



# OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH UNICEF WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT CHILD AND MATERNAL DEATHS

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USAID has partnered with UNICEF for decades to improve the health and well-being of children globally. As the world's leading organization mandated to promote and protect children's rights, and help meet their basic needs, UNICEF works in over 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, and to help them to thrive and fulfill their potential, from early childhood through adolescence. The United States Government (USG) is the leading public sector funder of UNICEF operations and programs. USAID's funding to UNICEF provides support to humanitarian and development activities, reflecting the dual mandate of both organizations.

PRODUCED BY THE OFFICE OF  
MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH  
AND NUTRITION, BUREAU FOR  
GLOBAL HEALTH, USAID



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## IMPACT IN NUMBERS



**THE GLOBAL UNDER-5 MORTALITY RATE HAS FALLEN BY 51% SINCE 2000,** IN PART THANKS TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S LONG-STANDING PARTNERSHIP WITH UNICEF.



UNICEF HAS HELPED **REACH MORE THAN 760 MILLION CHILDREN** WITH LIFE-SAVING VACCINES, **PREVENTING MORE THAN 13 MILLION DEATHS**, IN THE LAST 20 YEARS. ([Source](#))



UNICEF HELPS **VACCINATE OVER 400 MILLION CHILDREN** GLOBALLY AGAINST POLIO EVERY YEAR. ([Source](#))



PARTIALLY THROUGH UNICEF'S EFFORTS, EXCLUSIVE **BREASTFEEDING HAS INCREASED BY 37%** SINCE 2000, HELPING TO BUILD BABIES' IMMUNITY, GIVE THEM THE KEY NUTRIENTS THEY NEED TO GROW AND THRIVE, AND REDUCE THEIR RISK OF MALNUTRITION LATER IN LIFE. ([Source](#))

Partnering with UNICEF allows USAID to advance its priorities and maximize the impact of its investments by leveraging UNICEF's technical expertise in multiple sectors, geographic reach, established sub-national operations and local partnerships, robust supply chain capabilities, technical excellence, and close relationships with governments and other key multilateral partners and civil society networks. USAID is also actively engaged in the USG Delegation to the UNICEF Executive Board, led by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs. At USAID, the Bureau for Planning, Learning, and Resource Management leads coordination of USAID's contributions to the USG Delegation. This engagement allows USAID to contribute to the Board's oversight of UNICEF's overall governance and financial management, while reinforcing transparency, accountability, and effective risk management, including ensuring protections against fraud, waste, and abuse, thereby complementing USAID's direct oversight of its programmatic investments in UNICEF activities.

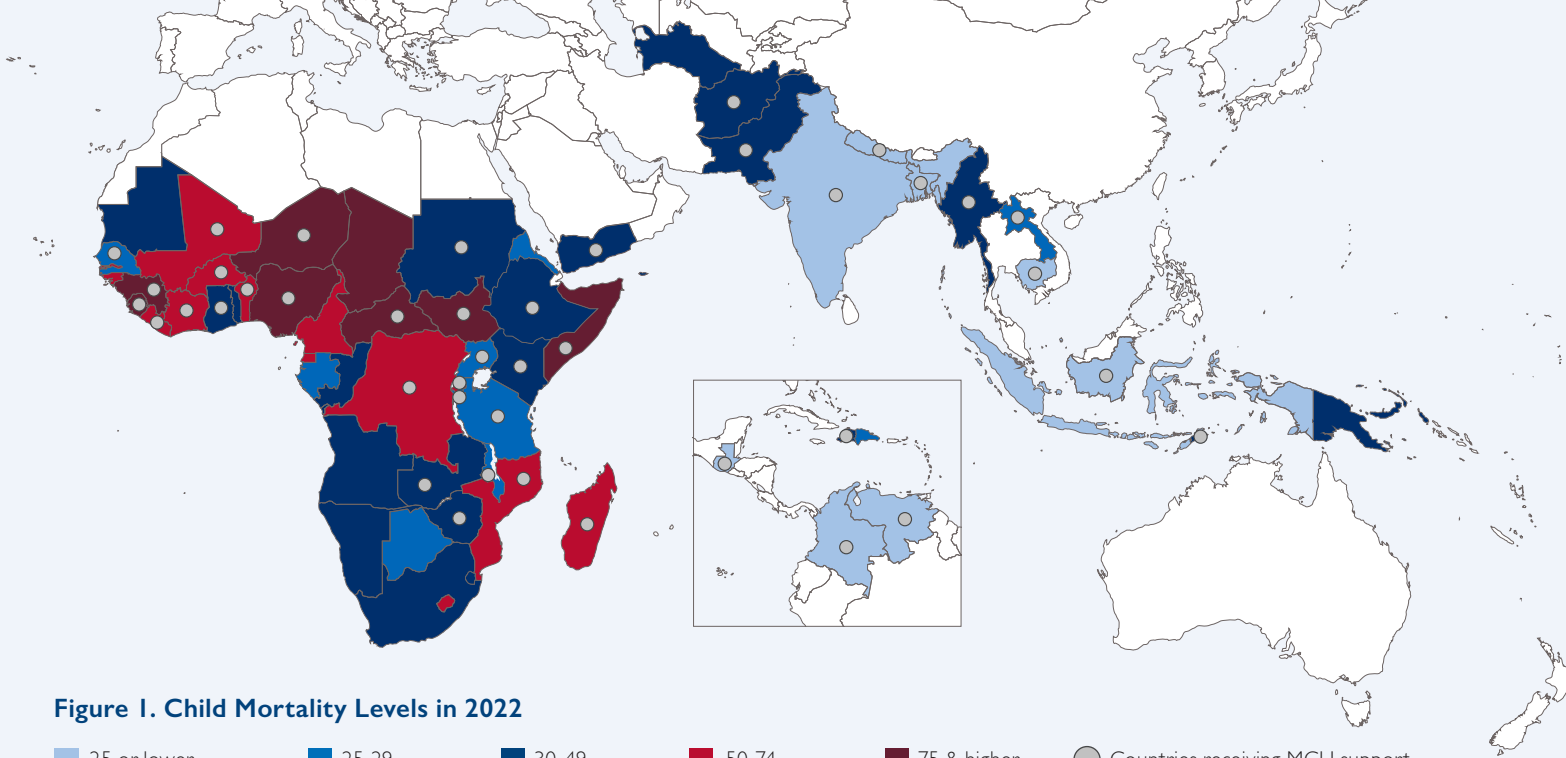
## ENSURING EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS

USAID teams worldwide collaborate with UNICEF to provide humanitarian and development assistance across sectors. The Office of Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition, the Bureau for Global Health at USAID, plays a key role in the administration, management, and oversight of the large majority of USAID's investments in health and related development activities with UNICEF. This central and active management, which includes funds from 75+ missions and other USAID Operating Units, promotes coordination and collaboration across different workstreams and technical areas while also ensuring robust and consistent oversight across the portfolio. The USAID teams responsible for managing these investments require joint country planning between USAID missions and UNICEF country offices to monitor progress and results, and ensure proper stewardship of U.S. taxpayers' funds.

Across the Agency, USAID's strategic and operational priority objectives for its partnership with UNICEF span three broad areas:

1. Guiding global health progress with data and rigorous monitoring;
2. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of USAID's investment by strengthening programmatic coordination and integration across sectors and health areas; and
3. Ensuring the sustainability of results by strengthening local capacities and systems.

By overseeing a large portion of USAID's investment in UNICEF, the Office of Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition is able to ensure that diverse and cross-sectoral investments into these three areas drive greater impact that contributes to the Agency's goals to prevent child and maternal deaths.



**Figure 1. Child Mortality Levels in 2022**

■ 25 or lower    
 ■ 25-29    
 ■ 30-49    
 ■ 50-74    
 ■ 75 & higher    
 ● Countries receiving MCH support

Source: [UN IGME 2023](#)

## GUIDING GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRESS WITH DATA AND RIGOROUS MONITORING

### Investing in Quality Data for Smarter Programs, Measurable Progress, and Informed Policy

USAID's support is integral to UNICEF's global efforts in collecting and analyzing mortality data for women and children. Through the collection and analysis of data on the causes of death, USAID and UNICEF are able to pinpoint and target specific health interventions, addressing the root causes of preventable mortality. Additionally, tracking the coverage of key health interventions allows us to measure basic access, ensuring that critical services are reaching those who need them most. By assessing the equity of health care, we work to close gaps in care, ensuring that vulnerable populations are not left behind. All of this data is made publicly available and easily accessible through interactive data dashboards, allowing global health stakeholders to leverage this information. These dashboards provide transparency and help guide efforts to achieve shared global health goals, making this data an essential tool for advocacy, policy-making, and progress measurement. USAID also uses this data to fulfill its own reporting requirements to U.S. Congress.

- UNICEF is part of the UN Interagency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, which develops [annual child mortality estimates](#), as shown in Figure 1. These were the basis of the Sustainable Development Goals and are the data that allows USAID to evaluate its progress in preventing child deaths. Over a 12-month period, this data was accessed nearly 280,000 times, influencing policy and programs across the UN system, sovereign donors, advocacy groups, global initiatives, civil society, and academia.

### Acting Swiftly to Combat Disease Outbreaks

Women and children are often disproportionately impacted by disease outbreaks like cholera, Dengue, Marburg and Mpox. As a result, USAID has partnered with UNICEF to develop the Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Fund, or IDORF, which prepositions funds to allow UNICEF to support countries as they rapidly respond to emerging outbreaks. USAID has supported UNICEF to respond to 11 recent disease outbreaks in Africa and Asia.

- In **Bangladesh**, USAID provided rapid support to the local UNICEF office to respond to a nationwide outbreak of Dengue, including by supporting leadership and coordination, risk communication and community engagement, procurement of test kits and increased diagnostic capacity, and conducting assessments to ensure health facility preparedness. Due to flexibilities built into the IDORF, both USAID and UNICEF were able to align response activities with efforts led by national and local authorities and adjust activities in real time as the outbreak evolved. This swift and coordinated response was critical in protecting children, particularly those under the age of 5, who are at a higher risk of death from severe Dengue if not properly treated.



## MAXIMIZING THE IMPACT OF USAID'S INVESTMENT BY INTEGRATING AND COORDINATING ACROSS SECTORS AND HEALTH AREAS

### Bolstering Critical Connections Between WASH and Health

Access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) is critical to achieve and sustain health goals. USAID partners with UNICEF to improve equitable access to safe water supply, build government capacity to maintain and deliver WASH systems, and engage the private sector to meet the need for WASH.

- In **Nigeria**, UNICEF receives USAID support to implement programs in the Northwest, a region that is historically underserved and hard to reach. UNICEF works to deliver climate-resilient WASH services to the most vulnerable populations, and as a result of USAID's support over 89,000 people have gained access to basic sanitation and more than 1,140 communities have been declared open defecation-free since April 2021. UNICEF works with the local government, communities, and the private sector to ensure the sustainability of this investment.

### Creating a Lead-Free Future For Children

USAID and UNICEF are founding partners of the Partnership for a Lead-Free Future, the first-ever public-private partnership dedicated to tackling an often neglected yet solvable issue: one in two children in low income countries has elevated levels of lead in their blood. USAID and UNICEF spearheaded efforts to sign on over sixty founding partners, with an initial collective investment of \$150 million across donors. With a secretariat at UNICEF, the partnership will guide collective efforts to marshal more global attention, leadership, and resources to champion country-led efforts to phase lead out of consumer goods and ensure safer industrial stewardship of lead.

### Advancing Nutrition and Early Childhood Development

USAID leverages UNICEF's wide geographic reach and technical expertise to make targeted investments in nutrition in the thousand day window from pregnancy to the child's second birthday as well as investments to encourage childhood development and maximize future health and potential.

- Iodine deficiency can have adverse impacts on child survival, health, and cognitive development, including by leading to stillbirth and miscarriages, and mental impairments, resulting in loss of learning abilities. USAID invests a Congressionally mandated \$2.5 million in UNICEF annually to prevent and control iodine deficiency. UNICEF works at the headquarters, regional, and national level in a number of priority countries to maintain or accelerate progress on salt iodization. In **Tanzania**, UNICEF is conducting research to validate successful approaches to monitor salt iodization programs which will inform programs elsewhere.
- In direct support of the U.S. Global Thrive Act, USAID partners with UNICEF to ensure children around the world have good health, adequate nutrition, safety and security, responsive caregiving and opportunities for learning. UNICEF is a global leader in this effort and continues to work closely with partners to operationalize the Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development (ECD) at the country level, generates data on the status of ECD in countries, and shares tools and resources on best practices. USAID has supported these efforts, including through the development of the Nurturing Care Practice Guide, and the Nurturing Care Handbook, and works with countries to adapt these resources to local contexts. This includes tools like UNICEF's Infant and Young Child Counseling Package which has been adopted by over 70 countries. USAID supported UNICEF to recently update this package to incorporate new tools and guidance, such as nurturing care, care of infants and young children with disabilities, and the prevention of all forms of malnutrition.

## Strengthening Global Vaccination Efforts

USAID's partnership with UNICEF expands access to routine immunization around the world through Gavi, the Global Vaccine Alliance, and strengthens regional polio vaccination programs.

- UNICEF is a founding partner of Gavi, supported by the United States since its inception. U.S. contributions to Gavi enhance access to lifesaving vaccines for children in the poorest countries, while UNICEF provides technical support and equipment to strengthen countries' local capacities to deliver those vaccines to children. At a country level, USAID missions partner with UNICEF and local governments to ensure timely distribution and access to Gavi-provided vaccines.
- USAID partners with UNICEF to coordinate outbreak response and polio vaccination needs in the Eastern and Southern Africa region. UNICEF staff in the region provide technical assistance for communication and vaccine management, and they generate profiles and maps for capacity building and evidence-based response planning in the polio priority countries. This support improves acceptance and trust in polio vaccines and emphasizes the importance of routine child vaccination against other deadly diseases. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, an increase in polio vaccine acceptance has been achieved through a community-based approach using Community Action Cells, community relays, text broadcasts through UNICEF's digital platforms, local radios, religious leaders, traditional chiefs, teachers, and the commitment of political authorities at the provincial and health zone levels.

## STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES AND SYSTEMS

### Implementing Sustainable Programs in Partnership with USAID Missions and Local Organizations

USAID missions around the world invest their country specific funds into UNICEF to implement programs. Countries benefit from UNICEF's existing networks and deep reach into countries, as well as the Organization's technical expertise.

- In **Kenya**, USAID is partnering with UNICEF on a groundbreaking program which aims to improve the quality and equitable delivery of maternal and child health and nutrition interventions among underserved communities in northeastern Kenya. Leveraging UNICEF's long-standing local partnerships and operations, the program aims to do this in a sustainable way by strengthening local and community health care delivery capacities and referral systems and overall improvements in quality of care. The program ensures access to WASH in health care facilities and advocates for increased allocations of domestic resources to improve health care delivery in the targeted counties.



## LEARN MORE ABOUT USAID'S MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS:

[usaid.gov/global-health/health-areas/maternal-and-child-health](https://www.usaid.gov/global-health/health-areas/maternal-and-child-health)

## READ OUR LATEST ANNUAL REPORT:

[usaid.gov/PreventingChildandMaternalDeaths](https://www.usaid.gov/PreventingChildandMaternalDeaths)

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