

UNICEF'S EVERY CHILD FUND 2025 REPORT

The Every Child Fund is vital to UNICEF's work. Instead of supporting a single programme, country or situation, these funds are deployed to wherever they can be most effective in countries and communities around the world. The Fund resources programme delivery, innovation, sustainability and excellence.

In 2025, global turmoil and compounding crises pushed children's needs to record levels, while steep cuts to international aid have drastically reduced the resources available to help them.

Despite this, UNICEF continued to deliver. In the current global context, flexible, unrestricted funding is more important than ever.

Our staff and partners responded to emergencies in over 100 countries, scaled activities to fill the gaps left by funding cuts and continued to bridge the gap between life-saving aid and sustainable long-term results for children.

The Every Child Fund provides the foundation on which all these achievements are built.

As a supporter of this unique fund, your contribution becomes impact at every stage of a child's life, helping ensure that every child can fulfil their potential.

We are pleased to share this edition of our Every Child Fund Annual Report, which includes impactful stories that illustrate what collective support to the Fund has achieved in 2025.

On behalf of all of us here at UNICEF UK, thank you for your support.

> **"[These] resources are the foundation** on which every other investment in children depends, and they are under pressure at precisely the moment when the need for them has never been **greater."**
>
> **Catherine Russell, UNICEF Executive Director**

Impact at a glance

By supporting the Every Child Fund, you contributed to this incredible impact in 2025:

- Over 1.6 billion polio vaccine doses delivered.
- 255 million children in 54 countries reached with services to prevent, detect and treat malnutrition.
- 27.8 million children reached with education support across 90 countries.
- Over 17 million people provided access to basic sanitation services.

Every Child Fund:
Global Reach, Local Impact

A child's life does not divide neatly into sectors. Their health depends on their nutrition. Their education depends on their safety. Their future depends on all of it at once.

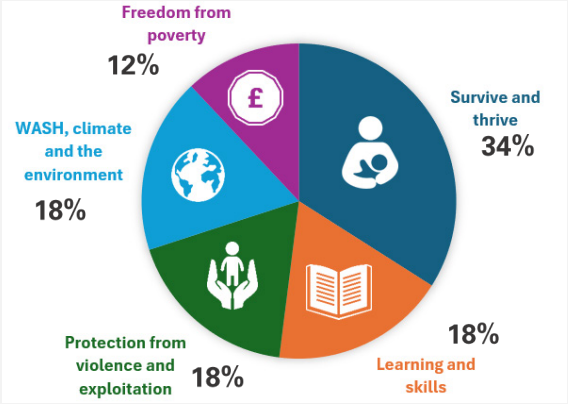
UNICEF's Every Child Fund follows that logic, spanning all core areas of UNICEF's work across the globe. **Supporting the Fund is a clear way to enable families, communities and national and local institutions to reach every child.**

Underpinning this is the expertise, excellence and effectiveness that earns trust amongst UNICEF supporters and partners. This includes shaping policy dialogue, our unparalleled logistics network and the infrastructure to respond quickly.

Unrestricted support generously given by people like yourselves is the difference between reaching children and reaching them well.

Providing holistic support

In 2025, the Every Child Fund supported all areas of UNICEF's work, across 149 countries, with Funds divided as follows:

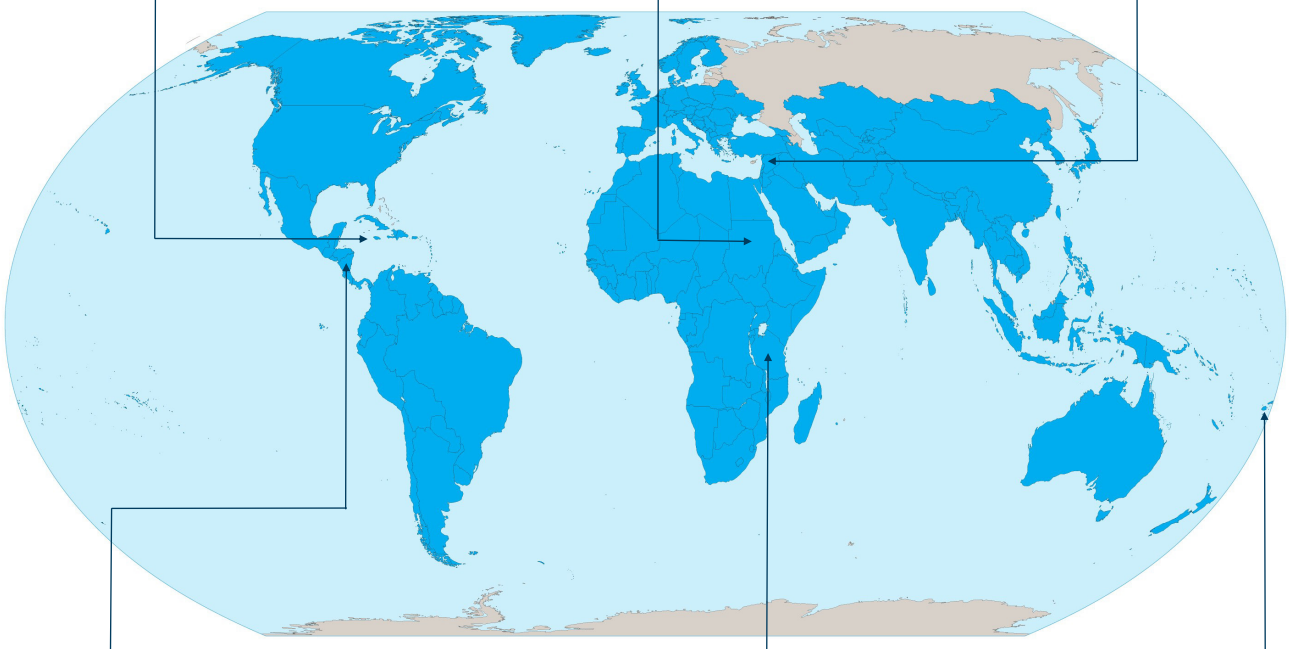


Here are some achievements enabled by pooled unrestricted funding in 2025:

Jamaica. When Hurricane Melissa made landfall, UNICEF was ready to respond immediately to 190,000 people thanks to the pre-positioning of supplies.

The Sudan. Unrestricted funding has filled a critical conflict-related funding gap, for example, enabling 720,000 children to be screened for acute malnutrition.

The Syrian Arab Republic. A national school assessment is delivering the data urgently needed to improve education after 14 years of conflict.



Nicaragua. Nearly 15,500 community health workers reached 220,000 children with health services. Thanks to this type of training, child deaths have fallen by 25% since 2020.

United Republic of Tanzania. National sanitation coverage has more than tripled since 2010, with improved access to sanitation for over 350,300 people in 2025 alone.

Fiji. New evidence on the costs of violence secured a 40-fold increase in domestic finance for child protection.

Every Child Fund: Trusted Expertise

What laws cannot do

UNICEF understands that, while legislative change is essential, people rarely change longstanding behaviour, such as child marriage, because a law tells them to.

Rather, change happens when the environment shifts in a way a person can feel, or when a message reaches them in a recognisable tone. Addressing this requires understanding of how and why people make decisions.

UNICEF brings together its expertise in child rights and social and behaviour change, alongside long-standing trusted relationships with governments, local organisations and community leaders to guide this type of work.

With no fixed end date and no restriction, the Every Child Fund provides the level of flexibility to rise to challenges of this scale.



Fatima dreams of becoming a seamstress and is learning the skills to do so at a vocational training centre. She never got a chance to go to school after her family fled from Boko Haram, but now she is even attending catch up classes.

Spotlight: Nigeria

Pioneering behavioural science

In Nigeria, UNICEF is building national infrastructure to work in this terrain at scale.

Across Nigeria, community-based social workers lead the day-to-day dialogues that address harmful practices, working in contexts where qualified professionals are too scarce. They are joined by religious and traditional leaders, who act as community champions.

Community child protection initiatives—including peer learning and vocational programmes—complement this.

In 2025, **over 400,000 community members and leaders were mobilised** to identify girls at risk of child marriage, challenge the pressures that drive it, and support the families and communities working to end it.

It was always intended that this approach would be underpinned by research. In 2025, this took formal shape with the launch of BIRD-Lab at the University of Lagos to explore what data tells us versus what actually drives change. The research it generates sharpens every conversation these community members hold, and it is this that reaches girls before harm finds them.

Nigerian institutions are now carrying both approaches forward.

1 in 28

of the **650 million women** alive today who were married as children are from Nigeria.

Child marriage has declined -40.8% to 33% in 10 years.

BIRD-LAB

now spans **23 Nigerian universities.**

BIRD-Lab: Behavioural insights research and design laboratory

The lab's purpose is to convene Nigerian institutions generating localised evidence to inform Nigerian programmes. The aim is to establish a cadre of expert behavioural scientists within the country. It is part of a global UNICEF network dedicated to harnessing behavioural science to affect change.

Every Child Fund: Closing the Gap

Making demand meet supply

Two approaches have shaped sanitation programming across low-income countries and communities for decades: **community-led sanitation and market-based sanitation**.

One works within communities to share information about hygiene and sanitation, with the goal of eliminating practices like open defecation. The other engages local businesses to make affordable, durable hardware.

These approaches are proven to be effective. But in the United Republic of Tanzania, an unresolved challenge remained.

Spotlight: United Republic of Tanzania

A model that could close the gap

Government commitment has quadrupled basic sanitation coverage over the space of a decade—from 13% in 2010 to 55% in 2022. However, one in ten Tanzanians still practices open defecation (one in seven in rural areas).

What has been harder to resolve is why the communities that need sanitation most remain the hardest to reach, even as the national numbers move in the right direction.

UNICEF has drawn on flexible funding to **test whether running the two approaches side-by-side can produce results** that neither approach could achieve on its own, and thereby close the gap on achieving universal sanitation.

This was tested in collaboration with the Government, and public and private sector partners, across Mbeya, Njombe and Kigoma. It required working with communities, artisan skills training and hardware pricing in varying contexts.

In 2025, the model reached 350,356 people across 132 externally verified open defecation free (ODF) communities.

Building on those results, this model now has a national policy framework behind it, a Ministry of Health strategy (with the Prime Minister's Office as co-owner), and a **growing private sector coalition** ready to help take it further.



Shaibu Mbalawa, a contractor, demonstrates his expertise as he installs a pan toilet (designed by the award-winning social business SATO) for a resident of Zanzibar—another region in Tanzania which seeks to improve sanitation.

Trained specifically in SATO pan installations, Shaibu's work is pivotal in advancing sanitation and hygiene standards within communities.

In Njombe, Mgaya—a self-taught carpenter—could build small structures, but has now received technical training to install these pans.

"Before, I used to just dig holes," he said.

55%

basic sanitation coverage in 2022, up from 13% in 2010

147,000+

children reached through the scale up of the hybrid model

98

villages in Makete District, Njombe, achieved ODF status

Every Child Fund: Innovating for Change

Asking the questions that no one else is asking

Core resources go further than targeting only known problems.

A dedicated portion of the Every Child Fund is allocated to strategic and innovative activities: initiatives that test new approaches, open new areas of programming and create the evidence for what comes next.

This is how UNICEF uses the flexibility of the Every Child Fund not just to sustain what works, but also to discover what works better to meet the diverse and evolving needs of children.

> "You can get an answer, then you go to check it, you verify it and see that it's something that is useful and you understand it."
>
> *A 9- to 12-year-old from Rwanda*

> "Every time we develop [skills] there's something new that comes out."
>
> *An 11-year-old from Egypt*

> "What worries me is not knowing what will happen in the future."
>
> *A 9- to 12-year-old from Mozambique*

Spotlight: Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Building the evidence that will define children's digital futures

When the world began grappling with what artificial intelligence means for children, UNICEF had already done the thinking.

Thanks to support to the Every Child Fund, UNICEF has developed a strategy and evidence base which provides a clear framework on AI.

Now, we're taking this a step further by looking at what AI skills children need, and how these can be taught where the need is greatest and the existing evidence thinnest. To do this, we have consulted with the children and young people often overlooked in AI discussions.

Across the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Mozambique, Rwanda and Senegal, children shared that they are interested not just in technical AI mastery, but in a broader suite of competencies including evaluating information, skills related to privacy, and knowing how to moderate the role that AI plays in their lives.

This is in a context where they worry about job loss and the trustworthiness of AI tools.

CLICK TO READ MORE
This article shares five AI insights from children.

The full findings will be published in 2026.

97 CHILDREN
consulted across five countries in Africa

200+
digital learning programmes reviewed

230 MILLION
jobs in sub-Saharan Africa requiring digital skills by 2030

One in five people in low-income countries use the internet. Those countries account for only 1 per cent of global generative (the creation of new content) AI traffic.

Without evidence to build children's AI literacy in these countries, the divide between those who shape AI and those who are impacted by it will only widen.

Every Child Fund: Sustainable Change

The value of long-term presence

UNICEF has been present in the Syrian Arab Republic since 1970 and remained throughout the recent 14 years of conflict, ensuring sustained support to children and systems.

Working with local agencies, UNICEF played a part to help keep the formal education system functioning, keep children connected to learning, and continue teacher training.

The value of that decision is visible now.

The 2024 political transition united the Syrian Government and several organisations around the shared goal of improving education. Alongside the Ministry of Education, UNICEF is playing a leading convening role built on long-term trust.

Spotlight: Syrian Arab Republic

An assessment to sustain education

In 2025, children began returning in numbers not seen since the war began. These learners found classrooms that were damaged and overcrowded.

The Every Child Fund has supported the first national school-based needs assessment to map teachers, student enrollment and the condition of school infrastructure across every governorate. Two programmes were developed:

The Safe Schools Initiative

This initiative has reduced violence in schools, improved learning and teaching, and enhanced teachers' skills to manage classroom dynamics.

The mental wellbeing support programme

Drawing on arts, music, sports and drama, educators are provided with practical ways to recognise and refer children who are struggling. Over 10,000 teachers have now been trained.

The Safe Schools Initiative has been **endorsed by the Syrian Government**. It now runs nationwide in 286 schools across 12 governorates, with 7,636 teachers and 116 national trainers.

Its success prompted the Ministry of Education to request UNICEF's support to develop a national framework for school safety.



Sahar, a teacher, takes part in an activity during a UNICEF-supported workshop on mitigating violence in schools, at a training centre in Damascus.

I benefited from this workshop both personally, with my own children at home, and professionally with my students," she says.

"I learned effective communication skills that have helped me build stronger relationships with children."

1.2 MILLION

children reached through education programmes

286

schools are running the Safe Schools Initiative

10,000+

teachers trained to recognise children who are struggling

Every Child Fund: Sustainable Change

The year 2025 was marked by an increase in the number of children requiring humanitarian support, driven by conflict, climate change and crises across the world.

To help address this increase, 30% of the Every Child Fund was deployed to support communities impacted by emergencies worldwide.

This included our team's dedication to support families in Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan where the impacts of conflict continue to affect millions of people each day, but also many other emergencies which are unlikely to receive as much media coverage.

This includes:

In Latin America and the Caribbean, funds supported the humanitarian response to the impact of Hurricane Melissa in Jamaica, Cuba and Haiti.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, disease outbreaks in Angola, Ethiopia, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania were responded to.

In South Asia, essential health and nutrition services were supported amongst the Rohingha refugee response in Bangladesh.

In East Asia and the Pacific, immediate needs were supported in the wake of a devastating earthquake in Myanmar.

Spotlight: Sudan

Nutrition support that could not wait

Sudan is experiencing one of the world's worst nutrition and food security crises, driven by the ongoing conflict that began in April 2023.

In parts of North Darfur, Global Acute Malnutrition rates exceeded 50%—among the most severe hunger recorded anywhere in the world.

In these critical situations, children's needs cannot wait for funding that has not yet been raised in an appeal. Thanks to funding that is unrestricted, which was already available, and which was donated by supporters like yourselves, UNICEF was able to work with local organisations to deliver life-saving supplies.

Supplies entered through the eastern port or were prepositioned in Chad for cross-border delivery into the hardest-to-reach areas.

As a result,

- **720,000 children were screened for malnutrition**
- **580,000+ children received Vitamin A supplements, crucial for their growth**



Asyaa, pictured here at 7-months-old in 2025, sits with her mother, Halimah, during a follow-up visit at a nutrition centre in North Darfur. Here, Asyaa received treatment for malnutrition.

"I found the support we needed at this centre. The doctors treated her and gave her milk and therapeutic food," says Halimah.

Why support UNICEF's Every Child Fund?

The UNICEF Every Child Fund is helping ensure that every childhood is the protected, nourishing, opportunity-rich period of formation that every child deserves.

It is not restricted to a specific country, situation or programme timeline. This means it can provide the predictability, flexibility and efficiency needed to maximise the impact of your generosity for children.

Predictable. This stable source of funding enables UNICEF teams to plan activities, allocate resources and implement strategic plans with greater certainty.

Flexible. Without restrictions on geography, we are able to direct funding to the most strategic, highest-impact activities.

Efficient. The streamlined nature of the fund means we are maximising the resources that go directly to children.

Why now?

International aid is under pressure at the moment when the need for it has never been greater.

Global Cuts in Overseas Development Aid (ODA) in 2025 were estimated to be between 9-18%.

These significant cuts are putting at risk progress that took decades to achieve. It is estimated that cuts could result in up to 5.4 million more preventable deaths among children under the age of 5 by 2030, while 6 million more children could be pushed out of school by the end of 2026.

The results and stories presented in this report demonstrate what collective action and flexible funding makes possible for children.

Lviv, Ukraine



Antwane, 12, talks with Olga Isaza, Representative, UNICEF Jamaica, about his experience during and after Hurricane Melissa. Antwane has been helping his neighbours clear fallen trees and debris to reopen the roads.
UNICEF continues to work with local authorities and partners to support affected children and families across Jamaica in the aftermath of the disaster.

CORE RESOURCES DO NOT UNDERWRITE A SINGLE PROJECT.

THEY UNDERWRITE THE CONDITIONS THAT MAKE RESULTS POSSIBLE.

Thank you for putting your trust in UNICEF

Every supporter who has contributed to the UNICEF Every Child Fund is doing something more consequential than funding a programme: you are co-investing in the conditions of childhood itself.

Your support of this essential fund is helping UNICEF teams to work alongside families, communities an governments to ensure that every child lives a childhood that offers safety, opportunity and hope.

If you would like any further information on the impact of your support, or how to deepen your impact even more, please do get in touch.

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