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for every child

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Building on Progress for Children in Uganda



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FOREWORD

A Letter from the UNICEF Country Representative

A Year of Progress and a Turning Point for Children

As I look back on 2025, I feel both pride in what we have collectively achieved for children in Uganda and a clear sense of the work that still lies ahead. This has been a year of meaningful progress but also a year of transition.

UNICEF Uganda's advocacy continued to place the rights of children at the centre of national priorities and strategic dialogue. As the United Nations agency mandated to uphold children's rights, UNICEF's work is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and grounded in a commitment to ensure that every child can survive, develop, be protected and participate fully in society.

Across the country, children benefited from expanded immunization, stronger maternal and newborn care, improved nutrition services and better access to learning. Child protection systems were reinforced, and social protection programmes expanded their reach to those in most need. These gains were made possible by the leadership of government and the dedication of frontline workers, partners and communities who continue to place children at the centre of their efforts, along with the generous contributions of development partners.

At the same time, the context remains demanding. Too many children continue to grow up in poverty. Malnutrition and learning gaps persist. Climate shocks and disease outbreaks strain families and public services. Uganda's continued welcome to refugees reflects remarkable solidarity, yet it also places additional pressure on districts that are already stretched. In my visits across the country, I have seen both the resilience of communities and the urgency of addressing these challenges more decisively.

In 2025 we worked to balance immediate response with long-term reform. Children's well-being depends on services that work together. Health, nutrition, education, water and protection all shape whether a child can grow, learn and thrive. UNICEF therefore continued strengthening integrated approaches that connect these systems so that children and families get access to the social services they are entitled to.

While life-saving services continued at scale, we also invested in strengthening the systems that sustain them. National policies advanced and public financing for children increased, although continued efforts will be needed to sustain and expand these gains. Social service systems were further professionalized, and data and digital platforms were improved to support better planning, implementation and accountability. Humanitarian responses were designed not only to meet urgent needs, but also to build resilience for the future.

I am convinced that lasting progress depends on strong national institutions. Services must reach children today, but they must also endure beyond projects and funding cycles.

The year 2025 marked the closing phase of our past Country Programme and the transition to our new Country Programme 2026–2030, Uganda's final programme cycle before the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals deadline. The new UNICEF Uganda Country Programme is closely aligned with Uganda's Fourth National Development Plan and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2026–2030, which together set the strategic direction for national development and United Nations system support in the coming years.

As Uganda prepares to implement the new Country Programme, UNICEF will continue strengthening national systems and partnerships to ensure that children everywhere benefit from resilient health, education, protection and social services. In the years ahead, UNICEF will continue to advocate for accelerated action to address key challenges facing children, for example addressing teenage pregnancies and malnutrition, expanding access to quality early childhood services and strengthening sustainable financing for the social services that children depend on.

The next five years will be critical. We must accelerate progress for children who remain excluded, particularly those living in poverty, children with disabilities, adolescent girls and children in climate-affected and refugee-hosting communities. Guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF will continue working with the government and partners to ensure that every child can realize their rights to survival, development, protection and participation.

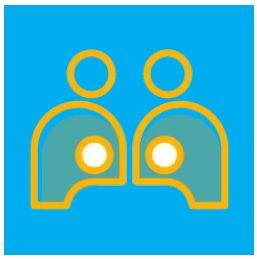
With continued partnership, disciplined focus and sustained investment, I believe Uganda can build on the foundations strengthened in 2025 and move closer to a future in which every child has the opportunity not only to survive, but to learn, to be protected and to thrive. Together with the government, partners and communities, UNICEF remains committed to advancing the rights and well-being of every child across the country.

Dr. Robin Nandy,
UNICEF Country Representative

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS
& UNICEF'S CONTRIBUTION








In 2025 UNICEF Uganda continued to prioritize high-impact programmes and life-saving interventions and stepped up partnerships to leverage support for children. Close to six million children received direct support through programmes delivered by UNICEF in both humanitarian and development contexts, and more than 11 million were reached by leveraging partners' services in health, education, nutrition, child protection, social protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), with key results listed below.

High-impact results contributed towards the National Development Plan (NDP) III goals of improving the quality of life of children in Uganda, enhancing the social well-being of the population, strengthening the role of the state in development and ensuring greater engagement and ensure greater engagement of the private sector.

Uganda country office continued to strategically invest core resources to support policy reform and the development and update of key national policies. UNICEF Uganda's advocacy placed the rights of children at the heart of national priorities and strategic dialogue, and technical support contributed to an improved quality of social service delivery for children. Important service delivery models in early childhood development, health care and cash-plus programmes were piloted to provide practical evidence supporting national scale-up. The country office also supported large-scale procurement services in nutrition and health and invested in climate-resilient actions. Social and behaviour change interventions reached over 8.2 million people through mass media campaigns and more than two million women, girls and boys benefited from gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response services. UNICEF Uganda's humanitarian action responded swiftly to public health emergencies and food insecurity and continued to support refugee operations.



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SOCIAL POLICY & SOCIAL PROTECTION

Putting children at the centre of budgets

Aber Blessing, a 9-year-old learner with an eye condition, attends class at Kitgum Matidi Primary School. With support from the G4DU Programme, she is able to learn in an inclusive, encouraging environment – smiling her way through lessons as teachers ensure she receives the attention and support she needs to thrive.

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Social Policy in 2025 – At a Glance

Increased budget allocations for education, health and social protection sectors **(to 13.9% from 12.8%),** protecting essential services for children


©UNICEF Uganda/UNI1716411/Mugisha

National Child Disability Assistance Programme adopted and **US$4.3 million** allocated from national budget **to support children with severe disabilities**

US$324.8 million mobilized through the Global Partnership **for Education for the Uganda Learning Acceleration Program** (ULEARN)


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12,217 out-of-school **children returned to education** through cash-plus support

35,520 vulnerable children received **education grants**

5,068 adolescent girls received **cash transfers** to remain in school

The strength of Uganda's public finances continued to shape the government's ability to invest in the education, health and protection services that children depend on. In 2025 the country's fiscal space remained constrained. Debt servicing absorbed nearly half of domestic revenues, leaving limited room for social investment within the country. The international development financing landscape experienced unprecedented volatility with sharp reductions in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) resulting in significant funding cuts for Uganda.

Protecting financing for children

In this challenging environment, UNICEF continued to work with government partners to ensure children's needs remained at the core of national budget decisions. As a result, the combined share of education, health and social protection sectors increased from 12.8 per cent to 13.9 per cent of the national budget, helping sustain the delivery of essential services that children depend on. Efforts to strengthen domestic financing also advanced through the local revenue enhancement model implemented in six districts to help expand fiscal space for local services benefiting children, including investments in school furniture and support for children with disabilities.

Strengthening evidence and data for decision-making

Better data helped place children at the centre of national planning. UNICEF supported the inclusion of monetary child poverty indicators in the 2023/2024 Uganda National Household Survey, providing policymakers with clearer insight into the scale and distribution of child poverty. In addition, UNICEF supported the development of a National Action Plan to End Child Poverty, strengthening the evidence base for policies aimed at reducing child poverty nationwide.

UNICEF also supported the Uganda Bureau of Statistics in preparing the country's first Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and producing thematic reports on children, further strengthening the national evidence base for policies and investments that affect children.

Additionally, UNICEF supported improvements in national data systems that guide investments for children. Uganda's first Education Statistical Abstract since 2017 was published, and the Education Management Information System will introduce a Child Functioning Module in 2026 to improve data on children with disabilities.

Expanding social protection systems

Progress was made in expanding social protection systems for vulnerable families. After two years of UNICEF's technical and financial support for the design of the National Child Disability Assistance Programme, the government completed the design phase in 2025, with a commitment to begin investing in its implementation in 2026. The programme aims to expand financial support and complementary services for families raising children with disabilities and is expected to help them meet essential needs and access essential services. The government has since approved US$4.3 million in the 2026/27 national budget to begin implementation.



The programme aims to expand financial support and complementary services for families raising children with disabilities and is expected to help them meet essential needs and access essential services.

Alongside these system reforms, UNICEF-supported programmes helped vulnerable children receive education. Cash programmes in northern Uganda, West Nile and refugee-hosting and urban settlements helped 12,217 out-of-school children and adolescents, particularly girls, return to school. In Kampala, the Girls Empowering Girls urban social



Tabisa's daughter has lived with a physical disability since the age of six. The wheel chairs were provided as part of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities activities after an assessment supported by UNICEF of those affected in Kayunga district. Children such as Tabisa's daughter, suffer from stigma attached to disabilities in the country and as a result lose out on basic rights such as education.

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protection programme supported 4,150 adolescent girls, demonstrating strong learning gains that prompted the Kampala Capital City Authority to adopt the model in its five-year strategy.

Additional cash-plus education support helped remove financial barriers to schooling for the most vulnerable. More than 5,000 adolescent girls supported through the European Union (EU)-funded Gender for Development Uganda (G4DU) programme received cash transfers to help cover school and other hidden education costs, alongside integrated interventions such as improvements in school water and sanitation facilities, teacher training and disability-inclusive support. A further 35,520 vulnerable children and adolescents received grants to complement universal primary education funding, improving access to education in 140 primary schools. These initiatives are helping generate evidence on how targeted financial support can strengthen school participation among vulnerable children and inform the scale-up of social protection measures for education.

A total of 3,169 out-of-school adolescents and young people from refugee and host communities, including teenage mothers, received cash assistance, mentorship and life skills development support, and were linked to formal and non-formal education and livelihood opportunities. As a result, they were able to meet their immediate needs, strengthen their resilience and self-reliance and improve their prospects for sustainable livelihoods, continued learning and a more productive future.

As part of shock-responsive social protection programming during the mpox outbreak, 1,300 households received cash assistance to address their immediate needs and mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the crisis. Post-distribution monitoring findings indicated that the assistance enabled households to meet essential needs, including food, health care and other basic services, while reducing negative coping mechanisms and strengthening their resilience to withstand and recover from the shock. The cash support contributed to improved household well-being, enhanced dignity and increased government capacity to manage future epidemiological shocks.

Looking ahead, UNICEF will continue working with the government and partners to strengthen financing for children and expand social protection systems. Strengthening national data systems, improving district planning and sustaining investments in social services will be critical to reach the most vulnerable children and ensure that every child in Uganda can survive, learn and thrive.

HUMAN INTEREST

BREAKING THE CYCLE

How Girls Empowering Girls cash kept them in school



©UNICEF Uganda/UNI919619/Wamala

> If she could speak directly to the donors, Gift would keep it simple. "Some of us would not be here without your support," she says. "We would not be this confident. We would not believe we are becoming something better."

When nineteen-year-old Masiga Gift Naome speaks about her past, the sad memories overwhelm her. Her voice falters. Tears roll down her cheeks. The hardest year, she says, was 2017, the year her father died and left seven children behind, and a mother who was grieving, overwhelmed, and unsure how to keep the family afloat.

Life did not simply change. It collapsed.

Each day followed the same routine. Gift would wake up early, sweep the compound, wash what needed washing, and sit for hours with nothing to do. When she could, she fried and sold 'daddies', to mean small snacks, to earn a little money for food or school supplies. "That life was very hard for me," she says. "We were struggling to exist."

In Kampala's low-income neighborhoods, that cliff edge is familiar. A death in the family or a lost job can tilt a home from 'managing' into hunger, debt, and interrupted schooling.

Then, in 2019, something shifted.

Gift was selected to join the pilot of the 'Girls Empowering Girls' (GEG) programme (Cohort 1), an urban social protection programme launched by the Government of Uganda led by Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), in partnership with UNICEF and with funding from the Government of Belgium.

"The positive change came when I joined Girls Empowering Girls," she says. "I started going for mentorship sessions. I started getting some funds. Slowly, life started moving."

The change was not instant. It came in small steps, repeated over months. Through regular mentorship sessions, Gift began to say what had happened to her family and what it meant to be a girl navigating adolescence without a safety net. She learned about her health, her rights, and how to protect herself from violence. "They taught us that we can exist in society without violence," she says. "That we can talk. That we matter."

The programme also provided cash support, quarterly remittances of UShs.160,000 (US$44.2) for primary school pupils and UShs.240,000 (US$69.4) for secondary school students. Gift used part of it to buy school requirements and part to expand the small shop business she ran with her mother. "I invested it in baking and the shop," she explains. "That is how I managed to continue with life up to here."

Read the the full story: https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/breaking-cycle-0



HEALTH & NUTRITION

Promoting child survival under sustained pressure

One year old Aguer Deng being measured using a MUAC tape – the (Mid upper arm circumference tape) often used on both children and pregnant mothers to help identify cases of malnutrition.

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Health in 2025 – At a Glance

Malaria vaccine introduced in 105 districts, expanding protection against one of the leading causes of child mortality


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Eight public health emergencies managed, including Ebola and mpox

Digital community health information systems integrated with national surveillance platforms


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Government budget for **oxygen services increased tenfold** through national scale-up support

215,000 people vaccinated against mpox

68,000 children treated for severe acute malnutrition



Baby Shadrak (1.5 years) who was experiencing breathing difficulties and in distress was brought to Kayunga Regional Referral Hospital. Diagnosed with severe pneumonia, Shadrack was treated with antibiotics and oxygen treatment which the hospital now has in constant supply thanks to the installation of a Pressure Swing Absorption oxygen plant which was funded by UNICEF.

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In 2025, Uganda's health system faced significant pressure, with eight public health emergencies, including Ebola and mpox, testing national response capacity. Despite fiscal constraints and global reductions in development assistance, essential services for mothers and children continued nationwide, sustaining hard-won gains in child survival.

While national coverage across many antigens has improved, specific challenges with antigens that cross over to the second year of life, such as measles-rubella, have persisted. The number of zero-dose children, who have not received any basic vaccines, remains high. This year the malaria vaccine was introduced across 105 high-burden districts, offering new protection to infants against one of the leading causes of child mortality. Similarly, a sub-national yellow fever vaccination campaign in 2025 provided protection to millions of people.

Emergency preparedness and response systems were strengthened. With support from UNICEF, village health teams conducted household outreach and risk communication campaigns that reached 12.6 million people with mpox and Ebola messages. In response to mpox, vaccination campaigns were launched and health workers and community teams received infection prevention training. Schools across the country were also sensitized to keep children learning safely during outbreaks. UNICEF supported the strengthening of infection prevention and control (IPC) measures in 585 health facilities through WASH supplies, staff training and reinforcing standard IPC protocols, helping protect children and families from future outbreaks.

Nutrition services continued to protect vulnerable children despite global supply chain volatility. With UNICEF support, children with severe acute malnutrition received life-saving treatment, while the government sustained its annual contribution for ready-to-use therapeutic food procurement. Vitamin A supplementation campaigns also continued nationwide, helping young children to boost their immunity to childhood infections.

A key step forward was the development of a multi-sectoral nutrition action plan with the Office of the Prime Minister. By bringing together ministries responsible for food security, health, WASH, education and social protection, the plan strengthens coordinated action to prevent child malnutrition. The plan also promotes healthier diets for children through behaviour change initiatives that support parents and communities to adopt improved nutrition practices.

Efforts to strengthen nutrition systems also advanced at the local level. With UNICEF support, district nutrition coordination committees strengthened joint action across sectors. Two per cent of the districts' discretionary development equalization grant (DDEG) allocation from the

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is channelled to district nutrition committees to support nutrition programmes. School-based platforms also expanded access to iron supplementation for adolescents.



Nutrition services continued to protect vulnerable children despite global supply chain volatility. With UNICEF support, children with severe acute malnutrition received life-saving treatment...

HIV services for mothers and children remained stable despite significant reductions in ODA. Prevention of mother-to-child transmission coverage remained high, ensuring that more babies are born HIV-free. Adolescents and women living with HIV also continued receiving life-saving treatment with UNICEF support.

In partnership with cultural institutions, UNICEF is transforming harmful norms that threaten adolescent health. In the Busoga Kingdom, more than 400 cultural leaders across 11 chiefdoms and 157 sub-counties spearheaded community action under the King's Abasaadha-Ne'Mpango campaign to prevent teenage pregnancy and promote healthy behaviours. Uniquely, the initiative placed boys and young men at the centre, engaging them through peer groups, mentorship and life skills training to champion positive masculinity and respect for girls' rights, particularly by challenging gender stereotypes and reinforcing shared responsibility for adolescent well-being and overall family health.

Progress was also made in strengthening health systems that support children's care. Community health workers and village health teams continued to play a vital role in delivering primary health services and connecting families to care at the community level. UNICEF supported national priorities under the reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) framework and the Accelerated Newborn Implementation Plan, shaping services for mothers and newborns.

Digital health platforms achieved better integration across national systems, including the integration of the Electronic Community Health Information System (eCHIS) with the Second District Health Information Software (DHIS2). Oxygen-as-a-Service installations expanded reliable oxygen access for children in respiratory distress. UNICEF also supported the development of a national oxygen scale-up road map, contributing to a tenfold increase in the government budget for oxygen services, from UGX 1.3 billion to UGX 10 billion.

Health and community data systems were also more closely linked. The eCHIS improved integration with the national DHIS2 platform, improving the tracking of children who have missed routine vaccinations. Work also began on the Child Well-being Management Information System, which will bring together data from multiple sectors to strengthen monitoring of child protection cases.

Together, these investments are enabling Uganda's health system to deliver more integrated services for women, children and adolescents. Expanded digital health platforms, stronger community health networks and improved surveillance systems are enabling health authorities to detect risks earlier and respond more rapidly to disease outbreaks and nutrition emergencies.

Continued partnership will be essential to sustain recent gains and accelerate progress towards universal health coverage for every child in Uganda. UNICEF will continue supporting the government to strengthen integrated primary health care and implement new maternal and newborn health guidelines so that mothers, babies and children across the country can access the quality care they need to survive and thrive.

HUMAN INTEREST

HEALTH CENTRES

Solar electrification boosts Uganda's health centres



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> Sister Adiambo is also praying that with the electricity supply guaranteed, investments will soon be made to ensure the maternity ward gets running water. "That will make the health centre actually healthy."

Thanks to GAVI, the Health Facility Solar Electrification intervention being implemented with UNICEF and the Ministry of Health will benefit 250 health centres across Uganda by being fitted with solar electricity installations

An excited old man greeted us on our arrival at Ayer Health Centre III in Uganda's northern district of Kole on the morning of October 1st. At 76 years, Johnson Okello had just got a daughter with his 24-year-old wife Pasquine Acen, and everyone was saying the baby was his spitting image. The celebration of the drastic drop in Okello family's average age most probably wouldn't have happened were it not for the heroic feat by Sister Ketty Adiambo. The dedicated midwife had performed the delivery under general darkness, relying solely on the light of her phone which was tightly gripped between her teeth. Okello had already named the hours-old baby girl Ketty Adiambo.

Power outages are frequent in Uganda, but fortunately for mothers seeking maternity services at Ayer and 250 other Health Centres III in the country, Sister Adiambo and hundreds of her colleagues nationwide soon won't have to perform such acrobatics trying to bring children into the world. Thanks to GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance's Health Facility Solar Electrification (HFSE) intervention being implemented with UNICEF and the Ministry of Health, 250 health centres across Uganda are being fitted with solar electricity installations to ensure a constant, uninterrupted power supply. This will not only guarantee full-time lighting but also run all vital medical equipment to ensure uninterrupted delivery of critical services.

As UNICEF's HFSE consultant Lokesh Sharma explains, the programme being implemented under the Cold Chain Equipment Optimization Platform aims at raising awareness in communities that health facilities will soon have a reliable power supply, which ensures proper storage of medicines and use of modern functional equipment. People will thus no longer be discouraged from seeking health services, as they will be assured of adequate care within their reach and will be counted on to safeguard the solar-powered systems as their own.

Indeed, Saul Odyek, the clinical officer in charge of the 16-bed health facility that conducts 60 deliveries a month, cannot wait for the day in a couple of weeks when installation will be complete. Standing at the site, which is already prepared for mounting the solar panels, Odyek can hardly hide his excitement...

Read the the full story: https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/solar-electrification-boosts-ugandas-health-centres



EDUCATION

Supporting children's learning

Students at Adjumani Girls Primary School in Adjumani District engage in a peer-to-peer counselling session. These sessions provide a safe space for young learners to discuss challenges, support one another, and build confidence in making informed decisions about their education and well-being.

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Education in 2025 – At a Glance


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US$324.8 million mobilized for the **Uganda Learning Acceleration Program**

Early Childhood Care and Education Policy finalized

National Digital Strategy for Education and Digital Skills Framework roll-out

Education Statistical Abstract published for the first time since 2017

578,764 learners' foundational literacy and numeracy strengthened

More than **12,000** out-of-school **children returned to school**


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In 2025 Uganda continued working to ensure that more children not only attend school but also learn. Many schools remain under pressure as enrolment grows, resources remain limited and refugee arrivals continue. Too many children still struggle to acquire basic reading and maths skills in the early grades, making it harder for them to stay in school and succeed later in life. The government endorsed the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2026–2030), setting national priorities to improve learning quality, strengthen foundational skills and expand pathways to employment for young people.

UNICEF supported advocacy for and mobilization of major financing to strengthen learning nationwide. As coordinating agency for the Global Partnership for Education in 2025, UNICEF convened development partners to unlock a US$324.8 million financing package for the Uganda Learning Acceleration Programme (ULEARN), aimed at improving foundational learning outcomes for millions of children.

Another important development in 2025 was the finalization of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy instruments, including the ECCE Policy Implementation Standards and Implementation Guidelines. The policy sets national standards for early learning and aims to expand access to quality early childhood services. For young children, this means arriving at primary school ready to learn, explore and succeed. Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards for pre-primary education were also rolled out to help ensure more consistent quality of early learning services nationwide. UNICEF provided technical inputs to the development and operationalization of these policy instruments, supporting the translation of policy into practice.

Early learning programmes supported by UNICEF continued to expand in underserved communities, enabling 20,517 children to access quality and inclusive early learning. UNICEF, through its partners, supported 157 community-based centres and trained 280 caregivers, facilitating young children's access to structured early learning activities, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas. For many children, this means entering primary school better prepared – able to recognize letters, count numbers and interact confidently in the classroom.

Through UNICEF support, more than 12,000 parents and caregivers were trained on key family care practices, equipping families with essential knowledge and skills to improve child health, nutrition, development and care-seeking practices. Parenting support is a critical investment, as nurturing care and responsive interactions in the early years have a lasting impact on children's cognitive, language, social-emotional and physical development, preparing them to learn and thrive throughout life.



Sarah Fatuma, 19, studies in the library at Imvepi Senior Secondary School after re-enrolling to continue her education. Sarah, a young mother and refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, gained skills and mentorship through the Cash Plus Skilling programme under the PROSPECTS framework, motivating her return to school.

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Elizabeth Mazira, a student at Dzaipi Secondary School, revising outside her class. After a period of absence from school, Elizabeth was encouraged by a member of the Adolescents Volunteer Action Team (AVAT) to return to her education, and today, she is back in class, working toward a brighter future.

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Improving foundational literacy and numeracy remained a central priority in 2025. Programmes across the country supported teachers to strengthen reading and maths instruction in the early grades, helping hundreds of thousands of learners to build the basic skills needed to progress in school.

To support learners who had fallen behind, UNICEF strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) to lead U-CatchUp, the government's remedial education programme, supported the development of the U-CatchUp plan and influenced integration of key elements into the teacher curriculum.

The U-CatchUp programme expands remedial lessons that enable students to recover lost learning, giving children a second chance to master essential skills and remain engaged in school. For many learners, the catch-up classes contributed to rebuilding confidence in reading and maths and reduced the risk of dropping out.

In Karamoja sub-region, north-eastern Uganda, where education outcomes remain among the lowest in the country, targeted investments by UNICEF and its partners in 2025 focused on improving both teaching and school infrastructure. Teacher training strengthened classroom instruction, while new classrooms reduced overcrowding and created better learning conditions for children. These efforts enabled more children to enrol in school and created better conditions for learning across the region.

Uganda also took steps to strengthen the systems that support education. Through the technical and financial support of UNICEF, the government advanced the National Digital Strategy for Education and the National Digital Skills Framework, which defines the core competencies that children, young people and citizens need to have in the rapidly changing digital era. Both frameworks were designed to support schools and non-formal education systems to integrate digital learning and prepare young people for a more technology-driven future.

A total of 65,855 in- and out-of-school adolescents and youth were trained in market-driven 21st-century skills, using training content developed by UNICEF in collaboration with MoES and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, for life skills, digital skills and social innovation and entrepreneurship. This equipped young people with key competencies like creativity and innovation, problem-solving and ideation, resilience, flexibility and technology use needed to thrive in school, work and life.

UNICEF provided financial and technical support for the development of curriculum content, built the capacity of teachers and instructors to deliver structured training sessions and supported district local governments in renovating youth skilling centres to offer flexible skilling pathways for out-of-school young people.



The U-CatchUp programme expands remedial lessons that enable students to recover lost learning, giving children a second chance to master essential skills and remain engaged in school.

Improved education sector data is strengthening planning and monitoring. The publication of the first Education Statistical Abstract since 2017 provided updated data to guide decision-making and monitor progress in education. UNICEF provided technical and financial support to MoES to develop and disseminate the Education Management Information System (EMIS) Guidelines. The guidelines establish standardized procedures for education data collection, validation, management and reporting, helping to improve the quality, consistency and use of administrative data across the sector. Together, these efforts strengthen the use of evidence for planning, budgeting and decision-making, while enabling the education sector to better identify disparities in access, participation and learning outcomes that require targeted action.

In addition, efforts focused on children who remain outside the school system. The UNICEF-implemented European Union funded G4DU programme continued expanding support for vulnerable girls in upper primary and lower secondary education. Operating across more than 200 schools in Lango, Acholi and West Nile, G4DU combines cash transfers with mentorship, life skills training and sexual and reproductive health referrals to address the multiple barriers that push girls out of school. Early implementation results showed improved enrolment and retention, with nearly all supported girls returning for subsequent school terms once financial barriers were addressed. Other cash-plus programmes, including Girls Empowering Girls and Empowering Adolescent Mothers and Their Children, also helped out-of-school children and adolescents return to education, with many initiatives targeting girls who often face greater barriers to continuing their studies.

Support for adolescent mothers returning to school addressed one of the major causes of dropout among girls. This was made possible through home visits and community engagement led by school management and local council leaders as part of the performance-based grants provided to primary schools through the G4DU. For many young mothers, returning to school offers a second chance to continue their education and build a more secure future for themselves and their children.

Communities played an increasingly important role in strengthening education. In 2025, UNICEF supported school management committees and parent-teacher associations to strengthen school governance, enabling parents and community leaders to take a more active role in improving learning outcomes.

As Uganda's child population continues to grow, strengthening foundational learning and expanding opportunities for vulnerable children, including adolescent mothers, will remain essential. Continued investment in quality education systems will help ensure that every child can learn, complete school and build the skills needed for Uganda's future.

PLAYFUL BEGINNINGS

Transforming early childhood in Karamoja

HUMAN INTEREST



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> "Let the children play. Some are getting sponsorships because of their talents in singing or athletics. This increases their importance."

While in Karamoja the first week of June 2025, I was delighted to witness screams of children on a swing, a mother clapping in rhythm, a rope skipping to the beat of laughter, and a teacher singing the alphabet. This is where learning begins – in play.

Across the nine districts of Karamoja: Karenga, Kaabong, Kotido, Abim, Napak, Moroto, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit and Amudat, 32 new playgrounds are redefining what early childhood development (ECD) looks like. Thanks to a partnership between UNICEF and Play Action International with funding from Education Cannot Wait, these spaces are not merely colourful clusters of metal, rubber and wood. They are arenas of growth, healing, connection and hope.

"Before..., children were weak and dormant..."

At Nakwanga ECD Play Lab in Nakapiripirit District, Judith Ileny, a 34-year-old Head Caregiver, smiles as children chase one another through the playground. "Before the playground was established, children were weak and dormant," she recalls. "Now, they are sharp and playful. They can dance, lead the play, even without us."

She gestures to a group of children in the playground. "We used to have about 30 children. Now we have 308." The rise is not just in numbers but in engagement, confidence and joy.

The transformation has not gone unnoticed. William Iwuala Abura, the District Education Officer for Nakapiripirit, confirms, "We now have 30 ECD centres, up from 15. The three centres with playgrounds supported by UNICEF each has over 300 children. Others without [playgrounds] have fewer than 100. That is the power of play."

Children learn how to learn

But behind every swing is a story, and behind every story is a parent. The rise in attendance and development is rooted not just in infrastructure but in people, particularly the caregivers and parents empowered through UNICEF's comprehensive parenting programme funded by the Ireland Government.

Anna Ochonga, a 45-year-old mother and grandmother from Namalu Parish, shares her journey. "I was not educated, but I have learned many things," she says proudly. "I talk with my grandchildren about school, cook with them, and ensure they brush their teeth."

Read the the full story: https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/playful-beginnings



WATER SANITATION & HYGIENE

Safe water and sanitation for healthier childhoods

Learners at Unna Primary School in Adjumani access clean, safe water. One of the many improvements supported through the G4DU Programme to enhance learning and wellbeing.

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WASH in 2025 – At a Glance



National WASH Management **Information System finalized**

National **Adaptation Plan for WASH** and National Sanitation Policy advanced

214,500 people gained access to improved **WASH** service



24,800 people benefited from **climate-resilient water infrastructure**

756,000 people received **WASH supplies** during the mpox response





Eleven-year-old Laul Marol drinks clean water from a tap stand in Cluster I, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. The facility was installed by UNICEF with support from European Union Humanitarian Aid. Throughout the settlement, children are drawn to the sound of flowing water. They gather at the tap stands to drink, rinse their faces, and wash away the day's dust from their legs, their laughter filling the air.

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Safe water, sanitation and hygiene remained fundamental to children's health, learning and resilience, yet too many children and communities continued to face significant gaps in access. Only 63 per cent of households had access to basic water services and 23 per cent to basic sanitation. In many schools and health facilities, the absence of handwashing facilities continues to expose children to infection and disrupt learning.

To address these gaps, UNICEF worked with the government and partners to strengthen the national systems that sustain WASH services. Support from UNICEF contributed to Uganda's National Adaptation Plan for WASH, the National Sanitation Policy and the Environmental Health Strategy, helping integrate climate resilience and children's needs into national planning. Engagement in national WASH and climate advocacy platforms also helped elevate the visibility of children's rights in sector dialogue. UNICEF supported the integration of child-focused priorities into Uganda's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0), highlighting the links between climate change, water security and children's well-being.

In 2025, UNICEF-supported government programmes helped expand access to safe water and hygiene services for communities and institutions serving children. Climate-resilient water and sanitation infrastructure was strengthened in vulnerable districts, helping ensure children and families have access to safe water and essential WASH services in both development and emergency settings. UNICEF supported the upgrade of rural water systems in four communities in Madi Okollo and Terego districts, serving 24,800 people, and improved water services in Kiryandongo, Rhino Camp and Nakivale refugee settlements, supporting 126,000 refugees and reducing reliance on emergency water trucking.

Safe water, sanitation and hygiene remained fundamental to children's health, learning and resilience, yet too many children and communities continued to face significant gaps in access.

Across development and humanitarian settings, more than 214,000 people, many of them children, gained access to improved WASH services in communities, schools and health facilities in Isingiro, Kikuube, Kamwenge, Madi Okollo, Terego, Adjumani and Kiryandongo districts.



Mashatr Haitham Alsaid, a 10-year-old girl, washes her feet in preparation for prayers at a newly constructed water tap in Cluster A, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, on October 13, 2025. The facility was built by UNICEF with funding from European Union Humanitarian Aid.

Residents previously walked long distances to access water for daily needs. The new system has brought water points closer to their homes, providing a sufficient supply.

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For children, these improvements are often felt most clearly in schools. In Karamoja sub region, UNICEF WASH investments helped improve water and sanitation facilities and contributed to increased school enrolment by 44 per cent, and by 38 per cent among girls. In addition, upgrades were carried out in schools and health facilities, improving the environments where children learn and receive care.

The UNICEF-supported WASH services played a critical role in protecting children during emergencies. During the mpox outbreak, 756,000 people received essential WASH supplies and services to strengthen infection prevention in communities and schools. Emergency WASH support also reached refugee-hosting districts, including the provision of latrines, handwashing stations and water treatment materials, while investments in climate-resilient water infrastructure will help communities withstand future shocks.

In 2025, UNICEF-supported government programmes helped expand access to safe water and hygiene services for communities and institutions serving children.

Better information is helping ensure that children who remain underserved are not overlooked. In 2025, UNICEF supported the finalization of Uganda's WASH Management Information System and trained government partners across three ministries – the Ministry of Water and Environment, the Ministry of Health and MOES – to strengthen how WASH data are collected and used. These improvements help authorities identify communities where children still lack safe water and hygiene services and guide faster action to address those gaps.

Looking ahead, expanding safe WASH services will remain essential to protecting children's health. UNICEF will continue supporting the Government of Uganda to strengthen climate-resilient WASH systems and close remaining access gaps, helping ensure that every child can grow, learn and thrive in a safe and healthy environment.

EU HUMANITARIAN AID

UNICEF water systems end long treks for Kiryandongo refugees

HUMAN INTEREST



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"I used to spend almost the whole day walking three kilometres to the water point," he says. "Now, I just walk a few metres. It takes me 10 or 15 minutes, and I'm done. UNICEF and its donors have solved our water problem. People were really suffering."

"It's a system that doesn't have to wait for sunshine or for fuel. We designed it to keep running, all day, every day on either fuel or sunshine."

The playful laughter comes first. Then the splash of water. Under the hot October sun in Cluster A of Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, children crowd around two silver taps standing between a maize garden and UNHCR tents. Their laughter echoes across the camp as they cup their hands to drink, splash their faces, and wash the dust from their legs. For years, this sound was missing, replaced by the silence of long walks in search of water.

Until this October, getting clean water in Kiryandongo meant waiting for rain, for water trucks, or for hours in line at the nearest water point. Now, that wait is over. Two new hybrid piped water supply systems, powered by solar and diesel, funded by European Union Humanitarian Aid and implemented by UNICEF in partnership with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), deliver safe water to refugees and nearby host communities.

"It's a system that doesn't have to wait for sunshine or for fuel," says Eng. Isaac Bwire, one of the engineers who supervised construction. "We designed it to keep running, all day, every day on either fuel or sunshine."

A day no longer lost to water

Huda Mohammad, 50, remembers walking nearly a kilometre each morning and then waiting another two or three hours in line to fill a single jerrycan.

"There were always too many people," she recalls, resting beside a yellow container now filled within minutes. "We all needed water for washing, cooking, and drinking. It was exhausting."

Today, the nearest tap stands only a few steps from her home. What once consumed half her day now takes barely 10 minutes. "I am so grateful to UNICEF and the donors (European Union Humanitarian Aid) who supported this project," she says.

In Cluster I, Martina Adiyo, a mother of three, smiles as she fills a 20-litre jerrycan from one of two taps installed right inside her compound. "Before, I used to walk a kilometre each way," she says. "Now it takes one minute."

Read the the full story: https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/eu-humanitarian-aidunicef-water-systems-end-long-treks-kiryandongo-refugees



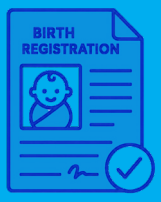
CHILD PROTECTION

Keeping children safe

Esther Wema, 16, a teenage mother, enjoys a light moment with her two-year-old daughter Amira Jemima outside her rented one-room house in Katanga Kampala. Wema dropped out of school during the COVID-19 lockdown. The father of her child is a casual worker who does not earn enough to support them. In 2022, she joined the GEG (Girls Empowering Girls) project and started getting cash transfers. She uses the money she gets to pay rent and care for the baby. She has also started a business selling fruits in traffic jams in Wandegeya.

©UNICEF Uganda/UNI540167/Mugisha

Child Protection in 2025 – At a Glance



Birth registration systems strengthened, enabling over **217,000 births to be registered**



Integrated child protection systems expanded, reaching over **371,000 children**



Case management systems strengthened, **supporting 22,000 cases**



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Community-based protection and psychosocial support scaled up, reaching over **200,000 children** and caregivers



Child justice systems reinforced, **benefiting 1,450 children** through diversion



Family tracing and **reunification** systems



Risk communication and community engagement expanded, reaching **1.3 million people**

Strong child protection systems are essential to safeguarding children's rights, yet many children in Uganda continued to face violence, exploitation and neglect. In 2025, growing humanitarian pressures, including refugee arrivals and funding reductions, placed additional strain on protection services in already-vulnerable districts. Despite these challenges, progress was made in strengthening the systems that keep children safe.



Strong child protection systems are essential to safeguarding children's rights, yet many children in Uganda continued to face violence, exploitation and neglect.

One important step forward was progress on birth registration reform. With UNICEF advocacy and technical support, the National Identification and Registration Authority advanced implementation of the Registration of Persons Regulations (2024), shifting birth registration from a project-based activity to a permanent government service. Birth registration services were expanded through 170 health facilities, providing legal identity to more than 74,000 children. The reform is helping more children secure legal identity at the start of life, opening the door to health care, education and other essential services and laying the foundation for birth registration services to be scaled up nationwide.

District-level efforts focused on making protection services easier for children and families to access. UNICEF supported the development of a Quality Assurance System for Social Work, laying the groundwork for the establishment of a Social Work Council to strengthen professional child protection services nationwide. Child Well-being Committees in 116 of the 146 districts brought together actors from health, education, justice and social welfare, allowing children to receive coordinated support through a single protection system rather than navigating fragmented services. Work also began on a national Child Well-being Management Information System to merge data across sectors and close long-standing gaps in information on violations of children's rights, strengthening case tracking and accountability.

Through UNICEF support, children in conflict with the law benefited from stronger cooperation across justice institutions. Collaboration between the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, the judiciary, police and the Justice, Law and Order Sector strengthened diversion procedures and coordination across institutions, where children in conflict with the law are referred to social services and community-based support rather than formal court processes. These approaches aim to ensure that children are supported to reintegrate safely into their families and communities rather than entering the formal justice system. A total of 1,450 (1,058 boys and 392 girls) cases of children were diverted from the justice system; 1,138 (879 boys, 259 girls) were granted non-custodial sentences, while 1,029 (765 boys and 264 girls) were granted custodial sentences as investigations continued.

With UNICEF support, community-based protection mechanisms continued to play a critical role in identifying and supporting children at risk. Trained para-social workers, child protection committees and community volunteers identified vulnerable children and linked them to appropriate social services. UNICEF worked with partners to expand community-based psychosocial support to help children and caregivers cope with violence, displacement and other stresses. As a result of strengthening the social service workforce, 157,866 adolescents, parents and caregivers received community-based psychosocial services. Alternative care services were enhanced with gatekeeping activities such as training foster care parents. Subsequently, 589 unaccompanied and separated girls and boys in humanitarian contexts received alternative care services, including being reunified with family.



Emmanuel Osire, 33 years comforts his 19-months old son Gerald Obore after receiving his measles-rubella vaccination on the left upper arm. This was during the community immunization outreach in Butto village, Koboko Parish, Wakiso district. The exercise is sponsored by the Government of Korea through UNICEF's ACT-A programme aimed to reduce Zero-dose children.

©UNICEF Uganda/UNI894152/Wamala

Prevention efforts expanded in 2025 through large-scale social and behaviour change initiatives. Mass media campaigns and youth-led outreach reached 26.7 million people nationwide with information on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and addressing harmful social norms linked to child marriage and teenage pregnancy. The U-Report platform engaged more than 151,000 users, while youth-led community initiatives produced over 125 radio programmes and other media content designed to raise awareness and encourage reporting of protection concerns.

> Continued investment will be needed to expand the number of trained social workers and community protection workers, improve how vulnerable children are identified and supported, and strengthen coordination across sectors so that every child in Uganda can grow up safe, protected and able to thrive.

Cross-sectoral initiatives also supported families directly. National Parenting Standards and a digital Parenting Hub were launched for caregivers to access services that support children's well-being. The SAUTI 116 child helpline was expanded with a chatbot and strengthened mental health and psychosocial support services, supporting more than 6,600 children through case management and referrals and improving referral pathways across sectors.

These efforts reflect a broader shift towards strengthening the national systems that protect children. Continued investment will be needed to expand the number of trained social workers and community protection workers, improve how vulnerable children are identified and supported, and strengthen coordination across sectors so that every child in Uganda can grow up safe, protected and able to thrive.

HUMAN INTEREST

TEENAGE PREGNANCY

"I just want to live, not disappear"



©UNICEF Uganda/UNI907568/Anthony

When you ask Jane what she wants now, she doesn't hesitate. "I want to finish school. I want to stand on my own. I want to show my child that life can be better."

How a 16-year-old girl refused to be buried by shame, culture and fear but instead found her way back to school through courage, compassion and the G4DU programme, supported by UNICEF with European Union funding.

"The first thing that came into my mind was to abort... because I wanted to continue with school." Jane (not her real name), 16

When Jane says those words, her voice isn't firm, not because she's afraid or shy, but rather she carries the strength of someone who survived a storm that came her way. At just sixteen, living in Marindi Village in Adjumani District in Northern Uganda, Jane had already learned to carry responsibilities far beyond her age. She rose before dawn to drive cattle to the grazing fields and returned home to get ready for school. She often arrived late, exhausted, but never giving up.

For Jane, school was hope. It was the one place that reminded her she was still a child with a future. But one morning in July 2025, her life took a sharp, terrifying turn.

It began quietly. A boy, almost her age, for he was 17, followed her from the grazing fields, asking questions she barely understood, showing a kind of attention she had never received. At first, it felt harmless. Then came the pressure. Then the sex. And soon after, the silence.

When her monthly period didn't come, Jane got worried. "I just started fearing," she recalls. "I knew my father would beat me and everything would change."

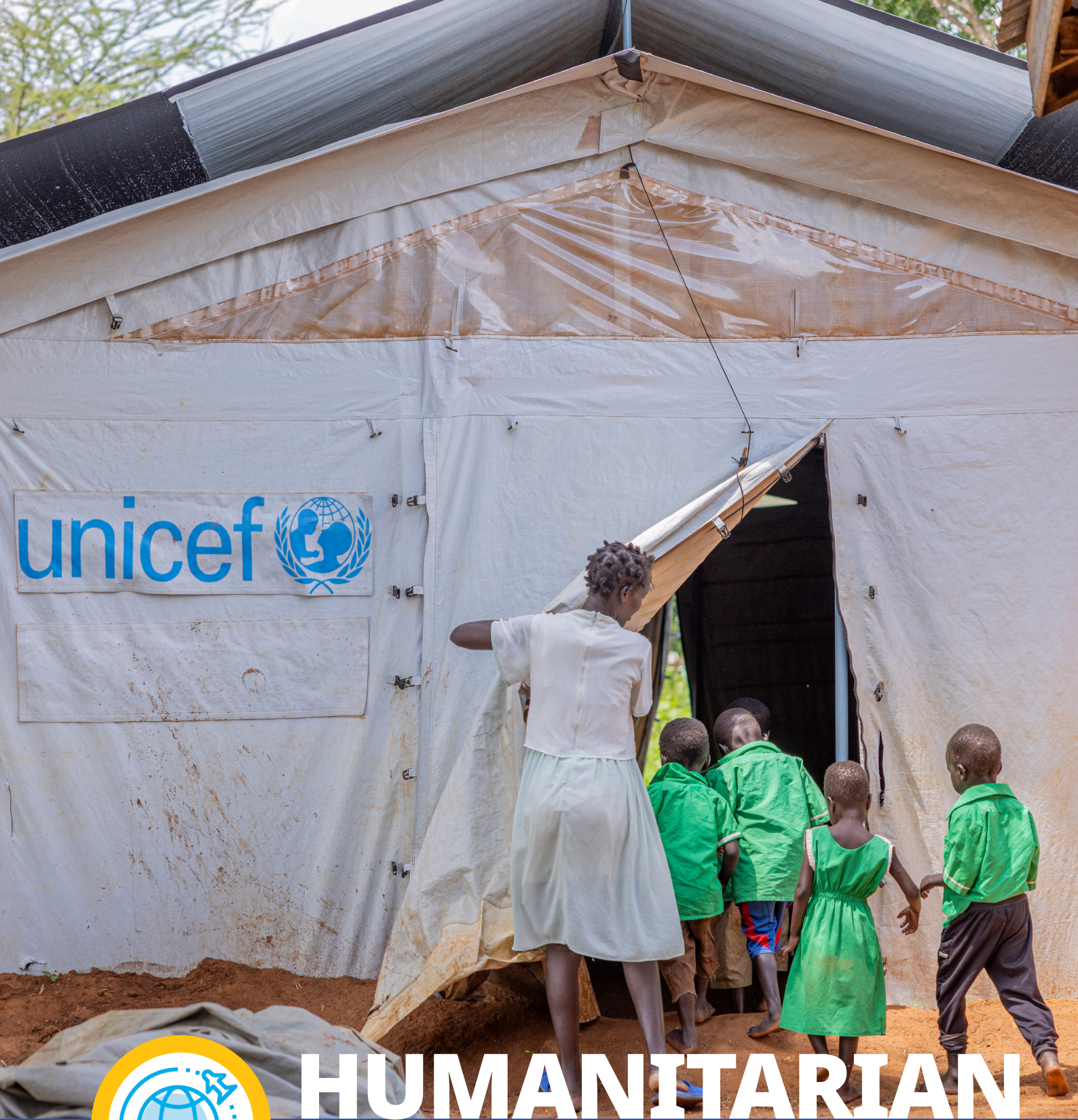
The boy first denied responsibility. The pregnancy test at the clinic confirmed the truth. And when word reached her father in Yumbe, where he was working, he stormed home, angry, and ready to cast her out.

Jane stayed away from school. In her mind, the future had already shut its doors.

"I wanted to continue with school... but everything was falling apart"

Negotiations between her family and the boy's family were tense and deeply cultural. There were cows, goats, cash and other items listed under Aganvu and Ndruma, the rituals of reconciling families after a girl becomes pregnant.

Read the the full story: https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/i-just-want-live-not-disappear



HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Responding to crises, protecting children

A caretaker walks Early Childhood Development (ECD) resettled children to class at Loodoi Primary School in Napak District, Karamoja sub-region. To ease classroom congestion, UNICEF provides temporary learning spaces, including tents, to accommodate the growing number of resettled children returning from life on the streets.

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Humanitarian Response in 2025 – At a Glance

153,933 asylum-seekers arrived in 2025, bringing Uganda's **refugee population to 1.9 million,** 77% women and children


©UNICEF Uganda/ UNI728547/Abdul

7.8 million people reached with **Ebola risk communication**

8 public health emergencies recorded, including Ebola, mpox, cholera, yellow fever and anthrax


©UNICEF Uganda/ UNI913022/Tibaweswa

215,680 people vaccinated against mpox

756,000 people received emergency **WASH supplies**

162,146 people affected by **hydrometeorological hazards**, 38% children

Multiple and overlapping crises continued to test Uganda's capacity to protect children, placing growing pressure on humanitarian and essential social services throughout 2025. Disease outbreaks, climate shocks and continued refugee arrivals threatened access to health care, safe water, nutrition and education, all of which are critical for children's survival, development and protection.

> Humanitarian action in Uganda increasingly focused not only on responding to immediate crises but also on strengthening national systems so they can better protect children when crises occur.

UNICEF supported the Government of Uganda and humanitarian partners to ensure that life-saving services for children and women continued during emergencies. Rapid responses to public health threats, including Ebola and mpox outbreaks, protected communities and limited transmission. With UNICEF support, community health teams conducted household outreach and risk communication campaigns that reached 7.8 million people with vital information on prevention and care.

UNICEF also supported emergency water, sanitation and hygiene responses in districts affected by natural disasters, especially floods and landslides. Disaster impacts included damaged water systems and an increased risk of disease outbreaks, particularly for children in vulnerable communities. Emergency WASH services enabled families to maintain access to safe water and reduce health risks.

Uganda also continued to host one of the largest refugee populations in Africa. In refugee-hosting districts, UNICEF supported health services, education, child protection and safe water systems for both refugee and host-community children. These efforts ensured that children displaced by conflict could continue learning, access essential health services and receive protection from violence, exploitation and neglect.

Humanitarian action in Uganda increasingly focused not only on responding to immediate crises but also on strengthening national systems so they can better protect children when crises occur. UNICEF supported government-led coordination of the refugee response and worked with local authorities and partners to strengthen district capacity to deliver services in refugee-hosting areas, reflecting a broader commitment to greater leadership by national and local actors.

As the country prepares to implement the 2026–2030 Country Programme, strengthening preparedness, resilience and inclusive service delivery systems will remain essential to ensuring that children and women are protected in times of crisis.



Pupils of Masaka Primary School in Butungama Sub-county, Ntoroko District, walk past a classroom block with walls damaged and bruised by the floodwaters. The building, once a place of learning and growth for the school's 796 students, now bears the scars of the recent floods.

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HUMAN INTEREST

UNICEF'S SUPPORT

To Ministry of Health to tackle the Sudan Ebola Virus outbreak in Ntoroko District



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"A team from the Ministry of Health and UNICEF visited our school. They spoke with both our staff and students, providing comprehensive information about Ebola. Thanks to their intervention, our learners became well-informed about the disease."

A critical initial step was the meticulous tracing and isolation of individuals who had come into contact with the confirmed case.

In the wake of the Sudan Ebola Virus Disease (SVD) outbreak in Southwestern Uganda, UNICEF was a key partner to the Ministry of Health and provided crucial support to response efforts focused on Ntoroko District and other parts of the country. The collaboration significantly contributed to raising public awareness, strengthened surveillance, and promoted infection prevention and control measures within the district's communities and schools.

Ntoroko District quickly became a focal point of the response after the burial of a probable case and the movement of a confirmed case that was traced back to the district. An alert was raised following the death of an individual in Kampala whose body was brought back to Ntoroko, and the subsequent death of a four-year-old boy who had been in contact with the initial case who was also diagnosed with SVD.

Upon confirmation of a positive case – the aunt of the deceased child – a multi-sectoral team, including officials from the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), and other partners, was immediately deployed to the district.

"On 3rd March 2025, I received a communication from the District Health Officer that there were officials from Ministry of Health, who had come to establish and investigate a suspected outbreak of Ebola in the district." Byaruhanga Patrick, District Health Educator in Ntoroko District

A critical initial step was the meticulous tracing and isolation of individuals who had come into contact with the confirmed case. These included household members and individuals the patient had interacted with at health facilities and even traditional healers. Nine close contacts were immediately taken to Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital for isolation and testing.

Following the incident, the Ministry of Health with UNICEF support and funding from the governments of Sweden and the United States embarked on community engagement and risk communication activities to control the spread of the outbreak. House-to-house visits were initiated in hotspot areas to educate residents on SVD transmission, signs and symptoms, and infection prevention measures.

Read the the full story: https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/unicefs-support-ministry-health-tackle-sudan-ebola-virus-outbreak-ntoroko-district



CROSS-SECTORAL ACTIVITIES

A moment of unity at Kololo Secondary School as students celebrate World Children's Day on November 20, 2025, dedicating the day to advancing children's rights, fostering empowerment, and promoting well-being.

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UNICEF's results for children in Uganda are supported by cross-cutting efforts that strengthen community engagement, partnerships, evidence systems and advocacy for children's rights. In 2025 the country office continued promoting child rights, gender equality and disability inclusion across policies and programmes, ensuring that the most vulnerable children remained at the centre of national development priorities.



Social and behaviour change initiatives mobilized communities and amplified youth voices on critical issues affecting children.

As part of the Accountability to Affected Populations, 18,682 complaints, concerns, questions and items of feedback were responded to through the U-Report live chat and partner platforms. The responses were handled by trained partners such as the Ministry of Health call centre and SAUTI 116 call centre counsellors.

Social and behaviour change initiatives mobilized communities and amplified youth voices on critical issues affecting children. Campaigns and community outreach reached more than 8.2 million people, while U-Report engaged over 151,000 users in dialogue on topics such as adolescent health, GBV and public health emergencies. Youth-led media initiatives and partnerships with cultural institutions, civil society and the private sector addressed harmful social norms linked to teenage pregnancy, child marriage and violence against children. Accountability mechanisms also allowed 18,682 queries and concerns from communities to be addressed through digital platforms.

Communication, advocacy and partnerships kept children at the centre of national decisions. UNICEF worked with the government, partners, civil society and the private sector to promote policies and investments that protect children's rights. Media and digital platforms amplified messages on health, protection and gender equality, while data and evidence informed policy dialogue. These efforts helped ensure that children's needs remained visible in national planning and that services reached those most at risk.

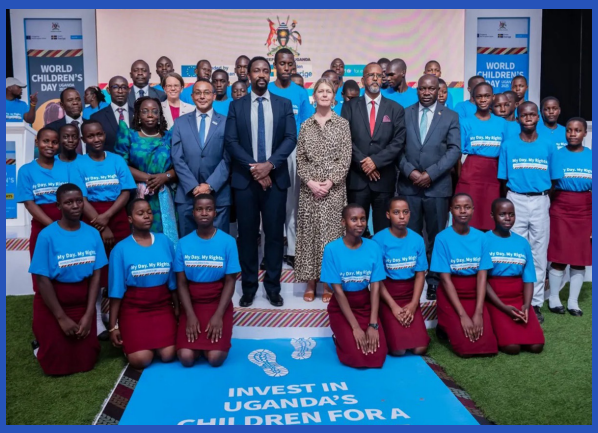
Strong operational systems helped deliver results for children across Uganda. Timely procurement and delivery of essential supplies supported health care, education, WASH and child protection services in both development and emergency settings. Investments in efficient systems and processes improved accountability and enabled UNICEF to reach children quickly and at scale.

In line with organizational regulations, UNICEF Uganda invested in fiduciary accountability and results-based management in the use of resources entrusted to it. Programme implementation was supported by regular financial monitoring and expenditure analysis to ensure that resources were used efficiently and effectively and for their intended purposes, that funding gaps and absorption risks were identified early, thereby directing resources to accelerate programme delivery. Risk management measures helped identify and mitigate operational, financial and programmatic risks. These included partner capacity assessments, assurance activities, spot checks, programmatic visits, supply end-use monitoring, post-distribution monitoring and timely follow-up on audit and monitoring recommendations. Programme progress was tracked through field monitoring visits, partner reports, programme reviews and sector dashboards. Evidence generated through routine monitoring, data analysis, fiduciary oversight and periodic evaluations informed course correction, strengthened accountability to children, communities, government, donors and partners, and contributed to measurable, equitable and sustainable results for vulnerable children.

HUMAN INTEREST

YOUR VOICES, YOUR SOLUTIONS

will change the world, leaders tell Uganda's child



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"When we invest in children, we invest in Uganda's future. Investing in children is not optional, it's essential," said Dr. Nandi.

"We are so excited! We are so happy!" More than their exclamations of joy, the bright, ear-to-ear smiles from this group of 13 to 14-year-olds told their story.

Ever Ready Club from Terego District in the West Nile region of Uganda, had just been announced the overall winners of a countrywide innovators boot camp in which 200 children, aged 9 to 17, showcased their skills and abilities to be change makers, offering solutions to problems identified within their communities. The boot camps were held across four regions—the central, western, and eastern regions and the greater Northern region of Uganda.

The group started growing vegetables after they identified malnutrition as a major problem in their communities. They use old sacks, tyres and broken tins, jerry cans and plastics to grow the vegetables. The group is not just boosting nutrition but is also tackling environmental sustainability.

"I encourage every child to grow vegetables, because doctors say it is healthy to eat them," said Viola Efiko, 14, one of the members. "Before we started our project, a lot of children were suffering from marasmus and kwashiorkor, but now children are not suffering because vegetables give us a balanced diet."

The Ever Ready Club was crowned the overall winners at the celebrations to commemorate World Children's Day on November 20, at Kololo Senior Secondary School, in Kampala. The Ever Ready Club were not the only winners that day. They shared the spotlight with Team Smile Guitar from the Western region, who took second place, and Lipanda Family, from the Central region, who took third place.

"We are very glad, what a great opportunity for us to change lives," said Hudson Tayebwa, the Team leader for Lipanda Family.

The group runs a youth rehabilitation project by engaging youth who are victims of substance abuse, in gainful employment through cleaning services.

"This is only the beginning in our efforts to change lives. I was a victim of substance abuse, but now I am a changed person."

Read the the full story: https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/your-voices-your-solutions-will-change-world-leaders-tell-ugandas-children



LOOKING AHEAD

Where every child can thrive

Learners enjoy porridge during break time at Kitgum Matidi Primary School. Through the G4DU Programme, school feeding initiatives help improve children's nutrition, boost concentration, and support regular school attendance.

©Unicef Uganda/UNI907556/Anthony

In the years ahead, delivering for every child in Uganda will depend on stronger national systems that can reach every child with the services they need. Under the new Country Programme (2026–2030), UNICEF will work with the government and partners to strengthen policies, financing and public services so that children, especially those most at risk, can access quality care, learning and protection wherever they live.

This shift comes at a critical moment. Uganda's child population is growing rapidly, placing increasing pressure on health, education and protection systems. Climate shocks, disease outbreaks and continued refugee arrivals are further testing families and the services children depend on. Strengthening systems is therefore essential not only to sustain progress, but to ensure that no child is left behind.

UNICEF will support efforts to expand and improve services for children while strengthening the systems behind them. Greater emphasis will be placed on climate-resilient health, education and WASH services to better protect children from environmental shocks. Investments in data will also help identify the most vulnerable children and ensure support reaches them more effectively.

As Uganda urbanizes, new approaches will be needed to support children in rapidly expanding towns and cities. UNICEF will work with partners to strengthen urban programming so that vulnerable children have access to essential services, protection and opportunities to grow, learn and thrive.

Partnerships will remain central. UNICEF will continue working with government, development partners, the private sector, civil society and communities to mobilize resources and sustain programmes for children, even in a constrained global funding environment.

This forward-looking agenda builds on gains achieved in 2025 despite a complex context. Across Uganda, millions of children benefited from expanded services in health, nutrition, education and protection, reflecting sustained government leadership and the commitment of partners and frontline workers. Yet many children still face significant challenges. Poverty, malnutrition and learning gaps continue to affect too many young lives, while climate shocks and public health risks remain frequent. Even so, national systems continued delivering essential services, sustaining hard-won gains in child survival, learning and protection.

Guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF will remain committed to working with the Government of Uganda and partners to ensure that every child can survive, learn, be protected and thrive.



Learners at Adjumani Girls Primary School in Adjumani District take a photo in their class on March 18, 2025. In a classroom filled with determination and hope, these students are gaining not just academic knowledge but also essential life skills that prepare them for the future. Through interactive learning and peer-to-peer support, the school fosters an environment where every girl has the opportunity to thrive.

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THANK YOU!

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Our profound gratitude goes to our development partners, without whose generosity our life-changing work for children in Uganda would not be possible.

Public sector partners and governments

- Kingdom of Belgium
- Canada
- France
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Kingdom of Sweden
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- United States of America

Multilateral

- European Union Commission
- European Union Humanitarian Aid

International Financial Institutions

- World Bank

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- French National Committee for UNICEF
- Italian National Committee for UNICEF
- Japan National Committee for UNICEF
- Korean National Committee for UNICEF
- Mastercard Foundation
- Spanish National Committee for UNICEF
- Swedish National Committee for UNICEF
- Swiss National Committee for UNICEF
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDSC)
- United States Fund for UNICEF

Programme contributions in United States Dollars (US$)

Programme	Regular Resources (US$)	Other Resources Regular (US$)	Other Resources Emergency (US$)	Total Actual Expenditure (US$)
Health	2,099,933	8,585,787	2,162,126	12,847,846
Nutrition	1,669,529	1,317,156	4,701,860	7,688,544
WASH	590,856	2,211,047	1,176,966	3,978,869
Education	565,728	6,797,358	236,415	7,599,501
Child Protection	595,043	3,547,731	712,182	4,854,956
Social Policy	2,968,423	4,271,596	77,371	7,317,390
Operational Effectiveness	1,701,463			1,701,463
Programme Effectiveness	10,965,836	10,373,680	2,111,912	23,451,428
Grand Total	**21,156,810**	**37,104,355**	**11,178,831**	**69,439,996**

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