UN with India
Annual Report 2021
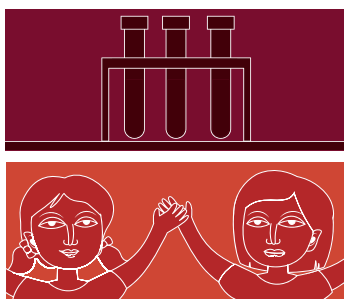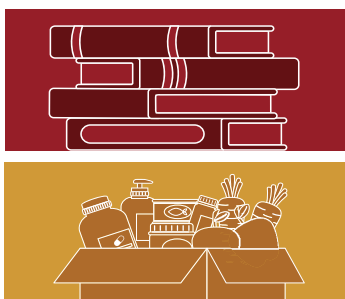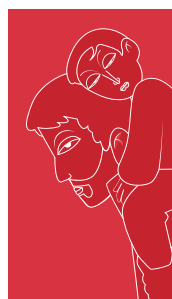
UNITED
NATIONS
INDIA

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Acronyms

APCTT
Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology

AHF
Auxiliary Health Facility

CSO
Civil Society Organisation

DRM
Disaster Risk Management

FAO
Food and Agriculture Organization

GBV
Gender-based Violence

GoI
Government of India

HCFC
Hydrochlorofluorocarbons

IEC
Information, Education, and Communication

IFAD
International Fund for Agricultural Development

ILO
International Labour Organization

IOM
International Organization for Migration

IPC
Infection Prevention and Control

JRP
Joint Health Response Plan

LGBTI
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Intersex

MCH
Mother and Child Health

MHPSS
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

MoEFCC
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

MoH&FW
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

MSMEs
Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises

NCD
Non-communicable disease

NCDC
National Centre for Disease Control

NFHS
National Family Health Survey

NHA
National Health Authority

NIMHANS
National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences

NTD
Neglected Tropical Diseases

PHC
Public Health Care

PPE
Personal Protective Equipment

RCCE
Risk Communication and Community Engagement

RMNCH+A
Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health

SDGs
Sustainable Development Goals

SERF
Socio Economic Response Framework

TISS
Tata Institute of Social Sciences

TPDS
Targeted Public Distribution System

UHC
Universal Health Coverage

UN Women
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

UN-Habitat
United Nations Human Settlements Programme

UNAIDS
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNCT
United Nations Country Team

UNCTAD
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNDP
United Nations Development Programme

UNEP
United Nations Environment Programme

UN ESCAP
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

UNESCO
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA
United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF
United Nations Children's Fund

UNIDO
United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNOPS
United Nations Office for Project Services

UNRC
United Nations Resident Coordinator

UNSDF
UN Sustainable Development Framework 2018-2022

UNV
United Nations Volunteers Programme

WASH
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

WCO
World Health Organization Country Office India

WFP
World Food Programme

WHO
World Health Organization

Foreword

As in many countries across the world, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to significantly affect our actions in India, and those of our partners, through much of the year. In addition to the tragic loss of life, we saw the continued disruption of the economy, labour market and education for millions of young people, while health and food systems remained stressed, with progress in poverty reduction and gender equality threatened. Yet we ended the year with some grounds for optimism, embracing the opportunity ahead to apply the lessons of hardship for a brighter future.

This report gives an overview of how the UN in India, partnering closely with the Government and our stakeholders in civil society, the private sector, and communities, redoubled our efforts to save lives, protect people and build back better.

We worked to respond to the health emergency — training frontline workers, delivering essential equipment and medical supplies, addressing misinformation, and supporting India's COVID-19 vaccination campaign — the world's largest. The UN in India procured and distributed over 10 million pieces of PPE and over 600,000 pieces of cold chain equipment, trained over 1.2 million health workers in using the Government's digital vaccination platform, and supervised over half a million vaccination sessions. At the same time, we worked to ensure that gains made in the past in routine immunisations, the control of communicable and non-communicable disease, including HIV/AIDS, and maternal health did not backslide.

We have responded to the social and economic impact of the pandemic, working to ensure everyone, especially the most marginalised, had access to social safety nets and that households and businesses stayed afloat. We combatted malnutrition and food insecurity — helping double the number of children treated for severe malnutrition this year, to over 300,000.

Over the past year, we continued to respond to the unprecedented disruption faced by 286 million children and adolescents impacted by school closures — ensuring that over 54 million children continued to learn through the lockdown. We also advocated for and produced guidelines for the safe reopening of schools throughout India.

And we didn't lose sight of the greatest existential threat of all, continuing to partner with the Government of India in responding to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and rising levels of pollution — helping restore lost ecosystems and biodiversity, supporting the clean energy revolution, reducing air pollution, and helping manage plastic and biomedical waste. In 2021, we also saw our UN family strengthened and global environmental goals further enhanced by the signing of the Host Country Agreement between the UN Environment Programme and Government of India.

Throughout the year, we remained focused on ensuring that the recovery was gender-sensitive and that gender equality was at the centre of all of our initiatives. Our support ensured that 14 million adolescents were reached with services to prevent child marriage, and over one million women, girls, boys, and men were reached by our joint programme to address and prevent gender-based violence.

Our partnership with NITI Aayog and State Governments to localise and institutionalise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) continued, and evidence-based policy making on the SDGs was further enhanced by the adoption of India's first National Multidimensional Poverty Index.

2021 was a challenging year for everyone in India — most of all for the families who lost loved ones during the pandemic. But it was also a year of hope the launch of the world's largest vaccination programme, and with it, the promise of a return to normalcy. As of this writing, India has already delivered over 1.8 billion vaccine doses, fully vaccinating over 75 percent of its adult population, while these numbers continue to grow. This remarkable achievement wouldn't have been possible without a 'whole of government' and 'whole of society' approach, including the unwavering effort, dedication, and sacrifices of India's frontline health workers, a large number being women, whom I wish to particularly acknowledge and thank.

I would also like to thank the hard work of our partners across Government, civil society, and the private sector— it is with thanks to them, together with the dedication of our UN Country Team, that the achievements outlined across sectors in this report were possible. And it is together that we aim to tackle many remaining challenges ahead.

I am pleased to conclude noting that in the course of the coming year, as India celebrates Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, its 75th year of independence, we will together with the Government finalise our new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, outlining the UN's enduring commitment to India's development priorities over the next five years. As always, our partnership will be guided by the global Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030, as we look ahead to a more inclusive, green, resilient and prosperous India, increasingly serving as a reference and role model to others.

Shombi Sharp
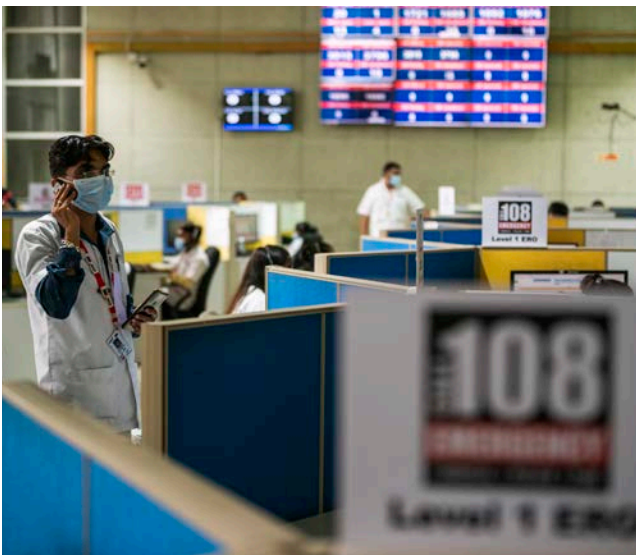UN Resident Coordinator in India
31.3.2021

© WFP/Parvinder Singh

Photo: UNICEF

UN in India

The United Nations provides strategic support to India to help the country achieve its goals to end poverty and inequality and promote sustainable development in line with the globally agreed Agenda 2030.

The United Nations system in India consists of 26 entities, including agencies, programmes and funds. The Resident Coordinator, the designated representative of the UN Secretary-General to the government, leads the UN Country Team in India (UNCT) composed of the heads of all the UN entities active in India. The UNCT leads the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Framework, a development cooperation strategy between the Government of India and the United Nations in India, driven by UNCT country programmes, in support of the achievement of India's key national development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), executed under the overall coordination of the Government of India's think tank NITI Aayog.

The UNSDF is underpinned by the overarching principle of the SDGs to leave no one behind, echoing the Government of India's message of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas (development for all). The programmatic work outlined in the UNSDF targets seven low-income states (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh), the North-East region, and the 112 aspirational districts prioritised by the Government for development. Our work is focused around improving the lives of the most marginalized, poor, and vulnerable communities.

Country **Context**

With a population of 1.35 billion, India is the world's largest democracy and is expected to become the world's most populous country in 2023. India is the third-largest economy in the world in purchasing power parity terms with annual output in 2020-21 of INR 195,86 lakh crores (or 8.9 trillion USD, PPP). India has been among the world's fastest-growing major economies in recent years, but although hundreds of millions of Indians have moved out of extreme poverty over the last three decades, as of 2018, some 377 million Indians (27.9 percent) still lived in multidimensional poverty. Over 80 percent of

Indian workers are also informally employed, and thus lack formal working arrangements and social insurance. India's female labour participation rate, at 22.8 percent, is among the lowest in the world. In 2020, India was ranked 131 out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index, with an HDI value of 0.645 putting the country in the medium human development category. India has experienced declines in recent years in child and maternal mortality, according to the Sample Registration System report by Registrar General of India, while nutrition remains a challenge.

India Key Development Figures

1.35 Billion[1]
Population

84.7%[2]
Male
Literacy Rate

70.3%
Female
Literacy Rate

19.2%[3]
Youth (15-24)
Population
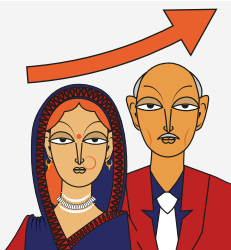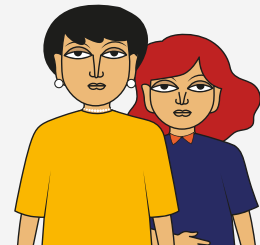
131 of 184[4]
HDI Ranking

27.9%[5]
Multidimensional
Poverty
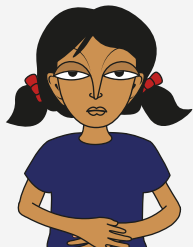
15.4%[6]
Prevalence of
undernourishment

82%[7]
Informally Employed
Workers

22.8%[8]
Women's Labour Participation Rate

[1] World Population Prospects 2019, UN DESA
[2] National Sample Survey, 2017-2018
[3] Census 2011
[4] UNDP Human Development Report 2020
[5] UNDP and OPHI, Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021
[6] FAO, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021
[7] Ministry of Labour & Employment Annual Report 2021-22
[8] PLFS Annual Report 2019-2020

The Government of India –
United Nations Sustainable Development Framework

The Government of India – United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) 2018–2022 is the framework of cooperation, results and strategies that brings together the work of the UN agencies in the country and guides the UN in India's cooperation with the Government of India. The UNSDF is guided by India's development goals of a better quality of life for all citizens and is aligned to the globally agreed-upon 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The UNSDF consists of seven Priority Areas (Results Groups)

Priority Area 1
Poverty and Urbanisation
USD 16.1 million
2021 Expenditure

Priority Area 2
Health, Water and Sanitation
USD 117.9 million
2021 Expenditure

Priority Area 3
Education and Employability
USD 111.9 million
2021 Expenditure

Priority Area 4
Nutrition and Food Security
USD 43.2 million
2021 Expenditure

Priority Area 5
Climate Change, Clean Energy and Disaster Resilience
USD 15.8 million
2021 Expenditure

Priority Area 6
Skilling, Entrepreneurship and Job Creation
USD 9.9 million
2021 Expenditure

Priority Area 7
Gender Equality and Youth Development
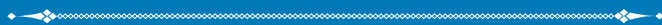**USD 7.5 million**
2021 Expenditure

Total UN expenditure in 2021
USD 222.6 million

UN in India response to COVID-19

In 2020, the UN system rapidly mobilized for a comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic – the greatest shared global challenge since the founding of our organization. UN agencies and partners developed a dual health and socio-economic response plan, working in close coordination with the Government of India to control the spread of COVID-19 and to build back better. Led by WHO, the Joint Health Response Plan (JRP) focused on slowing transmission and reducing mortality. The Socio-Economic Response Framework (SERF), facilitated by UNDP, guided medium and long-term recovery and adaptation – from protecting livelihoods and businesses to mental health and psychosocial support.

The UN in India continued to support the Government of India in its fight against COVID-19 through 2021 – a year that saw the devastating second wave of the pandemic. The UN system came together to fight the COVID surge, support frontline workers, strengthen systems, deliver essential equipment and medical supplies, work with communities, securing livelihoods, counter misinformation, and ensure that life-saving vaccinations were delivered at speed and scale.

Photo: UNHCR/
Daniel Ginsianmung

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and local partner NGOs delivered life-saving food assistance to refugees as well as host communities to improve nutrition and to build resilience during the second wave of COVID-19.

Fighting the **COVID-19 wave**

In the spring of 2021, the UN in India deployed its personnel and resources to help the country respond to the devastating COVID-19 surge. As the number of COVID-19 cases saw a sharp increase, healthcare facilities in the country were overburdened. We worked closely with governments to deliver critical supplies and public health interventions — procuring and delivering life-saving oxygen generators and plants, testing machines and personal protective equipment (PPE). To meet oxygen demand for COVID patients with breathing distress, UN agencies moved to procure and distribute life-saving oxygen supplies rapidly.

Oxygen generation plants were installed in hospitals

in Gujarat, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Tripura. 170 metric tonnes of WHO supported medical resources, including oxygen concentrators and tents for temporary health facilities were rushed to states and union territories to support India's COVID-19 response.

WHO provided high-performance tents (HPTs) to operationalize Auxiliary Health Facilities (AHFs) to augment the surge capacity in 51 sites in the six states of Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Odisha. The AHFs are operational in Odisha and four North Eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland. When COVID-19 cases declined, the AHFs

were used to provide fever triage, COVID-19 testing and vaccination, and essential health services, such as diabetic clinics and routine immunisation. Three other states — Assam, Bihar, and Jharkhand — have received and stored them for readiness for future waves of the pandemic and health emergencies.

UNDP installed Oxygen Generation Plants to increase the capacity of oxygen supply in remote North-Eastern parts of India – 11 hospitals of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Tripura now have sufficient oxygen supply for 2,000 beds. The agency also installed 22 ICU ventilators in Nagaland to boost preparedness. Collectively, we delivered over 10,000 oxygen generators, over 70 oxygen plants and over 10 million pieces of PPE.

The surge coincided with an accelerating pace in India's vaccination drive — the largest in the world. The UN stepped up its support for India's vaccination programme as it raced to outpace the climbing infection rate.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), in collaboration with partners, provided technical support to the Government of India in the planning phase of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. The UN, led by WHO, also supported state governments in setting up 'war rooms' command and control centres with real-time dashboards, allowing health authorities to track vaccinations, cases, hospital bed occupancy and oxygen to make informed decisions.

As always, we operated under our pledge to leave no one behind, striving to reach the most vulnerable and marginalised communities through the surge.

Photo: UNDP

An Oxygen Generation Plant was installed at Tura Civil Hospital, Meghalaya by UNDP.

WHO supported medical resources being inspected. Photo: WHO India

Supporting **communications and outreach**

Working closely with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), the UN provided support in developing a comprehensive COVID-19 messaging matrix and the State Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) strategy. A training module on risk communication and community engagement developed by UNICEF was translated into 14 regional languages, and over 1.3 million frontline health workers received training on how to enable their communities to make informed decisions to protect themselves in the pandemic.

UNICEF also supported the MoHFW in developing the COVID-19 Vaccination Communication Strategy, to raise community confidence in the vaccines by providing clear, accurate and transparent information to help increase uptake.

WHO developed more than 200 risk communications creatives on Covid Appropriate Behaviours (CAB) and vaccine confidence in 14 languages which were disseminated to states. WHO collaborated with community radios, women self-help groups and CSOs to create awareness on prevention of COVID19 and promote vaccination.

The UN in India also supported initiatives to acknowledge and thank India's frontline health workers, including supporting the including a series of 13 short films 'Matrubhumi Ke Karmveer' (heroes of the nation) lauding India's COVID warriors in partnership with the Doordarshan TV network. In collaboration with UNICEF, MoHFW published a photo book, Sentinels of the Soil, which pays tribute to India's frontline and community health workers through the stories of eight frontline workers who rose to the occasion and bravely performed their duties despite great personal risk.

Photo: WFP India

World Food Programme (WFP) created a new video to build the capacity of national front line workers on the safe distribution of food which has received 15,000 views and has been shared multiple times by partner agencies.

Photo: Sujay Reddy/UNICEF India/ 2021

19-year-old Harshali Pachaya, a RKSK Volunteer, walks through a village in Narsingh Runda, Madhyar Pradesh in July 2021.

Support for **frontline workers**

India's frontline health workers are the heroes in the battle against COVID-19, facing unprecedented workloads and personal risk in conditions requiring high human interaction to ensure that essential health and social protection schemes continue through the pandemic.

UN agencies supported India's frontline workers — procuring millions of pieces of PPE that helped keep them safe, training over two million in Infection Prevention and Control, and risk communications on COVID-19 mitigation to help them keep their communities safe.

Serving on the frontlines, nurses played a critical role in providing healthcare and protecting us since the beginning of the pandemic. To ensure their safety as cases surged, UN agencies conducted trainings for healthcare workers on personal protection and the management of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases, including over 10,000 nurses certified by UN Women on pandemic response.

The UN in India, also continued to support India's four million Safai Saathis, or waste pickers, the unsung heroes of the pandemic, who helped keep India's cities clean through the pandemic. UNDP helped Safai Saathis access social protection systems, personal protective equipment, and vaccinations through the pandemic.

WHO worked with a CSO to support 73,000 migrants with information and access to health and social security services in Goa, Delhi NCR and Maharashtra. WHO supported a federation of 400 Self-help Groups in Rajasthan to implement a dedicated behavioural change campaign targeting tribal women and their families in Bali block of Pali district in Rajasthan. The interventions reached approximately 20,000 people in 27 villages of the block.

Tabasum Bashir, a healthcare worker from the Primary Health Center Boniyar in North Kashmir, braves freezing temperatures and snow to vaccinate people living in the remote region, December 2021.

Supporting **India's vaccination drive**

UNDP supported the Government of India in the development and roll-out of the CoWIN (Winning Over COVID-19) digital platform, the cornerstone of India's successful vaccination drive. By the end of 2021, CoWIN had registered over 900 million Indians and recorded the administration of 1.8 billion vaccine doses (as of March 2022) and tracked beneficiaries on a real-time basis. Together as Team UN India, UNDP, UNICEF and WHO trained more than 1.2 million health and frontline workers in deploying CoWIN across the country.

The deployment of CoWIN was given an invaluable boost by an already existing digital vaccine and cold chain management system, the Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network, eVIN, developed and deployed by the Government of India with support from the UN since 2015.

UNDP continued to maintain eVIN, an innovation to improve India's immunisation coverage. eVIN is a cloud technology based system for real time visibility of vaccine stocks and storage temperatures. eVIN is now supporting smarter vaccine logistics management across all the 733 districts in 36 states and UTs and all 29,000 vaccine-storing health facilities are routinely using the eVIN system. eVIN

UNDP supported CoWIN call centre

has helped build capacities of nearly 50,000 cold chain handlers in strengthening the vaccine management system of India. The system is being used to manage vaccine stocks of the COVID-19 vaccine across the country to ensure uninterrupted and smooth supply of vaccines for all citizens.

India's cold chain system was further enhanced with UNICEF support, with the agency procuring and deploying over 600,000 pieces of cold chain equipment to support the vaccination drive and long-term immunisation services.

To ensure COVID-19 appropriate behaviours and quality of service, the UN in India trained over 900,000 vaccinators in safe vaccination practices and monitored nearly half a million vaccination sessions.

To ensure comprehensive coverage and inclusion, standard operating procedures were developed by the MoHFW to include those without government issued documentation, such as refugees, in the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

WHO Surveillance Medical Officer Dr Vivek Pardeshi and Dr Pradip Angre, dean at Mulund Jumbo COVID-19 Centre, Mumbai, review operations.

UN Support in Figures

Co-WIN registered
900 million Indians
and recorded administration of
1.4 billion vaccine doses

Over
400,000 queries
related to Co-WIN and COVID vaccination answered by UNDP technical helpline

Nearly
500,000 vaccination sessions
monitored for quality of COVID-19 vaccination by WHO.

Over
900,000 vaccinators
and vaccine team members trained on safe vaccination practices by UN agencies.

COVID-19

Vaccine
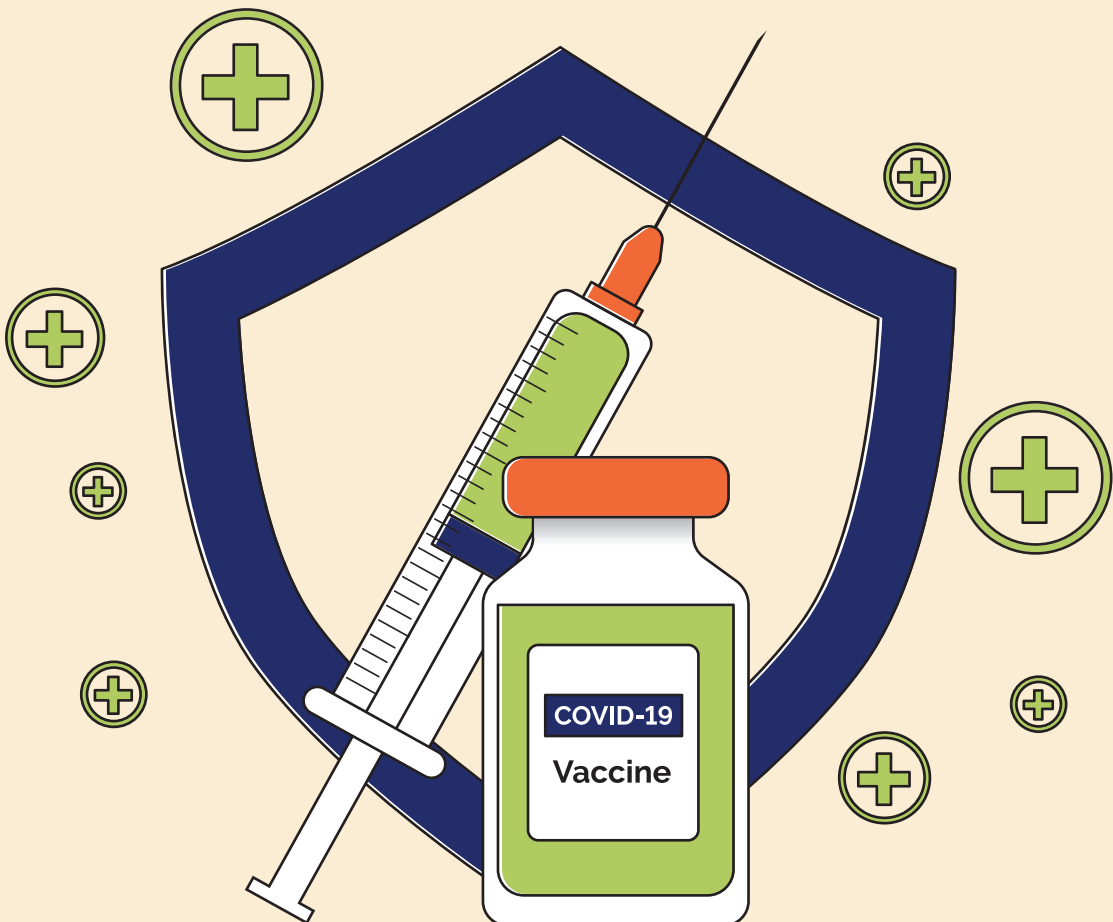
Over

10,000 healthcare workers

trained by UN Women on pandemic response.

Over

1.2 million frontline workers

trained in CoWIN by UN agencies

Over

2 million frontline workers

trained in Infection Prevention and Control by WHO

10 WHO Unity studies

on COVID-19 and a global solidarity trial for therapeutics were conducted by more than 30 medical institutions in collaboration with WHO

Over

188.7 million syringes procured
by UNICEF to support COVID-19 vaccinations.

Over

10,000 oxygen concentrators, 70 oxygen plants and 10 million pieces of PPE
delivered by the UN in India collectively

Over

600,000 pieces of cold chain equipment
procured by UNICEF

Over

120 million reached
by WHO supported radio campaign on COVID appropriate behaviours

Photo: © UNICEF/UN0571926/Singh

Priority Area 1

Poverty and Urbanisation

Introduction

Over the years, India has made significant progress in reducing poverty and inequality, lifting millions out of deprivation and improving the lives and livelihoods of all Indians. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has not only disrupted this progress but continues to threaten to reverse it.

The UN in India worked extensively with the Government of India, and State governments, to address development challenges accentuated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ranging from collecting and disseminating evidence for policy and advocacy to strengthening local governance structures for improved social service delivery, improving child and adolescent protection to improved planning, management and operation of cities, the UN system in India upheld its commitment to ensure that communities and institutions are empowered, and no one is left behind. The implementation, localization, and progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a focus on sustainable financing, remained a key priority for the UN system in India.

Social protection mechanisms, which acted as an essential safety net for individuals and communities during the pandemic, were among the key pillars of India's response to COVID-19. UN agencies, led by UNICEF, worked to improve the delivery of entitlements under these schemes to dampen the health and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. Key strategies included evidence generation and technical support to state governments in identifying the most vulnerable households in need of social protection schemes.

Recognizing the need for accurate data to identify the most vulnerable, UNDP and the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) provided technical support to NITI Aayog, the Government of India's apex policy think tank, to prepare India's first National Multidimensional Poverty Index. UNDP also supported the preparation of the first SDG Index for the North Eastern States, while UNDP and RCO also supported the India SDG Index.

UN agencies also continued to support India in localising and institutionalising the SDGs and mainstreaming them into the development priorities of India's states and union territories, including through a number of agency programmes and state-level SDG Centres supported by UNDP. As always, UN support focused on the most marginalised, seeking to ensure no one in India was left behind. This focus included youth-led interventions to provide people living in slums with life-skills, connecting the elderly to healthcare, and strengthening the access to social protection measures among People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) and transgender populations. Led by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN worked to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers were linked to healthcare, social protection, and legal assistance.

UN agencies, led by UNFPA and UN-Habitat, continued to support national and state programmes such as the Smart Cities Mission and the Development of the New Urban Agenda.
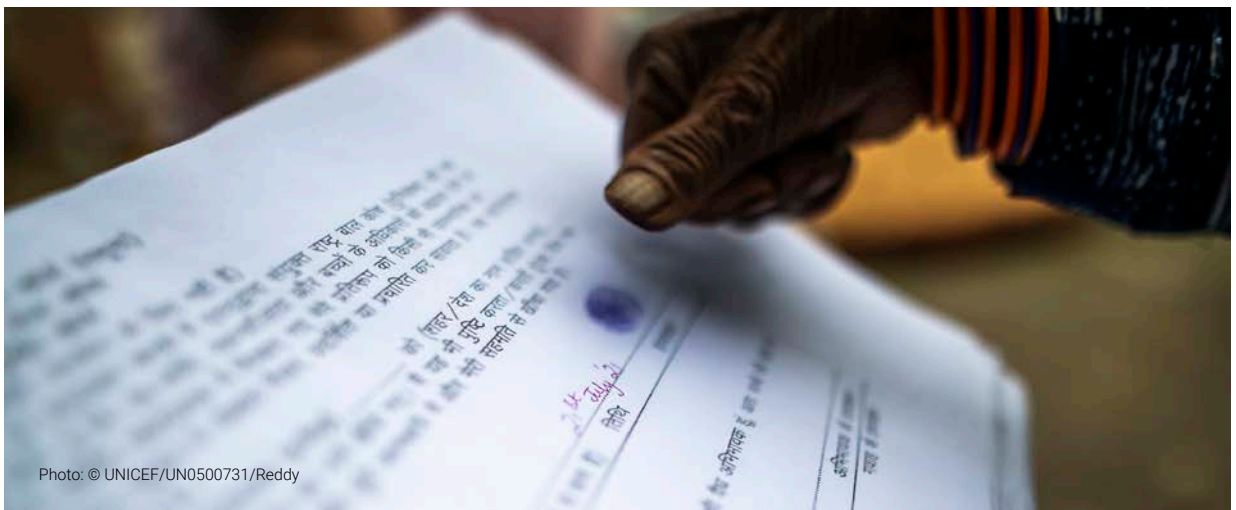
Photo: © UNICEF/UN0500731/Reddy

© UNICEF/UN0564192/ Bhardwaj

Strengthening
civil registration systems

Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) is the system through which a government records the vital events of a person's life. It is a critical foundation for a country's identity management and provides an individual with the documents they need to protect their rights, access their benefits and protect them from abuse. UNICEF is working with the Government of India to ensure that CRVS systems are strengthened to achieve 100 percent birth registration, bolstering the impressive gains already made this decade, with an over 10 percent increase in the level of birth registration achieved from 2015-16 to 2019-20 (NFHS 4 and 5).

To ensure interoperability of state level systems and to strengthen digital civil registration systems, UNICEF worked with the Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India (ORGI), towards the development and roll-out of the comprehensive CRVS training e-module including in nine vernacular languages. Further, the agency worked with the governments of six lagging states with technical support on data analytics, bottleneck analysis, digitization, and capacity building.

Further, UNICEF in Uttar Pradesh supported the linking of Aadhar (unique identity) to birth registrations, while the unified registry called SAMAGRA and its linkages with marriage registration and CRVS was accelerated in Madhya Pradesh.

Strengthening
social protection systems

To support the most vulnerable, UNICEF actively engaged with the government to accelerate progress on universal coverage of social protection systems.

All 16 UNICEF field offices engaged with their state and local governments to support effective delivery of multiple social protection entitlements under the Pradhan Mantri Garib-Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY), 'poor welfare scheme', an essential and life-saving response by the government to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. In particular, entitlements related to supplementary nutrition, mid-day meals, scholarships for children, social security pensions, food and cash transfers were supported. In six states, UNICEF worked to strengthen government responses to tackle the challenges of migration through evidence generation, policy advocacy and programmatic technical assistance towards a child sensitive policy on migration.

In partnership with NITI Aayog, UNICEF continued to work on building the foundations of integrated social protection. A joint microsimulation evaluation of national social protection programmes and advocacy informed expansion options for the maternity benefit programme and synergy opportunities for a national integrated social protection framework.

UNICEF in Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh actively supported the design and development of social protection responses with cash grants and cash plus interventions for children who lost parents during the pandemic. In Jharkhand, the agency continued its efforts towards universal cash transfers. Furthermore, sustained technical support and advocacy of the agency led to the announcement of the Ladli-Laxmi Yojana (LLY-2.0) and the girl-child 'Cash-Plus' initiative with a coverage of 420,000

Photo: UNDP

Pia Kapoor, a Transgender and Community Outreach worker in Delhi, leads a discussion on the eligibility and criteria for Government social protection schemes in her community. UNDP partnered with NACO to support the LGBTQ community and enable them to access social security schemes such as pensions, insurance schemes and skill building programs. The programme was able to reach out to 6,000 people from the LGBTQ community in the six states and facilitate access to Rs.25.91 crore ($ 3.48 million) worth of government social security benefits.

eligible girls in Madhya Pradesh in October 2021.

The UN Joint Team on AIDS, continued its advocacy for the inclusion of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) and other key populations to the government's social protection scheme. The 'Strengthening access to social protection measures among PLHIV and key populations' programme was able to reach out to 6,000 people from the LGBTQ+ community in the six states and facilitated access to USD 3.48M worth of government social security benefits.

Advocacy also resulted in directions from the Supreme Court of India to provide dry rations to sex workers enrolled by the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) and district legal authorities, without insisting on proof of identity, ensuring confidentiality.

With UNAIDS support, KP Networks mobilized USD 10M for food rations and cash transfers and USD 150M was raised from the The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) for NACO, COVID-19 emergency response and capacity building of communities to deliver services to PLHIV and key populations.

To support the Government of India and state governments in reaching transgender communities with welfare measures, UNDP partnered with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, developing a framework for conceptualising, designing and implementing welfare and well-being measures for transgender people in India.

Photo: Better Than Cash Alliance.

Shri Lukram Goura Singh opened his first bank account at the age of 70, after learning about the Manipur Old Age Pension Scheme. With some help, he has learned how to use an ATM and make online transactions. The benefits he receives under the government's Direct Benefits Transfer program help meet some of his basic needs. Through a bank account and a unique ID (Aadhaar), millions of vulnerable Indians are able to receive government incentives and subsidies digitally. The UN based Better Than Cash Alliance supported the central and state governments in India to expand the use of responsible digital payments, including helping drive the Digital North East 2020 vision.

NITI Aayog

INDIA

● ● ●

National Multidimensional Poverty Index Baseline Report

BASED ON NFHS–4 (2015–16)

Supporting
India's first National Multidimensional Poverty Index

Promoting an evidence-based policy agenda on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNDP with RCO provided technical support to NITI Aayog in preparing India's first National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The national index provides key insights into the development situation at the national, state and district levels, especially for India's sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the same rigorous methodology developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and UNDP for the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, it complements existing metrics in tracking progress on poverty reduction with two additional methods on maternal health and financial inclusion. The national MPI provides crucial insights into multiple cross-sectoral indicators for decision makers and development partners, helping inform high-impact interventions and simultaneously engendering evidence-based policy making.

Promoting **child-friendly local governance**

With UNICEF assistance, Child-Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) initiatives were adopted across numerous states in India. These initiatives worked to highlight that the Gram Panchayat (local government bodies) have a demonstrable capacity to contribute to the realisation of child rights. In collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, UNICEF promoted the mainstreaming of the concept of Child Friendly Gram Panchayat (CFGP) within the Government of India's People's Plan Campaign – especially focused on rural, high tribal population districts. UNICEF's advocacy in multiple states also led to the inclusion of child budgeting indicators within the overall financial framework at the state level.

The agency led Public Finance for Children (PF4C) efforts in states, leading to the adoption and institutionalisation of Child Budgeting, contributing to the safeguarding of child related budget allocations. Child Budgeting was institutionalised in the eight states of Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Kerala and Chhattisgarh. UNICEF support led to the training of over 255,000 elected representatives and officials in over 20,000 village councils across seven states in child-friendly local governance and creating child-related budgeting in 16 states.

© UNICEF/UN0595562/Panjwani

Localising **the SDGs**

In partnership with NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Development of the North-Eastern Region, UNDP developed the first sub-regional SDG Index and dashboard. The Index ranks 103 districts of the North-Eastern region on 15 SDGs using 84 indicators mapped across 50 global targets. The Index and dashboard serve as critical tools in identifying current gaps in SDG performance at the regional, state and district level for North-East India.

UNDP also supported the creation of Sustainable Development Goals Coordination Centres (SGDCCs), special purpose vehicles embedded in the Departments of Planning, Economics and Statistics, and Finance in five states: Haryana, Punjab,

Uttarakhand, Nagaland and Karnataka, strengthening the localization of the goals.

UNICEF provided technical inputs into the Localization of SDGs Report, focusing on the child-related SDG monitoring framework leading to the articulation of a Child Friendly Gram Panchayat framework. The agency also provided technical inputs to SDG Cells in over ten programming states in tracking and monitoring women and child SDG indicators. UNICEF is providing support in five states to help achieve SDG indicators on women and children by institutionalising decentralised participatory governance.

Helping **protect rural households**

UNDP provided capacity building and training support for the *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana* (Prime Minister's crop insurance scheme) for improved uptake and development of alternate risk management mechanisms in crop insurance, reaching over 109,000 stakeholders. Technical support was also provided to states such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu to develop alternate risk management mechanisms in crop insurance. Under a collaborative project of

UNDP and the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), a Geographic Information Services-enabled Entitlement Tracking (GEET) application was developed to generate awareness among rural communities regarding various social protection schemes.

UNDP also launched the Ajeevika app in Uttarakhand to help rural women access government services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over
100,000
stakeholders trained on improving uptake of crop insurance schemes by UNDP

Over
3,000
rural beneficiaries accessed information on social welfare schemes through GEET app

© UNICEF/UN0388004/Vishwanathan

Helping **the elderly**

A long-time partner of the UN, HelpAge India has been working with and for disadvantaged elderly people in India for nearly four decades. The organization's dedication was recognized through the 2020 UN Population Award, a first for an institution in India.

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) partnered with HelpAge India to document various types of services provided for the care of the elderly by different organisations during the pandemic and have a comprehensive understanding of best practices during emergency situations for programmatic response. Furthermore, the draft India Ageing Report was also prepared by India Institute for Population Science (IIPS) in partnership with the agency. Through the introduction of UNFPA, HelpAge supported elderly refugees in 2021 with winter support.

There is no Health without Mental Health.

© UNICEF/UN0564228/ Bhardwaj

Mental health and psycho-social support

UNICEF helped scale up Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS) services to reach 661,071 children across 17 states while institutionalising capacity strengthening of 7,566 child protection functionaries.

UNICEF collaborated with the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) to cover 5,000 self-help groups, 2,700 frontline workers and provide services to 42,526 adolescent girls and 50,000 pregnant and lactating mothers under Tele-Swabhimaan, which combines community-based psychosocial services with nutrition, maternal and child health and response to gender-based violence (GBV).

Expanding its partnerships with CHILDLINE, UNICEF helped roll out e-learning modules on ending GBV, online safety and MHPSS.

658,358
children reached with MHPSS

215,753
child protection and allied frontline workers were trained by UNICEF on MHPSS

1,158,551
women, girls, and boys able to access gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention, and response facilities with UNICEF support

Protecting **refugees**

There are 44,917 refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR as of end of 2021, spread across 13 states in India, and over 95,000 Sri lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu supported by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

Refugees are amongst the most vulnerable groups living in marginalised situations. Their assistance needs increased significantly due to the pandemic and deteriorating situations in Myanmar and Afghanistan, which saw a significant rise of 154 percent in the number of asylum seekers approaching UNHCR for registration.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) advocated for refugees on five fronts: financial inclusion, government issued documentation for all refugee groups, positive public attitudes, law and policy development, and access to territory/non-refoulement.

Nearly 3,000 refugees and asylum-seekers received legal support including those in detention and 23 field missions were undertaken to 10 locations where refugees reside in order to engage with over 190 community structures, assess needs and plan programmatic responses.

Along with NGO partners and UN agencies such as UNWOMEN and UNFPA, 7,573 women and girls were assisted with sanitary products to ensure that they could manage their menstrual cycles safely and with dignity. With the support of WHO and local authorities, refugees were able to access healthcare, 46,229 received COVID vaccinations and 2,392 individuals were provided medical tests and treatment.

745 refugees were supported with livelihood activities whilst over 38,449 refugees and host communities were provided with food support and 32,635 persons provided with emergency non-food support. Further, 8,569 refugees were provided with cash assistance.

UNHCR also organised training on refugee protection for 30 journalists on refugees and humanitarian issues. A community radio workshop was organised in partnership with UNESCO to build the capacity of community radio to report on displacement issues.

Photo: ©UNHCR/Harsha Vadlamani

Aria Zanat Rumesa, 10, refugee from Myanmar, who lost her left eye to cancer three years ago, at her home in Hyderabad, India. Monthly medical expenses for Rumesa, who aspires to be a doctor, is partly met by the monthly Subsistence Allowance from UNHCR.

5,873
refugees registered remotely

2,812
vulnerable refugee households provided with cash assistance

3,900
vulnerability assessments done

2,500
refugees received cash support for medical tests

7,573
refugee girls and women ensured access to sanitary products

2,951
refugees and asylum seekers including those in detention, received legal support

23
field missions to 10 refugee locations undertaken by UNHCR

Photo: © UNICEF/ UN0570308/Altaf Ahmad

Girls from Child Care Institute, Lalpur, walk to their school in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, December 2021.

Protecting **children**

Supporting governments and other stakeholders in preventing family separation and delivering family-based care services in 15 states, UNICEF supported 227,862 children with alternate care, capacitated 18,500 child protection functionaries on gatekeeping and case management, and linked 16.5 million at-risk families to social protection schemes. UNICEF also provided training on violence against children to child protection functionaries. UNICEF's evidence-based advocacy and continued engagement with the Government of India and NITI Aayog brought visibility to risks faced by children on the move in the draft Migration Policy of Government of India with policy guidance for their protection.

Together with its national NGO partners, UNHCR supported community-based approaches to strengthen the protection of children within the refugee community.

227,862
children supported with alternative care

16.5 million
at-risk families linked to social protection schemes

Supporting **sustainable finance**

UNDP continued its secretariat support to the Task Force on Sustainable Finance with the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and partners. This support has led to the development of a Roadmap on Sustainable Finance that lays out many key recommendations in areas such as barriers to deploying new and innovative financing such as impact investing, green finance instruments for sustainable development, sustainability related disclosures by corporations and preparing the financial sectors for climate risks.

UNDP also provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA) in implementing the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, including support in developing business responsibility and sustainability frameworks and guidelines. UNDP also built on its partnership with the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) to provide support for the design of India's first social impact bond. Building on this, the corporation has committed USD 13 million in outcome funding. This will be critical for the pay-for-success instruments market in India and provides a template for uptake by Urban Local Bodies.

UNICEF's advocacy and technical assistance on institutionalising Child Budgeting processes, SOP and statements have expanded the framework for strengthening of sustainable public investment planning at the state level. SDG-focused budget mapping efforts are also supported in multiple states. UNICEF also advocated for innovative financing of crucial public sector programmes for children with a focus on private sector partnerships.

Supporting **sustainable urbanisation**

UN agencies continued to support national and state programmes such as the Smart Cities Mission, Swachh Bharat (Clean India) and in developing the new urban agenda.

UN-Habitat worked closely with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in championing India's New Urban Agenda (NUA) for sustainable urbanisation. The agency also hosts Urban October, an annual month-long conversation on sustainable urbanisation. These include developing training programmes on sustainable urbanisation, SDGs under the NUA with technical inputs for presentation and lectures with the Human Settlement Management Institute (HSMI) under the Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO).

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) with input from UN-Habitat, continued the implementation of the Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot (SCIAP) project in India. The project is being piloted in Bhopal, Guntur, Jaipur, Mysore and Vijayawada to infuse sustainability strategies into urban planning, create climate-friendly infrastructure, improve services, and build urban resilience. Technical and financial assistance is provided to the cities to implement and innovate climate smart technologies in major infrastructure projects in the waste and sanitation sector.

UNFPA designed the 'Socially Smart City' model for supporting the Government of India's Smart City Mission in two cities. Under a citizen-centric programme for making Bhubaneswar a 'Socially Smart' city, youth-led interventions are being implemented in over 100 slum communities and 80 educational institutes with 172 youth from slums trained in Life Skills Education (LSE). In Patna, the project empowered 8,000 sanitation workers through leadership development programmes to become change agents to strengthen health and social services and to create a safe environment and spaces in the slums.

UNICEF is working with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and the MoHUA to integrate urban social protection framework and child-friendly elements into cities based on inputs of its urban vulnerability assessment. In addition, the agency is working to develop, streamline and optimise the delivery of urban primary health care in three states. In three states, UNICEF supported strengthening of the urban social protection programmes, including mapping and capacity development of urban local bodies.

Under the ambit of UNESCO's work on hydrological sciences, UNESCO New Delhi in collaboration with the National Institute of Urban Affairs developed a framework to evaluate the extent of Integrated Urban Water Management in Indian Cities and demonstrated its application for Delhi through the publication of a white paper. Further, to understand the financial risks and challenges in the water sector better, another white paper entitled "Blue Financing – Water for Future" was published in collaboration with the National Institute of Urban Affair and auctusESG.

Supporting
the 16th Indian Census

The 16th Indian Census is expected to take place in the coming year. The UN in India is providing technical and financial support to the Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India (ORGI) to ensure that the upcoming census will be of high quality, uphold international principles and standards, and produce data that is widely disseminated and utilised to inform development efforts.

To support the census, UNFPA developed and submitted web-based e-learning modules for house listing operations to ORGI. A mobile version of these modules, for ease of use, are also being developed. The modules on National Population Register and Population Enumeration are under preparation which will be used by around 3 million census enumerators and their supervisors when the Census operations starts. UNICEF provided technical support on the community mobilization and public education on the upcoming Census through development of the communication campaigns and materials.

Priority Area 2

Health and Water and Sanitation

Introduction

Over the past two decades, India has made considerable gains in ensuring healthcare for all. There has been a significant decline in the infant, child and maternal mortality rates and an increase in institutional delivery rates. As per the NFHS-5 data, family planning and contraceptive planning have improved significantly over the past decade.

The incidence, prevalence and death rates from HIV/AIDS have also declined sharply. Similarly, there have been significant reductions in neglected tropical diseases and vector-borne diseases and the shrinking of endemic areas.

Despite these public health gains, India faces many challenges. The quality of maternal health services, poor birth outcomes, communicable and vector-borne diseases and childhood malnutrition coupled with growing burden of non-communicable diseases and mental illness remain major causes of morbidity and mortality. And COVID-19, particularly the devastating second wave, overstretched the country's already overburdened health systems.

Much like in 2020, the UN system responded effectively and immediately to the COVID-19 surge in the spring of 2021, mobilising its resources and programmes to support the Government of India's

efforts to fight the pandemic. We also continued to support India's COVID-19 response through supporting the preparedness during the second COVID-19 wave through the supply of equipment like oxygen concentrators, PPE kits, research on therapeutics, vaccinations, development of warning systems, design and implementation of communication strategy, promoting Covid Appropriate Behaviour, busting myths and encouraging vaccine uptake, and monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on HIV response and surveillance plans.

UN agencies, led by WHO, also continued to work closely with India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) to ensure that the country maintains essential health services, even more so with attention focused on COVID-19. The UN continued to support routine immunisation, the control of communicable and non-communicable diseases, maternal, new-born and child health and leveraged digital technologies for vaccine delivery and health information.

UN agencies also continued to support the MoHFW in the roll out of the Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Scheme and its priorities for achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

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Strengthening
health systems

UN agencies in India continued decentralised support for strengthening health systems and towards achieving Universal Health Coverage. This included the expansion and monitoring of comprehensive Health and Wellness Centres in eight States, part of India's Ayushman Bharat Program to strengthen primary health care.

The UN in India supported capacity building of sub-national governments for monitoring the progress on Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3) on good health and well-being. Our support also included developing a SDG 3 dashboard for MoHFW — a national portal for maternal, perinatal and child death reporting, supporting the publication of the National Health Profile 2020, Best Practices in Performance of District Hospitals, and support for the fifth National Family Health Survey (NFHS 5).

UNHCR supported 14 health facilities in five locations accessed by both refugees and host communities. Vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers were also provided with medical kits, 1,447 individuals were provided PPE, 4,000 were supported with digital thermometers, 44,920 masks, one million units of soap, 25 oxygen concentrators, 60 hospital mattresses and 40 COVID kits were distributed for COVID-19 prevention and monitoring. UNHCR and WHO also supported the capacity building of 47 Auxiliary Health Facilities (AHFs), in Manipur and Mizoram.

India rolled out the Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP) across all states in April 2021 to provide near-real time data to the government and public health officials to detect, monitor and respond to outbreaks of more than 30 diseases across the country. WHO has supported the Government of India and various stakeholders in the development of the platform, which integrates health data sources from public and private sector facilities, under a single operating platform. The platform provides critical information on COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

WHO carried out four operational research studies for the National Health Authority (NHA) on its flagship health insurance program. A roadmap for transitioning to Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs) has been put together by WHO for NHA and will serve as a guidance document for NHA to transition to strategic forms of Provider Payment Mechanisms. WHO worked with the National Health System Resource Centre (NHSRC) to conduct a benefit incidence analysis.

WHO also supported the states of Assam, Kerala and Chhattisgarh by exploring scope and evidence for merging of multiple fragmented health coverage schemes, as well as strengthening of institutional capacity for implementation of these schemes. The agency initiated work with the state of Jammu and Kashmir on assessing public financial management (PFM) for the health sector, as well as baseline assessment of their health financing architecture.

WHO provided dedicated technical support to Aspirational districts in five states (Assam, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh) for the expansion and monitoring of comprehensive Primary Health Care (PHC) and Health & Wellness Centres (HWCs). The support includes strengthening diagnostics and infrastructure in the health & wellness centres, under recommendations from 15th Finance Commission to improve PHC through HWCs.

Research **on COVID-19**

WHO worked with 30 medical institutions across India to conduct 10 WHO Unity studies on COVID-19. Apart from data collection and evidence gathering, these studies helped to build capacity for conducting research studies in these institutes.

WHO Supported the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on a COVID Vaccine Effectiveness (CVE) study conducted in 11 medical institutes across the country.

WHO Country Office India (WCO) provided technical and funding support to the PGI Chandigarh collaborative study on Mucormycosis conducted at 26 institutes across India.

WHO also supported a study on COVID-19 severity, age distribution, and outcomes in emergency settings and other epidemiological aspects in collaboration with the Society of Emergency Medicine in India which was implemented at 15 sites across the country.
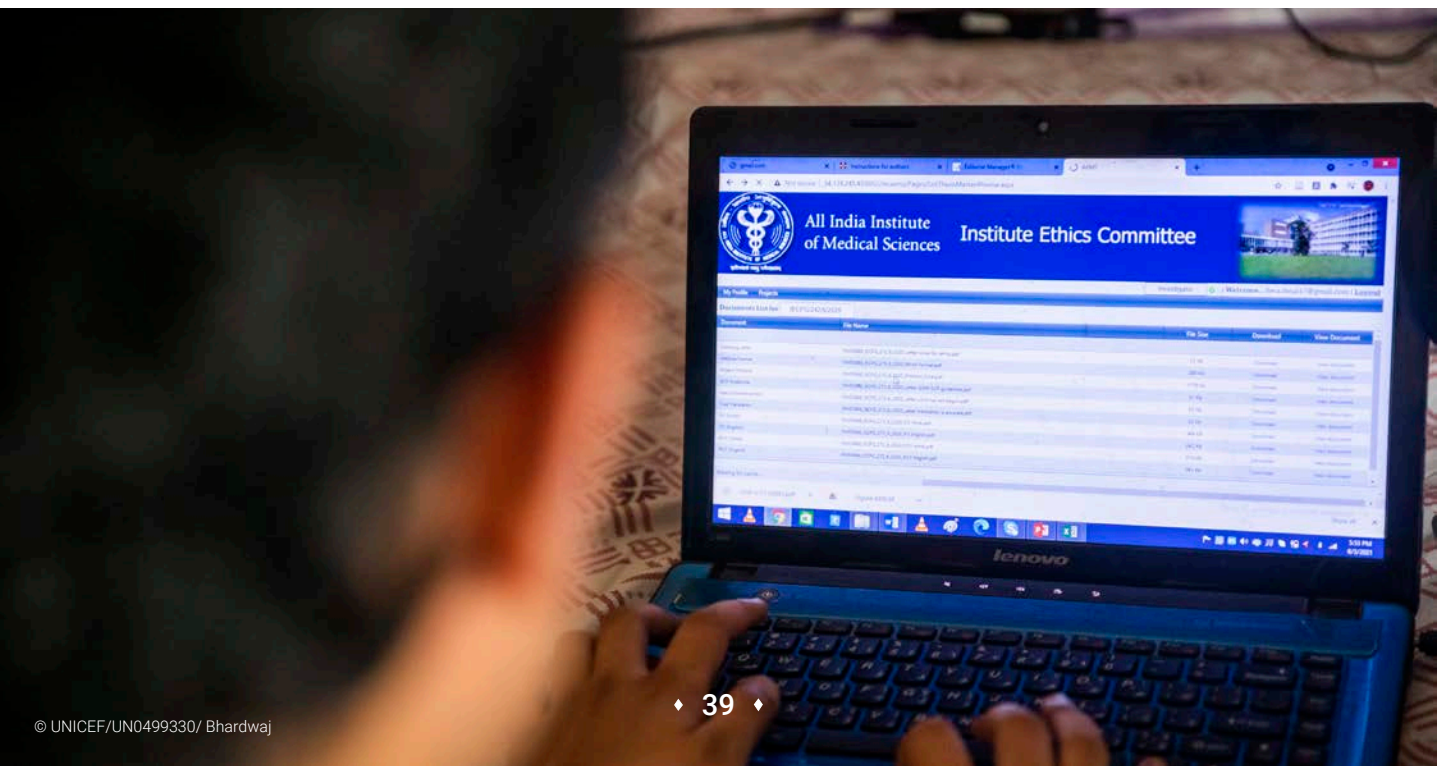
WHO worked with four WHO Collaborating Centers and 20 centres across the country to standardise reporting of COVID-19 and pregnancy outcomes (SCOPE), including maternal and newborn outcomes, on over 3000 COVID+ women in a birth cohort of more than 75,000.

WCO India supported the implementation of seroprevalence studies in Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka, among other areas.

Supporting **Infection Prevention and Control**

The UN provided support to MoHFW and state governments in strengthening infection prevention and control (IPC), a practical discipline designed to prevent infection of patients and healthcare workers.

©WHO India

WHO India supported training on infection prevention and control and psychosocial support at Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel COVID Care Centre and Hospital in Delhi. A WHO team with experts from three departments – communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, and health security and emergencies – assessed protocols and training at the hospital in May 2021.

87%
of UNICEF supported health facilities in Aspirational Districts had at least one focal point for IPC because of constant advocacy.

2 million+
health workers trained by WHO in IPC through training-of-trainers method

©UNICEF/UN0559020/Singh

Government employees transfer vaccine boxes from vaccine carrier to walk-in-coolers at the District Cold Chain Point, in Maharashtra on 20 October, 2021. review operations.

Strengthening **cold chain systems**

Upgrading cold chain systems was critical in strengthening India's capacity to deliver COVID-19 vaccines as well as for strengthening immunisation service delivery in the long term.

UN agencies worked to improve and strengthen cold-chains through the procurement and installation of equipment in 24 states, capacity-building, supportive supervision, standard operating procedures, and Effective Vaccine Management (EVM) conduction.

Over
600,000
pieces of cold chain equipment across 24 states were procured and installed by UNICEF.

77%
of Primary Health Centres in UNICEF-supported states designated as cold-chain-points for immunisation.

Over
25,000
temperature loggers installed and managed by UNDP, continued to support remote temperature monitoring of vaccines to ensure the right potency.

Over
170
cold-chain **technicians trained,**
9
states supported in improving EVM,
200
participants trained in cold-chain management system by UNICEF

100%
of the Cold Chain Points across India are using eVIN for real time visibility of vaccine logistics. eVIN has helped build capacities of nearly
50,000
cold chain handlers in strengthening the vaccine management system of India.

Winning over **COVID — CoWIN**

The CoWIN (Winning Over COVID-19) digital platform was developed by the Government of India with the support from UNDP and is the cornerstone of the country's successful vaccination drive. It allows programme managers and vaccinators to create and manage sessions, develop reports, and monitor progress.

Starting from 2015, UNDP through the countrywide implementation of eVIN had established a robust IT platform coupled with well-trained government cold chain handlers to digitize vaccine stocks and to monitor temperature of the cold chain. The learnings of eVIN paved the way to Co-WIN.

1.2 million+ frontline workers trained on CoWIN.

349,000 vaccination centres in carried out transactions on CoWIN

3.2 billion hits a day and **900 million registered people** on the application

1.4 billion vaccine doses tracked on CoWIN

400,000+ queries related to CoWIN answered by UNDP technical helpline

©UNDP India
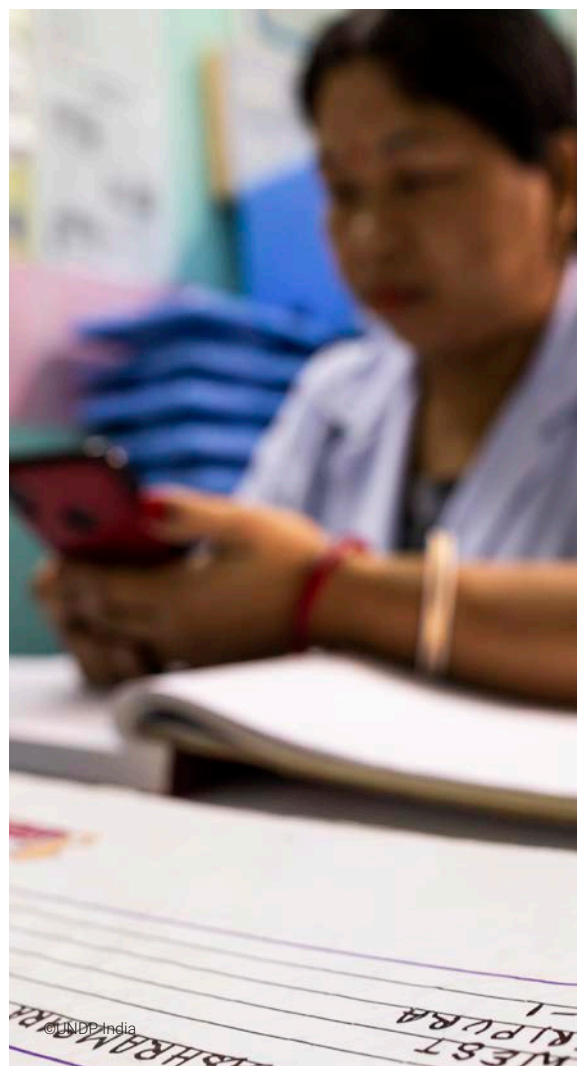
A health worker uses her smartphone to track vaccine cold chains with the eVIN application

Supporting the
COVID-19 vaccination drive

©WHO India

Delivering COVID-19 vaccines to the 62,000 eligible people of Bankatwa block in Bihar seemed like a tall order. Not only did the block have a low historical routine immunisation coverage of 64.3%, but difficult terrain, poor health infrastructure and vaccine hesitancy in the community were all set to impede the effort.

Vaccinating this hard-to-reach block would require meticulous operational planning, monitoring, and community participation. In anticipation of the challenge, the district administration collaborated with District Health Society (DHS) and the WHO India field team to undertake an extensive planning and monitoring exercise for the block's vaccination drive, which included training community health workers, improving vaccine storage capacity and partnering with local influencers and religious institutions to build community trust.

The result was an unprecedented success - with the Bankatwa block becoming the first in the state to achieve 95% COVID-19 vaccination coverage for people. The state government is now replicating the "Bankatwa model" in other blocks of the district and beyond.

188.7
million syringes procured by UNICEF to support COVID-19 vaccinations.

Nearly
500,000
vaccination sessions monitored for quality of COVID-19 vaccination by WHO.

Over
900,000
vaccinators and vaccine team members trained on safe vaccination practices by WHO.

138,235
COVID-19 vaccination sites monitored by Supportive Supervision visits by UNICEF

Over
400,000
vaccination team members trained on using CoWIN by WHO

46,299
refugees and asylum seekers received vaccinations as India included refugees and asylum-seekers in its national vaccination programme

©UNHCR/Daniel Ginsianmung

Marwa, a 25-year-old Afghan refugee nurse in Delhi, has been working tirelessly in the frontlines during the second wave of COVID-19. "When our neighbours and friends started having trouble breathing, they went looking out for hospital bed in the COVID-19 wards. They couldn't find anything," said Marwa. "This experience immediately prompted us to convert a part of our home to treat COVID-19 patients with mild symptoms." To help others in need, both Marwa and her mother, Florance, carried out in-house treatment for both refugees and Indian patients suffering from coronavirus

© UNDP India

Members of the West Bengal transgender community show their vaccination certificates. In collaboration with state and central governments, UNDP reached-out to around 7,000 transgenders and other key populations and ensured they received vaccinations for COVID-19.

Promoting **Risk Communications**

UN in India's risk communication informed people of the health risks they faced from COVID-19 and enabled communities to protect themselves through COVID Appropriate Behaviours (CAB). The UN also leveraged its partnerships to promote advocacy, reinforce positive news, bust myths, and fight disinformation.

Working closely with the Centre and state governments and civil society partners, UN agencies supported communication initiatives, including Social and Behaviour Change Communication

(SBCC) cells in nine states, engagement of district social mobilisation coordinators, training and engagement of the media, students, news channels, RJs and radio stations — all contributing to messaging on CAB. The #AsktheDoctor weekly initiative, in collaboration with News18 Group, to answer COVID-related queries, had a monthly reach of 30 million.

Risk communication with refugees and asylum seekers was done through 237 community engagements. Key messages pertained to early

Over 122 million people reached by a WHO supported radio campaign with FM radio channel, Radio Mirchi — airing over 11,000 radio shows in 10 states to promote vaccine uptake and CAB.

1.2 million+
people reached weekly in 8 regional languages with messaging on CAB, misinformation, and stigma through a WHO partnership with All India Radio and community radio stations.

1.4 million
people across 11 states and UTs reached by WHO and partners through the I am the Change - Today and Tomorrow national youth campaign to mobilize youth participation in COVID-19 prevention

Over
2000
adolescent health counsellors with a collective reach of 65 million adolescents across 24 states trained on CAB, and COVID vaccinations through WHO - MoHFW partnership.

©UNICEF/UN0499081/ Bhardwaj

identification of symptoms, quarantining, prevention/ treatment and vaccination. Issues related to addressing vaccine hesitancy were addressed in these sessions and through community messaging.

UNHCR India translated and disseminated the public risk communication messages issued by the Government of India in nine languages spoken by refugee groups.

Ending the **AIDS epidemic**

The UN Joint Team on AIDS (UNJT), coordinated by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) worked closely with the Government of India, state governments, ministries, and civil society to advance towards the national target of 'Three Zeroes' – zero new infections, zero deaths and zero discrimination.

Under its joint initiative in Gujarat – Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) – the UN Team worked to fast-track the 95-95-95 targets for HIV/AIDS – which means at least 95 percent of people living with HIV (PLHIV) know their status, receive antiretrovirals and have viral loads

sufficiently suppressed respectively.

UNICEF, the Gujarat State AIDS Control Society (GSACS) and the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) launched the NACO AIDS App to enhance knowledge on HIV prevention, uptake of prevention of mother-to-child transmission and HIV services, with a focus on adolescents and available social welfare schemes for PLHIV. This app is now available in 11 local languages across the country.

Under the same initiative, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in partnership with GSACS conducted a study to help reduce AIDS and Tuberculosis in prisons. In addition, UNODC and

NACO developed a training manual on Drug Use and HIV. Evidence-based advocacy induced policy changes and increased investment and design of integrated Harm Reduction packages for closed settings in Gujarat. The generation of district-level HIV estimates with UNFPA support shows a reduction in adverse maternal health outcomes and reduced mother-to-child transmission of HIV in key population groups across 70 facilities and 180 outreach workers.

UNJTA provided technical assistance and normative guidance to a number of policies, guidelines, and new initiatives, such as PrEP, self-testing, virtual outreach, community system strengthening, National Operational Guidelines for ART Services, and National Technical guidelines for HIV Care and

Treatment, including advanced disease management and treatment literacy.

A framework document on transgender welfare and training modules for providing holistic psychosocial support to LGBTQIA+ and Transgender communities, and support for a national health symposium for the LGBTQIA+ community were also undertaken.

62
staff and
1,816
peer educators recruited and ART treatment of children and adolescents improved thanks to UNICEF support and research.

97%
of pregnant women in Gujarat tested for HIV, and
98%
of positive cases placed on ART with UNICEF support

9 Districts of Gujarat
supported in integration of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services with HIV prevention by UNFPA.

Drug-free India

In line with the Government of India's 'Drug Free India' campaign against narcotics, UNODC trained more than 500 senior and operational-level officials from law enforcement agencies, focusing on investigation, evidence gathering, international cooperation, forensics, cybercrime and

cryptocurrency interdictions. Further, specialised forensic exercises and skill upgradations have been facilitated under International Collaborative Exercise (ICE) programme and eLearning platforms. Hindi translations of UNODC studies have been undertaken for wider dissemination.

Supporting Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCHA+) Services

The UN India Team worked to ensure the continued provision of quality Reproductive, Maternal, New-

born, Child plus Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) services throughout the pandemic. With UN support,

health workers were oriented on COVID clinical management, ensuring quality of care during labour and critical care in obstetrics, vaccination and RMNCH+A care during the pandemic.

As part of India's Midwifery Services Initiative, roll-out of midwifery through training/orientation of midwifery educators, state nursing council members, state officials, and the establishment of national midwifery training institutes continued to be supported.

WHO supported the training of the first batch of 35 Nurse Midwife Practitioner educators. WHO in consultation with the MoHFW and experts developed and launched a 12-week Midwife Leadership Programme development pilot course for 21 midwives in India.

Prasav Watch, a tablet based application tool, enabled labour room service providers to take timely decisions for managing high-risk pregnancies. UNFPA supported capacity building efforts in 11 medical colleges and ensured improved adherence to evidence-based clinical practices around labour and childbirth and postpartum family planning services.

A National Family Planning (FP) helpline was set up with UN support, and the streamlining of Family Planning services to the local level improved access to injectable contraceptives in Rajasthan, through task shifting and training ANMs to offer services,

resulting in 36 percent of injectable doses being given at sub-centres.

In Bihar, the WeCare App on family planning and maternal health services was launched by UNFPA for advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights of young Dalits in Sheikhpura district, Bihar. The application received over 17,267 registrations over the year.

UNFPA supported the MoHFW in drafting the Family Planning 2030 commitments by convening and coordinating FP2020 focal point meetings. A national consultation was also organized for strengthening and advancing social marketing of contraceptives in India. UNFPA also supported the governments of Rajasthan, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh in re-issuing guidelines for the continuation of essential Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WIth UNHCR support, 7,573 refugee women and girls were trained on menstrual hygiene, health, WASH, GBV and received sanitary material. 15,516 refugees and asylum seekers were sensitised on pregnancy, antenatal and postnatal care, breast feeding, family planning, institutional delivery, immunization, child marriage, reproductive and sexually transmitted Infections. With UNHCR support, 759 pregnant refugee women were facilitated with pre and antenatal follow ups.

3,033
faculty of nursing colleges and schools from 22 states trained by UNFPA as part of the strengthening of the midwifery component of nursing education.

246
Medical Officers in 4 states were trained on a comprehensive health sector response to gender-based violence.

260 **health facilities across 51 districts** continued to provide quality RMNCH+A services with UNICEF support.

15
priority districts in 3 states were capacitated on quality of care during labour by UNFPA.

100
health facilities were provided mentoring support for Labour Room Quality Improvement (LaQshya) resulting in an increase in state LaQshya Certified facilities from 54 in 2020 to 96 in 2021.

The Governments of Rajasthan, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh supported by UNFPA in re-issuing guidelines for continuation of essential Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Oriented
2,250
faculty members of medical colleges on COVID-19 clinical management, vaccination and providing maternal health services during COVID.

अस्पताल
Hospital | ஆஸ்பத்திரி

India reported its last case of polio on 13 January 2011. Since then, the country has sustained its polio-free status by maintaining high population immunity through the administration of oral polio vaccines. The United Nations, led by WHO and UNICEF, continues to support India in keeping the country polio-free, helping ensure equitable access to vaccines, and working in tandem with policy makers, health and frontline workers, partners and community volunteers to deliver life-saving polio drops to every child wherever they are.

Ensuring continuity of **routine immunizations**

The UN, led by UNICEF, UNDP and WHO, continued to support essential immunisation services in India. Along with other partners, UNICEF supported improving the quality of immunisation services and COVID Appropriate Behaviours through enhanced monitoring and supportive supervision (SS) of session sites, cold chain points and routine immunisation (RI) sites. SS visits were conducted at 56,000 RI sessions, which helped improve services at all levels.

The UN also worked to improve immunisation coverage among marginalised populations, helping develop special immunisation strategies for reaching 15 states with large tribal populations.

©Dr Pandey, WHO India.

Kala azar (visceral leishmaniasis) is the second largest parasitic killer in India—only malaria is more deadly. Since 1992, after years of accelerated implementation of elimination programmes, the number of kala azar cases in India has dropped by 97%. WHO in coordination with MoHFW and the Directorate of National Centre for Vector Borne Disease Control (NCVBDC) organised the second national situational assessment of the Kala-azar Elimination Programme in two endemic states and supported the development of 11 standard training modules for the health workforce.

191,070
medical officers and health staff were trained on Vaccine Preventable Disease surveillance through nearly 5,450 workshops by WHO.

56,000
routine immunisation sessions visited by UNICEF to improve services.

15
State Tribal Areas assisted by UNICEF and WHO with an action plan for strengthening immunisation coverage.

1,123
refugee children were immunised with UNHCR facilitation.

©WHO India.

The migration of Afghan nationals and the evacuation of Indian citizens from Afghanistan increased the risk of poliovirus entering the country, which is still endemic in Afghanistan.

Following an alert from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the arrival of flights from Afghanistan to Delhi on 20 August 2021, the Delhi state government organised teams to give passengers polio vaccinations with support from the WHO-National Public Health Support Programme (NPSP). The WHO NPSP team supported arranging for the vaccines, coordination of the on-site activities - including answering queries to address vaccine hesitancy among passengers - and finger-marking those who had been vaccinated to ensure no one was missed.

Ramnaresh Mahto, 70, was infected with polio as a child, and is dependent on a hand-operated tricycle for mobility. His mission in life now is to protect other children from polio and disability – he works as a volunteer delivering polio vaccines in his native village in Bihar. Photo: WHO India

Addressing **non-communicable diseases**

WHO designed and launched a series of awareness campaigns on the harms of tobacco use in multiple languages. The combined listenership of the campaign was over 159 million people. WHO also provided technical support to conduct the fourth round of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey.

The #BeatDiabetes campaign was launched in November-December 2021 reaching out to nearly 25 million users across 93 cities in the states of Haryana, Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Messages conveyed include healthy diet and physical activity behaviours, health seeking behaviour and self-care for people living with diabetes in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

The India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI) was scaled up to enrol more than 15 million hypertension patients for cohort monitoring and achieved variable blood pressure control from 34% to 62% among enrolled patients. IHCI is a multi-partner initiative of the GoI's MoHFW, ICMR, WHO and Resolve to Save Lives. IHCI aims to contribute to India's target of reducing the prevalence of hypertension by 25 percent by 2025.

WHO in collaboration with MoHFW, state governments and other stakeholders, is implementing interventions adapted from regional and global packages to strengthen the continuum of care for common noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) across primary and secondary levels over four years across four states. These include health promotion interventions and a strong referral mechanism for the screening and management of diabetes, hypertension, cancers, and complications of untreated disease.

Frameworks for healthy workplaces and higher educational institutions were developed by WHO through a multi-stakeholder engagement to guide on the minimum set of actions required to reduce health risks and to create a safe and enabling environment. It has the potential to reach 34 million students and 42 million workers

Ensuring access to **Water and Sanitation (WASH) services**

The UN, led by UNICEF, provided technical assistance, supplies and promoted safe practices to ensure continuity of Water and Sanitation (WASH) services, including ensuring communities remained Open Defecation Free (ODF). Wide-ranging capacity building, intensive mentoring and related initiatives with multiple stakeholders improved WASH compliance in 517 UNICEF supported facilities from 61 percent in 2020 to 67 percent in 2021.

UNICEF contributed to the training and engagement of 104 key resource centres, in support of Ministry of Jal shakti, to build capacities of implementing agencies supporting the Government's Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) at state, district and sub-district levels, and of more than 1,000 implementation support agencies, to build the capacity of village water and sanitation committees to plan and implement JJM.

Concurrent assessment, developing improvement plans, capacity building of laboratory personnel has been common support areas of UNICEF in all directly supported states. This has resulted in accreditation of 52 water quality monitoring laboratories.

UNHCR 's WASH interventions in 57 refugee camps in TamilNadu led to construction of 295 new toilets, the repairing of 505 toilets, construction of 57 hand washing stations, the drilling of 20 new borewells, repairing of six borewells and the distribution of tarpaulins to 2,625 households impacted in heavy rainfall. Awareness raising activities on COVID prevention, health and hygiene reached 27,733 refugees.

WHO implemented a pilot for integrating water safety planning in the Jal Jeevan Mission in two districts of Uttar Pradesh. WHO and UNICEF advocated for the development of a national roadmap on hand hygiene promotion.

Children demonstrate handwashing with soap at a school in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh as we mark Global Handwashing Day, 2021.

UNICEF/UNI395840/Soni

UNICEF leveraged an estimated
USD 407 million
for WASH interventions

700
women trained in water quality testing in villages in Uttar Pradesh by UNOPSO

28 million
families gained access to functional household tap connections through Jal Jeevan Mission and 1.7 million schools and AWCs got water-supply as part of JJM 100 days campaign.

1.14 million
people reached directly on hand washing and over 131 million through media as means of communication in 15 UNICEF supported states.

8 million
women and adolescent girls were sensitised on menstrual hygiene in UNICEF supported states. NFHS-5 also reports increased access to hygienic menstrual absorbents from 57.8% in 2016 to 77.3% in 2021.

8 million
people were provided with household toilets and 2 Mn through CSCs as part of SBM-II. 238,932 communities were newly certified as ODF, and 6,362 communities as ODF+ with Solid and Liquid Waste (SLW) managed safely.

Trained rural women test water quality in Uttar Pradesh. The UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is offering strategic technical assistance and capacity building support in 137 villages across 11 of the most water scarce districts in Bundelkhand, Vindhya and Prayagraj regions of the State of Uttar Pradesh. As part of the Community Leave No One Behind (CLNOB) programme, it helped identify a task force of 700 women who were trained in water quality testing for drinking water sources in their respective villages. UNOPS ensured 100% testing of drinking water sources in 137 villages.

Vaccinator and COVID Warrior, 31-year-old Chandrikaben Gohil, works as an ANM with Vadodara Municipal Corporation in Gujarat.

"Initially, I was a part of the team that was assigned the task of going door to door to detect suspected cases of COVID-19. During my rounds I would counsel people not to worry and encourage them to come forward for testing. I was also tasked with the responsibility of sample collection and send them for testing. It was difficult to work while wearing the PPE kit. But there was no option. So, gradually, like others, I too got used to PPE Kit," says Chandrikaben,

"I am now working as a vaccinator and feel so happy that I am protecting my people from COVID. Many of my relatives had doubts about the efficacy of the vaccine and were worried that I could be harmed if beneficiaries developed side effects post vaccination. When I myself got vaccinated and didn't have any ill-effects, they were convinced of both: The vaccine's safety and my job," says Chandrikaben with a winning smile.

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Priority Area 3

Education and Skilling

Introduction

While India has made great strides in improving access to quality education and reducing the number of out-of-school children in recent decades, the pandemic threatens to roll back many of these gains.

School closures, which continued through much of 2021, caused unprecedented disruption to the education sector, impacting access to learning for 286 million children and adolescents in India. Children have faced tremendous learning losses with millions at risk of not returning to formal education. Further, 40 percent of Indian children had no access to remote learning opportunities, with children from tribal areas and those with disabilities affected the worst.

The UN continued to advocate for the safe reopening of schools and worked with the Government, parents and other stakeholders at the national and state level to support the continuity of learning for all children – particularly the most marginalised. Government and partners were supported to deliver digital and non-digital content in local languages, lesson plans and learning resource materials, helping to reach children in hard-to-reach areas, children with disabilities, out-of-school children and children from disadvantaged and marginalised communities. Through these efforts, 21.5 million children were reached.

The UN also continued to provide technical assistance to the Government of India at the national and state level for successful and quality roll out of the School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP) reaching 6 million adolescents and youth.

In 2021, UNESCO launched one of its flagship publications, State of the Education Report for India, which provides a profile of the 9.6 million strong teaching workforce and challenges faced by them, including the impact of COVID-19 on teachers.

UNICEF also supported the development of the first educational assessment since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, the National Achievement Survey 2021 (NAS 2021), rolled out in over 118,000 schools covering 3.6 million students across the country. Further support was given to the national government in developing the national guidelines for the National Mission on Foundational Learning launched in July 2021.

UN agencies are supporting state governments in developing their implementation plans for the next five-years. The technical support encompasses instructional plans, learning materials and professional development plans for teachers and teacher educators.

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Ensuring **continuity of education**

As India's schools remained closed through most of 2021, UN agencies continued to support education initiatives to enable children to learn from home. This included responsive parenting sessions by frontline workers and community volunteers, disseminating activity calendars, audio-video stories, and songs.

The UN provided technical support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) and state departments of education, promoting digital and non-digital remote learning opportunities to ensure no child was left behind.

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2.1 million
children (47 percent girls) in 17 states were provided with access to quality learning and skilling reached through various digital and non-digital learning platforms in 17 states by UNICEF

54 million
3-8 year olds benefitted from home-based learning guidelines developed by MoE and UNICEF

10 million
parents were regularly engaged on supporting learning environment at home via networks- self-help groups, community volunteers, adolescent collectives, online platforms, television, and community radio supported by UNICEF

9 million
preschoolers (49 percent girls) were supported with a responsive parenting programme provided by UNICEF and partners' frontline workers (FLW) and community volunteers through playful parenting, disseminating activity calendars, audio-video stories, and songs.

Roll out of **comprehensive school safety programme** and **safe school reopening**

The UN in India continued to advocate and support the safe reopening of schools at all levels of education. At the same time, UNICEF supported state governments in developing guidance on safe school reopening protocols for schools and ECD centres along with continued advocacy for ensuring COVID-19 responsive behaviours.

The UN system in India (UNFPA, UNESCO and UNICEF with adolescent UBRAF funding from UNAIDS) also provided technical assistance to the Government of India at the national and state levels for the successful and quality roll out of the School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP). Animation videos and a comic book focusing on the 11 themes — including health, HIV, gender equality, nutrition and security against violence — were developed and used in government schools with UNESCO support.

At the national level, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) launched an online course for school teachers with UN support for improved understanding on standard operating procedures and precautionary measures to be followed for the safe reopening of schools.

UNICEF provided critical support to state governments in developing guidelines, training manuals and capacity building of teachers to improve coordination and collaboration among state disaster management authorities and Departments of Education in the roll out of Comprehensive School Safety Programme (CSSP) across 10 states. UNICEF also contributed towards facilitating collaboration between State Departments of Education and State Disaster Management Authorities and to include key topics such as COVID-19 safe protocols, elements of child protection and climate change. In Gujarat,

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10-year-old Manisha from Rajasthan is happy to be back in school after lockdowns.

continuous advocacy with the government resulted in the issuance of a government directive for the formation of school disaster management committees in schools across the state. In Jammu and Kashmir, the CSSP integrated climate change and COVID-19 safety protocols components in Samagra Shiksha plans, leveraging US$1 million for scale- up of the programme across the state.

In the area of Education for health and wellbeing, UNESCO's activities built on the experiences of the work undertaken in the state of Tamil Nadu on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) based violence and bullying at school. UNESCO strengthened the efforts of the State School Education and Health Departments in curriculum design and policy development for the creation of healthy, safe, and inclusive education environments.

To assist the safe reopening of government schools accessed by refugee and host community children, UNHCR provided five schools in Jammu with handwashing stations and three schools in Telangana with masks, sanitizer stands.

© UNESCO

Supporting **learning recovery**

Approximately 15.8 million children (48 per cent girls) were provided with remedial classes and a learning recovery programme devised with UNICEF's support to address and mitigate learning loss in eight states. For example, in Assam, 3.8 million children from classes 1-8 were reached through learning recovery programmes. In Odisha, 78,000 children in geographically remote areas were reached by 9,800 preservice student teachers through an innovative internship programme.

As schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students from marginalized and tribal communities of Odisha were unable to access online classes and faced the risk of being left behind. Many of them, first generation leaners, were unable to get help from their families and lost track of the curriculum that was being covered by online classes.

To bridge this learning gap, the UNICEF-support School Sanjog initiative of a `school on wheels' reaches out to children from the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) with fun-based learning. Reaching around 40,000 children across 8 districts, volunteers reached tribal villages and organized open-air classes.

Implemented in collaboration with the Government of Odisha's Education Department, School Sanjog deploys a visually appealing `school in a van' or `school on a bike', equipped with child friendly learning material such as audio-visual tools, books, science kits, sports kits, and hygiene education kits.

Getting **out-of-school** children back into **education**

Even before the pandemic, an estimated 32 million Indian children were out-of-school. After nearly 2 years of school closure, this number is expected to rise.

Working with government and partners, over 193,000 out-of-school children were mainstreamed into special training programmes and formal schools in nine states and union territories. A strategic approach was devised to expand and accelerate outreach and referral of out-of-school children living in vulnerable areas.

Interventions were aimed at targeting both the already identified cohort of out-of-school children pre-pandemic, as well as new children who had dropped out of learning post-pandemic. UNICEF strategically differentiated their approach by state, based on the availability of resources, possible collaboration with key actors and government counterparts and institutions and always brought forward the agenda for most disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

In Bihar, UNICEF brought learning to children – adopting a folklore approach and activating adolescent groups. Teachers decorated classrooms and organised street plays to evoke interest in students and build optimism for continuing school.

Photo: © UNICEF

"It's difficult to get children motivated again. They seem to have lost interest," Jagadish says. Jagadish is a trainee on the Alternative Internship Programme, a three-month internship launched by the State of Odisha to help bridge digital and learning gaps in the state. By the first week of October, the initiative had engaged almost 9,000 trainee teachers and reached more than 75,000 students.

Scaling up **digital learning an E9 initiative**

The E9 Partnership is a forum for 9 countries, including India, to accelerate the achievement of SDG4 on education for all. UNESCO and UNICEF collaborated to engage the government in the E9 Partnerships initiative on Digital Learning and Skills for all in India to scale up existing digital learning and skills opportunities and reduce the digital divide.

After the global launch of the E-9 ministerial meeting and the political commitments to scale up existing digital learning and skills opportunities to close the digital divide, UNESCO and UNICEF prepared a draft roadmap to support the government of India in realising the E9 objectives and SDG4.

Supporting **evidence-based education policy**

The UN supported the government and partners in the roll out of the National Education Policy 2020. UNESCO reinforced the capacity of Indian policymakers and stakeholders to achieve the

National Education Policy 2020's vision and objective of "Ensuring quality education for all in the country" through its flagship publication, '2021 State of the Education Report for India: 'No Teacher, No Class'.

© UNICEF/UN0554809/Latif

Dev Sharma, a visually impaired 5th grade student, takes the National Achievement Survey 2021 with the help of his batchmate and writer, Upendra Pandey, at their school in Delhi.

The publication is the annual flagship report of the UNESCO New Delhi Office and each report is based on extensive research of one key education issue within India's education context. With an in-depth analysis of the current state of teachers in the country and of the complexity of the work of teaching, and by highlighting best practices found from around the country, the 2021 UNESCO State of the Education Report for India aims to provide a foundation for evidence-based advocacy to drive progress towards the realisation of the SDG Target 4c on teachers.

The UNESCO New Delhi Office, in collaboration with UNICEF Regional Office in South Asia (ROSA), led and facilitated the development and adoption of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Framework for Action for Education 2030, which guides the planning and implementation of SDG 4 on Quality Education in the sub-region. UNESCO supported countries in the cluster, including India, to plan, implement and monitor progress towards Education 2030 in the region and mainstream the SDG 4 targets and initiatives in their national education policies and plans.

Working with NCERT, and following the success of recent linkages, UNESCO New Delhi provided support to improve pre-service teacher education aiming to integrate these values in teacher education in India and selected neighbouring countries. Further, UNESCO organized a Policy Linking workshop focusing on Grade 8 students with NCERT to set internationally comparable benchmarks for SDG4.1c and worked with MOE to set national benchmarks on six indicators identified by the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG). UNESCO also provided technical support to develop Readiness Index for Digital Education (RIDE) to MOE and to NSS 79th round, covering Comprehensive Annual Modula Survey (CAMS) as an active member of the technical committees.

Technical support was provided to state governments by UNICEF on key Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS) indicators, which has improved the use of data and evidence in preparing and monitoring state education sector annual plans. Support was provided to enhance the adoption and use of gender and equity-based analysis using U-DISE data to inform planning and monitoring of the Samagra Shiksha (SS) education sector annual plans in twelve states in India. UNICEF facilitated

State of the Education Report for India 2021

visualisation and analysis of key education indicators extracted from U-DISE 2019-20 on a Power BI dashboard to prioritise geographical and vulnerable areas to be included in the SS annual work plans and budgets where immediate action is required in Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh.

UNICEF is the key technical partner of the Ministry of Education for the National Assessment Survey 2021, the first large learning assessment survey following the COVID-19 pandemic, covering 118,000 schools, and covering 3.6 million students. It will provide a better understanding of the impact of the pandemic on children's learning and aid in the development of targeted measures.

In addition, support was provided to the national government in developing guidelines for the National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy launched in July 2021. State governments are being supported in developing their implementation plans for the next five years.

Life skills and career guidance

Life skills education and career guidance also remained a strong focus for the UN in 2021. The UN in India continued to provide technical assistance to the Government of India at the national and state level for the successful and quality roll out of the School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP) reaching 6 million adolescents and youth. Further, animation videos and a comic book focusing on the 11 themes on school health and wellness including health, gender equality, nutrition and security against violence were developed and used in 1.5 million government schools with UNESCO support. UNICEF also supported a career guidance portal which was launched in 15 states benefitting 26.2 million students (50% girls).

Photo: UNFPA

Peer Educators from four disadvantaged communities of Rishikesh jump up with joy and excitement as they complete the LifeSkills Education Training with GIWA in Rishikesh.

6 million
adolescents and youth
(5 million by UNFPA and 1 million by UNICEF) were intensively engaged with life skills education.

26.2 million
students in 15 state (50 percent girls) benefited from UNICEF career guidance portal

Supporting the **education of refugees**

UNHCR continued to advocate inclusion, facilitate access, and provide safe spaces for refugee and asylum-seeking children to learn. Refugees and asylum seekers were supported through advocacy efforts to facilitate access to government schools through an accelerated learning programme and provide educational kits to promote learning. UNHCR also supported the access of refugees and asylum-seekers to tertiary education. In the academic year of 2020/2021, 43 students received a scholarship from the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) to enroll in or continue higher education. In 2021, 78 life skills sessions were conducted which were attended by 3,621 refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR and partners also distributed 7,257 education and recreation kits.

©UNHCR/Wahidullah Faizi

Armaghan Akrami is a 10-year-old Afghan refugee who speaks Dari, English, Hindi, and Kannada. She's working on learning German and Punjabi as well. She and her two sisters used to share their father's phone for online classes.They now have access to two devices thanks to a tablet provided by UNHCR. Akrami learns from YouTube. "Through the internet and all the information available, I am able to learn so much,"
she said.

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Priority Area 4

Nutrition and Food Security

Introduction

In 2021 the COVID-19 pandemic caused continued closure of schools and Anganwadi Centres along with the diversion of human resources away from delivery of public health and social safety nets interventions. These issues threatened the nutrition and food security of the most vulnerable in India.

The Government of India provides food security through one of the world's largest food-based safety nets, with nearly 67 percent of its population relying on the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to avail their monthly entitlement of food grains at subsidised prices. Extension of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana programme through November 2021 and rollout of national portability for the TPDS through the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) are notable changes in 2021. The UN in India continued to work with the Government to expand access and improve the delivery of these systems.

During the second pandemic wave, policy and programme guidance and tools for continuity of essential nutrition services were updated and effectively deployed, reaching more women and children in 2021 with UN support. Messaging on continued breastfeeding and complementary feeding were integrated into COVID risk and vaccine communications and community mobilisation efforts. COVID sensitive face-to-face contact opportunities (home visits, monthly village health and nutrition days, small group meetings) were leveraged by UNICEF supported community health workers along with virtual contacts to deliver services and messaging on infant and young child nutrition.

UN advocacy, policy support, evidence generation and innovation supported the Government of India's push for better nutrition outcomes in the country. With technical and financial support, 447,000 children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) were treated through facility and community-based programmes, more than double the number of cases in 2020. WFP's technical support to the government on fortified rice culminated in plans for a national roll out of fortified rice in food-based safety nets. Iron folic acid (IFA) supplementation for the prevention and treatment of anaemia among adolescents and pregnant women saw significant gains. Support for social and behavioural change communications campaigns reached millions with information on best practices for nutrition.

The development of guidelines and evidence-based research aided safeguard farmers from COVID-19, enhanced farmers' livelihoods and improved food safety and hygiene standards.

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Supporting **infant and young child feeding**

UNICEF and WHO supported the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's (MoHFW) Mothers' Absolute Affection (MAA) programme, seeking to improve child survival and development by encouraging breastfeeding. WHO and UNICEF supported MoHFW in creating a social media campaign for World Breastfeeding Week. WHO also provided technical and policy support through an evaluation of the implementation of Infant Milk Substitute Act in India. As data from the most recent India National Family Health Survey indicated that only 11% of infants were receiving a minimum acceptable diet, UNICEF and WHO intensified efforts to ensure children were fed a diverse and nutrient dense diet. UNICEF supported government efforts to deliver two rounds of Vitamin A supplementation in six states. Almost 1 in 5 children from 12-59 months of age have Vitamin A deficiency, which increases the risk of childhood illness and death. WHO is also providing technical support to MoHFW to develop a targeted Vitamin A supplementation strategy.

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Managing Severe Acute Malnutrition

UNICEF advocated for the re-establishment of essential nutrition services following COVID related disruptions, especially services for children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM).

COVID related disruptions during the first COVID wave of 2020, and again during the surge in 2021, impacted facility-based services for the treatment of children with SAM. Anganwadi Centres (rural childcare centres) were closed in the lockdowns and remained out of operation until late 2021. A majority of inpatient wards for SAM patients (Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) were converted to COVID wards. The recovery from disruption in 2021 was faster than during the first wave, however. UNICEF engaged with the MoHFW and respective State Health Departments to restart SAM treatment. Thanks to these efforts and lessons learned from 2020, NRC admissions for children returned to normal levels in just two months from the start of the second wave. Such a recovery took nearly six months in 2020.

Twelve state governments – with UNICEF support and facilitation – issued or reemphasized SAM guidelines, led online trainings, intensified screening, and referral of children with SAM, and reactivated counselling activities with appropriate COVID prevention practices.

447,000 children with SAM were treated through facility and community-based programmes by October 2021, more than double the number of cases compared to 2020. Community-based programmes across eight states (Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh) and select geographies in four states (Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal) were supported for expanding the reach of services for addressing SAM. COVID sensitive facility-based SAM guidelines were also adapted for virtual trainings for nation-wide orientation for medical officers.

> **447,**
> **children with SAM**
> int
> suppor
> number than 2020

© UNICEF/UN0602836/Kaur

Medicines and supplemental feeding are given to baby Shivanya, held by her mother Deepa, at the Nutrition Centre at Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh, one of the facilities treating SAM that UNICEF is supporting. At the facility, parents bring in their malnourished children for a stay of 14 days, during which the growth of the child is monitored by nurses and doctors, and if required, they are referred to the hospital. The children are given healthy, nutritious food, and the mothers are given counselling on how to maintain good nutritional practices on returning home.

Continuity of **adolescent and maternal nutritional services**

A COVID-sensitive approach was adopted to ensure continuity of nutritional services for 68 million adolescent girls and 29 million pregnant women. The UN, led by UNICEF, was catalytic in nurturing the development of academic partnerships with the Government of India to improve maternal nutrition. Partnerships with local academic institutes (Indian Council for Medical Research,Lady Irwin College, Kalawati Saran Hospital, state level Centres of Excellence) was a key technical assistance modality for hybrid training, tele-counselling, tele-surveys, advocacy, and nutritional fiscal tools.

Women collective-led nutrition impact evaluations were completed and are being up-scaled to six states, adding new elements on gender and mental health.

Through continued advocacy efforts for resumption of services by the UN, Iron folic acid (IFA) supplementation for prevention and treatment of anaemia improved from 8% (September 2020) for adolescent girls to 24% in September 2021. Pregnant women IFA receipt improved from 77% (September 2020) to 90% (September 2021).
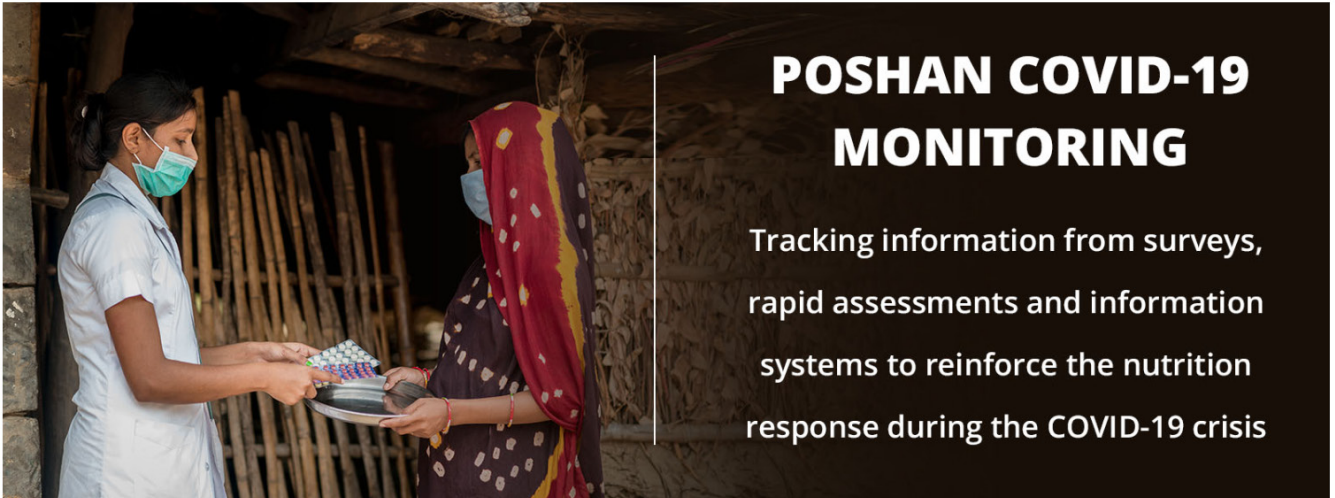
A milestone national policy dialogue on children's obesity was co-hosted by UN agencies, NITI Aayog and eight national Ministries. The dialogue addressed the worrying rise in the number of Indian children impacted by obesity, resulting in policy papers to address the marketing of unhealthy and processed foods.

WHO successfully provided technical and policy support to MoHFW and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India in developing key regulations and policies promoting healthy diets among children and adolescents. These include development of regulation restricting marketing of unhealthy food to school children, regulation on front of pack labelling aiming to support consumers make informed food choices and lastly a policy eliminating artificial trans-fats from the food supply chain a year ahead of the global target.

© UNICEF/UN0439998/Boro

Prity Tanti, 18, is a member of an adolescent girls club, and speaks about the nutrition and food with her club members at Anandabari Tea estate in Dibrughar district of Assam.

POSHAN COVID-19 MONITORING

Tracking information from surveys, rapid assessments and information systems to reinforce the nutrition response during the COVID-19 crisis

Monitoring Introduction

The POSHANCOVID-19 Monitoring page consolidates relevant data to monitor the interactions between COVID-19 and nutrition across the most populous states affected by both the pandemic and overall malnutrition.

Multisector **coordination**

Government and development partners' guidance, communications tools, and other materials on COVID and nutrition, government directives and updated conditions were made available on the

POSHANCOVID19.in website and programmatic highlights shared through #PoshanWeekly updates to 2,100 nutrition professionals.
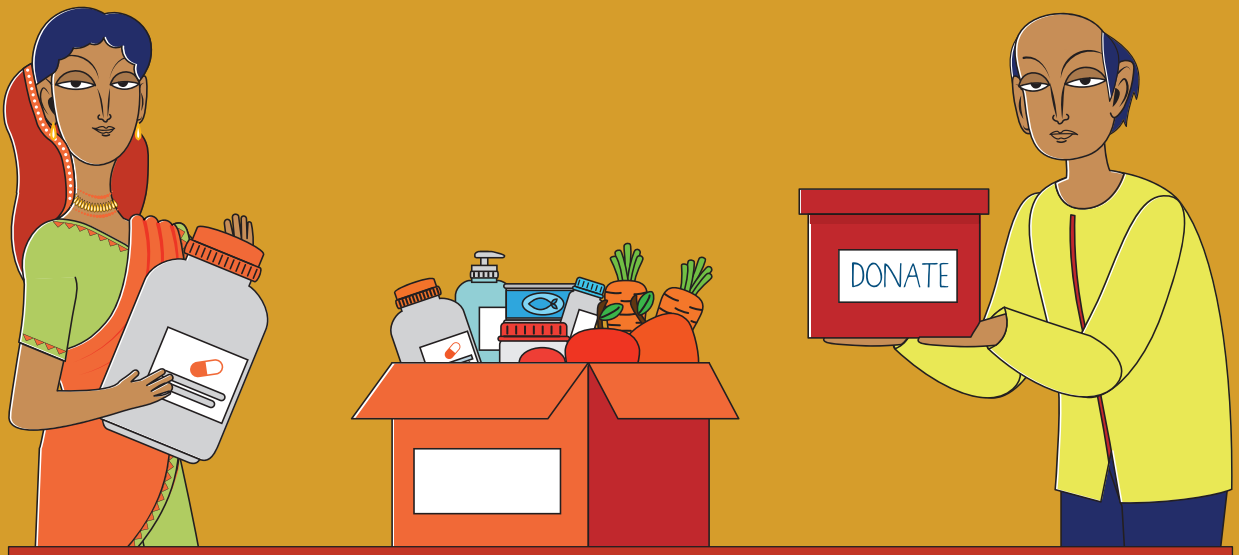
Supporting **social and behaviour change**

UNICEF worked to enhance the capacity of the government, partners and civil society to deliver social behaviour change communication (SBCC) related to nutrition services during COVID-19. UNICEF supported the POSHAN Abhiyaan, Jan Andolan and Anaemia Mukt Bharat (anaemia free India) schemes across 14 states.

A Jan Andolan (people's movement) dashboard supported during the government's nutrition month and Poshan Pakhwada (nutrition fortnight) campaigns reported over 200 million community events. Strategic messages on nutrition were integrated as part of outreach community engagement programmes around COVID-prevention. State specific SBCC initiatives like Yuvodaya (rise of youth) in Chhattisgarh, Hello Didi in Uttar Pradesh, Artists Federation in Odisha ensured improved reach of nutrition messages using digital mediums edutainment formats.

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Shriya (4 months) and mother Deepa listen to a community health worker in Tudparas Village, Chhattisgarh. Bapi na Uvat (Tips of Grandmother), a joint initiative by the District Administration and UNICEF, is aimed at decreasing rates of malnourishment in the district, and to spread awareness among rural women about health and child care. Under this initiative, the elder women of the villages voluntarily meet young rural mothers to give them useful tips on various topics related to childcare.

Policy support for **better nutrition**

Evidence-based research, training and policy support from UN agencies helped expand nutritional services across the nation.

FAO, in collaboration with National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), trained 81 professionals and students and provided follow-up support to build their capacity on nutrition-sensitive food systems for promoting nutrition in their work areas. FAO also commissioned eight thematic papers on 'Indian Agriculture Towards 2030' as part of a national dialogue with NITI Aayog, Government of India, covering topics such as climate adaptation, natural farming, pests, and structural reform. The papers were opened for public comment at a virtual conference held through 19-22 January 2021. The papers were revised based on the feedback from discussants and participants. Two outputs from this dialogue process are being finalised: a set of policy briefs and an open access book to be published by Springer.

In collaboration with the National Institute of Nutrition (ICMAR-NIN), FAO provided technical support for the adaptation of the ENACT (Education for Effective Nutrition in Action) programme in India. Subsequently, in partnership with the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), 39 Extension Advisory Service (EAS) providers in the Government were trained to integrate nutrition promotion into their training agenda.

Fortification of rice, a staple in many parts of India, has the potential to deliver significant public health gains. Recognizing this, WFP provided technical support to the national and state governments for the mainstreaming of fortified rice in government food safety nets. In 2021, WFP supported the production and inclusion of fortified rice in 129 districts in five states — Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha. WFP policy advocacy and technical support culminated in the Prime Minister's announcement on a nationwide scale up of fortified rice in the food-based safety nets by 2024.

WHO, as part of a 3 year multi-country project, provided support to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India to build institutional capacity in the country on codex standards and procedures. This included strengthening national codex structures through improved scientific and technical capacity in India and supporting promotion of sub-regional cooperation on standards setting, chemical risk assessment, development of standard procedure for the data generation, management and improved communication and coordination.

FAO and WHO
published guidelines on reducing risk of COVID-19 transmission during operations in farms and supply chains

WHO
developed a white paper on the Contamination of Milk with Aflatoxin M1 to support improved surveillance.

FAO,
in partnership with the National Rural Livelihoods Mission developed a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), Agri-Nutri-garden and Rating Matrix

WHO
implemented a multi-country codex project for advocacy and training on institutionalising codex standards and procedures in India, Nepal and Bhutan.

FAO
provided technical support for enhancing farmer's livelihoods and developed frameworks for documenting best practices on farm livelihoods

FAO,
in partnership with the Spices Board of India, provided technical support in developing good agricultural and hygiene practices in the nutrition-sensitive spices value chain.

COVID-19
TEST KIT

UNHCR, with its local NGO partners, responded to the COVID-19 crisis and food insecurity by providing life-saving nutritious food supplies to the most vulnerable in India.

Strengthening **food safety nets**

The UN system in India contributed to supporting the policies, programmes, and system components of the government's food safety nets, especially of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), the largest food distribution programme in the world. WFP also designed and rolled out information, education, and communication campaigns in 10 urban areas across 10 states to create awareness of existing and new initiatives of the TPDS to more than 800 million beneficiaries.

WFP worked on supply chain optimization and beneficiary management, helping reduce food waste, save money, and reduce carbon footprints. In Uttarakhand, 76 percent savings on transport costs were achieved.

WFP also initiated a multi-year engagement with the national government to reduce post-harvest losses in procurement systems by introducing mobile storage units and gaining approval to install prefab storage units in Arunachal Pradesh, as a proof of concept which the Government can scale up in the coming years.

In addition, WFP worked with women's micro-enterprises to establish Take-Home Ration (THR) production units in Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan to improve the nutritional quality of THRs as well as to support women's economic empowerment.

Women at a WFP supported THR manufacturer.

Under this initiative, WFP setup and operationalized two THR production units in Uttar Pradesh and one in Odisha, built the capacities of 632 government grass root functionaries and trained 250 members of women's self-help groups on the production of fortified blended foods and developed and rolled out numerous SBCC materials to the community with a focus on infant and young child feeding and the use of THR.

The socio/economic impact of the pandemic exacerbated the vulnerabilities of the most marginalised communities, especially refugees and asylum seekers. As they are not currently included in the government's food security initiatives, UNHCR provided food assistance to 38,449 refugees and host community members living in similar conditions in 13 locations.

Vandana Devi is the president of the micro-enterprise that runs the THR production unit at the Gauspur village in Uttar Pradesh. "For the women here, the unit and coming together has brought changes to our families and personal lives. We are bringing in income, doing business and the community is more aware now of the importance of nutrition," says Vandana, underlining the entrepreneurial and awareness approach that is rooted in the community. WFP and the Government of Uttar Pradesh have been piloting these units under a partnership to reduce malnutrition in the state.

Improving
rural livelihoods

Recognising that a key pathway to achieving food and nutrition security involves enhancing the incomes of poor rural communities, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is working with the Government and poor rural communities to ensure smallholder food and agricultural production systems are remunerative, sustainable and resilient. Partnering with the Government in eight states (Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Maharashtra) IFAD financing is contributing towards fostering strong grassroots institutions to empower village communities, especially women, promoting sustainable resource management systems and enhancing food security and cash incomes by introducing improved practices and proven production technologies.

As of December 2021, these projects were working with over 653,000 households. In Jharkhand alone, 60,500 households reported an almost four-fold income increase from rainfed agriculture. In Uttarakhand, over 100,000 households have successfully increased income from various sub-sectors such as high value agriculture and livestock, which also contributed to their food and nutrition security. Vulnerable tribal households raising livestock in Odisha are witnessing over USD 350 average income increases, even as more and more tribal households report improved access to land and forest for production purposes. With strategic investment in rural infrastructure related to soil and water conservation, link roads and markets, IFAD is helping farmers, especially in the remote hill areas of Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Uttarakhand, to enhance productivity, access new markets, and increase sales.

In 2021, a new project, Nav Tejaswini, was launched across all districts of Maharashtra to enable one million rural households to overcome poverty by improving their capacity to diversify into sustainable enterprises, engage in remunerative employment and enhance their access to markets. The new Chhattisgarh Inclusive Rural and Accelerated Agriculture Growth (CHIRAAG) project was also launched in 2021 with a focus on nutrition sensitive agriculture and improved food and nutrition security for the tribal communities of the state.

Priority Area 5

Climate Action, Clean Energy and Disaster Resilience

Introduction

India – with only about 2.4 percent of the world's total land mass and close to 18 percent of global population – is under tremendous stress to achieve sustainable use and protection of its natural resources, nature and biodiversity. With large parts of the country's rural population dependent on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and forests, any adverse impact on water availability due to changes in precipitation levels and falling groundwater tables is likely to affect livelihoods and food security adversely.

Nationally, several programmes and policies are aimed at reducing the risks posed by climate change — both to mitigate (by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases), and to adapt (by reducing exposure and vulnerability to expected impacts). The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and the corresponding State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) at sub-national levels have been developed to outline existing and future policies and programmes addressing climate mitigation and adaptation in various sectors.

The COVID-19 crisis has also demonstrated that the health of people and the planet are intertwined. Both environment and health are intrinsically related, for a good environment translates to good health. Many health issues today arise from poor environmental management and its consequences.

The UN in India continued to support the Government of India through the second year of the pandemic by helping restore lost ecosystems and biodiversity, fighting climate change and reducing pollution, including the surged medical waste and plastic waste streams - measures that help mitigate risks of future pandemics and build long-term resilience for people and the planet.

The UN is encouraging state and private actors to invest in building back better and greener, linking recovery efforts with solar and clean energy transition and India's targets in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in the renewable energy sector.

UN agencies are addressing the issue of deteriorating air quality in major Indian cities and its impact on human health through technical support and advocacy, working on integrated strategies for clean air and sustainable agriculture production, involving government, regulatory bodies, CSOs, and the private sector.

While India has initiated efforts to phase out single-use plastics and reduce marine plastic litter, COVID-19 biomedical waste, much of it plastic, has put unprecedented pressure on the country's solid
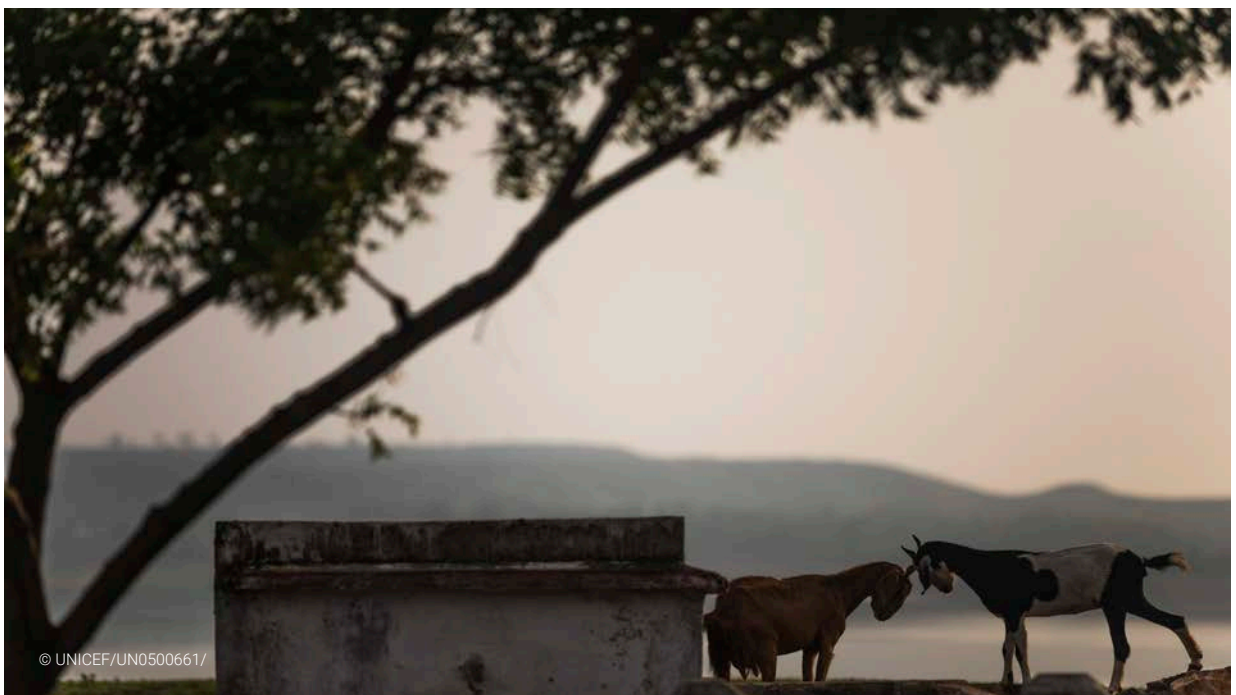
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waste management systems. UN agencies, led by UNDP, UNIDO and UN Environment Programme (UNEP) have responded to the urgent need for plastic waste management, through social and technical initiatives on the ground, and advocacy.

The UN also continued its support of disaster management systems in India, working closely with the government and its partners on risk-informed programming to strengthen resilience and reduce disruptions in delivery of services, helping minimise the impact of disasters.

Deepening its partnership with India, UNEP signed the host country agreement with the Government of India. UNEP continued its efforts to provide normative support to the Government at national and subnational levels and facilitated science-based action in various thematic areas, including air pollution, waste and chemicals, biodiversity, climate change, and related multilateral environmental agreements and conventions.

Supporting **climate change adaptation and mitigation measures**

UNDP played a crucial role by providing technical and advisory support to India's Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC), including the submission of the national report to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), highlighting technological and financial needs for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Support also included an assessment of international carbon markets for developing a domestic voluntary carbon market and mainstreaming climate-sensitive planning at both the state and local level in Chhattisgarh.

UNICEF has fostered learning initiatives to inform the roll-out of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), which is aiming to provide universal tap water to rural India. JJM is currently the most operational programme in India contributing to the mitigation of climate impacts – in particular, by reducing over-dependence on local resources – and adaptation of communities by investing in the sustainability and better functionality of water supply systems.

Upscaling **renewable energy**

UNDP programmes and projects provided access to renewable energy for both homes and businesses. This has benefitted over 130,000 beneficiaries across five sectors — health, education, clean cooking, agriculture, and transport — in five states (Assam, Manipur, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Sikkim). UNDP support has included e-mobility, the solarization of health centres and educational institutions, and the development of energy-efficient solutions in high-altitude regions. This has contributed to reducing carbon use, improvements in air quality, social and economic empowerment, and reductions in human-wildlife conflicts.

UNEP, in association with one of India's leading clean renewable energy companies, Renew Power, and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), is training and skilling 1,000 women salt farmers in Gujarat to become solar panel and solar pump technicians and entrepreneurs.
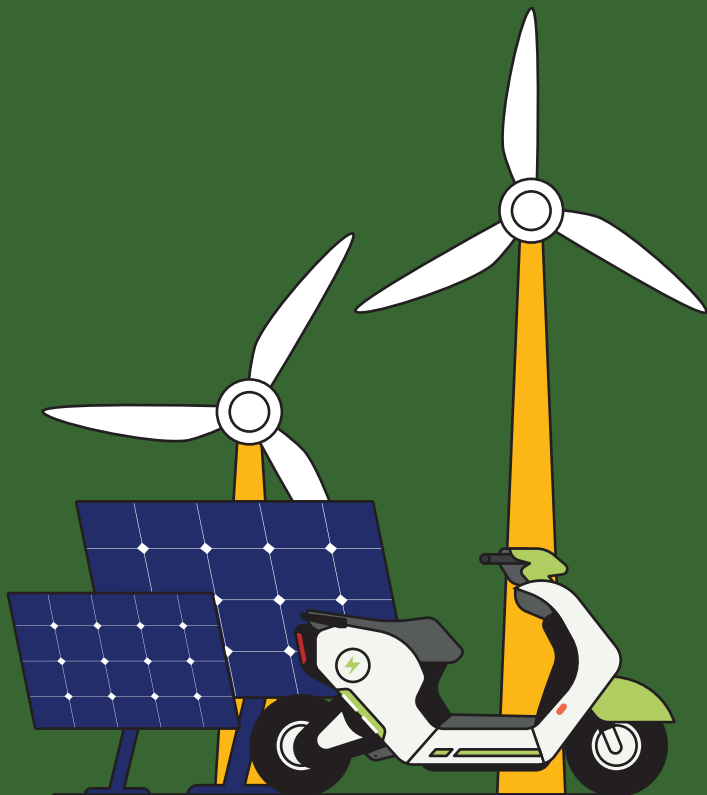
Over
130,000
beneficiaries in 5 states benefited
from UNDP renewable energy projects

78
e-vehicles distributed to
beneficiaries in Manipur and Ranchi

16
primary health centres and
education establishments
solarized, benefiting

50,000
people

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Accelerating **energy efficiency and innovation**

UN agencies expanded their support for accelerating energy efficiency and innovation. Working with the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), UNIDO enabled energy efficiency investments in 695 MSMEs in five sectors (brass, ceramic, dairy, foundry and hand tools) in 23 clusters spread around the countries. These MSMEs achieved annual savings of USD 7.9M and mitigated 65,000 tonnes of CO_2 emissions. In parallel, UNIDO, with the government's Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), supported 12 further MSME clusters to identify, standardise, demonstrate and replicate sector-specific energy efficiency technologies, including through innovative financing.

Under the framework of the Cool Coalition, UNEP supported the MoEFCC in a cold-chain Support

Programme in collaboration with EESL and the Alliance for an Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE) and Auroville Consulting.

Under the Facility for Low Carbon Technology Deployment, UNIDO with BEE and other partners expanded the technical and financial support for deployment and verification to 59 Indian innovators, in six technology areas. So far, 18 technology validations have been completed and out of these, 12 are being commercialised, including for waste heat recovery in milk chilling centres, the use of phase change materials in chest coolers and freezers and for last mile cold chain, as well as innovative regenerative burners for high temperature industrial processes.

Finding **solutions for air pollution**

Air pollution is a critical environmental and health challenge impacting India, with significant costs to human health and socioeconomic development.
Working to address the challenge of air pollution, UNEP in collaboration with the Climate & Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), and with support from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) initiated the first National Air Quality Progress Report. In partnership with the Paytm Foundation, UNEP also launched the Air Quality Action Forum to support the Ministry to

coordinate and synergise the efforts of organisations working on air pollution management in India.

Crop residue burning is one of the major sources of air pollution in India. In collaboration with CCAC, FAO supported the development of integrated crop residue management strategies in Punjab, including residue collection supply chains to mitigate crop residue burning.

Photo: Climate and Clean Air Coalition

Phasing out **ozone depleting substances**

Hydrofluorocarbons (HCFCs) are among the most ozone-depleting substances. UN agencies, led by UNDP, are supporting India in implementing the Montreal Protocol for the phasing out of HCFCs and providing technical assistance to industry for a smooth transition to ozone-friendly alternatives.

UNDP accelerated the adoption of environment-friendly practices by medium and small-scale enterprises and other private corporations further supporting the phase out of HCFCs in 163 enterprises. UNDP also finalised the "India: Mercury Initial Assessment" report, supporting India's Minamata Convention treaty pledge to phase out the industrial use of hazardous mercury compounds.

Development and promotion of
non-Persistent Organic Pollutant alternatives to DDT

Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) is an insecticide that effectively kills malaria spreading mosquitoes. Unfortunately, it is also a Persistent Organic Pollutant (POP) that pollutes the environment and can have harmful effects on the health of animals and people. UNEP and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) are helping India to develop, manufacture and regulate environmentally friendly and sustainable alternatives to DDT: innovative Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLIN) came into commercial production in 2021 and facilities for producing neem and Bt based biopesticides are under construction.

Supporting **better plastic waste management**

UNDP supported the collection of over 30,000 metric tonnes (MTs) of plastic waste across 21 cities, preventing more than 75,000 kgs of CO2 pollution. The agency also worked on the social inclusion and dignity of labour for waste pickers, which included offering formal employment, supporting financial inclusion as well as health security and social security.

UNEP completed three analytical studies on plastic, including regulation status, implementation and compliance, on single use plastic, marine plastic litter and biomedical waste in the country. The CounterMEASURES to plastic pollution project, implemented by UNEP, aimed at strengthening scientific assessments of macro and micro pollution in India. The project focuses on outreach and policy recommendations in the Ganges plain cities of Haridwar, Agra, Prayagraj, and Patna on the river Ganges plain. UNEP provided state and city-level policy briefs for respective governments to improve plastics waste management.

During the Ganga Mahotsav festival, UNEP, in partnership with the National Mission for Clean Ganga, organised community mobilisation and sensitization on plastic pollution in 12 locations in Uttar Pradesh, with over 600 young people, Urban Local Bodies, line ministries and stakeholders participating in the campaign.

Further, a legislators' meeting was organised by UNEP in partnership with the Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI), where a declaration was passed by 18 legislators from Himalayan States, acknowledging the urgent need for stringent policies against single use plastic and committing to a Zero-Waste-Himalaya.

UNEP, through the Tide Turner Plastic challenge, engaged youth across the country in addressing the issue of plastic pollution threatening life in oceans, rivers and on land. By July 2021,, 331,804 youth and 1049 eco-clubs had actively participated in the

© Abhir Avasthi/UNDP India

A Safai Sathi (waste picker) is enjoying her new-found financial independence.

initiative. Youth participation rose from 8 States in 2019 to all the 28 States and 9 UTs in 2021.

UNICEF supported the Government's Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission Phase II, focusing on improving waste management. UNICEF is building the capacities of rural communities and governments to implement interventions addressing faecal sludge, plastic, greywater, bio-waste, and menstrual hygiene waste management through a pan-India initiative seeking to reach 250,000 gram panchayats (village governing institutes) by 2023. So far, 6,362 communities have been certified as Open Defecation Free, which means they have safely managed solid and liquid waste management.

Photo: UNDP

Managing **hazardous waste and pollutants**

India is a major source of single-use plastic litter. The COVID-19 outbreak has worsened the situation, with an estimated 100 tons of biomedical waste daily, adding pressure to city waste management systems. As part of its COVID response, UNEP organised workshops and training programmes on biomedical waste management and developed a common toolkit on the implementation of policies. UNEP also analysed the worsened situation of bio-medical waste management in India during COVID pandemic. Further, UNIDO strengthened the institutional and technical capacity of large, medium and small healthcare facilities for the environmentally sound management of medical waste. Under this project – funded by the Global Environment Facility - UNIDO established model districts in five states for the establishment of a national integrated biomedical waste management system.

Photo: UNDP

Supporting **conservation and management of of biodiversity and ecosystem restoration**

In India, biodiversity conservation is critical because it supports the lives and livelihoods of millions of people while also mitigating the threats posed by climate change.

In partnership with UNDP, UNEP released the Partners Synthesis Report on Investing in Nature to Build Back Better, bringing together global experts, practitioners, policy, and decision-makers on issues surrounding nature rebuilding in India. UNEP and FAO launched the UN Decade on Ecosystem restoration on 5 June on World Environment Day 2021.

India currently holds the Presidency of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species, for the triennium (2020-2023). UNEP performed a national assessment on the impact of plastic pollution on wildlife, particularly migratory species, one of the priority action areas under COP Presidency strategy for the triennium.

UNEP, with support from the secretariat o the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, is supporting the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in a situational analysis and road mapping for achieving the national target for restoring 26 million ha of land by 2030.

In support of local communities and indigenous peoples in the UNESCO designated Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, UNESCO offered training to increase their capacity to mobilise local knowledge systems, undertake ecological monitoring, and build synergies with science, to address challenges of sustainable development.

Addressing wildlife crime and trafficking, UNODC brought together focal points from government agencies to deliberate on strengthening prosecutions and investigations on wildlife crime. The identified needs would form the framework of UNODC inputs in this area in the coming years.


Photo: UNDP

Green Room Air Conditioners on GeM!

Circular Economy & Resource Efficiency

Under the project on Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), UNEP supported the Ministry of Finance in conducting a prioritisation study and preliminary market assessment for development of criteria for Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) of two prioritised product categories - writing and printing paper and room air conditioners. Additionally, UNEP also undertook a preliminary market assessment study and recommended SPP criteria for green servicing of air conditioners. As a pioneering work initiative, Green Room Air Conditioners (RACs) were launched on the Government-e-Marketplace on 5 June 2021 on the World Environment Day. So far nearly 18,000 Green RACs, worth USD 10M, have been procured through GeM.

UNEP facilitated the formation of a district-level task force on circular economy for Angul in Odisha. The task force will support the district in development and implementation of a road map for circular, green and inclusive economic growth.
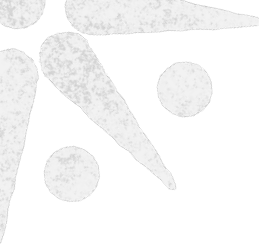
Circularity in **textiles & fashion**

The textiles sector has a huge environmental footprint. UNEP is assisting the Ministry of Textiles (MoT) in developing a plan for a sustainable textile centre hub in Surat, Gujarat. UNEP is providing strategic leadership and encouraging sector-wide collaboration to accelerate a transition towards a sustainable and circular textile value chain. UNEP also partnered with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) to offer a general elective course on design innovation for sustainable fashion to all students of the institute.

Photo: UNRCO
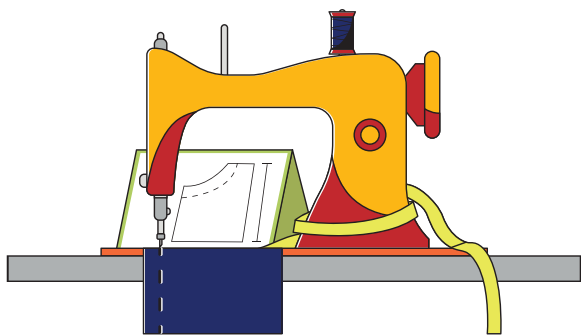
Building **resilience & strengthening the capacity of MSMEs**

UNDP helped build the capacity of state and city administrations to sustainably manage over one million ha of land and enhance the incomes of 3,000 beneficiaries (40% women) through provision of alternate diversified livelihood options in sectors including eco-tourism, waste management, organic agriculture and handicrafts.

Further, to help MSMEs navigate their way to a resilient and sustainable COVID recovery and to revitalize business, UNIDO and partners, including Empretec India Foundation and the India SME Forum, launched a knowledge and collaboration platform - Build Back Business from Crisis (B3C).

Hailing from a small village in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, 23-year old Karishma has been breaking gender stereotypes as a female mountaineer. Empowered women like Karishma are also catalysts for climate action. In her various expeditions, she has witnessed how the problem of waste is severely impacting the wildlife and ecology of these pristine areas. Since 2019, she has been participating in cleanliness drives along popular trekking trails. As a part of the SECURE Himalaya initiative by UNDP India, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, and the Government of Uttarakhand, Karishma along with 20 other youths were enrolled in a 2-month training programme on nature guiding and interpretation. The programme equipped them with the knowledge of basic ecology, flora, and fauna of the region. This ensures their socio-economic empowerment, and also creates a strong sense of environmental stewardship among local communities.

Photo: UNDP

A shepherd watches his sheep in Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand. As a part of the UNDP programme on 'Green Recovery Pathway for India: Transitioning towards a green and resilient COVID-19 recovery,' the department of Animal Husbandry in Uttarkashi has been provided a Rapid Zoonotic Disease Diagnosis Vehicle, or the 'One Health Van'. Fitted with modern diagnostic equipment, this van doubles up as a sample collection and disease diagnosis lab on the go, enabling health workers to rapidly identify zoonotic diseases in the community.

Health and the environment

UNEP and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) undertook a study - 'Priorities for the Environmental Dimension of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in India', an important step in better understanding the environmental dimension of AMR. Together with WHO, UNEP is part of a steering committee set up by the Government of India on Environment and Health, to support pathways for reducing the impact of environmental deterioration on human health.

FAO is supporting the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) in drafting a second version of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), Livestock sector (2022 – 2026). The first national stakeholder workshop was organised in November 2021 to incorporate the views of subject experts into the

draft NAP. As the magnitude of the use of antimicrobials in the animal health sector remains unknown, FAO India has developed a validated protocol for estimation of antimicrobial usage (AMU) at farm level. Additionally, FAO is engaged in developing a core group of trainers for estimating AMU to enhance the national capacity in the area of AMR containment.

UNDP extended technical support to the governments of Uttarakhand and Sikkim for establishing multi-stakeholder digital platforms and early warning systems to improve preparedness on zoonotic diseases spill over. The first-of-its-kind integrated model on One Health supports the states in implementing actions to prevent the occurrence of zoonotic diseases and green recovery.

Building **climate resilience** in agriculture

As part of enhanced climate adaptation and resilience building of small-holder farmers, WFP is supporting the Government of India's efforts in promoting millets as a climate resilient nutri-crop. In partnership with Odisha Millet Mission, WFP prepared a compendium of best practices and developed six policy briefs on various thematic dimensions of millet mainstreaming. WFP is also working with partners to improve the capacity of small-hold farmers to adapt to climate change.

WFP also supported the assessment of electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipt System (eNWR) to improve farmer resilience to shocks, enhance incomes and reduce food losses.

FAO collaborated with the ICAR-Central Agroforestry Research Institute (CAFRI) in two States to pilot the capacities building in agroforestry of more than 110 grassroots-level extension personnel, including rural youths. FAO also strengthened institutional capacities for monitoring, surveillance, and long-term control of Fall Armyworm, by training 557 scientists from major maize growing states.

FAO technical assistance to the governments of Mizoram and Nagaland in the IFAD funded Fostering Climate-resilient Upland Farming Systems (FOCUS) programme developed curricula and built the capacities of 171 state and district level officials as master trainers.

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Strengthening **disaster resilience**

India is uniquely vulnerable to natural disasters, a trend only exacerbated by climate change. UN agencies worked with the Government of India to increase institutional and community resilience, helping integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation measures and disaster risk reduction into national policies, strategies, planning and programmes.

UNICEF worked closely with the government and its partners on risk-informed programming to strengthen the resilience of children and their families, and reduce disruptions in the delivery of services, helping minimise the impact of disasters. In the agency's 17 programme states, a focus was put on building capacities of local governance for the localization of preparedness by mobilising and organising community-level task forces to address public health and other risks.

12
states capacitated in for risk informed humanitarian programme planning with UNICEF support.

22
Departmental Disaster Management Plans which are gender-sensitive developed in Maharashtra

145,000
schools in

10
states reached by UNICEF's Safe Schools Programme, which included DRR, with

USD4.59 million
allocated by GOI thanks to UNICEF advocacy.

11
states completed gender and child responsive DRR plans with UNICEF support

22,868
frontline personnel trained in DRR and climate change emergency response in Bihar

1,984
participants were trained by WFP in food and nutrition security in emergencies.

Eco-DRR- UNEP with key development partners is supporting the states of Kerala, Bihar and Odisha in developing and implementing scale-able models of ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR).

Priority Area 6

Skilling, Entrepreneurship, and Job Creation

Introduction

As India recovers from the COVID-19 crisis, its economy and workers face considerable challenges. The pandemic and ensuing partial and regional lockdowns led to a labour market crisis, impacting some of India's most vulnerable workers – migrants, women, youth, the self-employed, and those employed in India's vast informal sector – the worst.

Fragile micro and small enterprises (MSEs) bore a major brunt of the economic slowdown, and their workers faced cuts in working hours, layoffs, and reductions in incomes. COVID-19 containment measures forced millions of internal migrant workers, many belonging to the most marginalised social groups, to return to their home villages, exposing them to economic deprivation. Some started to re-migrate back over the second half of 2021.

The UN in India contributed to the Government's response to the economic and labour crisis, directing its efforts towards ensuring inclusive recovery with young people, women, migrant workers and other marginalised groups.

The UN system in India also supported online school-to-work transition programmes, skilling, entrepreneurship, and job creation with protection of workers' health, rights, incomes, and families, especially those in the informal economy. Efforts were particularly concentrated in low-income states and districts, the North-East region, and sectors including MSEs.

The UN also provided evidence-based policy support through reports, publications and guidance notes, focusing on social protection systems and support programmes for decent work and entrepreneurship, particularly for informal sector workers.

One of the core pillars of our work remains women's economic empowerment. Women's labour participation rate was already low before the pandemic, with the pandemic only exacerbating the situation. UN agencies supported the Government of India's programmes and policies to strengthen women's capacities and skills and generate opportunities for improved livelihoods.

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U-Report India is a Million Strong!

Boosting **Youth Employment**

YuWaah, the Indian chapter of the global Generation Unlimited initiative, is an initiative by UNICEF, supported by UN agencies, to meet the urgent need for education, skill development and employment opportunities for young people.

To create career pathways for young people, YuWaah partnered with the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) to support the 10.5 million young people registered on the National Career Service portal with work opportunities and career preparedness. They also deployed U-Report, a two-way digital community participation tool, to gather feedback from young people on how to improve the career services portal.

YuWaah also collaborated with the Government of Delhi to support 1.3 million youths seeking jobs. Over half a million jobs were registered, and more than 15,000 secured jobs through the Delhi Government jobs portal.

Building **key 21st century skills**

YuWaah, in collaboration with UNICEF U-Report and Udhyam Foundation, rolled out a chat-based learning program – FunDoo chatbot – to transmit essential 21st century skills on self-awareness, communication, problem solving and job-skills. A customised version of FunDoo was scaled-up with the aim of tackling learning loss. The chatbot reached over 250,000 users with engaging tasks and activities, with over 50% of the learners being female.

To promote and scale employability skills, a pan-India program named Young Warrior NXT (YWN) was conceptualised in August 2021 to promote and scale 21st century skilling in the Indian Education system. The Young Warrior NXT program aims to build key life and employability skills for 500,000 young people.
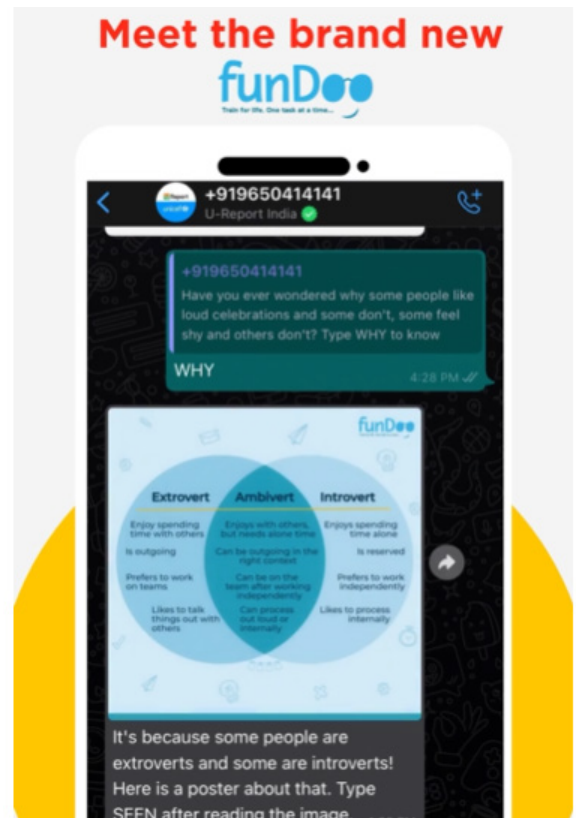
The Passport to Earning (P2E) programme – under a global partnership between UNICEF, Generation Unlimited, Accenture and Microsoft, is an e-learning solution. P2E aims to deliver sustainable skills for 5 million Indian youth (15-29) through the e-learning platform for the next three years.

Youth entrepreneurship

Yuwaah, GAME and Head Held High collaborated to launch a Young Women Entrepreneurship model to build the capabilities of about 50 young women. This is done by determining entrepreneurial inclination of women, training them about products and services that haven't penetrated the rural market yet and creating correspondence between rural consumers and producers leading to economic empowerment.

A joint initiative was launched between Yuwaah's partner GAME and Sahyadri College of Engineering to create a platform for young entrepreneurs in engineering colleges across Karnataka, with 80 students participating in the pilot scheme.

Over 190,000 individuals benefited from career guidance, counselling and training on employability and entrepreneurship skills – with more than 6,600 youth being linked with employment and apprenticeship opportunities with UNDP support.

© UNICEF/
UN0619366/Kolari

Young Warrior NXT helped me manage my stress, it also felt great to make my own CV and learn more about the right career path for me!

YOUNG WARRIOR NXT

Send **YWNXT** to +91 9650414141 on WhatsApp

The UNFPA team visited Usha Silai Schools in Madhya Pradesh and interacted with the community women and youth on their aspirations and impact of the programme, November 2021.

Supporting **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**

India's 63 million Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), contribute approximately 38 percent to India's GDP, and employ over 100 million people – they are the second-largest employer in the country after agriculture. The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing market disruptions hit the sector hard, particularly the micro and small enterprises. In addition, gender inequalities in the sector remain stark.

The UN is working to promote sustainable enterprise, supporting Indian MSMEs in becoming more productive and safer, generating quality jobs, providing decent working conditions, and addressing gender imbalances. For example, UNIDO continued its UDAY PRIDE programme aimed at enhancing productivity and innovation of automotive component manufacturers. Over 240 businesses are already benefiting in terms of cost savings, better quality, safer workplaces and more committed and gender diverse workforces. UNIDO and the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) launched the Facility for International

Cooperation for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (FIC-ISID) which is aimed at promoting awareness, best practices and partnerships for SDG 9 in India. FIC-ISID is already working on appropriate technologies and productivity methods for the Indian paper industry. Moreover, FIC-ISID oversees the completion of the National Manufacturing Innovation Survey (NMIS 2021) for the Department of Science and Technology (DST). This large-scale survey maps innovation practices and achievements in 58 manufacturing subsectors across all 36 states and UTs.

In 2021, the UN agencies ILO, UNDP, UNIDO and UN Women, jointly organised MSME Day, attended by more than 100 participants and deliberated on innovative practices introduced by the UN to support the industry's recovery from COVID-19. Similarly, UN agencies came together to organize World Youth Skills Day in 2021, focusing on skill development for women and the transition to environmental sustainability.

Technical support was also provided to the Government and other stakeholders, including at the state level, for preparing for COVID-19 safe return to workplaces. The International Labour Organization (ILO) hosted a series of webinars and developed training tools and materials, including guidelines and check-lists to mentor and coach enterprises and workers. UNIDO continued its Building Back Business from Crisis programme to assist MSMEs to recover and rejuvenate their businesses. These initiatives have led to the adoption of best practices by enterprises and in turn contributed to limiting the number of COVID cases amongst workers.

Recognizing that large numbers of small enterprises face limited market access and growth potential, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and South-West Asia Office (UN ESCAP SSWA) launched an e-commerce web portal aimed at women led MSMEs in South Asia, Wesellonline. The web portal provides training modules on e-commerce to empower women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses and join wider regional and global supply chains. In 2021, UNESCAP organised five trainings, with more than 1,300 women from South Asia, including 294 from India, trained on using the platform.

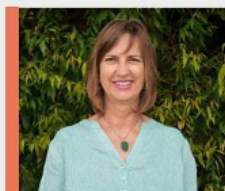Photo: UNIDO

MSME DAY-25 JUNE 2021

A discussion on

RESURGENCE OF MSMEs

INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY IN INDIA

Panel Discussion (5:40-6:00 pm [IST]):
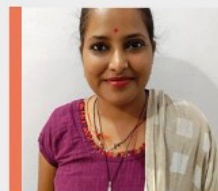Women led Green Enterprises focused on Gender Responsive Procurement Practices

Susan Ferguson (*Moderator*)
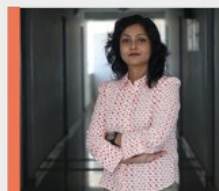Country Representative at UN Women Office for India

Suryamani Mohanty (*Panelist*)
Assistant GM, Manorama Industries

Gauri Gopal Agarwal (*Panelist*)
Founder & CEO, Skilled Samaritan Foundation

Anju Salvi (*Panelist*)
President, Sakhi Sangam Women Federation

Dr Romita Ghosh (*Panelist*)
Founder-CEO, Admirus & iHeal Healthtech

UNIDO UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

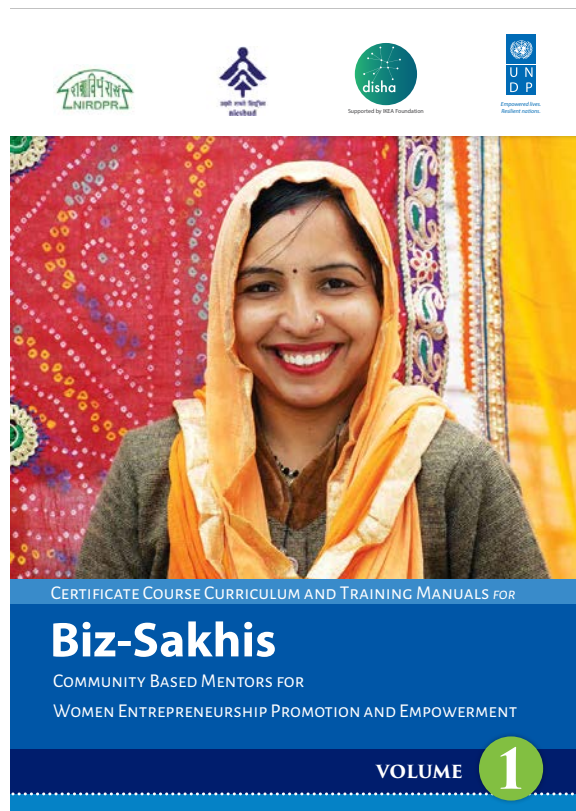International Labour Organization

UN WOMEN

UNDP

Improving livelihoods through entrepreneurship

Every year, millions of young Indians join the labour force, yet many of them, especially young women, are unable to secure employment opportunities. Encouraging entrepreneurship provides a path to livelihoods, and harnesses the energy, innovation, and ambition of young Indians to strengthen economic growth and generate decent jobs.

UNDP translated its Biz-Sakhi curriculum into several regional languages (Kannada, Gujarati) and facilitated the formation of farmer/artisan producer groups and group microenterprises, conducted entrepreneurship awareness and development programmes, provided digital literacy training and market and financial linkage support to communities.

A Community Innovator Fellowship was launched with NITI Aayog to foster grassroots innovations, and a multi-stakeholder alliance – REVIVE – was set-up to provide access to blended finance to marginalised communities with UNDP as an anchor partner.

CERTIFICATE COURSE CURRICULUM AND TRAINING MANUALS FOR

Biz-Sakhis

COMMUNITY BASED MENTORS FOR
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROMOTION AND EMPOWERMENT

VOLUME 1

To understand impact of COVID-19 on women, youth entrepreneurs and migrants, UNDP also conducted evidence-based policy research on "Impact of COVID on Future of Work for Women"; "Impact of COVID-19 on Youth Social Entrepreneurs" and "Socio-economic Impact of COVID on Women Migrant Workers".

Photo: UNDP

Ramkumar, a street vendor selling vegetables, was supported by UNDP to revive his business which had suffered losses during COVID-19 by training him on digital literacy and recommending him to expand his business to fruits

Over

87,000

young people provided
career guidance and counselling
with UNDP support.

17,000
women, artisans, farmers,
and informal workers
provided with mentoring support
to set up micro enterprise

Over

30,000

youths and women
trained on employability and
entrepreneurship skills, with more
than 6,600 youth being placed in
jobs with UNDP support.

Over

1,000

youths, especially rural
women, were supported in
starting new businesses jointly by
ILO and UNV in 8 states.

Photo: UNDP

UNDP enabled a group micro-enterprise in Almora, Uttarakhand, to expand their business through
linkage with experts and training on enhancing the quality of their products.

Strengthening **women's economic empowerment**

Women face unique challenges in India's labour market and have a low labour market participation rate of only around 23 percent, impacting their autonomy and livelihoods. Women were also often the first to lose their jobs during the pandemic. The UN, led by UN Women, focused on improving women's access to decent employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

With the Second Chance Education (SCE) programme, UN Women helped women increase their incomes through on- and off-farm interventions, mobilizing 88 skill training institutions under various schemes of the Government of India, and 71 local employers. As a result, 3,337 women completed skill trainings, 1,065 secured jobs, and 5,282 women were mobilized for off-farm enterprise development.

UN Women also created the first-ever platform, the 'Industry Disruptor', for women entrepreneurs to be a part of the supply chains of major brands in the textile sector, including H&M, Amazon, WinPE, Medusa and Okhai. Eighty women entrepreneurs were trained on gender-responsive business development strategies, access to finance, markets, and technical skills in collaboration with seasoned business experts. There are plans to replicate and scale the Industry Disruptor platform with financial support from the industry partners.

Together with UNDP, UN Women enabled 31 women entrepreneurs pitch their business ideas to 17 impact, commercial and angel investors in partnership with the Government of India's Women's Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP).

Women accounted for a large percentage (66%) of the total individuals positively influenced by various UNDP initiatives such as employability, entrepreneurship, digital and management skills training, as well as enhancing access to livelihood opportunities, social protection and facilitating

Photo: UNDP

Aspiring women entrepreneurs presenting their business plan as a part of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) training conducted in Karnataka under Project Code Unnati (a UNDP-UNV collaboration).

Kavita Manjhi is a Community Mobilizer for her village in Gaya, Bihar, under 'Jeevika', a livelihood initiative sponsored by the Bihar Rural Livelihood Promotion Society. She is also a beneficiary of the UN Women's Second Chance Education programme. She had to leave her education early because her village didn't have a school nearby and girls were not allowed to travel far to study. She re-joined formal education as an adult through the Second Chance Education programme. "Without an education, it is difficult to succeed in life," says Kavita.

linkages with digital market platforms and institutional finance. These initiatives have contributed to the economic empowerment journey of more than 236,000 women. An evaluation of these interventions reported an increase of 19% in the incomes of targeted farmers, artisans and entrepreneurs.

UN Women also supported the state of Maharashtra in creating a Women's Entrepreneurship Cell, as well as contributing to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights to integrate gender indicators.
UN Women also partnered with UNCTAD's Empretec capacity building programme to support integration of Indian women entrepreneurs into local, regional, national, and global industry value chains. The programme cultivated behavioural competencies, demonstrated by high impact entrepreneurs using a methodology developed by UNCTAD. Over 60 participants gained an enhanced understanding of entrepreneurial skills.

ILO supported the Standing Conference of Public Enterprise (SCOPE), a professional organization for public sector enterprises (PSEs), for a study on the "Impact of Work from Home on Women Executives and Managers in PSEs in India", focusing on three angles — Woman as an Employee, Woman as a Manager/ Supervisor and Woman as a Homemaker. The study was followed by a set of guidelines on developing gender-sensitive work from home policy in PSEs.

UNFPA in partnership with USHA Silai School launched a training programme to integrate Life Skill Education in the Stitching vocational courses in four states, focusing on building the capacities of 500 Silai School Women Entrepreneurs (SSWE). Through a cascade training model, these women entrepreneurs reached out to over 8,000 other women and girls in their communities to build knowledge on SRH, GBV and against harmful social norms and practices affecting gender equality.

With UNAIDS support, seven small businesses were started under the Solidarity Funds scheme, providing employment to 120 transgender persons and female sex workers.

UN WOMEN
INDUSTRY DISRUPTOR

AN ACCELERATION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN-FOCUSED ENTREPRENEURS

©Kanak Hirani, Jualahas

Funded by the European Union · weempowerasia — Gender equality means good business · UN WOMEN

THE DO · WinPE SKY SANS CEILINGS · H&M · amazon Saheli

Protecting **vulnerable workers**

India's internal migrant workers were among the most vulnerable during the pandemic and the ensuing economic dislocation, as many returned to their villages, exposing them to economic deprivation and job loss. UN agencies, led by ILO, worked to reintegrate them and support response and recovery programmes for India's migrant workers.

ILO supported civil society partners and other stakeholders in providing relevant information and guidance to migrant workers through Migrant Information Centres in Kerala and Maharashtra. A roadmap for the inclusion of internal migrant workers in the policy framework in India was developed.

Further, ILO collaborated with partners to undertake a study "New Ramifications of the Internal Migration in India as a result of COVID-19 — Industry Perspective" in three states (Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Kerala). The study covered three broad issues; manpower requirements, building trust, and the reintegration of migrants in the states of origin, leading to sensitisation of employers for better

workforce management practises. As a result of four regional and one state-specific workshop on "New Social Security Code and Strengthening of Social Protection System in India", a set of recommendations to implement laws and policies on social security were developed.

The UN in India supported workers' organizations in four states — Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, and Delhi — to establish and operationalize Workers' Information and Support Centres (WISC), which are trade union hubs providing information, counselling services and trainings to workers, especially the vulnerable and crisis affected.

ILO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Employment, also hosted a national dialogue on human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, which led to the identification of action areas to ensure inclusive economic growth and employment, and universal social protection of all workers.

ILO also supported over 50,000 informal economy workers from the metal and garment sectors in three states to access welfare schemes and establish links with trade unions.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) worked to build capacities of migrant workers and stakeholders on safe migration, human rights and employment laws and encourage ethical recruitment practices amongst businesses and employers in the Garment and Textile industries employing migrant workers. IOM is also utilising technology for migrant worker protection. It has collaborated with its partners and developed an online platform, 'WorkersJoint.org,' that currently contains data of almost 180 migrant workers for direct recruitment by businesses. Further, IOM helped establish two Migration Resource Centres (MRCs) in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, respectively, as well as one e-MRC in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

IOM is also closely engaged with the NITI Aayog, the apex public policy think tank of the Government of India and other stakeholders in the creation of the National Policy Framework for Migrant Workers for the smooth mobility of workers and promoting a safer environment.

IOM, in partnership with UNFPA, has also carried out a countrywide research study to identify factors behind the hesitancy, acceptance and accessibility of COVID-19 vaccination amongst migrants. This research will help identify the existing key barriers for migrants to access vaccines and their socio-economic attitude towards vaccinations. Furthermore, the study, in consultation with WHO, provides insights to inform frameworks and implementation strategies for a migrant inclusive COVID-19 vaccination drive, thereby addressing the unequal access to vaccines.

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IOM is actively working towards promoting safe, legal and humane migration through different institutional mechanisms.

IOM has reached over

60,000

migrant textile workers through its CREST Fashion Project through training of trainers, orientations of workers, establishment of migration resource centres and other information outreach strategies.

Over

40,000

migrants given factsheets on migrant protection laws and welfare policies by IOM

12

business and stakeholders trained on ethical business practices by IOM

Over

110

recruitment agency staff trained by IOM on ethical recruitment

Over

900

trainers received training on pre-deployment orientation through IOM

7

businesses have benefited from IOM's capacity building programme (CBP) that is being conducted with select representatives from garment and textile industry focusing on alignment of business practices with national laws to ensure safe migration.

With **UNAIDS** funding, in Gujarat, a total of:

34,780
migrants (28,551 male and 6,229 female) were reached with preventive messages and referral services for HIV/TB.

1,001
informal migrant workers were linked to Social Protection measures.

12,111
workers (9,697 male and 2,413 female) were tested for HIV, with all positive cases linked to treatment.

34,000
truck drivers and helpers in 9 states were reached with HIV/TB prevention messages. 9,898 truck drivers and helpers tested for HIV. All HIV positives were linked to treatment.

Guljan Amiri Shayan is an Afghan refugee who sought asylum in India in 2015. She used to work as an HR Admin officer at a hospital in Bamyan, Afghanistan, and was supporting local Bamyani women in converting their traditional embroidery art into a source of income. In November 2018, Guljan was one of the first refugee women to join Silaiwali, a social enterprise working with refugees. Aside from her job as a manager at Saliwali, Guljan helped many refugees to get work and training. Within 6 months, they went from 6 women to 36. Now, Guljan and ten other women have made their own enterprise 'Modern & Classic HandiCrafts'. "They helped me build this place. Without their support, I couldn't have done anything. The products, the machines, and even the tables aren't mine," Guljan adds. Photo: ©UNHCR/Urmila Jagannathan

UNHCR support to refugee and asylum seeker workers

The socio-economic situation of 745 refugees was improved through livelihood interventions such as micro grants, job placements, skill development and entrepreneurship development programmes and market linkages.

394 refugees were provided with Micro Grants, 221 of these were provided to women at risk of GBV under the MPTF (Multi Partner Trust Fund) project.

650 refugees were provided guidance on Labour Market opportunities across 10 locations in India; and Entrepreneurship Development Training was provided to 585 refugees.

Priority Area 7

Gender Equality and Youth Development

Introduction

© UN Women

Women, children, and young people, especially girls, are among some of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in Indian society. The gradual progress they have achieved at work and at home was threatened by the COVID-19 crisis. The second wave of the pandemic in the first half of 2021 compounded the social and economic devastation caused by the first wave of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated India's overlapping economic, social, and political challenges. Throughout 2020-21, the country witnessed stagnant economic growth, high unemployment rates – particularly among women and youth – poor quality and unequal access to essential services, and continued political exclusion.

Deeply embedded patriarchal structures and practices contribute to India's low ranking of 131 out of 189 countries in UNDP's Gender Inequality Index. Female participation in the labour force is low and declining, with the labour force participation rate standing at only 22.8 percent. Violence against women and girls, the practice of gender-biased sex selection, and child marriage all illustrate the extent to which gender discrimination and gender inequality are deeply ingrained.

The Government of India has recognized gender equality as a key priority. Nationally, there are several major programmes to enhance gender equality. These include the Government's flagship Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child) scheme, which aims to reverse the trend of declining child sex ratio and create an enabling environment in support of women and girls for gender equality.

Under the Government's National Skill Development Mission and the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), over 18 million young people have received industry-relevant skills training and help in securing better livelihoods. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS) flagship schemes such as Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and the National Service Scheme (NSS) engage millions of youth volunteers.

The UN in India continued to support the Government of India at national and subnational levels in influencing policies and strengthening response programmes through virtual training, capacity building sessions, technology-enabled redressal solutions, and empowerment and livelihood interventions for women and girls. We strengthened plans, strategies, and budgets at national, state, and local levels to realise India's national and international commitments towards advancing gender equality and the rights of women and children. We supported governments and CSOs in fighting the root causes of inequality, including harmful social practices such as child marriage and gender-biased sex selection – and we supported expanding opportunities for social, political, and economic participation and empowerment of young people.

Supported the **Prevention of Child Marriage** and **Harmful Practices**

The rate of child marriage in India has declined from 26.8 percent to 23.3 percent during the last five years. While India has made good progress in reducing the child marriage rate in the last decade, there is a concerning stagnation and even an increase in some states. Four states now account for more than half the child marriage burden in the country (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Maharashtra). Reports of child marriage have increased during the pandemic, and the second wave in India has witnessed a spike in children losing their parents leading to a higher risk of early marriage.

UNICEF and UNFPA are working closely with the government and civil society organizations to support multi-sectoral action to address child marriage and promote the empowerment of adolescent girls and boys. Advocacy and technical support to the government on Ending Child Marriage (ECM) led to the highest level of political commitment, which achieved scaling up of child marriage-free (CMF) village initiative and declaring 9,822 villages CMF by Department of Women and Child Development (WCD) in Odisha.

UNICEF's technical support to WCD and other departments has contributed to the development of state-level policy frameworks and budget statements on gender in states like Maharashtra. In Gujarat, UNICEF has initiated the revision of the Gujarat Gaurav Niti (Women Empowerment Policy) through a series of consultations at various levels. In Bihar, UNICEF provided technical assistance to develop a gender transformative strategy for empowering

© JAS

Volunteers for Jeevan Ashram Sansthan (JAS), a UNFPA supported CSO, educate girls, women, boys and men in Rajasthan on the harmful effects of child marriage.

adolescent girls and women. Also, to help women build skills and strengthen leadership in the urban and rural water management committees, UNICEF has partnered with local government institutes such as the Development Management Institute (DMI) in Bihar. In Rajasthan, a partnership with SIRD to support the training of female elected representatives in selected aspirational districts is in the pipeline. Furthermore, UNICEF has built the capacities of various stakeholders, implementing partners, CSOs, and NGOs on gender transformative programming in selected states. Similarly, UNFPA's sustained advocacy and technical support to the Department of Women Empowerment in Rajasthan achieved the development of the State Women's Policy.

In addition, UNICEF successfully piloted the Swabhimaan project through women's collectives and adolescent girls' groups, which is now in operation in 6 states. This project has a strong gender-layered focus on food, health, nutrition, sanitation and water. With sustained advocacy efforts and evidence from the pilots by UNICEF, the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) proposed to scale up Swabhimaan to additional states. To advance gender transformative programming, capacity building and curriculum on positive masculinities was rolled out in states like Assam, Rajasthan, and West Bengal.

UNHCR and its CSO partners worked closely in 11 states with refugees and asylum seekers on the prevention and response to child marriage through 190 community-based structures.

UNFPA also undertook extensive capacity building of authorities and nodal officers across five states to strengthen the implementation of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (349 authorities/officers were trained in 2021) and also built the capacities of judicial officers and prosecutors in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra to effectively implement the law, with a special emphasis on evidence collection and trial (153 prosecutors from Madhya Pradesh and 47 judicial officers from Maharashtra were trained in 2021).

The Naubat Baja infotainment programme in Rajasthan is reaching young people with information on child marriage, social issues and employment opportunities.

Other key results that UNICEF-UNFPA have been able to drive under the programme to end child marriage include:

14 million
adolescents reached with services and information to prevent child marriage

173
One Stop Centre staff trained in the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act in Punjab and Chhattisgarh

9822
villages in Odisha declared Child Marriage Free

13 million
community members equipped with information to act against child marriage and promote adolescent empowerment

46 percent
increase in Child Marriage Prevention Officers in Rajasthan

District Action Plans on ECM and adolescent empowerment in
175
districts supported for operationalization

Mobilised
300,000
frontline workers, self-help groups (SHG) and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

Supported the **Prevention** and **Response** to **Gender-Based Violence**

Violence against women and girls, particularly at home, remains widespread across India, and has devastating physical and mental consequences. During the COVID-19 pandemic, One Stop Centres, which support women who face violence, played a critical role in addressing the rise in gender-based violence (GBV) due to restricted mobility and access to essential services.

Through 16 training sessions, UNFPA built the capacities of 373 staff and counsellors from One Stop Centres in five states on strengthening their response to GBV, with an emphasis on integrating Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into GBV response services.

The UNICEF led Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), an inter-agency programme on addressing gender-based violence during COVID-19, was successfully rolled out and implemented in collaboration with UN Women, WHO and UNHCR across 17 States.
The programme reached 896,451 girls and women across the states of Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

Interventions mitigated, prevented, and responded to GBV with partners through various referral service mechanisms such as the One stop Centres, 181 Women Helplines, 1,098 Childline and Advika (adolescent) platforms. 737,014 women, girls, boys, and men were reached through online and offline outreach interventions.

As part of its COVID 19 response, UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women collaborated with Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) Mumbai. UNDP with the "iCALL" team trained 1,571 Community cadres across 7 States on Psychosocial support (PSS) for gender-based violence (GBV), COVID appropriate behaviour (CAB) and addressing stigma and discrimination.
UN Women strengthened the capacities of 7,707 functionaries and personnel of the Department of Women and Child Development in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan focusing on COVID-19 management, vaccination processes, vaccination hesitancy and mental health.

UNESCO, in partnership with UN Women, implemented a project on 'Awareness raising and capacity building to combat domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic'. The project provided training on home-based vocations to women and organised campaigns against gender-based violence through community radio in India. The project reached over 4 million women and other community radio listeners in Haryana State.

In partnership with Bournemouth University, UNESCO produced a report on sexual violence and the news media. The report provides comparative insights into the routines journalists follow and the challenges they face when they cover sexual violence. The guidelines contained in the report are intended to strengthen capacity-building efforts in this area for journalists and news media.

UNHCR continued its work on GBV prevention and response in 11 states through a rights-based community approach. 116 new incidents of GBV (23 from country of origin and 93 in country of asylum) were reported, and survivors were supported through a multi-sectoral response like referrals for psychosocial, health, legal, and safe shelter support. Women and girls were engaged in GBV prevention activities, focused on preventing harmful traditional practices and promoting positive behavioural change, while 4,517 men and boys were involved to promote their role as agents of change. 350 GBV awareness-raising sessions conducted reached 11,361 refugees and asylum seekers.

UNFPA and UNDP built the capacities of 63 CSO representatives on preventing sexual harassment and creating safe and equal workplaces.

More than

500

health care providers across six institutions trained on health system readiness to respond to all forms of violence against women (VAW) with WHO support.

896,451

women and girls reached by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund on addressing GBV during COVID-19

373

One Stop Centre Staff trained on integrating MHPSS into GBV response services by UNFPA

63 CSO

representatives trained on preventing sexual harassment and creating safe and equal workplaces by UNFPA and UNDP

1,571

community cadres trained on psychosocial support for GBV survivors by iCALL and UNDP.

4 million

women and community radio listeners by UNESCO-UN Women campaign on GBV

2000

plus support centre's work documented by Delhi University and WHO.
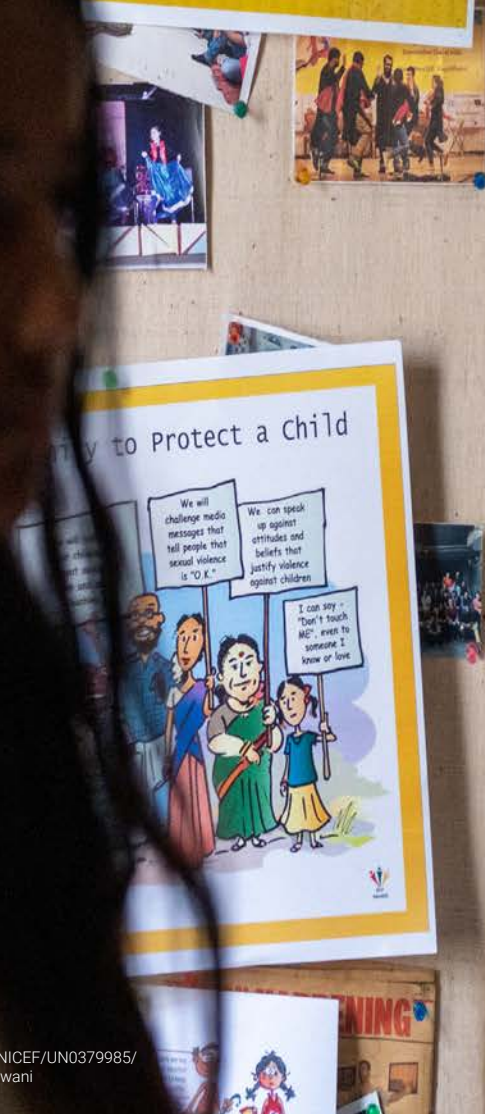
Supporting **Child Protection Services**

Through UNICEF support, capacities to deliver emergency-responsive child protection services across the Child Protection (CP), Justice and MHPSS continuum were strengthened in 17 States.

UNICEF continued prioritising child protection workforce strengthening through a national initiative with the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (GSSWA), and expanding its partnership with CHILDLINE in Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. A total of 215,753 CP and allied frontline workers were capacitated through UNICEF-supported trainings which addressed the MHPSS needs of children, adolescents, and families.

UNICEF's continued advocacy efforts on social service workforce strengthening resulted in recruitment and closing of vacancy gaps. As a result, over 1.1 million children accessed improved CP services.

UNICEF reached nearly 11 million adolescents (70% girls) with essential services and 13 million community members to raise awareness on CP issues and supported the engagement of 3.2 million adolescents on civic engagement initiatives.

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Lucy, (name changed), 8, holds a drawing she has made, inside a dormitory at Child Care Institute for girls, Lalpur, in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.

Engaging **men** in **gender equality**

Through the 'Transforming MENtalities Report', published in 2021, UNESCO mapped the current ecosystem of approaches to engaging men and boys for gender equality in India, identifying institutions and initiatives critical for the advancement of UNESCO's mandate in this area. The report launch event and partners' dialogue drew the participation of over 150 civil society organisations and policy makers who came together to deliberate on meaningful ways to engage men and boys for gender equality

UNESCO in partnership with the Equal Community Foundation created a cadre of master trainers and trained over 130 educators across 11 states in India using the gender-transformative curriculum from UNESCO's Action For Equality Programme. The educators have so far trained over 15,000 adolescent boys in their schools by engaging them in open discussions on different types of masculinities and the impact of socially constructed gender norms in order to create safe spaces for boys to reflect on and act against gender-based violence.

TRANSFORMING 'MEN'TALITIES
Gender Equality and Masculinities in India
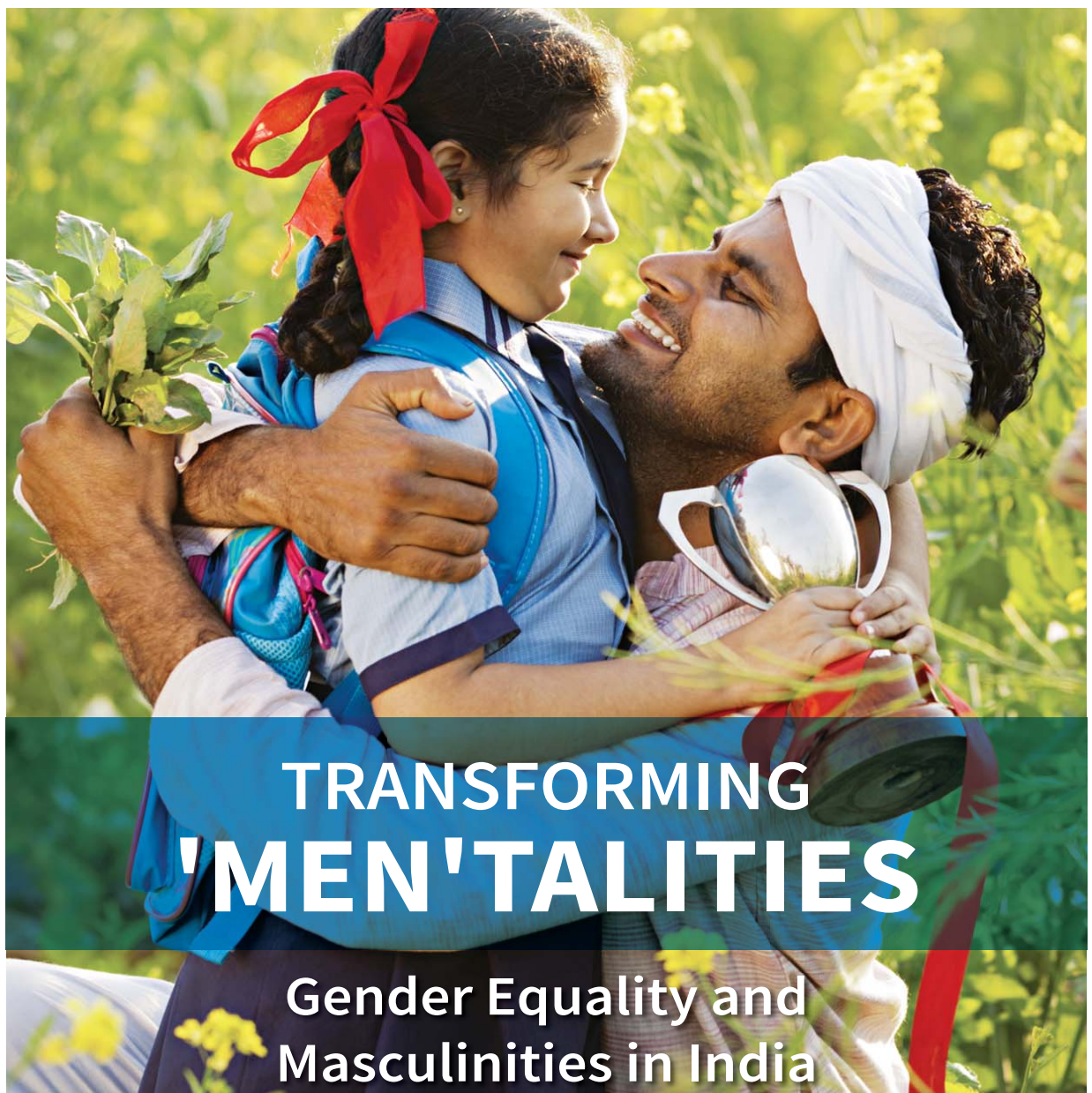
International Day of the **Girl Child**

To mark the International Day of the Girl Child on 11 October 2021, UNICEF India partnered with Point of View, to create and run a social media campaign. The campaign depicted a number of positive actions taken by adolescent girls during the pandemic through creative illustrations based on case studies by UNICEF Field Offices and various projects like Smart Betiyan and Swabhimaan. The campaign reached nearly 6 million people.

16 Days of Activism against **Gender-Based Violence**

The UN Country Team in India, along with its partners, marked the conclusion of its annual "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" campaign with a joint declaration by members of its Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) and by showing the potential of youth to prevent gender-based violence. This was organized under the theme of "End violence against women and girls now!", with participating UN agencies including UNICEF, UN Women, UNHCR and WHO.

ORANGE THE WORLD:
FUND, RESPOND,
PREVENT, COLLECT!
#ORANGETHEWORLD #GENERATIONEQUALITY #16DAYS

Enabling **adolescents and youth to participate in and lead social impact**

Are you passionate about representing the needs of your community at a national and global stage?

WE ARE LOOKING FOR YOU!

APPLY NOW

YuWaah's Young People Action Team

As part of UNICEF-YuWaah efforts to mainstream young people's equitable partnership in shaping development agendas, 42 young changemakers from diverse backgrounds served and continue to serve as advisory partners to inform, influence and drive GenU India's (YuWaah's) governance, strategies, and interventions.

Young Warrior Movement

YuWaah partnered with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, MoHFW, the Government of Punjab, NSS, NYKS and NCC, the Central Board of Secondary Education, University Grants Commission, and over 1,350 Civil Society and Private sector partners to facilitate the #YoungWarrior Movement. The Movement equipped 4.3 million young people with necessary resources and tools to lead over 7.6 million actions to safeguard family, peers and communities from COVID-19, whilst championing allied civic issues related to Child Rights, health, wellbeing, and empowerment.

Sports initiative

Within the framework of the regional call for proposals on "Supporting Coronavirus Response for Non-Profit Grassroots Youth and Sports-based Initiatives", UNESCO New Delhi provided technical and financial support to five grassroots organizations in India to implement innovative actions to respond to the pandemic at the local and community level using sport as a tool to promote human rights-based recovery and response plans.

Youth Innovations

UNIsolve, a platform that enables social innovation challenges, was designed to harness young people's innovative solutions to hyperlocal issues and link them up with incubation support. Overall, through the Yuwaah youth challenges, 1.5 million young people were reached and more than 131,683 young people participated in the challenges.

# Young People's Action Team (YPAT)

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Meaningful Civic Leadership

Over 3 million young people were equipped with necessary information and resources to lead ground-up action and advocacy on civic issues such as gender-based violence (GBV), disaster relief, environment, and Child Rights.

Lockdown learners

UNODC's 'Lockdown Learners' engaged over 14,000 youth and educators across 16 States/Union Territories of India on crime prevention, peace and the SDGs through activity-based learning and interactive, immersive dialogues. The series directly engaged with over 14,000 students and educators.
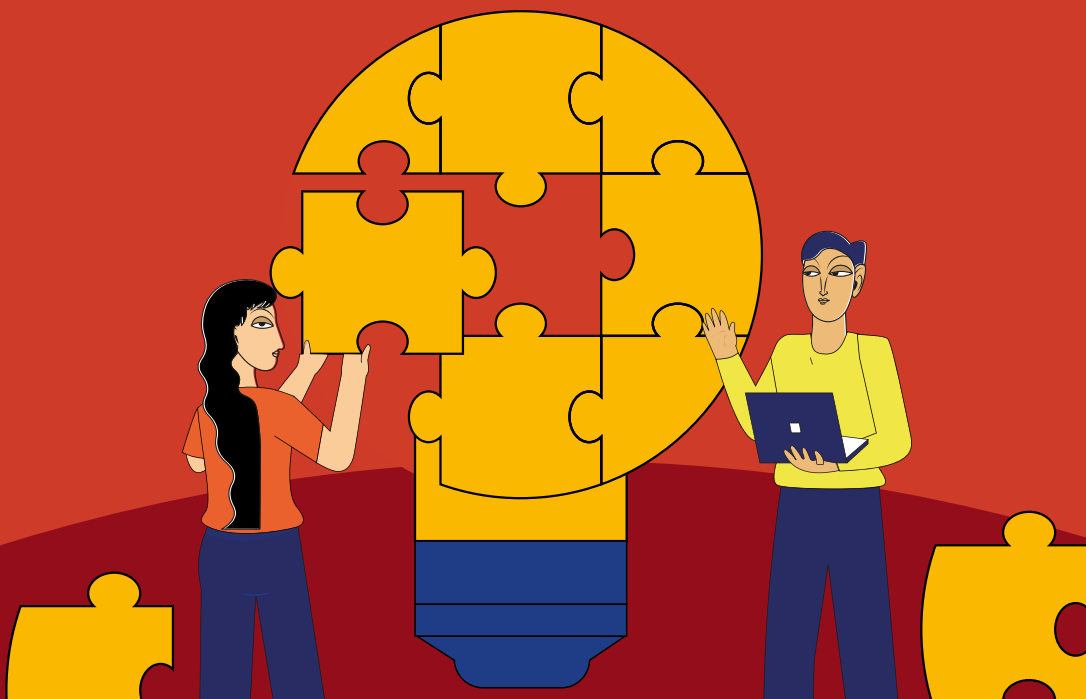
JOIN US AS A
#YOUNG WARRIOR

YOUNG WARRIOR

As a YoungWarrior, we will arm you with tools & resources to secure yourself, your family and your communities

- Pledge to take action against COVID-19 by posting your message with the phrase 'I am a #youngwarrior' on social media, tagging 5 friends

- Join us as a #YoungWarrior by visiting *yuwaah.org/becomeayoungwarrior*, typing in 'YWA' and hitting send, or give a missed call to **+91-80-66019225**

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Photo: UNESCO

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Supporting **youth entrepreneurship**

The UN Volunteer Programme (UNV) and ILO trained 461 youths on entrepreneurship skills across 9 states to start and improve their own business.

The GeoAI platform developed by the University of Nottingham allows for the detection of environmental non-compliance by industrial units from space using Artificial Intelligence. UNV and UNDP India Accelerator Lab partnered with the Bihar State Pollution Control Board to use this technology to study brick kiln manufacturing clusters for non-compliance of environmental regulation. More than 300 youths volunteered for the project.

Supporting Youth **Mobilization for Change**
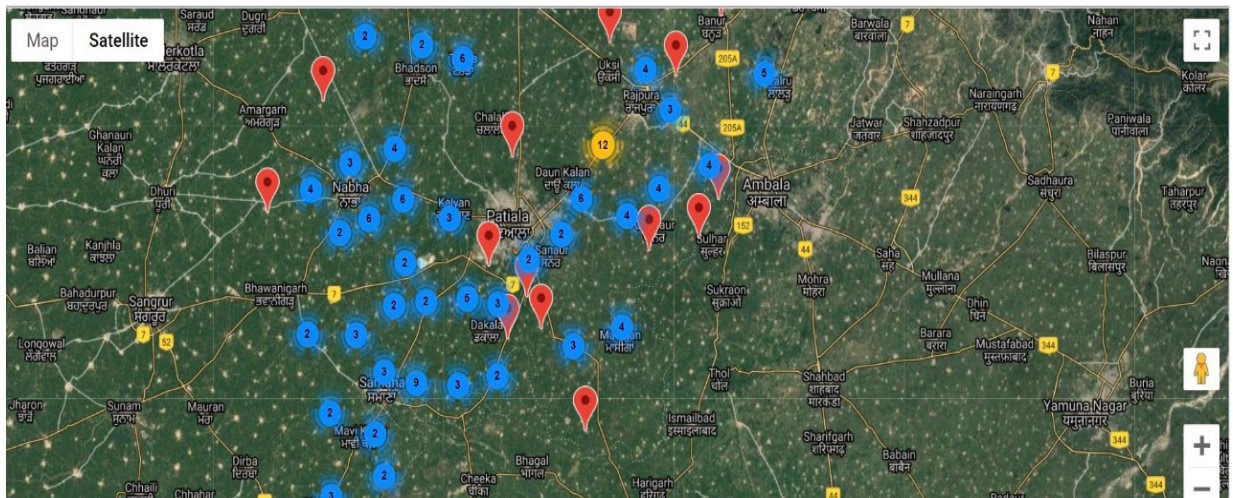
Under its partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, UNV India helped establish 5,351 youth clubs across 58 districts in all States and UTs, mobilizing more than 1.6 million youths to participate in different development activities.

To foster the spirit of democracy and participation, UNV India provided technical support to the Ministry of Youth Affairs to organise district- and state-level youth parliaments which culminated in the National Youth Parliament 2021, where youth from across India convened in the Central Hall of the Parliament of India.

UNV India was also the technical partner of the Ministry of Youth Affairs in organising the 7th BRICS Youth Summit (29-31 August 2021). At the Summit, young people from the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) congregated for discussion on 5 thematic areas – including youth

engagement, education, entrepreneurship, and health and wellness.

In addition, UNICEF has worked to mobilize youth from across states around climate action, by providing peer role models and access to content and skilling opportunities aspired for youth. In 2021, in collaboration with UNDP and UNEP, it hosted a month-long Green Job Series that reached over 1,100 youth and facilitative adults, such as teachers and parents, on various opportunities to be found in the 'green economy' within India.

Furthermore, UNICEF engaged directly with 1,200 youth through various climate and environment related workshops and skilling events. Finally, through its digital platforms such as U-Report, it has generated awareness about climate issues in partnership with the government. For instance, it has collaborated with the Delhi government on an awareness and engagement campaign focused on air quality and pollution, which reached over 50,000 respondents, with the majority being 30 years and under in age. UNICEF facilitated two youth delegates participation to the COP26 as well, to represent youth voices from India.

To empower refugee youth, UNHCR conducted regular capacity building sessions with 21 youth groups including awareness raising sessions on child rights, child marriage, child labour, harmful social and gender norms reaching out to 8,377 refugees and asylum seekers. In collaboration with CWC, 76 refugee youth leaders were trained on Child Protection who took lead in community empowerment activities and reached out to 3,178 refugees.

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Sidiqa Shafaie is an Afghan refugee youth leader. For the past two years in Delhi, India, she has been encouraging her peers and has steadfastly built bridges between the community and UNHCR operations on the ground.

Looking Ahead

2022 is a landmark year for India and the United Nations. The year started with India fully vaccinating over 75 percent of its adult population against COVID-19 — a remarkable achievement for the world's largest vaccine drive in just one year. The country extended its vaccination to children aged 12-14 years, boosting its protection against the deadly pandemic. This year also marks the 75th anniversary of India's independence, a celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

For the world, the year started on a grim note, with the UN Secretary-General identifying five crises that are feeding off each other. Inequity and injustice in tackling the pandemic; a global economic system rigged against the poor; insufficient action on the existential climate threat; a wild west digital frontier that profits from division; and finally, deteriorating peace and security.

In 2022, the UN system in India will continue working with the Government to address key development challenges to ensure that India, where half of the world's SDG targets lie, meets its national and global goals.

This is a critical year for Team UN India as we finalise our next generation of the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023–2027), in partnership with the Government of India, development partners, including civil society, the private and public sectors, and the people of India. To support this initiative, the UN in India is developing a Common Country Analysis (CCA) of the national context and identifying the opportunities and national priorities that will determine the shape of our programming in the critical decade of action.

The CCA will be informed through national stakeholder consultations with key development partners and population groups and NITI Aayog, our government counterpart for the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SDCF). From the CCA to the strategic prioritisation for the new SDCF, the entire process will be rooted in the needs and aspirations of the most marginalised population groups, whose voices and feedback will be incorporated into the consultations and drafting, to keep our promise of leaving no one behind.

Team UN India repurposed a significant part of its planned activities and budget towards the COVID-19 response outlined in the Joint Response Plan and Socio-Economic Response Framework to address the fallout of the pandemic in 2020–21. In 2022, the UN's repurposed work plan will continue and expand into new areas of recovery, including nurturing and supporting a green recovery, supporting the rebuilding of livelihoods and small and medium enterprises, building resilience, keeping schools safe and open.

The UN will continue to support India in the institutionalisation and localisation of the SDGs and setting up SDG Coordination Centres in more states. We will continue working closely with NITI Aayog on tracking SDG progress, as well as the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), to improve India's National Indicator Framework. We will work to further improve the data and coverage of marginalised groups to capture and integrate vulnerable communities from across the sub-national context into national and sub-national data.

As India focuses on achieving 100 percent vaccination coverage and building resilience to future shocks, the UN system stands prepared to support the emergency response to future waves of the pandemic — further developing disaster management systems and digital platforms. These include the Integrated Health Information Platform, which is being scaled up to all states. We will also continue to support national targets on Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), programmes to counter antimicrobial resistant pathogens and routine immunisation through Mission Indradhanush. Our vision for holistic and integrated well-being will be advanced through the One Health approach, a joint inter-agency push for human and planetary health through programmes on environment and health, as well as technical support for school health initiatives under Ayushman Bharat.

We will continue to provide technical assistance to the Government of India at the national and state levels for the successful and quality roll-out of the School Health and Wellness Programme, that will ensure reopened schools remain safe for all students and follow COVID protocols and best practices. We will also continue to support learning recovery programmes, aiming to reach at least 15 million students impacted by learning loss during school closures.

The UNCT will also expand its support to the

Government and partners to improve evidence-based infant and young child nutrition services and scaling up the inclusion of fortified cereals in food safety nets, including Mid-Day Meals and Targeted Public Distribution Services across more districts.

India rearticulated its global leadership on climate action at COP 26 last year in Glasgow — notably with the 'panchamrit' and 'LIFE' initiatives. The UN in India remains committed to deepening its partnership with the Government of India in meeting her ambitious goals on renewable energy, biodiversity protection and pollution control. We will continue our support for the National Clean Air Programme, India's phaseout of HCFCs under the Montreal Protocol, renewable energy initiatives and the upcoming ban on the use and manufacture of single-use plastics.

The coming year will see the UN redouble its efforts to ensure that India will harness the potential of the 'demographic dividend' of the largest generation of youth in history. The UN will also extend evidence-based policy support for female labour force participation, migrant-centred policies, and entrepreneurship development, particularly for women. Our work will support business continuity as well as occupational health and safety.

As always, gender equality and inclusion will permeate all our programming, with a focus on preventing gender-based violence and harmful practices, including child marriage and sex-selective abortions.

India's inclusive and green vision for growth, powered by an innovative ecosystem, 600 million young people, and large-scale people-centric social protection systems and programmes have the potential to accelerate the Decade of Action on the SDGs for the entire world. The UN in India is privileged to support India in this extraordinary mission.