



# SOCIAL POLICY

Our work to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty and to ensure Government investment in social protection and quality social services for children.

## Child poverty on the agenda

China has led the world in poverty reduction, but rapid growth has been accompanied by inequities in wealth and well-being.

Twenty-five per cent of children live in remote, mountainous and economically underdeveloped regions. These areas are characterized by high poverty incidence, in the western and central provinces. Urbanisation hides deep pockets of poverty from view.

The most disadvantaged children face multiple and overlapping deprivations. They are disproportionately young (aged 0-4 years), belong to ethnic minorities, live with disabilities and may not live with parents. Structural drivers of inequity, notably China's household registration system and uneven public investment, underpin limited access to education, health and other services for disadvantaged groups. As a result, large numbers of children have development outcomes comparable with children growing up in low income countries.

## Our programme

UNICEF's social policy programme aims to influence policy to adopt a child-rights based approach.

We work with government and academic partners to build evidence of practical ways to put the most disadvantaged children first in policy and budgets. Investing the most in disadvantaged children builds more inclusive national systems for poverty reduction and social protection, promoting increased equitable access to essential social services for children.

Specific goals include improved measures to track child poverty, changes to cash transfer eligibility criteria to reach more children and address their multiple needs, and a call for greater investment in services for all children, with a focus on benefitting the most disadvantaged.

Our approach brings new knowledge and evidence into policy-making processes, along with a global dimension on what works in social policy for children.

## Child poverty

Partnerships at national and sub-national level strengthen the capacity of the Government to identify who the poorest children are, understand the magnitude and extent of child poverty and develop policies and programmes for change.

With national partners, we generate knowledge, support policy dialogue and convene networks of national experts and champions on child poverty.

Work at sub-national level supports the implementation of China's National Programme for Action for Children, which serves as a platform to support integrated policies, programmes and budgets for children. Our technical assistance supports improved co-ordination, planning, implementation, monitoring and resourcing of child poverty reduction efforts.

Joint UNICEF-Government research, events and meetings have raised the profile and awareness of child poverty with national governments, partners and public audiences. This has contributed to an increased demand for child poverty analysis and growing interest in what works to end child poverty.

## Social protection

UNICEF supports the Ministry of Civil Affairs to improve China's social protection to minimize the social and financial barriers faced by the poorest families and children when they access services.

Pilot projects and research assess how well China's social assistance programme reaches children and the impact of integrating cash transfers with other services. As a result, we have seen measurably better outcomes for some of the poorest women and children to infant, maternal and child health services and the Government has increased capacity to reach vulnerable families and children with more comprehensive, child-sensitive social protection services.

## Public financial management

UNICEF contributes to improving the adequacy, equity, effectiveness and efficiency of public investment so that spending is increased and has a greater impact on children's lives.

We provide knowledge and advisory services to strengthen the case for investing in the poorest children as being not only right but also cost effective, bringing widespread economic benefits for individuals and society.

We help government take children into account in decentralized services, with a focus on increased equitable access to essential services. We support government to plan, budget and monitor better to improve child outcomes, for example through the development of sub-national performance indicators which put children and families first.

**UNICEF supported research to determine the most essential basic public services for families and children.**

**This research was used in the list of Basic Public Services announced by the State Council in the 13th National Five Year Plan in 2017.**

**This was a step towards clarifying a universal set of entitlements to essential services for all children and will underpin the development of finance and accountability frameworks to translate entitlements into equitable access.**

