings and 3.7 million children on the move. Over 18 million children accessed digital education. UNICEF supported 35.6 million births in 89 countries in 2024; reached 63.4 million children through efforts on integrated management of neonatal and childhood illnesses; and trained 1.2 million health workers. Early detection services for wasting reached 251 million children under 5, and 9.3 million were treated for severe wasting and other forms of severe acute malnutrition

As the world's largest purchaser of vaccines, UNICEF facilitated routine immunizations, preventive campaigns and outbreak responses, delivering 2.8 billion vaccine doses to 99 countries in 2024, including 652.7 million for outbreak responses in 39 countries. Partnering with Gavi, UNICEF supported 35 countries in the Big Catch-up initiative to vaccinate children who missed essential vaccines due to COVID-19 disruptions. UNICEF supported the immunization of 110.4 million children against measles, including 24.6 million in emergencies, an increase of 29.4 per cent compared to 2022. A new malaria vaccine was introduced in 17 countries, and over 25 million adolescent girls received the human papillomavirus vaccine. UNICEF reached 21 million people to boost vaccine uptake and expanded cold chain equipment and vaccine management systems in 70 countries. The organization delivered over 1.5 billion polio vaccine doses to 87 countries, contributing to the reduction of global polio cases by nearly 25 per cent between 2023 and 2024.

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<sup>i</sup> See UNICEF. Proven Solutions for Children. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/reports/proven-solutions-children>. Accessed April 2,