

CORE RESOURCES DRIVING EQUITY

CORE RESOURCES DRIVING EQUITY FOR EVERY CHILD

# CORE RESOURCES

for every child, everywhere

Annual Report 2023

Shape the Future with UNICEF

# From the Executive Director

“For every child.” This simple, powerful promise is at the heart of UNICEF’s mission.

I have seen firsthand the power to deliver positive, lasting change for children. UNICEF is working across 190 countries and territories to provide children with health care and nutrition services, lifesaving medicines and vaccines, education, protection, and access to safe water and sanitation. From conflict zones and disaster areas, and in the most remote communities, UNICEF responds to the needs of children today, while strengthening the systems they rely on in the future.

Despite our efforts, children continue to face challenges including new and protracted conflicts, the climate crisis, and growing inequality. These are often interconnected.

Children bear the brunt of today’s crises: globally 1.2 billion children live in multidimensional poverty; nearly 600 million children do not meet minimum reading standards; 35 million children suffer from wasting; and a quarter of the world’s children live in or have fled from conflict zones.

The world is off track to meet most of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. But UNICEF is doing everything in our power to reverse the trend, with a focus on reaching the most marginalized, including girls, children with disabilities, and those living in humanitarian emergencies.

This work requires unrestricted Core Resources (known internally as Regular Resources, or RR). Flexible funding enables us to respond quickly to crises, anticipate future risks, and build resilience. Core Resources give UNICEF the flexibility to direct funding to where it is most needed.

Yet these resources have been declining as a proportion of our overall funding. UNICEF is therefore urging our donors to consider unrestricted RR as it is the most effective way to save and improve the lives of children.

We are deeply grateful to the governments of the United States, Germany, Norway and Sweden for their steadfast support, and to the governments of the United States and Luxembourg for increasing their core contributions in 2023. Last year, UNICEF received its largest private sector contributions to Core Resources from the National Committees for UNICEF in Japan, Korea and Germany.

Core Resources are the lifeblood of UNICEF’s work for children. Through your continued investment we can have the biggest impact on the lives of children today, and help to shape the future.



**Catherine Russell**  
UNICEF Executive Director



# Core Resources: Private and public sector partners working together

UNICEF thanks each of our RR donors and partners – governments, bilateral and multilateral organizations, international finance institutions, corporations and foundations, civil society organizations, philanthropists, and millions of individuals around the world – all of whom contributed so generously in 2023 to support our work for children around the world.

## Top 30 RR partners by contributions received, 2023

PARTNER	USD (MILLIONS)	PARTNER	USD (MILLIONS)
United States	137	Australia	26
Japan Committee for UNICEF	117	Switzerland	24
Germany	76	Belgium	17
Korean Committee for UNICEF	74	Japan	16
German Committee for UNICEF	70	Finnish Committee for UNICEF	15
Spanish Committee for UNICEF	68	United States Fund for UNICEF	15
French Committee for UNICEF	62	Belgian Committee for UNICEF	15
Sweden	59	Denmark	14
Norway	45	Canadian UNICEF Committee	13
United Kingdom*	39	Polish National Committee for UNICEF	12
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	35	Canada	12
United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF	35	Portuguese Committee for UNICEF	11
Swedish Committee for UNICEF	35	Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF	10
Italian Committee for UNICEF – Foundation Onlus	35	Committee for UNICEF Switzerland and Liechtenstein	9
Dutch Committee for UNICEF	29	Norwegian Committee for UNICEF	9

## Top 10 multi-year RR revenue recognized, 2019–2023

Multi-year partner agreements promote the sustainability of UNICEF’s programming and therefore help us achieve the greatest impact for children.

PARTNER	USD (MILLIONS) MULTI-YEAR AGREEMENT**
Sweden	241.4
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	235.6
Switzerland	92.1
Australia	81.4
Belgium	66.4
Denmark	37.6
United Kingdom	32.1
Luxembourg	23.8
New Zealand	23.7
Qatar	8.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>842.1</b>

Note: Numbers may not add up because of rounding.

\* The RR contribution of \$39.1 million from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland includes two disbursements: \$19.8 million for financial year 2023 and a \$19.4 million contribution for financial year 2022 reported and paid in 2023.

\*\* Agreements with a lifetime of two years or more are defined as multi-year agreements.

To reach our global commitments outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals, UNICEF is working to solve complex global issues for children and their communities for the long term. This is why UNICEF is making a Call to Action for Member States to fulfil their Funding Compact commitment, and for all donors to increase RR and thematic funding as a portion of their overall UNICEF portfolio. The key to shaping a future of peace, resilience, sustainability – and, most importantly, achieving the greatest impact for children and their communities – is investing flexibly.



Scan the QR code or click the image for a comprehensive listing of all our RR partners.

# Core Resources: The powerful promise of equity

For over 75 years – in times of peace, in conflict, and in emergency – and undeterred by the scale of the needs, we at UNICEF unfalteringly rise to the challenge of our mission: ‘for every child’. And critically, it is Core Resources (RR) that provides the bedrock funding that makes UNICEF’s commitment for every child possible. By providing unrestricted RR funding, our partners and donors empower us to make good on this simple, powerful promise of equity.

## Shaping the future: Progress towards the SDGs

In 2023 we crossed the half-way mark to 2030 – the year UNICEF, the entire United Nations system, and our partners collectively committed to achieving the SDGs, including the specific goals for children.

UNICEF’s report *Progress on Children’s Well-being: Centring child rights in the 2030 Agenda* brought us hope. Change is truly happening in many countries worldwide. We succeeded in halving the global under-five mortality rate since 2000 and bringing it to an all-time low of 37 deaths per 1,000 live births. Success has also been achieved in reducing the malnutrition and child marriage rates. We celebrate those milestones with children and our partners.

Such progress, however, has not yet been shared by all children. There is a stark projection that at the current rate, only a fourth of all children will live in countries where 70 per cent of the SDGs’ child-related targets will have been met by 2030.

Today, just as we have done throughout our history, we are stepping forward. With our partners’ support and with the agility of our unrestricted Core Resources (RR), we are seizing every opportunity to pioneer and lead transformative solutions at scale, and to accelerate actions where the need for progress is the greatest.

## Why is RR a solution for realizing the collective impact of the SDGs?

RR is a game-changer because it is based on the same principles as the SDGs themselves: equity, interconnectedness, and sustainability. Indeed, RR helps us to ensure that no child is left behind wherever she or he may live. RR’s allocation formula for programmes prioritizes children’s most urgent, unmet

needs in an equitable way. Thanks to RR we can work in interconnected ways, addressing children’s holistic needs for good health, education, and protection throughout their childhood and adolescence. We meet these needs while achieving systemic and long-term change. RR also enables us to ensure continuity of results even when disruption occurs by ensuring that we can be present before, during, and after an emergency. Finally, RR is indispensable to our role as the global custodian and co-custodian of 19 child indicators in 12 out of the 17 SDGs. It enables us to be the world’s leading resource for data and to advocate for children’s rights to be monitored and safeguarded everywhere.

## Why is RR different than other funding types?

RR’s purpose is to provide the foundational funding in all UNICEF country programmes of cooperation. RR funds our convening presence, expert staff, and long-term sustainable investments in the institutions, services, and stakeholders that support children. With the flexibility and predictability of RR, UNICEF uses this solid base to then leverage additional earmarked funding to achieve targeted results for children.

With its focus on equity, RR helps us mitigate the negative effect of high concentrations of earmarked donor resources in a few countries.



### Two realities for children

<b>14%</b> of children live in	<b>39%</b> of children live in
<b>10</b> countries which account for	<b>10</b> countries which account for
<b>44%</b> of the earmarked (OR) expense	<b>38%</b> of the RR expense

Clearly, RR is the bedrock that allows UNICEF to be equitable for all children and to shape their future with the greatest shared progress towards the SDGs.

## Highlights of investing in Core Resources

Investing in Core Resources (RR) is a clear way to help UNICEF work for every child and the SDGs. These highlights show how our five comparative advantages, all enabled by RR, helped us achieve results for children around the world.

### Before, during, and after an emergency

In **Haiti**, through the RR-supported Emergency Programme Fund, UNICEF extended a lifeline for children by providing basic supplies and by leveraging other resources to ensure that 1.14 million people could access safe water.



### Taking the work to scale

In **Montenegro**, our RR investments have leveraged \$48 million in annual government finance to scale up a Universal Child Allowance, contributing to a 6 per cent reduction in child poverty over the last decade.



In **Cambodia**, RR has been the bedrock of UNICEF's investments across multiple sectors that have contributed to a 75 per cent reduction in under-five mortality over the past 20 years.



### Expert staff

In **Bangladesh**, our expert staff, supported by RR, provided strategic and technical leadership to implement the country's education-sector reform, resulting in a more inclusive and gender-equitable system for girls to access learning opportunities.



### Leading and pioneering

In **West Africa**, RR scaled up UNICEF's market-based solution for sanitation loans, which between 2020 and 2022 contributed to increased access to at least basic sanitation services for the populations of Ghana (13.6 per cent), Nigeria (10.15 per cent), and Togo (6.24 per cent).



In **Tunisia**, RR enabled the pioneering of a digital child immunization card to tackle under-vaccination in children. It also helped to produce the evidence that leveraged earmarked resources to replace 80 per cent of the country's cold chain, the critical system for safely transporting perishable vaccines, thus enabling more effective management of vaccines.



### Meeting needs throughout the entire childhood and adolescence

In **Ethiopia**, RR has been instrumental in establishing the social service workforce over the past two decades, and in 2023 these funds supported the training and deployment of 15 per cent of all social service workers, who reached nearly 600,000 children.

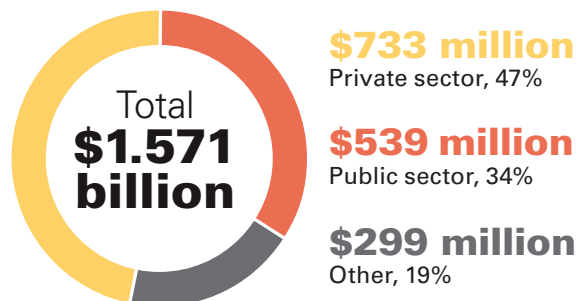


Scan the QR code or click the image to read the full impact stories.

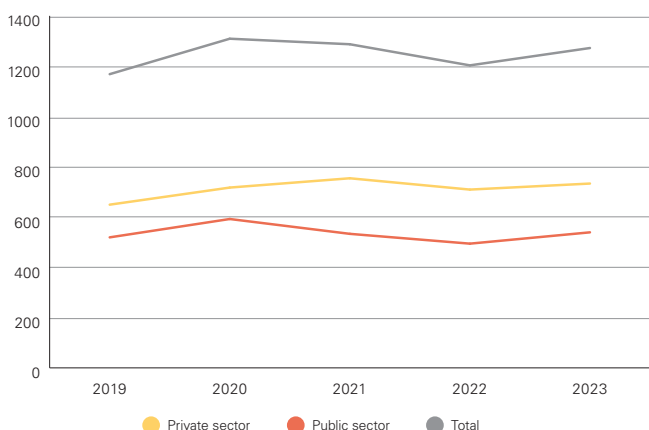
# Core Resources: income, trends, sustainability

We sincerely thank all donors and partners who recognize the value of RR and who contributed so generously to the \$1.571 billion in RR income in 2023. Contributions from the public sector increased by \$45 million over the previous year, while private sector contributions increased by \$24 million. Most of the increase, \$176 million (143 per cent over 2022), came from a one-off effect in 'other income' from interest, procurement services, and other sources.

## RR income in 2023

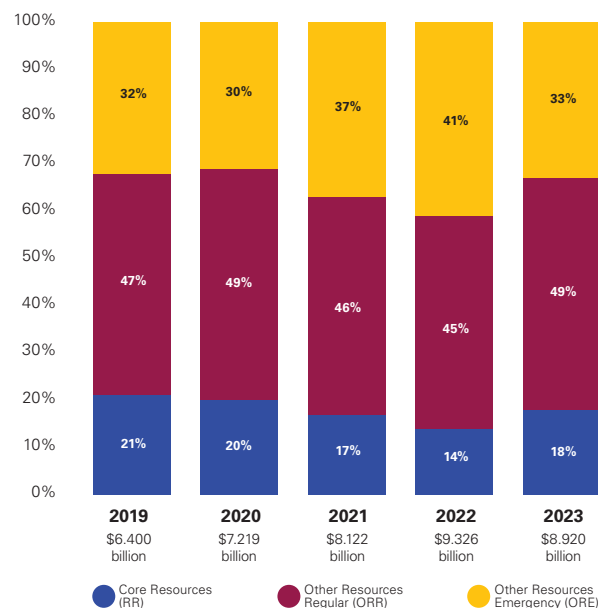


## RR income from voluntary contributions by type of resource partner (2019–2023)



We are immensely grateful for our donors' commitment to RR growth during the post-COVID years. At the same time, however, UNICEF is cognizant that the future trend of RR income must continue to increase and be sustained primarily through voluntary contributions, which over the past decade have been growing at a slower rate. This accelerated growth of RR is critical to meeting the growing needs of children as well as the Funding Compact commitments which are off-track.

## Income ratio by type of funding (2019–2023)



Over the last ten years UNICEF's proportion of RR to total income has been in decline, while earmarked funding has grown rapidly. In 2023 the increase from 14 to 18 per cent in the proportion of RR to total income was a good sign, although most of this increase was not driven by contributions. This disparity between the 18 per cent of fully flexible funding and 82 per cent of earmarked funding threatens the very essence of UNICEF's work. A balance must be restored.

With our partners, UNICEF is earnestly seeking to increase RR contributions as part of a broader portfolio approach across all funding types. This approach embraces the passions and institutional mandates of our partners and focuses on the different types of results that RR and earmarked funding can enable for children. Collectively, an acceleration of RR and the re-balancing of the portfolio can give all of us a renewed chance to shape the future for children and the SDGs.

# How we spend Core Resources effectively to promote equity and sustainable results



Simply put, flexible RR funding provides the indispensable foundation for all UNICEF efforts on behalf of children. RR consistently supports sustainable, long-term results, contributing to multiple SDGs that affect children's lives.

Specifically, in 2023, 87 per cent of RR was used for programmes, while 12 per cent was used in fundraising efforts to generate even higher levels of RR to meet the growing needs of children. The remaining 1 per cent supported UN Coordination on the implementation of the SDGs.

RR was spent strategically across three categories of UNICEF's budget:

## UNICEF'S BUDGET

### Direct Programmes Budget



**\$960.7 million Expense\***

The Direct Programmes Budget funds our country programmes of cooperation, including their initial allocation of core funding based on an equity formula. It also invests in strategic and innovative activities for children, the gathering of global data on children, thought-leadership, technical expertise for designing child-related policies worldwide, and global advocacy, including related to the SDGs. It also funds the organization's Emergency Programme Fund (EPF), which is our 'first responder' in sudden onset emergencies.

### Institutional Budget



**\$171.1 million Expenditure\*\***  
(of which **Development Effectiveness** was \$162 million)

The Institutional Budget supports our management and accountability system for results. Its largest component, Development Effectiveness, is funded primarily by RR and ensures that we can implement results-based models and programmes that meet international quality standards and that have a proven positive impact on children and the SDGs. It also supports UNICEF's strategic coordination with other UN agencies on the implementation of the SDGs.

### Special Purpose Budget



**\$160.0 million**

The Special Purpose Budget invests in UNICEF's private-sector fundraising and partnerships. This sustained investment has proven to be highly successful in the generation of significant increases in RR funding for children. It also ensures that UNICEF can develop partnerships and build coalitions with diverse private-sector actors – including philanthropists, businesses, and foundations – which steer the collective impact for children and the SDGs.

## How much RR was spent on programmes\*\*\* for children in 2023?

**87%**



\* **Expenses** – actual expenses made in the year.

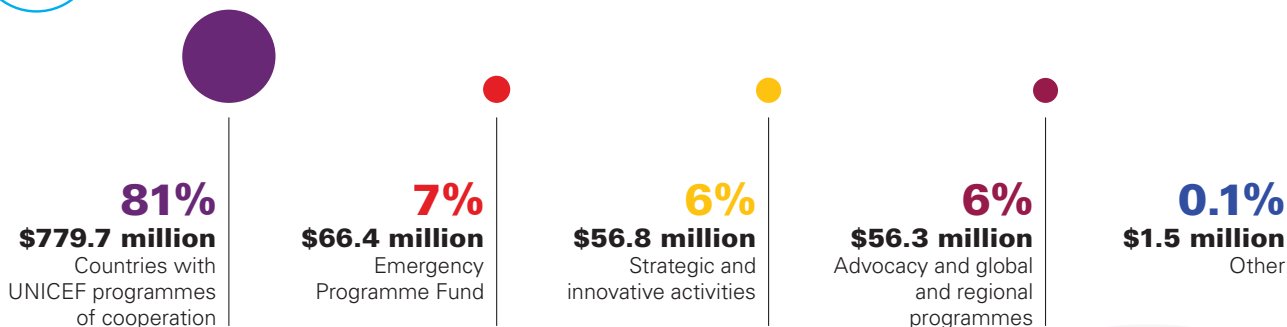
\*\* **Expenditure** – includes the expenses made and commitments of funds.

\*\*\* This figure shows combined expenditure of Direct Programmes and Development Effectiveness to demonstrate the total RR spent on programmes for children in 2023.

# What did Direct Programmes support?



## Direct Programmes: Expense overview by category\*



\* Percentages may not add up because of rounding.

## Countries with UNICEF programmes of cooperation

**81%**  
**\$779.7 million**



UNICEF's Country Programmes Documents of cooperation (CPDs) demonstrate the organization's contribution to results for children in a particular country. They are developed together with government and other partners and are linked to specific national priorities. RR is the guarantee that all CPDs in low and middle-income countries can receive a minimum of resources needed to deliver significant results for children.

**7**  
regions

**149**  
countries and territories

home to **2.1** billion children

UNICEF's transparent and equitable RR allocation formula is based upon three fundamental statistics: the level of child deprivation in a country, the economic capacity of a country, and the child population size. This formula is approved by UNICEF's Executive Board, which is composed of Member States, and ensures that RR goes where it is most needed and where it can have the greatest impact.



**Under-five mortality rate**



**Gross national income per capita**



**Child population size**

The **minimum for each country office is \$850,000 each year** – until the country achieves 'high income' status for two consecutive years.

Least Developed Countries receive at least **55 per cent of RR allocations** by value to country programmes, and at least **50 per cent** by value is directed to sub-Saharan African countries.





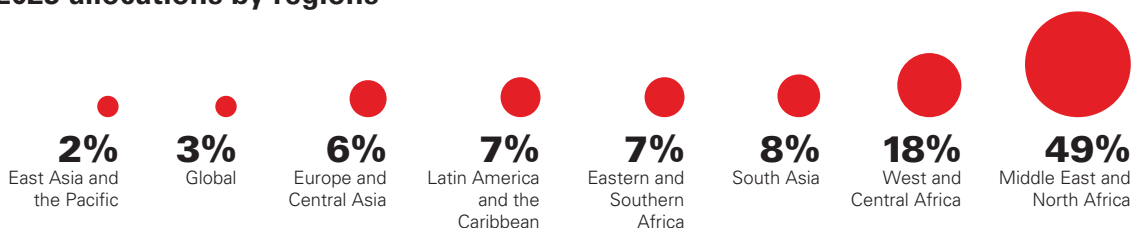
# Emergency Programme Fund

7% ●  
\$66.4 million

In a sudden onset emergency, RR funds UNICEF's immediate response within the first 24–48 hours. Through a revolving loan called the Emergency Programme Fund (EPF), UNICEF's country offices receive financing prior to receiving broader donor support.

In 2023, EPF provided RR funds to 28 UNICEF offices across global, regional, and country levels. Nearly half of these funds went to the Middle East and North Africa region for the response in Sudan and Syria and to scale up the response to the unprecedented devastation in Gaza. In Europe and Central Asia, EPF funded the response to the earthquake in Turkey and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in Armenia. Children in all regions benefitted from the EPF, including those in the Sahel crisis in West and Central Africa, flooding in Southeast Asia, and armed violence in Haiti in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## EPF 2023 allocations by regions



### EPF providing lifesaving support in Haiti

The situation in Haiti is dire. Armed group violence and rising insecurity have displaced populations. There is food insecurity, economic collapse, a breakdown in basic services, and cholera. Today, a staggering 2.9 million children are in need of humanitarian assistance. Yet despite this urgent need, UNICEF's humanitarian appeal for Haiti is underfunded by 81 per cent, with a funding gap of \$198.2 million. Faced with this harsh reality, UNICEF's Emergency Programme Fund (EPF), which is supported by RR, has been put to vital, lifesaving use.

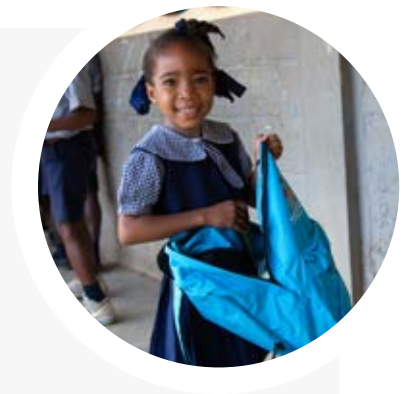
EPF funds have enabled UNICEF to step up its work in three critical areas:

**Providing a lifeline for children through basic supplies.** EPF allowed for the purchase of supplies for students and schools, contributing to the nearly 72,000 students who received individual learning materials from UNICEF in 2023. Funds also allowed the organization to carry out vital assessments and evaluations to determine the country's emergency needs and for the eventual return to education in areas under the control or influence of armed groups.

**Addressing the most pressing humanitarian needs.** EPF has strengthened UNICEF's field presence in Haiti's Artibonite department – host to a significant armed group presence and large numbers of internally displaced people. There, we are leading the delivery of interventions on water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), as well as cholera, nutrition, child protection, and social protection. EPF has allowed us to purchase key lifesaving supplies, including ready-to-use therapeutic food, local hygiene kits/cholera kits, and school supplies, and to deploy them wherever they are most needed.

**Scaling up of the cholera response.** While funds were still pending from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund, UNICEF used RR – provided through the EPF – to kick-start the cholera response. Thanks to this flexible funding mechanism thousands of families received lifesaving assistance. UNICEF mobilized 21 governmental rapid response teams, which have assessed over 16,000 suspected cholera cases and referred 3,556 to care in treatment centres. These teams also reached more than 41,000 households (some 750,000 people) with cholera behaviour change communication messages and established 14,600 sanitary locations. In addition, EPF and other sources of funding provided more than 1.14 million people with access to a sufficient quantity of safe water.

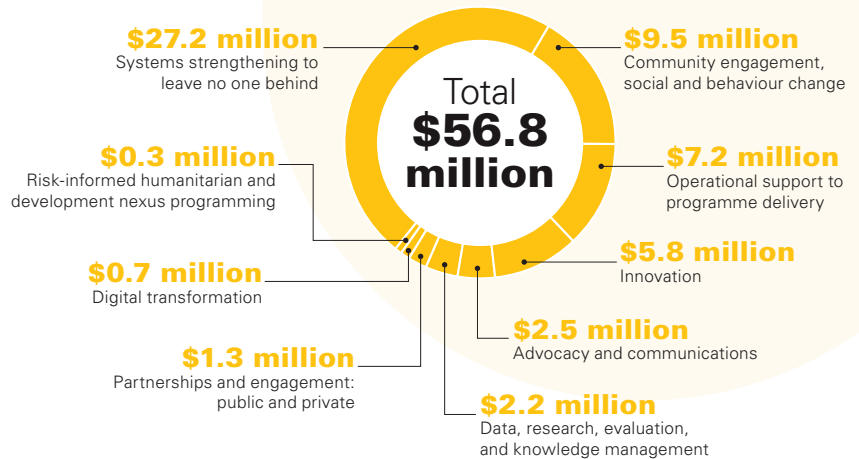
UNICEF will not ever abandon the people of Haiti, and thanks to RR we have been able to continue and scale up our vital work at this critical time.



# Strategic and innovative activities

6% ●  
\$56.8 million

UNICEF values innovation, which is why each year RR supports a Strategic and Innovative Activities Fund. UNICEF’s Executive Director, mandated by the Executive Board, allocates this fund to pioneering initiatives across all sectors that have the potential to provide even greater opportunities for children, and many of these initiatives are later scaled up with new donor funding.



## Selection of ongoing multi-year initiatives supported with the RR Strategic and Innovative Activities Fund



**\$10 million supports 10 countries around the world to expand services for adolescent girls to reach their full potential.** These countries implement multisectoral programmes that address barriers in health, education, and protection, and that catalyse national support – with and for adolescent girls.

**\$3 million supports the organization’s Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)** – UNICEF’s largest source of statistically sound and internationally comparable data on children and women, measuring progress on the SDGs worldwide.



**\$9 million provides catalytic support to demonstrate innovative water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) concepts** – bridging humanitarian response and development services in drought prone countries with active crises in the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya).

**\$20 million supports 25 priority countries to catalyse national and other investments to scale up the community health and nutrition workforce** (currently 1 million workers) **and to strengthen the primary health-care systems** to be resilient against future pandemics.



**\$10 million provides support to 21 lower- and middle-income countries to introduce HPV vaccination**, vaccinate adolescent girls aged 9–14 years, and deliver complementary girl-centred, gender-transformative services and interventions tailored to local priorities and needs.

**\$4 million supports the UNICEF Syria Country Programme to scale up safe repatriation** and other durable solutions for close to 50,000 children stranded in north-east Syria.



## RR funds the acceleration of UNICEF's Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan

Using RR funding for Strategic and Innovative Activities, UNICEF has been accelerating the implementation of our Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan (SCAP), which launched in 2023. SCAP marks a transformation of how we work, outlining UNICEF's whole-of-organization commitment and child-centred response to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss with a comprehensive blueprint to achieve our ambitious vision by 2030. We are excited to be joining forces with other United Nations agencies, governments, the private sector, civil society, and young people in this journey.



Scan the QR Code or click on the image to read more about the SCAP.

## Advocacy and global and regional programmes

**6%** ●  
**\$56.3 million**

As the global custodian of the SDGs for children, UNICEF strategically uses RR for advocacy to promote and safeguard children's rights. RR also funds programmes at the global and regional levels that enable us to be the leading source of data on children as well as a recognized thought-leader and technical expert across all areas that impact children's lives.

## RR funds UNICEF's State of the World's Children Report

Using RR funding, UNICEF's Global Office of Research and Foresight (UNICEF Innocenti) produced the organization's flagship report *The State of the World's Children 2023: For every child, vaccination*, which has recorded the highest-ever coverage of a UNICEF report and has already had a substantial impact. The report articulates the reasons behind the significant decline in routine vaccination and outlines the steps required for the global community to ensure that no child should miss out on lifesaving vaccines.

**Highest-ever coverage** of a UNICEF report

  
**Over 4,500** media mentions

  
**2.3 million** website viewers



Scan the QR code or click on the image to read the report.

In addition, UNICEF's strong evaluation function, which generates feedback on results through impartial and credible assessment, is consistently funded with RR.



## Other

**0.1%** ●  
**\$1.5 million**

This includes financial adjustments to country programmes in response to currency fluctuations or other economic factors.

# How we spend Core Resources around the world



Thanks to RR, our programmes for children cover all 7 regions and over 150 countries around the world. In 2023 our RR equity-based formula ensured that the majority of RR was spent in the least developed countries and sub-Saharan Africa. Two-thirds of RR was spent on development, and a third was spent on humanitarian programmes.

**\$50.1 million**

Global

**9%**

for humanitarian response

**\$91.9 million**

Middle East and North Africa

**60%**

for humanitarian response

**56%**  
of RR spent in sub-Saharan Africa

**\$37.3 million**

Latin America and the Caribbean

**39%**

for humanitarian response

**\$305.8 million**

West and Central Africa

**30%**

for humanitarian response

The colours on this map represent the seven UNICEF regions, with the 'global' category representing the HQ divisions.

This map is stylized and not to scale. It does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or area or the delimitation of any frontiers.

**\$33.6 million**

Europe and Central Asia

**22%**  
for humanitarian response

**\$57.6 million**

East Asia and the Pacific

**21%**  
for humanitarian response

**\$157.0 million**

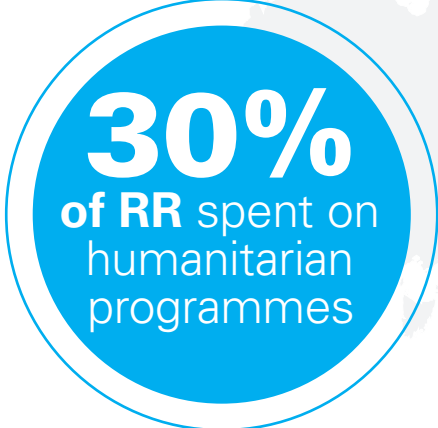
South Asia

**26%**  
for humanitarian response

**\$227.3 million**

Eastern and Southern Africa

**27%**  
for humanitarian response



# How we spend Core Resources in areas directly affecting children's lives

RR enables our long-term results in the five interconnected Goal Areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan – each linked to children's rights and the SDGs. In 2023 a third of RR was spent on health, nutrition, and immunization programmes. The second largest expense went to protect children from violence and exploitation, followed by programmes working to provide children with a safe and clean environment.

## Direct Programmes: Expense overview by goal area



## Direct Programmes contribute to 12 out of the 17 SDGs

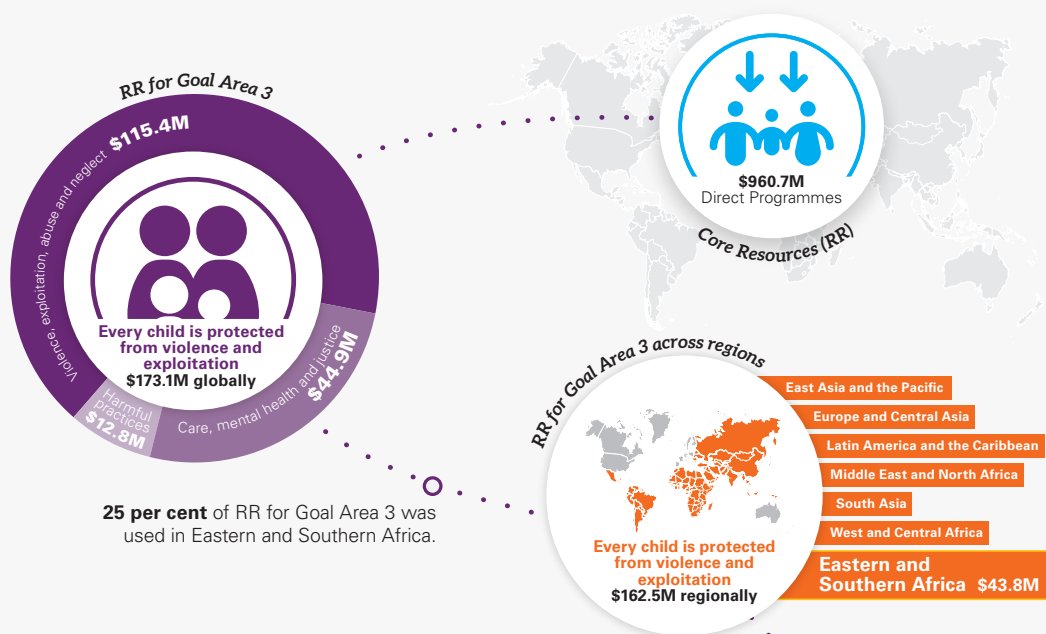


# How we spend Core Resources in countries: An illustration from global to on-the ground implementation in Ethiopia

This graphic illustrates how Core Resources (RR) are used by one country to achieve results for children.

Following RR's journey from global to country level begins with UNICEF's Strategic Plan Goal Areas. Each of the Goal Areas outlines results that are the basis on which we budget for our programmes at the global, regional, and country level. This illustration shows how RR under Goal Area 3 was used to advance three results for children in Ethiopia.

In 2023, Goal Area 3 accounted for 18 per cent of global expenses under Direct Programmes.



In Ethiopia RR was spent to continue strengthening the social service workforce for child protection at the district and community levels.

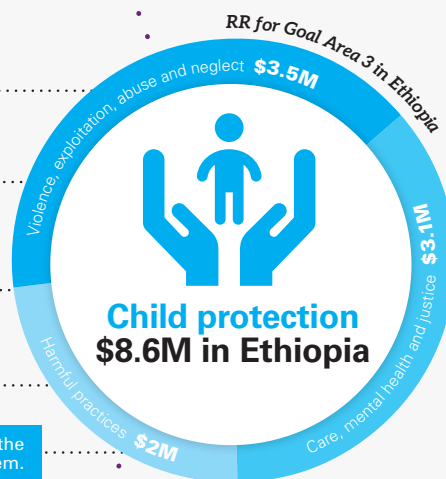
**Expert staff and consultants** provide technical leadership and coordination – ensuring an adequate and qualified social service workforce is in place for children. This includes supporting the government to develop regulatory and accreditation frameworks and continuous workforce capacity assessment.

**UNICEF's network of sub-offices** facilitates direct contact with local authorities and communities, and through a nexus approach, positions the social service workforce to provide critical services to children across development and humanitarian contexts.

**Partnerships with the government** support the deployment of 1,200 social workers country-wide, deliver pre-service and in-service training, and roll-out the community-based case management system for child protection. Through these partnerships, at-risk and vulnerable children are identified and receive the specialized support they need to thrive, e.g., health, education, legal, or mental health support.

**Supplies and equipment** to roll out the Child Protection Information Management System to improve tracking and management of child protection cases.

**On-site field travel** to support partners to plan, coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the UNICEF-funded programmes to strengthen the child protection system.



With RR funding, UNICEF supported the **pre-service and in-service training of all social workers** and deployed over 1,200 social workers (15 per cent of the workforce) across Ethiopia, including humanitarian hotspots. In the drought-affected Somali, Oromia, and Southern regions, social workers contributed to a **26.7 per cent reduction in the incidence of child marriage** between 2022 and 2023.



# Core Resources at the core of communities in Ethiopia



A few months ago Zemzem was abducted by three men, a traumatic experience for a 13-year-old girl. In some rural areas of Ethiopia, girls are regularly forced into child marriage.

Africa’s second most populous country is gripped by an enduring polycrisis and the collapse of many key systems. Armed conflict and intercommunal violence, climate hazards, disease outbreaks, acute food insecurity, refugee influxes, and high inflation are all contributing to large-scale population displacements, and continue to cause a complex and protracted humanitarian crisis. The result is multiple violations of children’s rights, including increases in sexual violence and child marriages. From the rugged mountains to the dry lowland plains, 21.4 million people, including 10.8 million children, require humanitarian assistance.

## SDG indicator 5.3.1

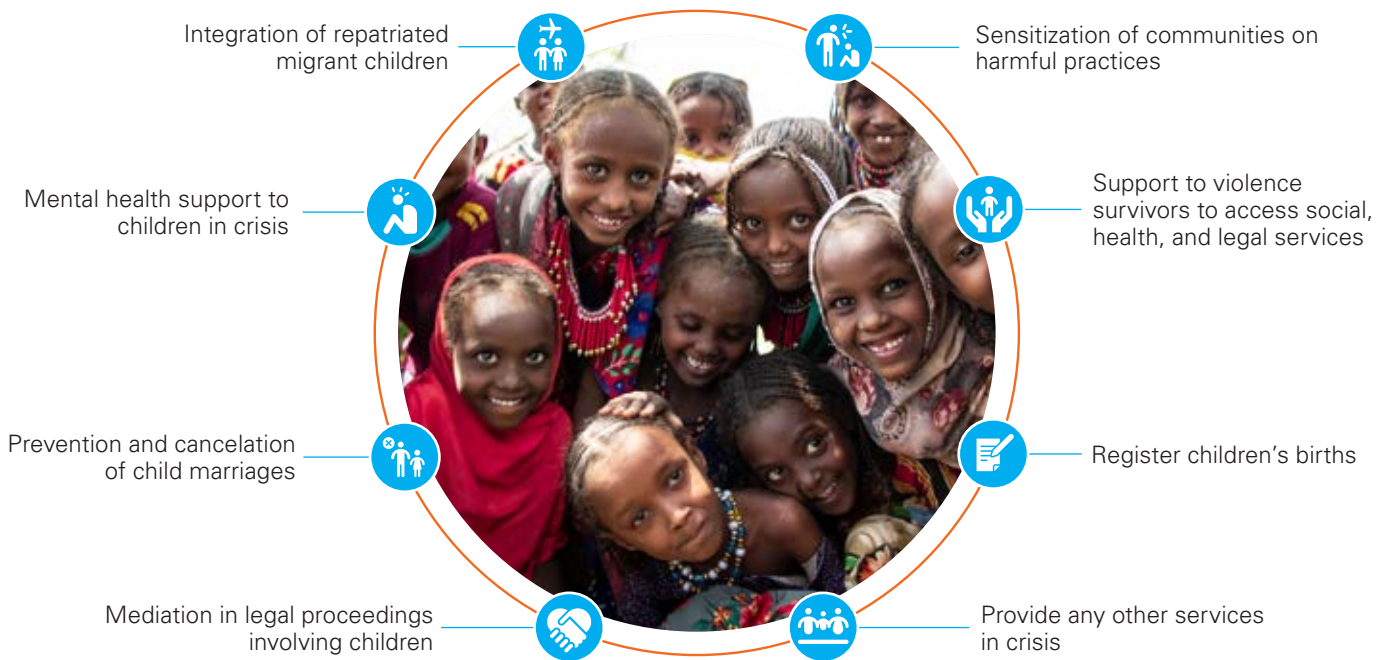


The prevalence of **child marriage has dropped from 75 per cent in the 1980s to just 40 per cent today**. UNICEF interventions in Ethiopia’s drought-affected Somali, Oromia, and Southern regions contributed to a **26.7 per cent reduction in child marriages** between 2022 and 2023.

It is against this backdrop that UNICEF has consistently deployed Core Resources (RR) in times of peace and leveraged other resources during the conflict to build and sustain the social services sector in Ethiopia. Why this sector? Because in Ethiopia, just as across the world, social service workers operate at the very heart of society, weaving the vital connections that link children and their families with essential health care, education, child protection, and other services. We work in two main ways: first, directly funding the deployment of 1,200 (15 per cent) of the country’s 8,000 social service workers to development and humanitarian settings; and second, strengthening the entire social services system through pre-service and in-service training to help children at scale. As a result, we have been able to provide children with services protecting them from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and other harmful practices, while also providing them with access to care, mental health, and justice.



## Social workers: Meeting the needs of children, whatever they are, from the heart of the community



The positive impact that access to social services has on children means that just one social service worker, working across silos and following the best interests of the child, can power progress towards multiple SDG goals. For example, Fatuma Ali, a dedicated UNICEF-supported social service worker in the Nesim Shekila subdistrict, was able to prevent 8th Grade student Fatuma Seid from being forced into an arranged marriage by connecting her to a comprehensive care and support programme that has enabled her to continue her education and have access to essential provisions.

“Thanks to my school principal, the social worker Fatuma Ali, and the committee that convinced my mother to cancel the arranged marriage, I am now free to pursue my education,” declared a grateful Fatuma. This one act ripples across five of the SDGs, and in 2023 it was repeated across the country as social service workers cancelled over 3,700 child marriages and supported those girls to experience a happier and more rewarding future.

Through RR, UNICEF Ethiopia has built a national social services sector where there was almost none before, and has sustainably developed it in a way that benefits children and families, ensuring that the social service workforce is embedded in the national social protection, health, and justice sectors. With UNICEF support from RR and other resources, these professionals are also being trained and deployed to humanitarian hotspots; and specialized teams consisting of both social workers and psychologists have been deployed in crisis zones, helping to ensure that we reach the most vulnerable children wherever they are – in times of peace and in times of insecurity.

We have also ensured equity by building the capacity of social service workers to identify and support at-risk and vulnerable children. And we have ensured high-quality care by developing standards to harmonize the quality of service delivery across the country, as well as by building a case management system to register and track the response and resolution of child protection cases. Critically, these efforts are supporting a sustainable, professional sector, both now and into the future.

“Social service workers in Ethiopia play a crucial role in providing access to vital services that significantly affect the daily lives of children,” notes Dr. Aboubacar Kampo, UNICEF Representative in Ethiopia. “Thanks to the predictability of RR funding over several years, the workforce has been able to grow and establish itself, ensuring continuity and reliability in service provision. Regardless of whether it is in a development or a humanitarian context, we can be there to support women and children no matter where they are.”

# A public sector perspective on giving to Core Resources

“I would like to offer my sincere thanks to each and every government and multilateral partner, who has contributed to Core Resources over the past year – and over many years. We appreciate your trust in our mandate and RR as the foundation to achieve it. We are positive that your core resource contributions will soon reach the Funding Compact commitments, as we continue to influence progress on children’s rights together.”

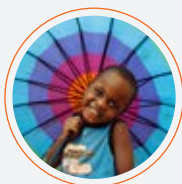
**June Kunugi**, Director,  
Public Partnerships Division

This year, we’d like to highlight the following partners for their generosity.

## PARTNER PROFILE: US GOVERNMENT

The United States Government (USG) is a steadfast and highly valued supporter of UNICEF. UNICEF’s multifaceted partnerships and collaborations with the USG exemplify how long-term collective action is making a profound difference in children’s lives worldwide. A cornerstone of our partnership is the enduring support for UNICEF’s Core Resources (RR), to which the USG is our largest contributor.

**Read the full profile in the Partner Companion**



“Sweden highly appreciates the work of UNICEF for defending and advancing the rights of children. UNICEF’s broad presence on the ground, with operations in more than 190 countries and territories, makes a real difference in children’s everyday lives. Sweden has been a long-term partner of UNICEF, contributing with flexible, multiyear funding. As core resources are growing scarcer, we would like to see more donors and Member States stepping up and contributing with flexible funding. This gives UNICEF a possibility to be fast and flexible and bring their operations to scale when needed, such as in Gaza and Ukraine. In this way we can, together, deliver more results for every child.”

**Johan Forssell**, Minister for International Development Cooperation, Sweden



“The need to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of children is as critical as ever and Denmark remains a committed and long-standing partner of UNICEF in this endeavor. UNICEF plays a key role in bridging development and humanitarian assistance to protect children in times of need. It is a priority for Denmark to strengthen the synergies between climate action and sustainable development and we welcome UNICEF’s ‘Sustainability and Climate Action Plan’ and its approach to protect the lives, health and well-being of children in the face of the climate crisis. Denmark is a proud provider of multi-year core and flexible funding to UNICEF allowing the agency to deliver effectively on its mandate. We encourage other partners to do the same.”

**Dan Jørgensen**, Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy, Denmark



“Belgium is proud to be among the top 20 resource partners for core resources of UNICEF, continuing our longstanding commitment as quality donor to our largest multilateral development partner. In an increasingly complex and conflict-affected world, this affirms our support to UNICEF’s mandate to Leave No Child Behind.”

**Caroline Gennez**, Minister for Development Cooperation, Government of Belgium



Scan the QR code or click the image to read the full partner profiles and insights.

# A private sector perspective on giving to Core Resources

This year, we'd like to highlight the following partners for their generosity.

## PARTNER PROFILE: INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

The UNICEF International Council is a unique community of over 150 private philanthropists and partners. At the Council's Annual Symposium in November 2023, a key topic was RR. Following the November Symposium, one Council member committed to creating a match fund for RR, hoping to leverage his gift and inspire others to give in the same way. This commitment led to other Council members joining the fund, unlocking up to \$350,000 in the match pool, ultimately raising \$630,000 in RR.

**Read the full profile in the Partner Companion**



**"To all our private sector donors and partners to core resources, from all over the world, I say a heartfelt "Thank you." As this report demonstrates, your generous contributions play a pivotal role in making it possible for UNICEF to change the lives of children around the world. Your continued and increased contributions to core resources are our pathway to Shape the Future for children and meet the SDGs."**

**Carla Haddad Mardini**, Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships

"Thanks to the players of the Postcode Lottery, we are able to support UNICEF with annual unearmarked funding. We believe that flexible funding is what enables UNICEF to try to reach every child to ensure they can reach their full potential."

**Jonne Arnoldussen**, Managing Director, Nationale Postcode Loterij, Netherlands



"We are proud to partner with UNICEF to cooperate on the global level to support education, and to help children in all aspects of their lives. By allocating 50 per cent of our funding to RR, we are donating in a way that is highly important for UNICEF because funds can be used flexibly in places where children and families are most in need."

**Finja Warnke**, Manager Sustainability, Hapag Lloyd



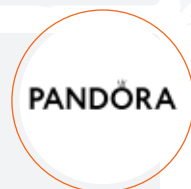
"Our funding philosophy is rooted in trust, as we have confidence in the capacity of UNICEF to effect meaningful and enduring change. The funds distributed by the lottery are unrestricted, neither allocated to specific projects nor designated for particular investments, reflecting our belief that non-profit organizations are best positioned to determine where the resources will be most impactful."

**Hélène Carlbark**, Head of Charities, Swedish Postcode Lottery



"As the world's largest jewelry brand, Pandora has proudly partnered with UNICEF since 2019," said Mads Twomey-Madsen, SVP of Global Communications & Sustainability, Pandora. "Together with other partners we have helped reach millions of children and young people with opportunities to learn, express themselves, and find work in the future. We have chosen to allocate 50 per cent of Pandora's support for UNICEF to Core Resources for Results (RR). This is because we recognize the crucial and distinct role that core resources play in helping children in crises when they need the support the most."

**Mads Twomey-Madsen**, SVP Global Communications and Sustainability, Pandora





# About UNICEF

We are the world's largest children's organization, an agency of the United Nations, and 100 per cent voluntarily funded. Mandated at the highest levels, we ensure that children and adolescents are protected, healthy, and educated. We have a presence in over 190 countries and territories, working during times of peace and stability and when emergency strikes. We partner with national governments and local communities, other United Nations agencies and NGO partners, and the public and private sectors to achieve our mission to create a better future for children and adolescents.

Importantly, UNICEF provides support to children from before birth all the way through to adolescence. Thus, please note that within this report the terms "children" and "childhood" encompass the full spectrum of a child's life, up to age 18.

**Cover:** Ngozi Chike plays with her six-month-old son, Chidiebube, after he has received a Vitamin A dose at Otuocha Primary Health-Care Centre, Anambra State, Nigeria.



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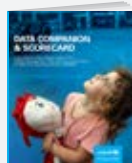
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### For more information:

If you have questions or want to know more about the work of UNICEF, please contact us at [rrreport@unicef.org](mailto:rrreport@unicef.org).



Scan the QR code or click on the image to read UNICEF's *Data Companion and Scorecard* for more information on progress against SDG milestones and targets to which RR contributes.



Scan the QR code or click on the image to read UNICEF's report *Progress on Children's Well-being: Centring child rights in the 2030 Agenda*.



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