



**THE BLUEPRINT
PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION:**

FIVE ACCELERATORS FOR REFUGEE INCLUSION



Our vision

All refugee children deserve a fair chance in life: they should be safe from harm and exploitation, living in clean and healthy environments, have the chance to learn, and look forward to a future with equal opportunities to their host community peers and between them.



Cover photo: 11-year-old Habiba is taking class notes from her teacher over the phone at home. During the COVID-19 pandemic, her school has started online classes via mobile calls for the students. UNICEF/Tapash Paul.

Photo: Gilalu Mohamed, an Ethiopian father of 2, smiles and feels happy that his daughters are getting a birth certificate. UNICEF/Gilalu Mohamed.

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Our commitment

At the beginning of 2020, UNHCR and UNICEF agreed on an ambitious two-year Blueprint for Joint Action. This initiative represents a bold step towards realizing both agencies' joint Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledge to stand by refugees and work with governments to ensure the inclusion of refugee children and their families in national systems and plans. The Blueprint partnership focuses on three priority areas: **education, WASH** and **child protection**. The Blueprint's transformational agenda contributes to implementing the GRF and ensuring no one is left behind as we redouble efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including gender equality.

Five accelerators for refugee inclusion

Urgent action is needed in five priority areas identified by UNICEF and UNHCR:

- 1 **Make refugee, migrant and internally displaced children visible in national datasets, and included in national plans, budgets and service delivery systems** – focusing on education, health, child protection, water and sanitation systems, and social safety nets.
- 2 **Scale up flexible and long-term financing** for refugee hosting countries, working with International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank and regional development banks.
- 3 **Make sure that investments and support really do reach the most vulnerable** children and families, including in the under-resourced areas which often host refugees and internally displaced people.
- 4 **Provide additional flexible, multi-year funding** for the UN, civil society, and refugee- and youth-led organisations to support their work on the ground to promote and progress refugee inclusion.
- 5 **Seize the moment of the High-Level Officials Meeting in 2021** to sustain public support, recommit and accelerate progress on inclusion of refugee children and families between now and the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.

The Blueprint

The Blueprint seeks to promote equal rights and opportunities for girls and boys in all their diversity and accelerate progress to **achieve increased access to education, clean water and sanitation, and child protection services for 10 million refugee and host community children and their family members by the end of 2022**. One year into implementation, progress is well underway in each of the ten focus countries: **Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya and Rwanda**.

The initial cohort of Blueprint focus countries are home to **2 million refugee children – over 20 per cent of the global total**. They represent a diverse range of political and operational contexts – including protracted and acute displacement crises, low- and middle-income countries, camp-based and urban settings, as well as mixed migration and internally displaced persons (IDP) contexts.

Building on successes and lessons learned, in the coming year the Blueprint partnership will be expanded and adapted to cover new contexts and countries. This foundation will underpin **a global scale-up of our efforts to achieve our joint vision to give every refugee child a fair chance in life**.

SUPPORTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The foundational commitment of the SDGs is to leave no one behind – and the Blueprint directly supports this. Refugee and host community children are amongst the most at risk of being left behind. By strengthening inclusive national systems for all in the areas of education, clean water, hygiene, sanitation and child protection; the Blueprint directly contributes to 9 SDG goals to accelerate progress for refugee and host community children.



Blueprint results for 2020

Despite challenges posed by the pandemic, country teams achieved strong results against the Blueprint's 16 core indicators across education, WASH and child protection. These results are tracked via a live joint dashboard. Key programmatic and policy achievements are highlighted below:



EDUCATION

Number of children and youth enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary education levels.

Over 517,000 children and young people in Blueprint focus countries were enrolled in **pre-primary, primary and secondary education**.



2020 TARGET **615,009** → 2020 ACHIEVED **517,306**

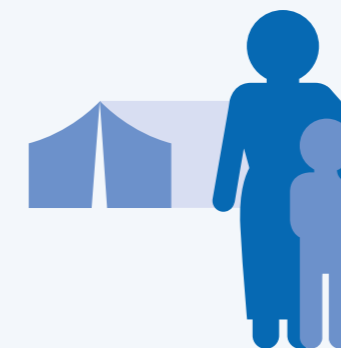
84%
OF TARGET



WASH

Number of refugees, returnees and host community members served with basic water services.

1.1 million refugees, returnees and host community members in Blueprint focus countries now have access to **basic water services**.



2020 TARGET **1,343,191** → 2020 ACHIEVED **1,103,701**

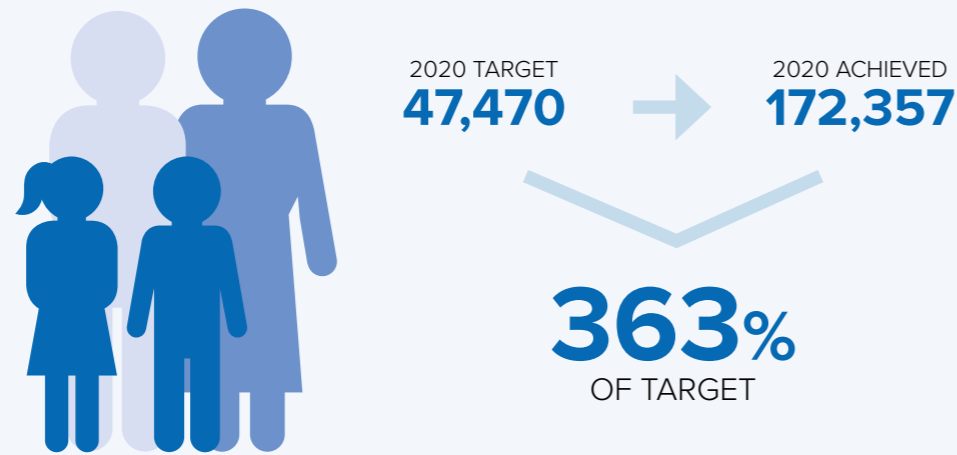
82%
OF TARGET



CHILD PROTECTION

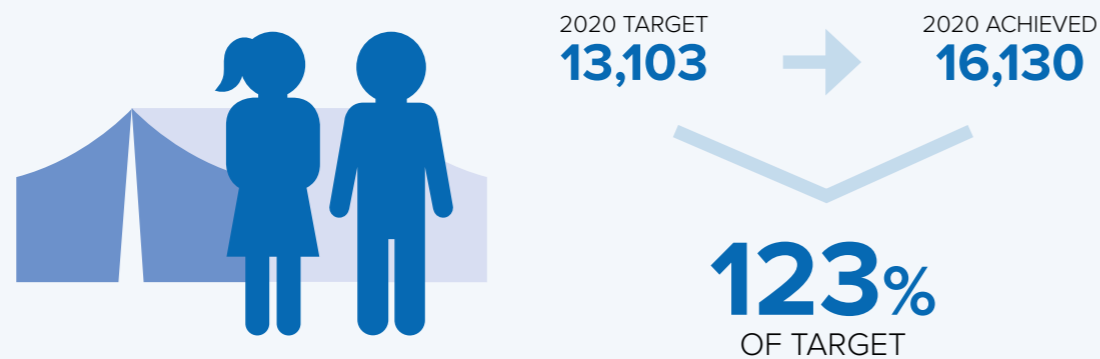
A. Number of children, adolescents and caregivers who receive community based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) and Child Protection services.

Over **172,000** children, adolescents and caregivers received community-based MHPSS and **child protection** services in Iraq, Bangladesh and Lebanon alone – more than triple the 2020 combined target for these countries. The scale up of these services was due to increased need, as well as the child protection sector’s efforts to deliver services through remote modalities and community-based outreach workers.



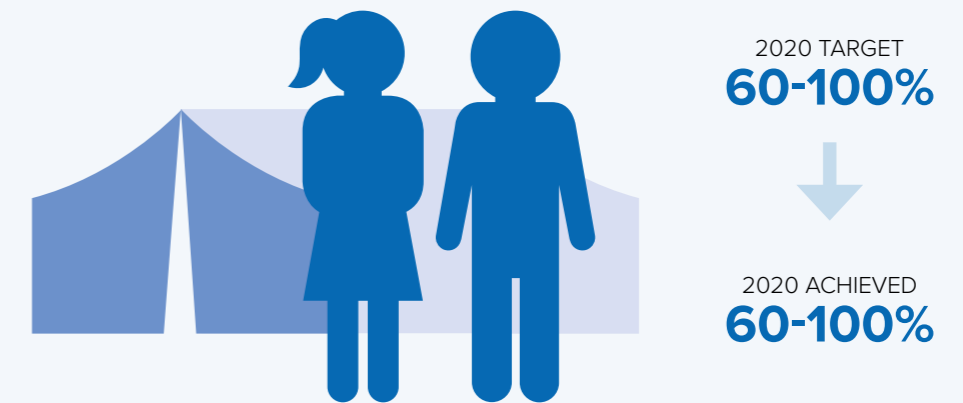
B. Number of refugee children whose birth is registered.

Over **16,000** births of refugee children were registered in 3 countries: Indonesia, Iraq and Ethiopia.



C. Proportion of refugee children at risk and unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) accessing Best Interests Procedures.

100% of the targeted refugee children at risk and UASC in Ethiopia, Honduras and Indonesia accessed safe and dignified Best Interests Procedures.



Efficiencies and effectiveness

The Blueprint has seen an **increased focus in streamlining institutional and programmatic processes between UNICEF and UNHCR, to achieve cost efficiencies and boost programme effectiveness.** A raft of replicable innovations and strategies have been jointly identified by country teams to eliminate areas of duplication, take advantage of economies of scale, or leverage complementary expertise to enhance ways of working. Evidence of potential cost efficiencies at scale has emerged from analysis of UNICEF and UNHCR budget trends in Blueprint focus countries, and more in-depth investigation of this data is ongoing.

At global level, UNICEF and UNHCR are strengthening alignment and pooling technical resources in all Blueprint programme areas. This includes harmonising institutional datasets and data related policies and improving the interoperability of case management systems – key steps to facilitate predictable sharing of data, in line with data protection frameworks. Further alignment and developing a shared evidence base will enhance effectiveness and achieve significant efficiencies at global, regional and country level. Developing a shared evidence base will enhance effectiveness - and achieve significant efficiencies at global, regional and country level.

Inclusion of displaced children: making it happen

The Blueprint leverages the capacities of the two agencies to bring about change in policy and practice to achieve more inclusive systems and services. UNICEF brings strong relationships with line ministries, expertise in social policy, WASH, child rights and protection, and strengthening systems. UNHCR brings their expertise and mandate on refugee protection and experience in frontline response and service delivery. The closer collaboration under the Blueprint has also seen streamlining of processes and sharing of resources between the two agencies.

● HONDURAS

Enhancing capacity of the national workforce has helped strengthen and expand national and municipal protection systems and services for internally displaced children. UNICEF and UNHCR have jointly provided technical support to child protection authorities to create and strengthen safe spaces in communities controlled by criminal groups and gangs, adapt services for COVID-19 prevention, enhance mental health and psychosocial support, and ensure presence of national child protection authorities in border areas to respond to mixed movements.

● ECUADOR

Joint technical support has strengthened the government's response to the high influx of Venezuelan children and families. In partnership with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, UNICEF and UNHCR are working to increase access to national and local child protection services for separated children and children at risk and support the regularization of refugee and migrant children and adolescents. This involves strengthening capacity of national and local social service workforces, expanding services available for refugee and migrant children, improving case management and Best Interests Procedures, and promoting alternative care measures.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, the two agencies have strengthened policies to facilitate the inclusion of refugee and migrant children in the national education system, improved the capacities of teachers and school staff, and worked with communities to address discriminatory practices.

EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Transformational change has also been achieved beyond the Blueprint focus countries. For example, in the East and Southern Africa region, under the "Blueprint for Sustainable WASH in East Africa" programme, WASH infrastructure utility projects benefit refugees and host communities in Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan.

● CAMEROON

In Cameroon, the Blueprint approach was applied to respond to the new influx of refugees from the Central African Republic, with UNICEF and UNHCR sharing implementing partnerships. This allowed for more timely and effective provision of psychosocial support for vulnerable children.

● LIBYA

Leveraging UNICEF's existing integrated service centres (known as Baity centres), UNHCR and UNICEF have strengthened the response for unaccompanied children. The centres provide a safe space for children and young people to access child protection and community-based mental health and psychosocial support services as well as on- and offline learning opportunities. The two agencies have strengthened referral systems for refugee and asylum-seeking children, built the response capacity of social workers, and supported inclusion of refugee children in public schools.

● LEBANON

Through joint collection and analysis of education sector data – including from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – UNICEF and UNHCR have supported the government to improve access and retention of stateless and refugee children, and children with disabilities, in the national education system.

The two agencies have also supported the Ministry of Social Affairs to develop and implement a National Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriage, including sensitising and supporting judges and Bar Associations.

UNHCR and UNICEF have eliminated duplication and combined expertise to provide joint training to partners, such as workshops on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, and joint training for non-legal protection organizations on birth registration and other civil documentation topics.

● IRAQ

In Iraq, UNICEF and UNHCR are working to realise the potential of a new Child Rights Act to gain ground on refugee rights.

● BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, UNICEF and UNHCR shared office space for education staff in the UNICEF office in Cox's Bazar. This has reduced costs and facilitated better coordination and programmatic collaboration.

● INDONESIA

In Indonesia, UNICEF provided capacity for a UNHCR-led rapid needs assessment, avoiding the need for UNHCR staff to fly to the area to conduct the assessment.

● RWANDA

In Rwanda, coordination of the responses to the Goma volcano eruption was expedited by the established Blueprint partnership modality.

● ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia, UNICEF and UNHCR have initiated the first ever tripartite agreement with the government refugee agency, ARRA. This has created new opportunities for refugee inclusion, leveraging UNICEF's sectoral knowledge and networks with regional authorities, together with UNHCR's strong relationship with ARRA. As a result, both agencies have improved access to refugee camps, allowing for smoother cooperation between the three parties and laying the foundation for further progress.



Photo: Zimbabwe, 2021 UNHCR Education Report, Tongogara Refugee Camp

© UNHCR/Zinyange Auntony

What we have learned?

An independent, iterative evaluation embedded in the Blueprint, has provided an overall positive assessment of the Blueprint's implementation at country level. It has confirmed **increased programme effectiveness, enhanced engagement with government, and significantly strengthened relationships** (in terms of trust, engagement and communication) between UNICEF and UNHCR teams in Blueprint focus countries. Through deep dives in each country, the evaluation has also found that enhanced collaboration under the Blueprint is creating positive spill-over effects into other areas of joint work.

The evaluation has identified areas where the initiative can be further strengthened, such as through further alignment of institutional processes; and by expanding the scope of the Blueprint to permit greater contextualisation and accommodate a broader range of interventions and sectors.

Reflecting with staff and partners in diverse country contexts, the evaluators have started to identify some of the ingredients of successful partnership, including senior level support and guidance; a focus on areas of collaboration that offer mutual benefits (so added value is clear and the incentive is built-in); and ensuring clear accountabilities (for example, using a results framework). These findings and the successful partnership models also identified by the evaluators, will inform future scale up of the Blueprint.

Most importantly, **the evaluation has underlined the importance of focusing on refugee inclusion, with a strong emphasis on building government and local capacity for sustainability**. Managing the shift towards inclusion of refugees in national systems is complex and involves sector-level engagement with line ministries and at global level to ensure refugees are captured in national and sub-national datasets, plans and budgets. Blueprint focus countries have requested the initiative be extended for an additional year to allow for further progress to be made and reported.

From pledge to promising practice

Whilst the Blueprint sees UNICEF and UNHCR operationalize their pledges made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum to promote refugee inclusion, **many refugee hosting countries – including most Blueprint focus countries – also made bold pledges to extend their national service delivery systems to include refugees.**

Rwanda, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Indonesia pledged to improve access to birth registration for refugee children, thereby unblocking a common bottleneck for essential services such as education, or health, reaching refugees. These states also pledged to improve access for refugee children to national schools or technical and vocational education and trainings (TVET).

Ethiopia and Ecuador both pledged to increase refugees' access to social protection, which is essential for protecting the most vulnerable and to address negative coping mechanisms such as child labour and child marriage. Ethiopia and Rwanda pledged to provide sustainable clean energy for refugees and host communities, thereby facilitating improvements in health, WASH, protection and education.

Donors, international financial institutions, UN agencies and the private sector made complementary pledges to provide technical or financial support to help translate progressive policies into positive outcomes for refugees and host communities.

The two-year anniversary of the Global Refugee Forum provides an important opportunity to assess progress against these pledges and learn from promising practices on refugee inclusion.

In spite of the complex additional challenges faced by refugee hosting countries as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been impressive progress in some areas.

- The German Development Bank (KfW) has partnered with UNICEF and UNHCR to develop a suite of Climate Resilient Water and Wastewater projects providing sustainable water utilities for refugees, IDP and host communities in East Africa.
- Flexible funding from Sweden, the US and others enables UNICEF and UNHCR to provide support to refugee hosting countries to strengthen and extend national systems to include refugees.
- All 10 Blueprint countries have included refugees in the actual roll-out of national vaccination programmes, although some challenges are still being addressed to ensure access to COVID-19 vaccines for refugees.
- IASC guidelines for working with and for young people in humanitarian settings and protracted crises have been developed through a consultative process led by UNICEF and NRC involving civil society organizations and youth. Reviewed by displaced and affected young people, these guidelines fill a major gap across all sectors in how to plan, design, implement and monitor more inclusive interventions on the ground.

Whilst progress is impressive in some areas, common challenges are also emerging. Progress on some pledges has stalled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on economies and national systems. Several refugee hosting countries who made progressive policy pledges report that they have not been able to translate these into positive changes for refugees due to a lack of predictable financing and or technical support. In other contexts, efforts to include refugee children and families in national education, child protection or WASH systems are on hold due to political sensitivities or capacity constraints. Several refugee hosting countries also noted the need to ensure that where support is given, this aligns with national plans rather than diverting from them.

These experiences reaffirm the **urgent need for refugee hosting countries, other Member States, International Financial Institutions, UN agencies and the private sector to join forces to increase public and political support for inclusion** and act quickly and strategically if we are to live up to the GCR's principle of international responsibility and burden sharing. The High-Level Officials Meeting in December 2021 provides a second chance to build on progress made since December 2019, and to jointly address political, practical and financial barriers to the inclusion of refugee children and families.

MAP: Inspiring examples of pledges and partnerships to help progress refugee inclusion

- Honduras** has provided training for migration officials at border points to strengthen protection of refugee and migrant children and is now scaling this across the civil service.
- Libya**, the Ministry of Education has allowed refugee and migrant children to enter public schools on the basis of a placement test rather than requiring identification documents and education certificates.
- Ecuador** has made legal changes in order to ensure that refugees' studies are recognized and has strengthened protections for unaccompanied and separated refugee children, adopting a joined-up approach across government.
- Rwanda** has passed a new law to ease birth registration for children for children, including refugees, through provision of registration services in health centres.

- Lebanon** opened its schools to refugees from Syria at the beginning of the influx and has since included these refugees in its 5-year education plan as well as its Back-to-Learning Initiative for the school year 2021/2022. Sustainable financing will be crucial to maintain delivery against this commitment.

Lebanon has eased the requirements for birth registration for Syrian parents, enabling thousands more Syrian children to have their birth registered and reducing the risk of statelessness.

- The Government of the Netherlands PROSPECTS partnership is providing strategic multi-year support for the socio-economic inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in 8 countries, including 3 Blueprint countries (**Iraq, Lebanon and Ethiopia**).
- In **Iraq**, the integration of refugee camps into host communities in the Kurdistan Region is set to improve sustainable service provision and promote inclusion.
- The World Bank is providing support to 16 low income countries and 4 middle income countries through its dedicated refugee financing windows, of which 5 are Blueprint focus countries (**Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Lebanon and Rwanda**).
- Indonesia** has issued a Presidential Regulation to accelerate refugees' access to civil documentation and birth registration; and made provisions to issue nationally recognized certificates to refugee students.
- Ethiopia** has issued a refugee proclamation to improve refugees' access to basic and social services and work, including in non-camp locations.



What's next?

Based on the experience of 2020, UNHCR and UNICEF have decided to extend the Blueprint timeline until the end of 2022 to allow sufficient time for transformational change at country level. We are committed to using this extra year to demonstrate proof of concept and consolidate our joint learnings from the Blueprint focus countries and extend the Blueprint to new contexts and countries where different collaboration models and complementary approaches have been used. We will continue to test and define tools developed jointly at the global level, including - for example, a diagnostic framework to help child protection experts assess the extent to which national child protection systems are inclusive of refugee girls and boys.

In addition, UNICEF and UNHCR will continue to promote and support inclusion of refugees in national systems globally. This will mean further leveraging development capacities and advocating jointly for adequate financing for refugee hosting countries to strengthen and expand national systems and services. Strategic collaboration to improve the availability and use of data will help make refugees more visible to better inform plans and budgets to meet their needs.

Lessons learned from country and global level, as captured by the Blueprint iterative evaluation, will inform the global scale-up of UNICEF and UNHCR's transformative collaboration from 2023 onwards.

But we cannot do this on our own. In order to maintain and accelerate progress on refugee inclusion, we are calling on all actors to join forces to focus action in line with the five accelerators for refugee inclusion identified by UNICEF and UNHCR.

Photo: Children wash their hands with soap at a Rohingya refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. UNICEF/Himu

© UNICEF/UNI315490/Himu

