

UNICEF IN CHINA AND BEYOND



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PREFACE

UNICEF's work in China spans 40 years and is today based on the theory that if we demonstrate best practices in child development, the government will replicate them at scale across the nation. We've seen successes. Our Bare-foot Social Worker model, which started from humble beginnings in a few villages, is now in the process of being adapted in more than half a million villages in China. We've seen vast improvements in areas such as water, sanitation, hygiene and nutrition.

Yet other areas need more work. Like almost every country, we still need to do more for the poorest and do it faster. Now that we know so much more about the importance of early childhood interventions for brain development, the need to ensure early childhood development services has never been stronger.

The other change we have seen in China is the appetite of other nations to learn from China's rapid development paradigm. We are often engaged in facilitating exchanges between China and the World as South-South Cooperation grows in strength.

The UNICEF in China and Beyond publication seeks to give an overview of UNICEF's work in China and, through these experiences, provide a global perspective on the major development areas relevant to children today. This includes child-friendly spaces, poverty reduction and early childhood education. The publication presents a snapshot of the issues, challenges and accomplishments in health, education, child protection, and social policy and reform sectors in China.

While the publication is not intended to serve as a comprehensive guide to everything that UNICEF is doing for children, it serves as an introduction to the areas in which UNICEF's work with the Government of China has yielded impressive results. We hope it will be of interest both to our partners in China, and to those seeking to engage with us in South-South collaboration efforts.

We hope that by learning about UNICEF's experiences in China you will gain valuable insights from the results achieved and how we got there, and also be able to envision what is possible through a strong record of collaboration between a United Nations Agency and a Member State.

We also hope that the initiatives presented in this publication can serve as a model and starting point for the work that needs to be undertaken, not just in China, but in other countries across the globe.

Newborn Care

How UNICEF is improving newborn care



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Global Perspective

Globally, the numbers of newborn deaths are significant. Every year, 2.5 million newborns die in the first month of life. That equates to approximately 7,000 newborn deaths every day with about 1 million babies dying on the first day and close to 1 million dying within the next six days. Improving newborn survival and quality of care needs a whole system approach. This includes strengthening prenatal care, care around the time of birth, and follow-up during the first days, weeks and months of a baby's life. Strong healthcare systems with trained and well-resourced professionals can lead to significant improvements in newborn survival and development. China's approaches provide valuable experience for other countries, especially those with high neonatal mortality rates. In May 2017, a US\$8 million Funding Agreement was signed between the Government of China and UNICEF with funding from the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund (SSCAF). This agreement will support maternal, neonatal and child health cooperation between China and eight African countries.



Key Results

UNICEF's work in China has informed and influenced key policies and guidelines relating to maternal and child health, from the Safe Mother and Newborn Action Plan (2018-2020) to the National Child Survival Strategy in China. Through the Safe Neonatal Project, UNICEF aims to expand access to and improve the quality of maternal and newborn health services using national pilots in 75 facilities covering around 2,000 health providers across four provinces.

Newborn Care in China

Over the last few decades, China has experienced significant progress in child survival. The neonatal mortality rate (NMR) dropped from 33.1 per thousand live births in 1991 to 4.5 per thousand live births in 2017. During the same period, the NMR dropped by 86 per cent in rural areas and 79 per cent in urban areas. This is helping to narrow the rural-urban gap. China's under-five mortality rate (U5MR) also dropped by 85 per cent, from 61 per thousand live births in 1991 to 9 per thousand live births in 2017.

Globally, China has also made significant progress in terms of newborn care. China was able to achieve the Millennium Development Goal to reduce child mortality ahead of time in 2008. China has also already achieved the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets for newborns, under-five and maternal mortality.

Despite progress in reducing maternal and child mortality, however, these benefits have not been spread evenly across the country, especially for the rural poor, ethnic minorities and migrant populations. In 2017, rural children were two times as likely to die in the first month of life, with NMR rates at 2.2 deaths per thousand live births in eastern provinces, and 7.0 in western areas.

In partnership with the National Health Commission (NHC), UNICEF launched the Safe Neonatal Project in early 2017 in 18 counties in four provinces. The project's aim is to expand access to and improve the quality of maternal and newborn health services, with special attention to high-quality care during childbirth and in the first days and weeks of life.

UNICEF is also providing support on the adaptation and implementation of the National Child Survival Strategy and Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP) in selected demonstration areas to identify cost-effective newborn survival and development interventions.

In promoting improved maternal and child health, UNICEF has informed and influenced the formulation and updating of key national policies and guidelines. This includes the China Child Health Action Plan (2018-2020), Safe Mother and Newborn Action Plan (2018-2020), and the production of the National Guidelines on Early Essential Newborn Care led by the National Health Commission.

At the provincial level, four Child Survival Strategies have been developed based on the National Child Survival Strategy that was adopted in 2016. Within these child survival strategies, essential newborn care has been identified as a

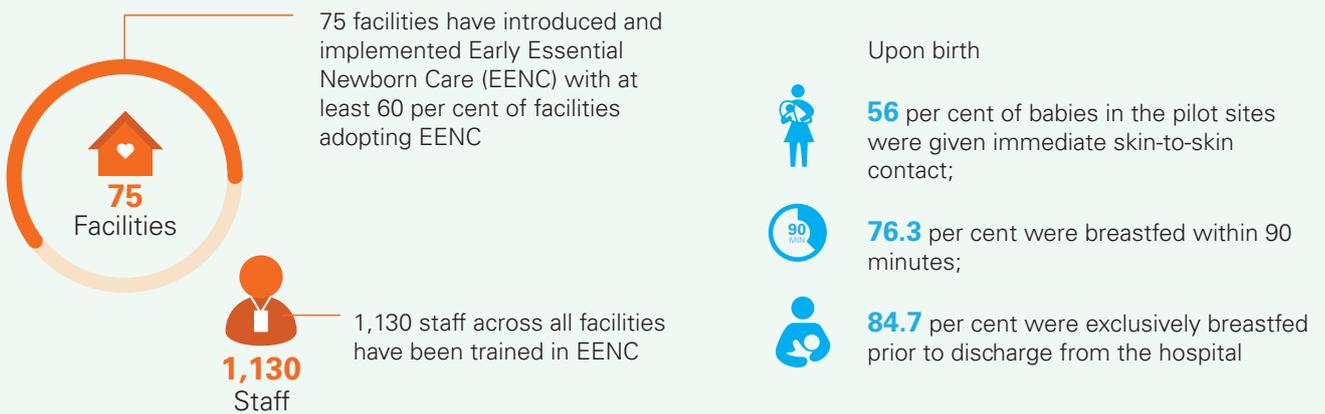
key component in addressing the largest remaining mortality burden in children under five in 18 counties in four provinces. Using local data from the newborn care pilot site in four provinces, and with the aid of the 'One Health' tool, 24 cost-effective newborn, maternal and child health interventions were identified. Through the Safe Neonatal Project, 14 key interventions will be tested. These interventions are a major part of the Early Essential Newborn Care package, and have been introduced into 75 facilities, covering around 2,000 health providers to improve care during pregnancy and childbirth. Interventions that are being promoted include:

- **Pregnancy:** corticosteroids to prevent respiratory distress syndrome in preterm babies; antibiotics for premature rupture of membranes; elimination of unnecessary inductions and caesarean section
- **Childbirth:** immediate drying and skin-to-skin contact; appropriately-timed clamping and cutting of the umbilical cord; resuscitation for non-breathing babies; elimination of unnecessary suction
- **Newborn:** initiation of early and exclusive breastfeeding, eye care and immunization

Kangaroo Mother Care will be introduced soon to save the lives of preterm and low birth weight babies. Analysis using the 'One Health' tool will help to identify financing gaps and opportunities for improving programme design and implementation.

In 2018, the prototype 'Healthy Family App' was also developed, which links with the National Health Management Information System. Once fully tested, the app will provide and improve access to stage-based health care information for pregnant women and children to make timely decisions on appropriate maternal and child health service seeking and increase access to and uptake of high impact child survival and development interventions.

Across the four pilot provinces under UNICEF's Safe Neonatal Project, the following results have been achieved:



Duan Huirong is the first woman to receive Early Essential Newborn Care in Hongsipu District of Wuzhong City in northwest China. She says she was impressed with the "exciting" skin-to-skin touch approach. "I was exhausted after the delivery, but when I touched my baby, the energy suddenly appeared."

Immunization

How UNICEF is protecting children against vaccine preventable diseases

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Global Perspective

UNICEF's work on immunization aims to reduce preventable child deaths by supporting quality immunization interventions including reaching the most vulnerable children in remote, rural and migrant communities. Since the introduction of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) in 1974, global immunization rates have increased from less than 5 per cent to 85 per cent. In 2017, UNICEF procured over 2.44 billion doses of vaccines to reach 45 per cent of the world's children under the age of 5.



Key Results

In China, UNICEF's work has informed and influenced key policy decisions around immunization, including advocating for the inclusion of inactivated poliomyelitis vaccine (IPV) second dose and Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) vaccine, and also the replacement of measles-rubella (MR) with measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) into the National Immunization Programme (NIP). UNICEF's advocacy has also seen the revision of the NIP Vaccine Procurement Policy through shifting the bidding process from provincial to national level.

Immunization in China

Between 1978 and 2007, China's Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) has expanded from vaccinations that protect against six diseases to vaccinations that protect against 15 diseases. Since the implementation of health sector reform in 2009, and in recognition of the previously inadequate attention given to immunization in the public health service package, the Government of China has increased funding for the National Immunization Programme (NIP). However, challenges remain and there are still inequities in quality of immunization services, which result in low immunization coverage and eventually lead to disease outbreaks. For example, during 2015–2016, 81 per cent of measles cases were reported by 25 per cent of counties as indicated by the National Measles Surveillance Reporting System.

National and provincial disease reporting systems have shown that provincial implementation of the immunization programme is variable. Rates of vaccine coverage are particularly low among children in geographically remote, rural, impoverished, ethnic minority or migrant communities. Disparities in vaccine coverage create dangers for all children in China as every child who contracts a vaccine-preventable disease may transmit this to other children. Funding for, and local prioritization of, the NIP still need to improve in these communities.

Although the Government of China is committed to advancing vaccination policies and programmes, China has not added new vaccines to the NIP since 2007. The most common cause of death in children under the age of 5 in China is pneumonia. The cost of treating respiratory illnesses in children under the age of 5 is high. Considering disease burden and cost of pneumonia, pneumococcal vaccine warrants special consideration for introduction into the NIP.

The domestic commercial sales price for pneumococcal vaccine is around RMB777 per dose, which is up to around 35 times more expensive than the lowest international procurement price (RMB22.5 per dose) via the UNICEF supply modality. Cost remains a prohibitive factor in including this life-saving vaccine in China's routine immunization schedule, and the World Health Organization and UNICEF stand ready to support the Government of China in introducing this vaccine.

UNICEF's Work in Immunization in China

UNICEF is working to facilitate the administration of combination vaccines through China's NIP as well as on vaccine transportation, storage and cold chain management. UNICEF is contributing to pilot projects that train local immunization management staff in administering and reporting on vaccinations and monitoring for adverse events following immunization. A social mobilization component raises awareness among minority ethnic groups on new vaccines and hepatitis B birth dose. In addition, UNICEF supports awareness-raising among migrant communities, including training for local immunization management staff on leveraging a multi-sectoral approach to registering and reporting on migrant children.

UNICEF supports national vaccination campaigns by supporting supplementary immunization activities designed to increase measles vaccination coverage, and by facilitating social mobilization activities during the annual Immunization Week to increase public awareness of routine immunization, particularly among ethnic minorities and western regions. UNICEF is also developing risk communication strategies about preventable childhood diseases and works to implement these strategies through a routine immunization programme and campaign activities.

UNICEF is also helping to expand the number and variety of vaccines offered through the NIP. We are supporting research on the disease burden of childhood pneumonia and exploring a strategic partnership with the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China to test and find innovative solutions that can make pneumococcal conjugate vaccine available and more affordable.

UNICEF's global expertise in supply and management of vaccine procurement could be leveraged to help the Government of China to procure vaccines, either through direct procurement or providing technical support on the procurement process. UNICEF can also help provide support on cost negotiation, policy change and expansion into the NIP.

UNICEF's support for China's immunization programme in previous years has contributed to impressive results. UNICEF's pilot projects have provided evidence for the refinement of policies and guidelines, including advocating for the inclusion of inactivated poliomyelitis vaccine (IPV) second dose and Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) vaccine, and also the replacement of measles-rubella (MR) with measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) into the NIP. A study on China's Immunization Costs and Economic Analysis will further provide much-needed evidence for informing policy decisions on financing.



Investing in Early Childhood Development

How UNICEF is working to ensure that every child achieves their full development potential

@UNICEF/China/2017/Xia Yong



Global Perspective

Early childhood development (ECD) is an increasingly important priority across the globe and commitments to ECD are growing. In 2000, only seven countries had national multi-sectoral ECD policies. By 2014, this number had increased to 68, 45 per cent of which were low-and middle-income countries. UNICEF's priorities in ECD aim to ensure that every child has access to high quality early childhood interventions to maximize their development potential. These interventions improve brain development and nurture a cognitive capital that is important for each individual child, and also for the future prosperity of nations.

With UNICEF support, China recently hosted a multi-sectoral delegation from Uganda and Ethiopia to visit an ECD pilot programme in Hunan Province. The delegation, which included ECD administrators, experts, practitioners and members of embassies, discussed potential support from China for Africa. This included using China's experience in community-based ECD programmes to support the development of a framework for nurturing care for children aged 0-3 years in Ethiopia and Uganda, as well as training community workers, caregivers and parents.



Key Results

China has increasingly prioritized ECD as an area for investment. UNICEF has been working in partnership with the Government of China since 2012 to promote an integrated package of ECD services, and also strengthening existing health, nutrition, education and protection systems for children aged 0-3 years. Through its pilot programme, UNICEF currently delivers ECD services in 12 provinces to children aged 0-3 years. The Government of China has included ECD for children aged 0-3 as one of its core mandates. The core strategies in the UNICEF-supported ECD programme have been successfully endorsed in the China Child Health Action Plan (2018-2020) released by the National Health Commission.

Early Childhood Development in China

In China, there are an estimated 45 million children who are less than 3 years of age – half of them live in rural areas. Supporting the development and protection of these children, especially those living in remote rural areas, is a priority for the Government of China and UNICEF. UNICEF promotes a comprehensive nurturing care framework that recognizes the importance of parenting, caregiving and protection, along with health, nutrition and education services.

Currently, children in poor rural areas are at greater risk of not reaching their full development potential. This is especially the case for those left behind in the care of grandparents or other caregivers who may have less knowledge on effective child rearing. They may focus more on children's physical needs and give less attention to social, emotional and intellectual development.

China's efforts towards establishing a multi-sectoral early childhood development (ECD) programme is built on a strong base of public health, nutrition and early childhood education services. The China National Programme of Action for Child Development (NPA) initiated by the State Council in 2011, articulates the need for integrated ECD services under health and education Ministries, while also calling for parental guidance with a target of 90 per cent for urban communities and 80 per cent for rural villages.

UNICEF has demonstrated the effectiveness of an integrated ECD package on reducing developmental delays and improving family nurturing care practices. However, more work needs to be done nationally to broaden and integrate services, increase coverage for all children and deepen quality of care.

Early childhood development is a focus of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4.2 aims for all girls and boys to have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education by 2030). To meet this target, China will need to accelerate the implementation of actions under the NPA, and deliver ECD services that are both better integrated and reach more children. China can also contribute to the global evidence base for assessing and reporting on SDG indicator 4.2.1, and establishing a common ECD index for all children.

UNICEF partners with government ministries and national non-governmental organizations to provide pilot ECD services for children aged 0 to 3 years, especially the disadvantaged. UNICEF's pilots across China aim to develop an integrated model of intervention, collect evidence, demonstrate impact and inform government policies, standards and norms.

UNICEF China and its partners are:

1. Gathering evidence for the development of ECD policies, standards and national technical service guidelines
2. Advocating for critical issues such as the adoption and implementation of a minimum universal package of ECD 0-3 interventions
3. Testing the provision of ECD services (health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, child safety) through a range of platforms (health clinics, home visits, and community-based group sessions)
4. Setting up community-based ECD service centres equipped with story books, toys, play equipment and parenting information kiosks
5. Strengthening ECD providers and caregiver knowledge and skills and piloting their role as a frontline ECD work force in China
6. Conducting outreach services to provide onsite technical support as well as follow-up and referral services for children at risk of development delays, deprivation, and children at risk of or experiencing violence
7. Integrating and leveraging community resources to build an integrated service model at community level
8. Establishing an online parenting portal and mobile App to disseminate information on best parenting practices among a wider audience
9. Supporting the government to address the supply of child care services for children under 3 years of age

UNICEF delivers ECD services for children aged 0 to 3 years through 170 pilot community-based ECD centres in 12 provinces. All 170 ECD centres will remain operational after UNICEF withdraws from the pilots with funding from local governments. Three out of the five provincial governments have already committed to scaling up the ECD model to cover all communities in their respective provinces.

At the national level, the Government of China has also included ECD for children aged 0 to 3 as one of its core mandates. The core strategies in the ECD programme have been successfully endorsed in the China Child Health Action Plan (2018-2020) released by the National Health Commission in 2018. The Early Screening Checklist (Warning Signs) for Possible Delays has been included in the national essential public health package and scaled up nationwide.

Through UNICEF's ECD pilot implemented in 12 provinces:

- **43,551** children have been reached with ECD services through **170** ECD centres 🏠
- **39,912** home visits 🏠 have been conducted reaching more than **20,000** families
- Around **27,975** children and their parents/caregivers 👨👩 have been reached through group sessions
- **38,887** children 👤 in project areas have been monitored, screened for early deficits and followed-up
- The proportion of anaemic children receiving treatment increased in project counties from 60 per cent in 2017 to **100** per cent in 2018 📊 in Pingquan County of Hebei Province
- An estimated **39,000** children in **781** villages have benefited through integrated ECD services distributed via the health system 🏥



Xiao Zeng and her 3-year-old son, Qiaoqiao play at home. Xiao Zeng is a regular visitor to the community ECD centre in Yichang City in Hubei province, which is available for free to all the residents. Xiao Zeng says the centre makes them feel included in the community and, that through the ECD centre, she has also learned how to play with her children at home.

In Hunan, Hubei and Hebei, provincial governments have committed to fully funding all the ECD centres established through the All-China Women's Federation and UNICEF project. The intention is to extend the ECD centre model to all communities in these three provinces in the coming years.

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Child-Friendly Kindergartens

How China is ensuring well-rounded development for young children



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Global Perspective

Child-friendly kindergartens deliver holistic education to children 3 to 6 years by providing them with spaces where they are safe, healthy and in a protective learning environment. Early childhood education for ages 3 to 6 years makes a huge difference in a child's development. Globally, only half of children have access to pre-primary education.



Key Results

In China, since the launch of UNICEF's project in 2015, child-friendly kindergartens have reached close to 100,000 children and trained over 5,000 teachers across five provinces and municipalities.

Child-Friendly Kindergartens

The State Council in China issued its landmark "Guiding Opinions on Pre-School Education" in 2010. This led to massive government investment in early childhood education, leading to a rapid and ambitious expansion of early childhood education opportunities in China. Three 3-year preschool education action plans have been implemented with hundreds of billions of dollars of investment from the government to improve access to and quality of preschool education. By 2018, there were an estimated 266,700 kindergartens across China providing preschool education services for 46,564,200 children, with a gross enrollment ratio of 81.7 per cent. This is a remarkable increase from 2010 when there were only 150,400 kindergartens providing services to 30 million children, with a gross enrollment ratio of 56.6 per cent.

Yet, the benefits are not equitably distributed across the population. Those that are in particular need of quality early childhood development (ECD) programs – the disadvantaged, those living in smaller and distant villages, those affected by migration and poverty – are, in many ways, excluded.

What is UNICEF doing in China?

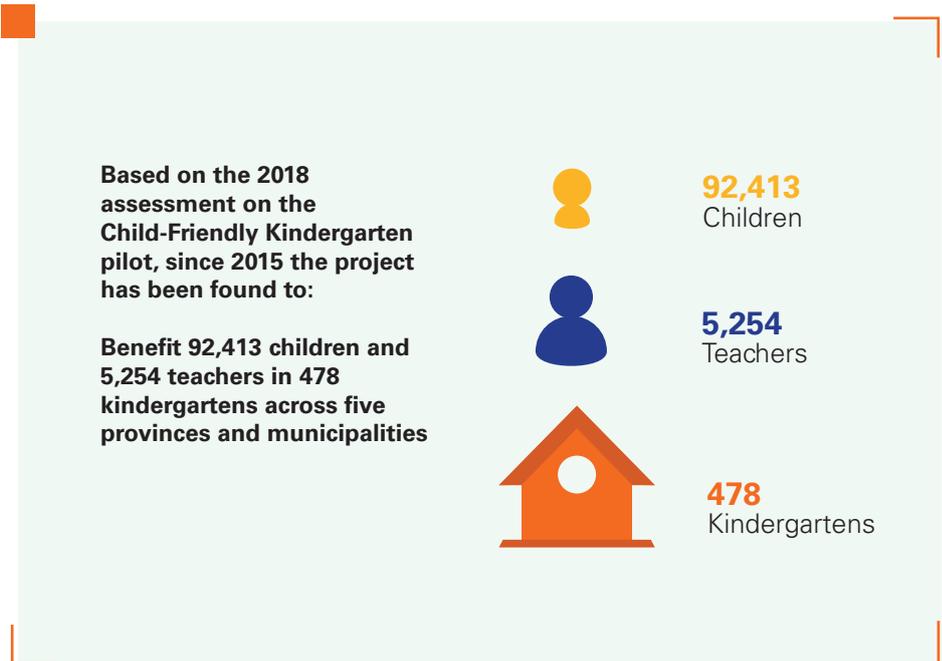
The Child-Friendly Kindergarten project seeks to improve the quality of kindergarten and preschool learning, and to promote comprehensive development of children by adopting child-centred, age-appropriate, play-based teaching-learning methods that involve games, music, stories, and extensive teacher-child interactions, as well as improving the kindergarten environment and teachers' capability. The aim of child-friendly kindergartens is to ensure children's well-rounded development including physical, cognitive development, as well as social and emotional competencies and creative thinking skills.

UNICEF works hand in hand with the Ministry of Education and its provincial and county education

bureaus to gather evidence through piloting child-friendly kindergarten approaches on what works best for the most disadvantaged children. UNICEF also supports the Ministry of Education in developing, refining and implementing national standards, strategies and guidelines to improve the quality of the kindergarten environment, teacher capacity, teaching practice and children's early learning outcomes.

The piloting of the child-friendly kindergarten model, which began in 2009 in 29 poor counties, has resulted in the development of many resources now available for national use. These resources are contributing to an 'ECD package', especially for rural kindergartens, that helps teachers improve the quality of the learning experience. It includes a set of child-friendly kindergarten curriculum guidebooks and a story-based school readiness curriculum.

The child-friendly kindergarten guidelines for children aged 3 to 6 years old consists of: education guidelines, curriculum planning guidelines, an evaluation manual and a specifically designed, story-based school readiness curriculum, supplemented by number and shape print cards for children to play with, and trainers' guidelines for school readiness curriculum.



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Children playing at a child-friendly kindergarten in the remote mountaintop village of Eyi. In 2014, the Eyi Kindergarten was selected as one of the first pilot kindergartens under the Child-Friendly Kindergarten project. Since then, Eyi Kindergarten's principal and teachers have received professional trainings, and visited kindergartens in the city to observe classes. Provincial experts and trainers also visit on a regular basis and provide suggestions. Through the project, the kindergarten has grown from a class of 11 to 60 children. In the yard, children build 'castles' with bamboo pipes, crawl through hurdles, and learn to work as a group. The project has instilled the idea of learning through games and environment. And the kindergarten itself has become a wonderland for children, where they can gain knowledge through play.



Child-Friendly Spaces

How community-based spaces are providing children and families in remote and disadvantaged communities with protection and welfare services

@UNICEF/China/2015/Xia Yong



Global Perspective

Child-friendly spaces are community-based facilities that provide children with a safe place to play, learn and develop. They have been used widely since 1999 to support children's well-being during emergencies. They provide a safe space with supervised activities, by raising awareness of the risks to children, and mobilizing communities to create a protective environment in many countries around the world.



Key Results

In recognition of the potential of the child-friendly spaces that UNICEF introduced in China, the Government of China – in the latest National Plan of Action for Children's Development (2011–2020) – called for the provision of one Children's Place (the Chinese version of the child-friendly space) in 90 per cent of all urban and rural communities.

Child Protection in China

China's emerging child protection system has received much support from the government, which has adopted laws and policies and introduced reforms to address gaps in service provision. These policies contain actions needed to prevent violence and respond to the needs of the most vulnerable. They also establish a multi-sectoral collaboration mechanism at county, township and village level. The government also increased its investments in protective services for children at village and community levels, and raised community awareness on child protection and welfare.

Initiatives have laid a foundation for a child protection system in China. Yet much room for improvement remains. And demand from the public for high quality services is high. In poor rural areas and remote communities, there is a lack of established and well-organized child protection and welfare services to support children and their families. There is a general absence of preventative measures and community-based services close to children's homes. This means that children are vulnerable to violence and exploitation and families are unable to provide support to keep children safe from harm. Disadvantaged children, including those living in poverty, children with disabilities, children affected by HIV and by migration, are often the ones most in need. But they are less likely to access services due to financial constraints, social stigma, poor access to transportation and language barriers.

Child-Friendly Spaces In China

In China, child-friendly spaces were first established by UNICEF and the National Working Committee on Children and Women to provide child protection services after the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008. A total of 58 child-friendly spaces have been established in the provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan under an emergency context.

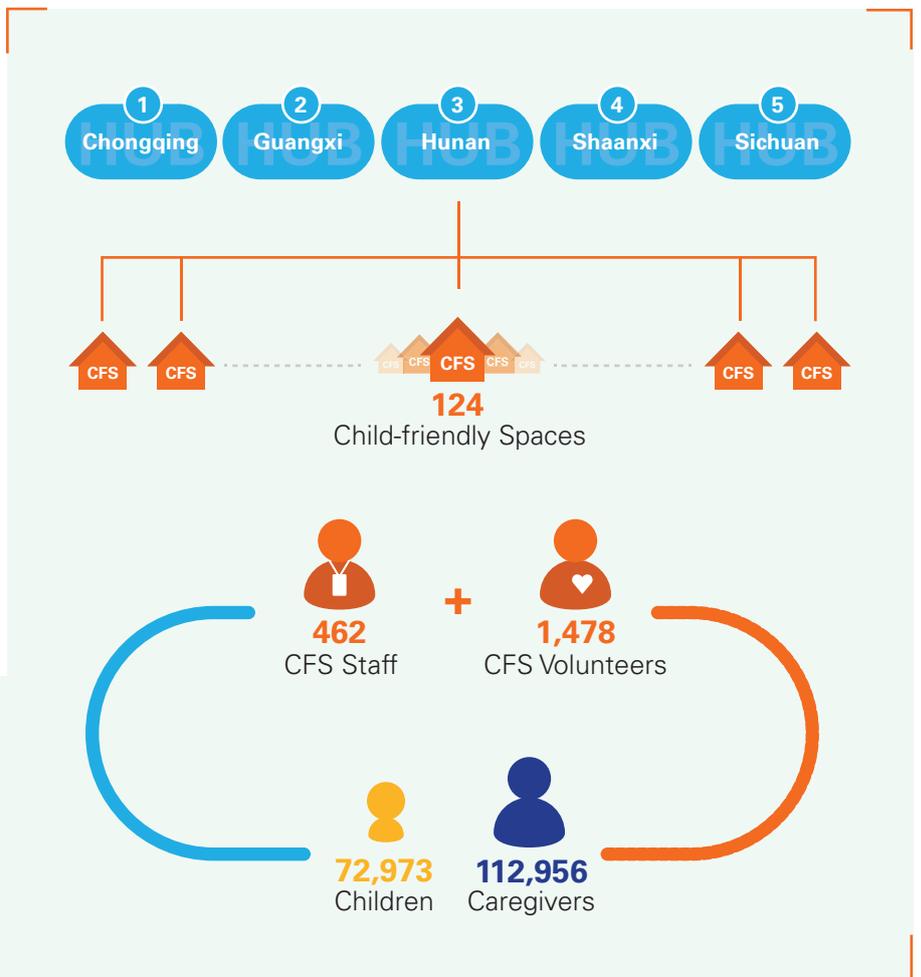
Initially intended to function in an emergency setting, the child-friendly spaces proved to be such a useful outlet for reaching vulnerable children that the Government of China and UNICEF began establishing them in a development (i.e. non-emergency) setting in nine provinces from 2012 to 2015. During this period, 21 child-friendly spaces were supported by UNICEF to function in a development capacity. Today, child-friendly spaces are being established by local governments as a permanent fixture within communities for reaching vulnerable children.

Child-friendly spaces provide a safe place for children to play, learn and develop through daily activities. This includes organized play, non-formal study, sports and much more. Child-friendly spaces also protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation through the presence of staff who are trained to recognize warning signs, development and special needs, and refer children to specific service facilities.

Child-friendly spaces provide an opportunity for communication and improving awareness and understanding on issues concerning child protection and early childhood development (ECD).

The government has set up and is operating Children's Places (or child-friendly spaces) nationally and calling for the provision of one Children's Place (the Chinese version of the child-friendly space) in 90 per cent of all urban and rural communities.

UNICEF's work has also expanded from supporting the operation of child-friendly spaces to establishing a technical support mechanism at the provincial level to ensure replication. Beginning in 2016, UNICEF has been working in collaboration with the National Working Committee on Children and Women to establish five provincial technical support hubs (Chongqing Municipality, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Hunan, Shaanxi, and Sichuan provinces) that have a total of 208 multi-disciplinary experts working with local authorities to ensure the establishment and operation of the child-friendly spaces. The hubs oversee quality assurance in addition to providing technical and supervisory advice. Through these five hubs, UNICEF is supporting 124 child-friendly spaces in 15 counties and districts to demonstrate the impact of providing quality community-based services to children at all ages, and their caregivers. UNICEF is also implementing variations on the child-friendly spaces model, including one that conducts disaster risk reduction activities and another that incorporates structured ECD activities for children up to 6 years old.



Through the **5** hubs that oversee **124** child-friendly spaces, **72,973** children and **112,956** caregivers have benefited from services delivered by **462** child-friendly spaces (full-time and part-time) staff and **1,478** volunteers.



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Ten-year-old Tingting, along with more than a dozen girls and boys, learns to make traditional Chinese masks during a painting class at a child-friendly space. Left behind by her parents at the age of three to live with her grandparents and three siblings, it hasn't been easy for Tingting to open up to others. But like all children, she loves to play. The child-friendly space in her village, which provides psychosocial support to those in need as well as organises various activities for children and their families, is her favorite place. "I remember when she first came here, Tingting seldom spoke to anyone, and she always kept her head down," says Wei, the volunteer who oversees the child-friendly space. "But now she's much happier and more confident through her interactions with other children and volunteers. She even volunteered to join the Children's Committee, helping to manage the child-friendly spaces and the activities."

"When I grow up, I want to be a volunteer [to help other children] just like you do," Tingting tells Wei.



Child-Friendly, Equitable and Quality Basic Education for All

How social and emotional learning helps to foster well-rounded children

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Global Perspective

Beyond academic learning, education should include the fostering of good health, moral values and a broad set of social and emotional skills among children. One of the key development goals of education globally is to promote the well-rounded development of children.



Key Results

With UNICEF's support the Chinese Ministry of Education has identified social and emotional learning as one of the core competencies for the future development of children. In 2018, the Ministry of Education expressed its support for more schools in China to integrate social and emotional learning as a key part of their teaching and learning practices. As part of the expansion plan for social and emotional learning, the Ministry of Education will also extend social and emotional learning to teacher education universities to strengthen the training of teachers in China.

UNICEF's Social and Emotional Learning Project in China

China is making good progress in terms of academic learning outcomes. Yet much remains to be done to improve other aspects of education, particularly the social and emotional skills for children and adolescents. This is especially true for those living in poor and rural areas and those affected by migration and urbanization. Of the 271 million children and adolescents living in China, approximately 44 million are living in poverty-stricken areas while more than half (51 per cent) or 138 million reside in rural areas and 103 million are affected by migration. Not only do these children face more academic pressure, they are also less likely to receive the care and emotional support they need from parents, guardians and schools.

The SEL project developed and piloted by UNICEF in partnership with the MOE builds on best practices from across the globe and within China to present a programme that is in line with China's educational development goals. The model applies a whole-school approach to improve the schools' ethos, management and relationship with families in order to form an enabling environment for children's cognitive, social and emotional as well as physical and health-related development. The approach places an emphasis on improving students' social and emotional competences and takes on the belief that systemic improvements across the school environment are necessary, as opposed to only focusing on one or two elements.

UNICEF works together with the Government of China and technical counterparts to:

- Develop and strengthen the SEL model based on research and best practices.
- Develop various resources for SEL in primary and junior secondary schools that respond to the social and emotional learning needs of children and adolescents

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) places an emphasis on improving students' social and emotional competences. This includes self-awareness, social-awareness, managing interpersonal relationships, effective communication and responsible decision-making. The SEL approach in schools demands systemic improvements across the school environment. It covers the following six elements: the creation of an SEL school development plan; providing capacity building for teachers and principals; developing an SEL curricula; integrating SEL into other subjects; creating a positive, inclusive and open school climate; and teaching a respectful school-family partnership.

The Government of China has acknowledged the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL) for children's educational development. In September 2016, the Ministry of Education (MOE) released a document on Chinese Children's Core Competencies for Future Development, which identified social and emotional skills among the core competencies. A year later, the State Council issued a document on Deepening the Reform of the Education System, which highlighted the need to develop students' capacities to self-manage and build relationships with others as part of the education development goals for children. While these policies have been important in raising awareness on SEL, there remains a gap between strong policy and weak implementation.

- Build capacities of teachers and principals to create an enabling learning environment in primary and junior secondary schools
- Pilot the SEL model in selected primary and secondary schools to demonstrate replicability in different settings and to generate evidence for policy advocacy
- Strengthen the system for scaling up through resource development and capacity building, assessment and evidence-based advocacy

By 2018, the SEL model completed its school-level implementation in primary schools, covering 525 rural schools in 16 counties of 11 provinces. The impact of the approach was reviewed through an assessment conducted in April 2018 in five project counties which reviewed progress against the baseline data collected in 2014 and 2015. The findings showed that children in project schools demonstrated improved self-confidence, communication, interpersonal skills and the ability to cope with challenges. Pilot schools also improved faster than non-pilot schools against several dimensions assessed, including how child-friendly the school climate was, teaching attitudes and skills, and relationships between teachers and students.

From 2019 to 2020, the project plans to extend to 125 rural junior secondary schools in the same five counties and provinces (25 per county), aiming to benefit about 80,000 adolescents and 2,500 junior secondary school teachers. The MOE has also agreed to extend SEL to teacher education universities to strengthen the training of teachers in China.



As of December 2018, all 525 pilot schools have integrated the SEL class designed by the project and applied the model's whole-school approach, thereby benefitting



291,300
Students



18,160
Teachers



525
School Principals

A girl explains her angry warning board to her Grade 1 class. "I'm covered in prickles when I get angry. It's true," she says. The class, which is learning about the topic of anger as part of a social and emotional learning programme, is under the instruction of Teacher Yang. To teach the kids to manage their feelings, Teacher Yang has suggested that the class make 'angry warning boards', which would not only help the children to remember to calm down but also remind their classmates and teachers to help them. In the following lessons, the young girl in the photo will learn that her 'prickles' can hurt her as well as the people around her. She will also learn that this can be avoided if she manages her feelings well.

Life Skills For Adolescents

How UNICEF is working to prepare adolescents for their future



@UNICEF/China/2017/Li Manwei



Global Perspective

More than 60 per cent of the world's 1.2 billion adolescents live in low-income and lower-middle-income countries. Many of them do not get to enter or complete secondary education and many more are not acquiring the skills they need to secure jobs. Because these young people represent the largest cohort of young people in history, it is crucial that we address the challenges facing them.

Adolescence, which takes place during the ages of 10 to 19 years, marks the beginning of many transitions—from childhood to adulthood, from school to the workplace and into society. Adolescents experience monumental changes in every aspect of their lives – physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially. When adolescent girls and boys are not supported and encouraged by caring adults, and when there are no policies and services attentive to their needs and capabilities, they may not fulfil their potential as adults.



Key Results

To support the adolescents of China, in 2016, the China Association for Science and Technology adopted eight skills-based modules on 21st century skills for vulnerable adolescents. Since then, UNICEF has trained over 50,000 in-school and out-of-school adolescents on life skills education.

UNICEF's Adolescent Life Skills Programme in China

The One Per Cent National Population Sample Survey in 2015 reports that there are 146 million adolescents in China (79 million males; 67 million females), the second-largest adolescent group in the world. In an era of rapid economic and labour market transformation, the Government of China recognizes that the education, health and well-being of adolescents, who will make up the next generation of workers, must be optimal. Adolescents in China are benefiting from free nine-year compulsory education as well as a dramatic increase in access to healthcare and information. But not all Chinese adolescents are benefitting equally due to the uneven development among regions.

In support of China's 2020 vision for education, UNICEF works with the Government of China to keep students in school, especially in impoverished areas, and to enhance the quality of education they receive and the critical thinking they develop. UNICEF supports programmes that offer alternative education pathways for disadvantaged and excluded adolescents. UNICEF also helps nurture girls and boys as innovators and changemakers.

A partnership with the Ministry of Education, the China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) and other technical partners is currently underway to improve the quality and relevance of teaching and learning in vocational middle schools and non-formal venues. The aim is to help adolescents acquire a set of interrelated cognitive, affective and behavioural competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making.

Interventions in the programme include: gender-sensitive life skills education for in-school and out-of-school adolescents in pilot sites across the country; improving the capacity of teachers, principals and education officers on social and emotional learning; and, developing a 21st century skills-oriented vocational education curriculum for adolescents and an interactive platform for adolescents to voice their opinions.

Since 2016, UNICEF China has also been working with CAST to develop a comprehensive training package for adolescents called "Step into the Society", which includes eight life skills-based modules, which aim to improve different dimensions of adolescent development. The modules focus on topics such as independence and self-management, interpersonal skills and communication, career development, life skills for girls, social and emotional learning, financial education, information literacy, and environmental protection and climate change. Through participatory training, the modules aim to

empower adolescents with social, civic and financial knowledge and skills so that they can make informed decisions about their own lives and key social issues that affect them. The "Step into the Society" training was implemented by CAST at national, provincial and county levels. UNICEF has also worked with the Ministry of Education to draft two life skills modules on interpersonal skills and social and emotional learning for senior secondary vocational school students. At least 10,000 adolescents take the "Step into the Society" training each year.

Since 2016, UNICEF's life skills education initiative for in-school and out-of-school adolescents is being implemented in 55 project counties in 22 pilot provinces. Through the pilot:



An estimated **50,000** adolescents have received training on **8** life skills modules.



An estimated **2,000** teachers have received trainings on life skills-based education.



An app with **2,000** users is being modified so adolescents can use it to voice their opinions and share their stories



UNICEF's life skills project for adolescents in China supports Generation Unlimited, a new partnership established to help adolescents and young people succeed. Generation Unlimited brings together public and private partners and young people to make sure that every young person aged 10 to 24 is in some form of school, learning, training or employment by 2030. It unleashes the voices of young people, creates synergies between major global actors and accelerates momentum towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Photos Courtesy of CAST

Fifteen-year-old Li Jinqiong recently won first prize in two separate painting competitions. A student in Pu'er City, Yunnan Province, she previously attended the training courses on 'Life Skills for Girls' and 'Social Emotional Learning', provided by the UNICEF-CAST Adolescent Project. In these courses, she was always responsible for painting in group tasks because of her love for painting. "When presenting my work, I felt something I had never felt before. I was timid in front of so many people. However, since all my teachers and classmates encouraged and supported me, I gradually gained courage and confidence."

"I was very excited to hear the news that I had won first prize because I used to be very introverted and didn't like to show myself. Now I've not only shown myself but have won awards," she says. "I've always loved painting but never had the courage to participate in competitions. I found my confidence and courage through the training courses. I'm quite different now from who I used to be."

Teacher Support and Service

Improving the quality of teachers and teaching in rural areas



Photo: Courtesy of Porsche China



Global Perspective

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), net enrollment rates in primary schools globally have increased from 82.3 per cent to 89.4 per cent since 1990. Yet the quality of teaching remains a challenge. The UIS reports that 387 million primary school age children and 230 million lower secondary school age adolescents are not achieving the minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. High quality education is necessary for children to develop to their full potential in order to succeed in the future. The key to this is improving the quality of teachers and teaching through teacher training and support services.



Key Results

With an impressive 99.95 per cent enrollment rate in primary education, China's focus is shifting to improving the quality of its teachers and teaching practices. Through a Rural Teacher Training and Support pilot implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE) with support from UNICEF, a total of 18,000 teachers in 990 rural schools received on-site support from other local-level programme experts composed of teaching researchers, trainers and experienced teachers. The MOE has also developed the National Rural Teacher Support Programme (2015-2020), which highlights the teacher training and support service as a key model in improving the quality of teaching and learning for rural children in China.

Quality of Education in China

China has succeeded in getting almost all children – 99.95 per cent in 2018 – enrolled in primary school. According to UNESCO, China's net enrollment rate in primary education is 10 percentage points higher than the global average level and 5 percentage points higher than that of upper-middle-income countries. The focus now, as highlighted in a series of national education reform and development plans and policies, is on quality of education for every school-aged child, particularly in poor and rural areas.

The Government of China has embarked on a series of national programmes with billions of dollars invested in teacher training. Yet children from poor and vulnerable communities continue to face inadequate, poor and uninspiring education. These children's teachers, particularly the over six million teachers reported by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in township and village primary and junior secondary schools, are in need of relevant and consistent training opportunities. They are also in need of adequate and interactive supportive guidance to achieve the goals set by the government to improve the quality of rural teachers and teaching toward 2035.

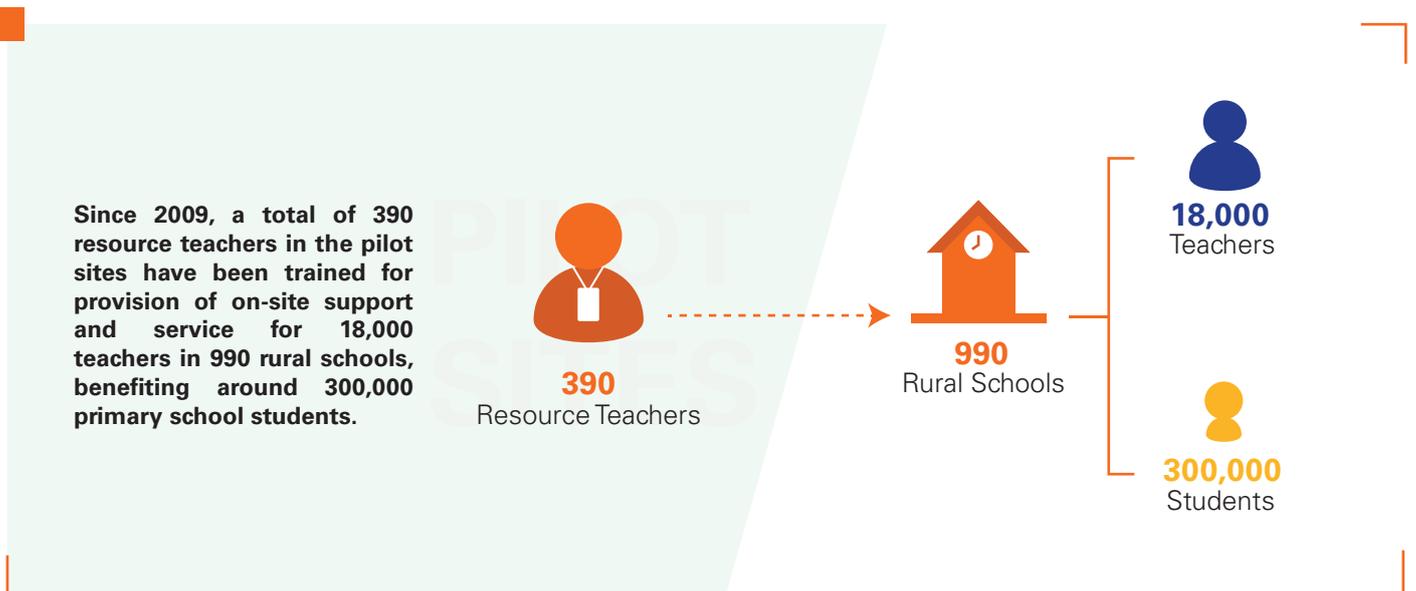
Rural Teacher Training and Support Programme

As one of the key components of the Child-Friendly School model, the rural teacher training and support programme focuses on improving teaching and learning through the provision of on-site support and supervision by resource teachers. Teams of resource teachers composed of local level teacher-researchers and trainers are set up to provide regular on-site in-service training and technical support for school teachers and head teachers. They also work to introduce innovative teaching strategies aimed at improving the quality of classroom teaching and learning.

UNICEF works together with the MOE and its provincial/county education bureaus and teacher training institutes to set up local resource teacher teams and help them shift from traditional and one-time training programmes to a dynamic and continuous model of teacher support and service (TSS) mechanism. The new model ensures that teachers can always get support and guidance from their trainer, and trainers can always provide technical support based on the teachers' actual needs.

From 2009 to 2018, the Rural Teacher Training and Support Programme has been piloted in 11 counties in seven central and western provinces. Successful implementation of the pilot encouraged local governments of 105 counties to adopt it as the key model of teacher training programme supported by government resources.

The convincing evidence and best practice generated by the programme has led the MOE to develop and implement the National Rural Teacher Support Programme (2015–2020). The programme aims to enhance the overall quality and abilities of 3.3 million rural teachers who are working in the most remote and poverty-stricken areas in China and have less opportunities to receive training. The programme emphasizes innovative training methods in accordance with the actual needs of these rural teachers, and highlights on-site support and guidance from resource teachers.



Resource teacher, Guo Meixiang visits a class taught by a teacher she has been guiding in Tengchong County, Yunnan. "Before the TSS project, when we visited schools, we just observed the lessons and gave feedback to teachers. Now, we understand that what the teachers need is not only feedback, but also [for us to understand] the real constraints and issues they have and the relevant support we can provide. For example, after we observed a lesson they delivered, we also delivered a lesson with the same content, to demonstrate how to apply the concepts and innovative methods into the practices. This means, instead of telling people to do something, we demonstrate to the class, to ask the teacher to observe what I do in the classroom and encourage them to follow and practice. This interactive and mutually learning TSS has been greatly accepted by teachers."



Barefoot Social Workers

Empowering communities to help deliver welfare services to children and families most in need

@UNICEF/China/2015/Xia Yong



Global Perspective

Reaching children with social work services is critical for providing support to the most vulnerable children. Barefoot Social Workers can assist caregivers to access public services, provide support on optimal child development, alleviate poverty, reduce discrimination, and prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and family separation.



Key Results

The Barefoot Social Workers model is helping to bridge the gap in available professional social workers by empowering community members to help deliver child welfare services. After a UNICEF-supported pilot that managed to reach 130,000 children in 120 villages, the Government of China has incorporated the Barefoot Social Workers approach into its emerging child protection system. By April 2018, 31 provinces in China had provincial action plans to scale up services by adapting the model.

Barefoot Social Workers in China

Over recent years, China has made enormous progress in raising living standards and improving child well-being. Yet millions of children remain in poverty and are unable to fully access basic social services due to lack of services at a community level.

Barefoot Social Workers in China (also known as village Child Welfare Directors) was established as part of a cooperation between the Ministry of Civil Affairs and UNICEF to help government social welfare officers reach children in need by empowering the grassroots (*i.e.* community members) to support the delivery of child welfare services.

Barefoot Social Workers are community members with a basic level of education who can demonstrate a positive attitude and commitment to children. These community members are recruited, trained and supervised to deliver child welfare services. Activities can range from identifying children in need and supporting them in seeking services, and raising community awareness on child welfare and protection including training on parenting skills.

Since 2010, UNICEF has provided financial and technical assistance to the Ministry of Civil Affairs to pilot the Barefoot Social Worker model in 120 rural villages in 12 counties across five provinces. UNICEF has also helped develop technical and evaluation guidelines and training materials that were distributed to 31 provinces and are currently available online.

Through the pilot, 12 county social welfare officers with the support of 120 barefoot social workers have managed to reach 130,000 children. This was done by closely monitoring their situation and making sure that many of those children and their families received access to much-needed child welfare services. Since late 2016, the central government has taken steps to strengthen the care and protection of children left behind in rural areas by migrant parents and other vulnerable children by incorporating the Barefoot Social Worker model to strengthen community responses. Currently, 31 provinces have provincial action plans for scaling up services by adapting the model following the central policies. Ninety-eight per cent of all Chinese villages have identified a Barefoot Social Worker-like community member for their respective village with plans to train all of them in the next two years in support services.

At the policy level, data obtained by Barefoot Social Workers on obstacles and practices related to issues such as civil registration, minimum livelihood standard, medical assistance, disability rehabilitation services and education, have helped inform local policy. Based on the collected data, local governments were able to develop a variety of supportive policies to address these issues (although cash assistance to poor children is still very limited and service is not fully publicly funded).

The results of the Barefoot Social Worker model have helped to inform national and subnational policies, including the State Council's Opinions on

Strengthening Care and Protection for Rural Left-behind Children (2016) and the State Council's Opinions on Strengthening Protection for Vulnerable Children (2016). The Ministry of Civil Affairs continues to facilitate the development of the Barefoot Social Worker model, aiming to appoint Child Welfare Directors in every village, following the creation of Notices on Launching Demonstration Activities of Protection and Care for Rural Left-Behind Children and Children in Difficult Situations in January 2018.

Under the pilot, every child's welfare and protection needs are monitored by the Barefoot Social Worker. In all the pilot sites, every child and caregiver are now able to reach out to a Barefoot Social Worker within walking distance and seek their support in accessing services.

These are some of the results of the Barefoot Social Worker pilot program:

More than **9,000** children without sufficient family care have access to a variety of social and economic support, such as guardianship arrangements, and education and health care

Nearly **83,000** vulnerable children have received social assistance

More than **5,000** children have successfully applied for civil registration

Around **50,000** children and **40,000** caregivers participate in regular group sessions to discuss topics such as how to prevent child injury and violence against children

Nearly **1,400** children with disabilities now receive entitlement to a monthly allowance



@UNICEF/China/2014/Zhou Jiefeng

Laze, an 11-year-old girl, plays with Rezuo, a Barefoot Social Worker. Laze lives with her grandmother in a rural ethnic minority village because her parents are sick and are not able to work. Since Laze's grandmother has trouble walking, Rezuo often comes to visit the family to help with household tasks and provide support. She has also helped them apply for the government's livelihood subsidy by preparing all the required documents, and made sure Laze can access rural health care, as well as a grant for children in need. Since Rezuo has come into their lives, Laze's well-being has greatly improved. She goes to school regularly and often plays with Rezuo in the village's Children's Place (or Child-Friendly Space).



Ying Yang Bao

How a complementary food supplement is making a big impact in nutrition

@UNICEF/China/2016/Xia Yong



Global Perspective

Worldwide, joint malnutrition estimates from UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank report that nearly half of all deaths in children under 5 are attributable to undernutrition. And while the prevalence of stunting (low height-for-age) has declined since 2000, 149 million children (or one in four) were reported stunted in 2018, while over 49 million suffered from wasting. Complementary food supplementation is a core public health intervention to treat malnutrition. UNICEF is working with partners globally to strengthen the nutritional intake of mothers and children through policy advocacy, capacity building, awareness raising and behaviour change communication.



Key Results

In China, Ying Yang Bao (YYB), an in-home complementary food supplement developed by Chinese scientists, is helping to reduce the incidence of anaemia and improving mental development among malnourished children. In 2008, following the Wenchuan earthquake, UNICEF provided support to the government through a pilot that provided YYB to infants and young children in eight affected counties in the provinces of Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi. UNICEF's study on the effectiveness and the feasibility of YYB helped leverage government policy.

In July 2012, the Ministry of Health and the All China Women's Federation distributed YYB to 270,000 infants and young children from six to 23 months old in 100 counties from 10 provinces. By the end of 2017, the YYB programme had covered 341 poverty counties, benefiting 5.8 million infants and young children. Beginning 2019, the government has been enacting plans to provide all 823 poverty counties in China with YYB.

Addressing Malnutrition in China

China has experienced significant progress in improving the health and nutrition of children. A combination of rapid socio-economic development and government initiatives has helped to significantly decrease the prevalence of underweight (low weight-for-age) and wasting (low weight-for-height) children. The national stunting rate reduced from 33 per cent in 1990 to 8.1 per cent in 2013. Similarly, anaemia prevalence among Chinese children under five went down from 18.8 per cent in 2002 to 10.9 per cent in 2013, with children aged 6-23 months bearing the highest risk.

However, disparities remain between urban and rural areas, and across various regions and age brackets. The nutrition of children under two years of age in poverty counties merits close attention. The 2013 National Nutrition and Health Survey showed a stunting prevalence of 18.7 per cent among children under five years of age in poor rural areas, while the prevalence of urban children was 4.3 per cent. The prevalence for children in central and western China was about 2 to 3 times higher than in eastern China. And in some poverty counties, the prevalence of anaemia among children was as high as 70 per cent.

In its efforts to counter malnutrition in China, UNICEF gathers evidence to assist policymakers in incorporating nutrition standards and tools in national level policies and surveillance systems. UNICEF also promotes changes in attitudes and behaviour related to good nutrition for individuals, families and communities.

One of the main components of UNICEF's nutrition programme in China is the promotion of a food supplement called Ying Yang Bao (YYB). Developed by Chinese scientists as an in-home complementary food supplement. YYB is a soybean powder-based product fortified with iron, zinc, calcium, Vitamin A, Vitamin D, etc. One 12-gram sachet of YYB per day provides children aged 6 to 23 months with 50 to 90 per cent of their daily recommended nutrients intake, which fills the nutrients gaps of suboptimal complementary feeding in poor rural areas.

In 2008, following the Wenchuan earthquake, UNICEF provided support to the government through a pilot that provided YYB to infants and young children in eight affected counties in the provinces of Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi. UNICEF's study has demonstrated the effectiveness and the feasibility of YYB.

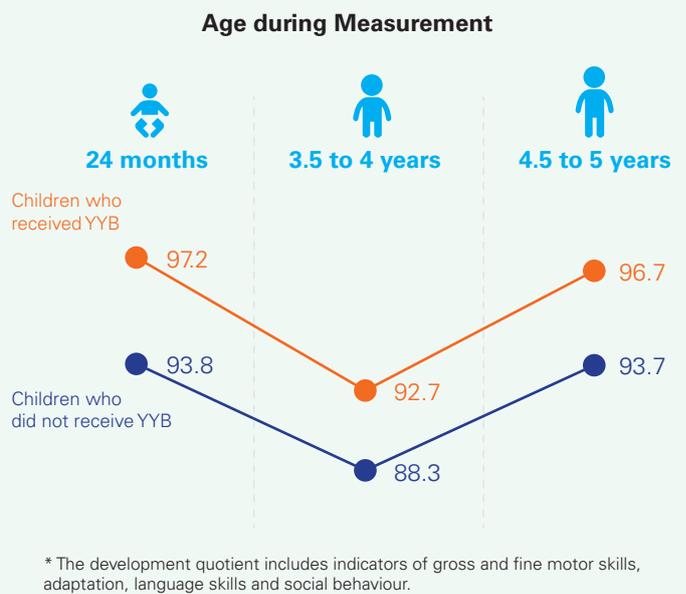
The positive impact of YYB on children's nutritional status has led to the government's commitment and continued financial support, implementation and scale up since 2012. By the end of 2017, the YYB programme had covered 341 poverty counties, benefiting 5.8 million infants and young children. Beginning 2019, the government has been enacting plans to provide all 823 poverty counties in China with YYB.

UNICEF has been complementing this effort with advocacy efforts and social mobilization to increase public awareness of YYB's nutrition value to infants and young children. The aim is to ensure greater acceptance of the product.

YYB's EFFECT ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

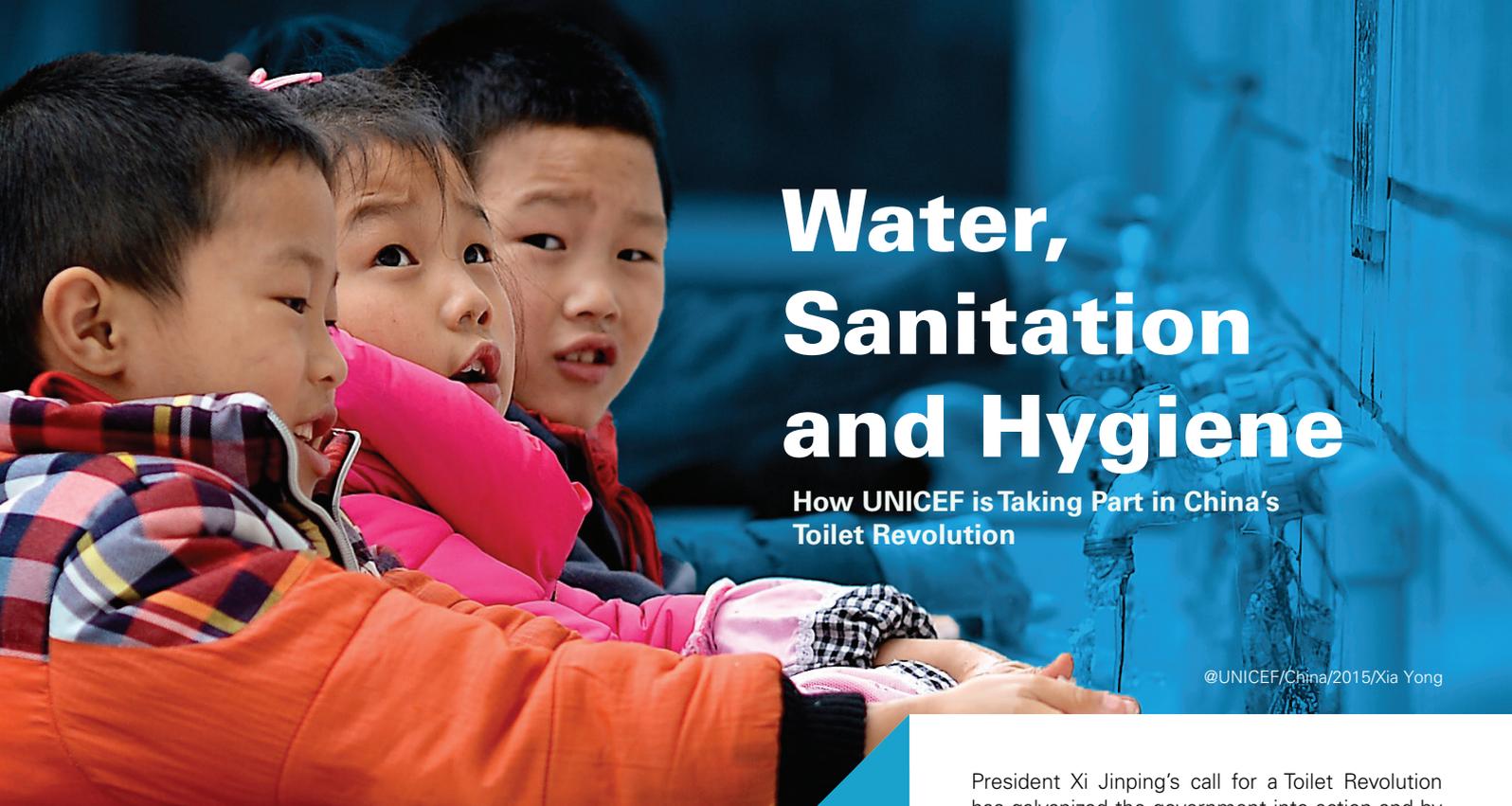
A long-term study conducted by UNICEF shows that feeding YYB to children below 24 months of age has a persistent effect on their mental development. The development quotient (DQ) was measured three times: when children were 24 months old, 3.5 to 4 years old, and 4.5 to 5 years old.

In the figure below, the DQ of a group of children who received YYB from 4 to 23 months is compared with the DQ of a similar group of children who did not receive YYB. The comparison shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean DQs of the two groups. Children who received YYB every day until they reached 24 months of age had higher DQ scores than children who did not receive YYB. The advantage of YYB on children's mental development could still be observed at 5 years of age.



©UNICEF/China/2012/Jerry Liu

Baby Han is spoon-fed by her grandmother from a bowl of porridge enriched with a packet of YYB. In Huzhu County at Qinghai Province, where the Han family resides, the prevalence of anaemia among children from 6 months to 2 years old is astonishingly high at more than 70 per cent. Local health teams have visited the Han household a number of times to explain the benefits of YYB. In little Han's family yard, a colourful poster with illustrations of YYB, a growth monitoring chart and a YYB consumption table is hung against a wall. Every day, Grandmother Han will tick on the table after feeding her granddaughter. "It is certain the baby girl will grow stronger and taller," she says with confidence.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

How UNICEF is Taking Part in China's Toilet Revolution

@UNICEF/China/2015/Xia Yong



Global Perspective

Globally, poor sanitation leads to 800 child deaths under five each day. Three million newborns and 1.2 million children suffer from sepsis. And 1 million newborn deaths are associated with maternal infection such as maternal sepsis each year globally. Although there are a range of contributing factors to these alarming statistics, clean water, sanitary toilets and good hygiene practices are essential for the survival and development of children. Ensuring "availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" is one of the targets set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Key Results

In China, UNICEF works in partnership with national and local government to ensure that every child grows up in a clean and safe environment with access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. Our work helps reduce the disparities faced by disadvantaged children by demonstrating cost-effective, innovative and integrated health, nutrition and WASH projects in 115 counties across 25 provinces.

With UNICEF's facilitation, Chinese-produced sanitation products and toilets have reached children and families in Pakistan, Mongolia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Regular learning exchanges between China and other countries also provide participants with the chance to learn about WASH experiences and innovative sanitation technologies and explore possibilities for collaboration.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in China

In China, 340 million people do not have access to basic sanitation services while an estimated 20 million continue to practice open defecation. Despite these numbers, China has achieved significant progress since 2000, achieving its Millennium Development Goal water target six years ahead of schedule and its sanitation target on time.

President Xi Jinping's call for a Toilet Revolution has galvanized the government into action and by the end of 2015, 75 per cent of China's population had access to at least basic sanitation services and 96 per cent had access to at least basic drinking water services. Yet there remains a significant disparity between urban and rural areas. Eighty-six per cent of the urban population has access to improved toilets compared to 61 per cent of people in rural areas who have access to basic sanitation. Only 42 per cent have access to safely managed sanitation services.

UNICEF's WASH Initiative

UNICEF's WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) initiative aims to ensure that every child grows up in a clean and safe environment with access to basic water and sanitation services.

By supporting the Government in its Toilet Revolution, UNICEF works in WASH by:

- helping to facilitate an enabling environment through advocacy, research and support for pilots and demonstration sites that help inform policies and national programs
- working with partners to help construct affordable latrines for households, schools and healthcare facilities and by organizing sanitation marketing sessions that encourage the sharing of suitable sanitation technologies
- helping to increase demand for and access to sanitation facilities through the promotion of handwashing and good hygiene

Efforts to facilitate an enabling environment for WASH initiatives have led to the adoption of national policies including the Rural Household Toilet Hygienic Standards, the National Subsidy for Rural Household Latrines and the National Programme on Urban and Rural Integrated Environmental Sanitation Improvement Action.

UNICEF's advocacy and technical assistance have also contributed to several policy guidelines being adopted by the government. These will help

increase access to appropriate WASH services. They include the Standards on the Service Capacity of Primary Healthcare Facilities, the Healthy Village Standards and Healthy Township Standards.

Every year, public awareness is raised at the national level and in demonstration areas through campaigns such as Global Handwashing Day and World Toilet Day whenever new facilities are constructed. UNICEF provides information, education and communication (IEC) materials for these public awareness campaigns and holds information training sessions for education and health professionals. In 2018, more than 250,000 children in six project counties participated in World Water Day, Global Handwashing Day and World Toilet Day campaigns.



WASH in Schools began as a standalone project implemented by the Ministry of Education in five provinces in 2006 under UNICEF's Child-Friendly Schools programme. The project focused on providing school children with access to safe drinking water and clean and inclusive sanitation facilities as well as providing them information on personal hygiene and healthy living. Education administrators and teachers were also trained on policies, standards and guidelines on WASH, the importance of WASH for child learning and development, and strategies for promoting healthy behaviours in schools.

Since its inception, the project has evolved to become a WASH-led Whole School Environment Improvement project, now including health, nutrition, environment and climate education and disaster management. Plans are currently underway to expand and adapt the WASH in Schools initiative in more provinces through government and other networks.

The current cycle of the WASH in Schools project has been implemented in five provinces, benefiting over 150,000 school children in 300+ schools and training over 8,000 education officials, school masters, and teachers. With a proposed scaling up planned by provincial government, this is expected to now reach an additional estimate of 300,000 children.



UNICEF also helps strengthen healthcare facilities by providing technical support to local authorities and township hospitals in the design and construction of toilets and handwashing facilities. At the national level, UNICEF has supported national health agencies in developing standards and technical guidelines for improving sanitation facilities in healthcare settings. Work is also underway for WASH standards to be integrated into government monitoring and evaluation tools nationwide.



Eliminating Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis B

How UNICEF is working towards a generation of children born free from infection

@UNICEF/China/2018/Daniel Ouwens

Eliminating Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis B

The Government of China has made tremendous efforts to reduce the transmission of HIV from mother to child. To support this programme, UNICEF worked together with the Government of China in launching the first-ever prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) pilot on HIV in 2001.

Through a rigorous approach to PMTCT, China was one of the early adopters of an integrated PMTCT (iPMTCT) programme for HIV, syphilis and HBV, building on its already existing maternal and child health (MCH) system.

Government funding in PMTCT reflects the importance the government has placed in preventing new infections. Total government investment increased from US\$3.7 million in 2004 to US\$125.2 million in 2010, and to US\$209.9 million in 2016.

Remarkable progress has been made since the initiation of PMTCT in China. Mother-to-child-transmission of HIV decreased from 34.8 per cent before the launch of the programme to 4.9 per cent in 2017. The increasing trend of congenital cases of mother-to-child transmission of syphilis has also been reversed since 2011. The incidence rate of congenital syphilis was 21.9 per 100,000 live births in 2017. Among children aged 1-4 years, the prevalence of hepatitis B antigens declined from 0.96 per cent in 2006 to 0.32 per cent in 2014.

Despite enormous progress achieved in China, the shift from "prevention" to "elimination" has not been easy. UNICEF has been a long-term and strategic partner of the National Health Commission (NHC) on maternal and child health and PMTCT.



Global Perspective

Mother-to-Child Transmission (MTCT) is an important contributor to HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B infection in children. Globally, an estimated 160,000 children are newly infected with HIV annually, and more than 350,000 pregnant mothers have adverse pregnancy outcomes, over 200,000 of which are stillbirths or neonatal deaths resulting from syphilis transmitted during pregnancy. In 2015, 1.3 per cent of children under 5 years of age were infected with the hepatitis B virus. WHO's global goals for triple elimination include (1) ≤ 50 new paediatric HIV infection per 100 000 live births, or HIV MTCT rate < 5 per cent in breastfeeding population or < 2 per cent in non-breastfeeding population; (2) ≤ 0.1 per cent prevalence of hepatitis B surface antigen among children; (3) ≤ 50 congenital syphilis cases per 100 000 live births.

In China, UNICEF together with the National Health Commission, is supporting China in the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B. This will hopefully be a global first.

In 2017, NHC and UNICEF initiated a Demonstration Project on Eliminating Mother-to-Child Transmission (EMTCT). The project aims to support China in its validation efforts to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B by 2020.

Based on the WHO validation criteria, the UNICEF pilot project focuses on four priority areas in achieving EMTCT goals:

- Management and service provision
- Data quality
- Laboratory quality assurance
- Community involvement, gender equality and human rights

At the national level, the programme aims to sustain government commitment and support the preparation of guidelines and plans to validate the elimination of the transmission of the three diseases.

In project demonstration counties, the project is developing community-based models to provide timely and quality treatment and care for children and families living with or affected by the three diseases. This model is addressing key bottlenecks to promote accessible and standardized care for children and families living with and affected by HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B.

UNICEF's role is to support the government in achieving its triple elimination goal, and set targets for 2020 across the project provinces. Through sharing of experiences and lessons learned from its pilots, the EMTCT project is guiding the development of the Validation Framework, the National EMTCT Implementation Plan, and the M&E Framework, all of which form the basis for the roll out of the national EMTCT Programme.

National and local advocacy, and project learning from six project counties in three provinces (Yunnan, Guangdong and Zhejiang) in 2018 has led to the government's commitment to scaling up EMTCT to other regions of the provinces by 2019, and achieving EMTCT targets across the whole of the provinces by 2020.

In 2018, all project counties/districts included EMTCT indicators into a performance-based evaluation mechanism for health officials. Governors or vice-governors have now taken a leading role in the EMTCT Working Group at the provincial and local levels.

By September 2018, the following results were achieved across the 109 health facilities in the six pilot sites:



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Biya, a mother of three girls, breaks into tears during a peer education session while explaining her decision to abort her second pregnancy at five months because her first daughter, diagnosed with AIDS, was sick. Biya, who had just learned she was also HIV-positive, did not want another child to suffer. She had never heard about PMTCT options when pregnant with her first two babies. With PMTCT treatment from her local hospital, Biya's third and fourth babies were delivered healthy and free of HIV.

Child Poverty And Poverty Alleviation

Improving child poverty alleviation efforts

©UNICEF/China/2018/Ma Yuyuan



Global Perspective

Globally, 385 million children live in extreme poverty. UNICEF works with governments around the world to advise and implement evidence-based interventions to alleviate poverty. In China, UNICEF is engaged in research, analysis and evidence-based policy advocacy that prioritizes children in China's poverty reduction and development strategies. This work has led to an increased policy focus on the most disadvantaged children in China.

Poverty Alleviation in China

In 2007, UNICEF China and the State Council's Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development (LGOP) established a partnership to work together to eradicate child poverty in all its forms. Under this partnership, UNICEF and LGOP agreed to bring together local and global expertise to inform how child poverty is targeted as part of China's national poverty alleviation efforts.

China's remarkable achievements in poverty reduction mean that the incidence of monetary poverty, including child monetary poverty, is very low in the country. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the rural poverty rate was 3.1 per cent, and the child poverty rate was 3.9 per cent in 2017. These very low incidence rates are the result of a prolonged period of sustained poverty reduction, during which the rural poverty rate fell from nearly 50 per cent in 2000 to its current level, and the percentage of poor rural children more than halved between 2014 and 2017.

However, child poverty is still a pressing concern: poverty continues to affect millions of children in China, and it affects children at a higher rate than adults. Remaining poverty is hard to address and eradication hard to sustain. According to UNICEF China estimates, around eight million rural children lived below the official poverty line in 2017. Further, many more children live just above the poverty line, and/or experience multiple deprivations that prevent their rights from being fully realized, stopping them from developing to their full potential and compromising their futures.

The UNICEF China/LGOP partnership has made child poverty a priority in China's policy agenda. The two agencies worked together to develop a conceptual framework and situation analysis of child poverty in China, which was completed in 2009. The situation analysis focused on two provinces in the Western and Central regions of China, Gansu and Hubei, which had been designated by the Government of China as priority areas for poverty reduction. In parallel, a series of national, regional and provincial workshops and meetings (including the first-ever National Child Poverty and Development Forum) were held, addressing the difference between child and adult poverty, the multiple dimensions of child poverty, and the main social protection measures to address child poverty. These activities contributed to child poverty being included for the first time in the Ten-Year National Rural Poverty Reduction Strategy (2011–2020).

This surge in attention to child poverty also led China to more deeply engage in the policy and research debate on child poverty on the global stage, with a focus on South-South cooperation, particularly between China and sub-Saharan Africa. In November 2012, UNICEF and LGOP hosted an International Symposium on Child Poverty and Development in Beijing, China. This symposium brought together noted development thinkers and senior civil servants from poverty alleviation and social protection agencies in countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas to share experiences, provoke discussion, and inspire action on child poverty.

The partnership also delivered policy action on child poverty at the provincial level. At the request of the Hubei Provincial Government, UNICEF and LGOP focused efforts on assisting Hubei to carry out more in-depth assessment of multidimensional child poverty in four "poverty block" or poverty priority areas within the province using the then new MODA (Multiple and Overlapping Deprivations Analysis) methodology, and on translating the resulting insights into policy. After months of fieldwork, analysis, and validation of the results, UNICEF supported the provincial poverty alleviation office and provincial Women's Federation in a process of several rounds of multi-stakeholder consultations using the results of the MODA study. This formed the basis for drafting the Hubei provincial-level Child Poverty Alleviation Plan (2013–2016), the first ever in China.

UNICEF's work with the Hubei Provincial Government was also instrumental in leveraging private sector funds to provide additional support to child poverty alleviation efforts. With the assistance of UNICEF, the Hubei Provincial Government developed a proposal for a series of child poverty alleviation projects, which was submitted to the Bestseller Foundation (a Corporate Foundation). This proposal resulted in a 3-year, 40 million RMB investment by the Bestseller Foundation on child poverty alleviation efforts in the province.

UNICEF and LGOP continue their efforts to prioritize child poverty and services for children in the government's post-2020 poverty reduction strategy, the follow-up to the 2011–2020 Poverty Reduction Strategy.

This strong collaboration spanning over a decade shows UNICEF China and the government's commitment to realizing the rights of every child, and showcases the potential for UNICEF and the Government of China to work together to end poverty in China and the Belt and Road.



Basic Public Services

Improving access to basic public services for children

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Global Perspective

Basic public services in public health, education, child welfare and social protection are essential for children to develop to their full potential. Globally, UNICEF works in partnership with governments to ensure these services are fully included in policy commitments and budgets, and to identify cost-effective and equitable ways to deliver them.



Key Results

In China, UNICEF has collaborated with ministries on research to inform Basic Public Services development plans and governance and improving investment. Between 2009 and 2017, the share of government expenditure on three Basic Public Services have increased steadily – from 29 per cent of total government expenditure to 34 per cent of total government expenditure.

Basic Public Services

UNICEF has partnered with the National Development and Reform Commission of China (NDRC) and the Ministry of Finance of China (MOF) for over a decade to expand access to basic public services (BPS) for every child in China. Basic public services for children include maternal and child health and nutrition, medical insurance, water and sanitation, education and early child development, child welfare and protection, and social protection. Enabling children to access these essential services allows them to develop to their full potential.

UNICEF, NDRC and MOF work in partnership to ensure that the services children need are in place, are of good quality, and are accessible to all. The joint work of UNICEF and NDRC focuses on ensuring national plans for BPS include the services children need, are well designed, and are effectively implemented, monitored and evaluated. The cooperation between UNICEF and MOF is geared towards ensuring investment in specific services critical for children to increase government funding for specific BPS areas, as well as to help improve efficiency in the allocation of resources in BPS.

UNICEF and the Government of China have expanded the services crucial for children and improved the efficiency and equity in their delivery. The work done by UNICEF and the two ministries has resulted in tangible policy changes in favor of children, for example:

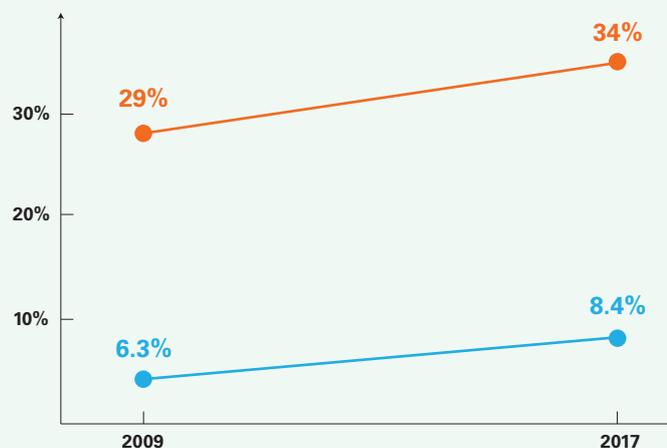
- In 2008, UNICEF supported NDRC with technical assistance for the social development components of a three-year National Master Plan for Restoration and Reconstruction.

- In 2010, in a decision informed by joint research between MOF and UNICEF, the universal living allowance benefit was increased to improve welfare to orphans in China.
- In 2013, the Social Development Department of the NDRC, with UNICEF support, included measures to support the integration of rural migrants and their children in their host cities in the National New Urbanization Plan (2014-2020).
- In 2014, UNICEF-NDRC research on the disparities in access to BPS between poverty-stricken areas and the rest of the country formed the basis for the “National Plan for the Development of Children in Impoverished Areas (2014-2020).”
- In 2015, UNICEF supported MOF in conducting a review of government financing on child protection and welfare service provision. This eventually led to increased public funding for child protection services at community levels. This also led to the transformation of street children protection centres into child protection centres, to extend outreach services to children at risk.
- In 2017, NDRC invited UNICEF to provide inputs to background papers on social mobility in preparation for the 19th Chinese Communist Party (CPC) Congress. This resulted in a recommendation to incorporate the discussion on child nutrition and the importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) into the 19th CPC Congress Cadre Learning Material.
- In 2018, a UNICEF-NDRC joint report on developing a comprehensive policy framework for ECD received the attention of Premier Li Keqiang and then Vice Premier Liu Yandong, who issued instructions to further explore the subject and to formulate national ECD policies for children 0 to 3 years old. This, in turn, led to the need for strengthening public infrastructure for ECD in rural areas being highlighted in the State Council’s Guiding Opinions on Maintaining Efforts to Remedy Shortcomings in Infrastructure.
- In 2019, also as result of a collaborative research work between UNICEF and NDRC, multiple ministries led by NDRC, jointly with MOF, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Civil Affairs and other departments, issued a national policy of promoting rural migrant families and their children’s access to kindergartens, education and social protection programmes in urban settings.
- From 2010 onwards, UNICEF provided technical support to the development and implementation of the BPS within the 12th, 13th and 14th Five-Year Plans. These plans reflect the government’s understanding of which services are considered “essential” for the well-being of the Chinese people and for the social development of China, and outlines the responsibilities of all levels of government in the provision, expansion, improvement, regulation and equalization of such services over each five-year period. The National BPS List, published with UNICEF technical assistance, for the first time explicitly included support for vulnerable children and children left behind in rural areas by migrant parents.

UNICEF’s partnership with Chinese ministries continues to deliver results and expand the policy agenda to include emergent policy areas and services crucial for children, such as ECD. UNICEF’s mutually supportive collaboration with MOF and NDRC is a model for how research and evidence can be leveraged to generate gradual but steady policy changes for children, in China and beyond.

Between 2009 and 2017, the share of government expenditure on three BPS (Education, Health and Social Security and Employment) increased steadily – from 29 per cent of total government expenditure (or 6.3 per cent of GDP) to 34 per cent of total government expenditure (or 8.4 per cent of GDP).

- % of GDP (gross domestic product)
- % of total government expenditure



Sources: Ministry of Finance, Finance Yearbook of China, 2008 (2002–2007 data); National Bureau of Statistics, China Statistical Yearbook, 2009–2018 (2008–2017 data)



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