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A Donor's Guide to Children and Youth

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> “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”
>
> — Nelson Mandela —

created in collaboration with

unicef
for every child

introduction

Welcome to the Donor's Guide to Children and Youth.

Philanthropists and children share a common power – the power to shape the future. As today's donors increasingly recognise this enormous potential, more and more of them are coming together to support initiatives for children. In the context of ongoing challenges related to COVID-19, climate change and protracted conflicts, creating global philanthropic partnerships for young people has never been so vital. And with almost 2 billion children under 15 alive today[1] – more than ever before – the cost of inaction has never been higher.

UNICEF and Lombard Odier have joined forces to support this mission. Together, we are raising awareness among philanthropists to facilitate engagement and funding for children. We are proud of the progress we have made so far, separately and together, to increase understanding of the challenges and opportunities for children around the world. But we know that more can – and must – be done.

UNICEF has been the world's leading organisation for children for over 75 years. Founded by the United Nations in the aftermath of World War II, UNICEF has grown to a global scale, with a presence in 190 countries. UNICEF is the largest vaccine buyer in the world,[2] reaching 45% of all children under five with vaccines every year.[3] It is also the world's leading organisation for child education and protection.

Since UNICEF was founded, the world has made enormous progress for children. Child mortality rates have plummeted, school attendance has soared, and countless laws and policies have been introduced to protect children from violence, exploitation and abuse. But there are still too many children who have been left behind in this progress. Philanthropists can play a critical role in realising every child's basic needs and rights. At the same time, philanthropic contributions can reimagine a better future for children, going beyond basic necessities to ensure that every child can thrive and achieve their full potential.

These two priorities – ensuring children's basic needs and rights are met, and reimagining a better future – offer many opportunities for philanthropists to create transformative impact.

Since the founding of Lombard Odier over 225 years ago, the families leading the bank have consistently been involved in philanthropy and have shared their experience with clients. Fondation Philanthropia, which was created in 2008, facilitates clients' philanthropic engagement. It has already donated funds in support of children and youth around the globe.

Building on the success of the Donor's Guide to Cancer in 2018[4] and the Donor's Guide to the Environment in 2020,[5] Lombard Odier has partnered with UNICEF to launch this document, the third in the Donor's Guide series.

Today, we make this guide freely available to any partner or philanthropist. We hope that this guide, intended as an initial step towards improved understanding of the challenges and opportunities for children, will help focus philanthropic efforts and make an impactful contribution to meeting children's basic needs and rights, and to reimagining a better future for all children.

With our deepest gratitude, we sincerely thank all contributors for this collective creation.

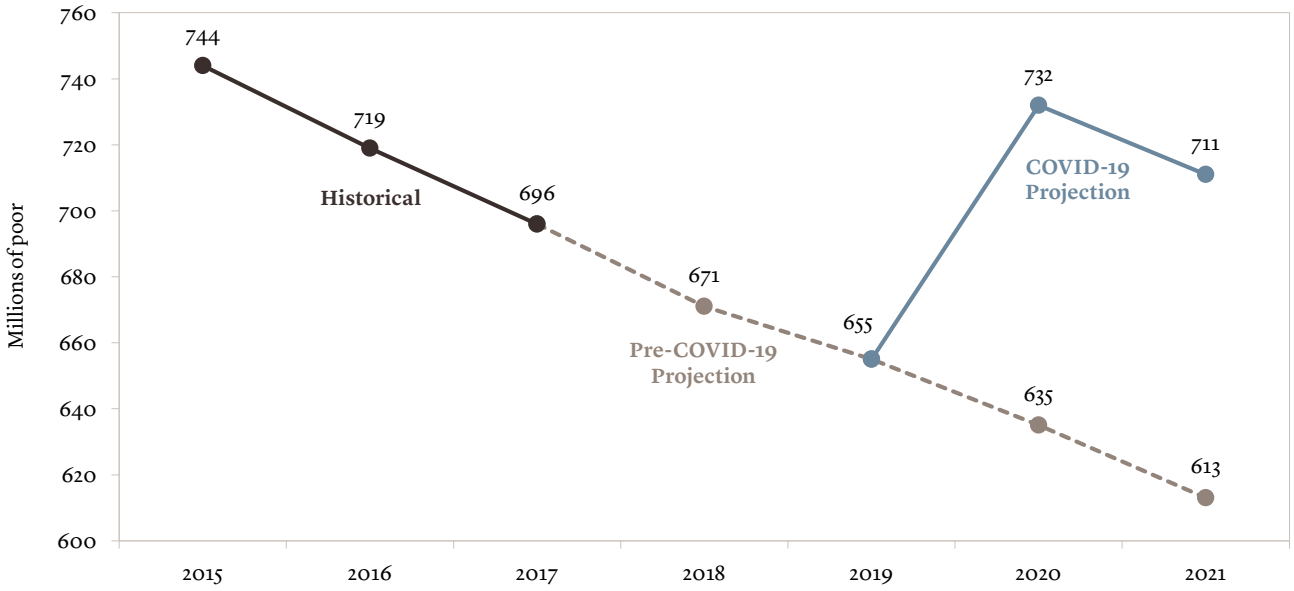
Charlotte Petri Gornitzka,
Deputy Executive Director, Partnership

Denis Pittet,
Managing Partner, Lombard Odier Group and President, Fondation Philanthropia

The world is facing a particularly turbulent moment. The impacts of COVID-19 have devastated individual lives and national economies (see Figure 1). Extreme weather events are on the rise due to climate change.[6] Protracted conflicts are forcing record numbers of people from their homes.[7] All of this is severely impacting children, limiting their access to health services, education, and protection from violence, exploitation and abuse.

But within these challenges are opportunities. Today, philanthropists are increasingly recognising that supporting initiatives for children is the best way to reshape the future, by building on recent global progress and leveraging new solutions for a next and better normal.

Figure 1: World Bank chart showing the increase in poverty caused by COVID-19[8]



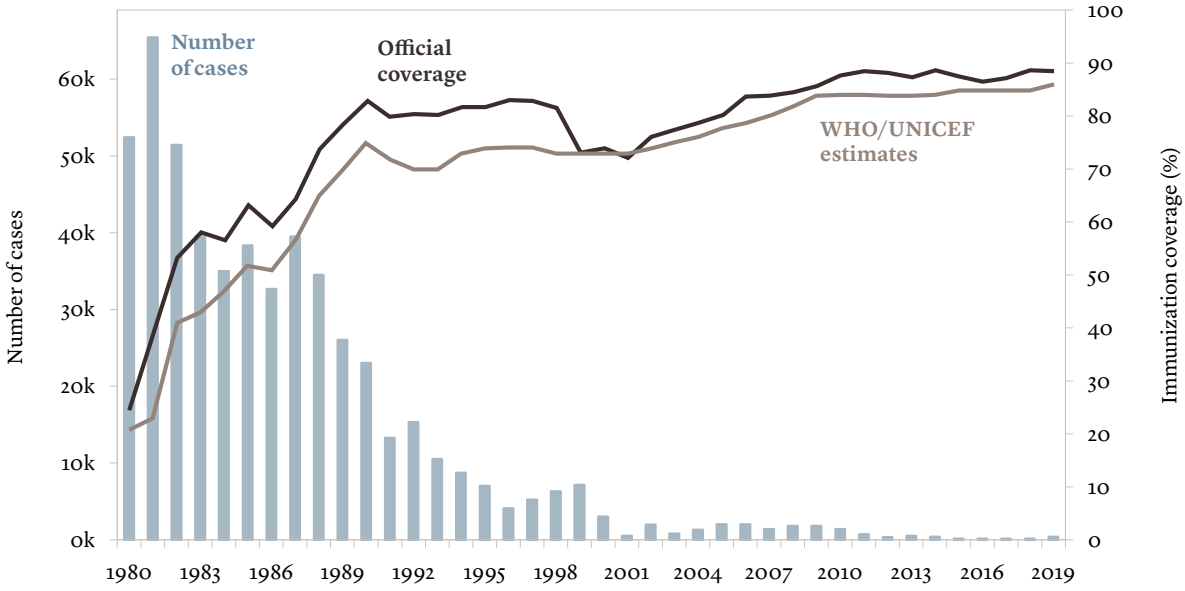
Source: Lakner et al (2020) (updated), PovcalNet, Global Economic Prospects

The situation for children

In today's fast-paced world, it is easy to overlook the progress we have made for children. Cases of polio have fallen by 99.9% since 1988 (see Figure 2).[9] The global youth literacy rate has surpassed 90% for the first time in history.[10] And the global prevalence of child labour has fallen by 38% in the last decade.[11]

Although this progress has been remarkable, it has not been shared equally (see Figure 3). Too many children are still dying of preventable diseases, too many are denied an education, and too many are suffering from violence, exploitation and abuse.

Figure 2: World Health Organization graph showing decrease in polio cases and increase in polio vaccine coverage since 1980 [12]



Source: WHO/UNICEF

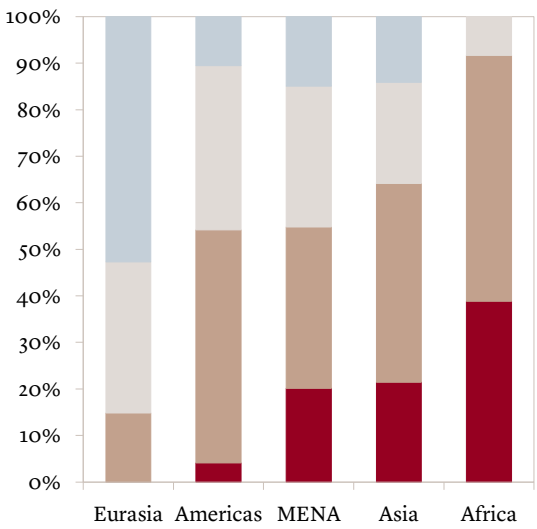
Basic needs and rights

Philanthropic support for children must focus on those who have been left behind in our global progress. These are the children who are most vulnerable. They may be experiencing poverty, living in remote areas, or suffering from discrimination due to their gender or disability status.

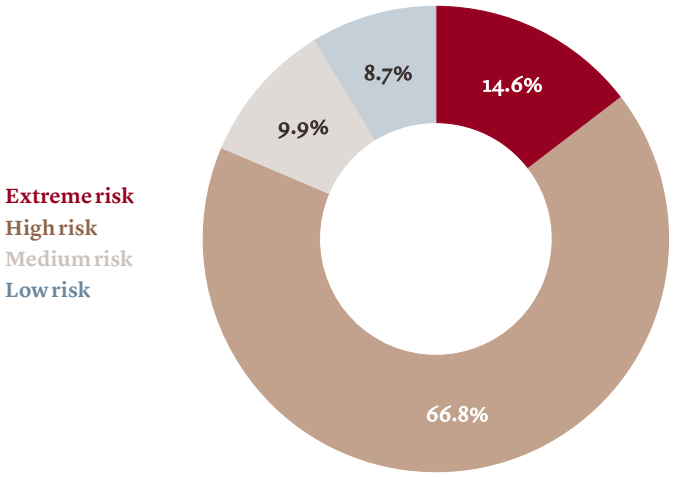
For these children, the focus must be on making sure their basic needs and rights are met, as described in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These include the right to good quality health care (Article 24), the right to an education (Article 28) and the right to protection from violence, exploitation and abuse (Articles 19, 32, 34, 35 and 36).[13]

Figure 3: Bar chart showing disparities in child labour risks in different regions[14]

Regional breakdown by population, 2020



Global population by risk category, 2020



MENA: Middle East & North Africa
Source: Verisk Maplecroft's 2020 Child Labour Index

Reimagining a better future

While it is essential to ensure that every child's basic needs and rights are met, we must also carve out a more ambitious path for the future – one that provides children with a platform to flourish and achieve their full potential.

This means supporting a health system that enables children not just to survive, but also to thrive, with services that promote good mental health, nutrition and exercise. It means improving the quality of education, so that children can develop skills that are relevant to their lives and their future careers. And it means expanding our definition of child protection to include new risks, such as cyberbullying.

By thinking beyond children's basic needs and rights, we can begin to reimagine a better future for children – one in which their full potential can be realised.

Figure 4: Statistics on the challenges facing children worldwide

In Africa there is just one mental health professional for every 100,000 people[15]

Undernutrition affects more than 150 million children worldwide[16]

Globally, 369 million young people are disconnected from the internet and online learning opportunities[17]

287 million children have no drinking water services at school[18]

Out of 170,000 young people surveyed, more than a third report being victims of cyberbullying[19]

The challenges

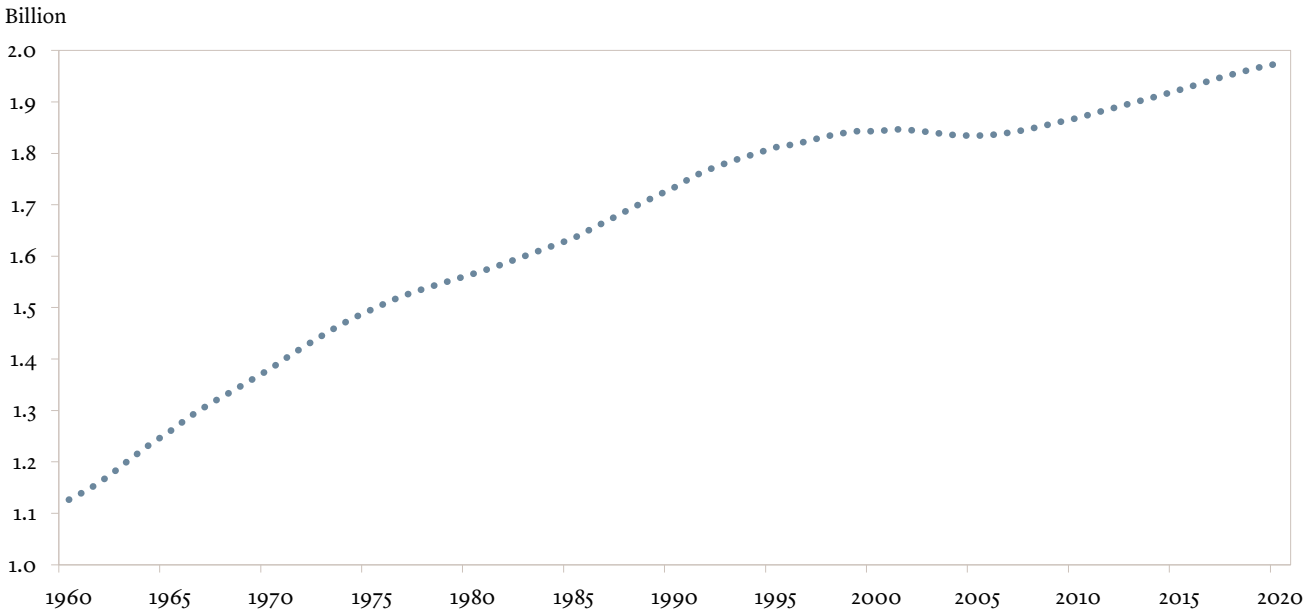
Today, the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to deepen inequalities, threatening decades of global progress. Climate change is hitting the most vulnerable people hardest, with droughts, floods and other extreme weather events. And protracted conflicts in Africa, Asia and the Middle East are driving millions out of their homes and into poverty.

It would be easy to feel overwhelmed in the face of these challenges. But the world has overcome global crises before.

In the aftermath of World War II, we reimagined what was possible. We came together to create the United Nations. We built new health and welfare systems. We eradicated smallpox.

The crises we face today are complex, long-term problems. The only way to solve these problems is to build a generation that is equipped to withstand them and address them. With the support of the philanthropic community, we can enable children to survive, thrive and reshape the future.

Figure 5: World Bank graph showing growth of youth population [20]



Source: World Development Indicators

The opportunities

The time to act is now. In recent decades, improved child survival rates have created the largest generation of young people ever (see Figure 5). With the right support, we can take advantage of this demographic dividend and unlock the next generation's power to reshape the future. But without adequate support, we risk losing the progress we have made for children so far and wasting the potential of an entire generation.

Philanthropists will have a major role to play as we navigate this crossroads for the next generation of youth. In particular, the unique freedom philanthropists have to direct their funding will be critical to catalysing innovative ideas, addressing funding gaps, and providing organisations with flexibility to respond to children's evolving needs in an unpredictable world.

This donor guide covers three priority areas that philanthropists can support for children: health, education and child protection. For each area, we provide a set of case studies to show past successes and examples of what future donations can achieve. We hope that these case studies will give you a clear idea of what your contributions can accomplish and inspire you to make your own flexible contributions as part of a global effort for children.

health

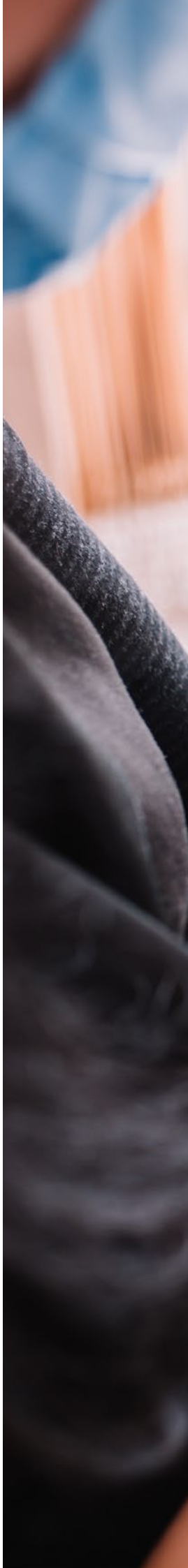
The world has made remarkable progress for child health over the past three decades. In 1990, 9.3% of children globally died before their fifth birthday. Today, that rate has fallen to 3.8%.[21]

Despite this considerable progress, improving child survival remains a matter of urgent concern. In 2019, an estimated 5.2 million children under five died[22] – that is one child death every six seconds.

The overwhelming majority of these deaths are preventable. We know what the solutions are, and they are often very simple. But for many children and families, these solutions remain inaccessible, due to inadequate health services.

One example of these simple solutions is 'kangaroo care', a technique in which mothers hold their newborn babies close with skin-to-skin contact, to create an incubator-like environment. This low-cost solution is among the most effective methods for saving the lives of preterm and underweight babies. Yet it is not often taught to parents, due to health services being overstretched or health workers being inadequately trained.

Vaccines are another simple solution for health, preventing as many as 5 million deaths per year.[23] But many countries still struggle to vaccinate their children because of a lack of funds to support vaccine infrastructure, such as refrigerators to keep vaccines effective or transportation to reach children in remote locations. For example, in 2016, just 16% of health centres in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had a working refrigerator.[24]



We know the solutions for these big challenges in child health. But the principal barrier to solving them is a lack of financing. As the world faces demographic changes and the continued fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic – which has put some 228 million people at risk of disease due to disruptions in routine vaccine campaigns[25] – we must increase financial support for child health or risk losing the progress we have made.

Over the next 30 years, some 2 billion births are projected worldwide.[26] In Africa, where the most substantial increase in births is expected, overstretched health services will be tested even further. In Asia, ageing populations will put pressure on health systems, impacting the availability of services for children.

On top of this, new health priorities are emerging. Mental health is one of these. Increased attention was brought to mental health during COVID-19 lockdowns, which dramatically increased isolation, anxiety and stress among young people. In a survey from the United Kingdom, 80% of young people agreed that the pandemic had made their mental health worse, with 41% describing it as "much worse".[27] This unprecedented situation has shown the world how essential mental health services are, and how they must be a key component of all health-care programmes.

But within every challenge, there are also opportunities, and the COVID-19 crisis has helped to catalyse some new initiatives that could transform the landscape of child health for the better. One of these is oxygen therapy. This treatment is critical for patients suffering from COVID-19, but it can also be used to treat pneumonia, the world's leading infectious cause of death for children under five.

As the world scales up the use of oxygen therapy in response to COVID-19, there is an extraordinary opportunity to ensure that oxygen supplies are also deployed and used in newborn and paediatric wards. With a child dying of pneumonia somewhere in the world every 39 seconds, this could be one of the great life-saving opportunities of our time.[28]

The following case studies have been chosen to illustrate a few of the most significant actions taking place within child health today. They showcase the power of collective action, ensuring every child has the opportunity to live a happy, healthy life.

Maternal and newborn health in Bangladesh

Background

Like most countries, Bangladesh has recently experienced a huge improvement in the health of mothers and newborn babies. Since 2000, the proportion of mothers dying due to pregnancy-related or childbirth-related causes has fallen from 434 per 100,000 to 173.[29] At the same time, the infant mortality rate has dropped from 6.3% to 2.6%.[30]

However, there is still much more progress to be made. By way of comparison, Norway – one of the world's best-performing countries for maternal and newborn health – has a maternal mortality rate that is 86 times lower than Bangladesh's[31] and an infant mortality rate that is 13 times lower.[32] There is no reason why Bangladesh could not aspire to the same level of maternal and newborn health care as a country like Norway. But, to achieve this, there are several challenges that must be overcome.

One of the biggest challenges is the prevalence of home births in Bangladesh. In fact, more than half of women across the country give birth at home, with the rate being even higher in rural areas.[33] When women give birth at home, they miss out on support from skilled birth attendants. This leaves both the mother and child at risk if there are complications during delivery.

CARE Bangladesh is implementing a project to improve awareness of how to access good health services during pregnancy and delivery and the benefits of doing so. Working with local volunteers, the project is embedding knowledge on the importance of maternal and newborn health, not just among mothers, but also in their families and the wider community.

Project Description

In 2018, CARE Bangladesh began this project to reduce maternal and newborn mortality in Bangladesh. The work focuses on the districts of Patuakhali and Sirajganj, where the proportion of women giving birth at home is higher than the national average.

The project's key strategy is to provide training for community health volunteers. This vital training improves their ability to support pregnant women with advice on nutrition, referrals to specialised health services and much more.

One of the main duties of community health volunteers is to go door to door, identifying pregnant women in the community and working with them to create a birth plan. This ensures that mothers and families know how to get to health centres with skilled birth attendants, both for regular check-ups and once labour begins. In addition, community health volunteers conduct group sessions with mothers on a variety of health-related topics, such as maternal nutrition and breastfeeding.

To reach the wider community, the project uses mobile loudspeakers to broadcast key health messages in local languages. This approach is particularly effective in areas with low literacy rates and has been especially useful in the context of COVID-19 and social distancing. During the pandemic, the mobile speakers were used to spread COVID-19 prevention messages, such as the importance of handwashing, while continuing to emphasise key health messages for pregnant mothers and newborns.

Maternal and newborn health in Bangladesh

Outcomes

Through this project, CARE Bangladesh has trained over 1,400 community health volunteers so far.

During a recent three-month period, these community health volunteers were able to visit more than 568,000 homes. They conducted 7,698 birth-planning sessions, as well as 14,134 sessions to promote good nutrition among mothers and infants, including breastfeeding.

The impact of this work has been seen in increased numbers of women giving birth in health centres in the target districts. In addition, there have been improvements in local data collection and reporting on maternal and newborn health. This is critically important, not just for monitoring progress, but also for effectively guiding the future work of CARE Bangladesh, other local organisations and the government.

Despite these successes, there is a significant risk that maternal and newborn health in Bangladesh will be negatively affected by the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as increased poverty. Therefore, continued funding is needed to ensure that health messages reach pregnant mothers in Bangladesh to support their safe delivery and a healthy start to life for their children.

Donor Opportunities

A donation of USD 25,000 can be used to improve the child and maternal counselling skills of 2,500 community health volunteers and teach them how to register pregnant women and newborns.

With a donation of USD 75,000, CARE Bangladesh can reach approximately 600,000 women to encourage them to visit health facilities for antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care. This outreach will be conducted through sessions with local mothers' groups.

For more information:

www.carebangladesh.org

Oxygen therapy in Senegal

Background

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, it left the world short of oxygen, a vital treatment for patients suffering from the disease. But the challenge of accessing oxygen therapy is not a new phenomenon. For many years, it has also been one of the main obstacles for treating the biggest infectious killer of children: pneumonia.

Pneumonia takes the lives of 800,000 children every year – that is one child every 39 seconds.[34] Most of these deaths would be preventable with access to oxygen therapy treatments.

Despite oxygen's positive benefits for treating COVID-19 and pneumonia, there are inherent complexities in providing equipment for oxygen therapies. For many health facilities in low-income and middle-income countries, the supplies are simply too expensive to purchase. For those in rural or remote areas, it may be challenging to arrange transport and delivery. If staff are not adequately trained, the equipment cannot be used at all.

In response to this situation, UNICEF is implementing a new project called SPRINT – Scaling Pneumonia Response Innovations. This project strengthens the capability of governments to assess their own oxygen needs and procure the right equipment.

SPRINT is being successfully implemented in Senegal, and, with more funding, the project can be expanded to help end oxygen scarcity in low-income and middle-income countries everywhere.

Project Description

UNICEF launched the SPRINT project in Senegal in collaboration with the Senegalese government. The project has three main components: oxygen system planning, technical guidance on oxygen therapy devices, and oxygen supply access.

Oxygen system planning – Using its extensive expertise in oxygen systems, procurement, supply chains, global health and neonatal care, UNICEF developed a computer-based tool to help the government of Senegal determine its oxygen needs, challenges and solutions. The tool provides important data for oxygen treatment and can be used in different country contexts.

Technical guidance on oxygen therapy devices – Significant planning is required to set up oxygen systems. The equipment must be of the correct type, size and amount. There must also be maintenance plans in place, sufficient power available, and training to ensure staff can use the equipment properly. To support this, UNICEF partnered with the World Health Organization to develop a guidance manual to help key decision-makers to select, procure, use and maintain oxygen therapy equipment properly.

Oxygen supply access – In many countries, oxygen therapy equipment is not available through local markets. Using its unique scale and logistics, UNICEF has made a high volume of essential oxygen equipment available through its supply channels as part of the SPRINT project. This means countries such as Senegal are now able to access critical oxygen supplies, even when the materials are not locally available.

These three key activities, implemented in unison, have been critical for enabling the government of Senegal to ensure oxygen therapy is available at health facilities across the country.

Oxygen therapy in Senegal

Outcomes

Since the SPRINT project began in Senegal, it has helped increase access to oxygen treatments for thousands of children in the country.

Through SPRINT, UNICEF and the government of Senegal have provided oxygen to 64 health facilities in regions with high rates of pneumonia. This includes providing 95 oxygen concentrators, which extract oxygen from the ambient air and deliver it to patients, as well as 69 pulse oximeters, which measure the amount of oxygen in a patient's blood.

In addition to this, the SPRINT project has provided 831,400 amoxicillin dispersible tablets to 157 health facilities in Senegal. This medicine, along with oxygen therapy, is one of the most effective treatments for children with pneumonia.

However, it is not enough to just enable access to supplies. It is also essential that health workers know how to use them and that systems are in place to ensure their long-term maintenance. To support this, various sessions have been initiated across Senegal to train health workers on how to install, use and maintain the new equipment they have received.

By including the government as a key partner, SPRINT is ensuring continued high-level support for oxygen therapy in Senegal, enabling the outcomes to be sustained for the long term.

Donor Opportunities

In addition to Senegal, the SPRINT project has also begun in Ghana, where 13 health facilities have received equipment and medicine. Plans are also in place to roll out SPRINT across the world.

Due to the extraordinary size and scope of this project, flexible contributions are needed to enable a global scale-up. Opportunities are available for donors at all levels.

With a donation of USD 100,000, donors can enable one to three target regions within a country to be supplied with amoxicillin dispersible tablets for pneumonia treatment. With USD 500,000, donors can support up to two countries that have already ordered oxygen supplies with training of key personnel and assistance to review and improve national policies related to pneumonia. With a contribution of USD 1,000,000, donors can make a transformative difference, implementing the SPRINT project in one target country, which includes an initial analysis, securing equipment, training health workers and formulating a national oxygen road map, while also increasing access to amoxicillin dispersible tablets.

For more information:

www.unicef.org/innovation/oxygen-therapy

Adolescent mental health in Argentina

Background

Typically, health services focus on physical health. On average, just 2% of country health budgets are spent on mental health. This figure drops to less than 1% in low-income countries.[35] But mental health should be a vital part of any good health system – especially for adolescents.

Adolescence, defined by the World Health Organization as ages 10 to 19,[36] is a time of particular vulnerability to mental health challenges. Globally, one in five adolescents experiences mental health conditions.[37] In the worst-case scenario, this can lead to adolescent suicide, which is among the top three causes of death for adolescents in the world.[38]

In Argentina, where adolescents make up 16% of the population,[39] this problem is particularly severe. Over the last 20 years, the adolescent suicide rate has increased.[40] And this problem is not just evident in the mortality statistics. It can also be seen in the proportion of young people who report having seriously considered suicide – an astonishing 21.5%.[41]

The causes of mental health problems in Argentina are diverse. Many young people report feelings of loneliness. Others experience violence at home. For girls, early pregnancy is connected with mental health challenges, especially when these pregnancies are the result of sexual abuse or occur in relationships with unequal power dynamics.

The situation in Argentina illustrates the need to increase availability of good mental health services for adolescents. It also highlights the need to approach this problem in a comprehensive manner, in order to address the many root causes of mental health problems among adolescents.

Project Description

To tackle the mental health challenges faced by adolescents, UNICEF and the government of Argentina are improving access to mental health support in schools. This is achieved by having health professionals, known as advisors, visit schools, where they can offer confidential listening services and connect adolescents with mental health services in the wider health system.

Establishing these services in schools brings mental health support directly to adolescents. This ease of access is important, as adolescents often do not know how to access mental health services in the public health system. The comprehensive nature of the in-school services allows trained advisors to support students no matter what their mental health challenges are. In this way, the services are an easy-to-access one-stop shop for mental health.

For instance, confidential listening services give adolescents a safe space to share their concerns and emotions. Simply having a well-trained, sympathetic ear can make a huge difference for adolescents whose mental health is affected by factors such as loneliness and social isolation.

For more complex problems, the advisors help adolescents to access specialised services or report problems such as violence. Likewise, the advisors can provide information on sexual and reproductive health services, access to free contraceptive methods and sexual education materials.

To maximise the effectiveness of the mental health services in schools, UNICEF has organised 16 adolescent forums where young people can share their own mental health experiences and their views on improving the health system. In total, 2,332 adolescents have participated in the forums. Their views have influenced the design of the project and been shared with health minsters in Argentina.

Adolescent mental health in Argentina

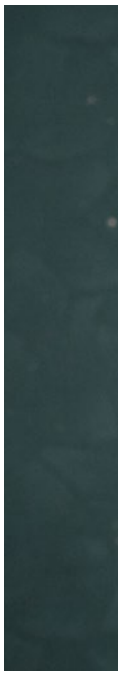
Outcomes

During the first phase of the project, UNICEF and the government of Argentina introduced comprehensive mental health services to 64 schools, reaching 15,800 adolescents. Since then, the services have significantly expanded, reaching over 520,000 students today.

However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures forced the project to adapt. During this period, UNICEF helped to develop a mobile application to connect adolescents directly to counselling services through chat platforms.

Although this approach was launched specifically in response to COVID-19, it also has long-term potential for equalising access to mental health services. There are significant regional disparities in health services in Argentina, so giving adolescents digital access can help to reduce gaps, especially for counselling services and accessing sexual and reproductive health information. Likewise, the digital approach also enables adolescents who have dropped out of school to access the services.

Though the school-based services have been very beneficial for adolescents in Argentina, building digital access to mental health services will yield even greater results – reaching adolescents on a much larger scale and equalising access for those who are most marginalised.



Donor Opportunities

For the next phase of this project, USD 600,000 is required to expand the comprehensive mental health services and reach 1.79 million adolescents in Argentina. This expansion will be achieved through further development and roll-out of the digital mental health services. This will include training more counsellors and developing a communication strategy to make adolescents aware of the services.

In addition to this, there is an urgent need for donors to support mental health data collection in Argentina. Having timely and accurate data on adolescent mental health is critical for informing national decision-making on which services are needed most. Therefore, as a further component to this project, UNICEF will work to improve data collection on adolescent mental health, with the support of donors.

For more information:

www.unicef.org/argentina/

education

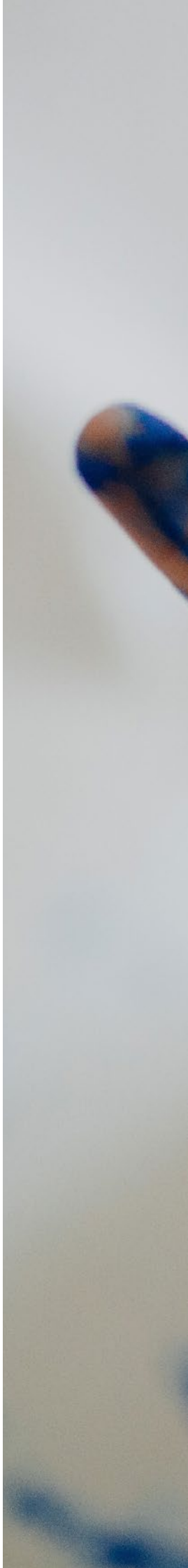
Today, more children and adolescents are enrolled in education than ever before. Despite this progress, 20% of school-aged children around the world are still left out of the classroom.[42]

This final 20% of children will be the hardest to get into school. These children are excluded from education due to complex vulnerabilities. They may be experiencing poverty, living in remote locations far from the classroom, or suffering from discrimination due to their gender or disability status.

Ensuring these children can access education is not just essential for creating a more equal future. It is also vital for supporting emerging economies. As the world experiences a demographic boom, especially in Asia and Africa, educated populations are needed to raise global productivity and transform economic and social outcomes. This cannot be achieved when 20% of children are out of school.

Now, with 24 million more children estimated to have dropped out of school in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to work even harder to make sure every child can access an education.[43] But, this will require significant support from donors – and new ways of thinking.

Digital technology is one innovative way to improve access to education. As the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated, online learning can offer a powerful solution when children are unable to physically attend school. But, with two thirds of the world's school-age population lacking internet connectivity at home, unlocking this solution will involve transformative change on the global level.[44] If we want every child to have access to digital learning, some 3.5 billion people must be connected by 2030.[45]



Tackling the immense challenge of this digital transition is key. We know that the classroom of the future will be both online and offline, so ensuring every child is connected is vital to ensuring that no child is left behind.

However, it is not enough for every child to simply access education. We must also make sure that this education is of good quality.

At present, many children are receiving low-quality education that does not provide them with the skills they need for their futures. In fact, an estimated 617 million children and adolescents are unable to reach minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics, even though two thirds of them are in school.[46] Without skills for lifelong learning, children face greater barriers to their earning potential and employment later in life.

Again, digital technologies must be part of the solution. Bringing the classroom of the future online will improve education quality by providing children with flexible learning opportunities which can be tailored to their needs. It will also support their development of digital skills, which are vital for the 21st century workforce. In Asia, the number of workers using digital skills will need to increase five-fold over the next five years,[47] while in Africa, over 200 million jobs will require digital skills by 2030.[48]

In tandem with digital skills development, more funding is needed to improve the quality of education inside the classroom. That means training teachers, providing adequate learning materials, and ensuring curricula cover the skills and knowledge children need.

Education systems must also prioritise quality education for young children. Just like older children, they need trained teachers, classrooms that are equipped with resources for learning, and defined curricula. At present, despite clear evidence that early education provides a crucial foundation for children's lifelong learning, it does not receive its fair share of funding, compared to higher levels of education.

Access to education and quality of education are the two pillars that will help unlock a brighter future for children and reap immense dividends for emerging economies.

The following case studies illustrate actions and funding opportunities to ensure that children and adolescents can learn. These examples demonstrate that together we can enable every child to access a quality education.

Early education in rural Zambia

Background

In their earliest years, children form more than 1 million new brain connections every second – an astounding pace that is never repeated at any other phase of life.[49]

This critical stage of brain development is shaped by each child's life experiences. When they are exposed to early learning, stimulation and nurturing care, children can be set on a path that will have a lifelong benefit for their education and earning potential. But when children are denied such opportunities, the impact can be devastating. For example, for children in low-income or middle-income countries, poor early development could mean they earn 25% less as an adult.[50]

Yet, despite the clear and proven benefits of investment in the early years, more than 175 million children – nearly half of all pre-primary-aged children globally – are not enrolled in early learning opportunities.[51]

In the agricultural belt of eastern Zambia, UNICEF is supporting a new initiative that offers a promising solution to the enrolment challenge. This strategic project brings together communities and government partners to ensure a sustainable approach to early education, which not only helps children get the best start in life, but also benefits everyone in the community.

Project Description

In recent decades, Zambia has made great progress in increasing education enrolment for children. But this progress masks considerable regional disparities. Children in rural and remote areas are too often denied access to education, particularly in the critical early years, putting them behind in life right from the start.

The Insaka initiative is tackling this problem by bringing early education and a package of other interventions like better nutrition and regular health monitoring into the community and into the home. Taking its name from a Bemba word that describes people coming together to exchange learning, the Insaka initiative is built on the concept of community cooperation and support.

The project's centrepiece is a physical space constructed for early learning. This includes a cluster of buildings, a colourful playground and a vegetable garden. In this space, children participate in early learning activities, while adults benefit from classes that promote playful parenting to support children's mental and physical development.

The Insaka initiative also reaches the wider community, through a network of volunteers who go door to door to mentor parents and caregivers on how to give children the best start in life. Their advice includes ideas for learning activities at home, such as storytelling and creating homemade toys, as well as information on good health and nutrition.

Early education in rural Zambia

Outcomes

Providing a child with good early education yields benefits that can last their whole life and even transform entire communities. When children are well educated, they are more likely to be able to support their own children's learning and development in the future, helping to break inter-generational cycles of poor education and poverty.

The Insaka initiative is built on this long-term vision. That is why community involvement and support is so important, at all levels. The initiative is designed in collaboration with government partners, and community leaders, such as local chiefs, are involved in the planning. Community members support the initiative as volunteers, while also benefiting from its services.

Ensuring strong local support and involvement in the project helps to embed it within the community for the long term. In this way, the positive project outcomes become sustainable, as the community gradually takes over full responsibility for the services. Therefore, financial support for the Insaka initiative has a truly long-term impact, as the outcomes for children continue to be sustained into the future.

Donor Opportunities

Early education provides the highest social return of all education sectors. For every USD 1 spent on early childhood development, the return can be as high as USD 7.30.[52]

Yet, despite the clear and proven benefits of early education, it receives the smallest share of funding compared to primary, secondary and tertiary education. Less than 1% of international aid to education currently supports early education, and less than 2% of government education budgets is allocated to early education in low-income countries.[53]

With a donation of USD 225,000, donors can help construct two flagship Insaka centres in Zambia, including solar power and water points. Donations of USD 50,000 to USD 100,000 can provide support to community volunteers, ensuring they receive training to run activities at the centre and conduct door-to-door visits to families with young children.

Early education offers philanthropists the opportunity of a lifetime. It is the best way to have a positive, lifelong impact on a child's future, and it can unlock wider benefits for families and communities that last for generations to come.

For more information:

www.unicef.org/education/early-childhood-education

Accessible education for children with disabilities in Cambodia

Background

An estimated 93 million children worldwide live with disabilities.[54] Like all children, they have ambitions and dreams for their futures. And like all children, they need quality education to develop and realise their full potential.

Despite this, children with disabilities are 10 times less likely to attend school than those without.[55] With limited access to learning opportunities, children with disabilities face lifelong disadvantages for their inclusion in social, economic and political life.

In Cambodia, according to parents surveyed, 52% of children with disabilities are either not enrolled in school or have dropped out. The most common reasons for this are concern for the child's safety (cited by 68% of parents surveyed) and concern that the school is not accessible for students with disabilities (64% of parents surveyed).[56]

Krousar Thmey, which means 'new family' in the Khmer language, is a non-governmental organisation in Cambodia providing adapted education for children with disabilities and projects to prepare them for working life. Krousar Thmey has created a network of five special schools for children with disabilities, developed local skills in special and inclusive education, and created specific teaching tools.

Project Description

In 1994, Krousar Thmey launched its education programme for children with hearing or visual impairments. This ongoing programme encompasses five main activities:

1. Krousar Thmey runs five special schools, to provide quality education adapted to the needs of children with disabilities. Students attending classes in one of the special schools are also enrolled in public schools. This model facilitates the social integration of children in the public education system and sends a strong signal that they have the same learning capabilities.

2. Krousar Thmey helped to create Khmer braille and now prints books and publications in braille to improve the quality of education for visually impaired students.

3. In 1997, Krousar Thmey developed Cambodian sign language by adapting American Sign Language to the Cambodian context. In 2013, Krousar Thmey co-founded the Cambodian Sign Language Committee to create a common sign language and to produce the resources necessary for its dissemination throughout the country, including through sign language classes.

4. Krousar Thmey trains specialised teachers in the education of deaf or blind children. Through these trainings, teachers deepen their knowledge of specific topics in special education, revise their disciplinary knowledge, improve their command of sign language and braille, and develop new educational tools. Furthermore, new specialised teachers are trained and then join the special schools.

5. Krousar Thmey provides academic and career counselling for students with visual or hearing impairments to improve their chances to access higher education, enrol in professional training or find job opportunities.

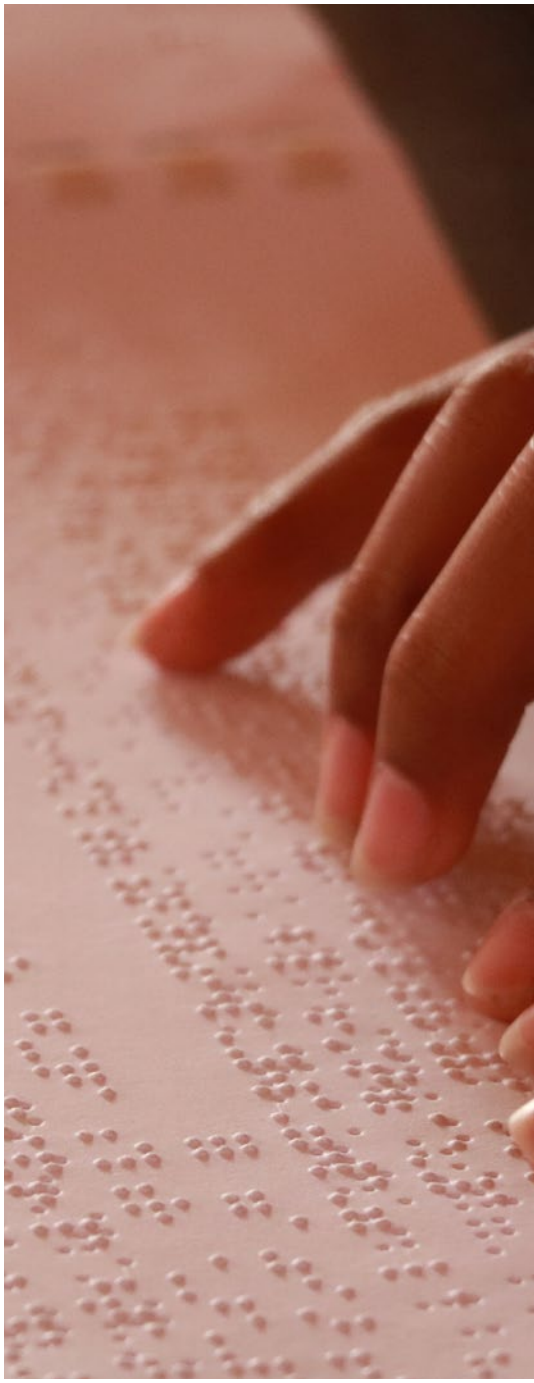
Accessible education for children with disabilities in Cambodia

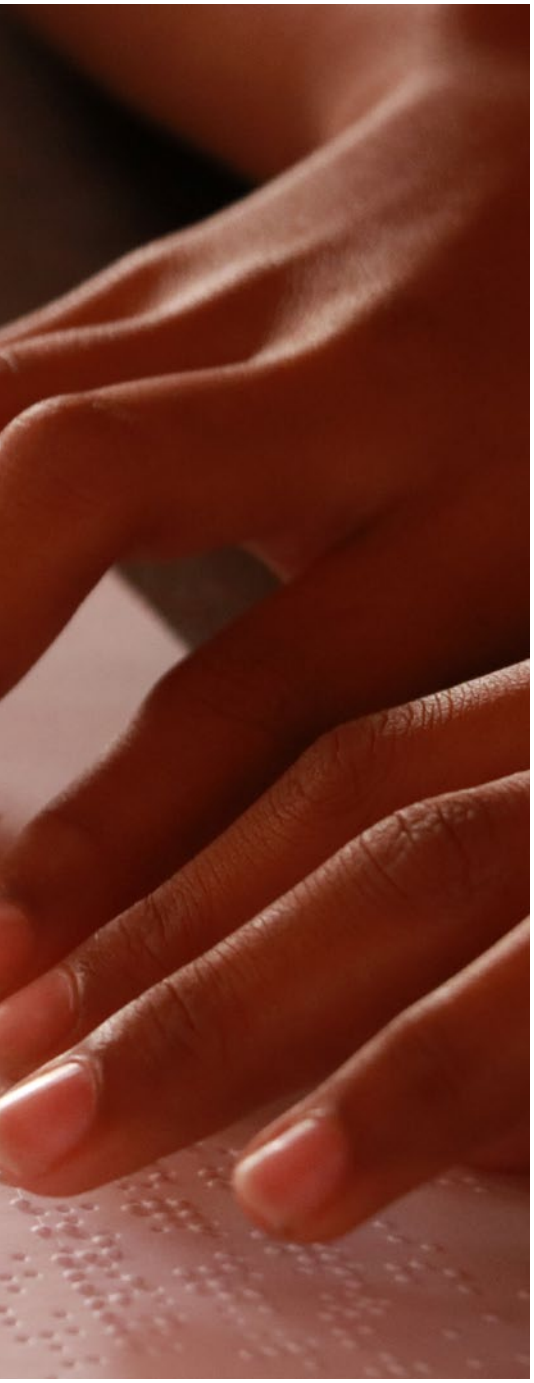
Outcomes

Krousar Thmey's special education programme benefits 800 children and young people with visual or hearing impairments each year. In line with the organisation's founding philosophy and advocacy to involve local authorities, the goal has always been to hand the programme over to the Cambodian government.

This process began in 2011, when the teachers of the special schools officially became civil servants of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. In 2014, the government started covering the costs of running the Braille Workshop, which produces learning equipment suitable for the blind. It also took on the costs for the Sign Language Committee's activities, so that it could continue developing Cambodian sign language. At the beginning of the 2018 school year, the government took over the five special schools, along with their 190 staff members.

Since 2019, Krousar Thmey has acted as a partner of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and the National Institute for Special Education to support teacher training, awareness-raising activities, the creation of teaching materials and the development of inclusive communication technologies. The organisation is also in charge of conducting biannual audits for three years to ensure the sustainability of the programme, support educational authorities in the management of the special schools, and take stock of each school's situation with regard to the quality of educational services. Finally, Krousar Thmey continues to support academic and career counselling of deaf and blind students.





Donor Opportunities

The project's activities have been implemented in partnership between Krousar Thmey and the National Institute for Special Education since 2019. The goal is for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport to take full financial responsibility for the academic and career counselling project by 2025. It is currently being funded by one of Krousar Thmey's donors, but more support is needed to sustain the programme prior to the government assuming full financial responsibility in 2025.

With USD 84,800 per year, donors would support over 150 young people with visual or hearing impairments each year. These funds would cover all academic and career counselling activities, including academic and vocational orientation, access to employment, individual and collective counselling, visits to companies, universities and training centres, awareness-raising activities, the creation of resource centres, financial and material support to students, as well as capacity building for the National Institute for Special Education's staff.

For more information:

Krousar Thmey

www.krousar-thmey.org/en/

Digital Education in South Africa

Background

Digital technologies are fundamental to almost everything we do today – from gaining an education to searching for employment and communicating with friends and family. While use of the internet and digital technologies has grown rapidly over the past 20 years, this progress has not been shared equally. In fact, the world faces a growing 'digital divide', with those who are disconnected left out of basic opportunities for education, employment and social connection.

The digital divide is particularly visible in South Africa, the most unequal country in the world according to the Gini coefficient, which measures income distribution.[57] Here, only 68% of people are connected to the internet,[58] and just 5% of schools offer computer science lessons, with those that do based primarily in affluent areas.[59]

Without access to digital technologies or the internet, many children in South Africa are on the wrong side of the digital divide. As these children grow up and enter the workforce, they will find themselves without the basic digital skills they need to find meaningful employment.

Given that South Africa already has a youth unemployment rate of 43%,[60] the country must be supported to make a digital transition to provide opportunities for the next generation.

To meet this urgent need, Africa Teen Geeks, a non-profit organisation, is training teachers in computer science and running digital learning classes for children across South Africa, especially those in less affluent areas.

Project Description

Since its inception in 2014, Africa Teen Geeks has grown to become the largest computer science non-profit organisation in Africa. Its mission is to eliminate the barriers faced by disadvantaged communities in pursuing an education or career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Through strategic partnerships with the University of South Africa and South Africa's Department of Basic Education, Africa Teen Geeks is well-equipped to bring this mission to reality.

Training teachers and resourcing schools – Recognising that there are significant barriers for many schools to deliver digital education classes, Africa Teen Geeks has a strong focus on training teachers and resourcing schools. This work is done with the government of South Africa to help bring the STEM curriculum – including computer science, coding and robotics – into all classrooms.

STEM Digital School – In addition to supporting schools with the resources and skills they need to teach the STEM curriculum, it is essential that quality content is available. Through the STEM Digital School, Africa Teen Geeks has created over 6,000 free video lessons on subjects including app development, coding and robotics. The STEM Digital School is also responsible for creating the first African block-based coding platform, which uses a simple 'drag and drop' interface to teach children how to build scripts from pre-made 'blocks' of code. The platform includes tutorials for both learners and teachers to help ensure that every African school can teach coding.

Girl Geek Summit – Girls are consistently underrepresented among top performers in STEM subjects. To address this disparity, Africa Teen Geeks runs the Girl Geek Summit, an event which exposes girls from disadvantaged backgrounds to female leaders within STEM. By meeting these role models, girls can be inspired to work in STEM and gain an understanding of what it takes to pursue these careers.

Digital Education in South Africa

Outcomes

Africa Teen Geeks has had a significant impact on improving exposure to computer science in South Africa. At its first event in 2015, the organisation introduced 12,500 children to computer science, 98% of whom had never used a computer before.

While Africa Teen Geeks continues to reach children through events such as Girls Geek Summit, its widest impact is made through its teacher training work, collaboration with the government of South Africa, and creation of learning resources.

So far, Africa Teen Geeks has trained over 800 teachers. Now, as a new coding and robotics curriculum, developed by Africa Teen Geeks and the Department of Basic Education, is rolled out in 1,200 schools, there is an opportunity to train even more teachers. Once more teachers are trained to deliver this new curriculum, it can be scaled up nationally, bringing digital education to all children in South Africa, regardless of their socio-economic status.

The STEM Digital School has also enabled Africa Teen Geeks to reach a considerable number of learners. So far, over 500,000 people have participated in online Zoom classes and its free video lessons on YouTube have been viewed over 1 million times.

Donor Opportunities

With a donation of USD 158,000, Africa Teen Geeks can train 2,100 teachers in disadvantaged and rural areas to deliver computer science lessons. That works out to just USD 75 per teacher.

As Africa Teen Geeks continues to expand its offering of online classes through the STEM Digital School, a donation of USD 400,000 can roll out coding and robotics classes to reach 1 million learners.

Finally, with a donation of USD 1,000,000, Africa Teen Geeks can build coding and robotics labs in 72 schools (roughly USD 14,000 per school), providing students with the equipment they need to learn these key digital skills first-hand.

For more information:

AFRICA TEENGEEKS

www.africateengeeks.co.za/

child protection

Every day, children all over the world face violence, exploitation and abuse. This can take many different forms. Some children are caught up in violent conflicts. Some are exploited for child labour. And some are abused by the very people who are there to protect them, such as their teachers or family members.

No matter what form they take, violence, exploitation and abuse have devastating impacts on children and on the wider community. When children live in safe environments, they can grow up to become responsible and active citizens. But when they suffer violence, exploitation and abuse, children struggle to develop the social skills and education they need to become supportive members of the community. In fact, the social burden and economic impact of violence against children can be equivalent to as much as 5% of a country's GDP.[61]

Child protection should start from the moment a child is born. But today, a quarter of the world's children under five do not officially exist according to government records.[62] These are children who never received a birth certificate, either due to cost or other barriers to reaching registration services. Without a legal identity, these children are invisible to their governments. This leaves them vulnerable to missing out on the protections provided by health, education and social services. Unable to prove their date of birth, these children are exposed to age-related risks, such as child labour or early marriage.

While birth registration is key to ensuring children's safety from the start, protection services remain vital throughout childhood. Once they enter school, children need protection from violence. At present, nearly 720 million school-aged children are not fully protected by law from corporal punishment in the classroom, and two thirds of children globally say they are worried about violence in school.[63] Once a child reaches adolescence, the risk of violence can escalate further. In fact, every seven minutes, somewhere in the world, an adolescent is killed by an act of violence.[64]

GREYSTANES

Protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse is a serious challenge. It cannot be solved by airlifting supplies to areas in need. Rather, it requires systemic change. This means collaborating with governments to strengthen child protection laws and policies. It means reaching out to parents, teachers and communities to improve their knowledge of harmful practices, such as corporal punishment or child marriage. And it means engaging directly with children, helping them to overcome the challenges they have faced and empowering them to protect themselves in the future.

Increased funding for child protection is a particularly urgent need today, with several recent trends putting children at greater risk. One of these trends is the increasing prevalence of protracted conflicts. Today, one in six children lives in a conflict zone,[65] and thousands of children as young as eight have been recruited by armed forces.[66] Conflict is also a main driver for people being displaced from their homes. Today, 82.4 million people are displaced, more than double the amount recorded 20 years ago.[67] 42% of these displaced people are children.[68] When children are forced from their homes, they may be separated from their families, putting them at risk of trafficking, child labour, early marriage or exploitation by armed groups. Even if they reach relative safety by crossing borders, children may be confined to detention centres or face discrimination due to language or cultural barriers.

Another recent trend that is putting children at risk is the increasing prevalence of digital technology. Around the world today, a child goes online for the first time every half second.[69] While growing up online offers children significant opportunities to learn and broaden their horizons, it also brings serious risks. More than a third of young people in 30 countries report being bullied online, with one in five skipping school because of it.[70] Even more alarming, some 80% of children in 25 countries report feeling in danger of sexual abuse or exploitation online.[71]

As the world continues to undergo rapid change, funding for child protection services must keep up with this pace. The following case studies give concrete examples of how donors can support some of the most pressing child protection priorities today.

Birth registration in Nigeria

Background

Every child has the right to a legal identity. Yet, a quarter of children under five do not officially exist.[72] These children are deprived of birth certificates, their first legal proof of identity. Often, their parents cannot afford to travel to birth registration centres, or they simply do not understand the consequences of not registering their children.

Unfortunately, the consequences can last a lifetime. Children without an official identity miss out on key services such as health care and education. They also face challenges later in life in opening bank accounts, registering to vote and entering the job market. Without proof of their age, unregistered children also risk being recruited into armed forces or exploited for early marriage or child labour.

Low birth registration rates have an impact beyond the individual child. When a large proportion of its citizens are invisible to the system, a government cannot make informed decisions about resource allocation. As a result, low birth registration is one of the greatest barriers to progress and development in low-income and middle-income countries.

This problem is particularly severe in Africa, which is home to 57% of the world's unregistered children.[73] Despite having the most significant population growth of any region of the world, Africa has the lowest birth registration rates. If progress is not accelerated, the number of unregistered children in Africa will exceed 100 million by 2030.[74]

In response to this crisis, a series of birth registration projects are taking place in countries across the continent. One of the most significant of these is in Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa and a nation in which more than half of children born today go unregistered.[75]

Project Description

To tackle the challenge of birth registration in Nigeria, a project is being implemented by a group of partners. This project is structured around three strategic pillars.

Innovation – The project supports a shift from paper-based to digital birth registration to improve collection and centralisation of data. This digital shift can enable families in rural and remote communities to register their children using SMS platforms on their mobile phones – an effective approach in Nigeria, where mobile phone ownership is high.[76]

Interconnection – By bringing birth registration records into a digital format, the project creates opportunities to use the data in an interconnected way. For instance, when the government has good records on the number of children in specific areas, it can make better-informed plans for immunisation and education.

Incentives – Technology alone is not enough to achieve universal birth registration. A shift in attitudes and behaviours must also take place. The project provides incentives for parents to register their children, such as financial grants or mobile data, to catalyse behaviour change.

Creating sustainable change at the national level requires collaboration. Therefore, the project is implemented by a large group of partners, including:

- Government agencies, such as the National Population Commission
- Mobile network operators, to support SMS-based birth registration
- Financial institutions, to support with financial incentives
- International experts, such as UNICEF
- Large non-governmental organisations, such as Plan International, which helped introduce digitised birth registration
- Small non-governmental organisations, such as the SOAR Initiative, to support community engagement for birth registration.

Birth registration in Nigeria

Outcomes

Collaborative interventions, such as this group project in Nigeria, can have a dramatic impact on birth registration rates.

Thanks to projects like this, the West and Central African region has seen registration rates for children under five increase from 45% to 53% over three years – equivalent to an additional 8.6 million children registered.[77] In Nigeria, the birth registration rate for children under five increased from 30% to 43% between 2013 and 2018.[78]

Despite this progress, significant acceleration is needed to achieve universal birth registration in the region by 2030 – a target set by the United Nations as part of its global Sustainable Development Goals.[79] To meet this target, registration rates must double or triple in Nigeria and across the region to reach an estimated 22.4 million children under one by 2030.[80]

Donor Opportunities

It takes around USD 4,500,000 to fund the birth registration partnership in Nigeria annually. There are also opportunities to fund some new activities for birth registration in the country. For instance, with a donation of USD 1,000,000 the partnership can test a block chain system for tracking the birth registration and vaccination of children.

Donors can also support birth registration initiatives in other countries across the region. The annual programme in Senegal costs around USD 1,000,000 and the annual programme in Equatorial Guinea costs around USD 200,000.

For more information:

www.unicef.org/wca/birth-registration

ORIGINAL
ORIGINAL

Reducing violence in schools in Uganda

Background

In Uganda, violence against and among children is widespread, with 59% of girls and 68% of boys aged 18-24 experiencing physical violence in childhood,[81] and one in three school children reporting peer-to-peer bullying.[82] Although prohibited, corporal punishment is often used in Ugandan schools, with 93% of boys and 94% of girls experiencing physical abuse by school staff in certain locations.[83]

In refugee settings, disrupted households and community structures increase children's exposure to multiple forms of violence.[84] The Adjumani district in northern Uganda, home to some 230,000 refugees,[85] experiences high rates of gender-based violence, with around 10 cases reported almost every day. The negative consequences of COVID-19, including school closures, have aggravated the protection situation for children, increasing their risk of exposure to violence, neglect and emotional distress.[86]

Right To Play, an international non-profit organisation, is implementing a project to address the protection challenges children face in Uganda. Specifically, Right To Play is using a 'play-based approach' to improve safety for children at schools in refugee settlements.

Project Description

The first phase of the project, implemented with the support of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, aimed to improve safety in schools for 8,100 children aged 11-18 in four refugee settlements in the Adjumani district in northern Uganda.

The project followed a play-based approach to violence in schools, considering children's complex psychological, physical, social and emotional needs, as well as their social and cultural realities. Through the project, Right To Play was able to strengthen school systems, enhance the capacity of teachers and students to improve prevention and response to violence against children in schools, and engage with communities to shift social norms and change behaviour towards child protection and rights.

The project took a collaborative approach, with teachers, the school leadership, government officials, parents, and local child protection actors such as Child Protection Committee members participating.

Reducing violence in schools in Uganda

Outcomes

The project led to an overall reduction of violence against children and their improved feeling of safety in schools and communities. The project also had a significant impact on the wider community.

Teachers – Bringing improved teaching practices into the classroom led to a reduction in corporal punishment. This improved relations between students and teachers, with students feeling more confident in interacting with teachers without fear of punishment and acknowledging teachers as trusted authorities to report cases of abuse.

Parents – Parents benefited from knowledge of their obligations and responsibilities, such as refraining from corporal punishment and giving meaningful advice to children, including sexual education and protection against violations of their rights. Children, in turn, felt more willing to report cases of abuse to their parents.

Refugee and host communities – The project enabled an improvement in cross-cultural socialisation between children from refugee communities and those from host communities. Children's participation in school activities, irrespective of tribal orientation, increased.

Donor Opportunities

Following a successful first project phase, Right To Play is now building a second phase to strengthen and draw on the achievements made so far. It will address the unmet needs of children with disabilities in schools, often victims of peer violence; support more out-of-school children to return to the classroom; and strengthen local leadership structures to improve their ability to handle cases of violence in the community. To gradually incorporate the training modules into the school curriculum, the project will increase engagement with government officials, ensuring that teachers and other educational staff continue receiving the trainings. Finally, to enhance the overall project impact, the second phase will increase the target of teachers trained per school.

A donation of USD 700,000 to the second phase of the project would help Right To Play to reinforce child protection mechanisms and key stakeholders' capacity to prevent and respond to violence against children, both in the community and in the 33 project schools.

For more information:

RIGHT TO PLAY
PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

www.righttoplay.com

Protecting child rights in urban Brazil

Background

In 2007, the world officially became a majority urban planet for the first time in human history.[87] Even after this milestone was reached, the global urban population has continued to grow by some 80 million people per year.[88] Based on current trends, 68% of the global population, or 6.7 billion people, will live in urban areas by 2050.[89]

While urbanisation has many benefits, it also brings challenges. Data show that on average, compared to their rural peers, urban children have better access to services such as health care, education, water and sanitation. But a closer look at the evidence suggests that not all urban children are benefiting equally. In fact, the poorest urban children are at a considerable disadvantage, and can even be worse off than their rural peers.[90]

This inequality is a particular problem in Brazil, where rapid urban growth has led to high levels of poverty and social exclusion, physically manifested in *favelas* (slums). In Rio de Janeiro, some 22% of the urban population lives in *favelas*, while in the northern regions of Brazil, only a quarter of urban residents have sewage, waste collection and piped water.[91]

This exclusionary urban planning has a high social cost, creating marginalised areas and deepening inequality. The impact on children and young people is evident in Brazil's homicide rate for children and teenagers, which is the third highest in the world,[92] as well as its teenage pregnancy rates, which are higher than global and regional averages.[93]

This case study presents two UNICEF programmes in Brazil which are protecting the rights of children and reducing inequalities in urban areas.

Project Description

The UNICEF Municipal Seal of Approval – Since 1998, this programme has been supporting urban municipalities in Brazil to make progress on children's rights. UNICEF provides guidance, training workshops and technical assistance to participating municipalities, helping them to strengthen policies to ensure children's rights are met.

The programme runs on a four-year cycle, and participating municipalities which achieve significant improvements among key child rights indicators during this period are awarded the UNICEF Municipal Seal of Approval. To achieve Seal certification, the municipalities must also form local adolescent citizenship groups to facilitate the participation of young people in decision-making.

Platform for Urban Centres – This programme was launched in 2008 to reduce disparities in access to services in large cities, and to address high levels of violence and exclusion experienced by adolescents in deprived urban areas.

The Platform for Urban Centres differs from the UNICEF Seal, as it does not follow a certification model. This enables each participating city to implement the programme differently, reflecting the diverse needs and capacities within each local area. In this way, the Platform for Urban Centres takes a focused approach on context-specific problems, such as youth violence, while the UNICEF Seal takes a broader approach to promote children's rights at scale.

Protecting child rights in urban Brazil

Outcomes

The UNICEF Municipal Seal of Approval – The first iteration of the UNICEF Seal, in 1998, reached 170 municipalities across Brazil. Today, it reaches 1,924 municipalities. In the Semi-Arid and Amazon Legal regions, key target areas for the programme, 85% and 80% of municipalities participate, respectively. All of this has a measurable impact on children. Among key child rights indicators, municipalities in the Semi-Arid and Amazon Legal regions with UNICEF Seal certification perform better than those without. Even among municipalities that participate in the programme but do not receive the UNICEF Seal, results are better than the Brazilian average in 60% of child rights indicators.[94]

Platform for Urban Centres – In 2008, the programme was launched in three cities. It now operates in 10 cities, covering 9 million children. Participating cities have seen declines in rates of neonatal mortality, teen pregnancy and school dropout. However, reducing youth violence remains a challenge, and more funding is needed to make progress on this significant child protection issue.[95]

Donor Opportunities

The UNICEF Seal and the Platform for Urban Centres are among the largest and longest-running UNICEF programmes in Brazil. With ongoing support from philanthropists, the programmes can continue to embed a child rights focus in urban policymaking and planning, reducing inequalities and protecting children from harm.

As the programmes focus on enabling local governments and communities to make changes for themselves, they offer donors the opportunity to make a significant impact. It costs USD 1,000,000 annually to run the entire UNICEF Seal programme. These costs support UNICEF's guidance, training workshops and technical assistance work.

Likewise, the Platform for Urban Centres programme costs USD 300,000 annually. The costs support UNICEF's research, coordination and advocacy work to help cities identify key problems and work with partners to develop solutions.

For more information:

www.selounicef.org.br/

Social support for children separated from their families in Switzerland

Background

Today, 1% of the world's population, or 82.4 million people, are displaced from their homes.[96] Many have been forced from their homes by conflict and some have been displaced by natural disasters, while others have fled persecution. Furthermore, there is an increasing number of people migrating for economic and social reasons. In fact, the number of migrants globally has increased from 153 million in 1990 to 281 million in 2020.[97]

Amidst all this movement, children are particularly vulnerable. They face numerous challenges in transit, at their destination and upon return, often because they have few – or no – options to move through safe and regular pathways. They may be separated from their families, forced into child labour, pressed into early marriage, exposed to smuggling, subjected to human trafficking, or put at risk of violence and exploitation. They often miss out on education and health care, and struggle with language and cultural differences in the communities they arrive in. All these difficulties can have lasting physical and psychological effects, preventing children from reaching their full potential.

In 2018, Païdos, an association that helps children in Geneva, Switzerland, realised that the city was home to an increasing number of unaccompanied children in vulnerable situations. In response, Païdos launched a pilot project to provide them with emergency care. Called CAP, this project seeks to protect and support unaccompanied children by taking rapid action against marginalising factors that can lead them to fall into illegal and harmful activities, such as prostitution or drug abuse.

Project description

The CAP project is aimed at unaccompanied minors aged 15-18 who are separated from any parental authority figure and who lack legal status in Switzerland. All the children are referred to Païdos by the Geneva Child Protection Service and are housed in shelters or hotels.

These minors, for the most part of North and West African origin, have generally fled particularly difficult family and social situations, and often come from precarious backgrounds. In addition to their difficult life experiences, they have also experienced often traumatic migratory journeys and a state of rootlessness in Europe, marked by dramatic experiences such as human trafficking, illegal networks and social exclusion.

The CAP project aims to support these children and protect them from risks of marginalisation, such as networks of crime, drug trafficking and prostitution. The project also aims to help children return to schooling, access health care and build positive futures in which they are socially integrated in the community.

To achieve these aims, the CAP project uses an active and caring listening approach. The children are given opportunities to share – or not – their experiences in a safe environment. At their own pace, children can open up about the challenges they have faced and their complex feelings. For most of them, it is the first time that they have spoken to a psychologist. The teenagers testify, sharing their experiences to feel "less alone," to "free their minds" and to "empty their hearts." Gradually, a relationship of confidence is established. This space and time, different from their survival mode, allows them to discover themselves in a new light and to see their potential.

The CAP project also gives children a chance to participate in a wide range of workshops, including French language classes, cooking sessions, group meals, art classes, sports activities, cultural exchanges and support groups. These workshops not only help the children to gain valuable skills, but also give them an opportunity to take part in positive social interactions, helping them to integrate into society.

Social support for children separated from their families in Switzerland

Outcomes

Since its inception in 2018, the CAP project has worked with 201 unaccompanied minors.

All of CAP's beneficiaries arrive in "survival mode" – they often abuse medications or alcohol, have difficulty adapting to schedules and oversight, and can easily return to their risky behaviours. During the programme, the children become more and more receptive to learning and psychological help, and the relationship of confidence gets stronger by the day. The "Païdos family", as the teenagers often refer to it, becomes an ever more meaningful concept.

Donor Opportunities

Support from private donors allows Païdos to ensure that the CAP project functions well, and to provide high-quality educational and psychological support adapted to the needs of unaccompanied minors. Annual support of USD 72,000 covers the project's budget, which corresponds to an expenditure of USD 120 per adolescent per week.

To further develop and strengthen the therapeutic and psychological support needed for unaccompanied minors in distress, Païdos is looking to increase the availability of its in-house psychologists. The cost of doing so is USD 39,000 per year.

For more information:

CAP
accueil psychopédagogique
pour mineurs non accompagnés
païdos

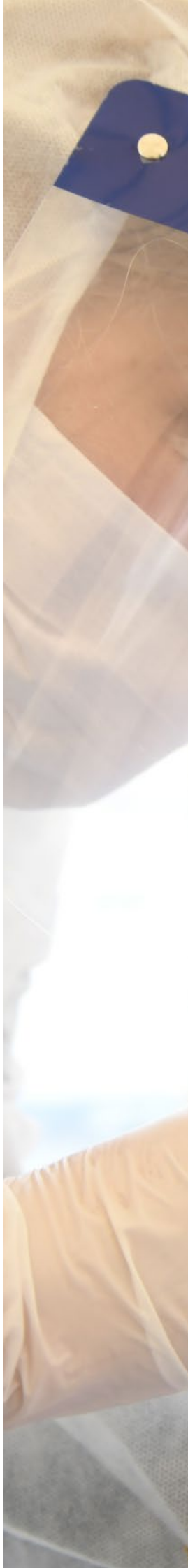
https://paidos.org/nos-actions/cap/

conclusion

In recent decades, the world has seen sustained progress across all measures of human development in virtually every country (see Figure 1). Projects like the ones featured in this donor guide have played a critical role in this transformative change.

But now, the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic threaten to reverse this progress.[98] Health service disruptions caused by the pandemic have created a backlog of at least 23 million children who have missed out on routine vaccines against deadly diseases, such as measles.[99] Likewise, school closures have set 168 million schoolchildren back almost an entire year in their education.[100] An estimated 140 million children could fall below the poverty line due to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic.[101] On top of this, the world also faces challenges from climate change and protracted conflicts.

We now stand at a crossroads for global development. But with over 40% of the world's population under the age of 25,[102] we have an opportunity to set the world back on the path to progress, by making sound investments in children and young people.

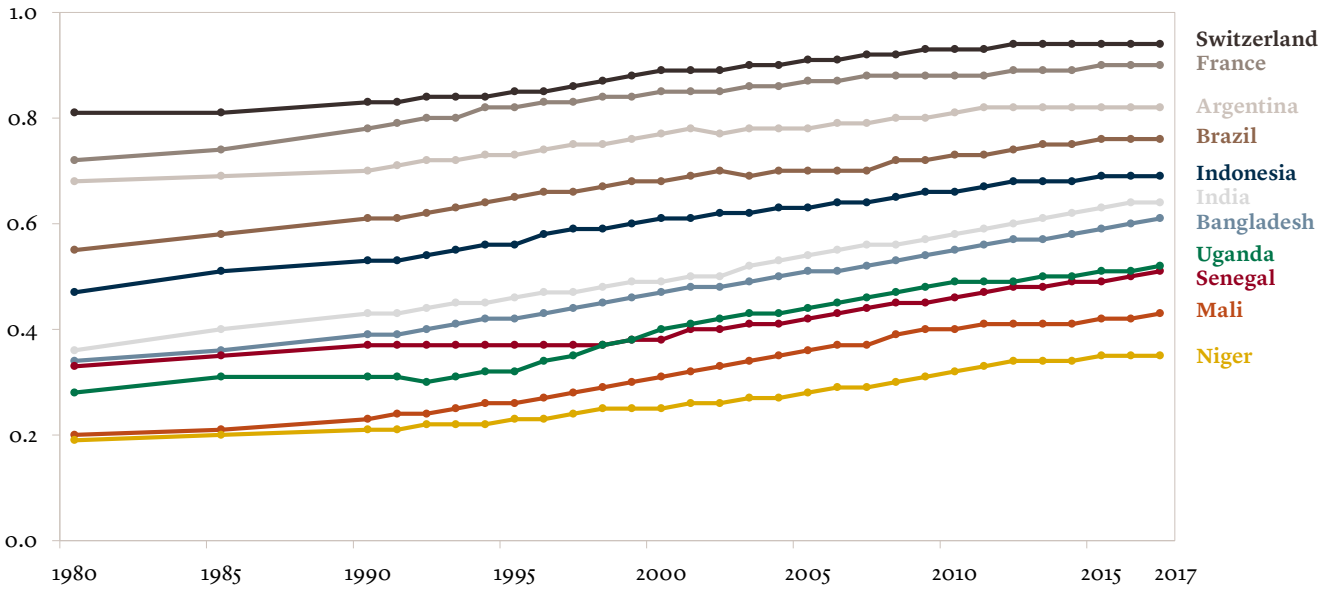


防护
Face
Direct Splash

The path ahead

In 2015, the world came together to agree on an ambitious vision for the future set out in 17 Sustainable Development Goals (see Figure 2). These global goals were adopted by all United Nations Member States with an aim to end poverty, reduce inequality and build more peaceful, prosperous societies by 2030. Although global progress towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals has been tested by unexpected challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, they remain our clearest and most strategic path forwards – for children and for the world.

Figure 1: Graph showing global progress in selected countries as measured by the UN Human Development Index [103]



Source: UNDP (2018), OurWorldInData.org

Figure 2: The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

But the Sustainable Development Goals are not just a means for helping children. They are also a set of goals that cannot be achieved without children. Despite all the progress we have made, we are currently behind schedule for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.[104] Securing children's basic needs and rights is one of the best ways to get back on track and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on time, for the benefit of all people and the planet.

The case for investing in children is clear. By supporting child-focused work within the Sustainable Development Goals framework, we can build a generation that is healthier, better educated and better protected. These young people will then be better equipped to engage in social issues and to develop innovative new solutions to the world's problems, feeding back into accelerated progress on the rest of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We are already seeing the extraordinary power of youth social engagement to influence positive change on a global scale. In recent years, young activists have played a crucial role in shaping the climate agenda. But there are still too many youth voices that are not as widely heard on other issues, such as mental health and violence against children.

The path ahead

The power of innovative new ideas to reshape the future is also clear. Such ideas will have to come from the next generation of young people, who will only be able to provide them if they have the health care, education and protection they need to reach their full potential.

The time for philanthropists to act is now. If funding is strategically used to support the largest generation of young people in history, then the potential for global progress is unlimited.

As we move closer to 2030, the need for philanthropists to step forward is becoming ever greater to enable us to reach the Sustainable Development Goals on time. Doing so is critical to all children's basic needs and rights, and to reimagining a better future.

The cost of this global transformation will be high. But the cost of inaction will be even higher.

How can philanthropists channel resources?

For philanthropists interested in contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals by funding programmes for children, there are clear social returns on their donations. For instance, within child health, every USD 1 directed towards immunisation saves USD 16 in health care costs, lost wages and lost productivity.[105] Within education, annual contributions of just USD 23 per secondary school student can generate benefits worth 12 times as much.[106] Within child protection, interventions to reduce child marriage costing less than USD 4 per person annually can generate a sixfold social return.[107]

While funds are critical for advancing progress for children and the Sustainable Development Goals, philanthropists themselves have a unique power to maximise impact with their funding and work in a targeted way in support of publicly-funded interventions. In fact, philanthropy can have a particular value in four distinct ways.

1. **Innovation** – As philanthropists have greater freedom than governments or large organisations to direct their finances, they can catalyse new and innovative approaches that may be high-risk, but also have the potential for transformative change. Philanthropists can support projects at any stage, from the seed of a good idea to a full-grown initiative. Thus, philanthropic gifts can give innovative ideas, such as oxygen therapy (see page 18), the time and resources they need to grow, enabling a bridge from vision to reality.

2. **Co-financing** – Philanthropic support can be key to unlocking co-financing or finalising projects. For instance, the education programme in Cambodia (see page 34) is gradually moving to a government-funded model, but needs co-financing from philanthropists during this transition. Creating or joining co-funded projects enables philanthropists to achieve larger goals, maximising impact for everyone.

How can philanthropists channel resources?

3. **Underfunded areas** – Philanthropic giving can be a pivotal way to support less widely considered, yet no less important, efforts. Birth registration, for example, is critical for ensuring children's access to health care, education and many other services (see page 46). That said, it rarely attracts attention from traditional donors. This creates the opportunity for philanthropists to make a major impact, by supporting an underfunded area of work. Through their funding, philanthropists can also help raise awareness, catalysing financial contributions from others as well as influencing governmental change.

4. **Flexible funds** – Finally, and most importantly, philanthropists can provide organisations with funds that can be used with minimal restrictions. These flexible funds are critical, giving children's organisations the agency to use their own expertise to direct resources where the need is greatest and where funding shortfalls are highest. Flexible funds also enable organisations to be agile and respond rapidly when a situation suddenly changes, as in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing flexible and unrestricted donations is the best way for philanthropists to have an impact for children.

Philanthropists have a unique power to shape the future. At this singular moment in history – in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a boom in the youth demographic and only a few years to get the Sustainable Development Goals back on track – the power of philanthropy is critically needed. With the right support, we can realise the basic needs and rights of every child, and reimagine a better future for subsequent generations.

We hope that this donor guide has offered you some inspiration on how you can make a difference for the world's children. In addition to noting all the facts and data cited in this guide, it is important to remember that behind every number is an individual child whose life can be changed forever with your support. We hope you will continue to explore more of the work of the organisations featured in this guide and take action to support their efforts for children.

Next steps with Lombard Odier Philanthropy Services

You may feel overwhelmed by all the options, but we are here to discuss your aspirations and help guide and connect you with the relevant partners. Based on our expertise in advising clients who wish to make a meaningful contribution to realising every child's right to health, education and protection, we at Lombard Odier Philanthropy Services recommend you take these steps:

- **Define your philanthropic objectives** - set your priorities in terms of topic, but also geographic scope, mode of intervention and impact. This will help you find the niche that is relevant to you and the targeted issue.
- **Develop your giving strategy** - in this field, as in many, no donation is too small. Decide if you wish to help strengthen the means of action (capacity building); focus on providing more care, research or services; or promote their outcomes.
- **Marry passion with power of data** - try to balance the passion you feel for the cause with a data-based approach. It will help you select the right programme or project.
- **Collaborate and co-finance** - remember that in the case of children and youth, joining forces with others and co-financing are crucial. Seek interactions with existing funders platforms.
- **Share learning and achievements** - share what you learn with other like-minded donors and learn from them. Your advisor can help widen your circle of contacts in conservation circles or elsewhere.
- **Asset management strategy** - if in charge of a grant-making foundation, whether focused on children or not, discuss with your Board the opportunity to invest the capital in companies or funds that adopt child or Sustainable Development Goals-centered approaches.

Philanthropy Services | +41 22 709 99 40 | philanthropy@lombardodier.com
www.lombardodier.com/philanthropy

unicef
for every child

UNICEF is the world's largest children's organisation, an agency of the United Nations, and 100% voluntarily funded. Mandated at the highest levels, UNICEF ensures that children and adolescents are healthy, educated and protected. We have a presence in over 190 countries and territories, working during times of peace and stability and when emergencies strike. We partner with national governments and local communities, other UN agencies and non-governmental organisations, and the public and private sectors to achieve our mission to create a better future for children and adolescents.

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