



UNICEF and partners provide clean drinking water to affected families in the flooded town of Silchar in the remote district of Cachar, Assam State, using a boat-mounted water treatment plant.

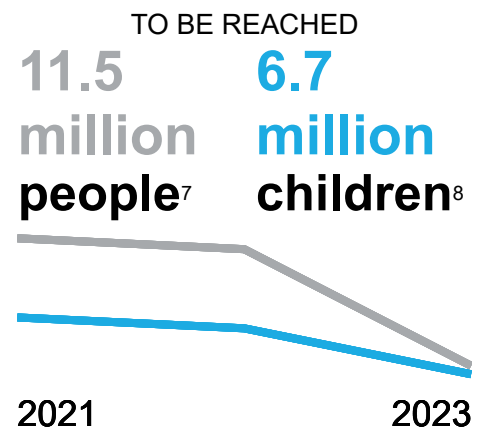
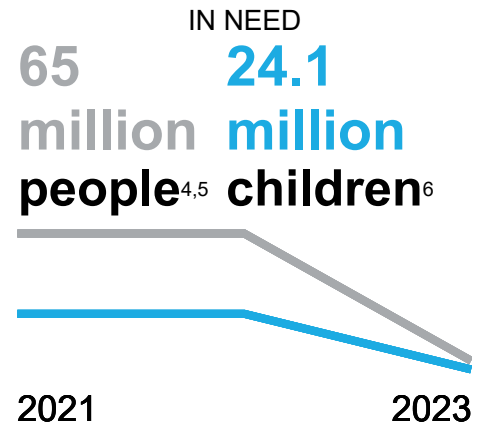
unicef 
for every child

Humanitarian Action for Children

India

HIGHLIGHTS¹

- In India, an estimated 24.1 million² children are impacted by floods, cyclones, heatwaves and other emergencies every year.³ Climate change, combined with environmental degradation, is increasing the frequency, severity and overall impacts of these kinds of hydro-meteorological hazards. To cope, the most vulnerable children require life-saving, multisectoral assistance and sustained access to services in remote, hard-to-reach locations.
- In 2023, UNICEF aims to boost emergency preparedness and provide immediate life-saving and life-sustaining assistance to the most vulnerable populations facing multiple humanitarian crises by supporting the continuity of services, scaling up government-led responses and investing in resilience-building interventions.
- UNICEF requires US\$15.7 million to address the vulnerabilities and needs of 6.7 million children impacted by emergencies and build systemic capacities to provide multisectoral humanitarian responses at scale. Social-sector delivery systems are still recovering from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis, and there is an urgent need to strengthen systemic capabilities to cope with recurring disasters that are further aggravated by climate change. Sector strategies aim to strengthen sector and community preparedness, inclusive of people with disabilities, and reduce the risk of gender-based violence.



KEY PLANNED TARGETS



8.9 million

children and women accessing primary healthcare



1.6 million

pregnant women receiving preventative iron supplementation



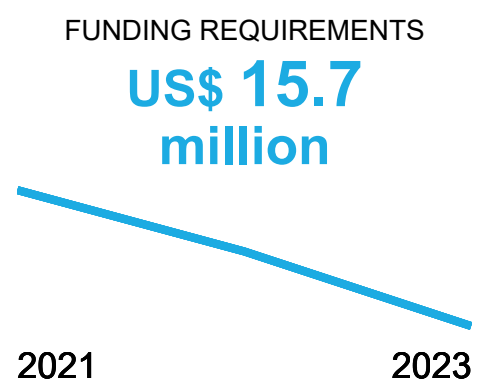
704,750

women and children accessing gender-based violence mitigation, prevention, response



544,000

people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water



HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

The number, scale, duration and complexity of humanitarian crises¹¹ in India have increased dramatically, challenging the capacity of social sectors to prepare for and respond to them. Around 80 percent of India's population lives in districts exposed to such extreme hydro-meteorological hazards as floods, drought, heatwaves and cyclones.¹² These increase vulnerable peoples' exposure to hazards and disrupt essential services. They undermine development gains for children.

Among the 65 million people impacted annually by emergencies in India¹⁰ are 5.8 million children under age 5, many of whom live in remote locations. These children need multisectoral support.

There is a continued need for knowledge and system literacy among at-risk populations and for front-line workers to practise climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability to achieve local risk-resilience targets.

Climate shocks, the global economic crisis and the socioeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have negatively impacted household income and food security in India. While the country mounted massive expansions of social protection safety nets in 2020-2021, only 40 per cent of all poor households reported receiving both food and cash assistance.⁹ There is a direct impact on child well-being. For example, malnutrition remains associated with 68 percent of child mortality, and 22 million children under age 5 suffer from wasting, including 8.8 million children with severe wasting.¹³ Wasted children are more prone to diseases and have a significantly higher risk of death.¹⁴

Climate change also impacts the delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), nutrition and other services for children under age 5 as well as millions of school-age children. Floods and cyclones can damage WASH infrastructure and lead to water source contamination, increasing the risk of life-threatening disease outbreaks, especially for children under age 5. Children deprived of nutrition, WASH and other services eventually bring a significant disease load into the primary health-care system, which may already be overwhelmed due to the extreme weather event.

Displacement and the loss of a protective environment due to high-intensity disasters challenge learning continuity, especially for the most disadvantaged children in remote areas. This puts many children at increased risk of dropout, learning loss and exploitation.

While India has made progress in several child-related indicators (e.g., the reduction in under-five mortality from 34 to 28 per 1,000 live births¹⁵), many children under age 5 who live in remote locations are especially vulnerable to emergencies, particularly losing out on school days and on health care and other services, and may face an increased risk of trafficking and gender-based violence.

SECTOR NEEDS¹⁶



21 million
women in need of
obstetric care¹⁷



5.7 million
children in need of
nutrition assistance¹⁸



12.5 million
children in need of
protection services¹⁹



17.6 million
children in need of
education support²⁰



30.6 million
people lack access to
safe water²¹

STORY FROM THE FIELD



Dulu Das and her six-month-old daughter, Nilamshi Das, are flood survivors staying in Solmara Bazar Grihaa relief camp run by the Nalbari District Administration in the State of Assam. Despite access to food and drinking water, Dulu Das found it difficult to breastfeed in the crowded camp, a challenge shared by many. With UNICEF's support, a breastfeeding corner was set up, providing a huge relief to Dulu and other mothers. Breastfeeding corners, the result of many years of UNICEF advocacy and investment in systems strengthening for preparedness, are integral to the child-friendly spaces in the government-run relief camps in Assam.

[Read more about this story here](#)

Nilamshi Das, 6 months, and her mother are flood survivors and benefit from the breastfeeding corner in a government relief camp in Nalbari district, Assam. UNICEF advocated for breastfeeding spaces as a preparedness measure.

UNICEF will support government-led efforts to reach the most vulnerable children and women with an integrated package of life-saving services that include health, nutrition, WASH, education, child protection, social and behaviour change communication and social protection services, in partnership with local civil society organizations, partner platforms and youth-volunteers. UNICEF will prioritize building government preparedness and response systems to address capability gaps that are exacerbated by climate variability and climate extremes. Partnerships²⁴ will be the core operational strategy to address the needs of the most vulnerable women and children in hard-to-reach areas. Considering children's high levels of exposure to natural hazards in India, the next UNICEF country programme (2023-2027) infuses risk-informed programming with a strong commitment to inclusive and gender-sensitive humanitarian results.

Health strategies will strengthen government systems that prioritize quality and coverage and will emphasize access to key high-impact services and continuity of interventions, antenatal care, institutional deliveries and routine immunization for the most vulnerable women and children from tribal, urban-rural poor and internally displaced populations in 17 states. Supporting the government-led response, life-saving WASH services will utilize supplies, youth leadership and hygiene behaviour campaigns to address the needs of the most vulnerable children. Child-friendly facilities that are gender- and disability-sensitive will enable better use of WASH services.

UNICEF will support strengthening of existing government delivery platforms for high-impact essential nutrition interventions that rapidly respond to malnutrition in children and pregnant women. The nutrition approach is to promote access to diets, services and practices that improve the nutritional status and respond to wasting and anaemia among children, adolescents and women.

Community engagement will improve access to and acceptance of information, entitlements, services, learning, and life skills resulting in social and behavioural changes. To enable local risk-resilience, 195 community radio stations in 26 states will take life-saving messages to 30 million people in at-risk communities and front-line workers in remote locations.

UNICEF will support inclusive, safe and gender-sensitive quality learning in schools, temporary learning spaces and child-friendly spaces through capacity development of teachers and the use of essential supplies in remote areas affected by floods and cyclones. A continuum of care through government service delivery platforms supported by UNICEF will promote the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents during emergencies and address the needs and vulnerabilities of unaccompanied children or those without parental care through family-based alternative-care and reunification services.

UNICEF will support the government's routine social protection and humanitarian cash systems to expand coverage to the most vulnerable during the period of stress and proactively address their needs during periods of crises through technical advisory, on-ground case management, information-as-aid (cash+) and feedback mechanisms.



Health

- **8,900,000** children and women accessing primary healthcare in UNICEF-supported facilities



Nutrition

- **204,000** children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment
- **1,600,000** pregnant women receiving preventative iron supplementation



Child protection, GBViE and PSEA

- **647,600** children, adolescents and caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support
- **704,750** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- **200,000** people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel who provide assistance to affected populations
- **9,350** unaccompanied and separated children provided with alternative care and/or reunified
- **1,588,100** adolescent and youth reached with targeted messages and information on child protection concerns in emergencies



Education

- **310,000** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning



Water, sanitation and hygiene

- **544,000** people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs
- **154,500** women and girls accessing menstrual hygiene management services
- **714,000** people reached with hand-washing behaviour-change programmes
- **161,000** people reached with critical WASH supplies



Social protection

- **2,955,500** households benefitting from new or additional social assistance (cash/in kind) measures from governments with UNICEF-technical assistance support



Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)

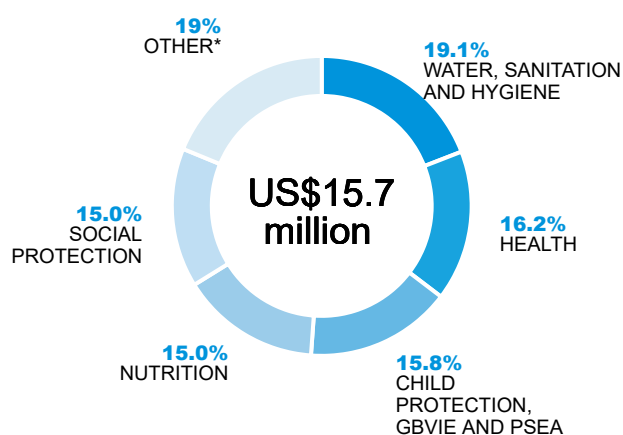
- **33,000,000** people reached through messaging on prevention and access to services^{25,26}
- **600,000** people who participate in engagement actions
- **300,000** people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2023

UNICEF requires US\$15.7 million in 2023 to alleviate suffering of 3 million targeted families (that include 6.7 million of the most vulnerable children) impacted by floods, cyclones and heatwaves. UNICEF and partners will address the needs of women and children impacted by emergencies and build capabilities of communities and government to improve agility and scale in their response to extreme weather events, which are becoming common place due to changing climate and environmental degradation. This will be reinforced through engagement with at-risk communities: UNICEF will leverage a vast network of community radio stations to reach 30 million people through messaging on prevention, protection and access to life-sustaining services.

To achieve more predictable, systematic humanitarian action for children in India, and to strengthen government and community preparedness to achieve improved child survival outcomes during emergencies in 2023, UNICEF requires US\$2.55 million for health systems response; US\$3 million to deliver safe water, sanitation and hygiene services and WASH supplies; and US\$2.36 million to deliver nutrition services. UNICEF-supported multisectoral responses will mitigate the risks of gender-based violence and cater to people with disabilities in emergencies. This will be complemented by a range of preventive and rehabilitation services through the child protection and education programmes.

Without this funding, UNICEF will be unable to support communities, the Government and other partners for essential preparedness and critical life-saving and life-sustaining humanitarian action for the most vulnerable women and children in selected areas in India.



Sector	2023 requirements (US\$) ²⁷
Health	2,550,000
Nutrition	2,360,000
Child protection, GBVIE and PSEA	2,480,000
Education	1,180,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	3,000,000
Social protection	2,360,000
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)	1,770,000
Total	15,700,000

*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions : Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP) (11.3%), Education (7.5%).

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ENDNOTES

1. COVID-19 remains a Public Health Emergency of International Concern as declared by the World Health Organization in January 2020. On 1 July 2022, UNICEF deactivated its Level 3 Sustained Phase for the global COVID-19 pandemic response. All activities related to COVID-19 pandemic response, including programme targets and funding requirements, have been shifted into regular development programming and operations. While UNICEF's Level 3 emergency response phase of the COVID-19 pandemic was deactivated, the organization is continuing to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on children, their families and their communities and on the social systems they rely on.
2. Compared with the past two years, the funding requirement is sizably reduced as COVID-19 response is mainstreamed into development programming, hence not included in the Humanitarian Action for Children appeals.
3. The number of children impacted by disasters annually is derived from a 10-year average of the number of disaster-impacted people in India, collated by the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) in India from various government documents that record the impact of such seasonal emergencies as floods, droughts, cyclones and various other hazards. UNDMT used data from 2000 to 2009 that was revalidated through a UNICEF project for the period of 2010 to 2019.
4. This is a 10-year average of the number of disaster-impacted people in India, collated by the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) in India from various government documents that record the impact of such seasonal emergencies as floods, droughts, cyclones and various other hazards. UNDMT used data from 2000 to 2009 that was revalidated through a UNICEF project for the period of 2010 to 2019.
5. UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.
6. Using the people in need figure (see endnote 3), this is calculated using population proportions derived from the 2011 census in India, showing that 37 per cent of the population is under 18 years of age. Hence 37 per cent of 65 million people in need is 24.1 million children in need.
7. Total people to be reached is based on households targeted for social assistance; household size for each of the 11 targeted states was corroborated with the census of 2011 and the related Sample Registration Survey that happens every three years. This figure includes 51 per cent women/girls and 2 per cent people/children with disabilities. UNICEF is working intensively with the Government to improve the effectiveness of several of its sectoral flagship programmes. This leverages development interventions to address humanitarian needs, which explains the limited scope of people/children to be reached specifically by UNICEF compared with the total number of people and children in need, many of whom are being reached through the government programmes.
8. The social protection target is used to project the children and people being reached by UNICEF. The target of households benefiting from new or additional social assistance measures (cash or in kind) from governments, with UNICEF technical assistance, would translate to 11.5 million people and 6.7 million children being reached by UNICEF in 11 states. Household size is projected using the 2011 census and corroborated with the Sample Registration Survey that occurs every three years. To arrive at the figure of number of children the total fertility rate for each of the 11 target states is used from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-21). This figure includes 51 per cent girls and 2 per cent children with disabilities.
9. Bhattacharya, Shrayana and Sinha Roy, Sutirtha, Intent to Implementation: Tracking India's social protection response to COVID-19, Social Protection and Jobs Discussion Paper, no. 2107, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2021.
10. This is a 10-year average of the number of disaster-impacted people in India, collated by the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) in India from various government documents that record the impact of such seasonal emergencies as floods, droughts, cyclones and various other hazards (2013).
11. This is a long-term trend. Number of long-term vulnerabilities that are driven by climate change; increasing population density/pressure leading to environmental degradation that puts more and more people in the harms way; unplanned development (e.g., urban development) contributing to environmental degradation; all these and many more factors continue to manifest as shocks and stresses. This cycle of difficult and changing conditions for children is fluid and unmarked, yet significant. At times (greater uncertainty) it manifests as major climate emergencies such as urban flash floods, landslides along with flash floods in remote mountainous regions, extreme cyclones in remote delta regions, multi-year droughts, and in other ways.
12. Mohanty, Abinash and Shreya Wadhawan, Mapping India's Climate Vulnerability: A district level assessment, Council on Energy, Environment and Water, New Delhi, October 2021, available at <www.ceew.in/sites/default/files/ceew-study-on-climate-change-vulnerability-index-and-district-level-risk-assessment.pdf>.
13. The 22 million children under 5 years of age suffering from wasting represents 19 per cent of all children under 5 years of age, and the 8.8 million children who have severe wasting make up 8 per cent of children of this age. Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2022.
14. Community-based management of severe acute malnutrition. A Joint Statement by the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme, the United Nations. System Standing Committee on Nutrition and the United Nations Children's Fund. May 2007.
15. Calculated based on Sample Registration Survey 2018 and the 2011 census.
16. India still hasn't adopted the cluster system, so there is no inter-agency process to ascertain sector needs. Hence, the sector needs are derived from big/long-term deficits and referenced to specific government and United Nations sources. The government of India covers the majority of the sector needs. UNICEF builds the capacity and capabilities of the Government, which helps drive efforts to address the needs of children and women to scale. The particular relevance of UNICEF's humanitarian action is to address the needs of the most vulnerable children and women in remote and marginalized communities.
17. This is a UNICEF estimate based on the total number of births in the UNICEF programming states in India, based on Sample Registration Survey 2018. Twenty-one million pregnant women need essential maternal health services.
18. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, UNICEF and Population Council, Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey 2016-2018, New Delhi, 2019.
19. A UNICEF estimate based on a 10-year average of the number of disaster-impacted people in India, collated by the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) in India from various government documents that record the impact of such seasonal emergencies as floods, droughts, cyclones and various other hazards (2013).
20. A UNICEF estimate of children aged 3-18 years among the 65 million people impacted by disasters each year. This is based on a 10-year-average of number of disaster impacted people in India, collated by the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) in India from various government documents that record the impact of such seasonal emergencies as floods, droughts, cyclones and various other hazards.
21. Approximately 30.6 million people have their access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene affected by disasters every year. Source: Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, The Human Cost of Disasters: An overview of the last 20 years (2000-2019), 2020.
22. This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action.
23. UNICEF is committed to empowering local responders in humanitarian crises in a variety of ways. The revised Core Commitments made investing in strengthening the capacities of local actors in the humanitarian response a mandatory benchmark for UNICEF action. A more localized response will improve humanitarian action and is fundamental to achieving better accountability to affected populations.
24. Partnerships with local actors (local governments and local non-governmental organizations), in line with Grand Bargain Commitments, are one of the key strategies for addressing needs and vulnerabilities across such a vast and diverse country, where remoteness is an issue. UNICEF India has been investing systematically for past few years in the Network Approach to Emergency Preparedness for Response (NAEPR) with partner Sphere India, a coalition of more than 80 humanitarian agencies. These agencies have more than 400 local non-governmental organizations as their partners to implement humanitarian programmes. NAEPR has helped promoted child-centred humanitarian action with these partners and the government counterparts that are part of the Sphere India coalition.
25. This includes 30 million people reached with life-saving messages during cyclones, floods and monsoons through 195 community radio stations operating in 26 states. This mode of community engagement will also address the information and knowledge needs of at-risk populations and front-line workers, to enable practice of climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability. The capability being leveraged includes 195 community radio stations in the 26 states.
26. The population targeted is higher than the total number of people/children to be reached because the target includes mass media outreach.
27. Targets are lower compared with 2022 largely due to a shift in the scale of needs and the UNICEF role. In 2022, numbers were largely driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, which demanded a much more intensive response (for infection prevention control) from UNICEF and other stakeholders, because the Government and its institutions were impacted as well. Now government functions and service delivery have recovered significantly compared with 2022.