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**Every child, including  
adolescents, has access to  
inclusive social protection and  
lives free of poverty**

Compendium of SBC Best Practices



# Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements and lessons learned

Access the individual case studies by clicking on each item below:



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## UNICEF Mexico Improves Relationships Between Migrants and Host Communities in Tapachula

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements and lessons learned

### Brief summary



**Dates of Activity**  
2022 to present

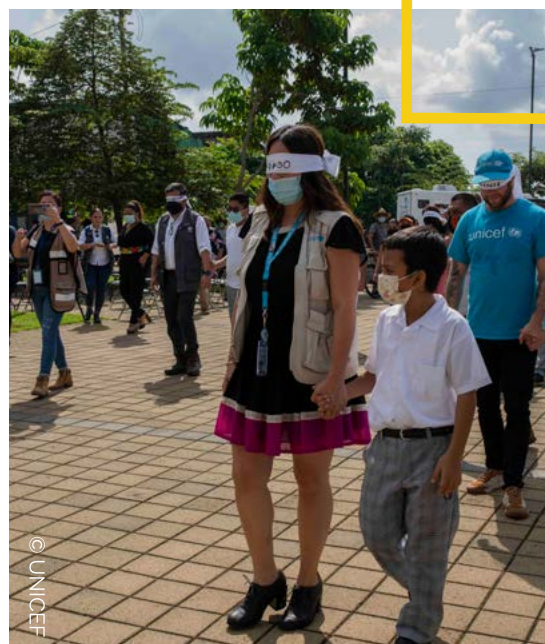


**Duration**  
8 months (initial investment)



**Budget**  
US\$200,000

Between August 2022 and March 2023, UNICEF Mexico supported the *Voces en el Camino* (Voices on the Road) Campaign to increase tolerance and understanding among immigrants and their host communities in Tapachula, Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Edutainment activities were implemented to help immigrants and community members understand the key issues related to the rights of immigrant children and adolescents. The activities included participatory muralism, storytelling workshops, a ten-episode interactive animated digital mini-series, and an automated chat service to help adolescents access care and services on mental health and provide information regarding access to education, documentation, protection measures, and health and nutrition. Each of the activities reached substantial numbers of intended audience members.





## Context

Between January and March 2022, there was an increase in people arriving in Mexico, mainly from Central America, Haiti, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Cuba, Congo, Nigeria, and Ukraine. On 15 March, 4,000 people arrived in Tapachula (a city and municipality located in the far southeast of the state of Chiapas in Mexico) with the intention of seeking asylum in Mexico. An estimated 30,000 people in Tapachula city were waiting for their refugee status. By the end of February 16,309 people had formally requested asylum in Mexico. Shelters were over capacity, with some forced to close their doors due to staffing shortages caused by an increase in COVID-19 infections.

Migrants are generally unaware of the law when they arrive in a new city or country, leaving them vulnerable to a host of human rights violations. The lack of space for adequate care made the protection of children (especially unaccompanied children) and adolescents difficult in Tapachula. There was a disproportionate use of force by security agents against families with young children. In addition to physical injuries, UNICEF staff working in Tapachula noticed severe dehydration and malnutrition in young migrant children. Coupled with the physiological, physical and mental burdens associated with being an immigrant, there was also enormous emotional stress and having to face xenophobia.<sup>1</sup> Migrants did not know where to go to be safe and to receive healthcare and other essential services.



## Strategic approach

UNICEF supported the Government of Tapachula, Mexico, civil society implementing organizations (Adra and Cadena) a creative agency (*Lorogranada*), and Tapachula authorities to launch an evidence based social and behaviour change (SBC) campaign aimed at guaranteeing compliance by host communities with the rights of migrant children and adolescents in Tapachula. The campaign activities were oriented toward integrating immigrant youth within host communities through art and access to education, and by sensitizing host communities to the circumstances that led to their migration. The expected results were to create more empathy for the immigrants at the individual and community levels, leading to decreases in xenophobia and violence, and increases in tolerance and integration.



The first stage of the intervention was launched in August 2022 and ended in March 2023. The campaign activities included:

- **Participatory muralism:** Sixteen murals were painted by local artists and artists associated with the collaborating NGOs using a participatory approach that included children on the move and from the host communities.
- **Storytelling workshop:** An immersive exhibition was created in the Tapachula Museum where a workshop entitled *Me Lllaman Migrante* ('They call me a migrant') was conducted. The workshop fostered discussions about the reasons for migration and the vulnerability of, and risks faced by, migrants.
- **Interactive miniseries:** The miniseries consisted of ten illustrated and animated episodes created for the internet by a collective of digital artists. The episodes focused on improving knowledge, attitudes, and self-care among migrants living in Tapachula shelters, and covered a range of topics including nutrition, education, protection, identity, emotional well-being, and health challenges (especially COVID-19 prevention).
- **Uniendo Voces (Joining Voices) chat service on U-Report:**<sup>2</sup> The U-Report component allowed migrant children and adolescents to access reliable, relevant and updated information on their rights and the services available to them, such as mental health, access to education, migration processes, and health services.
- **Workshops:** Three workshops were created by *Fundación Jorge Marín* that promoted



the recognition and validation of migrants' identity, and their entitlement to exercise their rights, especially childrens' rights: *Cuéntame tus alas* ("Tell me about your wings"); *El ruido generado por el choque de los cuerpos* ("The noise generated by the clash of bodies"); and *Mi compañero de viaje* ("My travel buddy"). The aim of these workshops was to reinforce self-protection messages.

- **Theatre for development:** Five plays were written and performed with puppets for children aged 4–7 years. The plays presented key migration issues, including protection, nutrition, mental health, education and WASH to help the children process healthy ways of addressing these issues. Each performance was followed by a tailored activity to reinforce the key themes.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** The campaign included monitoring, social listening and evaluation activities using a mix of methodologies, for example, direct observation and data registration, surveys using Kobo, on-site qualitative data systematization, and written evaluations conducted by the implementing partners.



## Key achievements

- About 800 visitors per week (approximately 600 people on the move and 200 locals) were exposed to the mural at CEDECO, a community development centre that provides services to locals and migrants. The stories and perceptions around the art pieces were collected and documented. By March 2023, the murals reached approximately 20,000 people.
- The storytelling workshop reached more than 9,000 people who left around 700 letters dedicated to children on the move.
- The interactive miniseries reached approximately 3,000 children in shelters under the direct execution scheme and approximately 10,000 under the broadcast scheme through an agreement signed with *Télécom Sans Frontières* (TSF).
- The *Uniendo Voces* chat was accessed by an estimated 20,000 migrants; at least 1,100 individuals received direct assistance through U-Report based on the numbers reflected by HIAS, the implementing partner that delivered the mental health service and the Rapid Pro-engagement metrics.
- The three workshops created by *Fundación Jorge Marín* reached an estimated 3,000 displaced children in schools and shelters.
- This cross-cutting and longitudinal intervention has addressed more than five Humanitarian Aid for Children (HAC) indicators.<sup>3</sup>
- This intervention also changed the indicators used to measure the intervention.

**20,000**  
PEOPLE

exposed to the murals

**20,000**  
MIGRANTS

accessed the  
*Uniendo Voces* chat

**3,000**  
CHILDREN

in shelters were  
reached through the  
interactive miniseries

**1,100**  
INDIVIDUALS

received direct  
assistance through  
U-Report



## Lessons learned

- 1** Creating and disseminating engaging interventions based on art and expression is an effective way to gather information about perceptions, feelings and testimonials.
- 2** Art and edutainment can effect social change while fostering active listening and addressing UNICEF's objective of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP).
- 3** Inclusion and participation have proven to be an essential driver in reducing discrimination rates, making intervention processes easier and more appropriate for the community.
- 4** The support of the local government is essential to ensure the participation of the host community.
- 5** Including an "ownership" component to a project helps to ensure that the different parties involved will sustain the activities.



## Recommendations

- 1 Go digital:** Expanding the activities to online platforms would make the messages more accessible to more people.
- 2 Scale up:** Building a more robust network of partners would extend the reach of the campaign to the state level, while securing buy in from the government to reduce costs of implementation.
- 3 Expand to other countries:** Making the programme available to all countries along migrant routes (e.g., Colombia, Venezuela, Central America) would enable the messages to travel far and wide and foster understanding within and among multiple cultures.
- 4 Translate messages and materials:** The messages and materials should be translated and/or adapted for the various interventions (e.g., voice overs on the mini-series, scripts in multiple languages) which would be a cost-effective way to extend the reach of the programme in other LACR countries.
- 5 Knowledge management:** The programme activities and results should be documented and shared with as wide an audience as possible in order to create awareness and motivate advocacy for social programming and/or crowdfunding.

## Endnotes

- 1 UNICEF, 'Mexico-migration Tapachula: Report No. 1', March 2022, <[https://www.unicef.org/media/117641/file/Mexico-\(Tapachula\)-Humanitarian-SitRep-18-March-2022.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/117641/file/Mexico-(Tapachula)-Humanitarian-SitRep-18-March-2022.pdf)>.
- 2 U-Report is a global messaging platform that empowers young people around the world to engage with and speak out on issues that matter to them.
- 3 The HAC indicators are: People engaged in RCCE actions; number of people with access to established accountability mechanisms; number of people reached through messaging on prevention and access to services; number of people in host communities participating in community activities on prevention of xenophobia, promotion of inter-cultural dialogue or inclusion in crisis affected areas; number of people participating in engagement actions (for social and behavioural change).





## UNICEF Viet Nam Improves Tolerance and Inclusion Among Youth During the COVID-19 Pandemic through Kindness is Contagious Campaign

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

### Brief summary



**Dates of Activity**  
May to July 2020



**Duration**  
Three months



**Budget**  
US\$50,000

In May 2020, UNICEF Viet Nam and the Ministry of Health (MOH) launched a three-month mass and social media campaign, Kindness is Contagious, calling on youth to show support for their community by promoting mutual understanding, tolerance, and inclusion during the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign emphasized three key messages: be kind, be tolerant and be optimistic. Youth were invited to share drawings, videos, and other innovative and creative solutions for coping with anxiety related to the pandemic through UNICEF and MOH's digital platforms. The campaign aimed to help youth learn what they can do differently to quell their anxiety during the COVID-19 period and then once the situation returned to normal.<sup>1</sup> In three months of campaign from May to July 2020, the messages reached more than 65 million social media users throughout the country, two million of whom engaged with overwhelmingly positive feedback.

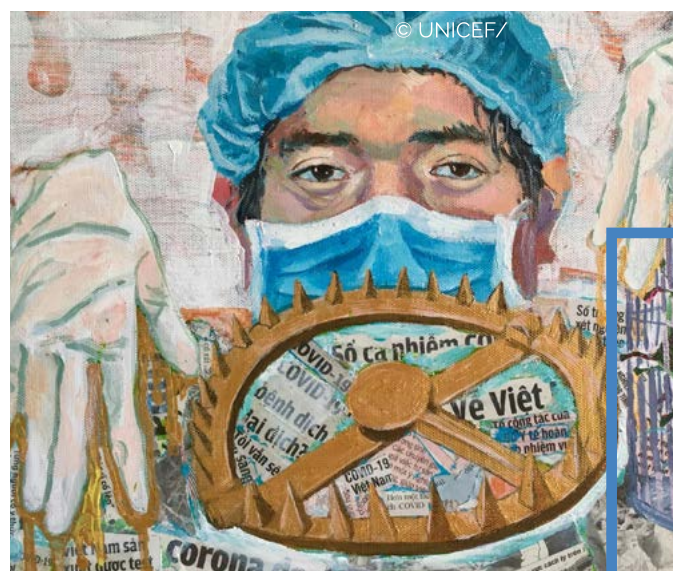


## Context

At least 55 per cent of Viet Nam's population is under 35 years of age.<sup>2</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated physical distancing and severely restricted the ability of youth in Viet Nam to engage in activities that connected them with their peers. Loneliness, fear of infection, death of oneself and loved ones, grief after bereavement, and financial worries were major stressors leading to anxiety and depression. The resulting isolation contributed to higher levels of mental health issues for the entire population, especially youth. The pandemic created a heightened and disproportionate risk of suicide and self-harming behaviours among young people.<sup>3</sup>

In 2021, lockdowns and social distancing worsened the state of mental health and psychosocial issues among children and families during the fourth wave of the pandemic. By July 2021, more than 66 per cent of households worried about the impacts of COVID-19, with experiences varying from depression to irregular anxiety. Female-headed households and migrants living in crowded conditions had

disproportionately experienced mental health issues. Caregivers and their children reported experiences of stress, fear, worry, loneliness, frustration, and poor sleep due to fear of infection, as well as long periods of remote learning, social distancing and lockdowns. These experiences were exacerbated by the lack of physical exercise, as well as stressors including reduced income, unemployment, and additional caretaking duties.<sup>4</sup>



## Strategic approach

The Kindness is Contagious campaign was implemented from May to July 2020. The aim of the campaign was to promote mutual understanding, tolerance, inclusion, and positive preventive messages related to the COVID-19 situation among adolescents and young people, as a way to support their communities. The secondary audience was the broader public, including decision-makers. The key messages included "Check on your loved ones," "Spread accurate information through social media," "Send kind messages to people having a hard time," and "Listen to music, read a book, or play a game." The campaign activities were designed to:



1. Stimulate dialogues with decision-makers, influencers, adolescents and young people through mass media (TV and Radio talk shows);
2. Promote the voices of young people through UNICEF and MOH social media creative platform involving artists and young people to stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving (#long\_tot\_de\_lay Instagram, Facebook);
3. Engage with influencers, artists through social media platforms and promote positive messages (#long\_tot\_de\_lay Zalo, TikTok<sup>5</sup>); and
4. Amplify the voices of adolescents and youth champions and promote sharing and caring for others through mass and social media (human interest story, photo series, short video).<sup>6</sup>



UNICEF Viet Nam and the Ministry of Health partnered with the social media platform Zalo, TikTok to provide the Vietnamese population with accurate information about COVID-19. UNICEF Viet Nam adapted a practical tips guide about actions to take for fighting COVID-19 from UNICEF Headquarters, to create the COVID-19 youth actions graphic checklist chart for dissemination through mass and social media (Facebook, YouTube, and Zalo, Tik Tok). The purpose for the chart was to engage youth in keeping track of the actions they took to fight coronavirus. A social media platform with two hashtags (#long\_tot\_de\_lay, and #CompassionisContagious) was created for young people and creatives to share their ideas about how to overcome the difficulties of living through the pandemic.

Young Vietnamese artists and organizations, including singer Min, music band Ngot, rapper/song writer Suboi, fashionista Chau Bui, actress Ninh Duong Lan Ngoc, painter Tamypu and Nha Nam Publishing and Communication Company worked with UNICEF and the Ministry of Health to boost the campaign.<sup>7</sup> The country office, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, supported the creation and dissemination of video clips with influencers to launch the campaign, and to share broadly with the public. Two radio talk shows and two television talk shows were aired on national

radio and television channels to stimulate dialogues with policy makers, influencers, adolescents and young people.

A book containing 106 of the 500 drawings submitted to the online platforms by young people throughout Viet Nam was published. Each drawing was considered an act of kindness, an optimistic thought, or a creative solution to the mental toll of the pandemic.<sup>8</sup> One thousand copies of the book were distributed to various government Ministries, five UNICEF projects provinces, USAID, influencers, and participants in the Kindness Campaign closing event.





## Key achievements

In the three months of campaign, from May to July 2020, the messages reached more than 65 million social media users in Viet Nam, two million of whom engaged with overwhelmingly positive feedback. The video clip to launch the campaign was seen by 3.4 million viewers. The campaign generated 80 online and print media articles. Seven thousand people were interested

in the Facebook event page for the campaign, and 500 posted drawings that were shared with others. The feedback received via mass and social media was overwhelmingly positive. Many students that saw the campaign asked if they could learn how to design similar campaigns. A number of private companies also offered to support UNICEF in implementing the campaign.

65

MILLION+

social media users reached

3.4 M

viewed the campaign launch video clip

80

online and print media articles published

500

posted drawings were shared with others on Facebook





# Lessons learned

- 1 Linking the word “contagious” with a positive meaning helped to reduce fear of the word.** Creating the concept of kindness as a contagion helped to redirect negative feelings about COVID-19 toward positive feelings about helping others through the pandemic and fit with the cultural context in Viet Nam.
- 2 Using tailored messages and appropriate communication channels to reach the intended audiences was key to spreading the word about COVID-19 prevention and the Kindness is Contagious campaign.** The campaign messages were adapted from the [UNICEF COVID-19 Toolkit to Take Action and Spread Awareness on COVID-19](#) to the Vietnamese context. A young visual artist, Nguyen Duc Phuong, was hired to create Vietnamese-appropriate drawings from the Guide.
- 3 Pivoting from print materials to digital content was essential for reaching the intended audiences.** Ongoing pandemic restrictions necessitated a shift from print media (commonly used for campaigns in Viet Nam’s) to digital content dissemination via Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Zalo, and TikTok. The “kindness” postcards and other creative activities disseminated via social media helped to spread the positive messages of the campaign.
- 4 Mobilizing artists and influencers helped engage youth and multiply the campaign messages.** Young Vietnamese artists that joined hands with UNICEF and the Ministry of Health boosted the reach and cachet of the campaign messages.
- 5 Government support, especially from the Ministry of Health, was essential for creating and disseminating the campaign.** The Vietnamese government manages the key national media channels, including TV and radio, and Zalo – the most popular social media messaging app with 74 million regular users. The Government of Viet Nam prioritized the need to reach young people with positive messages to help them navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government’s support enabled all involved the campaign to act rapidly and provide trusted information to the public.





# Recommendations

- 1 Engage the intended audience (in this case, youth) in the co-creation of the campaign.** Young people represent an inexhaustible source of ideas and creativity that can appeal to their peers to motivate social and behaviour change. It is important to engage the intended audience in creative problem-solving.
- 2 Time campaign messages to real-life situations.** The COVID-19 pandemic required immediate dissemination of specific calls to action. Timing the launch of the Kindness campaign was important for matching the sentiment of the population and motivating the desired behaviours.
- 3 Ensure that campaign messages are accessible to the intended audiences, especially to hard-to-reach audiences.** Using multiple languages (including sign language as appropriate) helps to ensure that all intended audiences are exposed to the campaign messages.
- 4 Assess each campaign to understand what worked or did not work so that lessons learned can be applied to develop more efficient and effective campaigns in the future.** The lessons learned from the Kindness is Contagious campaign were used to develop subsequent COVID-19 prevention and vaccination campaigns.

## Endnotes

- 1 UNICEF, 'UNICEF and the Ministry of Health launch the "Kindness is Contagious" campaign in Viet Nam, May 2020 <<https://www.unicef.org/vietnam/stories/unicef-and-ministry-health-launch-kindness-contagious-campaign-viet-nam>>.
- 2 Viet Nam General Statistics Office, 'Completed results of the 2019 Viet Nam population and housing census', 2019, <<https://www.gso.gov.vn/en/data-and-statistics/2020/11/completed-results-of-the-2019-viet-nam-population-and-housing-census/>>.
- 3 WHO, 'COVID-19 pandemic triggers 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide', 2 March 2022, <<https://www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-depression-worldwide>>.
- 4 UNICEF, The socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on children and families in Viet Nam. Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, and Bac Giang provinces in focus, October 2022, <<https://www.unicef.org/vietnam/media/11181/file/Final%20designed%20policy%20brief-follow%20up%20study%20on%20covid%20impacts-En.pdf>>.
- 5 Zalo, Tiktok is Viet Nam's most popular messaging app.
- 6 UNICEF, 'UNICEF and the Ministry of Health launch the "Kindness is Contagious" campaign in Viet Nam', May 2020, <<https://www.unicef.org/vietnam/stories/unicef-and-ministry-health-launch-kindness-contagious-campaign-viet-nam>>.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 The book was jointly produced by UNICEF and Nha Nam Publishing and Communication Company.v



## UNICEF Bulgaria Pilots a New Model of Care for Children with Disabilities

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

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### Brief summary



**Dates of Activity**  
2017 to 2025



**Duration**  
Eight years



**Budget**  
US\$536,400

UNICEF Bulgaria, in collaboration with H&M Foundation and other partners is supporting activities to increase early detection of developmental delays and disabilities and decrease the stigma and discrimination associated with children living with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> A new systems approach model of care is being pilot-tested in two municipalities, Nova Zagora and Haskovo. Using this model, parents have access to services that help them to

detect developmental delays and disabilities through regular hearing and vision screenings among babies and young children, improving their chances for obtaining specialised care and services for their children as early as possible, and providing them with an inclusive support system. The Be Inclusive campaign is being implemented to eliminate the culture of stigma and shame that surrounds children with developmental delays and disabilities.



## Context

There are at least 32,000 children with disabilities living in Bulgaria.<sup>2</sup> An innovative UNICEF-supported national survey of attitudes and social norms toward children with disabilities and developmental difficulties in Bulgaria stated that "children with difficulties are often isolated and even insulted."<sup>3</sup> A majority of parents of children with disabilities (physical or intellectual) stated that their child suffered because of negative attitudes toward children with disabilities. Two-thirds of parents of children with disabilities agreed that people generally feel sorry for families that have children with disabilities.<sup>4</sup>

In Bulgaria, early detection and early childhood intervention services that support caregivers to provide nurturing care to children with disabilities

and developmental difficulties during the first three years of life is not sufficiently developed, limiting the children's opportunities for growth and development. There has also been insufficient support for teachers to build their capacity to support students with disabilities. During the 2018 to 2019 academic year almost 22,035 children with disabilities and special needs attended mainstream schools and Kindergartens. Although Bulgaria adopted the Pre-school and School Education Act in 2015 that established conditions for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the mainstream educational system, the UNICEF study found that although these children are present in the classrooms, they are not genuinely included as peers, and often feel lonely and rejected.<sup>5</sup>



## Strategic approach

Under a pilot HQ project implemented in Uganda, Peru and Bulgaria, UNICEF Bulgaria developed a tiered service delivery model of care and support for children with disabilities. This model is being pilot-tested in two selected municipalities, Nova Zagora and Haskovo. The model includes offering early identification of developmental difficulties to parents (e.g., regular hearing and vision screenings among babies and young children), providing early childhood intervention services at the community level, supporting transitions to inclusive early education and care, and disseminating messages to promote social inclusion of children with disabilities.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) was introduced to screen children for developmental difficulties by trained healthcare practitioners. The process of introducing and integrating population-level screening for developmental

difficulties into the Bulgarian health system has been initiated; primary care physicians in Nova Zagora and Haskovo have been trained through the Bulgarian Pediatric Association to carry out screenings for children at nine and 18 months. Further integration of the package of services in the systems model will be done as part of the European Union Child Guarantee in Bulgaria, as well as screening for developmental difficulties through the home visiting services, was established with UNICEF support in the two pilot districts.<sup>6</sup>

In a complementary effort to a more holistic disability-programming approach, UNICEF Bulgaria also introduced augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) assistive technologies in pilot kindergartens and schools so that children with disabilities can learn and communicate with their peers. The programme



aims to improve stakeholder capacities to use augmentative and alternative communication technologies for non-verbal children (promoting in particular the UNICEF ECARO-supported C-Board). UNICEF Bulgaria, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and the Regional Centre for Support of the Processes of Inclusive Education – Sofia City, also launched the first-of-its-kind (in Bulgaria) online educational platform called Help Me Thrive - which was a pioneering innovation during the COVID-19 distance learning. This platform contains a library with free educational and therapeutic resources in support of children with special educational needs, and is available to all children, parents, teachers and professionals (<http://podkrepimemon.bg>).

Through the new model, community-based and family-centred support is being provided for children with delays and risks at early childhood intervention (ECI) community centres; more



intensive and specific early interventions are provided to children that need them. To date, ECI teams in the two municipalities have completed their basic training and have started working on early intervention cases with children and families. Municipal Coordination Units have been established in the two pilot districts to facilitate the introduction of a systems approach to ECI. The teams include representatives from the municipality, health, education and social services, and local authorities. Two videos and a set of promotional communication materials (brochures, leaflets and posters) have been developed to promote ECI services. One video focuses on the benefits of early childhood intervention provision, and the other on two family stories with children in similar medical conditions that received different kinds of support. The second video is focused on the ethical reporting of cases of families with children with developmental difficulties that are vulnerable. The service in Haskovo also ran campaigns using local news outlets, that aimed to increase awareness among parents and other stakeholders about the ECI systems approach.

In February 2022, UNICEF and the H&M Foundation also launched the Be Inclusive campaign to raise awareness about children living with disabilities and the challenges they face. The campaign was designed for a general audience, and the messages provided useful tips on how to be a more inclusive friend to anyone living with a disability – reaching more than 20,000 people. The campaign was disseminated on H&M Foundation and UNICEF global social media channels throughout 2022.

Evaluations to measure child, family, and community level outcomes will take place at the two pilot sites, using a cohort of at least 1,000 children at each site who are followed for up to 1.5 years. The advocacy component of the programme will push for the development of a sound legal basis for early intervention services, and for the development of an online system for collecting data on child development in the ECEC system.



## Key achievements (to date)

- The UNICEF-supported national survey on social norms associated with disabilities in Bulgaria was the first of its kind in the country.
- To date, 217 children under three years of age underwent the UNICEF early intervention programme in Bulgaria, conducted by general practitioners and supported home visiting nurses and community-support centres.
- Up to date, 162 children were directly supported, including by providing communication devices, and 806 professionals participated in training activities for using the UNICEF-promoted AAC assistive technology for non-verbal children in Bulgaria (C-Board).
- Twenty-one ECI practitioners in five municipalities have been trained to provide ECI family-centred services and online support to parents of children with disabilities ages 0–7 years.
- Sixty children with disabilities and developmental delays have received ECI services from the trained practitioners.
- Forty-eight education system professionals and ECI specialists are applying augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) approaches in their work.
- To date two ECI community centres have been created in the two pilot regions to serve as support nets between parents and doctors.

**217**  
CHILDREN

under three years of age underwent the early intervention programme

**806**  
PROFESSIONALS

participated in training activities

**2 ECI**

community centres were created



## Lessons learned

- 1** A whole-community approach is needed to shift from the medical (diagnose-centred) to the social (human-rights focused) approach for addressing disability and developmental delays.
- 2** A systematic approach (setting up an ECI system at national and regional level) is important for scaling up and sustaining ECI interventions.
- 3** Partnerships and coordination among stakeholders is key for the development and operation of ECI services.
- 4** Capacity-building of professionals on interpersonal communication skills and respect for diversity is fundamental for creating a more supportive environment for children with disabilities and developmental difficulties to survive and thrive.
- 5** Engaging parenting support programme/groups and individuals is essential for increasing self-efficacy and empowerment among caregivers, preventing child abandonment, increasing demand for ECI services, and transforming the shaming culture into strengths-based nurturing care.
- 6** Applying social and behaviour change intervention approaches (e.g., advocacy, system strengthening, service delivery, mass/social/print communication) helps to amplify messages about services for children with disabilities and motivate the adoption of positive social norms regarding disabilities.



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# Recommendations

- 1** Fully integrate ECI into the Bulgarian healthcare system (i.e., into screening protocols, referral pathways), community-based services, and family support programmes;
- 2** Incorporate the ECI model into the national health strategy;
- 3** Engage working groups/advisory boards to ensure that the model is integrated into the health system as intended;
- 4** Collect (ethically sourced) data to determine the impact of the model on selected intermediate results (for children with disabilities, their parents, individuals without disabilities, health practitioners, and others);
- 5** Continue to use SBC (e.g., campaigns, online content) to deliver key messages related to improving the lives of children living with disabilities and their parents/caregivers;
- 6** Provide training to children with disabilities and their parents/caregivers to be advocates for their rights and for services;
- 7** Provide parents/caregivers with safe-spaces for sharing experiences and feeling supported;
- 8** Introduce a feedback/complaint mechanism to understand what parts of the model/programme are working and what needs to be changed.



# Endnotes

- 1 The H&M Foundation is an independent non-profit global foundation, headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden. It is privately funded by the Stefan Persson family.
- 2 UNICEF Bulgaria, 'Data on the children with disabilities in Bulgaria and around the world: How to overcome the challenges', p. 24, <<https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/en/data-children-disabilities-bulgaria-and-around-world>>.
- 3 UNICEF, 'National survey of attitudes and social norms toward children with disabilities and developmental difficulties in Bulgaria: Summary of data', <<https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/en/media/15211/file>>.
- 4 UNICEF Bulgaria, 'Data on the children with disabilities in Bulgaria and around the world: How to overcome the challenges', p. 6, <<https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/en/data-children-disabilities-bulgaria-and-around-world>>.
- 5 UNICEF Bulgaria, 'Data on the children with disabilities in Bulgaria and around the world: How to overcome the challenges', p. 24. <<https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/en/data-children-disabilities-bulgaria-and-around-world>>.
- 6 The European Union Child Guarantee is a resolution that ensures that every child in poverty can have access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition, as part of a European integrated plan to combat child poverty, and further recommended that all children have access to good quality services at this crucial stage in their development (<https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/en/pilot-testing-eu-child-guarantee-bulgaria>).



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## UNICEF Georgia Supports See Every Colour Anti-Stigma Campaign for Children with Disabilities

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

### Brief summary

From 2017 to 2020, UNICEF Georgia, in collaboration with USAID and the EU, supported the See Every Colour initiative, a nationwide social and behaviour change intervention to change harmful attitudes and beliefs about children with disabilities and foster social inclusion. The See Every Colour intervention involved engaging communities through activities such as community outreach, a hashtag campaign and the engagement of celebrity influencers, discussions and debates with students in schools, and strengthening the capacity of teachers and health workers to address the needs of

children with disabilities. The #SeeEveryColour campaign reached more than 1.4 million people, changing public perception and policy aimed at helping children with disabilities. About 5,000 teachers, health workers, community members and young people's capacities were strengthened to promote and support inclusion of children with disabilities. UNICEF Georgia reported a wide-scale reduction of stigma and discrimination towards persons with disabilities, and an increase in public understanding of the importance of inclusion of persons with disabilities.

## Context

In 2022, there were 128,144 persons with disabilities registered in Georgia, 12,725 of whom were children. The prevalence of Georgian children with disabilities is about 1.5 per cent. Multiple Indicator Cluster survey (MICS) data from 2018 suggested that only eight per cent of children in the country had functional limitations. These estimates are well below global estimates, and do not accurately reflect the situation in Georgia for children with disabilities due to mis- and under-reporting. The inaccurate data render children with disabilities invisible within Georgia's national legislation, policies, and services.<sup>1,2</sup>

The Georgian public tends to stigmatize children with disabilities. In 2015, the Welfare Monitoring Survey (a quantitative survey) showed that more than 40 per cent of the public stigmatized children with disabilities. This type of discrimination was a consequence of a lack of knowledge about disabilities, fear of difference, negative cultural biases, and stereotypes related to disability. A 2016 study on the stigmatization of children with disabilities showed that stigma and discrimination toward children with disabilities in Georgia has led to institutional, cultural and social isolation among those children, and has been the leading barrier to creating an enabling environment in society.<sup>3</sup> Addressing stigma and discrimination has been essential to promoting the abandonment of discriminatory attitudes and practices and promoting the creation of positive social norms to increase demand for quality and inclusive services for children.





## Strategic approach

The 2015 Welfare Monitoring Survey and 2016 study on stigmatization acted as a baseline study for the See Every Colour initiative, a nationwide social and behaviour change intervention to change harmful attitudes and beliefs and foster social inclusion of children with disabilities. From 2017 to 2020, UNICEF Georgia, in collaboration with USAID and the EU, supported activities at the individual, family/peer, community, institutional (teachers, doctors, media), and policy/systems (municipalities) levels. The aim was to educate the population about disabilities, and disband myths and prejudices associated with children with disabilities by modelling positive attitudes and creating empathy. The intervention also sought to empower children with disabilities and their parents by giving them a platform for advocacy, and to initiate policy and community discussions and strengthen local government mechanisms and community networks. The target audiences included children with disabilities and their peers without disabilities, parents of children with and without disabilities, professional groups (teachers and doctors), the public at large and media platforms. These audiences were engaged as agents of change and were involved in the planning and implementation of the initiative.

The See Every Colour intervention involved engaging communities through:

- Engaging parents of children with disabilities as advocates through opportunities created by the initiative to talk to the media about the challenges they faced, and to discuss related issues via an online platform (Parents for Change);
- Outreach activities (e.g., city celebrations, rugby games, EU Days or sport event);
- Holding debates and discussions about the needs of people with disabilities with students at schools and universities;
- Creating and disseminating a brochure deconstructing the myths and prejudices associated with people with disabilities, and a comic book illustrating positive attitudes toward children with disabilities;
- Engaging celebrity influencers in an online celebrity hashtag campaign, #SeeEveryColour, including a series of posters featuring celebrities and influencers sharing their personal stories about their relationships with people with disabilities and their commitment for inclusion. Participants in this campaign also held social media and outdoor activities, made art installations, gave public speeches, and held debates and municipal-level contests;
- Strengthening the capacity of professionals working with children (e.g., teachers, health workers) to better understand and address the needs of children with disabilities;
- Working with the media to share positive stories highlighting the talents of people with disabilities via talk shows on national and regional media channels, and print media.







## Key achievements

- The #SeeEveryColour campaign reached more than 1.4 million people, changing public perception and brought real change in policy aimed at helping children with disabilities.
- About 5,000 teachers, health workers, community members and young people's capacities were strengthened to promote and support inclusion of children with disabilities.
- Wide-scale reduction of stigma and discrimination towards persons with disabilities.
- Increased public understanding and practice towards the importance of inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Increased confidence, and visibility of children with disabilities and parents.
- Creation of enabling environment at municipal level for services for persons with disabilities.
- Increased capacity of professionals (teachers and health workers) to address the needs of children with disabilities.
- Creation of sustainable institutional mechanism to advocate for disability issues.

**5,000**  
TEACHERS

health workers, community members and young people's capacities were strengthened

**#SeeEveryColour**  
CAMPAIGN

reached more than

**1.4 million**  
PEOPLE



## Lessons learned

- 1 Engaging children, adolescents and their family members as 'creators' of campaigns** and communication materials, rather than passive beneficiaries, helps to ensure the development of relevant and targeted materials and activities, and gives them a voice so that they can demand greater accountability from decision makers and service providers.
- 2 Applying a range of social change strategies** to motivate positive changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours at the individual, household, community, institutional and policy levels helps to reinforce the key messages to destigmatise and include children with disabilities.
- 3 Providing a platform for individuals and groups to tell their story is meaningful to the storyteller and the listeners.** The #SeeEveryColour campaign gave people the opportunity to share their stories and motivate others to be non-judgemental and more inclusive.
- 4 Changing negative attitudes requires time and investment.** Many service providers shared the same negative attitudes and beliefs about children with disabilities as local communities. Additional efforts were required to raise their awareness of their own biases and attitudes.
- 5 Engaging with government institutions at national and local level is critical to ensure ownership, accountability and sustainability of activities, and results.** It is important to advocate for the inclusion of individual and collective behaviour change around children with disabilities into the government's policies, strategies and budgets.
- 6 Sustainable change is driven at community level.** It is essential to acknowledge that change is more sustainable if it is driven by communities; investing in communities should be the focus of any further initiative focusing on inclusion of children with disabilities.

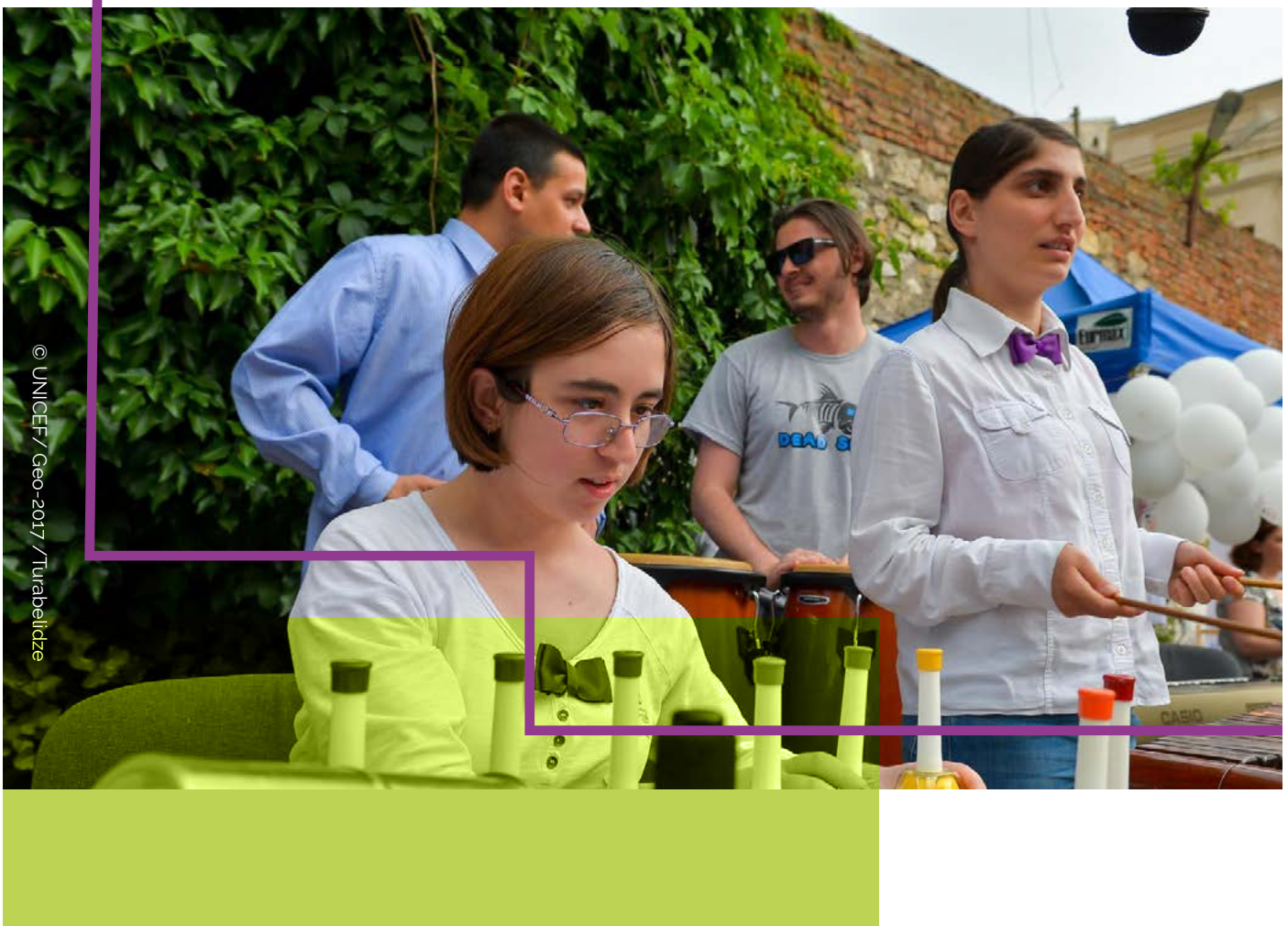


## Recommendations

- 1** UNICEF should continue the See Every Colour social and behaviour change efforts with a focus on reducing stigma against children with special educational needs and ensure that all children have unhindered and equal access to both formal and informal education regardless of their needs.
- 2** UNICEF and partners should continue to raise awareness on the importance of inclusive education and increase involvement of children with special needs across the education system.

# Endnotes

- 1 United Nations Children's Fund, 'Applying social and behaviour change approaches to support the inclusion of children with disabilities: Cases from UNICEF Europe and Central Asia', UNICEF, February 2022, <[www.unicef.org/kazakhstan/media/7946/file/Case%20studies%20from%20UNICEF%20Europe%20and%20Central%20Asia:%20Social%20And%20Behaviour%20Change%20Approaches.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/kazakhstan/media/7946/file/Case%20studies%20from%20UNICEF%20Europe%20and%20Central%20Asia:%20Social%20And%20Behaviour%20Change%20Approaches.pdf)>.
- 2 Globally, UNICEF estimated that in September 2022, 4.3 per cent of children aged 0–4 years, 12.5 per cent of children aged 5–17 years, and 10.1 per cent of children aged 0–17 years have moderate-to-severe disabilities based on household surveys of child functional status (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9554924/>).
- 3 United Nations Children's Fund, 'Applying social and behaviour change approaches to support the inclusion of children with disabilities: Cases from UNICEF Europe and Central Asia', UNICEF, February 2022, <[www.unicef.org/kazakhstan/media/7946/file/Case%20studies%20from%20UNICEF%20Europe%20and%20Central%20Asia:%20Social%20And%20Behaviour%20Change%20Approaches.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/kazakhstan/media/7946/file/Case%20studies%20from%20UNICEF%20Europe%20and%20Central%20Asia:%20Social%20And%20Behaviour%20Change%20Approaches.pdf)>.



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## UNICEF ECARO National Outpost in Italy OPS! Campaign Aims to Flip the Script on Racial Prejudice Against Migrants and Refugees

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies,  
achievements, and lessons learned

### Brief summary



#### Dates of Activity

July 2021 to March 2022 (Phase 1)  
July 2022 to March 2023 (Phase 2)



#### Duration

Nine months  
Nine months



#### Budget

US\$47,000  
US\$63,000

In July 2021, the UNICEF ECARO National Outpost in Italy launched the "OPS! Your Opinion, Beyond Any Prejudice, Against Stereotypes!" campaign to engage young people in combatting unconscious racial prejudice and change the narrative on migration in Italy. The aim of the campaign was to help identify, deconstruct, and correct unconscious prejudices and stereotypes that create tensions in Italian host communities. The first phase of the campaign, through March 2022, used digital creativity, social media engagement,

the "U-Report on the Move" platform, and artificial intelligence (AI) to foster mutual understanding, connection, and support between refugee and migrant youth in Italy and their host population. The second phase of the campaign added a skills-building course for young activists (OPS! Academy) and other awareness-raising activities. The two phases of the campaign reached more than 2.25 million young people with opinions, messages, and proposals for debunking racial prejudices formulated by and for young people.

For many years, the central Mediterranean route that connects the southern shores countries with Italy, and the Western Balkans Route, have been the main routes of migration to Europe. It is estimated that more than 100,000 unaccompanied and separated children have arrived in Italy by sea since 2014. Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, more than 170,000 refugees have arrived in Italy, among them over 50,000 children.<sup>1</sup> In 2016, UNICEF, in coordination with the Government of Italy and relevant national stakeholders, began operating a programme in Italy that is dedicated to ensuring protection and social inclusion for migrant and refugee children and families.

UNICEF has been responding to the migrant and refugee crisis in Italy by, for example, supporting coast guard search and rescue operations, to ensuring minimum standards in reception centres, and by creating a pool of guardians and foster families to arrange alternative care for children. In April 2017, the U-Report on The Move online platform was launched in Sicily as part of as part of the ONE UNICEF Response support to the protection, care, development and social inclusion of migrant and refugee children in Italy.<sup>2</sup> A poll conducted by UNICEF on the 'U-Report on the Move' platform in June 2021 suggested that about 80 per cent of young migrants and refugees in Italy experienced or witnessed prejudice. At least 42 per cent believed that Italian nationals judged migrants or refugees to be criminals; some youth respondents felt

that Italians believed that migrants and refugees had low levels of education. Sixty-two per cent of those polled said that the prejudice they experienced was due to the colour of their skin, 12 per cent said it was due to language, and 10 per cent said it was due to their being poor. Young people that responded to the poll said that they felt sad, angry, lonely, or fearful as a result of the prejudice that they experienced.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, a social media sentiment analysis on Italian youth's attitudes towards migration and racism commissioned by UNICEF in the same period showed that most young people living in Italy have a different perception of the situation and struggle to acknowledge the existence of racism.

Since the beginning of 2023, UNICEF has been working in collaboration with the European Commission's Department for Migration and Home Affairs (HOME) on the PROTECT Project, a two-year programme to strengthen the protection for migrant and refugee children in Italy. The project's aim is to provide access to information, skills building, and inclusion interventions in favour of migrant and refugee children, young people transitioning into adulthood, and women and families from the time they arrive in Italy. The specific geographical areas for the emergency response are Sicily (including Lampedusa), Calabria, Apulia, Latium and Friuli-Venezia Giulia.



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## Strategic approach

In July 2021, UNICEF ECARO National Outpost in Italy launched the "OPS! Your Opinion, Beyond All Prejudice, Against Stereotypes!" campaign to engage young people in combatting unconscious racial prejudice and change the narrative on migration in Italy.<sup>4</sup> The campaign name, "OPS!," has dual meaning – it is both an acronym and the word people say when they recognize they have made a mistake. The campaign was conceived of by youth for youth. The aim of the campaign was to help identify, deconstruct, and correct unconscious prejudices and stereotypes that create tensions within Italian host communities.

The first phase of the campaign (through March 2022) used digital creativity, social media engagement, the U-Report on the Move platform, and artificial intelligence (AI) to foster mutual understanding, connection, and support between refugee and/or migrant youth in Italy and their host population. Young people with refugee and migrant backgrounds were encouraged to enter an online contest where they were asked to share their experiences as migrants and refugees through photos, videos, illustrations, songs, and/or articles. Twelve participants were selected to enrol in a series of peer-to-peer skills-building courses to help them refine their artwork. The courses were created in partnership with nationally recognized private sector entities such as the European Institute of Design (IED), the People Pub publishing house, and the Saint Louis College of Music. UNICEF supported a public event to showcase the final creations and present awards to the contest winners.

In addition to the contest and courses, 68 high school students and their teachers were involved in testing and diffusing a web-based application (app) created in collaboration with the private company AmmaGamma. The app uses artificial intelligence to provide classrooms with a group

gaming experience where they learn about their unconscious prejudices and how to overcome them.

The second phase of the campaign, "OPS! We Did it Again!," was launched in July 2022 and adopted an intersectional approach, extending the focus on race, gender, and sexual orientation. The activities included a skills-building course for young activists (OPS! Academy), training on social media literacy, and other awareness-raising activities on unconscious bias. The course was created in partnership with representatives of eight civil society organizations. The web-based app developed in collaboration with AmmaGamma was updated to include gender-based bias and piloted with high school students in three Italian cities: Naples, Pistoia, and Milan. Young social media influencers were engaged in the creation and publication of awareness-raising content on unconscious bias and intersectional discrimination on Instagram and TikTok. The culminating event of the second phase was the Activate Talk OPS!, a virtual panel on discrimination on the U-Report On-the-Move channel, held to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The panel included young influencers, UNICEF experts and policymakers, and was conducted in partnerships with the National Office Against Racial Discrimination (UNAR).



To enhance the online component of the OPS! campaign, the U-Report On-the-Move team mapped and contacted Italian reception centres to promote OPS! activities for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), migrants, and refugees. Two social mobilizers conducted in-person activities at the centres to promote OPS! A focal point at each reception centre was identified and linked to the UNICEF office

in Italy to ensure communication between all parties working directly with this population of adolescents and youth and the OPS! campaign.

Communication with reception centre staff was enhanced through the creation of a dedicated section on the U-Report platform where they were able to receive news and make suggestions to improve OPS! and contribute to ad-hoc surveys.



## Key achievements

- The first phase of the OPS! campaign reached 1.17 million young people with opinions, messages, and proposals for addressing racial discrimination, with an engagement rate of about 180,000 young users. The second phase reached 1.09 million young people with opinions, messages, and proposals for addressing discrimination based on race, gender, and/or sexual orientation by young people that took part in the campaign activities, with an engagement rate of 60,000.
- More than 200 high-school students and nine teachers were trained through the AI web-application on recognizing unconscious bias and discrimination narratives, and 170 students engaged in organizing two exhibitions on the topic.
- Forty-four young people, 16 of whom had a migration background, were trained and supported across the two phases of the campaign to use their creative skills, along with various communication channels to raise awareness on unconscious bias and discrimination narratives. This training was made possible by a collaboration with nine CSOs, four private sector entities and nine professional social media influencers.

**200**  
HIGH-SCHOOL  
STUDENTS

trained through AI  
web-application

**170**  
STUDENTS

engaged in organizing  
two exhibitions

**1.09 million**  
YOUNG PEOPLE

reached in the second phase



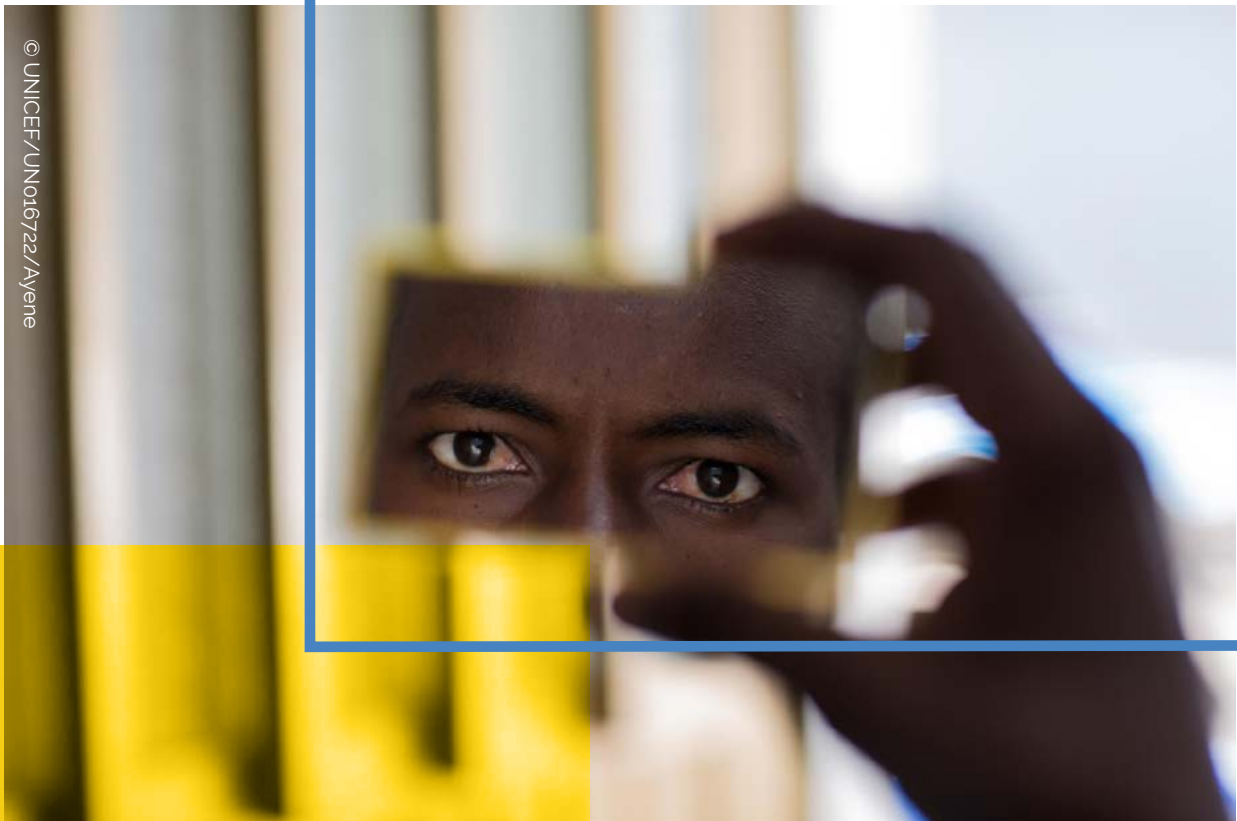
# Lessons learned & Recommendations

- 1 Availability of age disaggregated data in literature is essential for both setting and monitoring behavioural evidence focused on youth.** When planning the OPS! campaign, most research on Italians' attitudes toward migrants and refugees did not contain age-disaggregated data to capture children and young people's attitudes. To overcome this issue, the UNICEF ECARO National Outpost in Italy commissioned a sentiment analysis on the topic in social media and launched a survey through the U-Report on the Move platform specifically for youth with a migrant or refugee background. The UNICEF Outpost in Italy will launch a more comprehensive study of youth attitudes toward migrants and refugees by capitalizing on the tools and the network built through the previous phases of the OPS! campaign.
- 2 Always consider the need for training and guiding potential partners.** The OPS! campaign was conducted in partnership with various Italian private sector companies, communication agencies, and learning institutions. Some of these partners did not have any prior training on diversity and inclusion, requiring the UNICEF team to provide intensive education to ensure the proper implementation of the campaign activities. Partner selection should consider prior knowledge and experience on diversity and inclusion and include activities to fill any knowledge gaps.
- 3 Choose the right testimonials by prioritizing the quality of messages and brand of the influencer.** Given that the key target audiences for the OPS! campaign were adolescents and youth, collaboration with Italian social media influencers was identified as essential to ensuring maximum outreach to these audiences. The sentiment analysis revealed that adolescent and young Instagram users assign great importance to the key message of any Instagram content, as well as to the identity and brand of its author. This predisposition of youth to messages and brand suggests that influencer selection should be based upon a previous history of published content, rather than the number of followers alone.
- 4 Online initiatives should be integrated with face-to-face activities to maximize engagement, especially when working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and youth from different places and backgrounds.** The U-Report On-the-Move platform specifically targets unaccompanied and separated children, adolescents, youth migrants, and refugees living in Italy. This platform allows the UNICEF ECARO National Outpost in Italy team to remotely engage the target group, collect opinions about different topics, and promote OPS! initiatives. This engagement should be paired with face-to-face initiatives to maximize engagement. The two social mobilizers that visited reception centres in person were key to directly engaging with centre staff and visitors and promoting OPS! activities.
- 5 Engagement of the target group needs to be nurtured and maintained over time to avoid dropouts.** UASC and young migrants and refugees participating in OPS! campaign activities live in different areas of Italy, heightening the risk of disengagement from the activities over the lifespan of the programme. It is necessary to ensure the consistent integration of team-building activities and regular communication with participants.
- 6 Inclusion of native-born youth as co-facilitators of activities is a key to success.** Italian adolescents acting as co-facilitators of OPS! activities helped to improve connections with adolescent and youth migrants and refugees. Sharing experiences and ideas helped to change the mindset of both Italians and new arrivals to Italy about the place of UASC, migrant, and refugees in Italy.



# Endnotes

- 1 UNICEF Europe and Central Asia, 'UNICEF Emergency response in Italy: Italy supporting refugee and migrant families and children', <[www.unicef.org/eca/unicef-emergency-response-italy](http://www.unicef.org/eca/unicef-emergency-response-italy)>.
- 2 U-Report on the Move is a UNICEF digital community enabling young migrants and refugees to speak out on issues that matter to them, respond to polls, participate in contests, and take part in local, national and international events. To register, they send a message on Facebook Messenger, Telegram or WhatsApp.
- 3 ANSA, 'UNICEF: Eight out of ten migrants in Italy victims of prejudice', 23 June 2021, <[www.infomigrants.net/fr/post/33150/unicef-eight-out-of-ten-migrants-in-italy-victims-of-prejudice](http://www.infomigrants.net/fr/post/33150/unicef-eight-out-of-ten-migrants-in-italy-victims-of-prejudice)>.
- 4 For further information see: <https://www.unicef.it/minori-migranti-rifugiati/inclusione-partecipazione/campagna-ops/>.



## UNICEF Niger Helps to Strengthen Community Engagement Using the *Niyya Da Alkawali* Approach

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

### Brief summary



#### Dates of Activity

March 2021 to  
December 2022



#### Duration

22 months



#### Budget

US\$1,744,797

*Niyya Da Alkawali* (also called INDA) is an integrated community participatory approach that is based on 16 standards of quality community engagement. This approach was used in four regions of Niger to improve the capacity of communities to develop action plans to improve the quality and sustainability of community engagement efforts. The overall aim for implementing INDA was to enhance household and community resilience. Approximately 2,228 community members were trained to use INDA tools for developing participatory community action plans. Almost 300 multisectoral

community action plans were developed and implemented in the villages. The INDA supported villages were able to demonstrate their capacity to manage projects, which enabled them to organize such activities as combatting silting by spraying in villages in the commune of Mainé Soroa and constructing classrooms in the village of Guidan Oumarou in the commune of Kornaka. Several awareness raising sessions were organized to promote social cohesion and peaceful co-existence in the villages of Baderi, Kateillari, and Soukoudou in the commune of Mainé Soroa.

## Context

Niger has one of the fastest growing and youngest populations in the world and is affected by chronic, recurrent and sudden emergencies, which are compounded by multi-dimensional vulnerabilities, climatic shocks and population displacements. In 2010, the Government of Niger prioritized local self-governance to support the provision of quality basic services, foster social cohesion and promote socio-economic development. Decentralization as an organizing principle was enshrined in the country's constitution. Many local authorities, however, did not have the financial resources, human resources, or management skills to properly manage development activities (e.g., WASH, nutrition, or education projects; health services). As such, villages and regions are often not able to assure the provision of efficient and effective public services, resulting in mistrust by citizens of local representatives.





## Strategic approach

UNICEF Niger has been focusing on building the capacity of local authorities around decentralization efforts and integrated community-based approaches. INDA was implemented in 13 communes across four regions (Tahoua, Zinder, Diffa and Maradi), and facilitated by 52 national NGOs under the leadership of local administrative and municipal authorities. This approach was used to create networks of community groups within a village. The spokespersons of the community groups were brought together to form a *Wakilan Gari* (“village committee”), that served as the gateway for all development and emergency actions for the village. The *Wakilan Gari* members served as volunteers.

Each municipality worked with a local NGO to hold workshops to build the capacity of 2,228 members of *Wakilan Gari* to be leaders in directing the development cycle for local projects, and to transfer their knowledge and expertise to volunteers in their villages. Fifteen traditional leaders have also been trained to accompany the roll out of the INDA. Two thousand one hundred forty-eight young people part of the *Wakilan Gari* were also trained on community engagement approaches. UNICEF Niger supported the development of training modules and materials for the Niyya Da Alkawali initiative (e.g., tools for participatory planning).

Sixty-five staff from 52 local NGOs have received capacity building in community participatory approaches. The INDA training guide used by facilitators to build capacity for managing and sustaining community interventions was tailored to the Niger context by, for example, including local proverbs to help explain community engagement norms. The NGOs have organized monitoring field trips to support communities.

The *Wakilan Gari* members carried out community diagnoses, inclusive participatory planning, and supported the local development cycle for the community project. The community interventions were adapted to meet the needs of communities in conflict areas that are prone to attacks (e.g., Diffa).

In December 2022, an online training module containing the steps for implementing the integrated community-based approach and the fundamental standards for quality community engagement for village committee members and community engagement platforms, was developed in six languages (French, Hausa, Kanouri, Tamashek, Peul and Toubou) and disseminated using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology.





## Key achievements

- Since 2021, the Niyya Da Alkawali community engagement strengthening programme was carried out through a partnership with 13 selected NGOs (coached by a national NGO) and 13 tripartite agreements signed between NGOs and municipalities. The partnerships have led to the establishment and training of 942 village platforms and 948 village committees (*Wakilan gari*).
- All 948 village committees have developed action plans. Action plans that have been implemented include spraying to combat silting in several villages in the commune of Mainé Soroa (Doumawa, Konkondou, N'gabidare, Chankol, Bacha, Baderi and Katiellari), and constructing classrooms in the village of Guidan Oumarou (commune of Kornaka). Several awareness raising sessions were organized to promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, in the villages of Baderi, Kateillari, and Soukoudou in the commune of Mainé Soroa.
- Forty-two monitoring missions of local NGOs and village committees were carried out by the NGOs to galvanize these core

community groups to coordinate and carry out the activities. This approach helped municipalities benefit from a meaningful participatory programme, and to establish real ownership of the community-building responsibilities assigned to them through Niger's decentralization reform.

**948** VILLAGE COMMITTEES

have developed action plans

**42** MONITORING MISSIONS

of local NGOs and village committees were carried out

**65** STAFF

from

**52** LOCAL NGOS

have received capacity building in community participatory approaches





# Lessons learned

- 1 It is essential to give the vulnerable a voice:** The INDA contributed to building resilience by leveraging human and social resources and community structures. The application of norms and standards for community engagement made the voice of the most vulnerable heard. The legitimacy, representativeness and effectiveness of community leadership led to results in this first phase of the Niyya Da Alkawali pilot project. INDA/ACPi has enabled communities to become aware of the importance of collective analysis of their own situations and their ability to solve many of their problems through the implementation of endogenous initiatives.
- 2 Raising community self-esteem is critical to success:** This approach fostered self-esteem and self-confidence for communities to gain mastery of their own lives. Dialogues, coaching and peer support have given local communities greater capacities for diagnosing and prioritizing their problems, and planning for change.
- 3 Adapting core standards to local cultures motivates ownership:** The adaptation of the core standards for quality community engagement to local cultures (e.g., using local proverbs) facilitated community ownership.
- 4 Commitment from leaders is critical:** The commitment of some mayors from the 13 selected communes who recognized the added value of the approach enabled bottom-up planning and better representation of villages.
- 5 Coordination and sharing information enables more efficient implementation:** The establishment of a regional-level system for coordinating and sharing information with implementing NGOs and development and emergency actors, was essential to implementing the activities.
- 6 Improving integration of the community activities:** The improved integration of the Community Early Warning and Emergency Response Systems, food security committees, nutrition committees, education committees and child protection committees into the list of village committee members allowed for better responses to community interests in a holistic way, through inter-sectorial programming and linkages with systems, national programmes and policies and government.

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# Recommendations

- 1** Support the development of the national programme for strengthening community and citizen engagement (PRCC) by the Ministry of Land Use and Community Development.
- 2** Integrate the *Niya Da Alkawali* community-based model (including communal development plans) into the decentralization scheme (systems, programmes, and governance) at national, regional and local levels.
- 3** Establish institutional framework and coordination platforms(s) at the national, regional, and communal levels of the PRCC.
- 4** Create a partnership with the National Association of Religious and Traditional Leaders to support the coordinated diffusion of a social movement for the transformation of social and gender norms.
- 5** Strengthen community systems and the implementation of public policies conducive to community engagement through the National Agency of Development Volunteers (ANVD) of Niger.
- 6** Organize quadripartite community meetings between the different actors involved in the implementation of INDA (e.g., *Wakilan Gari*, NGOs, community health workers and relays, and technical service representatives at the local level) to monitor action plan progress.
- 7** Build capacity within village committees to improve their communication techniques, and to set up an inclusive accountability framework for meetings organized by municipalities to gather complaints and provide feedback and build on the lessons learned.



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## UNICEF Lebanon Tackles Disability Stigma

Key social and behaviour change (SBC)  
strategies, achievements, and lessons  
learned

### Brief summary



**Dates of Activity**  
2019 - ongoing



**Duration**  
3.5 years



**Budget**  
US\$2.5 million

In 2021, the UNICEF Lebanon country office supported a revised disability inclusion approach that encouraged specialized disability organizations to build networks with formal public and private schools and non-formal education organizations. The approach ensured that children with moderate disabilities were partially or fully integrated in inclusive learning, while still receiving rehabilitation services at the specialized disability organization. As an immediate impact of the newly adapted disability strategy, by January 2022 at least 53 out of the 486 Children With Disabilities (CWDs) with severe to moderate disabilities were integrated fully into formal and non-formal inclusive education, while still receiving rehabilitation services from specialized

organizations. About 250,000 people were reached with messages about inclusivity through Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) activities supported by UNICEF Lebanon and implemented by partner organizations.

In 2017, 75 per cent of respondents in Lebanon thought that children with intellectual disabilities should not be integrated into society (25 per cent for physical disabilities). The underpinning behavioural and attitude change was therefore deemed as a necessary step to create an enabling environment for people with disabilities. In 2018, UNICEF developed a Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy that is based on the socio-ecological



model and that equips key stakeholders with essential tools to promote positive attitudes and behaviours on inclusion. Every education partnership that provides services to children with disabilities (CWD) has a Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) component embedded. Since 2019, education partners have been developing and rolling out SBC plans, leading to the transformation of the SBCC strategy into an SBC through the addition of a conceptual framework. In 2022, more than 100 SBC initiatives nationwide in collaboration with 132 local entities engaging more than 9,000 people on disability inclusion

were conducted. SBC initiatives have been diverse in nature and speak to all levels of the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM), engaging children with disabilities themselves, their parents and peers, service providers, communities, local authorities and more! A pre-post quantitative assessment of SBC initiatives have shown an increase in positive attitudes towards inclusion in children without disabilities and caregivers of children with and without disabilities. Qualitative tools of assessment have also captured changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

## Context

UNICEF believes in the right of children with disabilities to be included in society and in inclusive quality education. The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office (LCO) committed in its Country Programme Document to mainstream the needs of children and youth with disabilities (CWDs) across programme outcomes. The main objective was to ensure that barriers to inclusion of CWDs in society were addressed and that CWDs had equitable access to basic services and needs. In 2017, the LCO partnered with five specialized disability organizations that provide rehabilitation, special education and parental engagement services to 400 refugee children with moderate to severe disabilities. For children with milder disabilities, UNICEF LCO worked with non-formal education partners to ensure the inclusion of CWDs in non-formal education, and with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) to increase the accessibility of CWDs in the public schools through the MEHE inclusive pilot schools.<sup>1</sup> In 2021, UNICEF shifted its disability inclusion approach with specialized disability organizations by implementing more inclusive modalities. The new strategy's objective is to improve the access of children with moderate disabilities to inclusive learning. Throughout the

whole process, the underpinning behavioural and attitude change was deemed as a necessary step to create an enabling environment for people with disabilities. Therefore, every partnership on disability inclusion had an SBC component.



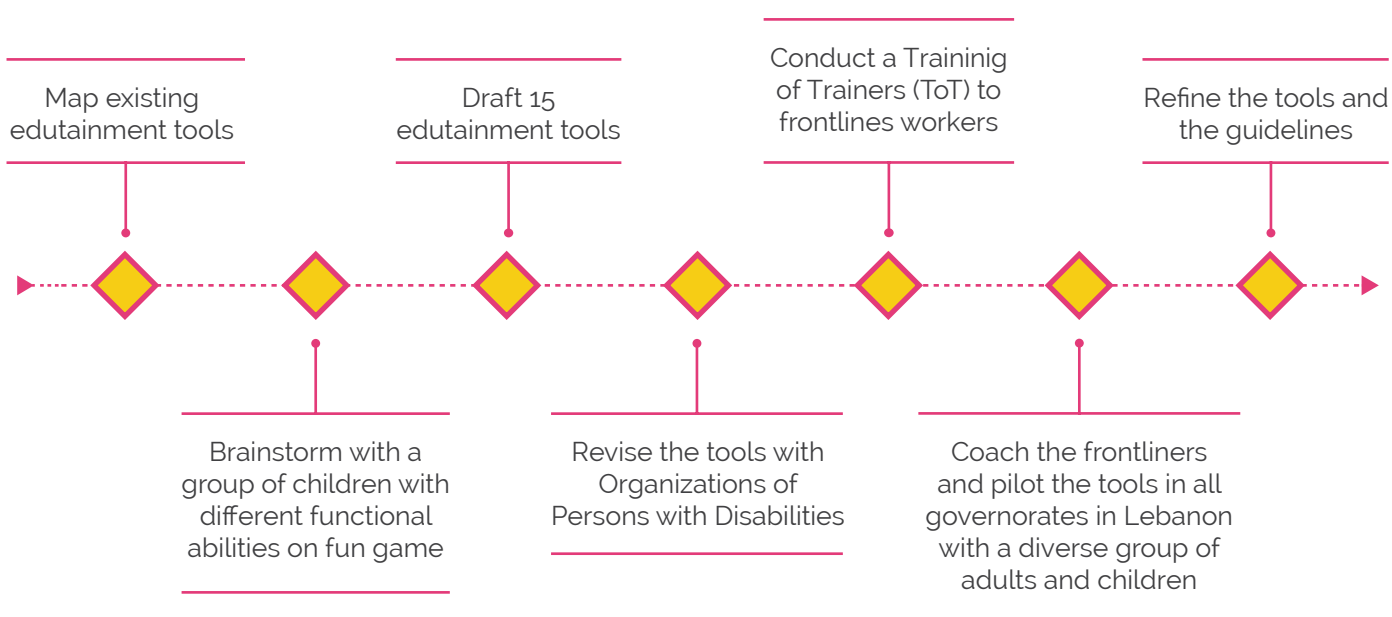
## Strategic approach

**Community engagement:** In 2022, all partners were trained in the Community Engagement (CE) curriculum and were coached to develop community plans. Partners then engaged community members to identify problems and use available resources to plan and implement solutions on disability inclusion. Examples of initiatives conducted include the development of an inclusive garden and the building of a path to one of the biggest public beaches in Lebanon. Partners usually start with CE and use the community plans as a roadmap to design and implement capacity building, social mobilization and edutainment. Several of the identified problems from the community members that are highlighted in the community engagement include the lack of capacity of local institutions to include CWD, hence limiting the social inclusion of CWD. Therefore, employing a bottom-up approach, partners provide that capacity building local institutions such as social development centres, recreational centres, sports and summer clubs, theater clubs, scouts etc. to be able to be inclusive in their services. Partners refer children

with disabilities to these services and provide coaching to the service providers. This results in continuous long-term positive social inclusion of CWD.

**Social mobilization:** Making inclusion everyone's business is key to SBC. Hence, partners conduct different social mobilization initiatives such as getting people together to conduct a street parade, conduct an inter-university competition on the best video for inclusion and train volunteers from the community and universities to co-implement community-based activities.

**Edutainment:** To move away from the traditional-style awareness sessions, education-entertainment formats are used to engage the community in creative and fun inclusive activities, increasing awareness and inclusive interactions in a gradual, natural, and subtle way. These types of activities are scarce, hence UNICEF developed 15 edutainment tools to be used by frontline workers. A guide is being finalized and the participatory process was as follows:





## Key achievements<sup>2</sup>

A pre-post quantitative assessment of SBC initiatives has shown an increase in positive attitudes towards inclusion in children without disabilities and caregivers of children with and without disabilities. This has become a standard monitoring tool in the form of pre-post test on KOBO that all partners use in every activity they do. This data is directly inputted into two attitudinal indicators in the RWP monitoring plan. Sixteen innovative inclusive edutainment tools have been developed that frontliners can use to promote positive attitudes towards disability inclusion. Most Significant Change M&E tool has been piloted and captures important changes in knowledge, attitude and practices. The third layer of selection is at the community level where only at the end of the programme, all the stories that were chosen by the second layer go back to the community for them to select the story they found most significant.



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# 250,000

people were reached with messages about inclusivity

“ I finally saw my son happy because this activity made gave him an opportunity in life where he felt valuable and that he has an important role to play. ”

*-Lebanese mother from Beddawi*

“ The sessions and the guidance we took gave me great courage to stop the bullying. ”

*-44-year-old Palestinian woman living in Saida*



## Lessons learned

- 1** Not all partners are ready to do SBC for disability inclusion. They need to show commitment and interest in SBC. Then, training is needed.
- 2** In-hand resources and guidance are needed. The CE curriculum and training was very useful as it unified our understanding of the CE process. Unified template was also very useful.
- 3** Unified key intervention guidelines were needed and provided partners with options for SBC activities. However, we need to keep space for the partners to innovate and pilot-test.
- 4** Small scale trial and error is okay.



## Recommendations

- 1** Continue implementing and strengthening SBC for disability inclusion.
- 2** Ensure that the network of specialized disability partners continue to provide work efficiently and effectively with formal schools and non-formal education organizations, and with the whole community, to integrate children with moderate disabilities in inclusive education.
- 3** Incorporate an SBC component for partner organizations to complement the special services and create an enabling environment for inclusion of CWDs in communities.
- 4** Specifically address barriers and needs of girls with disabilities who are more vulnerable to violence and child marriage.

## Endnotes

- 1** United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF Lebanon: Specialized Disability Organizations, UNICEF Lebanon, <[www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/8486/file](http://www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/8486/file)>.
- 2** Ibid.

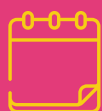


## UNICEF Palestine Supports the Development of an SBC Strategy for Children with Developmental Delays and Disabilities

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

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### Brief summary



**Dates of Activity**  
2019-2022



**Duration**  
2 months to develop the strategy



**Budget**  
Unknown

Children with developmental delays and disabilities in the State of Palestine are often severely marginalized and subjected to stigma and discrimination from those around them. UNICEF Palestine conducted a mixed-methods baseline knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices (KABP) study of children with developmental delays and disabilities, their parents/caregivers, community members, and service providers. The study results were used

to inform the design of a multi-year SBC strategy for the State of Palestine. The strategy activities aimed to promote early childhood development behaviours, increase demand for services among parents and caregivers of children with developmental delays and disabilities, and provide parents and caregivers with the knowledge and skills they need to address stigma and discrimination.



## Context

A study of people with disabilities in Palestine showed that Jenin (in the West Bank) had the highest reported percentage (4.1 per cent), followed by the district of Hebron in the southern West Bank (3.6 per cent). The Gaza governate in the Gaza Strip reported that 2.3 per cent of their children were living with disabilities. At least half of the people living with disabilities in Palestine had mobility issues. Health services in Gaza and the West Bank are generally insufficient to meet the needs of the population, especially the needs of children with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

Palestinian parents and caregivers of children with developmental delays and disabilities face many barriers when seeking services for their child. Many residents of Gaza and the West Bank are unemployed and have lower levels of education. They often struggle with transporting

their children to receive services due to a lack of funding for assistive devices such as wheelchairs, or an inability to pay for transportation services. Once a parent arrives at a facility with their child, they may find that those services are not available, or may be too expensive for the parents to afford. Many parents and caregivers often do not know where to go to seek information and services for their child. Stigma and discrimination toward children, and parents of children, with developmental delays and disabilities, self-stigmatization and religious and/or cultural beliefs that associate disabilities with a lack of faith, can also be reasons for not seeking assistance or services.<sup>2</sup> In 2016, a situation and services assessment for people with disabilities in Palestine concluded that reducing stigma and discrimination is key to improving access to services.<sup>3</sup>



## Strategic approach

The aim of the KABP study was to understand the ways in which children with developmental delays and disabilities, parents and caregivers, service providers, and community members perceived the issue of stigma toward children with developmental delays and disabilities. The study also measured knowledge of positive parenting practices among parents or caregivers and practitioners, and how knowledge and attitudes are practiced in caregiving, parenting, and day-to-day interactions with disabled children.

The study consisted of (1) a quantitative study, representative of the entire population of Gaza and the three governates of Hebron, Jericho, and Nablus in the West Bank; (2) a qualitative study that included focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) with

parents or caregivers/guardians, extended family members, community members, leaders, service providers, and policymakers in both Gaza and the West Bank; and (3) participatory activities that were conducted with youth ages 10–15 years with developmental delays and disabilities in both Gaza and the West Bank, and parents/caregivers in each region. The design of the study was based on a review of literature, including key reports on the situation of children with developmental delays and disabilities in Palestine. Three key concepts from the Theory of Planned Behaviour (i.e., attitudes, normative expectations, and self-efficacy) were used to guide the design of the quantitative survey instrument and the qualitative inquiry. Findings from the study were used to develop an SBC strategy.<sup>4</sup>



## Key achievements

- The study findings were used to develop a cross-sectoral and innovative approach to working with children, families and providers, and support for policy and programming in Palestine.
- The Palestine KABP study received a '[Best of UNICEF Research 2021](#)' for its high potential for impact to benefit children.

The Palestine KABP study received a

**'Best of UNICEF Research 2021'**

Participatory activities that were conducted with youth ages 10–15 years with developmental delays





# Lessons learned & Recommendations

- 1** When using the participatory inquiry method, it is important to ensure that the facilities used for activities support a multitude of disability profiles.
- 2** Include a specific question or set of questions about actual behavioural intention to confront stigma and discrimination in the quantitative research tool. While intention was assessed, in part, using qualitative inquiry, it may be useful to create a specific survey question category for intention.
- 3** It is important to ensure that the registries used for sample selection include all possible communities, especially small communities. Some communities in the West Bank and Gaza were not well represented in the KABP study because there were not listed as communities in the sampling frame. The excluded communities may present different findings than neighbouring villages, refugee camps, or cities.
- 4** The research instruments were complex and largely suitable for parents and not children. Although there may be complications trying to conduct research with children, it is important to understand their perspective. The participatory activities came close to capturing the view of children and their parents or caregivers.
- 5** Keep FGDs to a respectful and manageable timeframe. The FGDs for the KABP study incorporated questions for a social network analysis. Although the network discussions yielded useful insights into the perceptions of parents and caregivers with regard to their support systems, not all FGD facilitators were able to complete those questions due to time constraints.



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# Endnotes

- 1 Carlson A., Lungu C., *Report: Baseline knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices (KABP) study in support of a C4D strategy for early childhood development and children with developmental delays and disabilities for Palestine*, UNICEF Palestine, Jerusalem, 18 September 2019.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Jones N., Abu Hamad B., Kifah Odeh K., Perezniето P., Al Ghaib OA., Georgia Plank G., Presler-Marshall E., Shaheen M., *Every child counts: Understanding the needs and perspectives of children with disabilities in the State of Palestine*, UNICEF Palestine, Jerusalem, 2016.
- 4 The final report from this study can be accessed at [www.unicef.org/sop/media/1666/file/KAP%20REPORT%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/sop/media/1666/file/KAP%20REPORT%20FINAL.pdf).



## UNICEF Oman Develops Social and Behaviour Change Strategy to Address Early Childhood Development, Inclusion of Children with Disabilities and Violence Against Children

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

### Brief summary



**Dates of Activity**  
2020 to 2021



**Duration**  
18 Months



**Budget**  
Unknown

UNICEF Oman, in collaboration with the Sultanate of Oman Ministries of Education, Health, and Social Development, supported formative research to inform the development of a social and behaviour change (SBC) communication strategy for three programme areas: Integrated early childhood development (ECD), inclusion of children with disabilities (CWD), and violence against children (VAC). A comprehensive desk review was conducted to provide information on what is already known about these areas in the Omani context.

Qualitative studies were conducted to identify perceptions and attitudes on ECD, CWD, and VAC prior to developing the strategy. UNICEF Oman delivered a joint cross-sectoral SBC strategy for the Government of Oman and formed an SBC Taskforce to oversee and achieve the SBC activities in the strategy workplan. Social and behaviour change indicators were embedded into administrative data systems in three government ministries. UNICEF Oman also supported the launch of mass campaigns with Government of Oman.

Early childhood development programmes are one of the most cost-effective ways to set the right foundation for children's health and education to increase skills, abilities and productivity of children. Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) is essential for all children to achieve their full potential. Children who do not receive adequate "nurturing care" (e.g., health, nutrition, early development, learning opportunities, care and protection) tend to have lowered cognitive, language and psychosocial outcomes which translates to lowered academic achievement in primary school. The 2014 Oman Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) showed that only 25 per cent of children under-five have three or more children's books. The percentage of children ages 36–59 months who are developmentally on track in at least three of the four domains (literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional, and learning) is 68 per cent.<sup>1</sup> While early childhood education services in Oman have expanded rapidly in recent years, participation in early childhood development programmes, particularly in nurseries and day care, is still relatively low, despite strong public commitment and widespread acknowledgement of the importance of a good start in life for social and economic development. Early childhood development services, such as kindergartens

and nurseries, are mostly provided through the private sector and tend to be limited in remote areas. Enrolment in ECE for 3–5 year-olds was reported at 50 per cent during the 2017/18 school year.<sup>2</sup>

Inclusion of children with disabilities in preschools is limited.<sup>3</sup> According to a formative research study conducted in 2019 on perceptions around inclusion, parents of children with disabilities were concerned about the well-being of their children in school, given the stigma and discrimination that their children might face. Parents of children without disabilities and young people themselves expressed reservations on the benefits of inclusion and described their interaction with CWD as evoking pity or discomfort, with some even saying that CWD are "not normal." Some parents refused to have their children in inclusive classes with CWD.<sup>4</sup>

Violence against children is outlawed in all settings, including schools, by the Child Law of 2014. Yet, a significant proportion of children and young people are exposed to violence in schools, communities and families. Limited availability of recent prevalence data makes it difficult to gain a more complete understanding of the many dimensions and extent of this issue.





## Strategic approach

UNICEF Oman worked with the Programme Management Group (PMG) and the Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) Task Force, comprised of officials from the ministries of information, education, health, social development as well as the National Centre for Statistics and Information, on the development of a strategy to address ECD, inclusion of CWD and VAC. A formative research study was conducted to inform and guide the design and delivery of the strategy, beginning with a comprehensive desk review to provide information on what is already known about these areas in the Omani context. The review highlighted additional areas where information was missing, and these gaps also informed and guided the research inquiry and development of a qualitative study research protocol that focused on:

1. Obtaining a deeper understanding of knowledge and practices related to ECD/ ECE, inclusion of children with disabilities, and violence against children and identifying any myths and cultural beliefs that influence caregiver behaviours.
2. Identifying common practices associated with child development, upbringing, and care in early years and exploring reasons behind low exclusive breastfeeding rates and early initiation of complementary feeding, and factors that contribute to resistance to exclusive breastfeeding.
3. Exploring the perceptions of the community on ECD and obtaining a better understanding of early schooling perceptions.
4. Exploring infrastructural, social, and cultural challenges to inclusion of children with disabilities.

Exploring knowledge and attitudes on positive disciplinary measures, identifying potential entry points and platforms for implementing a positive parenting programme, and exploring credible sources of information ECD/ECE, inclusion, and positive discipline.<sup>5</sup>

A strategy document was developed based on findings from the formative research. The overall communication goals of the strategy were to:

1. Contribute to the scaling up and strengthening of Oman's IECD and positive parenting interventions.
2. Contribute to the acceptance, scaling up and strengthening of inclusion of children with disabilities in the education system.
3. Contribute to improving awareness of parents/caregivers, teachers, communities and to foster an environment that will eliminate and stop violence against children in households and schools.



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## Strategic approach

Activities were planned on three levels: policy, service delivery and interpersonal. At the policy level, advocacy and high-level engagement activities were planned with senior officials, decision makers and media. At the service delivery level, activities aimed to enhance the capacity of health providers and educators on IECD, inter-personal communication (IPC), nutrition, ECE and early stimulation. A wide range of interpersonal level activities were planned, including:

- A national communication campaign on IECD targeting caretakers of children between 0–8 years, EVAC, and inclusion of CWD targeting caregivers between 0–18 years and influencers.

- Social mobilization activities in priority zones through identification and capacity building of local partners and NGOs.
- Awareness raising activities at pre-schools and schools.
- Celebrating International days in relation to IECD, EVAC, and CWDs.
- Engaging religious institutions to promote IECD, Nutrition, and preschool education.
- Research, monitoring and evaluation.
- Management and coordination.

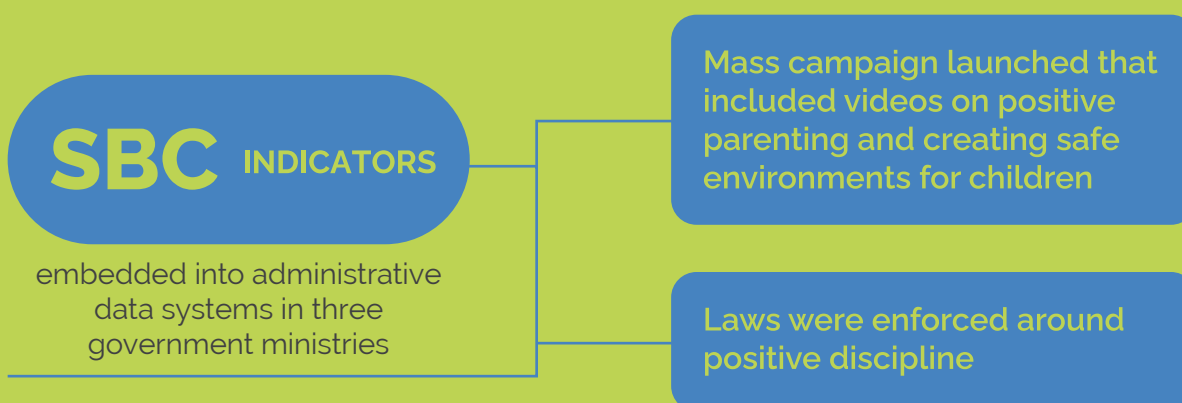


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## Key achievements

- UNICEF Oman delivered a joint cross-sectoral SBC strategy for the Government of Oman.
- UNICEF Oman formed an SBC Taskforce to oversee and achieve the SBC activities in the strategy workplan.
- Social and behaviour change indicators were embedded into administrative data systems in three government ministries.
- UNICEF Oman developed a training-of-trainers curriculum on how to counsel caregivers on IECD and nutrition and developed job aides and digital tools for health providers.
- UNICEF Oman supported the launch of a mass campaign (*Our Children, Our Priority*) with the Government of Oman, including videos on positive parenting and creating safe environments for children.
- Nutrition protocols and child feeding practices were developed and/or updated.
- Manuals for handling reported cases of violence, bullying and cyberbullying were updated.
- Advocacy was conducted for ensuring the opening of additional inclusive preschools and ensuring quality preschool education.
- Laws were enforced around positive discipline.
- Training for media personnel was conducted to highlight the importance of IECD and positive discipline for the future of Omani children.
- Capacity building sessions were conducted to train Health, Education, and Social Development focal points at the ministry level to communicate with the media about IECD, EVAC and inclusion.





## Lessons learned

- 1 A key challenge was getting the SBC Taskforce to implement SBC strategy activities. It may be necessary to create a higher-level governing structure to strengthen the implementation mechanism.



## Recommendations

- 1 Generate more data to serve as evidence to improve the strategy.
- 2 Advocate for various ministry sectors to include more social indicators into their administrative data systems.
- 3 Add community engagement and community mobilization components to round out the strategy (it was missing from the initial strategy).

## Endnotes

- 1 M&D Consulting, *Oman Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy 2021-2024*, UNICEF Oman, 2021.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 M&D Consulting, 'Formative Research to Support Development of a C4D Programme with the Aim of Enhancing Practices in IIECD, Protection from Violence and Inclusion of Children with Disabilities', 2019.
- 5 Ibid.

## UNICEF Afghanistan Develops New Social and Behaviour Change Integrated Strategy

Key social and behaviour change (SBC)  
strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

### Brief summary



**Dates of Activity**  
2022-23



**Duration**  
August 2022 to April  
2023



**Budget**  
USD91,000 (HQ)  
USD150,000 (CO)



## Context

Afghanistan remains one of the most complicated operations in the South Asia region. Prior to August 2021, the decades-long conflict in Afghanistan, combined with institutional weaknesses and sociocultural norms created a challenging context in which to support children's rights and health. After August 2021, healthcare programmes and humanitarian work became increasingly difficult to implement. Because of the brain drain, the UNICEF Afghanistan office lost many staff, SBC section alone lost four members out of five; in addition, there was no Chief in the office and no SBC specialist until April 2022. Other emergency situations (e.g., Cholera and Measles outbreaks, Acute Watery Diarrhoea)

and natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes and floods) increased the vulnerability of children and women and added pressure on the overall country office response

In August 2022, UNICEF Afghanistan developed an integrated Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) country strategy. The country office utilized SBC guidance documents and frameworks provided by UNICEF HQ, and received technical support from UNICEF South Asia Regional Office and UNICEF HQ teams. The strategy was used to build SBC capacity within the country office, and partners.





## Strategic approach

The UNICEF Afghanistan SBC team hired an international company through the global Long Term Agreement (LTA) to support the development of the strategy. The strategy was co-created in consultation with all UNICEF programme sections and selected number of participants from key NGO partners. Representatives from each UNICEF section and partners participated in a five-day workshop to finalize the details of the strategy and develop a theory of change for 2023 to 2025. The SBC strategy development process began with creating cross-sectoral guidance documents on SBC evidence generation, community engagement and accountability to affected people, and an SBC emergency toolkit with special modules (e.g., how to conduct rapid assessments; mobilizing SBC responses) for use in emergency settings. UNICEF Afghanistan allocated some of its own resources to roll out the strategy by cascading trainings at the sub-national level; staff in 15 international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Afghans from various community structures (e.g., Community Health Workers, school management Shura members, religious leaders) that work with UNICEF on community engagement activities were trained in SBC and accountability. The strategy was used to build the capacity of the UNICEF SBC and other sector staff (e.g., WASH, Nutrition), UNICEF implementing partners (international and national NGOs), and stakeholders from key departments of DFA ministries.

The newly developed strategy supported overall SBC programme planning and implementation in Afghanistan. The SBC team adopted an integrated approach to deliver community engagement, respond to emergencies, and improve Accountability to Affected People (AAP), and established Complaints and Feedback



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Mechanisms (CFMs) across the country. The SBC team worked with program sections to identify key priorities and then developed focused sectoral strategies to address the priorities. The SBC activities have been operationalized by local partners and amplified by community members through various community structures, including safe spaces where women and adolescent girls can share their feedback, concerns, and complaints. The SBC toolkit for emergency situations helped to ensure timely and appropriate responses during recent earthquakes and Cholera/Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) outbreaks, and for managing an influx of Afghan returnees.

UNICEF Afghanistan used the SBC approach to support Community Systems Strengthening (CSS), new community engagement activities,

and scaling up ongoing initiatives. Investments were made in leveraging partnerships with community structures, for example, the TAAVON (a religious leaders' network that grew from 500 members in 2022 to about 7,000 members in 2023). A training module on Child Rights in Islam was developed to help religious leaders understand children's rights using religious examples for familiarity. The religious leaders have since assisted with access to previously hard-to-access districts and facilitated engagement with communities. A partnership was also formed with QAHRAMANAN (a youth network of about 5,000 members) to support their civic engagement, and at the same time leverage their support to wider SBC areas of

work. A limited amount from the 7% set-aside funds was used to strengthen Grandmothers Groups (GMGs). Grandmothers are influential at the household level and respected throughout the country. They can move around freely, and are in a position to help women overcome restrictions placed on them. Grandmothers helped not only in influencing recommended practices at household level, but also in overcoming the issues of restrictions on women and Maharam's cost. In collaboration with program sections, the SBC team contributed to the capacity building of Community Health Workers, School Management Shuras, and Community Development Councils.



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## Key achievements

- The development and endorsement of the integrated SBC strategy plus the integrated system documents (evidence generation, community engagement, and SBC in emergency toolkit).
- Training for key partners on the strategy. A total of 82 UNICEF and partner participants were trained on the integrated SBC approach. Some of those partners cascaded the training at the sub-national level, reaching more groups and investing in the community structures.
- UNICEF Afghanistan mobilized additional resources to roll out the SBC strategy at the national- and sub-national levels. The SBC team also put into practice some of the assets developed as part of this strategy, for example, implementing the SBC emergency toolkit during the earthquakes, and the Cholera and Measles outbreaks.

82

PARTNERS TRAINED

on the integrated SBC approach

Cascaded trainings at the sub-national level





## Lessons Learned

- 1** Designing an integrated SBC strategy for community engagement and accountability requires a robust situation analysis to understand the key issues to be addressed.
- 2** Engaging multiple UNICEF sectors and selected partners in the co-creation of an integrated SBC strategy is challenging (in terms of time), yet instrumental to ensuring that all parties understand the added value of SBC.
- 3** Having a newly formed and talented UNICEF SBC team in post-2021 Afghanistan facilitated the shift from C4D to SBC and the adoption of an integrated SBC strategy.
- 4** Explaining “integrated SBC” to staff, partners and stakeholders with varying backgrounds and basic knowledge of SBC requires persistent and repetitive efforts. Creating an understanding of the “value added” of integrated SBC, especially for community engagement and accountability activities, and especially in challenging environments, entailed significant effort.
- 5** When working in a constrained, complex, and unpredictable environment (e.g., restrictions on women’s movement; bans on education for females and female employment; shrinking physical spaces in which to work), requires staff to be adaptable and agile in how SBC programmes are implemented. The community service organizations (CSOs) in Afghanistan have limited SBC capacity, which required the SBC team to work that much harder to ensure quality programming. The external agency responsible for developing the SBC strategy was unable to travel to Afghanistan to deliver the training on the strategy due to their stand on bans for female humanitarian workers, which negatively impacted the quality of the training.
- 6** The UNICEF Afghanistan team manages an extensive program that, in addition to SBC, covers AAP, youth and young people engagement, and community systems strengthening. The integration of SBC across UNICEF sections helped that SBC does not get lost in programme development and implementation across sectors.
- 7** The UNICEF office in Afghanistan was able to leverage the 7% set-aside funds to invest in existing and established community structures which has proven to be very effective in overall programme planning, implementation and monitoring.



## Recommendations

- 1** Continue scaling up the implementation of the strategy in 2024 and beyond.
- 2** Train more partners on the SBC strategy.



## UNICEF Niger Supports Girls and Youth Empowerment Through Skills-Building Platform and Community Hubs

Key social and behavior change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

### Brief summary



#### Dates of Activity

January-December  
2022



#### Duration

12 months



#### Budget

655,327 USD

As part of the UNICEF 2019-2021 Country Programme, UNICEF Niger supported social and behavioural change interventions for youth and adolescents, including activities to change social norms that are harmful to girls and young mothers (e.g., arranged marriages). UNICEF Niger developed a digital mapping platform, installed on the Ministry of Youth and Sports server, that facilitated the registration of 5,315 youth-based associations in eight regions. The UNICEF Niger team set up 11 connectivity hubs equipped with 21 laptops and 22 desktops where adolescents and young people could build capacity and skills and co-create social innovations to improve

self-efficacy, transform negative social and gender norms and contribute to positive change in their communities. A national community-based approach was also implemented, Niya Da Alkaweli (Love and Promise), based on 16 norms and standards of quality community engagement, in four regions. About 2,200 adolescents and young people (986 girls and women) from 948 villages in the four regions were trained in community profiling, causal analysis, group problem-solving and facilitation of community assessments, and dialogues and planning of youth-led community engagement initiatives.

In 2022, the population of Niger was 26.2 million, 47 per cent of whom were under the age of 14 years.<sup>1</sup> The majority (83%) of the population live in rural areas.<sup>2</sup> Patriarchal and hierarchical gender relations are the norm in the country's seven regions. Women and young people have little involvement in family decisions, which limits their access to social and economic services, hinders their survival and development, and affects their ability to adapt to crises and shocks.<sup>3</sup>

Niger has one of the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world. At least 85 per cent of women aged 20-24 in rural areas were married by the age of 18, compared to 43 per cent in urban areas.<sup>4,5</sup> An estimated 28 per cent of girls are married before the age of 15. Child marriage is driven by gender inequality and the belief that women and girls are inferior to men and boys. Cultural norms give married girls a certain level of respect within society that they could not achieve if they were unmarried.<sup>6</sup> As part of the UNICEF 2019-2021 Country Programme, UNICEF Niger supported social and behavioural change interventions for youth and adolescents,

including activities to change social norms that are harmful to girls and young mothers, for example, arranged marriages. UNICEF supported youth and adolescent civic engagement through empowerment and participation in inclusive and accessible spaces that ensured adolescents and youth (especially the most vulnerable) were accounted for and heard.

Since 2021, Niger's security challenges have displaced more than 3.7 million people (including two million children), exacerbated poverty, increased food insecurity, and created a situation of insufficient opportunities for young people. In May 2022, 759 primary schools and 34 secondary schools were closed nationwide due to the security situation, affecting more than 68,000 children, 48 per cent of whom were girls.<sup>7</sup> Only 27 per cent of females 15-19 years are literate, compared to 50 per cent of boys in the same age group.<sup>8</sup> Many girls drop out of school or are excluded due to an unsafe environment, placing them at higher risk of marrying young due to limited alternative options.<sup>9</sup>





## Strategic approach

In 2022, UNICEF Niger initiated an inclusive youth movement to support programmatic priorities including the promotion of positive social and gender norms; climate action; promotion of peace and social cohesion; and generation of demand for basic social services (e.g., immunization, entrepreneurship). To support this youth movement, UNICEF Niger developed a digital mapping platform, installed on the Ministry of Youth and Sports server that facilitated the registration of 5,315 youth-based associations in eight regions.

The UNICEF Niger team set up 11 connectivity hubs equipped with 21 laptops and 22 desktops. The connectivity hubs are spaces where adolescents and young people can build capacity and skills (e.g., entrepreneurship, advocacy, leadership, non-violent conflict management), reflect on relevant issues, engage in decision-making with others, and by co-creating social innovations to improve self-efficacy, transform negative social and gender norms and contribute to positive change in their communities. In 2022, a national community-based approach, *Niya Da Alkaweli* (Love and Promise), based on 16 norms and standards of quality community engagement, was also implemented in four regions (Maradi, Zinder, Diffa and Tahoua). Almost 2,200 adolescents and young people (986 girls and women) from 948 villages in the four regions were trained in community profiling, causal analysis, group problem-solving and facilitation of community assessments, and dialogues and planning of youth-led community engagement initiatives.

Since 2017, Niger has been holding a five-day conference called the "Forum national pour l'autonomisation de la femme et des jeunes" (National forum for the empowerment of women and youth, or FONAF), a platform for showcasing and amplifying girls' experience and skills. This

forum is attended by regional authorities, UN Women representatives, youth entrepreneurs from regions throughout Niger, and more than 500 exhibitors (e.g., a vegetable drying business, a pureed tomato enterprise, and a local spice dealer). In 2022, UNICEF supported the empowerment of young girls through capacity building on agri-food processing to allow young girls to develop their business and train their peers. During the 6th FONAF in 2022, young girls who received training during the 5th forum in 2021 shared their transformational journeys. The women shared their challenges marketing local products and were able to discuss solutions and strategies with decision makers and received support and advice from girls of the 2021 cohort. For example, in rural areas, households have vegetable gardens used for their daily subsistence, but most people have no refrigerator. The trained youth developed the idea of teaching female youth to process and conserve tomatoes as pureed or peeled to avoid waste and enable them to preserve their produce for 20 months without needing a fridge, and to save money and preserve the environment at the same time.

At the national level, UNICEF Niger supported the participatory development and the validation of the National Youth Policy and operational plan through a validation workshop. At the institutional level, The UNICEF country office supported the creation and operationalization of 13 frameworks to guide the coordination of activities for and with youth and adolescents (including those with disabilities) and monitoring implemented by youth movements. Niger also supported capacity building among local authorities and within communities (including religious leaders, local media, and local NGOs) to create an environment conducive to inter-generational dialogue, participation and engagement of adolescents and young people in community life, and to increase social accountability and social cohesion.





## Key achievements

- At least 5,315 youth and sports associations were registered on the digital mapping platform which remains functional on the Ministry of Youth server.
- UNICEF supported 303 associations working to promote citizenship, culture of peace and youth leadership.
- With UNICEF's support, 15,586 girls and boys participated in the skills development, empowerment, civic engagement and/or employment training led by the Ministry of Youth with support from UNICEF. At least 6,395 youth (35 per cent girls) were trained on advocacy techniques, leadership, associative life and prevention and management of conflict through the associations.
- Over 7,000 young people and adolescents (30 per cent girls) developed various skills under the leadership of the Ministry of Youth.
- 360 individuals (women, youth, religious and traditional leaders, elected officials, refugees and people with disabilities) reported having developed the capacity to host community debates and dialogues.
- UNICEF's support to the FONAF contributed to empowering young women and girls, recognizing their value within the communities, and fostering women and girls' autonomy and self-efficacy; 237 young girls were trained specifically in agribusiness and vegetable dyeing.
- UNICEF supported 32 training sessions for youth and adolescents in simplified accounting and literacy in collaboration with regional youth directorates. 47 girls successfully completed the literacy and basic accounting training. Out of these 47, thirty girls from Gaffati, Koleram, Jirataoua and Doguerawa villages actively marketed their products.
- The youth entrepreneurship model has strengthened citizen engagement and motivated decision makers to support financing micro, small, and medium-size enterprises in Niger.
- 13 coordination and accountability frameworks were co-created with young people at the municipal level that reinforce the culture of including the voices of youth and adolescents in local governance.
- UNICEF supported the development and the validation of the National Youth Policy and action plan through a validation workshop.

**5,315**

youth and sports associations were registered on the digital mapping platform

**7,000+**

young people and adolescents participated in skills-development trainings

**237**

young girls were trained specifically in agribusiness



# Lessons Learned

- 1** Young people's entrepreneurship can be an important lever for change, especially among young females.
- 2** As a result of UNICEF's support to the FONAF, girls' interest in entrepreneurship increased; many are successfully creating and managing micro-enterprises in Niger and changing the power dynamics in their family and in the community.
- 3** Girls that participate in entrepreneurial activities were regarded as role models by their peers and were able to share their experience with neighboring communities.
- 4** Girls' economic empowerment can be leveraged to abandon harmful practices such as child marriage and gender-based violence; parents that value a girl's productivity will allow her to delay marriage.
- 5** The trainings created a critical mass of young people and adolescents with the self-efficacy to act as leaders and contribute for social and gender norms transformation in their communities.
- 6** The establishment of coordination frameworks at the municipal developed with and for young people reinforced the culture of including the voices of adolescents and young people in decision-making and community development.



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# Recommendations

- 1** The Ministry of Youth should prioritize the operationalization of the National Youth policy and action plan.
- 2** The Ministry of Youth should promote the digital mapping platform to grow the number of youth and youth associations registered to accelerate the spread of a youth-led social movement for social and behavior change.
- 3** The Ministry of Youth should strengthen initiatives or policies that focus on providing young women entrepreneurs in rural community with access to credit, vocational training, and literacy opportunities in collaboration with other relevant sectors.
- 4** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry should promote local consumption to boost the sales and the profitability of young women entrepreneurs.
- 5** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry to facilitate funding opportunities for startups and small and medium-sized enterprises and made accessible to young women entrepreneurs.
- 6** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry should further support young women entrepreneurs through agricultural and entrepreneurial public policies at the institutional level (e.g., abolition or reduction of the business tax for the first five years in business), and by creating pathways for young entrepreneurs to access appropriate local expertise, resources and support.
- 7** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry should incorporate the use of digital/ICT-based platforms and prioritize the digital transformation in business strategy and development. A digital mapping of the initiatives can contribute to greater visibility and influence of public policies supportive of girls' entrepreneurship.



# Endnotes

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# SOCIAL + BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

The Compendium of SBC Best Practices has been jointly developed by the Country Offices, the Regional Office, the HQ SBC Team and PCI Media.

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The compendium is available electronically and can be downloaded from <https://www.sbcguidance.org> and <https://unicef.sharepoint.com/sites/PG-SBC>

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