



## UNICEF

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**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** is a special program of the **United Nations (UN)** devoted to aiding national efforts to improve the health, nutrition, education, and general welfare of children.

### What is the History behind the Creation of UNICEF?

- **UNICEF** was created in **1946** as International Children's Emergency Fund (ICEF) by UN relief Rehabilitation Administration to help children affected by World War II.
- UNICEF became a **permanent part** of the [United Nations](#) in **1953**.
  - The name was shortened to **United Nations Children Fund** but it is still referred to as UNICEF.
- It is **mandated by the United Nations General Assembly** to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.
- UNICEF is guided by the **Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989**.
  - It strives to establish **children's rights** as enduring **ethical principles** and **international standards** of behaviour towards children.
- Awarded the **Nobel Prize for Peace** in 1965 for "**promotion of brotherhood among the nations**".
- **Headquarters:** New York City.
  - It works in over 190 countries and territories with **7 regional offices**.

### What is the Work of UNICEF includes?

- After 1950, the UNICEF directed its efforts toward general programs for the improvement of children's welfare, particularly in **less-developed countries** and in various emergency situations.
  - It eventually expanded its scope to the struggle of women, especially mothers, in the developing world. For example, it launched its '**Women in Development Programme**' in 1980.
  - In 1982, UNICEF commenced a new **children's health program** that focused on **monitoring growth, oral rehydration therapy, advocating breastfeeding and immunization**.
- The work of the UNICEF includes:
  - Child Development and Nutrition,
  - Child Protection,
  - Education,
  - Child Environment,
  - Polio Eradication,
  - Reproductive and Child Health,
  - Children and AIDS,

- Social Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation,
- Advocacy and Partnership,
- Behaviour Change Communication,
- Emergency Preparedness and Response.
- UNICEF **mobilizes political** will and material resources to help countries, particularly developing countries.
- UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children — victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation, especially those with disabilities.
- UNICEF works with all its partners towards the attainment of the **sustainable human development goals** adopted by the world community.
- The realization of the vision of peace and social progress enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

## What is the Organisational Structure of UNICEF?

- UNICEF is governed by an **Executive Board** consisting of 36 members that are elected to terms of three years by the **United Nations' Economic and Social Council**.
- The following countries are home to UNICEF Regional Offices.
  - The Americas and Caribbean Regional Office, **Panama City, Panama**
  - Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, **Geneva, Switzerland**
  - East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, **Bangkok, Thailand**
  - Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, **Nairobi, Kenya**
  - The Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, **Amman, Jordan**
  - South Asia Regional Office, **Kathmandu, Nepal**
  - West and Central Africa Regional Office, **Dakar, Senegal**
- Each region that UNICEF serves is allocated a number of seats on the Executive Board, so all regions are represented.
- There are also **33 national committees** across the globe, which are non-governmental organizations that help promote the rights of children and fundraise.

## How the Funding is done?

- The **national committees are an integral part of UNICEF's global organization** and a unique feature of UNICEF.
  - Serving as the public face and dedicated voice of UNICEF, the National Committees work tirelessly to raise funds from the private sector, promote children's rights and secure worldwide visibility for children threatened by poverty, disasters, armed conflict, abuse and exploitation.
- UNICEF is funded exclusively by **voluntary contributions**, and the **National Committees** collectively raise around one-third of UNICEF's annual income.
  - This comes through contributions from corporations, civil society organizations and more than 6 million individual donors worldwide.
- It also **rallies many different partners** - including the media, national and local government officials, NGOs, specialists such as doctors and lawyers, corporations, schools, young people and the general public - on issues related to children's rights.

## UNICEF and India: What is the Scenario?

- UNICEF **began its work in India in 1949** with three staff members and established an office in Delhi three years later.
  - Currently, it advocates for the rights of India's children in 16 states.
- **Nodal Ministries:** Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- Work done by UNICEF in India includes:

- **Census support, 2011:** Gender issues were mainstreamed into the training and communication strategy for the 2011 Census.
  - This helped 2.7 million enumerators and supervisors collect quality disaggregated data as part of the UNICEF contribution to the joint United Nations support to the Census.
- **Polio Campaign, 2012:** Polio cases in India fell from 559 in 2008 to zero cases in 2012.
  - The Government, in partnership with **UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary International** and the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** contributed to almost universal awareness of the need to vaccinate all children under five against polio.
  - As a result of these efforts, India was removed from the list of endemic countries in 2014.
- **Reduction in MMR, 2013:** UNICEF's support to the **National Health Mission (NHM)** and the second phase of the **Reproductive and Child Health programme** resulted in increased access to institutional and community-based maternal, neonatal and child health services.
  - This contributed to a reduction in the **Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) to 130** (2014-16), and the **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) to 34** (2016). (Data Source: NITI Aayog)
    - **MMR** is defined as the proportion of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births.
    - **IMR** is the number of deaths per 1,000 live births of children under one year of age.
- **Call to Action, 2013:** This initiative was launched to reduce under-five mortality.
  - It has brought together state governments, development partners, such as UNICEF, NGOs, the corporate sector and other key stakeholders under the umbrella to ensure harmony in efforts to accelerate inroads in child survival.
- **Maternal and Child Nutrition, 2013:** The **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)** successfully launched a nationwide communication campaign on **Maternal and Child Nutrition** with UNICEF Ambassador promoting nutrition for children.
  - This was one of the largest public service campaigns in the country, reaching people across India, through diverse means of communication in 18 languages.
- **India Newborn Action Plan, 2014:** This is first of this kind in the region, builds upon the existing commitments for newborn under **Call to Action, the RMNCH+A (Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child Health + Adolescent)**.

## What is the Strategic Plan (2022-2025)?

- UNICEF's Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, reflects UNICEF's unreserved commitment to promoting the rights of all children, everywhere.
  - It comes at a crucial time when **the human rights of children are under threat** to a degree that has not been seen in more than a generation.
- It is the first of two sequential plans towards 2030 and it represents UNICEF's contribution to **child-focused Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** in all settings. As such, it provides a global framework for country programmes and National Committees.
- The **Strategic Plan will guide synchronized action** towards an inclusive recovery from COVID-19, acceleration towards the achievement of the SDGs and the attainment of a society in which every child is included, without discrimination, and has agency, opportunity and their rights fulfilled.
- The Plan was informed by voices of children, communities, governments, UN sister agencies, private sector, civil society and other partners.
  - It outlines **key programmatic goals and a related set of result areas**, change

strategies and enablers, including new or accelerated approaches on topics like climate action, mental health and social protection.

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