



Model  
United Nations

BYU Kennedy Center

**36th Annual**

**BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE**

Sponsored by the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies

Friday, October 31, 205 – Provo, Utah

**Welcome Letter**

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SECRETARIAT

Esteemed Delegates,

Kate Markham  
*Security Council*

Welcome to the 36th annual Brigham Young University Model United Nations Conference! Your commitment to this conference demonstrates your dedication to global citizenship and your passion for developing and maintaining a stronger future for the world.

Kelly Miles  
*United Nations Children's  
Fund*

My name is Kelly Miles, and I am honored to be your United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) director. My most recent MUN experience was representing Türkiye in the National Model United Nations General Assembly. I am a Global Studies major with minors in Statistics, International Development, and Nutrition. During my time at BYU, I have been fortunate to participate in the Ballroom Touring Company. This combines my love of dance and people and allows me to see people directly affected by UNICEF as I travel. I am excited to discuss the impact the United Nations has and its influence for good. This is an opportunity for growth and change in understanding these issues. I hope that this program will bring you confidence and inspiration in whatever direction your life takes you. I look forward to meeting you and being a part of your experience.

Akira Contreras  
*Organization of American  
States*

Mauricio Morales  
*International Atomic  
Energy Agency*

This year, the UNICEF will consider the following topics:

- I. Technology as a Resource in Disrupted Youth Education
- II. Strengthening Access to Maternal Care

Jessie Moore  
*General Assembly Third  
Committee*

UNICEF protects and supports the rights of children in over 190 countries, with the purpose of helping children to flourish. The committee contributes in a variety of ways, from humanitarian warehouses to vaccine provision. These topics reflect current issues, such as the suffering of refugee children in Gaza and the systemic barriers for mothers.

Benjo Phillips  
*Economic and Social  
Council*

This background guide is a catalyst for your future research and the development of your topics. It remains general to allow space for creativity and the advancement of your research skills. Be deliberate in your preparations leading up to the conference. Your MUN experience will be determined by the work you put into it. I encourage you to put forth your best efforts, as this is an experience for expanding your horizons.

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Kelly Russell  
*Executive Director*

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DAVID M. KENNEDY  
CENTER FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES

Best,  
Kelly Miles  
Director, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund  
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Cory Leonard  
*Assistant Director*

## Committee History

*“Hope can drive us forward in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. It can be all that stops us from giving in to doubt and insecurity. Hope is the foundation on which the organization I lead, UNICEF, has been built. And hope is what fuels our optimism that this mission can be achieved.”*

-Catherine Russell, UNICEF Executive Director

### Introduction

The United Nations (UN) is a cohesive international organization that promotes humanity worldwide. It has grown to comprise 193 Member States since 1945 and is a place of hope for nations to discuss problems and collaborate on solutions.<sup>1</sup>

The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has developed into the United Nations Children’s Fund. Formed after WWII by the United Nations General Assembly to aid mothers left destitute by the effects of warfare, it would eventually become a permanent part of the United Nations system in 1953. Today, it continues to provide crucial aid to women and children in developing countries.<sup>2</sup> UNICEF has a particular focus on education, equality, humanitarian assistance, climate change, and water and sanitation. These topics align with the mission of protecting the rights of children through peace and crisis to maintain the right that childhood is universal.<sup>3</sup>

### Mandate, Functions, and Powers

UNICEF’s mandate, established by the United Nations General Assembly (GA), is to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs, and to nurture their opportunities to reach their full potential. Under GA supervision and guided by the Convention of the Rights of the Child, UNICEF is invested in the flourishing of children. This is attained by advocating for the protection of children’s rights and providing them with basic needs and opportunities.<sup>4</sup> Since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. “About Us | United Nations.” *United Nations*, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations. “UNICEF—United Nations Children’s Fund | United Nations.” *United Nations*, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/ccoi/unicef-united-nations-childrens-fund#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Children's%20Fund,devastated%20by%20World%20War%20II>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF. “What We Do | UNICEF.” *UNICEF*, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF. “What We Do | UNICEF.” *UNICEF*, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

1989, world leaders have a responsibility to recognize that children are their own individuals with rights autonomous from their parents.<sup>5</sup>

The foundational framework from the Convention on the Rights of the Child guides UNICEF's operations. It reinforces the protection and dignity of every child through guiding legislation, drafting resolutions, and encouraging Member States to align with its principles. While the only body in the UN with legal authority to act is the Security Council, UNICEF's encouragement is typically carried through because it is easily agreeable<sup>6</sup>. In addition to supporting children through urging Member State reform, UNICEF works closely with mission-aligned non-profits. In this respect, national and international governing bodies partner with the public sector to strengthen child protection, ensure access to justice, and support vulnerable children, with a particular emphasis on those who are in conflict or suffer from legal challenges.

Since the development of UNICEF, several notable resolutions have emerged. For example, A/RES/54/263 explains UNICEF's mandate, containing protocols from the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and providing further guidance respecting child pornography, trafficking, and prostitution. It is worth noting that although UNICEF's mandate cannot force Member State implementation of this guidance, entities which fail to conform are criticized by compliant Member States.<sup>7</sup> It is a widely accepted principle that protecting children is a universal concern. Although the body has no formal legal authority, like the Security Council, it remains highly influential due to the established consensus that children are the future.

## Conclusion

Henrietta H. Fore, the UNICEF Executive Director, remarked: "A child's right to an education does not change because of a crisis. It is just as important as every other need, and can even improve outcomes in other sectors."<sup>8</sup> Education is just once facet of the UNICEF vision but must be prioritized given that it is a key indicator of success in other areas of a child's life. As UNICEF is, above all, a public forum where Member States may voice concerns and opinions about the welfare of children the globe over, this committee represents a unique opportunity to make education the focal point of any solution.

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<sup>5</sup> UNICEF. "Mission Statement | UNICEF." *UNICEF*, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/about/mission-statement>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF. "Convention on the Rights of the Child | UNICEF." *UNICEF*, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>7</sup>United Nations General Assembly. *Convention on the Rights of the Child: Optional Protocols*, A/RES/54/263, 25 May 2000, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/54/263>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF USA. "A Child's Right to Education Does Not Change Because of Crisis." *UNICEF USA*, <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/childs-right-education-does-not-change-because-crisis>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

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**UNICEF. "Convention on the Rights of the Child." *UNICEF*. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>.**

This source is on what the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is. It discusses what it has achieved and what it is looking forward to.

**UNICEF. "Mission Statement." *UNICEF*. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://www.unicef.org/about/mission-statement>.**

This page is UNICEF's mission statement. It contains the mandate and the relevance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**UNICEF. "What We Do." *UNICEF*. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do>.**

This article is the focus of UNICEF. They specifically help through humanitarian efforts, education, equality, health, sanitation, and development.

**United Nations. "About Us." *United Nations*. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us>.**

This source provides a general outline of the UN and part of its history. It continues to go over the system of the structure.

**United Nations. "UNICEF—United Nations Children's Fund." *United Nations*. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://www.un.org/en/ccoi/unicef-united-nations-childrens-fund#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Children's%20Fund,devastated%20by%20World%20War%20II>**

This page provides the history of the making and development of UNICEF. It discusses the relevance to WWII and its inspiration behind it.

**United Nations General Assembly. *Convention on the Rights of the Child: Optional Protocols*. A/RES/54/263, May 25, 2000. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/54/263>.**

It is a resolution adopted by the General Assembly that was passed in March 2001. The resolution was developed for advocating for children's rights from child pornography and prostitution.

**UNICEF USA. “A Child’s Right to Education Does Not Change Because of Crisis.”**

***UNICEF USA.* Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/childs-right-education-does-not-change-because-crisis>.**

This article is on reaching children with and without internet access. There are several quotes by influential members of UNICEF.

## I. Technology as a Resource in Disrupted Youth Education

*“Digital learning was not just a stop-gap measure during the pandemic. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it is essential to realizing the right of every child to an education – and a critical key to closing learning gaps for the most vulnerable children and adolescents.”*

– UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell

### Introduction

Under UNICEF’s goals, education for children is of utmost importance for the rising generation. However, education systems increasingly face growing stress as they continue to endure conflict, poverty, underfunding, climate shocks, and technological changes. These challenges have resulted in sub-par or nonexistent academic opportunities for children worldwide. According to a recent report, two-thirds of 10-year-olds in low-income countries lack reading comprehension,<sup>9</sup> and 251 million children lack access to any kind of formal schooling.

In light of these issues, UNICEF developed a call to action through the Digital Education Strategy 2025-2030, with a focus on continuous learning by utilizing technology in an innovative and sustainable way. Unlike traditional approaches, this policy reimagines the scope of education and successfully improves learning outcomes. The development of the Digital Education Strategy bridges gaps for underserved populations, including for children in conflict zones, teachers in remote areas, and children from marginalized groups.<sup>10</sup> Through global partnerships, UNICEF seeks to promote digital learning that is equitable and safe, high quality, and implementable across settings.<sup>11</sup> Although disrupted learning is inevitable due to conflicts and other global realities, these collaborations and innovations are providing opportunities to continue education in times of crisis. The Digital Education Strategy directly impacts SDG 4, which is focused on providing equal opportunities for education and promoting lifelong learning,<sup>12</sup> along with SDG 5, which seeks to promote gender equality. These goals are furthered as Member States adopt improved educational programs.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund. “Digital Education.” *UNICEF*, [www.unicef.org/digitaleducation/](http://www.unicef.org/digitaleducation/). Accessed 19 June 2025.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund. “Goal 4: Quality Education.” *UNICEF Data*, [data.unicef.org/sdgs/goal-4-quality-education/](http://data.unicef.org/sdgs/goal-4-quality-education/). Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund. “Education Overview.” *UNICEF Data*, [data.unicef.org/topic/education/overview/](http://data.unicef.org/topic/education/overview/). Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund. “Education Overview.” *UNICEF Data*, [data.unicef.org/topic/education/overview/](http://data.unicef.org/topic/education/overview/). Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations. “Goal 5: Gender Equality.” *Sustainable Development Goals*, [sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5](http://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5). Accessed 18 June 2025.

## Current Situations

Children are among the most vulnerable populations during times of war, conflict, and disaster. Globally, crises have disrupted the education of 75 million children. Losing access to school means more than lost lessons—it means lost futures. One in four children’s education suffers from interruptions due to humanitarian crises. In the face of these situations, technology provides a lifeline to sustaining the creativity and connection that traditional classrooms would provide.<sup>14</sup>

In Nigeria, children face the ongoing threats of terrorism, which has destroyed at least 496 classrooms and severely damaged over 1,000 others. Although education is technically free, school attendance is only 53% due to violence, poverty, and lack of infrastructure. To protect the right of learning in a safe environment, UNICEF is providing digital classrooms along with remote-learning alternatives and teacher trainings.<sup>15</sup> In Sudan, conflict and instability have left 6.9 million children without access to their classrooms.<sup>16</sup> UNICEF’s reaction was to distribute solar-powered tablets, contribute to radio-based education areas without internet, and create temporary learning centers for children. The current project in Sudan is offering safe learning spaces and seeking to improve educational equality for refugees.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Mexico faces education challenges due to organized crime and community violence. One UNICEF-supported program has, to date, provided 4,5000 students with safe learning spaces and hybrid learning access in high-risk areas. These models use a dual-pronged approach by combining in-person instruction with digital resources, which has proven vital for maintaining education during instability.<sup>18</sup>

Other countries like Gaza, Türkiye, and Syria continue to suffer the effects associated with disrupted education from displacement and disaster. In these environments, UNICEF’s technology has provided adaptable solutions. Digital learning platforms, offline tools, and AI assessments continue to support education despite facing various infrastructures and security constraints.<sup>19</sup>

These examples highlight the critical need for adaptation. Crises vary in nature; however, the

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<sup>14</sup> UNICEF. "Education in Emergencies." *UNICEF*, 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/education/emergencies>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>15</sup> UNICEF Nigeria. "Education." *UNICEF Nigeria*, 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>16</sup> UNICEF Sudan. "Education." *UNICEF Sudan*, 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/sudan/education>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF. "Education in Emergencies." *UNICEF*, 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/education/emergencies>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF. "Education in Emergencies." *UNICEF*, 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/education/emergencies>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF. "Education in Emergencies." *UNICEF*, 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/education/emergencies>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

threat to education is universal. Using the flexibility of technological tools has the potential to create a learning environment based in inclusivity, resilience, and accessibility.<sup>20</sup>

## **UN and Global Efforts**

UNICEF's Digital Education Strategy 2025-2030 outlines five key areas to strengthen global education during emergencies, among which are embedding equity, adaptability, and innovation into the structure of educational delivery.<sup>21</sup>

One significant contribution under this initiative is Giga, a united effort with UNICEF and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to connect schools to the internet. In Rwanda, Giga provided this service for 1,500 schools. As a result of Giga, rural students received increased access to digital content. Likewise, teachers in the same regions were equipped with added training and tools through their new web availability. In Ukraine, UNICEF has worked closely with the Ministry of Education to produce "Learning Without Borders," a program that continues education for 80,000 displaced students. These solutions are prime examples of UNICEF's global strategy for regional impact.

The five pillars for this strategy are:

1. Empowering teachers with the proper digital tools and training to increase student engagement and retention.
2. Tailoring foundational learning literacy and numeracy skills through artificial intelligence to support different levels and languages.
3. Creating flexible pathways for children, aimed to expand digital literacy, socioemotional skills, and AI.
4. Integrating technology like Giga and Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) into the system to improve the future of education.
5. Promoting leadership, creating human-centered, inclusive, creative, and data-informed strategies in education.<sup>22</sup>

UNICEF's tasks are directed toward impact Sustainable Development Goal 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all. Additionally, the organization continues to promote gender equality in crucial disruptions to learning, which actively targets SDG 5. Through digital education, UNICEF has cultivated partnerships that make it adept at responding to emergencies

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<sup>20</sup> UNICEF. "Digital Learning." *UNICEF*, 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/digitalllearning/about-us>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>21</sup> UNICEF. "Digital Education." *UNICEF*, [www.unicef.org/digitaleducation/](http://www.unicef.org/digitaleducation/). Accessed 19 June 2025.

<sup>22</sup> UNICEF. "Digital Education." *UNICEF*, [www.unicef.org/digitaleducation/](http://www.unicef.org/digitaleducation/). Accessed 19 June 2025.

and pushing for robust learning in fragile, low-resource, and conflict settings.<sup>23</sup>

## Artificial Intelligence

A transformative tool that has grown in importance is the use of artificial intelligence (AI). Given that children are very impressionable, AI can either elevate their innate and learned skills, or else create obstacles. Specifically from the ages of 4-12, the brain is in a critical developmental stage for cognitive functions such as memory and decision-making. During this growth window, today's young are becoming increasingly exposed to AI tools, making this technology a valuable new asset in educational programming. Mindful use of AI can provide benefits in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development. Using AI in educational tools is associated with positive developments due to its unique ability to focus on individualized learning. The program has the capacity to help children build vocabulary, communication, music, and storytelling skills, while fostering a fun learning experience. Through AI-supported learning, children can practice skills in an individualized, safe space. This individualization is especially helpful in making learning more accessible to children with disabilities, and can even help their teachers and parents to monitor development.

As a data collection source, AI contributes to child learning through gathering personal information and behavior patterns and comparing this content to data about childhood stages of development in order to formulate its responses. While potentially very useful, this method of data collection comes with its share of concerns. Should data privacy be compromised via breach or misuse, there are myriad consequences for children and their families. Furthermore, AI's data collection-driven model is susceptible to misinformation, making the objectivity of AI as a learning resource somewhat questionable. Then there is the matter of accessibility. The implementation of AI learning into curriculum could potentially widen pre-existing learning gaps, as underprivileged students who already lack access to the technology that they are expected to use outside of the classroom will be unable to utilize AI tools. Conversely, students who have access to technology are at risk of becoming overly dependent on AI tools, which can stunt academic growth and limit interpersonal interactions, thereby negatively impacting a child's development.<sup>24</sup>

Due to its prevalent use in society, finding a way to teach responsible AI usage is crucial for the development of the rising generation. Under conscientious oversight, AI can be harnessed to provide valuable educational benefits leading to fundamental change and growth. Implementing

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<sup>23</sup> United Nations. "Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls." *Sustainable Development Goals*, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>24</sup> UNICEF. *Early Childhood Development and AI: Opportunities and Risks for the Youngest Learners*. UNICEF, Oct. 2024, [https://www.unicef.org/media/163786/file/2024-10\\_Blog%20ECD%20and%20AI\\_cw\\_zj\\_am.pdf.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/163786/file/2024-10_Blog%20ECD%20and%20AI_cw_zj_am.pdf.pdf). Accessed 18 June 2025.

AI in learning technology opens various fields of potential.<sup>25</sup>

## Impacts of Education Gaps

A common aphorism in education circles is that education systems tend to invest the least in children who need it the most. However, investing in the education of low-income children is the most effective way to help them reach more stable socio-economic situations later in life.

Current UNICEF <sup>26</sup> These children are <sup>27</sup> There is also a strong correlation between access to education and overall health and wellbeing. A lack of educational opportunities can impact the the safety of children's marriage and pregnancies.<sup>28</sup> In addition to these social effects, educational neglect also has economic repercussions, resulting in the loss of ten thousand billion dollars that could have been attained through skilled labor. Simply increasing the proportion of students by 10% would increase the global GDP by at least 1 to 2 points. In this way, the opportunity afforded to individuals also benefits the local community, the Member State supplying education, and the global economy.<sup>29</sup>

## Conclusion

Through stability and crises, education is a universal right. UNICEF is a vital coordinator in creating learning opportunities by utilizing technology for children. This support is especially necessary for children at risk of dropping out of school in areas of conflict.<sup>30</sup> As technology continues to advance, especially with tools like AI available at a child's fingertips, access to education has the potential to expand to demographics that have previously experienced disruption. Advancements can continue to provide consistent learning in spite of inconsistent conditions.

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<sup>25</sup> UNICEF. *Early Childhood Development and AI: Opportunities and Risks for the Youngest Learners*. UNICEF, Oct. 2024, [https://www.unicef.org/media/163786/file/2024-10\\_Blog%20ECD%20and%20AI\\_cw\\_zj\\_am.pdf.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/163786/file/2024-10_Blog%20ECD%20and%20AI_cw_zj_am.pdf.pdf). Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>26</sup> United Nations. "Global Learning Crisis Threatens Future of 300 Million Students – UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank." *UN News*, 24 Jan. 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/01/1132502>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>27</sup> United Nations. "Global Learning Crisis Threatens Future of 300 Million Students – UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank." *UN News*, 24 Jan. 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/01/1132502>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>28</sup> UNESCO. "Out-of-School Children and Educational Gaps Cost the Global Economy \$10,000 Billion a Year." *UNESCO*, 17 June 2024, last updated 5 July 2024, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/out-school-children-and-educational-gaps-cost-global-economy-10000-billion-year>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations. "Global Learning Crisis Threatens Future of 300 Million Students – UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank." *UN News*, 24 Jan. 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/01/1132502>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

<sup>30</sup> UNICEF Middle East and North Africa. "Education in Emergencies and Crisis." *UNICEF*, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/mena/education-emergencies-and-crisis>. Accessed 18 June 2025.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What benefits might be attained by increasing education access?
2. Could technology fully replace teachers in disrupted areas?
3. Are there certain ages that should have a higher priority in receiving learning opportunities?
4. Should AI have an age requirement for educational use?
5. What effects have events like COVID-19 had on protecting children's education?
6. Should countries that receive more refugee children be given technology for in-person education?

## Annotated Bibliography

**UNESCO. *Out-of-School Children and Educational Gaps Cost Global Economy \$10,000 Billion a Year.* UNESCO. Accessed June 18, 2025.**

**<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/out-school-children-and-educational-gaps-cost-global-economy-10000-billion-year>.**

This page highlights UNICEF's call to action in using digital education. It is a collaboration with governments, technology partners, and communities to create a future of learning.

**UNICEF. *About Us – Digital Education.* UNICEF. Accessed June 18, 2025.**

**<https://www.unicef.org/digitaleducation/about-us>.**

This page provides background information on UNICEF's three focuses on learning opportunities. Their efforts in utilizing and integrating digital learning

**UNICEF. "Education in Emergencies." *UNICEF Europe and Central Asia,***

**<https://www.unicef.org/eu/education-emergencies>. Accessed 18 June 2025.**

This source discusses UNICEF's reaction to education challenges in crises. They aim to focus on protecting children's right to education despite emergencies and conflicts.

**UNICEF. *Giga: Connecting Every School to the Internet.* UNICEF, 2024,**

**[www.unicef.org/innovation/giga](http://www.unicef.org/innovation/giga). Accessed 2 July 2025.**

**UNICEF Ukraine. "UNICEF and Ministry of Education Launch 'Learning Without Borders' Platform." UNICEF, Mar. 2023, [www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/stories/unicef-and-ministry-education-launch-learning-without-borders-platform](http://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/stories/unicef-and-ministry-education-launch-learning-without-borders-platform). Accessed 2 July 2025.**

**United Nations News. "Global Education: Millions of Children Still Missing Out." *UN News*, 2023, [https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/01/1132502?utm\\_source](https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/01/1132502?utm_source). Accessed 18 June 2025.**

This article covers the ongoing challenges children face in participating in school. The UN and others examine efforts to ensure education for all.

**UNESCO. *Out-of-School Children and Educational Gaps Cost Global Economy \$10,000 Billion a Year.* UNESCO. Accessed June 18, 2025.**

**<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/out-school-children-and-educational-gaps-cost->**

**global-economy-10000-billion-year.**

This article highlights the economic impact of children not receiving an education. It stresses the need for policy interventions to close educational gaps.

**UNICEF. *Blog: Early Childhood Development and Artificial Intelligence*. 2024. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://www.unicef.org/media/163786/file/2024-10-Blog%20ECD%20and%20AI-cw-zj-am.p>.**

This source discusses the role of childhood development and artificial intelligence. It explores how AI can support early learning.

**UNICEF. *Education in Sudan*. UNICEF Sudan. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://www.unicef.org/sudan/education>.**

This source describes UNICEF's programs for educational challenges in Sudan.

**UNICEF. *Education in Nigeria*. UNICEF Nigeria. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education>**

This source examines the quality of education in Nigeria, highlighting the challenges it faces.

**United Nations. *Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls*. Sustainable Development Goals. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>.**

The page outlines SDG 5, which focuses on gender equality and empowerment.

**UNICEF Data. *Education Overview*. UNICEF Data. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/overview/>.**

This page provides data and statistics related to global education and disparities among children worldwide.

**UNICEF Data. *SDG 4: Quality Education*. UNICEF Data. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://data.unicef.org/sdgs/goal-4-quality-education/>.**

Focused on Sustainable Development Goal 4, this source is about ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities.

**UNICEF. *Education Emergencies and Crisis in MENA*. UNICEF MENA. Accessed June 18, 2025. <https://www.unicef.org/mena/education-emergencies-and-crisis>.**

This page highlights UNICEF's response to education emergencies in the Middle East and North Africa. It explains the challenges but also the support that the children are affected by conflict and displacement.

## II. Strengthening Access to Maternal Care

*“Every woman has the right to quality, respectful health care throughout pregnancy and childbirth. No mother should die giving life.”*

— Catherine Russell, UNICEF Executive Director

### Introduction

Every two minutes, a woman dies from issues relating to pregnancy or childbirth, many of which were preventable or treatable. Although there has been exponential progress regarding increasing access to maternal care, women continue to experience unnecessary risks during pregnancy and delivery.<sup>31</sup> Improving access to consistent, affordable, and high-quality maternal care requires deliberate practices of prenatal checkups, skilled birth attendants, and postnatal support. These initiatives improve survival rates significantly for mothers and babies.<sup>32</sup>

Increasing nutrition access is also a key aspect of maternal health. During pregnancy, meeting a woman’s nutritional needs is crucial. This requires both access to good information and good food, as a woman’s nutritional needs during pregnancy change in ways that are not intuitive. Even after acknowledging this necessity, access to the essential five food groups can still be scarce. Fruits, vegetables, fish, dairy, and other necessities are restricted by financial, social, and cultural barriers.<sup>33</sup> Since the development of the fetus is dependent on the mother’s health, caring for the mother during pregnancy is a strong indicator for the birth of a healthy child.

UNICEF continues to support maternal health through programs that prioritize nutritious foods. These programs focus on the fortification of basic resources like flour and rice to provide the essential vitamins and minerals necessary for supporting the mother and baby.<sup>34</sup> These specially designed resources help to prevent deficiencies in iodine, zinc, calcium, iron, and folate. Increasing nutrients can prevent or lower the chances of complications like pre-eclampsia, anemia, and other fatal conditions.<sup>35</sup> In addition to these fortified foods, UNICEF is committed

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<sup>31</sup>UNICEF USA. *Maternal Health*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/maternal-health>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>32</sup>UNICEF USA. *Maternal Health*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/maternal-health>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>33</sup>UNICEF USA. *Maternal Health*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/maternal-health>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>34</sup>UNICEF USA. *Maternal Health*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/maternal-health>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>35</sup>UNICEF USA. *Maternal Health*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/maternal-health>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

to providing aid in the forms of micronutrient supplements, recommended exercise regimens, health check-ups, and counseling.<sup>36</sup>

Despite these efforts, many women still lack access to care due to health system failures including poor quality of services, shortages in supplies, inadequate training, mistreatment, humanitarian crises, and restrictive gender norms.<sup>37</sup> UNICEF partners with individual Member States to overcome these challenges and promote maternal survival by improving prenatal and postnatal care. These efforts directly support Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.1 to minimize maternal mortalities.<sup>38</sup> Key to achieving that target is SDG 3.7, offering universal access to sexual and reproductive health services by 2030.<sup>39</sup>

Both maternal and child mortality rates are higher than acceptable given the technology and information available today. The need to direct resources towards these targets is dire, as 90% of maternal deaths occur in low to middle-income countries. This clearly indicates that the majority of maternal deaths are linked to a lack of care, not pre-existing conditions. In 2000, child mortality stood at 9.9 million deaths and decreased to 4.9 million by 2023.<sup>40</sup> Even still, newborns continue to be the most vulnerable of these statistics. Half of child deaths occur within the first month of being born. If this trend continues, 35 million children under five will die by 2030. These deaths are usually caused by pneumonia, malaria, birth complications, and diarrhea, all of which are preventable.<sup>41</sup> UNICEF has taken responsibility for creating action to address the needs of mothers, newborns, and young children. This action is seen through providing the right of affordable health care, proper nutrition, and sanitized water despite difficult environmental conditions.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>UNICEF USA. *Maternal Health*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/maternal-health>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>37</sup>“SDG Target 3.1: Maternal Mortality.” *World Health Organization (WHO)*, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/sdg-target-3-1-maternal-mortality>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>38</sup>“SDG Target 3.1: Maternal Mortality.” *World Health Organization (WHO)*, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/sdg-target-3-1-maternal-mortality>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>39</sup>“SDG Target 3.1: Maternal Mortality.” *World Health Organization (WHO)*, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/sdg-target-3-1-maternal-mortality>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>40</sup>UNICEF USA. *Maternal Health*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/maternal-health>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>41</sup>UNICEF. *Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival*. UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/health/maternal-newborn-and-child-survival>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>42</sup>UNICEF. *Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival*. UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/health/maternal-newborn-and-child-survival>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

## Current Issues

Despite these bleak statistics global efforts are proving successful in addressing these concerns. The past two decades of interventions have saved millions of lives and reduced maternal mortality. Women today have better survival rates in pregnancy and childbirth in comparison to the year 2000.<sup>43</sup> The progress towards improving women's survival rates has taken significant strides, but the future of this movement is by no means certain. Cuts to foreign aid have closed health facilities, resulted in the loss of budget for skilled health workers, and disrupted distributions of medicine and equipment. These funding issues hinder fundamental initiatives for providing treatments for vulnerable women and babies.<sup>44</sup>

Pregnant women living through humanitarian emergencies are the most vulnerable group. Reports to the UN state that two-thirds of maternal deaths happen in countries amid conflict or crisis.<sup>45</sup> Currently, some of the most vulnerable countries are Chad, Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Afghanistan, and Somalia. Maternal death is consistently an issue in these countries, and UNICEF and other agencies have expressed concern about consistent funding complications and health care system failures in these places. Prioritizing access to these initiatives can be the difference between life and death.<sup>46</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to setbacks, even in countries with robust health care systems. In 2021, there were about 40,000 deaths of women due to the complications during pregnancy and labor. Abrupt losses in access to maternity care, along with the stress of navigating complex health care systems, shows the tenuous state of maternal care access in global crises.<sup>47</sup> These disruptions lessen the reliability of services, increasing the risk of preventable death.

## UN and Global Efforts

To magnify improvements to maternal health and nutrition on a global scale, UNICEF collaborates with local governments and other partners to reach vulnerable women. This is not limited by geography; women in remote or underserved regions are prioritized. Community

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<sup>43</sup> UNICEF USA. *Trends in Maternal Mortality*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/media-hub/reports/trends-maternal-mortality>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>44</sup> UNICEF USA. *Aid Cuts Threaten Fragile Progress in Ending Maternal Deaths, UN Agencies Warn*. UNICEF USA, 17 Oct. 2023, <https://www.unicefusa.org/press/aid-cuts-threaten-fragile-progress-ending-maternal-deaths-un-agencies-warn>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>45</sup> UNICEF USA. *Aid Cuts Threaten Fragile Progress in Ending Maternal Deaths, UN Agencies Warn*. UNICEF USA, 17 Oct. 2023, <https://www.unicefusa.org/press/aid-cuts-threaten-fragile-progress-ending-maternal-deaths-un-agencies-warn>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>46</sup> UNICEF USA. *Aid Cuts Threaten Fragile Progress in Ending Maternal Deaths, UN Agencies Warn*. UNICEF USA, 17 Oct. 2023, <https://www.unicefusa.org/press/aid-cuts-threaten-fragile-progress-ending-maternal-deaths-un-agencies-warn>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>47</sup> UNICEF USA. *Aid Cuts Threaten Fragile Progress in Ending Maternal Deaths, UN Agencies Warn*. UNICEF USA, 17 Oct. 2023, <https://www.unicefusa.org/press/aid-cuts-threaten-fragile-progress-ending-maternal-deaths-un-agencies-warn>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

health care workers serve in many countries to build networks for these rural women.<sup>48</sup> One of UNICEF's most significant contributions has been the Maternal Nutrition Acceleration Plan. It targets 16 countries with a high rate of complications for pregnant women, including Ethiopia, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Nepal, where 36% of pregnant women (about 32 million) risk stillbirth. This is due to a lack of iron, which increases anemia. Additionally, further threats in these countries include low birth weights, late child development, and ultimately maternal death.<sup>49</sup>

The Maternal Nutrition Acceleration Plan is focused on creating practical, inexpensive strategies that converge principles of nutrition education, counseling, weight check-ups, micronutrient supplements, and referrals for treatment. A solution developed in Nepal was created to address milk shortages, resulting in a milk bank that supported over 500 premature or critically ill babies with donor breast milk. For its part, UNICEF strengthens the health care systems of participating Member States by using policy advocacy, community participation, and educating local health workers.<sup>50</sup> This progress has been pivotal in turning the tide against preventable deaths, but funding cuts continue to be a major hurdle which cut successful programs like supportive services for breastfeeding and counseling. Alongside financial barriers, some initiatives face community resistance due to stigma around prenatal care or modern medical interventions. Despite challenges, these global efforts show the powerful impact of coordinated action in giving mothers and babies a stronger start in life.<sup>51</sup>

## Adolescent Pregnancy

Adolescent pregnancy is strongly correlated with child marriages. Regions of South Asia are especially susceptible to this practice, where 28% of girls between the ages of 20 and 24 are married before they turn 18.<sup>52</sup> Families prompt child marriages to try and protect their daughters from harassment, premarital sex, or uncertainty from conflict and natural disasters. Such arrangements stem from discrimination and gender inequality, fundamentally undermining girls' autonomy. Significant age gaps between girls and their husbands leave room for an imbalance in

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<sup>48</sup> UNICEF USA. *Maternal Health*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/maternal-health>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>49</sup> UNICEF USA. *UNICEF Launches Multi-Country Push to Improve Maternal Nutrition*. UNICEF USA, 16 May 2023, <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/unicef-launches-multi-country-push-improve-maternal-nutrition>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>50</sup> UNICEF USA. *UNICEF Launches Multi-Country Push to Improve Maternal Nutrition*. UNICEF USA, 16 May 2023, <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/unicef-launches-multi-country-push-improve-maternal-nutrition>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>51</sup> UNICEF USA. *Breast Milk Bank Helps Babies Thrive in Nepal*. UNICEF USA, 13 Mar. 2023, <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/breast-milk-bank-helps-babies-thrive-nepal>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>52</sup> UNICEF. *Re-shaping the Future: The Transformative Role of Maternal and Newborn Health in South Asia*. UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/29841/file/Re-shaping%20the%20future%20pdf.pdf>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

relationships, often making young brides feel inferior to their husbands and pressured to prove their fertility.<sup>53</sup> These concerns are the main contributors to the overload of adolescent pregnancy, while also contributing to the risk of gender-based violence (GBV).<sup>54</sup> In South Asia, 19% of girls aged 15–19 report acts of physical or sexual violence by their partner within the last year. Almost half of the girls justified the violence. This is a harmful reinforcement of gender norms and a lack of support for girls in danger.<sup>55</sup>

Being pregnant as an adolescent comes with more risks because the girl's body is also continuing to develop. The mother and baby will more likely encounter higher risks of complications. Problems like obstructed labor, stillbirth, and obstetric fistula stem from underdevelopment can occur. Such painful outcomes are often challenging to treat because of financial and social barriers.<sup>56</sup> The proportion of adolescent girls who have access to maternal care in comparison to adult women is significantly lower. For instance, teenage mothers in Pakistan are 11% less likely to receive antenatal care. Statistics from other countries continue this trend, like Bangladesh (8%), Afghanistan (6%), and India (5%). Moreover, the probability in these countries of delivering a child by a skilled birth professional is only 76%. This lack of support compounds the devastating effects of maternal complications. The reality that 6,500 adolescent girls in South Asia face is crippling.<sup>57</sup> In addition to physical complications, young women who experience poor maternal health are also more prone to struggling with their mental health, leading to depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Lack of acknowledgment and initiative through reproductive care for adolescent girls will only continue to injure future generations physically, mentally, and emotionally.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> UNICEF. *Re-shaping the Future: The Transformative Role of Maternal and Newborn Health in South Asia*. UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/29841/file/Re-shaping%20the%20future%20pdf.pdf>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>54</sup> UNICEF. *Re-shaping the Future: The Transformative Role of Maternal and Newborn Health in South Asia*. UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/29841/file/Re-shaping%20the%20future%20pdf.pdf>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>55</sup> UNICEF. *Re-shaping the Future: The Transformative Role of Maternal and Newborn Health in South Asia*. UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/29841/file/Re-shaping%20the%20future%20pdf.pdf>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>56</sup> UNICEF. *Re-shaping the Future: The Transformative Role of Maternal and Newborn Health in South Asia*. UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/29841/file/Re-shaping%20the%20future%20pdf.pdf>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>57</sup> UNICEF. *Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies: Progress and Challenges in Maternal and Newborn Health*. UNICEF, 2023, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/healthy-mothers-healthy-babies/>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>58</sup> UNICEF. *Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies: Progress and Challenges in Maternal and Newborn Health*. UNICEF, 2023, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/healthy-mothers-healthy-babies/>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

## Healthcare Systems

To increase access to maternal care, several key factors must be considered, including location, degree of poverty, gender norms, climate change, poor nutrition, and social services. Within disadvantaged populations, Community Healthcare Workers (CHWs) serve a vital role in closing these gaps.<sup>59</sup> On average, most CHWs are women educated in providing maternal and child health services. Including these workers from local communities provides a greater sense of cultural sensitivity and knowledge. This supports the unique needs of women and children respectfully and effectively.<sup>60</sup>

A crucial element of a successful CHW is developing trust between families and health care systems. Fulfilling their roles as educators and advocates, CHWs continue to strengthen mothers in making informed decisions for their health and their children's health.<sup>61</sup> The responsibilities that are expected of CHWs include screening for malaria and malnutrition, giving vaccines, treating illness and injuries, assisting pregnant women, encouraging breastfeeding, providing hygiene education, and identifying vulnerable children. The impact of this care is the difference between life and death in low-resourced settings.<sup>62</sup>

Improving health care globally could prevent about 8 million deaths each year. The steps towards improvement would be to ensure clean, fully stocked health facilities, proficient staff, basic resources, and access to vital medicines. Further urging CHWs to prioritize basic measures like breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact can reduce the likelihood of death in infants.<sup>63</sup> Providing skilled midwives is a form of crucial prevention. These experienced professionals can lower two-thirds of all maternal and newborn deaths. Still, developing countries and their health facilities lack the necessary resources and support to deliver safe, reliable care.<sup>64</sup>

In conflict zones, maternal mortality is increased by 30%. Further disruption in necessary maternal and reproductive health services has continued to accumulate due to COVID-19. The World Health Organization (WHO) illustrates the consequences of insufficient infrastructure and respectful, safe care. The effects of maternal mortality might have been minimized if the focus

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<sup>59</sup> UNICEF USA. *Community Health Workers: Elevating Health Services for Children and Families*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/community-health-workers>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF USA. *Community Health Workers: Elevating Health Services for Children and Families*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/community-health-workers>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>61</sup> UNICEF USA. *Community Health Workers: Elevating Health Services for Children and Families*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/community-health-workers>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>62</sup> UNICEF USA. *Community Health Workers: Elevating Health Services for Children and Families*. UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/community-health-workers>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>63</sup> UNICEF. *Quality of Care*. UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/health/quality-care>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>64</sup> UNICEF. *Quality of Care*. UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/health/quality-care>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

had been shifted.<sup>65</sup> Harm towards women due to unsafe medical practices, mistreatment, and neglect remains prominent. In countries like Ghana, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Guinea, one-third of pregnant women experience forms of abuse while delivering. This includes physical abuse, withholding hospital admittance, and being ignored during labor. These conditions break women's confidence in health care systems. Within the already vulnerable population, women who are younger and less educated are more likely to experience mistreatment that will impact the physical and emotional well-being of mothers and their babies.<sup>66</sup>

## Conclusion

Improving access to maternal care is a matter of human rights and global equity. Every woman has the right to safe and respectful care throughout pregnancy and childbirth. Yet millions still lack access to essential services due to poverty, conflict, discrimination, and under-resourced health systems.<sup>67</sup> These efforts to expand maternal care must address both the clinical and structural dimensions to improving nutrition, expanding community-based care, training skilled health workers, and dismantling harmful taboos. UNICEF emphasizes that empowering adolescent girls, supporting community health workers, and strengthening health systems are all critical to breaking the cycle of maternal and infant mortality.<sup>68</sup> It is time to commit to investing in women and their care, since all women deserve safe and respectful care globally.

## Questions to Consider:

1. How have cultural beliefs and taboos around women and pregnancy impacted maternal health?
2. How have community health workers' roles impacted cultural barriers to maternal care?
3. How can governments and NGOs develop maternal programs that respect culture while also providing evidence-based care?
4. Should preventive care be the focus of increasing access to maternal care?

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<sup>65</sup> Fogstad, Helga. "Unsafe and Disrespectful Health Practices Continue to Harm the Most Vulnerable Women and Newborns." *UN Chronicle*, 16 Sept. 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/unsafe-and-disrespectful-health-practices-continue-harm-most-vulnerable-women-and>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>66</sup> Fogstad, Helga. "Unsafe and Disrespectful Health Practices Continue to Harm the Most Vulnerable Women and Newborns." *UN Chronicle*, 16 Sept. 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/unsafe-and-disrespectful-health-practices-continue-harm-most-vulnerable-women-and>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>67</sup> "Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival." *UNICEF*, <https://www.unicef.org/health/maternal-newborn-and-child-survival>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

<sup>68</sup> "Maternal Health." *UNICEF USA*, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/maternal-health>. Accessed 30 June 2025.

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An initiative in Nepal focused on premature and critically ill babies. The breast milk bank provides nourishment for the development of newborns.

**“Community Health Workers.” UNICEF USA. Accessed June 30, 2025. <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/community-health-workers>.**

This source discusses the impact of community health workers by bridging divides of factors like poverty, gender norms, climate change, poor nutrition, and inaccessible social services.

**“Ending Preventable Newborn Deaths and Stillbirths by 2030.” UNICEF Data. Accessed June 30, 2025. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/ending-preventable-newborn-deaths-and-stillbirths-by-2030/>.**

In this document, the Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP) guides countries in preventing newborn mortality. It sets the new global, national, and subnational targets to advance progress.

**“Foreign Aid Funding Cuts Harm the World’s Children.” UNICEF USA. Accessed June 30, 2025. <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/foreign-aid-funding-cuts-harm-worlds-children>.**

This page provides the current risks millions of children face due to funding cuts. Severe impacts affect 17 high-priority countries that would leave more than 2.4 million children suffering.

**“Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies.” UNICEF Data. Accessed June 30, 2025. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/healthy-mothers-healthy-babies/>.**

This brochure focuses on improving women’s access to health information, education, income, and autonomy. Strategies also include increasing the number of female health care personnel to improve service access.

**“Maternal Health.” UNICEF USA. Accessed June 30, 2025. <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-health/maternal-health>.**

As a form of prevention, UNICEF supports maternal health by working with partners and

countries globally to ensure access to quality health care and nutrition.

**“Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival.” UNICEF. Accessed June 30, 2025.**

**<https://www.unicef.org/health/maternal-newborn-and-child-survival>**.

This article addresses UNICEF’s response to the needs of mothers, newborns, and children. The focus is set on maternal and newborn health, childhood diseases, and immunizations.

**“Quality of Care.” UNICEF. Accessed June 30, 2025.**

**<https://www.unicef.org/health/quality-care>**.

This research provides a basis for understanding the effects of a lack of access to quality health care. Basic medicines, supplies, sanitation, and well-equipped health facilities offer a foundation for prevention.

**“Re-shaping the Future: Strengthening Health Systems for Women and Children.”**

**UNICEF South Asia. Accessed June 30, 2025.**

**<https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/29841/file/Re-shaping%20the%20future%20pdf.pdf>**.

The contents of this source address adolescent health in South Asia. Adolescents face barriers to sexual and reproductive health. The policy and programme landscape provides guidelines and data regarding these issues.

**“SDG Target 3.1: Maternal Mortality.” World Health Organization (WHO). Accessed**

**June 30, 2025. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/sdg-target-3-1-maternal-mortality>**.

Sustainable Development Goal 3.1 is directed towards reducing the global maternal mortality ratio. Maternal health and newborn health are correlated issues that can determine life or death. This page provides data in support of this goal.

**“Trends in Maternal Mortality.” UNICEF USA. Accessed June 30, 2025.**

**<https://www.unicefusa.org/media-hub/reports/trends-maternal-mortality>**.

*This report provides trends in maternal mortality progress. Deaths have slowed down significantly, as shown by UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, and the World Bank Group. Over the past 20 years, figures trace maternal deaths nationally, regionally, and globally.*

**“UN Agencies Warn Aid Cuts Threaten Fragile Progress on Ending Maternal Deaths.”**  
UNICEF USA. Accessed June 30, 2025. <https://www.unicefusa.org/press/aid-cuts-threaten-fragile-progress-ending-maternal-deaths-un-agencies-warn>.

*This report is in response to humanitarian funding cuts that create severe impacts on health care. Other impacts include the global impact of COVID-19 on maternal survival. These accounts indicate a slowing progress on maternal mortality.*

**“UNICEF Launches Multi-Country Push to Improve Maternal Nutrition.”** UNICEF USA. Accessed June 30, 2025. <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/unicef-launches-multi-country-push-improve-maternal-nutrition>.

This article’s focus is on the UNICEF push on the new Improving Maternal Nutrition Acceleration Plan to Prevent Malnutrition and Anemia During Pregnancy. The vision is for women and adolescent girls receiving adequate nutrition before and during pregnancy.

**“Unsafe and Disrespectful Health Practices Continue to Harm the Most Vulnerable Women and Girls.”** United Nations. Accessed June 30, 2025. <https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/unsafe-and-disrespectful-health-practices-continue-harm-most-vulnerable-women-and>.

This page highlights harmful and disrespectful health practices like neglect and mistreatment during childbirth, endangering vulnerable women and newborns, particularly in low-resource settings. Global progress trends are positive in maternal and child health; however, urgent reforms are necessary in healthcare systems.