



# OUR WORK ON EDUCATION

We aim to give all children the building blocks for a brighter future by transforming the quality and relevance of education at scale.

## Unlocking potential

China has the world's largest education system covering 260 million students and over 15 million teachers.

China has long prioritized public education in its development agenda and has achieved near universal enrolment. The Government provides nine years of free and compulsory primary and junior secondary education to children. Ambitious national targets for early childhood education has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of children aged 3-6 attending kindergartens.

However, barriers and challenges remain and not all children in school are learning as they could be. The poor quality and narrow focus of education is holding back learning and the future of many children especially those from remote rural areas, ethnic groups and specific vulnerable groups. In remote rural areas, teachers, especially ethnic minority teachers, tend to have lower education qualifications and fewer training opportunities.

## Our programme

Our education programme aims to ensure that all children, including those with a disability, realise their right to a quality and stimulating education - from early learning opportunities that lay the groundwork for success in school, all the way through to secondary school.

Getting children into school is not enough, the curriculum needs to evolve – new skills for the jobs of the future introduced with learning methodology that practices these skills. Through our Child-Friendly Schools model, we promote inclusive, safe, healthy and nurturing environments that support children's learning, expand their skills and expose them to sport and art, problem solving and creativity.

UNICEF's inclusive education programme aims to increase the number of children benefitting from quality early years and basic education. We also seek to increase the benefits of life-skills education to disadvantaged and vulnerable adolescents, both in and out-of-school.

Through our long-established partnership with the Ministry of Education we help to generate evidence and create innovative pilot models which translate into strengthened policies, standards and guidelines to transform learning outcomes for children across China.

## Early childhood development

UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education and the All China Women's Federation to pilot new and exciting models for early childhood care and education which demonstrate how quality services can meet the needs of the most disadvantaged children.

The pilot project underway in 166 centres for children aged 0-3 years and 332 centres for children aged 3-6 years involve safe, healthy, non-discriminatory and effective teaching-learning methods proven to best enable child development and learning.

Based on learning from the project, UNICEF has created resources for national use including a set of child-friendly kindergarten curriculum guidebooks and a storybook-based school-readiness curriculum. We have supported the development of high quality teacher training models and strategies which have been rolled out in the national teacher training programme.

Our work has contributed to national policies, standards and guidelines including the State Council's *Opinions on Promoting Early Childhood Care and Education* and leveraged significant government investment for early years education.

## Achieving system-wide change

We support the planning implementation of the Government's education reforms with a specific focus on ensuring quality education for all children. UNICEF has strengthened China's education statisticians' capacity to generate and use statistics to inform better planning and to implement a monitoring system to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

## Child-friendly education

Jointly launched with the Ministry of Education in 2001, our Child-Friendly Schools programme has led to the development of a model for China which focuses on improving the quality of education by making it an engaging and stimulating experience for children aged 6-12 years.

Participating schools emphasise social and emotional learning to encourage good mental health, along with sport and physical education to promote healthy development and teamwork. The approach also includes ensuring water, sanitation and hygiene with improved health management capacity to encourage children to follow good personal hygiene practices, and the professional development of teachers to improve teaching quality.

Elements of the Child-Friendly Schools programme have informed the *Compulsory School Management standards* for primary and junior high schools with the potential to extend the programme's benefits to tens of millions of children, particularly those living in rural areas.

We design and implement strategies to reach out-of-school children and adolescents aged 10-19 years, with an overarching approach of pilots to policy to results at scale.

**"A child-friendly school helps children to achieve improved learning outcomes, transition successfully to secondary school, and learn important life skills that will enable them to make a positive contribution to society."**

Rana Flowers  
UNICEF Representative to China.

The *Social and Emotional Learning* project as part of Child-Friendly Schools is currently implemented in **525** schools, serving disadvantaged children in **16** counties, benefiting **290,000** students and **18,000** teachers.



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