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Office of Research – Innocenti

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

TURNING RESEARCH INTO ACTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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ABOUT UNICEF INNOCENTI

The Office of Research – Innocenti is UNICEF's dedicated research arm. Its prime objectives are to improve international understanding of issues relating to children's rights and to help facilitate full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, across the world.

UNICEF Innocenti undertakes cutting-edge strategic research on key issues affecting children and young people, addresses research questions set in collaboration with country and regional offices and other external partners, and publishes regularly in peer-reviewed journals to ensure its methodologies and results are of the highest standards. UNICEF Innocenti's established research workstreams focus on child well-being, including on:

- adolescents
- gender equality
- child-friendly family policies
- children in the digital age
- child poverty and equity
- violence against children and women
- children migrating alone or with families
- child labour and exploitation
- factors behind learning outcomes, including teacher absenteeism and weaknesses in the system.

In 2021, the office graduated its digital research workstream from an emerging area to an established workstream, underscoring its maturity after five years of incubation and reflecting the growing importance of this work within UNICEF and for children and young people, particularly in the COVID era.

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

unicef | for every child

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Note from our Director

The outbreak of COVID-19 forever changed life as we knew it. While the development of vaccines brings hope, their uneven distribution reduces the odds of reaching 70 per cent of people in every country by mid-2022. As the global community contends with learning losses affecting a whole generation and inflation coincides with a record rise in child poverty, new conflicts and emergencies threaten children's lives.

Millions of families have fled their homes to escape war, conflict or climate-related hazards. And rising temperatures, loss of biodiversity and extreme weather events endanger life on earth. The view is bleak, but finding solutions starts with evidence of what works.

In 2020, UNICEF Innocenti responded to this need by launching of our office-wide COVID-19 Rapid Research Response. Building on this platform, in 2021 we expanded the scope of our work by amplifying children's voices, opinions and experiences, exploring emerging research areas, and producing fresh and innovative reports.

Vite a Colori (*Life in Colour*) tells the stories of Italian adolescents in the first year of COVID-19, while *Life in Lockdown* seeks to understand the immediate mental health effects of the pandemic, reviewing evidence on more than 130,000 children and adolescents across 22 countries. *What Makes Me? Core capacities for living and learning* explores life skills that children need to develop over the early part of the life course, and which contribute to their personal well-being and development. *Gender Solutions*, an upcoming report, showcases the impact of gender-related evidence at UNICEF and rewards its generation and use.

While new findings are essential to our work, we have significantly expanded our Children and COVID-19 Research Library, which now contains more than 3,300 high-quality social science articles. Once again, we brought together the best, most innovative and impactful evidence generated by UNICEF in the tenth edition of *The Best of UNICEF Research*, which culminated in a global awards ceremony with our Executive Director.

Our strong partnerships with regional and country offices, and dedication to co-creative work, have fostered even more engagement with key policymakers and paved the way for UNICEF Innocenti findings to shape solutions in several countries. For example:

- Our rapid action research on digital learning informed the implementation and upscaling of the Akelius Digital Learning programme among Syrian refugee children and adolescents in Lebanon – from 200 students before COVID-19 to more than 26,000 students in 2021
- Findings from our *Disrupting Harm Kenya* report were used to develop the Nairobi County Child Protection and Welfare Policy
- Training was delivered to more than 1,000 researchers and enumerators on analytical methodologies in education and learning, social and economic policy, research facilitation, evidence synthesis, knowledge management and ethics in evidence generation
- Our behavioural science team is working with partners to address the demand-related barriers to uptake of primary health services in 12 countries across 5 regions.

Our impact and influence are also seen in the uptake of our work by policymakers at national and regional levels, and by stronger relationships with knowledge partners.

Our office engaged directly with policymakers across a diverse array of countries, including Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Ethiopia, Ireland, Italy, Libya, United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania.

Our contributions to the 2021 G20 Summit received strong recognition. These included a policy brief on digital learning, which was one of the official policy briefs for the final Communiqué; participation in a G20 side event on mental health with Health Ministers; facilitation of a workshop on inclusion and equal opportunities for

the Y20; and several contributions to the G20-related discussions on health, financial track and women.

Our knowledge partnerships provided us with the opportunity to spotlight important issues for children:

- We generated cutting-edge reports on the impact of increasing learning losses with the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Our collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) revealed the nutritional impacts of school closures on children
- Together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Bank, we produced data-driven contributions addressing critical knowledge gaps on children and youth and forced displacement
- Our convening acumen brought together key stakeholders, such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and Population Council-Kenya to set a global research agenda for female genital mutilation; and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) by highlighting our Social Spending Monitor, which dives deeply into public spending on children during COVID-19
- Our work on efforts to end violence against children and women was presented to the White House Gender Advisory Council
- We are proud to have kicked off our global research agenda on children with disabilities through a series of papers presented at the 2022 Global Disability Summit, featuring background research to UNICEF's joint report with WHO on assistive technology.

In October, we hosted the second UNICEF Innocenti Film Festival: *Narratives of childhood from around the world*, which curated and presented 38 films from 29 countries. The festival represents an enormous opportunity for UNICEF to use film and storytelling as an advocacy and public engagement tool for child rights. This year we introduced the Iris Awards and hybrid in-person/online screening options. The festival also included new partners and panel discussions with filmmakers.

There is much to look forward to in 2022, including *Report Card 17* about how environmental factors affect children's well-being, *Best of UNICEF Research 2022,* and the 'Leading Minds Conference on Child Identity'.

Maintaining strong relationships across UNICEF divisions and offices remains a top priority. These are key to identifying evidence and knowledge gaps, complementary research priorities, innovation in thought leadership and strengthening synergies to reach deeper insights.

Looking ahead, UNICEF Innocenti will be even more creative, innovative and strategic about what research we undertake and how we do it – while maintaining the highest rigour and quality. We will also focus more on research uptake and influencing through convening, learning clinics, making best use of emerging tools, strategic engagement and concerted fundraising, both within and outside UNICEF.

I would like to conclude by thanking our partners and donors for their outstanding collaboration. We are eager to continue and improve upon this vital work to guide actions for children and young people.

Gunilla Olsson
Director
UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti

Snapshot

2021 IN REVIEW

UNICEF INNOCENTI RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

100

HIGH-PROFILE RESEARCH REPORTS

14

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES IN LEADING ACADEMIC JOURNALS

12

4 **Leading Minds online webinars** on COVID-19 and children, bringing together experts on key issues affecting children during the pandemic:

- the looming debt crisis
- vaccines and the great divide
- child labour
- online learning

9 **Innovative and immersive microsites** showcasing research:

- What Makes Me? Core Capacities for Living and Learning
- Best of UNICEF Research 2021
- Reopening with Resilience
- Sport for Development phase II – Playing the Game
- UNICEF Innocenti Film Festival
- Childcare in high-income countries
- Reimagining Migration Responses
- Time to Teach
- Social Spending Monitor

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TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTNERS

138

TOTAL NUMBER OF UN AGENCIES AND OFFICES THAT PARTNERED WITH UNICEF INNOCENTI

10 including the World Bank

CITATIONS OF UNICEF INNOCENTI RESEARCH IN POLICY DOCUMENTS

331

CHILDREN AND COVID-19 RESEARCH LIBRARY PAGE VIEWS

50,985

ACTIVE WEBSITE USERS

2.8 million

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

17,916

36% highly engaged

TRAININGS, WORKSHOPS AND WEBINARS ORGANIZED/ATTENDED BY UNICEF INNOCENTI

139

SOCIAL MEDIA

35,957 LinkedIn followers (+239%)

5,782 Instagram followers (+35%)

35,326 Twitter followers (+9%)

21,450 Facebook followers (-0.3%)

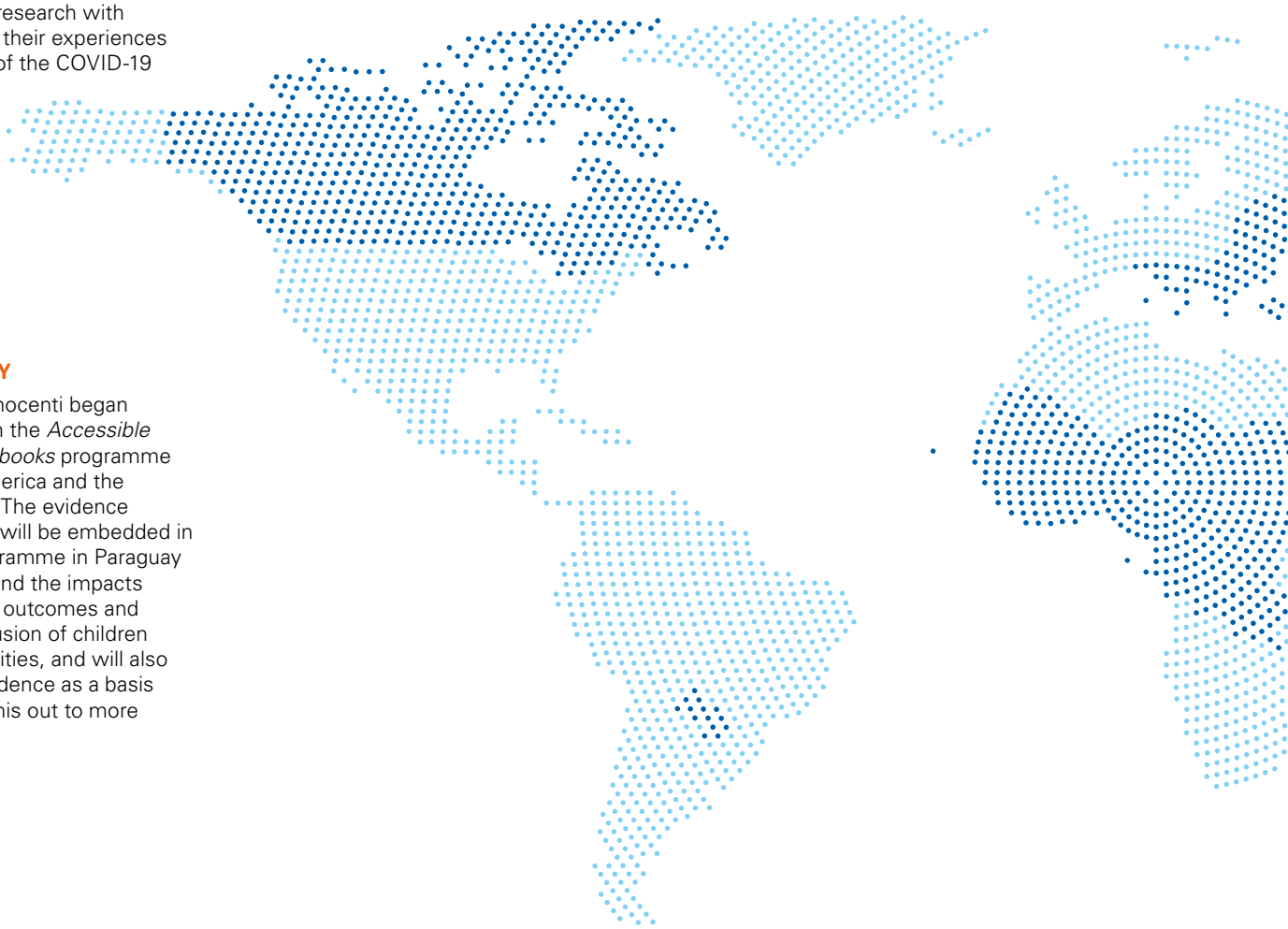
8,138 YouTube subscribers (+30%)

68,073 SlideShare views (+142%)

Figure 1. Examples of our global reach in 2021

CANADA, ITALY, MADAGASCAR

Amidst the continued COVID-19 crisis, we undertook qualitative research with children on their experiences and views of the COVID-19 pandemic.



PARAGUAY

UNICEF Innocenti began research on the *Accessible Digital Textbooks* programme in Latin America and the Caribbean. The evidence generation will be embedded in a pilot programme in Paraguay to understand the impacts on learning outcomes and on the inclusion of children with disabilities, and will also use the evidence as a basis for rolling this out to more countries.

Global reach of our research and convening

At UNICEF Innocenti, we generate and facilitate research and convene leading experts from around the world on issues related to children, working through the organization's headquarters' divisions, regional and country offices and national committees, and with governments, foundations, research institutions, think tanks, universities and other partners.

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ITALY

We hosted the second *UNICEF Innocenti Film Festival* in Florence in October 2021 to showcase narratives of childhood from around the world and the dynamic forces shaping childhood in different contexts.

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

We worked with the UNICEF regional office to support the use of behavioural science to diagnose and respond to challenges affecting the uptake of primary health and immunization services.

BANGLADESH, INDIA

We continued the research project *The Evidence on Educational Strategies to Address Child Labour in South Asia* with local partners, with strides made in collecting data in the two countries.

LEBANON

In partnership with the Akelius Foundation and the Swedish Committee, we carried out rapid action research looking at how a digital learning course was used in the transition to remote learning and found that children who used the course made gains in their language learning. The research informed the implementation and scale-up of the Akelius Digital Learning programme to more than 26,000 students and 1,336 teachers.

THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOGRAPHIC REPUBLIC

Preliminary findings from the first stage of the *Data Must Speak Positive Deviance Research* showed the positive impact of investing in building teacher capacity. The initial research showed that highly effective schools usually have principals who provide teacher support and ensure collaboration which, in turn, fosters high levels of trust, respect and innovation. The preliminary findings were embedded into existing processes including education sector analysis and planning.

AFGHANISTAN, BANGLADESH, LIBERIA, MADAGASCAR AND NEPAL

We worked with UNICEF country offices supported by the *Let Us Learn* initiative to produce a series of research briefs and reports exploring the effectiveness of education programmes aimed at reaching the most marginalized children.

WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

UNICEF Innocenti launched a synthesis brief and 11 country reports providing insights into the causes of absenteeism by primary school teachers as part of the *Time to Teach* research.

BURKINA FASO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, ETHIOPIA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

We began the primary research phase of the *Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection* (GRASSP) programme with four primary data collections, which aim to determine the impacts of social protection programmes on gender equality outcomes and assess fidelity to programme implementation objectives.

ETHIOPIA, SOMALIA, SUDAN

We published a series of reports from the large-scale study *Reimagining Migration Responses* on child migration and displacement in the Horn of Africa which involved interviews with 1,290 migrant children and young people in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan.

KENYA

We launched the first of a series of national reports from the *Disrupting Harm* project. The research included survey data collection in 13 countries across East Asia and eastern and southern Africa. The Kenya report provided an evidence-driven guide for countries to increase prevention and improve response to online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA).

CÔTE D'IVOIRE, MOZAMBIQUE, NIGERIA

We initiated new research to strengthen birth registration in the three countries. The project *Known from Birth: Generating and using evidence to strengthen birth registration systems* focuses on effective strategies to scale up initiatives and strengthen birth registration systems.

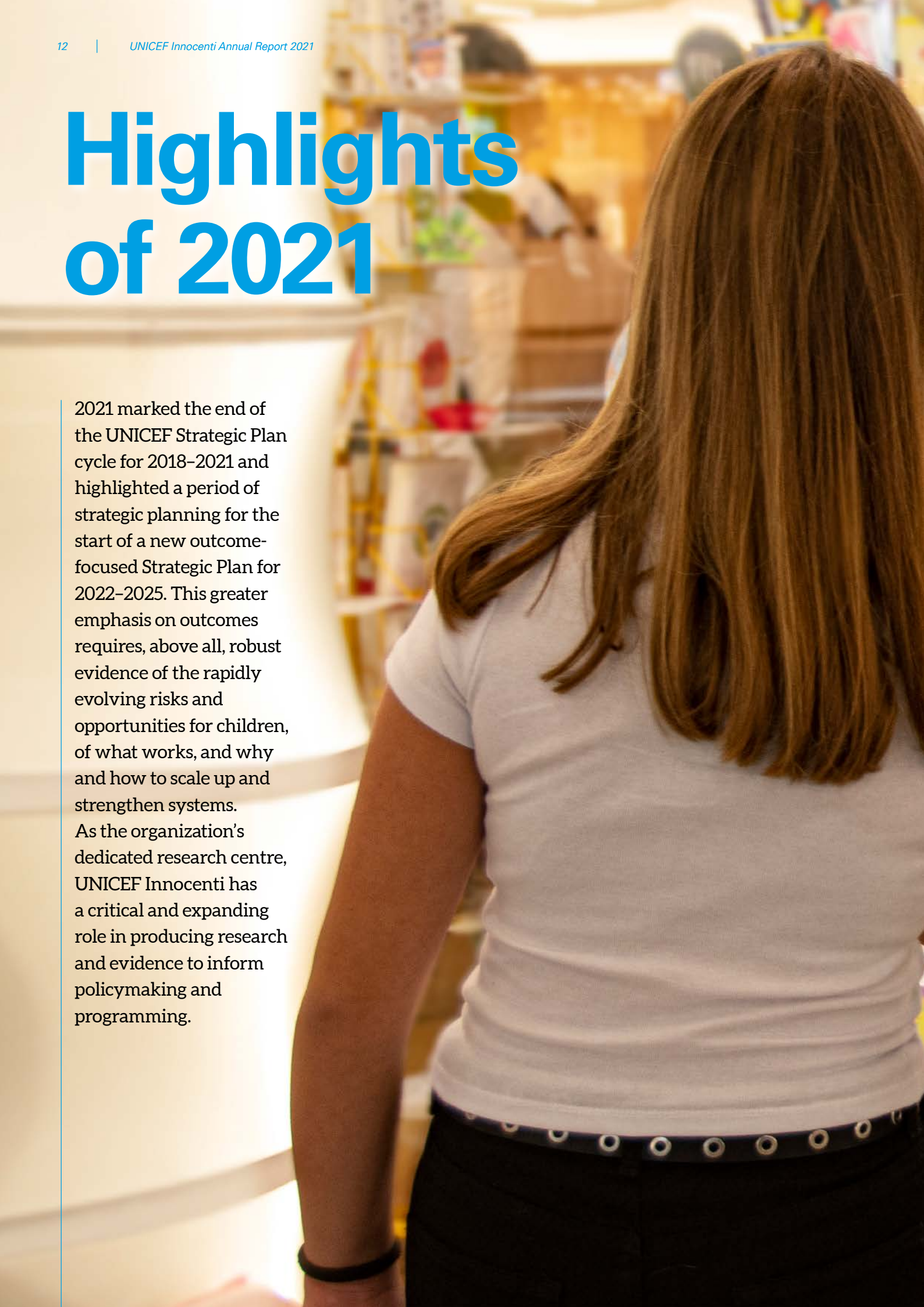
GHANA, LEBANON, NIGERIA

We started new research that assesses the impacts of the cash transfer programmes in these countries using quantitative and qualitative research methods. The studies in African countries are carried out under the *Transfer Project*.

AFGHANISTAN

We have worked in close coordination with UNICEF Afghanistan on a mixed-methods study of child return and reintegration in the Afghan context to support migration programming. Owing to the political transition in Afghanistan, data collection was paused in 2021 and is expected to resume in 2022. We worked with partners on a large-scale assessment of girls and boys' learning in community-based education across remote areas of the country.

Highlights of 2021



2021 marked the end of the UNICEF Strategic Plan cycle for 2018–2021 and highlighted a period of strategic planning for the start of a new outcome-focused Strategic Plan for 2022–2025. This greater emphasis on outcomes requires, above all, robust evidence of the rapidly evolving risks and opportunities for children, of what works, and why and how to scale up and strengthen systems.

As the organization's dedicated research centre, UNICEF Innocenti has a critical and expanding role in producing research and evidence to inform policymaking and programming.

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THE COVID PANDEMIC CONTINUED TO MARK THE RESEARCH AGENDA AND OPERATIONS OF UNICEF INNOCENTI IN 2021.

The pandemic has underscored the office's increasing focus on investigating how strong national systems can deal with shocks and safeguard social services. Strengthening systems, in turn, requires a greater focus on research – for it is only by applying rigorous analysis to complex challenges at global, regional and national levels that UNICEF will be able to find and suggest the best solutions for governments and other stakeholders. As the economic fallout and social costs of the COVID-19 crisis continued, UNICEF Innocenti carried out a wide range of activities in 2021 looking at how the pandemic has affected children. We:

- studied children's experiences of COVID-19 (in Canada, Italy and Madagascar), the new poor and the effects of economic contraction on children's well-being in West and Central Africa
- generated evidence highlighting the digital divides globally and regionally, analysed remote learning responses for pre-primary learners and drew attention to the need for implementation and scaling-up research
- authored a second joint report on education and the pandemic What's Next? Lessons on Education Recovery: Findings from a Survey of Ministries of Education Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- published a further report The State of the Global Education Crisis: A Path to Recovery with UNESCO and the World Bank to warn about growing learning losses and inequalities caused by school closures (updated estimates suggest learning poverty could increase from 56 per cent to 70 per cent because of COVID-19, with this generation standing to lose US$17 trillion in lifetime earnings). These closures not only affected children's learning but also impacted their overall well-being
- launched the COVID-19: Missing more than a classroom report in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP). The report investigated the impact of school closures on school feeding and children's nutrition, finding 39 billion in-school meals had been missed by the start of 2021
- maintained the Children and COVID-19 Research Library, started by UNICEF in 2020, which now contains more than 3,300 high-quality social science articles produced around the world, including a quarterly thematic digest containing evidence on the impacts of COVID-19 on issues such as mental health, violence against women and children and disability
- produced a dedicated research brief of the mega-map on child well-being, developed with the Campbell Collaboration, highlighting new evidence syntheses of relevance to COVID-19 and children
- generated a rapid evidence assessment on interventions to promote vaccine update and non-pharmaceutical (behavioural) interventions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Europe and Central Asia in conjunction with the UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) and the London Metropolitan University
- established and co-chaired, with Sheffield University, a Campbell Collaboration Global Coordinating Group for Evidence Synthesis on Children and Young Persons' Well-being
- supported the design and delivery of the inaugural Cochrane Convenes, which drew on experience of the COVID-19 pandemic to bring together leaders from across the world to explore and recommend changes needed in evidence synthesis to better prepare for and respond to future global health emergencies

- supported the design and delivery of the WHO Global Evidence to Policy Summit, which aimed to accelerate the role of evidence as a catalyst for policy and societal change towards more equitable, resilient and sustainable global health in a post-COVID-19 context
- collaborated with the McMaster Health Forum to generate a report on the Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges which aims to strengthen the use of evidence by decision-makers drawing upon lessons from the COVID-19 response.

CONFLICT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONTINUED TO BE AN IMPORTANT CONTEXTUAL BACKDROP

In addition to the pandemic, climate and conflict also influenced our work in 2021. The seventeenth edition of UNICEF Innocenti's flagship series, *The Innocenti Report Card on Child Well-Being in Rich Countries,* takes its first look at the physical, social and natural environments in which children in high-income countries live, from climate change to poverty. The analysis for the Report Card 17 was completed in 2021, with the report set to be published in May 2022.

The Reopening with Resilience series explored lessons from remote learning during COVID-19 to build more resilient education systems as climate change increases the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events. Climate change, along with COVID-19 and conflict, continues to be a serious threat to children's rights and futures and was a key issue for evidence-based advocacy in 2021. COVID-19 continued to hamper data collection, especially affecting the mobility and travel of teams, leading to delays in programme implementation and changes to workplans and timelines.

There are rising conflicts in several countries (such as Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Yemen) in which the Transfer Project and the GRASSP research programme are being implemented, so UNICEF Innocenti has been working more closely with country offices to manage fieldwork and develop studies that deal with these specific contexts.

In 2021, UNICEF Innocenti contributed to the process leading to the G20 Summit to ensure that evidence on children fed into the discussions on the three pillars of the Italian G20 presidency: *people, planet, prosperity.* These included:

- the policy brief *Digital Learning for Every Child: Closing the Gaps for an Inclusive and Prosperous Future*, prepared by UNICEF Innocenti in collaboration with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and UNICEF Programme Group, was accepted by the T20 engagement group as one of the official policy briefs for the final Communiqué
- facilitation of a workshop on inclusion and equal opportunities for Y20 (the youth arm of the G20), in collaboration with the Young Ambassadors Society (YAS)
- participation in the side event of G20 Health Ministers on Mental Health at the G20 Global Health Summit, and actively contributed to G20-related discussion groups on health, financial track, women (W20) and others
- as a member of the global reference group, UNICEF Innocenti also brought together organizations, such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, WHO and Population Council-Kenya, working on female genital mutilation (FGM) to produce a global research agenda. The document outlines evidence gaps and research priorities that need to be addressed to eliminate FGM over the next five years and provides approaches to enable uptake and effective use of the evidence generated (A Research Agenda to Strengthen Evidence Generation and Utilisation to Accelerate the Elimination of FGM | UNICEF).

Research in the spotlight

This section highlights the key results in research generation and use achieved in 2021, which received the most attention or had the most influence and stirred policy and programming action.

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Social and economic policy

A total of 13 collections of primary data from households and individuals across multiple countries/regions including Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Italy, Madagascar, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania, were carried out despite COVID-19 limitations. This enabled us to continue to:

- generate evidence and insights on vulnerability, poverty and social protection despite COVID constraints
- meet donor obligations and support countries
- contribute to their emergency programming/system development through up-to-date research.

The renewed support in 2021–2024 from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) will sustain the ongoing research on cash transfers as part of the Transfer Project and broaden the scope into social protection systems. It will also help establish UNICEF Innocenti as a lead not only in impact evaluation but also in systems reviews.

The research will also contribute to the rapid development of child-focused social protection systems across the globe as, at present, only around one in eight countries has any universal child allowance.

Expansion of our contribution to evidence-based advocacy and engagement on social and economic policy increased in 2021. Multiple engagements with policymakers took place across a diverse range of countries (ministers and ministries in Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Ethiopia, Ireland, Libya, United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania) and national statistical offices in UNICEF's eastern and southern Africa region. This resulted in strong feedback that links the work of UNICEF Innocenti to concrete action by policymakers.

Together with the International Labour Organization (ILO), we co-authored the family chapter in the World Social Protection Report 2020-22 and we are collaborating on an upcoming report on social protection and child labour.

Vite a colori

OVERVIEW

The *Vite a colori* report tells the experiences, perceptions and opinions of a group of adolescents in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in Italy.

This project has expanded to cover seven countries (Angola, Canada, Chile, Indonesia, Italy, Lesotho and Madagascar) across five UNICEF regions and is an example of how research in one country can cross-fertilize studies in others.

The project will offer important insights into how children have been affected by the pandemic and will provide practical and policy implications for their support. It has also generated important learning on methods that can be used in other crises or emergencies.

METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study relies on state-of-the-art qualitative methodologies, allowing UNICEF Innocenti to expand its capacity in this area, fill a gap in knowledge related to how children see the impact of COVID-19, and meet principles of child participation in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

IMPACT

The project has seen the development of children's participation in research, through a youth advisory board in Italy. It has strengthened links with UNICEF National Committees in Canada and Italy, with UNICEF Country Offices in Angola, Chile, Indonesia, Lesotho and Madagascar and with external research institutes in Canada, Indonesia and Madagascar. It has also developed a diverse network of international experts who act as advisers.

Where do rich countries stand on childcare?

OVERVIEW

Even before COVID-19, some of the world's richest countries were failing to offer comprehensive childcare solutions to all families. In some instances, this reflected their policy priorities rather than available resources. The COVID-19 pandemic also challenged children's education, care and well-being, as parents struggled to balance their responsibilities for childcare and employment, with a disproportionate burden placed on women. Lockdown and school closures meant that childcare was one of the worst-affected family services and this had a significant knock-on effect. The report *Where do rich countries stand on childcare?* built on previous work by UNICEF Innocenti and probed more deeply into family-friendly policies in wealthy nations.

METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The report showed how governments can support parents and guardians through paid parental leave, affordable and high-quality childcare and other measures. Using the most recent comparable data, the report assessed the parental leave and childcare policies in the 41 high-income countries that are part of the OECD and/or the European Union. It concludes with nine recommendations on how policies can be improved to provide comprehensive solutions for all families.

IMPACT

By the end of 2021, the full version of the report was downloaded 11,558 times, appeared in 163 online articles or social media posts, and was quoted in major policy documents such as the European Commission's report Education and Training Monitor 2021. The report has also become "go-to" research for international comparisons of family policies in the press, as seen in The Guardian and Yahoo.

Social Spending Monitor

OVERVIEW

Launched in 2021, this series takes a deep dive into a pressing issue affecting social spending and children. These reports include case studies from countries in quarterly briefs on COVID-19 and the looming debt crisis, debt distress in the Middle East and North Africa and other topics.

METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This work has further established UNICEF Innocenti as a leading voice on child-responsive fiscal policy, and public services and benefits in low-and-middle-income countries. It has also demonstrated the severe effects that COVID-19 is having on public expenditures, and how official development assistance and debt-servicing contributes to the picture.

IMPACT

This work has already been influential, having been cited multiple times in policy documentation, the media and in reports by other international organizations.

The Transfer Project: A decade of exploring cash transfers and their impact on child well-being

In 2021, UNICEF Innocenti continued generating rigorous evidence on the impacts of cash transfer programmes and prompted a learning and knowledge exchange across sub-Saharan Africa under the Transfer Project. This was done in collaboration with regional and country offices, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, national governments and researchers. New research was launched in Ghana and Nigeria, and, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, mixed-methods primary data collections were successfully carried out in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Notable publications included an assessment of disability and its influence on personal well-being in Tanzania; a paper describing conducting impact evaluations in fragile and humanitarian settings; and a summary synthesis of the evidence generated by the Transfer Project since 2009. Phase 2 (2018–2021) was successfully completed, and major achievements included:

- 49 African researchers trained in impact evaluation methods
- 7 African fellows mentored
- publication of 11 research reports
- 38 journal articles (including 36 open-access)
- 13 working papers
- 23 briefs and 21 blogs
- evidence presented at more than 21 national dissemination events
- 79 international meetings and practitioner workshops.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) signed a new agreement with UNICEF Innocenti to support Phase 3 of the Transfer Project from 2021-2024, which will prioritize rigorous research on impact, design, implementation, and systemic integration and build investment cases for government-run cash transfers in sub-Saharan Africa.

What Makes Me? Core Capacities for Living and Learning

OVERVIEW

The *What Makes Me? Core Capacities for Living and Learning* report explores how 'core capacities' – or cornerstones of more familiar concepts, such as life skills and competences – develop over the early part of the life course and contribute to children's personal well-being and development. The report assesses how core capacities improve the lives of children and enhance understanding of the ways in which education and broader social systems can protect and promote these capacities.

METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

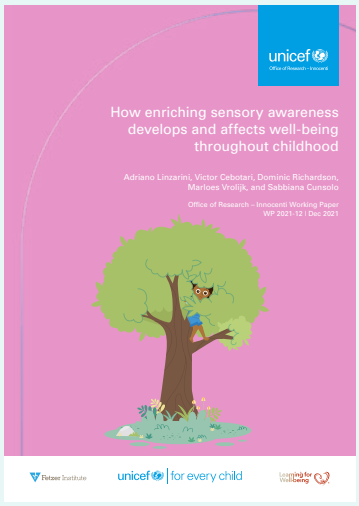
The report synthesizes the work of the *Measuring What Matters* project and nine detailed working papers – covering the core capacities of 'discerning patterns', 'enriching sensory awareness', 'empathizing', 'inquiring', 'listening', 'observing', 'reflecting', 'relaxing' and 'sensing' – that individually review the empirical evidence on each core capacity in the academic literature.

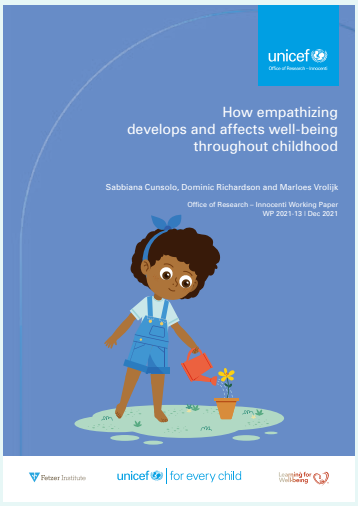
Each working paper assesses the contribution of the core capacities and the perspectives from which they are applied – mental, physical, emotional and spiritual – to children's well-being and development. They also examine the practice and policies applied by adults working with children in relation to each core capacity.

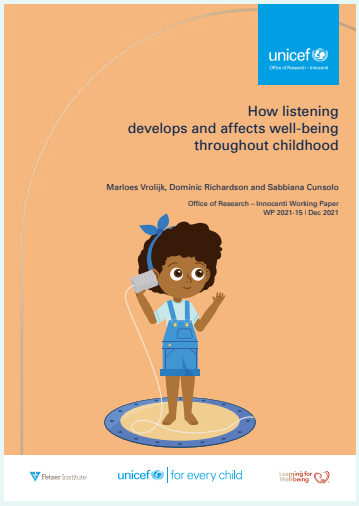
The *Measuring What Matters* project builds on the existing evidence base to understand better how children's personal attributes (age and gender), and the world around them promote the use of core capacities for children's well-being, and how policies and practices for child development support this. It outlines practical steps to improve the living and learning conditions for children globally – at school, at home and in their daily lives across their childhood and into adulthood.

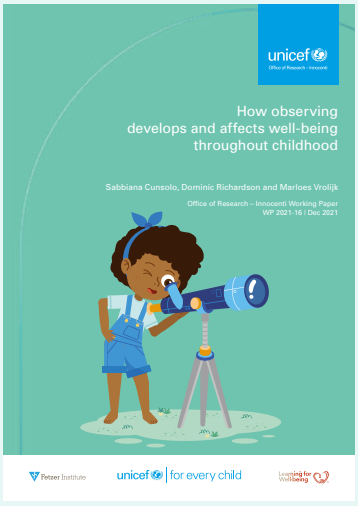
IMPACT

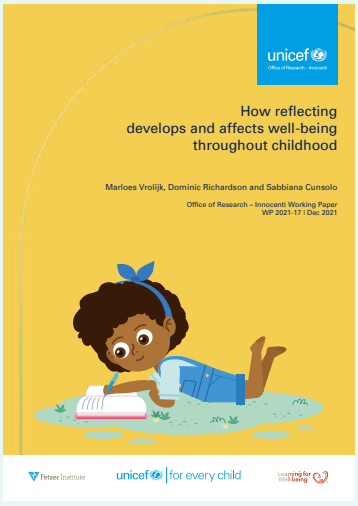
Since the launch of *What Makes Me?* as part of the Web Information Systems Engineering (WISE) conference in Doha in November 2021, engagement with policy and civil society has been strong. Training on core capacities and their use in schools is planned with the Ministry of Education in the State of Palestine for the first quarter of 2022, and a presentation was given to the board of the Steiner Waldorf Schools, which is intending to apply lessons from the research on the development of teaching and learning practices in its schools worldwide.

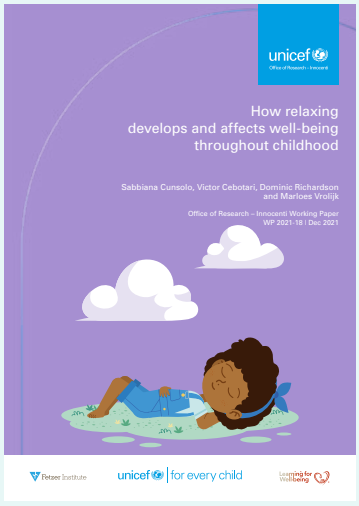


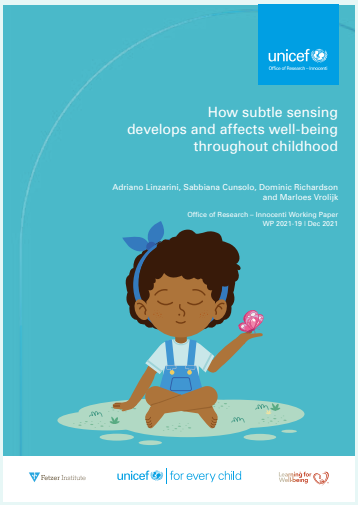












https://www.unicef-irc.org/what-makes-me

Education and learning

Globally, over half of children in low- and middle-income countries cannot read and understand a simple story by the age of 10, and COVID-19 has only made this learning crisis more severe, especially for the most marginalized students. UNICEF Innocenti's Research on Education and Development (READ) unit generates and supports the use of quality research to address the global learning crisis and ensure every child learns.

READ conducts demand-driven, country-level research spanning foundational learning, digital learning and innovation, teachers, early childhood education, inclusive education for children with disabilities, sport for development, and gender.

Across these thematic areas, READ maintains an equity focus, generating evidence on what works for the most vulnerable children.

READ focuses on research embedded within systems, policies and programmes across 44 countries, working in close partnership with governments, UNICEF country offices, regional offices, and headquarters to co-create research and maximize its use for decision-making. The unit contributes to global dialogues and fora, including the Building Evidence in Education Working Group and the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel, on designing research for use by decision-makers.

Time to Teach

OVERVIEW

Time to Teach provides insights into the reasons for absenteeism among primary school teachers across sub-Saharan Africa. A synthesis brief for West and Central Africa and 11 new country reports were published in 2021.

METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This mixed-methods study found that 14.7 per cent of primary school teachers in the region are frequently absent from school, 14.5 per cent are absent from class and 15.3 per cent systematically reduce instruction time. Absenteeism is higher in public schools and among younger and less experienced teachers. Despite high levels of absenteeism, evidence shows that, while teachers are generally committed to their job, the education system urgently needs strengthening to support them.

IMPACT

Findings were disseminated through five workshops organized with the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office and with UNICEF country offices, targeting policymakers and partners, and through conversations on reconceptualizing how teacher absenteeism is defined.

Playing the Game

OVERVIEW

The *Playing the Game* report synthesizes findings from 10 case studies of Sport for Development (S4D) organizations operating in diverse countries and with different thematic focuses, and outlines an evidence-based framework for child and youth S4D programming. The companion practitioners' toolkit offers guiding questions and practical recommendations for designing new programmes, guiding the expansion of existing ones to new locations, and improving programmatic and organizational aspects.

METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The S4D framework identifies eight key S4D programme elements across the three stages of the programming cycle: design, implementation and scaling up. The framework emphasizes the need for organizations to gather information about the local context, identify target groups and establish smart partnerships to ensure smooth operation. The analysis also finds that organizations should train coaches in safeguarding children, utilize high-quality curriculum and methods, and design monitoring and evaluation approaches that can help them learn what does, or does not, work and use these lessons as a basis for sustainable scaling up.

IMPACT

The S4D main report, the practitioners' toolkit and the case studies were launched in partnership with the Barça Foundation at a United Nations General Assembly side event in September 2021, reaching 500 plus participants across more than 75 countries. UNICEF Innocenti also presented its findings at the international SportBiz Europe meeting in October 2021 and at the High-Level Officials Meeting of the UNHCR in December 2021. The report's findings were also included in an S4D presentation at the WISE Summit in December 2021.

Unlocking Learning: The implementation and effectiveness of digital learning for Syrian refugees in Lebanon

OVERVIEW

UNICEF Innocenti builds action research into the implementation of the Akelius Digital Learning course, which aims to improve learning for marginalized children and young people in nine countries across the Middle East, Africa and Europe. The research generates insights on what works, and how, and identifies ways to continuously improve and increase the reach of the programme.

METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

In Lebanon, where 40 per cent of school-age children and adolescents are Syrian refugees, the Akelius Digital Learning course was designed to accelerate English and French language learning and facilitate access to the Lebanese education system, where classes are taught in Arabic, French and English. As COVID-19 shut down schools and learning centres across the country, UNICEF Innocenti's rapid action research looked at how the digital learning course was used in the transition to remote learning and found that students who used the programme made gains in their language learning. Findings also highlighted the significant support needed for teachers and emphasized their critical role in accelerating learning through digital programmes.

IMPACT

The research informed the implementation and scale-up of the Akelius Digital Learning programme, from 200 students before COVID to more than 26,000 students and 1,336 teachers.

Early childhood education

OVERVIEW

The UNICEF Innocenti research paper It's Not Too Late to Act on Early Learning highlighted the need to prioritize early childhood education in the COVID-19 era, with estimates that school closures could cost pre-primary students $1.6 trillion in lost future earnings.

METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The youngest learners in low- and middle-income countries lost more instruction days and were less likely to benefit from remote learning than their counterparts in high-income nations.

Lessons from accelerated, bridging and remedial programmes can show how to mitigate the long-term educational impact for these children.

IMPACT

The findings were presented at a Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Global Education Summit side event in July 2021, attended by 400 people, with more than 500 subsequent views of the recording of the event.

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Reopening with Resilience

OVERVIEW

The Reopening with Resilience research series, undertaken by UNICEF Innocenti in collaboration with the UNICEF Global Education in Emergencies team, provides analysis on remote learning responses to the global COVID-era school closures. The series highlights how the effects of COVID-19 for children in low- and middle-income countries will be severe, given low levels of learning prior to the pandemic, and the vast disparities in access to devices, internet and electricity needed for remote learning.

METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Access to remote learning during COVID-19 school closures has been a challenge for children in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in rural areas. In many countries, broadcast media (TV and radio) were used to reach those without access to the internet. Connectivity remains a major barrier to digital learning, with two thirds of the world's school-age children lacking access to the internet at home. Mobile phones are the most prevalent and equally distributed technology that can be harnessed for remote learning but, despite this, have been given less attention in remote learning delivery.

IMPACT

These reports build on existing evidence to highlight key lessons learned in continuing education for all students during widespread school closures, and provide recommendations to build resilience into national education systems.

Child and adolescent rights and empowerment

The Child and Adolescent Rights and Empowerment (CARE) team builds evidence to inform global, regional and national strategies. It strengthens systems and programmes on a range of child rights issues with a focus on the protection of children from violence, harm and exploitation. The CARE team's portfolio spans work on violence against girls, boys and women, migration and displacement, child labour, gender-responsive and age-sensitive social protection, harmful practices including child marriage, and birth registration. The team works through a combination of empirical research, evidence synthesis, and thought leadership to look at the intersections of these issues through the life course of childhood and intergenerational intersections.

In 2021, UNICEF Innocenti's CARE team made significant contributions to UNICEF's thinking on how it will accelerate actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the decade ahead, through the Child Protection Strategy (2022-2030) and Gender Policy and Action Plan (GPAP, 2022-2025) development processes.

The *Gender Dimensions of Violence Against Children and Adolescents* discussion paper, provided evidence-backed arguments that helped UNICEF intentionally embrace a gender-transformative approach to child protection and expand its strategy to focus on violence against boys, girls and women and on violence against women beyond emergencies.

The team collaborated within UNICEF and with external partners. On migration and displacement evidence, we worked with UNICEF East Asia and Pacific, UNICEF Afghanistan, UNICEF Programme Group, Data and Analytics team, and the International Data Alliance for Children. Externally, we established new partnerships with UNHCR on refugee inclusion in national education systems and worked with UNHCR and the World Bank to produce the *Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement JDC Quarterly Digest*, *Data and Research on Children and Youth in Forced Displacement*. Collaboration with the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (GPECM) led to the launch of the Strategic Technical Assistance Research (STAR) Initiative to end harmful practices.

Evidence on Educational Strategies to Address Child Labour

OVERVIEW

The *Evidence on Educational Strategies to Address Child Labour in South Asia* research project continued building evidence on effective educational strategies for reducing child labour in India and Bangladesh.

Research by UNICEF partners, the Economic Research Council in Bangladesh and Population Council in India, continues, with progress made in collecting data despite COVID-induced operational challenges.

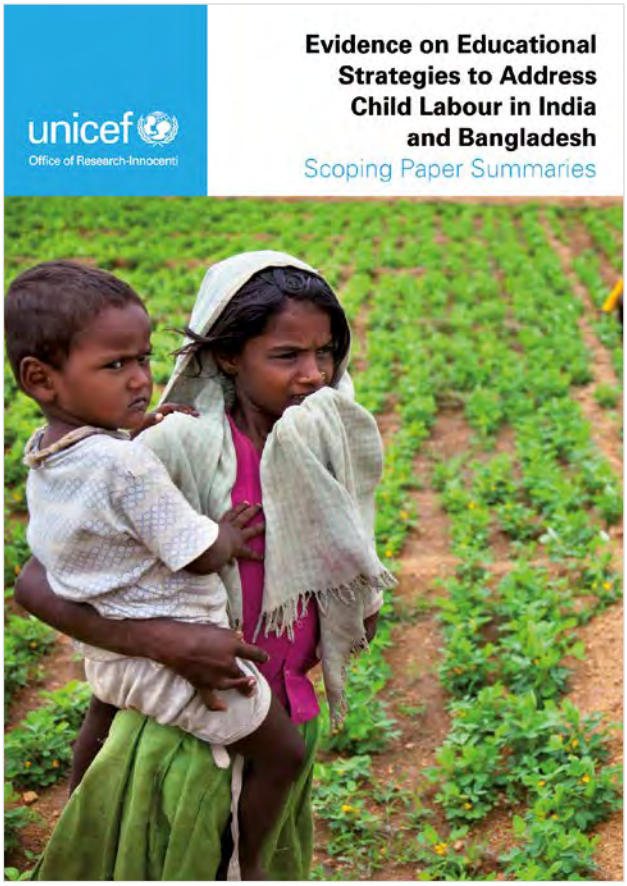
METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Full findings, implications and measures of impact are expected in 2022. The project stepped up information-sharing on education and child labour through:

- a Leading Minds Online webinar on Child Labour and COVID in June that discussed the new child labour estimates and their relevance in the light of COVID-19
- technical and strategic inputs to UNICEF global planning for the *2021 International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour*
- publication of a compendium of scoping paper summaries in May, which has attracted 2,000 online views on the UNICEF Innocenti website.

IMPACT

UNICEF Innocenti anticipates the project will make a significant impact in 2022 with the publication of its main research products, including a synthesis report, country reports and working papers, and the results of a global systematic review of evidence. The project is also in the process of launching an innovative Learning Accelerator Fund that will support continuing knowledge generation by the India and Bangladesh partners. Building on this work, UNICEF Innocenti will also be making a presentation to the 2022 high-level Think20 (T20) conference during Indonesia's G20 presidency on the theme of *Eliminating Child Labour, Promoting Human Capital and Ensuring Well-being*.



Reimagining Migration Responses

OVERVIEW

In 2021, UNICEF Innocenti's Migration and Displacement research programme published a series of reports from the 2020 study in the Horn of Africa. The large-scale study, *Reimagining Migration Responses,* in child migration and displacement in the Horn of Africa involved interviews with 1,290 migrant children and young people in Ethiopia, Somaliland and Puntland and Sudan.

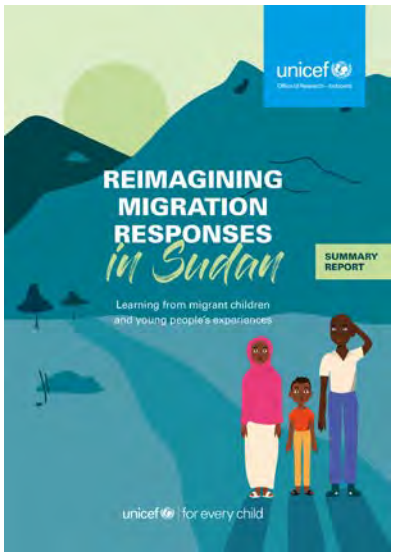
METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The reports were published at a time when the number of international migrants under 18 in the region is rising, accelerated by complex and fast-evolving economic, demographic, security and environmental drivers.

IMPACT

The reports have contributed to addressing the evidence gaps on children and young people migrating in the Horn of Africa. They provide an enhanced understanding of their protective environments, access to services and resources, and perceptions of safety, well-being and trust in authorities and other providers.

The Mixed Migration Centre, a leading source of knowledge on mixed migration, highlighted the Reimagining Migration Responses in Sudan report in its Q3 Quarterly Mixed Migration Update, covering quarterly trends and migration-related updates in the North Africa region.



Data and Research on Children and Youth in Forced Displacement: Identifying Gaps and Opportunities

OVERVIEW

UNICEF Innocenti worked with UNHCR and the World Bank to produce the *Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement JDC Digest – Data and Research on Children and Youth in Forced Displacement*, spotlighting several recent data-driven contributions addressing critical knowledge gaps.

We also fostered collaboration within UNICEF on migration and displacement evidence, contributing to the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific region's *Children on the Move* situation analysis, and establishing new partnerships with UNHCR on refugee inclusion in national education systems and other areas.

METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The digest provides a selection of credible, actionable evidence which practitioners and policymakers urgently need to better support those who are forcibly displaced around the world, regardless of age.

IMPACT

Collaboration on this publication provides an opportunity for further partnership with UNHCR and the World Bank on migration research.

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Improving efforts to end violence against children through evidence

OVERVIEW

Building on UNICEF Innocenti and Campbell Collaboration's Evidence and Gap Map on Interventions for Reducing Violence against Children, and the Gender Dimensions of Violence against Children and Adolescents discussion paper, UNICEF Innocenti led a coalition of partners in implementing two evidence events.

METHODS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The first was Taking stock of the evidence on preventing and responding to violence against children; the second was Intersections between Violence Against Children and Women Prevention and Response: Identifying Evidence Gaps and Opportunities for Collaboration.

About 1,000 researchers, practitioners, policymakers and activists from around the world gathered virtually to

- consider the evidence on violence against children, including its intersections with violence against women
- identify existing knowledge gaps
- discuss opportunities to increase coordination to prevent and respond to both forms of violence.

Additional presentations on the Evidence Gap Map (EGM) were made at the Europe Conference of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN); the INSPIRE conference supported by the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (INSPIRE comprises seven strategies to end violence against children); and the work on intersections between violence against children and women presented to the White House Gender Advisory Council.

IMPACT

Outcomes of these events led to the development of a shared research agenda on the intersections of violence against children and against women, a joint effort of UNICEF Innocenti with WHO and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI).

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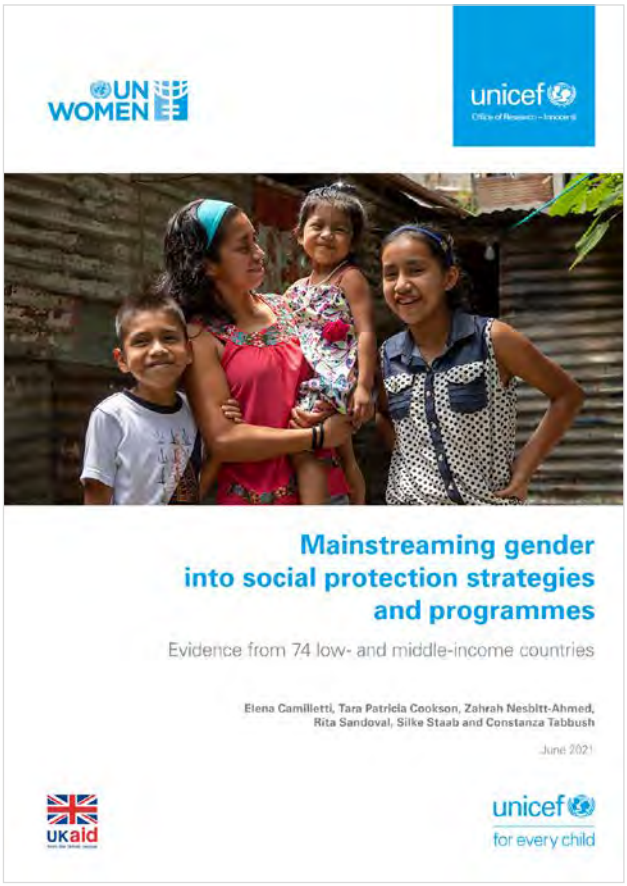
Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection Programme (GRASSP)

GRASSP, a programme by UNICEF and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), continued to accelerate efforts on research delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Data was collected in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and the United Republic of Tanzania targeted and is to be completed in 2022.

Research on reform processes of social protection systems began with stakeholder meetings involving key government and non-governmental actors in Vietnam and will continue in 2022 in Angola, Ethiopia, Mexico and Uruguay. The programme also continued to build evidence on analytical approaches and measures for research that can help guide the integration of gender considerations into social protection including mapping social protection strategies and programmes in collaboration with UN Women.

Responding to the growing urgency of the climate crisis, and in the lead-up to the twenty-sixth United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), GRASSP convened a panel of leading experts on gender-responsive social protection and climate change.

Additionally, the programme continues to inform policy and research discussions in a variety of contexts, e.g., through UNICEF's Gender Action Plan, 2022- 2025 and other policy documents, and in research conducted by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) on gender, climate change and social protection informed by the GRASSP conceptual framework. UN Women, as part of the Joint Programme on Universal Adaptive Social Protection in the Eastern Caribbean, has also drawn on the framework as a resource for universal basic income as a form of gender-responsive social protection discussions. The blog, Gender, unpaid care work and social protection has been cited extensively, including by the European Parliament's study Gender equality: economic value of care from the perspective of the applicable EU funds: an exploration of an EU strategy towards valuing the care economy.



Digital engagement

In 2021, UNICEF Innocenti's digital research programme continued its focus on evidence generation directly with children and their families. Under the Disrupting Harm project, UNICEF Innocenti carried out extensive data collection with more than 13,000 children and 13,000 caregivers in East Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam), and in eastern and southern Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania).

This project, supported by research partners ECPAT International and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), provides the most comprehensive overview to date on how technology facilitates the sexual exploitation and abuse of children, both online and offline, and how national protection systems are responding, or failing to respond, to this crime. In 2021, the first country assessments were finalized and launched, providing an evidence-driven road map for countries to improve prevention and response to online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA).

In parallel, we worked with the LEGO Group and Western Sydney University to conduct participatory creative workshops with children in 13 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America to get their perspectives on how digital experiences and digital play can contribute positively or negatively to their well-being.

The long-term aim of this project is to support the development and testing of evidence-based measures that can guide the design and evaluation of positive digital experiences for children, and to provide political, regulatory, and civil society actors with enough evidence and tools to promote good practices for designing digital experiences for children in a way that promotes their well-being.

Disrupting Harm in Kenya

OVERVIEW

Disrupting Harm in Kenya is the first of a series of 13 national reports produced by this project.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

In 2021, 12 per cent of children in Kenya aged 12-17 and who had access to the internet, were subjected to OCSEA. Most of these said the offender was someone they knew. Data from law enforcement and children's testimonies also highlighted the ways that sexual abuse can occur along a continuum of in-person and digital interactions between offenders and victims. But response mechanisms to OCSEA, including existing legislation and public-sector capacity, often lag behind technology. These findings have direct implications for policy and prevention programmes and highlight the value of embedding responses to OCSEA into existing child protection mechanisms where possible. The findings and recommendations of this report are aimed at policymakers, law enforcement bodies, NGOs, schools and the tech industry.

IMPACT

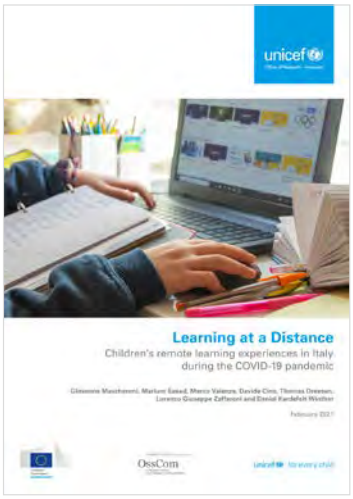
The Government of Kenya has been involved in this project from the outset, providing feedback on data-collection tools and taking part in national consultations, to implement the report's recommendations. Since the launch of this report in October 2021, the findings have been used to develop the Nairobi County Child Protection and Welfare Policy.

Learning at a distance

Italy was the first country in Europe to implement a national lockdown. Many children and their families saw their mobility severely restricted for several months, and school closure was widespread.

This report is part of a wider project that focused on children and parents' experiences of using digital technology during the lockdown, drawing on data from 11 European countries (and coordinated by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre). The report explores children's experiences of remote learning and highlights how existing inequalities might undermine remote learning opportunities, even among those with internet access. It also provides insights on how to support children's remote learning in the future.

Italian students missed 65 days of school in 2021, compared to a high-income country average of 27 missed days. This prolonged break is of concern as even short breaks in schooling can cause significant loss of learning for children and lead to educational inequalities in the longer term.



At least 3 million Italian students may not have been reached by remote learning due to a lack of devices or internet connectivity.

Expanding areas of research

UNICEF Innocenti's expanding research areas highlight new and emerging topics explored by the office to find answers to pressing questions for children in a changing world.

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Education

DATA MUST SPEAK

The *Data Must Speak* (DMS) Positive Deviance Research is a three-year, multi-country research programme that aims to identify and scale-up locally rooted solutions to improve learning. UNICEF Innocenti mobilized additional funding for DMS to expand to a total of 13 countries and facilitated 28 co-creation workshops, trainings and dissemination activities with ministries of education, UNICEF country offices and implementing partners.

In 2021, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Nepal and Togo completed several research stages and embedded preliminary findings into Education Sector Analysis and Planning. One of the preliminary findings from Lao PDR shows the positive impact of female headteachers on learning outcomes. Only 25 per cent of headteachers are women in the total sample studied, but among the highly effective schools, 41 per cent of headteachers are women. Similar findings are found in Togo: primary school exam results and promotion rates are higher for girls in schools where the headteacher is a woman, helping to reduce existing gender disparities between girls and boys.

UNICEF Innocenti, through DMS, positioned itself as a thought leader in designing research for use through co-creation with stakeholders from the outset, sharing its research methodology through conferences and convenings and reaching over 1,200 individuals. DMS's strong external visibility has helped to secure partnerships with the Jacobs Foundation, Schools2030, and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

DIGITAL LEARNING

Digital learning research builds evidence generation into the implementation of large-scale, multi-country digital learning programmes.

The Akelius-UNICEF partnership, which aims to improve foundational literacy and numeracy skills to facilitate marginalized children's participation in formal education, expanded research to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Mauritania, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Implementation research started within the *Learning Passport*, a partnership between UNICEF and Microsoft recognized as one of *TIME Magazine*'s Best Inventions of 2021.

An emerging research area is the Accessible Digital Textbooks (ADT) programme in Latin America and the Caribbean, which aims to create accessible content and tools for children with disabilities. The digital learning team at UNICEF Innocenti will embed evidence generation into the roll-out of the programme in multiple countries to understand ADT's impact on learning outcomes and inclusion for children with disabilities, and use the evidence to inform scale-up to more countries.

Social policy

INVESTMENT CASE FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION

This work, an emerging research area for UNICEF Innocenti in collaboration with Sida and the World Bank, reviews best methodological practice for undertaking cost-benefit research to build social protection systems, deliver social services and cash transfers. The research will continue in 2022 and include social protection investment case studies of selected sub-Saharan African countries.

CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD POVERTY

This research entails understanding poverty from a child's perspective, and how it varies within regions of a country. The work is in its first stage and represents a long-term ambition to bring children's perspectives into measuring child poverty and providing evidence on differences within countries on the experience of poverty to better inform policy responses.

FISCAL SPACE FOR IMPLEMENTING NATIONAL CHILD POLICIES

Research on mapping and evaluating public expenditures in low- and middle-income countries, through the Social Spending Monitor and the upcoming International Public Policy Monitor, will continue in 2022. This work is designed to shed light on fiscal space for implementing national child policies and assessing best practice in public finance management.

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Child rights and protection

BIRTH REGISTRATION

Birth registration within stable systems providing universal civil registration is a bedrock of child rights, ensuring that no child is exploited, excluded or discriminated against due to an absence of credible documentation proving their age. In 2021, a new project was initiated to strengthen birth registration in three countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique and Nigeria. Phase one of the project '*Known from Birth: Generating and using evidence to strengthen birth registration systems'* focuses on policy-responsive evidence syntheses related to effective strategies to scale up initiatives and strengthen birth registration systems. Phase one of the work has been initiated in partnership with the Africa Centre for Evidence at the University of Johannesburg.

STRATEGIC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR RESEARCH

UNICEF Innocenti also launched a new initiative in collaboration with the GPECM called the STAR. This initiative aims at leveraging UNICEF Innocenti's technical expertise in designing and conducting mixed-methods research to improve the quality of national and regional studies funded under the GPECM. In addition to providing close advisory and technical support, rapid evidence syntheses and research uptake activities will be undertaken to ensure that the research generated by the GPECM informs global, regional and national policy discussions in a timely and impactful way.

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Other emerging research areas

DISABILITY

A 2020 UNICEF Innocenti humanitarian research scoping paper highlighted disability as one of 10 priority gap areas for investment. Subsequently, a series of global consultations in 2021 with organizations of people with disabilities, UN organizations, researchers, international NGOs, donors and UNICEF offices resulted in a global research agenda and strategic actions.

This further prompted the commissioning of an EGM on inclusive interventions for children with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries to be published in 2022.

2021 also saw the publication of a series of related background papers as part of UNICEF and WHO's joint global report on assistive technologies and the development of an extensive review of research on assistive technologies and children that will be released in 2022.

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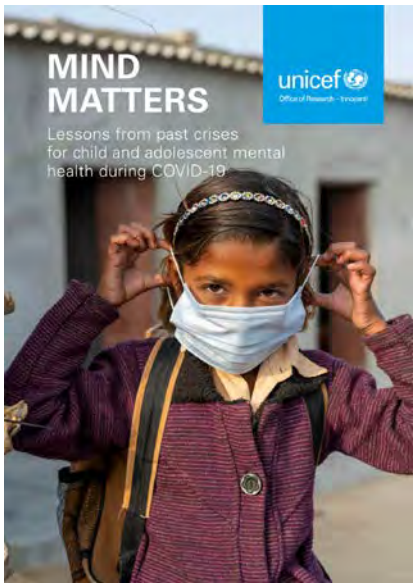
MENTAL HEALTH

In 2021, UNICEF Innocenti stepped up its work on mental health, launching two rapid review reports: *Mind Matters* and *Life in Lockdown*. Both reports focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child and adolescent mental health. The office also developed a research conceptual framework on mental health and initiated the EGM on child and adolescent mental health promotion – both of which will be published in 2022.

Mind matters

This report looks at the impacts of disasters and past epidemics, such as Ebola, HIV, SARS/MERS and Zika – on child and adolescent mental health and psychosocial well-being.

It examines how these insights can guide policies and programmes to support children, their families and communities during the current COVID-19 pandemic.



The report highlights proven and promising interventions culled from past experiences to mitigate the impact today – especially for the most vulnerable children and adolescents. These include social protection, care-giver skills and support, community and social support, life skills and school-based programmes, and specialized care.

Life in lockdown

COVID-19 lockdowns have significantly disrupted the daily lives of children and adolescents, with increased time at home, online learning and limited physical social interaction. This report seeks to understand the immediate effects on their mental health.

Covering more than 130,000 children and adolescents across 22 countries, the evidence shows increased stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, as well as increased alcohol and substance use, and externalizing behavioural problems. However, children and adolescents also reported positive coping strategies,

resilience, social connectedness through digital media, more family time, and relief from academic stress.

The report recommends building the evidence – through surveys, longitudinal studies and mixed methodologies among other measures – on the longer term impact of the pandemic on child and adolescent mental health in low- and middle-income countries, including vulnerable populations.

BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

UNICEF Innocenti's work on behavioural science took a major step forward in 2021, expanding its partners and initiatives.

The behavioural science team began working with UNICEF ECARO to help diagnose and respond to challenges affecting the uptake of primary health and immunization services. We also partnered with the global UNICEF immunization team to build country office capacity to support the application of behavioural science and human-centred design methods and to implement research to address the demand-related barriers to uptake of primary health services.

As one of the lead players in establishing UNICEF's Behavioural Insights Research and Design (BIRD) Laboratory, we were also responsible for building the prototype BIRD Laboratory website to be launched in 2022.

An applied behavioural science web page, built for the UNICEF Innocenti website, highlights our evolving expertise and interest in this area.

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Research facilitation, knowledge management and ethics

UNICEF Innocenti oversees research quality assurance and ethical evidence generation standard-setting for UNICEF worldwide. The Research Facilitation and Knowledge Management (RFKM) team focuses on research-related governance, knowledge management, capacity-development and uptake and impact activities, as well as on cross-sectoral methodological support in evidence synthesis; behavioural sciences research; implementation research; and strengthening an organizational evidence and learning culture across UNICEF and partners.

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EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS, CAPACITY-BUILDING, ETHICAL EVIDENCE GENERATION

UNICEF Innocenti collaborates with and supports other parts of the organization in their generation, synthesis and use of research. It supports the commissioning of high-quality and ethical research, and the training of UNICEF colleagues in robust research management processes and methods. These include evidence synthesis products such as EGMs; rapid evidence assessments and systematic reviews; applied research; surveys; impact evaluations; and longitudinal studies. The office strives to make research accessible, particularly to governments and non-academic audiences.

In 2021, UNICEF Innocenti developed and rolled out multiple modules and capacity-building exercises to foster evidence and learning cultures to support child rights, both internally and externally. These included commencing five child-focused evidence synthesis products in the areas of birth registration, child labour, disability, gender and social protection and mental health. In addition, guidance papers and toolkits were published relating to children, ethical considerations and behavioural science programmes, and predictive analytics.

Other important activities in 2021 included the annual Best of UNICEF Research (BOUR) publication, which showcases the organization's highest-quality, most innovative and impactful research, and which culminates in an award ceremony at the end of the year. Internal capacity-building activities organized in late 2021 included a Research Uptake and Impact workshop, conducted in collaboration with CommsConsult and an Adaptive Programming workshop.

The workshop was held jointly with development consultancy Acute Incite and the UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes and Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring. It built on a new open-access AGORA course on An Introduction to Thinking and Working Politically (AGORA is a free portal offering tailored learning solutions to UNICEF's staff, partners and supporters). Applied training on research management and methods was also held for the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office and its Madagascar and Malawi country offices, building enhanced understanding of effective research management processes among relevant country office staff.

To strengthen organizational research governance, a robust assessment was undertaken to determine the critical issues in the creation of open-access and open-data policies in UNICEF. Further, the Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis was revised to reflect contemporary developments in research methods, tools, and contexts and feedback from internal and external stakeholders. Reflecting this substantial revision, the corresponding online training was updated, resulting in the creation of two different modules: one for staff, and a more basic training for external parties.

The Children and COVID-19 Research Library was started by UNICEF Innocenti in 2020 to curate the best research on the pandemic and children, and it grew and maintained its popularity in 2021. The openly searchable library continues to collect new high-quality research on the impacts of COVID-19 on children and adolescents and is updated daily. More than 3,300 pieces of research are currently included in the library.

In June 2021, UNICEF Innocenti launched a quarterly digest drawing on the latest research collected in the library and focusing on trending themes. The first issue focused on the impacts of COVID-19 on the mental health of children and youth. The second issue focused on violence against children and women during the COVID-19 pandemic. The next digest will be released in early 2022 and will focus on how children with disabilities have experienced the pandemic.

The *Gender Solutions* project is a new collaborative initiative between UNICEF Innocenti and the organization's headquarters and regional offices. It aims to capture the impact of gender-related evidence at UNICEF since the launch of the first Gender Action Plan in 2014. This will inform future evidence generation linked to the new Gender Action Plan for UNICEF's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. The project will result in a publication highlighting case studies of impactful evidence and a series of Gender Evidence Awards to reward excellence in gender-related evidence generation and use.

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Convening, thought leadership and communications

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CONVENING, THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS

UNICEF Innocenti convenes leaders, experts, practitioners, policymakers, young people and other stakeholders to discuss the latest evidence, identify evidence gaps and ways to fill them, share good practices and set research and policy agendas for the future. In 2021, the office continued to convene solely online, reflecting the impossibility of hosting events in Florence as the pandemic continued.

In 2021, we continued our *Leading Minds Online* (LMO) webinar series, staying with the theme of how COVID-19 was affecting children as the pandemic entered its third year. Four LMO events were held on diverse issues, including the looming debt crisis and COVID-19-induced debt burdens on countries; vaccines and the great divide between rich and poor countries; the effect of COVID-19 on the increase of child labour mostly among the poorest and most marginalized children; and the effects of online learning on children.

In addition to the online LMO events, we also hosted or co-hosted several other important events. In mid-2021, the office organized a workshop on inclusion and equal opportunities for Youth 20 (the youth arm of the G20), in collaboration with the Youth Ambassadors Society. The office also participated in the side event of G20 Health Ministers on Mental Health at the G20 Global Health Summit, and actively contributed to G20-related discussion groups on health, financial track, women and others.

For the first time, UNICEF Innocenti participated in the Cooperation Forum of the Rome MED – Mediterranean Dialogues, the annual high-level initiative promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI) in Rome with the aim to address shared challenges in the Mediterranean area at both regional and international level.

And in October 2021, the UK FCDO and UNICEF Innocenti convened a webinar, 'What does gender-responsive social protection have to do with the climate crisis?'. Conducted against the backdrop of the latest UN climate negotiations (COP26), the webinar facilitated a discussion on the role of GRASSP in responding to shocks caused by the climate crisis.

We also supported numerous online and hybrid global webinars and launches featuring experts and leaders from governments, academia, international organizations and think tanks. These included:

- **Global launch** of *Playing the Game: A framework for child-focused sport for development programmes* with the Barça Foundation during the United Nations General Assembly, reaching more than 500 participants
- **Online launches of joint reports** of UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank under the series *What's Next? Lessons on Education Recovery: Findings from a Survey of Ministries of Education amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic,* and *The State of the Global Education Crisis: A Path to Recovery.* Both initiatives shed light on the global education crisis and charted a path towards building more effective, equitable and resilient education systems
- *What Makes Me? Core Capacities for Living and Learning* high-level **policy panel discussion** and **report launch** was held during the WISE Summit 2021, with participation of the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education from Sierra Leone, Minister of Education of the State of Palestine, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, and the Learning for Well-being Foundation

- **Numerous thematic webinars**, including on the intersections between violence against children and women, gender-responsive social protection, behavioural sciences and implementation research, and online side events during the Global Education Summit, Evidence and Implementation Summit and the Africa Evidence Week 2021.

In October 2021, UNICEF Innocenti hosted the second UNICEF Innocenti Film Festival, following its inauguration in 2019. The festival, entitled *Narratives of childhood from around the world*, curated and presented 38 films from 29 countries on the dynamic forces shaping childhood and the experiences of children in different contexts. The film festival added new partners, and features including its own Iris Awards (designed in collaboration with students) as well as hybrid in-person/online screening options for viewers. The film festival represents a unique and innovative opportunity for UNICEF to use film and storytelling as an advocacy tool for child rights.

The combination of bringing together the films' directors and UNICEF Innocenti's researchers as subject experts to debate and discuss issues illustrated throughout the films was compelling and amplified the power of films to illustrate research findings.

In support of the extensive research portfolio generated by the office, the communication team produced nine innovative and immersive microsites. These include:

- Best of UNICEF Research 2021
- Children in High-Income Countries
- Reimagining Migration Responses
- Reopening with Resilience
- Social Spending Monitor
- Sport for Development phase II – Playing the Game
- Time to Teach
- UNICEF Innocenti Film Festival
- What Makes Me? Core Capacities for Living and Learning

In 2021, a new social media platform strategy was developed and complemented by an increasing capacity to monitor digital engagement and inform decisions about production and timing of content through monthly digital impact reports. Use of new analytics tools such as Overton unlocked the potential to measure uptake further, particularly in policy domains. UNICEF Innocenti's website has more than 2.8 million active users and over 200,000 active social media users, and more than 150 policy citations of UNICEF Innocenti research in policy documents of governments and multilateral and academic institutions across the globe. The report on family-friendly policies remains one of the top performing reports with more than 100,000 lifetime downloads so far.

Lessons learned

UNICEF Innocenti undertakes mid-year and end-year reviews to reflect on its work, identify risk and opportunities and to learn lessons on what works in both its research and its operations. These points are some of the key insights in 2021.

- **Understand the scale and complexity of COVID-19.** The impact of the pandemic continues to be felt markedly, and it has revealed the complex intersections between different aspects of child well-being in terms of outcomes, and response mechanisms. There is a need for strategies to assess how the effects of COVID-19 on children will evolve or persist in the coming years. UNICEF Innocenti can have a lead role in adopting a systems-level framework and perspective for viewing global megatrends (pandemics, urbanization, digital interconnectivity, climate, etc.) and their impacts on children's rights and futures.
- **Continue using co-created country level (field-oriented approaches) when designing research projects.** UNICEF Innocenti's active engagement with the organization's country and regional offices, national governments and implementing partners has proved increasingly successful in aligning research priorities to evidence needs. These findings are reinforced by annual surveys conducted with country and regional offices, in which this co-creation is consistently cited as a key strength of the office. In 2022 and beyond, we will continue to co-create research with those who intend to use it, build research into implementation of programmes and policies, and facilitate real-time improvements in delivery of results. Strengthening the capacity of country and regional office teams will be needed to support them during co-creation processes with in-country stakeholders and fieldwork.
- **Plan research uptake strategies from the start.** As UNICEF Innocenti works closely with governments, UNICEF country and regional teams, it has been important to plan concrete research uptake strategies from the outset. These strategies inform the research design (generally through co-creation), implementation of the research (usually through adopting a learning-by-doing approach), and how the research can leverage key policy windows to ensure findings are used by policymakers at all levels. More time and resource investments are required to ensure robust dissemination, uptake and impact.
- **Strengthen internal and external collaboration with partners to maximize impact.** Collaboration within UNICEF Innocenti and UNICEF, as well as with external organizations, has improved in recent years, particularly since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, and should be sustained. Strengthening feedback loops with headquarter divisions and regional and country offices, and sustaining regular touchpoints have proved successful in emphasizing complementarity and collaboration. Working more closely with national and other partners who have grounded perspectives on change has also helped UNICEF Innocenti's research to be nimble and alert to changing dynamics on the ground.
- **Use existing global opportunities more effectively.** In 2021, international commemorative occurrences such as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, and global events such as the G20 summit were used to capitalize on a period of global exposure, agenda-setting and to enhance issue/programme/project visibility. There is considerable potential to build on these events more strategically in 2022 and beyond, with greater attention to strategy and planning.
- **Convene more online to reach more people.** Online convening has provided an opportunity to reach significantly more people than was possible in-person pre-pandemic. Even with a return to in-person convening, we should maintain our acumen in online convening. These will need to be shorter events, with easy-to-enter systems and formats rather than days-long or hours-long programmes as witnessed by the hour and half-hour LMO events, multiple online thematic convenings and the BOUR 2021 awards event.
- **Transparency and regular dialogue help in managing partner expectations.** Regular contact, open dialogue and sharing of information with partners have facilitated addressing COVID-19 delays and changes and allowed for pragmatic planning and responses.

Finance, people, partnerships

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Financial resourcing and management

UNICEF Innocenti spent a total of US$8.7 million in 2021 to deliver results through research generation and use, research facilitation, knowledge management and ethics in evidence, and convening, thought leadership and communication. Three quarters of these funds were mobilized from partners, with the remainder coming from UNICEF. In 2021 alone, UNICEF Innocenti raised almost US$11.8 million in additional grant funding. In addition, we received more than US$3 million from other UNICEF offices for joint research.

The regular contribution from the Government of Italy was the most significant, followed by UNICEF core funding and complemented by diverse public and philanthropic funding sources from long-term partners (*see Figure 2*).

Scaling innovation: Data Must Speak about positive deviant approaches to learning

US$159,578
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE (IDRC) ON BEHALF OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION EXCHANGE (KIX) OF THE GPE AND IDRC

Playing the Game: Phase 2 of understanding the evidence for child-focused sport for development

US$221,875
BARÇA FOUNDATION (WITH SUPPORT FROM THE SPANISH NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR UNICEF)

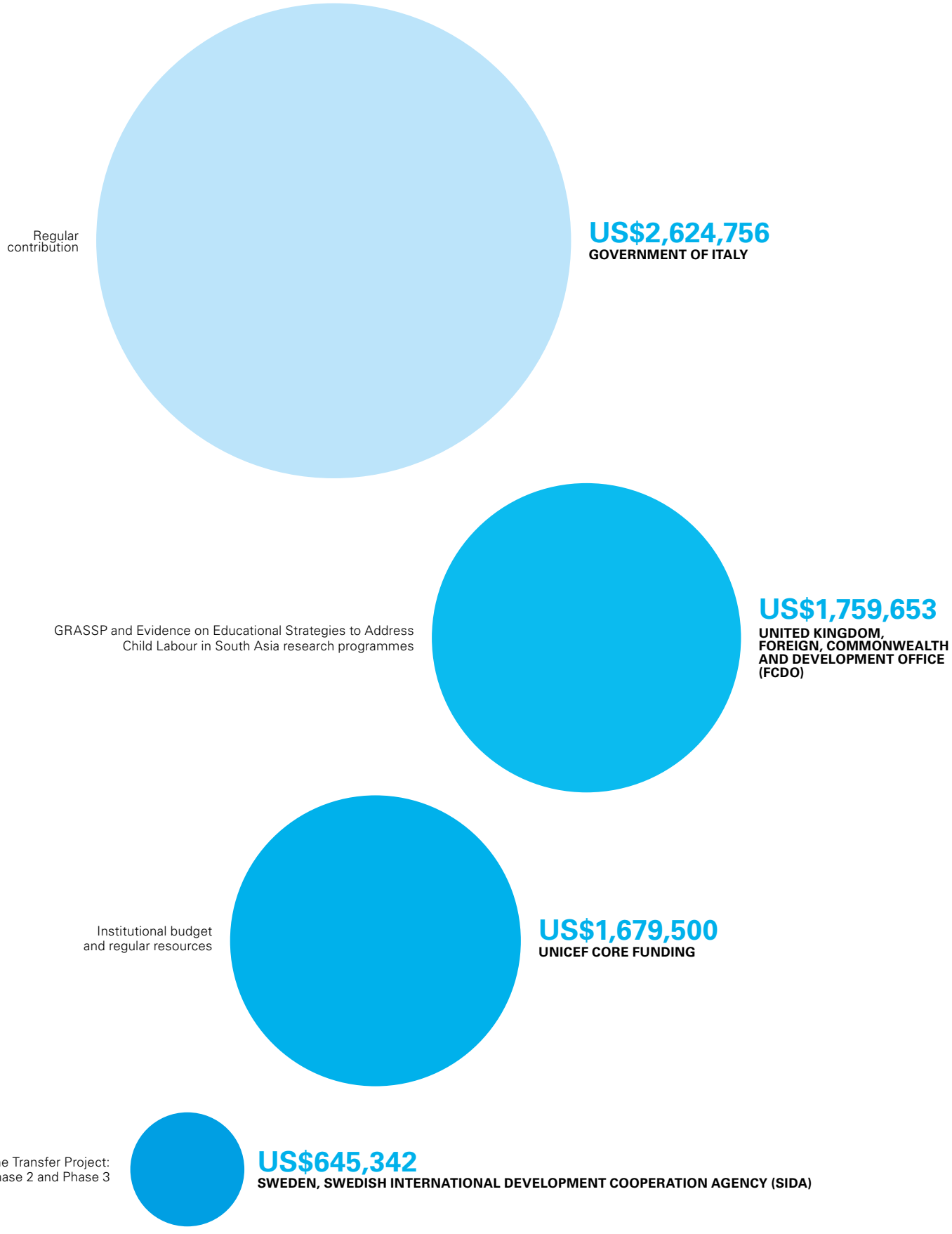
Global Humanitarian Thematic Fund, Education and Social Inclusion Thematic Pool

US$393,963
VARIOUS DONORS TO UNICEF THEMATIC FUNDS

Disrupting Harm: Investigating violence against children online

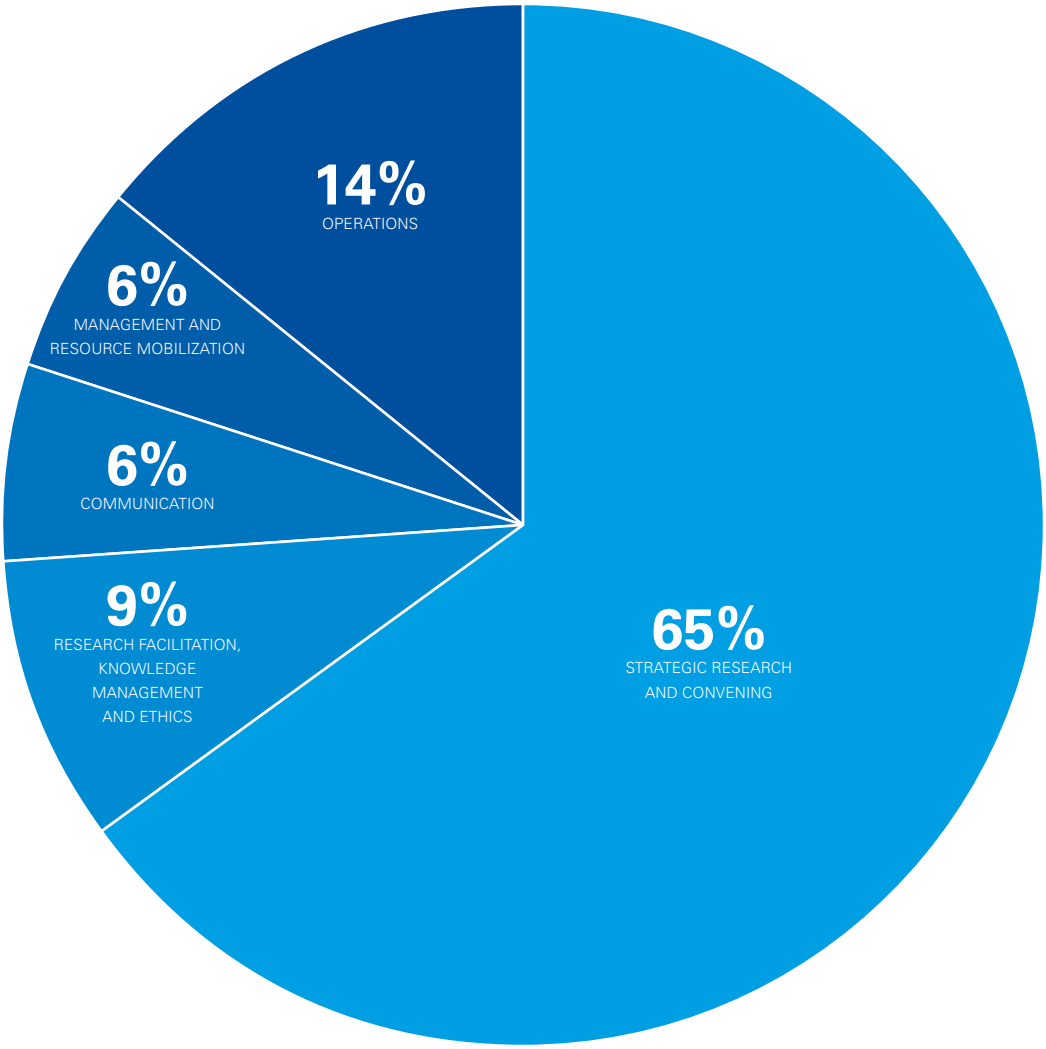
US$442,738
THE FUND TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Figure 2: Top funding sources by expenditure in 2021



In 2021, 80 per cent of UNICEF Innocenti expenditures focused on content generation and use across the office's three pillars of research generation and use: research facilitation, knowledge management and ethics in evidence, and convening, communications and thought leadership (*see Figure 3*).

Figure 3. UNICEF Innocenti expenditure by category, 2021



People

In 2021, the UNICEF Innocenti team comprised international professional staff, general service staff, individual contractors and consultants. The roles undertaken include researchers, managers, knowledge management and ethics, communication, convening, partnerships and planning specialists. The office also hosted skilled interns who embarked on their research journeys with UNICEF Innocenti.

There were 43 staff members in 2021, of which 70 per cent were in the international professional category and 30 per cent in the general service category. UNICEF Innocenti employed 79 consultants, with the majority holding contracts with a tenure of more than 10 months.

The largest group of staff members belonged to the 40-49 age group (37 per cent) (*see Figure 4*) and two thirds of staff were female (*see Figure 5*).

Figure 4. Staff age group composition

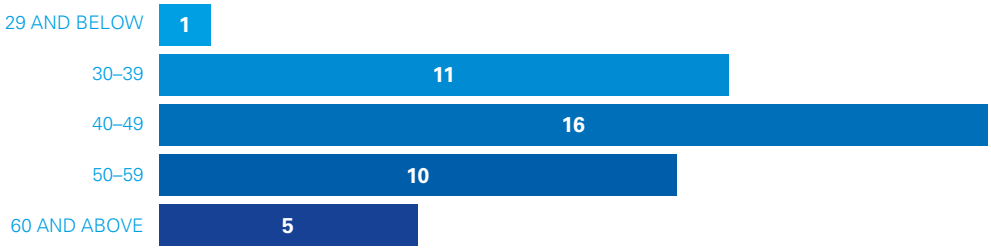
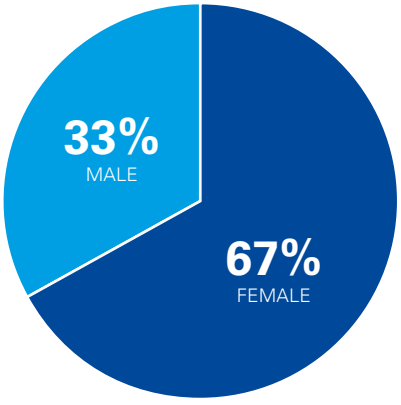


Figure 5. Gender diversity

In terms of geographical diversity, 83 per cent of the staff and consultants were from high-income countries. UNICEF Innocenti is making concerted efforts to increase the number of staff from programme countries and bring parity in staff and regional diversity in the office.



Partnerships

UNICEF Innocenti collaborates with a rich array of partners to fulfil its research mandate and extends special thanks to the Government of Italy for renewing its flexible funding and supporting the office with its guidance and institutional backing for more than 30 years. UNICEF Innocenti also thanks the resource partners listed in Figure 6 for their generous partnership and substantive intellectual support in 2021 in its research for children.

In 2021, UNICEF Innocenti progressed on new and existing research initiatives with partners, including:

- third phase of the *Transfer Project* (2021-2024) with the support from the **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)** which will help sustain UNICEF Innocenti's research on cash transfers and broaden its scope into social protection systems
- implementation of a multi-country survey research in 13 countries as part of the *Disrupting Harm* project thanks to the funding from the **End Violence Fund** and in collaboration with **ECPAT International** and **INTERPOL**
- new partnerships with the **Jacobs Foundation** and the **Committee for UNICEF Switzerland and Liechtenstein** to expand the *DMS* positive deviance research to three new countries
- partnership with the **Akelius Foundation** and UNICEF headquarters, with support from the **Swedish Committee for UNICEF**, building implementation research into a digital learning programme to improve children's foundational literacy and numeracy skills. In 2021, the research expanded to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Mauritania and São Tomé and Príncipe.
- collaboration with the **LEGO Group**, the **Danish National Committee for UNICEF** and the **UNICEF Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division** on Responsible Innovation with Technology and Ethics for Children. In 2021, together with the **Western Sydney University**, **New York University** and **Sesame Street**, UNICEF Innocenti supported national consultations with children in 15 countries to understand their views on how digital technology should be designed to support well-being.

Figure 6: Top new contributions to UNICEF Innocenti research programmes in 2021

Appendices

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Appendix 1: Research outputs and publications

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Appendix 2: Trainings, workshops and webinars

1. Gender in Social Protection: Learning as we go from eastern and southern Africa
2. Introduction to GRASSP, co-organized with UNICEF South Asia Regional Office Regional Evaluation Office
3. Stakeholder consultation on "Women, Children and Youth in the context of GCM implementation"
4. UNHCR-MMC regional Policy Workshop on Protection Challenges on the Central (CMR) & Western Mediterranean Routes (WMR)
5. Research on violence against children during the COVID-19 pandemic
6. Integrating gender into research and evaluations: Lessons from the Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection (GRASSP) research programme, 19 March 2021 (LSE workshop)
7. Modelling the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on violent discipline of children
8. Global webinar on Children and Parental Care during COVID-19 with CP/PD and Better Care Network
9. Preventing Family Violence with Gender-Transformative Parenting Programmes
10. EPRI Global Webinar on Gender-Responsive Social Protection
11. Refugee and migrant children's education and health needs
12. Global webinar on Evidence: Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all children: the Campbell Collaboration and UNICEF partnership mapping the evidence
13. Measuring Social and Gender Norm Change: Lessons from UNICEF work on promoting and measuring gender and social norms across sectors
14. 3rd International Young Carers conference
15. Webinar - SDG 16 EGM - preparations for the 2021 United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
16. Gender dimensions of violence against children and adolescents, Highlights from a Strategy Paper
17. Y20 workshop on inclusion and equal opportunities
18. Norad workshop on social protection and groups vulnerable to human rights violations, 3 June 2021
19. ISPCAN European regional conference - Symposium on evidence synthesis for child protection
20. Launching the State of the World's Fathers 2021 Report: Structural Solutions to Achieve Equality in Care Work
21. Global webinar on Child Marriage and Social Protection: Exploring the evidence on child marriage and social protection
22. Ending violence against children and against women (@ Baker Hughes)
23. 29th IAFFE Conference
24. Webinar: COVID-19 and Child Labour
25. UNICEF Gender & Social Protection webinar: Experiences from Argentina, Madagascar and beyond
26. 13th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality
27. Bolstering Social Protection beyond COVID-19: What the Data Tells Us
28. Webinar: Evidence Matters: Taking stock of the evidence on preventing and responding to violence against children
29. White House Gender Policy Council presentation on VAC/VAW intersections for US National Action Plan on GBV
30. Webinar: What does gender-responsive social protection have to do with the climate crisis?

31. Webinar: Intersections between Violence Against Children and Women Prevention and Response: Identifying Evidence Gaps and Opportunities for Collaboration
32. Global public webinar session on evidence as part of GPECM
33. SVRI launch of global shared research agenda on VAW in LAC
34. Regional INSPIRE Conference on Ending Violence Against Children During COVID-19
35. ISPCAN UNICEF panel on COVID-19 and child protection
36. FCDO Partners Learning event
37. Collaborative research agenda setting: Global Research Agenda VAW
38. Flinders University Gender Consortium. Webinar: Leading for Women's Economic Empowerment: The Role of Social Safety Nets
39. Exploring links between violence against women and girls (VAWG) and education
40. Institute of Development Studies Care Working Group. Joint presentation with Promundo on Men, care and social protection
41. Collaborative research agenda setting: Global Research Agenda VAW
42. Flinders University Gender Consortium
43. Using evidence to develop tech-based tools for addressing violence
44. Institute of Development Studies Care Working Group
45. KIX EAP Hub Regional Conference: Inclusive Education from Policies to Practice
46. UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank report launch: What's next? Lessons on education recovery
47. Pathways towards an education that leaves no one behind
48. Global Education Summit Side Event: How to apply Smart Buys evidence in country education investment decisions?
49. Global Education Summit Side Event: Reopening the future: Prioritizing pre-primary education
50. Global Education Summit Side Event: Strengthening data systems and utilization in the education sector
51. Africa Evidence Week 2021: Strengthening and promoting education data systems and utlilization in Africa: Lessons from the Data Must Speak Global Initiative
52. Building Evidence in Education (BE2) Working Group Member Meeting: Designing research for Use
53. CIES 2021: Strengthening Data Systems and Utilization in the Education Sector – Lessons Learned from Three KIX Co-Funded Multi-Country Research Projects
54. Building Evidence in Education Working Group Knowledge Systems Strengthening Special Interest Group: Designing Research for Use
55. UKFIET 2021: Funder Perspectives on Strengthening Knowledge Ecosystems to Improve Evidence-informed Decision-making in Education in Low- and Middle-Income Countries
56. The State of Global Education: From Crisis to Recovery
57. DMS Dissemination Event: Findings from Nepal
58. CIES 2021: School closures: Impact on learning and efforts to mitigate them
59. DMS Co-Creation Workshop with Nepal
60. DMS Co-Creation Workshop with Laos
61. Evidence and Implementation Summit 2021: Operationalizing Implementation Research and Scaling Science
62. Building Evidence in Education Working Group Knowledge Systems Strengthening Special Interest Group: Operationalizing Scaling Science
63. DMS Dissemination Event: Findings from Lao PDR
64. DMS Co-Creation Workshop with Mali
65. Global Education Forum 2021: Technical Meeting
66. Education Reforms in Global Contexts: Research, Policy & Practice
67. Training of surveyors and data collectors on ethical standards and qualitative data-collection methods
68. DMS Co-Creation Workshop with Niger Ministry of Education
69. DMS Co-Creation Workshop with Togo Ministry of Education
70. DMS Co-Creation Workshop with Zambia Ministry of Education
71. DMS Zambia Technical Working Group Training
72. Africa 21 GPE KIX Hub Network Convening
73. CIES 2021: Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on Children in Non-formal Education
74. Let Us Learn 2021 Annual Review Meeting
75. Building EdTech Evidence and Research Working Group Meeting: Continuing learning for the most vulnerable during COVID-19

76. Safer Internet Day: Learning at a Distance - Children's remote learning experiences in Italy during the COVID-19 pandemic
77. Evidence Generation for the Accessible Digital Textbook Initiative (Taller de formación para la elaboración y producción de libros digitales accesibles con Enfoque de Diseño Universal de Aprendizaje)
78. Accessible Digital Textbook qualitative data-collection training and ethical protocols: FGDs, classroom observations and KII
79. Training on M&E framework for digital platforms and user-test exercise for the Learning Passport
80. Science and Technology Week: Digital Learning: Teacher's Challenges in the Digital Age
81. Reunião Anual de Revisão - RAR (Annual Revision Meeting)
82. CIES 2021: 167. The effects of COVID-19 on learning, nutrition and child protection. Evidence, promising practices and new challenges in social responsibility
83. Akelius Mission to Rome and Bologna
84. Digital Learning Mission to São Tomé and Príncipe
85. UNICEF Innocenti Deep Dive Consultation with External Partners
86. Data-collection Training - Learning Passport in Timor-Leste
87. Data-collection Training - Learning Passport, Usability Testing Zimbabwe
88. Data-collection Training - Learning Passport, Usability Testing Jordan
89. RISE Delivery Board Meeting
90. Sport for Development Phase 2 launch event: Playing the Game
91. Annual Basic Education Meeting - Republic of South Africa
92. TTT Regional Launch: Teacher Attendance and Time on Task in Primary Schools in West and Central Africa
93. TTT dissemination event: Findings from Morocco
94. TTT dissemination event: Findings from Ghana
95. TTT dissemination event: Findings from Ivory Coast
96. Sportbiz Europe Barcelona Edition: Sports for good: The sports industry as a game changer for children
97. S4D Phase 3 co-creation meeting with partners
98. CESA Teacher Development Cluster Special Meeting
99. WNCB research webinar
100. 2021 Mediterranean Dialogues: Shaping the Future Mediterranean: Education, Technical and Vocational Training for Sustainable Development
101. Gender-Responsive and Age-Sensitive Social Protection: A research agenda. Virtual presentation to UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in Tanzania. January 21, 2021
102. Gender in Social Protection: Learning as We Go from eastern and southern Africa. Virtual Learning Event on Gender in Social Protection organized by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office's Gender-Responsive Social Protection Programme, with World Bank, FCDO and UNICEF. January 13, 2021.
103. Social Protection Research and Policy Conference: From Evidence to Action in Asia and Pacific
104. Measurement of Child Poverty Workshop for Uzbekistan
105. Measurement of Child Poverty Workshop for Indonesia
106. Gender-Responsive and Age-Sensitive Social Protection: DRC study. Virtual presentation to UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in DRC. January 21, 2021
107. Gender-Responsive & Age-Sensitive Social Protection: Lessons from Ethiopia and Tanzania
108. 15th Conference of the European Sociological Association 2021
109. International Society for Quality of Life Studies 20th Annual Conference
110. Launch of the "Vite a colori – children's experiences/views of COVID-19" report
111. Presentation of the study "Cash Transfers, Public Works and Child Activities: Mixed-Methods Evidence from the United Republic of Tanzania"
112. Child Labour & Social Programming: Focus on Educational Strategies
113. Cash Transfers & Child Labour: Evidence from the Transfer Project
114. Family-friendly policies in South Asia
115. Cash Plus impacts on adolescents' safe transitions to adulthood
116. Brown bag: Preliminary Results of the Impact Evaluation of the Child Grant Programme 0-2 in Mozambique
117. Technical working group dissemination event: Evaluation of the Child Grant Programme 0-2 in Mozambique
118. Social Protection Week: Evaluation of the Child Grant Programme 0-2 in Mozambique
119. International Population Conference
120. Brown bag at the Center for Violence and Injury Prevention at the Brown School, Washington University

121. Evidence from a government Cash Plus programme for adolescents in Tanzania
122. Impacts of a Government Cash Plus Intervention on Adolescent Health and Well-being
123. Disability status and multi-dimensional personal well-being among adolescents in the Southern Highlands Region of Tanzania: results of a cross-sectional study
124. Government implemented Cash Plus model reduces violence experiences and perpetration among adolescents in Tanzania
125. Tanzania Adolescent Cash Plus impact evaluation, Round 3 findings
126. A Cash Plus Model for Safe, Healthy and Productive Transitions to Adulthood
127. Real-time monitoring of COVID-19 impacts among adolescents and young people, their families and communities in Southern Highlands regions in Tanzania
128. Inequalities in children's education
129. What Makes Me? A Policy Panel Discussion on Core Capacities for Living and Learning. WISE summit, Qatar.
130. Where do rich countries stand on childcare? A focus on Quebec. A presentation to the Quebec government (online), Canada.
131. Social protection for children: Universal benefits Social protection: A Lever for Fairer and more Resilient Development. National Economic Social and Environmental Council, Algeria (online)
132. Supporting children and families beyond COVID in HICS: seminar to Thomas Coram Research Unit, Department of Social Science, University College London
133. Measuring What Matters: Core Capacities for Living and Learning in Childhood: Presentation to the IF20 Education Working Group of the G20
134. Presentation of breakout working group 3: Achieving the rights of the child system-wide (ARCS playframe): WED movement Abu Dhabi.
135. Measuring What Matters: Core Capacities for Living and Learning in Childhood: Working Group on the Quality of Childhood, European Commission
136. Changing education and schools: child and adult core capacities: European Foundation Congress
137. Training AHRC on Guidelines on Ethical Research in Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings for Funding Bodies
138. Webinars Predictive Analytics for Children: An assessment of ethical considerations, risks and benefits
139. Webinars on Updated Ethics in Evidence Procedure
140. Research Uptake and Impact Workshop
141. Adaptive Programming Workshop
142. Applied Training on Research Management and Methods
143. Webinar on the ethics of applied behavioural science and children
144. Qualitative research methods webinar
145. Best of UNICEF Research Live Awards Ceremony
146. Cochrane Convenes
147. WHO Global Evidence to Policy Summit
148. Knowledge Management During COVID-19: Review of Development Organizations' Practices and Experiences
149. Panel presentation at the Evidence and Implementation Summit 2021

Appendix 3: Partners of UNICEF Innocenti in 2021

Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), United States

Action Research for Co-Development, Italy

Acute Incite, United States

Africa Centre for Evidence, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Akelius Foundation, Sweden

Alliance for Human Development, Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute, Canada

American Institutes for Research, United States

Amnesty International UK, United Kingdom

Apolitical, Germany

Behavioural Insights Team, Australia

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, United States

Bocconi University, Italy

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, Bangladesh

Campbell Collaboration

Centre for Evidence and Implementation, Australia

Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, South Africa

Cochrane Network

Center for Global Development, United States

Centre for Global Health Inequalities Research (CHAIN), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway

Centre for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology (CIESAS), Mexico

Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Children's Rights Alliance for England, United Kingdom

Cinema La Compagnia, Italy

Collaborative on Global Children's Issues, Georgetown University, United States

CommsConsult, Zimbabwe and United Kingdom

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Germany

Drexel University, USA

Economic Research Group, Bangladesh

ECPAT International, Thailand

Elsevier, Netherlands

The Equality Institute, Australia

European Institute of Design (IED), Italy

Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre), United Kingdom

FC Barcelona and the Barça Foundation, Spain

Fetzer Institute, United States

Fondation Botnar, Switzerland

Fondazione Sistema Toscana, Lanterne Magiche, Italy

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), United Kingdom

Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children

Global Women's Institute, George Washington University, United States

GreeneWorks, United States

G20 Health and Development Partnership, United Kingdom

Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, United Kingdom

Health Media Lab (HML), USA

Inter-American Development Bank

International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)

International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada

International Disability Alliance, Switzerland

International Fund for Agricultural Development

International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), United Kingdom

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Istituto degli Innocenti, Italy

Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), Italy

Johns Hopkins University, United States

Knowledgeable, United Kingdom

The Lancet Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Youth Maltreatment

The Lancet Commission on Global Mental Health

Learning for Well-being Foundation, Netherlands

LEGO Group, Denmark

London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom

Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

Mastercard Foundation, Canada

McMaster Health Forum, Canada

Mindset, Jordan

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy

Municipality of Florence, Italy

Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Australia

New York University, United States

Nuffield Council on Bioethics, United Kingdom

Oak Foundation, Switzerland

On Think Tanks, Peru

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Overseas Development Institute, United Kingdom

Overton, United Kingdom

Oxford Internet Institute, United Kingdom

Oxford Policy Management, United Kingdom

Palinsesto, Italy

Partnership for Economic Policy, Kenya

Pew Charitable Trusts, United States

Population Council, India

Prevention Collaborative

Promundo, United States

Raising Voices, Uganda

Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) Programme, United Kingdom

Save the Children International, United Kingdom

Southern Cross University, Australia

Stanford University, United States

State University of New York at Buffalo, United States

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Sweden

Talking Evidence, United Kingdom

The Engine Room

The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (Education Commission), United States

The Learning Pool, United Kingdom

Think20 (T20) Italy Engagement Group

Together for Girls, United States

Toscana Film Commission, Italy

Tufts University, United States

Tuscany Region, Italy

United Kingdom Research and Innovation Global Challenges Research Fund (UKRI GCRF) Accelerate Hub, United Kingdom

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children

United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, including its causes and consequences

United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children

United States Agency for International Development, United States

United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), United States

United States Department of Labor, United States

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy

University College London, United Kingdom

University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

University of Essex, United Kingdom

University of Florence, Italy

University of Nairobi, Kenya

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, United States

University of Oxford, United Kingdom

University of the Philippines

University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

University of Southampton, United Kingdom

University of Zurich, Switzerland

UN Women

Wageningen University & Research, Netherlands

Washington University in St Louis, United States

Wellcome Trust, United Kingdom

Western Sydney University, Australia

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, United States

William T. Grant Foundation, United States

Women's International Network of Florence, Italy

Women 20 (W20) Italy Engagement Group

World Bank

World Health Organization (WHO)

Young Ambassadors Society, Italy

Youth20 (Y20) Italy Engagement Group

Glossary

Behavioural insights is an inductive approach that combines insights from psychology, cognitive science and social science with empirically tested results to understand how people make decisions. It recognizes that humans are not always rational, and that we do not always follow through with what we intend. Our decisions can be affected by seemingly irrelevant things, such as how information is presented or what others are doing.

Behavioural sciences research is the study of human behaviour, using empirical data to investigate how people think, behave, interpret the world, understand their emotions, make decisions, communicate and relate to others.

Blended learning is an approach to education that combines digital platforms, content and interaction with traditional classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student. While students still attend "bricks-and-mortar" schools with a teacher present, face-to-face classroom practices are combined with technology-mediated (computer / tablet) activities regarding content and delivery. Blended learning is also used in professional development and training settings.

Cash Plus programmes provide cash payments in combination with complementary support, such as education or health services, as part of social protection efforts for the most impoverished households.

UNICEF Innocenti's **Children and COVID-19 Research Library** is an open-access database collecting research from around the world on COVID-19 and its impacts on children and adolescents.

Evidence gap maps (EGMs) are visual tools for presenting an overview of the state of evidence relevant to a topic, theme or sector to signpost where evidence exists and/or where it is lacking. They usually summarize and present evidence from systematic reviews and primary studies (impact evaluations) and on occasion, from other EGMs. An EGM highlights the available evidence, and the evidence gaps by presenting them in an interactive and user-friendly visual format.

Evidence synthesis is the process of bringing together information and knowledge from a range of sources to inform debates and decisions on policies, programming and future evidence generation. Evidence synthesis products are produced according to rigorous quality standards, using explicit and transparent methodology to minimize bias. Evidence synthesis products include rapid evidence assessments and rapid reviews, systematic reviews and EGMs.

Gender-Responsive and Age-Sensitive Social Protection (GRASSP) is where changing gender norms, roles and access to resources is a key component of outcomes. Age-sensitive means understanding how different risks and vulnerabilities play out across an individual's life based on her/his age.

A gender-transformative approach addresses the causes of gender-based inequalities and works to transform harmful gender roles, norms and power imbalances.

Global Kids Online (GKO) is an international research network that aims to generate and sustain a rigorous, cross-national evidence base around children's use of the internet. The GKO network was developed by UNICEF Innocenti, the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and the EU Kids Online network.

The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children is a unique public-private collaboration that includes United Nations agencies, governments, industry, regional bodies, civil society, young people, advocates and champions, all focused on one thing: making the world safe for children.

Implementation research is the integration of research within existing programme implementation, systems, and policymaking cycles to improve programme outcomes (e.g., acceptability, appropriateness, feasibility, fidelity, sustainability, coverage) and overcome implementation bottlenecks. It also includes meaningful engagement and leadership roles for decision-makers, including implementers, within research.

Life course lens acknowledges that a person's age and their stage in life has implications for the risks and vulnerabilities that they face (which social protection can help to address).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental economic organization with 36 member countries, which was founded in 1961 to stimulate progress and economic growth.

Sport for Development (S4D) refers to the use of sport, or any form of physical activity, to provide children and adults with opportunities to achieve their full potential through initiatives that promote personal and social development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

Time on task in education refers to the portion of instructional time that teachers spend directly involved in teaching. This is a synthesis of slightly different existing definitions that fits the way time on task was measured in the field for the Time to Teach study.

The Transfer Project is a multi-country social protection research initiative established in 2018. It is a collaborative effort by UNICEF Innocenti, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, UNICEF regional and country offices, national governments and local research partners.

Photo credits and captions

Cover: © UNICEF/UN0594604/Dejongh
Displaced children at the Dar Es Salam refugee camp, Baga Sola, in the West of Chad. UNICEF and partners have supported the implementation of child protection activities, in particular psychosocial care through child-friendly spaces.

Page 8: © UNICEF/UN0535852/Dejongh
A child playing outside, in Agadez, Northern Niger.

Pages 12–13: © UNICEF Innocenti/Mannocchi
Two girls are getting ready to return to school in Rome, Italy, after a school year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. These adolescents missed 65 days of school in 2021, compared to an average of 27 missed days among high-income countries worldwide.

Pages 16–17: © UNICEF/UN0380328/Bea
Students wear masks during an awareness session on COVID-19 at the *Pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) Alhamdulilah, in Kemadu village, Rembang, Indonesia.

Page 28: © UNICEF/UN077166/Nesbitt
A nursery worker interacts with a child as she plays with toys during indoor play time at the Victoria Road Preschool for children between the ages of 3 and 5 in Basseterre, the capital of St. Kitts island, St. Kitts & Nevis.

Page 33: © UNICEF/UN0579602/Pacardo
Children from the Badjao indigenous communities living in Surigao City, the Philippines, were among the most vulnerable people affected by Typhoon Rai in December 2021. Badjao children's lives are tied to the sea. They live, learn and play in houses and community schools on stilts.

Page 34: © UNICEF/UNI380647/Bongyereirwe
Adolescent girls rescued from FGM, attend a classroom session, at Kalas Girls Primary School, Kenya, where they share their experiences through drawings and short stories.

Pages 38–39: © UNICEF/UN0311118/Labrador
Group work helps students to learn from each other. This is one of the techniques teachers are being taught by pedagogical advisors, with a view to improving quality education at Phonkeo Primary School, Saravane Province, Lao PDR.

Page 41: © UNICEF/UN0384669/Gumulira
A Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) beneficiary of Tavekenji Village, Malawi, is pictured holding cash just after she received her monthly cash transfer at Kunyungwi School pay-point.

Page 42: © UNICEF/UN0484623/Diarassouba
A newborn baby with his birth registration, at the regional hospital of Man, in the west of Côte d'Ivoire.

Page 43: © UNICEF/UN0538327/Noman
Emad, 11, uses the balance beam in the prosthetic centre in Aden, Yemen. Emad was injured in an explosion while in his home. "When I came to this centre, they provided me with limbs and trained me how to use them. When I grow up, I want to cure and treat people who are injured", he says.

Page 45: © UNICEF/UN0534101/Mahar
An art class in one of Goris's parks, during which children and adolescents learned to create a piece of art from waste plastic bottles and bags. Goris, Armenia.

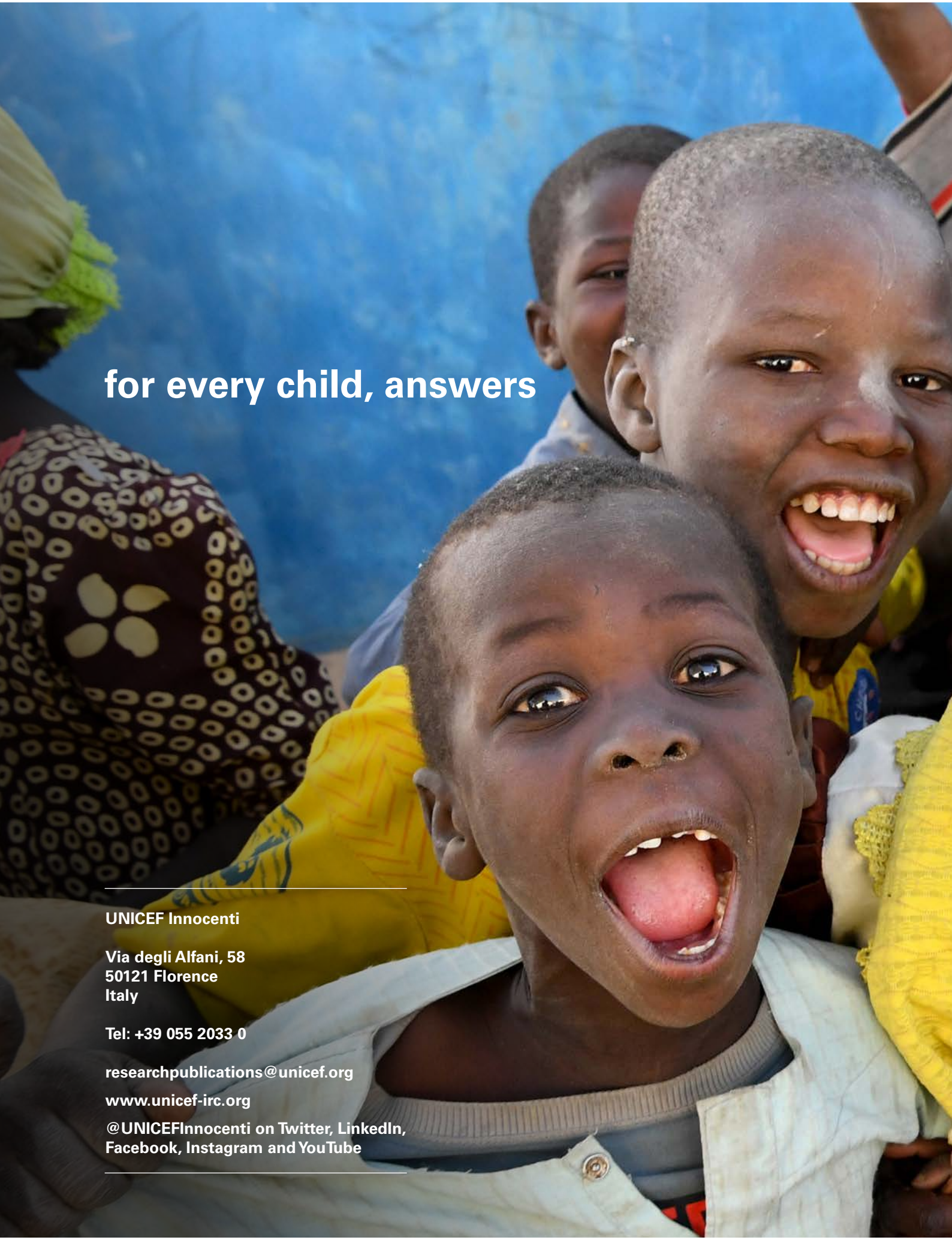
Pages 46–47: © UNICEF/UNI363794/Aryan
Members of the 'Afghan Dreamers' girls robotics team, including leader Somaya Faruqi (third from right), 17, show how the team used locally available second-hand spare auto parts to assemble a bag ventilator device to help treat patients with acute COVID-19 cases. Herat, Afghanistan.

Page 49: © UNICEF/UN0406611/Htet
Students at play, at Hpayar Ngoteto Primary School at Kayin State, Hpayar Ngoteto township, Kayin state, Myanmar.

Pages 50–51: © UNICEF/UN0547123/Elwyn-Jones
An estimated 25,000 protesters in Glasgow, Scotland, gathered to lend their voices to calls for stronger commitments by governments to take concrete and corrective action to avert catastrophic climate change, as part of the Fridays for Future demonstrations for climate action.

Pages 56–57: © UNICEF/UN0342222/Keïta
A father of three children and a farmer, in his field, in Zebala village. Despite being the breadbasket of Mali, the Sikasso region has the highest rate of stunting in the country. Poor infant and young child feeding practices and home consumption practices have led to this high rate of malnutrition.

Pages 64–65: © UNICEF/UNI240181/Ralaivita
Children playing at a water point at Marovoay primary school, Madagascar.



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