

Children's health: a global priority

An investment opportunity for the private and public sectors

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South Sudan Dr Bol Chaw Manyang, Medical Director of a UNICEF-supported hospital, conducts a session to advise expectant mothers on safe delivery of babies.

Stronger systems

create better health outcomes at large scale, and the positive ripple effects of your investments do not stop there

The opportunity

When you support UNICEF's work on health, you support one of the simplest, yet most fundamental visions of the world – that every child has the right to survive and thrive. And today, more than at any other time in UNICEF's 75-year history, with your support, we have an opportunity to make real change and make that vision a reality.

UNICEF has a clear plan for what needs to be done and we have made real progress in recent years. Our drive to improve health outcomes suffered setbacks because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the pandemic also created an opportunity, bringing about unique conditions to accelerate innovative programmes and solutions. If we act now, we can harness this momentum and begin to create a global shift away from simply treating diseases towards strengthening health systems, so that all children and women have access to affordable, quality, equitable health care.

UNICEF's proven track record, clear plan and unique ability to work with governments for children means that donors supporting our work can have the confidence that they are saving the lives of the children of today and helping protect the children of tomorrow by enabling governments around the world to develop health systems that work more effectively for children.

Stronger systems create better health outcomes at large scale, and the positive ripple effects of your investments do not stop there. By securing better health, you will also nurture dynamic, competitive thriving economies, reduce poverty, increase stability and progress, and strengthen economic development.¹ And because a healthy childhood leads to fewer sick days, you will also bring about better education and thus increase adult productivity.²

We hope you will join us in investing in women's, children's and adolescents' health, to end preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths, and to promote the healthy development of all children.

UNICEF and health: five key messages

- By supporting UNICEF's health goals, donors can both save the lives of the children of today and help us protect the children of tomorrow by enabling governments to strengthen their health systems
- 2. The COVID-19 pandemic has reversed many gains in health indicators, but has also created opportunities to accelerate innovative programmes and solutions
- UNICEF's work on health tackles areas including primary health care, immunization, HIV and AIDS and mental health
- 4. UNICEF works with governments and institutions to ensure a concerted, efficient, and effective way to deliver results.
- 5. UNICEF is 100 per cent voluntarily funded and needs significant resources and strategic partnerships to deliver a full array of health targets by 2025 and to ensure the world can reach our Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

¹ <<u>www.who.int.int/health_financing/UHC_ENvs_BD.pdf</u>>

² Investing in health for economic development: Universidad de las Americas, Puebla.

17

million children in 2020 were 'zero dose' – not having received any diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis-containing vaccine

The challenges

To address this overall context of child, adolescent and maternal health, UNICEF and partners must tackle the following challenges.

Situation in numbers in 2019

- Every **16 seconds**, a baby was stillborn
- Every minute, a child died from malaria
- Every two minutes, a child was infected with HIV
- Every hour, 33 women did not survive childbirth
- Every day, 14,000 children under the age of five died
- In one year, one million adolescents died of preventable causes

1 Inequitable health outcomes

In recent decades, the world has made significant strides improving health outcomes for children and adolescents. But inequities among and within countries persist. Especially in low- and middle-income countries, millions of children lack access to quality health care and services. The single most important factor that determines a child's ability to survive and thrive is where the child is born; gender is another.



In some places, health facilities are too far or expensive to reach. In others, facilities lack the medical supplies or trained personnel necessary to deliver basic essential and quality care. Without quality health care and services near where they live, children are more susceptible to illness, environmental hazards and the devastating effects of humanitarian emergencies. They are also more likely to face challenges going to and staying in school – with consequences that spread out across society.

2 Not all children access immunization services

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit immunization hard. In 2020, 17 million children were 'zero dose' – not having received any diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis-containing vaccine (DTP1) – up from 14 million in 2019 before the pandemic. Of these, 12 million zero dose children live in 19 priority countries (see map). These children are the most likely to suffer multiple deprivations, and are found clustered in communities that are remote, rural, affected by conflict or in urban slums, underserved by wider health and social welfare programme. These children and communities must be reached, or they will remain at risk of death from vaccine-preventable diseases.³

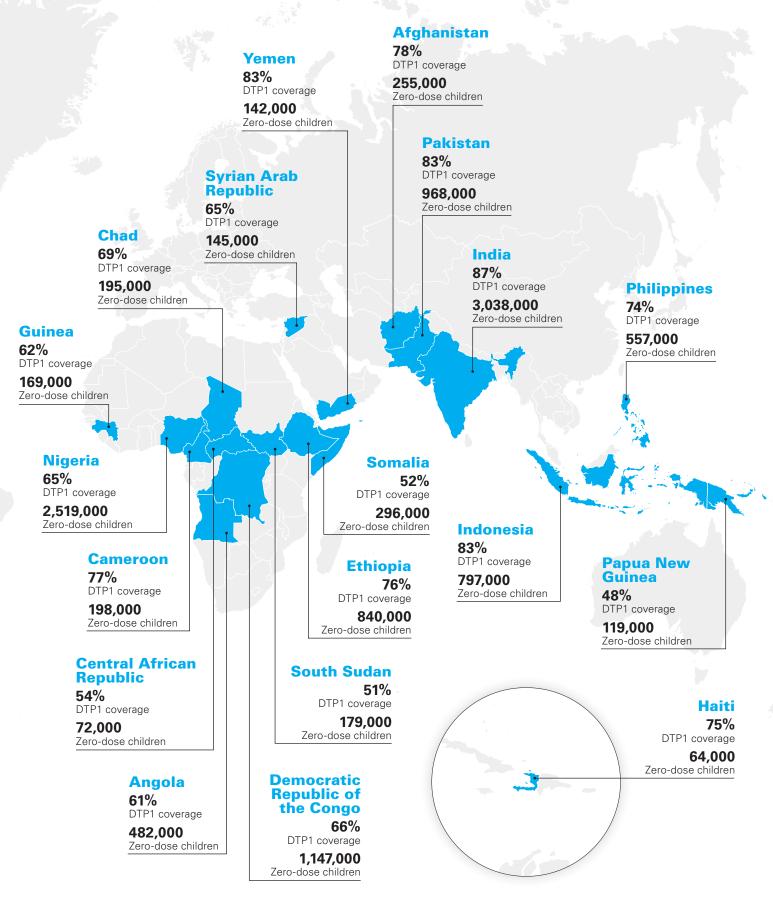
In 2021, most countries experienced drops in childhood vaccination coverage rates, and lifesaving vaccination campaigns were postponed in 50 countries. Subsequently, in January and February 2022 a sharp increase in measles cases signalled a heightened risk of spread of vaccine-preventable diseases and could trigger larger outbreaks, potentially affecting millions of children. Pandemic-related disruptions, increasing inequalities in access to vaccines, and the diversion of resources from routine immunization are leaving too many children without protection. In addition, with millions of people being displaced due to conflicts and crises including in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Somalia and Afghanistan, disruptions to routine immunization and COVID-19 vaccination services, lack of clean water and sanitation, and overcrowding are increasing the risk of vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks.⁴

³ Devex: Opinion: Reach zero dose children to build back better).

⁴ UNICEF and WHO warn of 'perfect storm' of conditions for measles outbreaks, affecting children, 27 April 2022, at <<u>https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-and-who-warn-perfect-storm-conditions-measles-outbreaks-affecting-children></u>

Priority countries by absolute number of zero dose children in 2020

UNICEF's 19 priority countries, which account for 75 per cent of world's zero-dose children.



Every 100 seconds,

a child or young person under age 20 is newly infected with HIV

(3) HIV and AIDS continue to take a heavy toll, especially among adolescent girls

In the global effort to end HIV and AIDS, children and adolescents continue to fall behind. Every 100 seconds, a child or young person under age 20 is newly infected with HIV. New cases of infection still occur at birth, during breastfeeding and in adolescence; and not enough children and adolescents living with HIV have access to testing and life-saving treatment. As a result, hundreds die every day. Most new infections in children and adolescents occur in sub-Saharan Africa, the epicentre of HIV. **In 2020**:

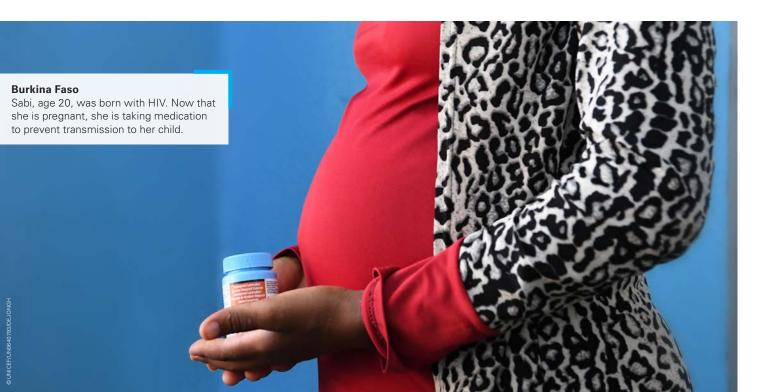
- There were **160,000 new HIV infections** in children aged 0-14 globally
- 2.78 million children and adolescents were living with HIV, nearly 88 per cent of them in sub-Saharan Africa
- Only 54 per cent of infected 0–14-year-olds were on HIV treatment as, compared to 74 per cent of people living with HIV aged 15 and older
- There were **100,000 deaths of children** from AIDS-related causes

(4) Young children and adolescents face unique and multiple challenges

All children – including those with disabilities and developmental delays, those living in poverty or deprivation, and those affected by conflict or displacement – need nurturing care and health services to survive and thrive. But millions do not receive them in places where health systems are not equipped to support routine health interactions among children, families and caregivers. Without regular monitoring, some children miss out on specialized health services and developmental support that could help them fulfil their potential.

Each year, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) claim 41 million lives: That is about 70 per cent of all global deaths. While NCDs tend to manifest in adulthood, many are linked to behaviours adopted during childhood and adolescence. Because these diseases have implications for nutrition, education and the environment, greater action is needed from governments, businesses and communities to prevent them from becoming epidemics.

An estimated 26 per cent of deaths in children under five years old can be prevented by addressing environmental risks. For example, the global rise of cancer, diabetes,



1 in 3 children – up to 800 million worldwide – have dangerously high blood lead levels

neurodevelopmental disorders and asthma has accompanied a surge in air pollution, e-waste and the use of harmful chemicals in everyday products. Three hundred million children live in areas with toxic air (where toxicity levels are six or more times higher than international guidelines).⁵ And around 1 in 3 children – up to 800 million worldwide – have dangerously high blood lead levels.⁶ Improving children's ability to survive and thrive means addressing the profound ways in which environmental factors shape their health and well-being.

Death and injury due to road traffic accidents is on the rise worldwide. It is now the biggest killer of children and young people aged between 5 and 29 years.⁷

(5) Many children, adolescents and caregivers suffer from poor mental health

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the burden on children was huge, with 14 per cent of children and adolescents aged 6-18 worldwide experiencing mental disorders,⁸ and one in four children living with a parent with a mental disorder.⁹ In recent years, changing humanitarian contexts have created a more dangerous environment for child and adolescent well-being and development. Prolonged conflict, mass displacement, violence, exploitation, terrorism, disease outbreaks, intensifying natural disasters and climate change all lead to greater instability and more difficult conditions for children's mental health and psychosocial well-being.¹⁰

In addition, COVID-19 has put the mental health and well-being of an entire generation at risk, with potential for long-term poor mental health consequences among children, young people and their parents and caregivers in all corners of the globe. The pandemic disrupted many of the foundations that assure children's mental health

- ⁸ IMHE 2019, <<u>http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool</u>>
- ⁹ WHO Global Health Estimates 2020 <<u>https://data.unicef.org/resources/adolescent-health-dashboard-regional-profiles/2</u>>

¹⁰ Operational guidelines on community based mental health and psychosocial support in humanitarian settings: Three-tiered support for children and families (field test version), UNICEF, New York, 2018. and well-being, with many children likely to have faced heightened isolation, anxiety and stress due to disrupted education and uncertainty about their futures at critical points in their emotional development. Furthermore, those in difficult family contexts of violence, neglect and abuse have been cut off from external support from teachers and friends. Stress, social isolation and violence in the family are likely to affect brain health and development in young children and adolescents.¹¹

¹¹ <<u>https://unsdg.un.org/resources/policy-brief-impact-covid-19-children</u>>



⁵ UNICEF, 2016, Pollution: 300 million children breathing toxic air - UNICEF report, <<u>https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/pollution-300-million-children-breathing-toxic-air-unicef-report></u>

⁶ UNICEF, 2020, The Toxic Truth, <<u>https://www.unicef.org/reports/toxic-truth-</u> childrens-exposure-to-lead-pollution-2020>

WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018.

UNICEF's sustainable response

UNICEF works around the world to strengthen health systems; immunize and treat children for pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria and other health conditions; help countries combat non-communicable diseases; and support children with mental health conditions, developmental delays and disabilities. To end preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths and promote the health and development of all children and adolescents, UNICEF continues to scale up work in primary health care at the community level.

UNICEF's health response is built around the following areas:

(1) Strengthening primary health care and high-impact health

Primary health care is the first port of call for anyone who needs medical advice or care. At UNICEF, we put children first and so our experts come together to create a package of services. This means that we can cater for mothers-to-be, newborns, children and adolescents with solutions that address key issues such as health and nutrition; immunization; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); HIV; and early childhood development. Importantly, we design service delivery to achieve maximum impact: whether through the community, via outreach, at a facility, or a combination. This greatly improves the quality of care for children. In addition, we also ensure that supply chains are more effective so that health professionals have everything they need. Finally, we tap into the expertise of community health workers, helping them to become part of the health system. Together, these actions strengthen the primary health system so that it can better help children.

(2) Ensuring immunization services for all children

UNICEF is uniquely positioned to ensure that all children and women receive the vaccines they need. As a leader in advocacy for equity in immunization, UNICEF works with partners to supply vaccines, enough to reach 45 per cent of the world's children under five. In over 100 countries, UNICEF works with governments, private sector, non-government organizations and other UN agencies to engage communities, procure and distribute vaccines, keep



Yemen

A health worker vaccinates a child as part of a public health campaign, supported by UNICEF, to vaccinate around 1.35 million children (aged 6 months and 10 years) against measles and rubella in 10 provinces in 2022.

UNICEF

ensures that children, their mothers and adolescents are tested for HIV and linked to treatment

supplies safe and effective and help ensure affordable access for even the hardest-to-reach families in emergency settings. Working with partners, UNICEF establishes, maintains, and improves the cold chain for vaccines and other essential medical supplies. UNICEF identifies and prioritizes marginalized and underserved communities and strengthens the front-line immunization workforce to reach them.

Going the last mile to reach all children with vaccine in Nepal.

③ Fast-tracking the end of HIV and AIDS

To break the cycle of new infections and deaths, UNICEF ensures that children, their mothers and adolescents are tested for HIV and linked to treatment. UNICEF prioritizes structural factors – poverty, lack of education and violence – that put people, especially adolescent girls and young women, at risk of acquiring HIV. UNICEF provides pregnant mothers with antiretroviral treatment (ART) to stay alive and healthy, and to stop transmission of HIV to their children during pregnancy, delivery or breastfeeding. UNICEF tests children and adolescents for HIV, links them to services, provides lifelong ART early in the disease and improves retention in care and adherence. The efforts inform new and improved health policies as well as strengthen both health and community systems.

AIDS free adolescent in Malawi.

(4) Addressing multiple challenges in early childhood and adolescence

UNICEF supports governments to ensure the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents. This includes services for early childhood, disability, non-communicable diseases, environmental health and injuries. UNICEF and partners use a multisectoral approach to health, wellbeing and development, focusing on integrating nurturing care into routine health interactions between families and caregivers. To support children with disabilities, UNICEF ensures that they are included and covered by existing health and other early childhood development (ECD) services. To counter the increase in prevalence among children of non-communicable diseases – such as chronic respiratory diseases, cancers and diabetes – UNICEF takes actions to promote good health. Working with young people, UNICEF is elevating action on environmental pollution and climate change. UNICEF is also working to prevent and reduce road traffic fatalities and drownings.

(5) Mental health and psychosocial wellbeing

Mental health and well-being is a growing and evolving area that UNICEF is addressing within regions and countries to promote the mental health and well-being of parents and caregivers, and to support children's and adolescents' development and their chances for reaching their full potential. UNICEF's leadership in this space for over a decade, integrating mental health across sectors, supports its position in promoting and implementing mental health and well-being through child protection, health, ECD, disability and nutrition programmes.



Democratic Republic of the Congo Chirac, age 4, and Felix, age 7, lost their mother to Ebola. Twice a day, Liévin, a UNICEF-supported psychologist, visits the family to support the children's mental health. "Papa Liévin comes to visit us every day," says Felix. "We play quizzes and it makes us feel good."

Results

UNICEF has been at the forefront of decades of progress globally on child survival, health and wellbeing, and realization of children's rights to survive and thrive. By 2020, more children lived to see their first birthday than at any other time in history. Child mortality had fallen by 50 per cent since 2000 - driven in large part by a halving in malaria mortality, from 25 deaths per 100,000 population at risk in 2000 to 10 at the beginning of 2020. Between 2000 and 2019 alone, routine immunization efforts saved more than 37 million lives in 98 low- and middle-income countries. In 2020, an estimated 85 per cent of pregnant women living

with HIV received antiretrovirals for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission and to keep them alive and well, up from 17 per cent in 2010.

This progress has been set back in the last two years by COVID-19, which has overwhelmed some of the world's most robust health care systems. UNICEF is responding to the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis by focusing on community-based and digital solutions, and seizing opportunities to make health-care systems more resilient.

In 2020-21, UNICEF supported the public health response to the pandemic and the continuity of essential health services. In 2021, UNICEF...

supported the delivery of 38.9 million live births in health-care facilities in 52 high-burden countries, an increase from 30.5 million in 2020. Between 2018 and 2021, with UNICEF support, the cumulative total increased from 84 million to 180 million live births delivered in health-care facilities, far exceeding the Strategic Plan 2021 target (140 million)



exponentially scaled its support to 45 governments to mobilize resources and oxygen systems to meet the increased need for oxygen therapy during the pandemic, while ensuring long-term impact for the survival of newborns and children with severe pneumonia and other life-threatening conditions



provided 17.5 million people in 22 countries with insecticide-treated nets to prevent malaria

> vaccinated some 22.4 million children against measles in 48 countries reporting humanitarian situations

as the largest single buyer of vaccines globally, and with longstanding expertise in procurement and logistics, procured 2.751 billion doses of vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccine doses, for governments and other development partners for 123 countries, enough to reach 46 per cent of the world's children under five



ensured provision of antibiotics for an additional 8.75 million children with suspected pneumonia in 25 high-burden countries, increasing the cumulative total from 6 million children who received antibiotics in 2016 to 43.3 million in 2021



of HPV

girls in target countries

received their final dose



ensured that 2.78 million

125 countries should see their primary health-care systems strengthened with UNICEF support in 2022-2025

UNICEF's work on primary health care is supporting implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3: Good Health and Well Being. UNICEF's Strategy for Health is aligned to the SDGs' timeline (2016–2030) and focuses on two overarching goals:

- 1. End preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths
- 2. Promote the health and development of all children

UNICEF's targets for 2022-2025



Strengthen primary health-care systems in 125 countries



Vaccinate a minimum of 50 million children against measles annually



Support the integration and rolling out of innovative **HIV diagnostic platforms** in primary health care in 72 countries



Support the integration of **adolescent health priorities**, including sexual and reproductive health, in primary health-care services or through school and digital platforms, in 42 countries



Support the integration of **early childhood development** in primary health care in 86 countries



Support the integration of **mental health services** in primary health care in 70 countries

Pakistan

A 5-year-old boy receives the polio vaccine from a door-to-door vaccinator as part of a national polio campaign. Cases of polio have fallen by 99.9 per cent globally since 1988 and the disease is now endemic in just two countries – Afghanistan and Pakistan.



Why partner with UNICEF

As donors, you make deliberate choices to use your resources in a way that can create the best results. At UNICEF, we do the same. With over 75 years of experience, we know what it takes to use resources to achieve the greatest impact for children. This impact rests on five key comparative advantages. This way of working means we tackle the challenges that matter, with the right responses, in ways that benefit the greatest numbers of children. When you partner with us for health, you help us strengthen health systems which pay dividends for whole communities and their future generations. And more than that, you support an approach that integrates primary health care with other essential services in the community. As a result, your contribution goes even further and supports the health and wellbeing of the whole child.

Key comparative advantages of partnership with UNICEF

- Our expert staff: We are immensely proud of our health staff. Working around the world, they have deep expertise and a network of contacts and relationships which are the lifeblood of the impact we deliver for children day in day out. We cherish the hard-earned trust placed in them by donors, governments, partners and of course, children and their families.
- Leading and pioneering: Your support allows us to lead and innovate for children. Your trust gives us the flexibility to take risks and innovate, which is how we create new ideas to benefit children now and into the future. Our rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic where we rapidly procured and supplied COVID-19 vaccines and used our existing infrastructure to help facilitate their logistically demanding delivery is just one example of this.
- Taking the work to scale: UNICEF achieves impact for children because we have a footprint in over 190 countries. You amplify our impact by pooling your funds with other donors and helping us scale up innovations, proven best practices and programming. What that means is that UNICEF can promote adoption of global best practices, then tailor them for each country's contexts and the needs of children, and then roll out policies or programmes to reach scale around the world.
- Meeting needs throughout the entire childhood and adolescence: No matter how challenging or remote the setting, we find new ways to reach the children, adolescents and mothers most at risk of life-threatening diseases and outbreaks. And we never give up. And we complement this with key interventions from across all of the social sectors from health and nutrition, to protection, to clean water and sanitation. This means we meet all needs through various stages of development from early childhood to adolescence.
- Before, during, and after an emergency: In a crisis, every hour matters. Our teams are first responders because your support has enabled us to be in a country long before a crisis, building the effective systems, relationships and plans that we need to support children. And when emergencies strike, our experts are in place and can use their existing skills, equipment and relationships to make an impact wherever it matters most. We have close relationships with the partners that can deliver real change, fast: with ministries of health at national and sub-regional levels as well as in communities. Sadly, when a crisis first ends, the children's suffering may not. Your support means we can stay long after the emergency and for as long as children need us to ensure their future wellbeing.

How you can invest with UNICEF

As a 100 per cent voluntarily funded organization, UNICEF has worked for over 75 years with donors and partners who, like us, want to be there for every child. We offer you partnership opportunities that are designed to meet your mission or passion, and also achieve our shared ambition for children.

Ensuring the world's children and adolescents receive the health care they require in their communities is a difficult and complex task. In order to ensure that our work is the most efficient and effective, UNICEF offers three distinct investment options, each fit for the challenge and each offering donors the opportunity to capitalize on our experience and skills to create the best results for children. These are: Core Resources for Results, the Health Thematic Fund, and Specific Programmes. However you invest, your funds will make a difference, for every child.

Option 1 – Invest in Core Resources for Results

If you believe in this simple mission: for every child, this option may be for you. The unique challenges of health for children and adolescents may be of strong interest, but you also recognize that it takes an integrated approach across all areas of a child's life to ensure their wellbeing. You might also have a wide area of countries that you are open to exploring. Core Resources for Results, known within UNICEF as "RR", is our most prized resource because it enables three things: 1) predictability for our staff who are planning and implementing programmes in changing contexts around the world, 2) the maximum flexibility to decide how best to spend these valuable contributions to achieve the greatest impact, and 3) efficiency by maintaining them as "unrestricted" and thereby reducing transaction costs and maximizing the funds that can go straight to children.

Each year, UNICEF uses a portion of its total RR funding to achieve outcomes specifically to improve child and adolescent health. Whilst some donors already fully appreciate the power of system strengthening, it is still often an 'undervalued asset'. Partnering with UNICEF on Resources for Results offers ambitious donors the chance to scale up their impact with exceptional value for money.

Option 2 – Invest in the Health Thematic Fund

If you or your institution are dedicated to our health programming, then you may want to consider the UNICEF Health Thematic Fund. Like RR, it also provides high levels of predictability and flexibility, while also enabling you to target your funding to health results. And you can designate your contribution to achieving global aims or to a specific country. It is where your passion meets our mission. We believe that this trust-based approach delivers donors one of the strongest returns on investment. You could think of UNICEF's Health Thematic Fund like a portfolio. UNICEF's most ambitious and high-reward system strengthening activities.

The flexibility of thematic funds gives UNICEF the opportunity to balance the needs against the immense challenges facing children today and our ambitious targets. A Health report shared with you each year provides a collection of key achievements, learnings, and stories of children globally or in your chosen country.

Option 3 – Invest in specific programmes

For some of you, your organizational mission or your own unique passions may lead you to fund a specific health programme. UNICEF has a long history of developing strategic partnerships to meet partners' priorities and philanthropic goals. We also work with partners to complement financial investment with the technical expertise of their corporation or institution or by joining forces to advocate for primary health care. These bespoke partnerships see donors build long term relationships with our experts and country offices to develop lasting and powerful initiatives that endure and can be scaled up to benefit children in the long term.

Republic of North Macedonia A health worker performs a medical check-up before administrating a vaccine to a young child.



Investing flexibly to achieve the greatest impact

Here are some indicative ways in which investments in UNICEF's health programming could achieve results for children.

Primary health care

US\$5 million

would enable UNICEF to support 5 countries to strengthen their supply chains to save the lives of mothers and newborns

US\$500,000

per year would support national efforts to enhance capacity at sub-national level to better manage primary health care systems

Early child and adolescent health

US\$7 million

would fund clean air solutions to protect child and maternal health in seven countries

US\$250,000

would fund the rolling out a training and support package on care for child development for front-line workers in primary health care in facilities and in communities

Immunization

US\$6 million

protects 4 million children against measles and rubella through a vaccination campaign

US\$250,000

supports planning, budgeting, and advocacy for sustainable immunization financing in one country for one year

HIV and AIDS

US\$1 million

ensures that thousands of pregnant and breastfeeding women living with HIV receive and adhere to HIV treatment

Mental health

US\$500,000

would develop an integrated package in one country for mental health and train health-care staff to identify and manage priority mental health conditions in primary health care

US\$150,000

will fund a programme for 125,000 adolescents in one country to increase awareness and mental health literacy and build socioemotional skills among adolescents and youth, as well as to create conditions for more open dialogue and reduction in the stigma and shame associated with mental ill-health



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Bangladesh

A newborn baby undergoes photo therapy at a UNICEF primary health centre in a refugee camp. Photo therapy is used for the treatment of neonatal hyperbilirubinaemia, otherwise known as jaundice.



Abheet Solomon and Vivian Lopez

Global Health Planning and Partnerships Programme Group

Programme Coordination Unit

Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division Public Partnerships Division programmecoordination@unicef.org

www.unicef.org

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