



children first.

Social Inclusion

UNICEF is working harder than ever to promote the rights of children everywhere.

Every child has a right to a fair chance in life, to live free from extreme poverty and discrimination. Fairness has always been at the heart of UNICEF's work — from the time UNICEF was established to meet the needs of children after World War II, to today, as millions of children are uprooted from their homes due to conflicts and wars they did nothing to create.

Despite great progress over the past two decades to improve the situation for children, crushing poverty and widening disparities in health, education and protection still undermine the lives of millions of children. Between 1990 and 2015, the number of children who died each year from preventable causes fell by more than half, from 12.7 million to 5.9 million. But 16,000 children still die every day from things we can prevent. Children in the poorest households are nearly twice as likely to die as those from the wealthiest households. Nearly half of the people living on less than \$1.90 per day in 2013 were children — even though children only make up a third of the global population. And more than a third of people living in the most extreme poverty are less than 13 years old.

Many children are excluded from realizing their basic rights because of their gender, race, ethnicity, geographic location or disability. Children are excluded from education because they are poor. They are denied health services because they live in remote areas or urban slums. They are at risk of physical injury and loss because they live in communities hit hard by climate change. Marginalized children are at greater risk for exploitation and abuse. And many children experience several of



these deprivations at once: the same girl who doesn't have enough to eat is often also out of school; she may also be living with a disability and at risk for exploitation and abuse.

Protracted conflicts, often fueled by the inequitable distribution of resources and marginalization of ethnic or religious groups further compound the suffering of children and young people. In humanitarian situations, the poorest children are the hardest hit. Communities devastated by climate-related disasters often have the fewest resources to rebuild and recover, and remain at greater risk to future disasters.

About UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization by providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood.

For more information, visit unicefusa.org.

UNICEF in Action

Of all the world's inequities and injustices, this is perhaps the most fundamental: Children growing up in poverty are nearly twice as likely to die before reaching their fifth birthday as children growing up in better circumstances. An unconscionable majority of them die unnecessarily. Most of these deaths could have been prevented with high-impact, low-cost solutions. UNICEF has found that investments in the most deprived children and communities provide greater value for money than equivalent investments in less deprived groups. Every \$1 million invested in the poorest children and communities saves nearly twice as many lives as equivalent investments that do not reach the poor. By reaching those poorest communities with cost-effective health interventions, we can avert 70 million under-five deaths by 2030.

UNICEF works in direct partnership with governments to identify who the most vulnerable and excluded children are, and what they need. Through evidence-gathering and policy guidance, UNICEF helps shape social protection systems that affect children nationwide. UNICEF policy experts help governments monitor their budgets to allocate resources to the poorest and most marginalized children, and design programs that will bring the greatest results. UNICEF also champions children's rights and promotes access to justice, ensuring that legal frameworks protect minorities from discrimination and exclusion.

Cash transfer programs are an important social protection tool that can help keep the poorest, most vulnerable households out of extreme poverty and ensure access to health care and quality education. Women-headed households are often the recipients of these cash grants, which have been proven to strengthen women's financial security, social status and participation in the labor force. In Madagascar, UNICEF supported the country's first national cash transfer program to increase secondary school enrollment, reaching 39,000 households and 117,000 children. In Jordan, UNICEF provided a monthly cash grant of \$28 to 15,500 families, benefiting 56,000 boys and girls. The program prevented more than half of the families from having to cut back on food rations and freed up their limited resources for

school expenses and medicine. The program was so successful that it is even impacting how the Jordanian government carries out some of its standard social protection programs, improving funds transfers through new technology, and using some of UNICEF's monitoring and evaluation tools.

In addition to partnership with governments, UNICEF also works with civil society actors, local leaders and families themselves to tackle the underlying drivers of child poverty and exclusion. For example, UNICEF worked with the civil society partner BRAC International in Bangladesh to unpack the drivers of harmful social norms and customs that exclude children from school. This is leading to an increase in school enrollment among children with disabilities, girls and other disadvantaged groups. UNICEF also empowers children to have a voice and be agents of change for the world they want. UNICEF's free, open-source SMS platform, U-Report, reached more than 2 million users in 34 countries in 2016. Through this tool, young people can voice their opinions, share information on what's happening in their schools and communities, and demand that local leaders make changes to improve their lives.

UNICEF Social Inclusion Snapshot

- Children make up only a third of the global population, but account for half of the people living in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.90 a day.
- There are an estimated 93 million children with disabilities in the world. They are often the most marginalized and vulnerable.
- UNICEF invested \$330 million in 2016 to strengthen social protection systems for children and tackle the underlying drivers of child poverty and exclusion.
- UNICEF helps governments in 157 countries to provide critical social protection programs for the most vulnerable and marginalized children.
- UNICEF reached an additional 24 million children with cash transfers in 2016, covering a total of 179 million children, including 1.4 million children in emergency settings. ●

Discrimination creates and compounds inequity. In the face of social exclusion, children in the most dire situations are the least likely to receive the care, resources and services they need.