

UNICEF Hindu Inter-faith Action

What is UNICEF?

UNICEF – the United Nations Children’s Fund - is the only global organisation working specifically for children. UNICEF works with local communities and governments in 158 countries to help every child reach their full potential ensuring that they have the essentials for a healthy start in life. Essentials that we perhaps take for granted - such as clean water, basic education, immunisation and health care. UNICEF carries out this work through long term sustainable development and in times of conflict and disaster.



UNICEF/1999/Edward Carwardine

In the UK, UNICEF aims to win support for children worldwide by campaigning on UK and international children’s issues. We work with partners in business, local organisations, schools, faith groups and communities to raise money to support UNICEF’s programmes internationally.



UNICEF/HQ95-0774/Laura Hess

UNICEF receives no direct funding from the United Nations and is reliant upon voluntary income to fund its work.

UNICEF and faith organisations

UNICEF is a non-religious, apolitical organisation; however faith based organisations are important partners in UNICEF’s work with children all over the world. Religious leaders enjoy close and regular contact with communities, their voice is highly respected and they can be vital in influencing change.

Worldwide, UNICEF and religious partners from different faiths are acting together as advocates for children on a wide range of programmes.

UNICEF’s work in India

India is home to 414 million children and 26 million more are born every year – more than in any other country. UNICEF is fully committed to working with the Indian Government to ensure that each child receives the best start in life and thrives to develop his or her full potential.



A key concern is the health of young children. Despite health improvements over the last thirty years, lives continue to be lost to early childhood diseases, inadequate newborn care and child-birth related causes. More than 2 million children die every year from preventable infections. Infant mortality is as high as 64 per 1,000 live births and maternal deaths are similarly high. UNICEF is working to immunise children against diseases such as diphtheria, measles, polio, tuberculosis, tetanus and whooping cough, as well as train birth attendants in safe birthing practices and provide resources and training for health centres in the poorer parts of India.

UNICEF/2001/David Bull

Malnutrition



UNICEF/India/2004

One third of malnourished children in the world live in India. Malnourished children are less likely to perform well in school and are at greater risk of disease and early death. The prevalence of malnutrition varies across states Rajasthan being one of the states with the highest rates of malnutrition, where more than half the children are malnourished. The problem is not related to food intake alone; it is also influenced by access to health services, quality of care for children and pregnant mothers, as well as good hygiene practices.

UNICEF is assisting the Government to improve the training of childcare workers, develop innovative communication approaches with mothers, provide essential nutritional supplies, and strengthen the support available to families and communities.

Water and Sanitation



UNICEF/India/2004
Children collecting water during the floods in Bihar

An estimated 400,000 children under five years old die each year due to diarrhoea. Several million more suffer due to diseases caused by poor hygiene and unsafe drinking water. Poverty and lack of awareness, as well as lack of easy access to water, are reasons for poor hygiene practices in homes and communities. The absence of toilets affects women and children in particular, and accounts for low attendance of girls in school.

UNICEF is supporting the government in developing water and sanitation systems. A particular concern is to ensure that marginalised groups, especially women and the poor, participate in and benefit from decisions about improved services.

Education



UNICEF/India/2004
Gujarati girl attending her first day at school

Despite a major improvement in literacy rates over the last decade, the number of children not in school remains high. The education system faces a shortage of resources, schools and teachers.

UNICEF supports the national objective to ensure that all children complete five years of school and have access to quality education, especially girls who are often marginalised or needed to help at home. UNICEF wants to encourage children to stay in school by making it child-centred with interactive learning to make it motivating and fun.

How you can help!

Please support UNICEF's work in India, helping to give children the best start in life.
Cheques can be made payable to UNICEF and sent to:
UNICEF Hindu Interfaith Appeal, FREEPOST, Billericay, CM12 0BR
or call 0870 606 3377 or email helpdesk@unicef.org.uk for more information.

Thank you!