



UNITED NATIONS
INDIA



Key Developments In India

Annual Report 2024

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Foreword by UN Resident Coordinator Shombi Sharp

Combining world class technology with deep roots in tradition, India has continued to chart a confident course forward despite the uncertain global picture. The past year saw the country celebrate its cultural on the global stage, hosting the UNESCO World Heritage Committee's annual meeting for the first time. Assam's *moidams*, the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty, became the 43rd Indian site on the prestigious World Heritage List, a testament to the rich and diverse historical legacy.

Even as it honored its past, India was also busy helping shape the digital age. At the ITU World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly in New Delhi, India's world class Digital Public Infrastructure was celebrated while global agreements on artificial intelligence, the meta-verse, and digital governance were forged.

But 2024 was also a year of reckoning for the world. With just six years left until 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals are dangerously off course. The latest SDG report paints a sobering picture: only 17% of targets are progressing as planned, with more than a third having stalled or even regressed. Time is slipping through our fingers, and half-measures will no longer suffice.

For this reason, the transformative change India is driving at scale becomes all the more important. For example, trachoma was eliminated as a public health concern, a remarkable victory against a preventable cause of blindness. And the digital revolution in health care gathered pace, with the U-WIN platform modernizing vaccine distribution and ensuring more equitable immunization coverage. Meanwhile, States across India pushed forward on human-centered innovations. Odisha launched the first 24/7 access to food grains through *Annapurti*, or the 'Grain ATM', a pioneering automated system that has improved efficiency, reduced wait times, and ensured uninterrupted access to food entitlements at the last mile. The latest SDG India Index, produced by NITI Aayog, reflected steady progress at the State level, with India's overall score rising to 71 out of 100, up from 66 in the previous edition. The United Nations Country Team has been a proud partner in each of these cases, and many other Indian success stories across all six strategic Outcomes of the UN-India Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework elaborated throughout this report.

Real progress is of course not about a set of figures, but about people. As UN Resident Coordinator in India, I am privileged to travel across this incredible country, meeting so many inspiring individuals and communities with whom our UN team partners. This past year, Major Radhika Sen of the Indian Army shared with me her pioneering work as a UN peacekeeper that was celebrated with the UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award, underscoring India's long-standing commitment to supporting women in peace and

security. And the talented members of the Indian Women's National Wheelchair Basketball Team invited me to play as they trained in preparation for Olympic qualifying, demonstrating how sport is not just a pastime, but as a fight for equality and inclusion. I'm also reminded of Aishwarya Rath, a young artist with Down Syndrome now making her mark in Bollywood. One of her paintings brightens my office, a daily reminder that talent knows no barriers. Or the...? (male?) Stories like these, too many to fit into these pages, are proof that the SDGs are measured in lives uplifted and inspirations unleashed.

Now, 2025 dawns as a milestone year — 80 years since the founding of the United Nations, the defining concept of countries and communities co-creating collective solutions for common challenges, 30 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for women and girls, and a decade since the world committed to the SDGs. The road to 2030 is narrowing, and the urgency of the task ahead cannot be overstated. But progress has never been the work of governments alone. It is the partnerships we forge, the communities we empower, and the systems we transform that will determine whether we can bridge the development gap before time runs out.

This year will be pivotal in advancing the initiatives outlined in the Pact for the Future, adopted by all Member States, including India, at the last UN General Assembly. This landmark agreement, along with its key annexes, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations, reaffirms a shared commitment to a more peaceful, sustainable, and inclusive world.

Meanwhile, India cemented its role as a voice of the Global South, amplifying calls on issues ranging from climate justice to food security to health equity. In a year marked by global fractures, India remained a bridge — fostering dialogue where others saw division.

The path forward is steep, but the summit is still within reach — if we are collectively bold enough to act. India has already shown that it can accelerate progress at immense scale, offering the world's SDG ambitions a much-needed lifeline and sharing solutions with others through South-South Cooperation. The UN in India remains unwavering in our commitment to working alongside government, civil society and the private sector as a humble partner, helping together ensure that no one is left behind.

The challenge is great, but so too is the opportunity. As India advances towards 2030 and ultimately the vision of *Viksit Bharat* in 2047 — a fully developed nation by its centenary year — actions taken here today will help define the decades to come far beyond national borders. The future will belong to those who dare to shape it, and India is very much staking its claim under a unifying mantra of *Vasudheva Kutumbakam*, the world is one, at a time when the world indeed needs to come together more than ever before. This gives much reason for optimism.

Key Developments in India in 2024

With more than 1.4 billion people, India is the world's most populous country and its largest democracy. In 2024 Indians went to the polls in a national election, with 642 million voters participating. Of these, 312 million were women, the highest ever participation by female voters. While Narendra Modi began a third term as Prime Minister, the BJP lost its absolute majority, and he had to rely on support from regional parties to form a National Democratic Alliance coalition government.

India continues to be the world's fastest-growing major economy, ranking as the fifth largest globally. Real GDP increased by 6.5% in the 2024-25 fiscal year, following 9.2% growth in FY 2023-24 – the fastest India has grown in 12 years (excluding the post-pandemic rebound).

Consumer price inflation remained moderate, with prices rising 5.2% in 2024, although food price inflation remained notably higher at 8.4%. The Reserve Bank of India kept its key interest rate steady at 6.5% throughout 2024.

Despite global headwinds, India's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) continued apace. In July, India launched the SDG India Index, 2023-24, the fourth edition of this national tracking tool. India's overall score rose to 71/100, showing significant improvement from 66/100 in 2020-21 and 57/100 in the 2018 baseline report.

The Index recorded significant progress towards SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land). SDG 13 (Climate Action) saw the highest increase, from 54/100 in 2020-21 to 67/100 in 2023-24.

According to the Index, India's SDG progress continued to be slowest on SDG 5 (Gender Equality), with its score rising only from 48/100 in 2020-21 to 49/100 in 2023-24. However, India's female labour force participation rate – a key measure tracking women's economic empowerment – continued its steady rise, reaching 41.7%, driven largely by more women entering the workforce in rural India. Wage rates for female workers, especially in rural areas, nevertheless remain worrying low.

A key pillar of India's SDG progress has been the extension of social protection coverage to a wider share of the population. In 2024, ILO's World Social Protection Report noted the doubling of India's coverage from 24.4% in 2020 to 48.8% in 2022. This has been accomplished by the digitization of various social registries and eligibility rosters over the past decade, enabled by Jan Dhan financial inclusion, Aadhar universal identification and mobile Internet penetration, which has ensured an extension of cash benefits to an increasingly wide group of citizens.

After more than a decade with no comparable nationally representative data, India released two consecutive household consumption expenditure surveys to investigate

household living standards after the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The surveys provide data required to assess trends in economic well-being and to determine and update the basket of consumer goods and services and weights used for the calculation of the Consumer Price Index. Data collected are also used to measure poverty, inequality and social exclusion. The two surveys showed that the rural-urban gap in consumption expenditure per capita is steadily narrowing and inequality is decreasing.

In the face of intensifying climate change, India is raising its voice in favour of global action. At the UN Environmental Assembly in Nairobi in March, Member States agreed to an historic resolution on sustainable lifestyles proposed by India, based on the concept of LiFE i.e. Lifestyle for Environment., a global movement to adopt environment-friendly lifestyles announced by Prime Minister Modi in 2022.

The UNEA resolution calls on the UN system to mainstream sustainable lifestyles approaches across climate action efforts. In November, at the COP29 UN climate change summit in Baku, India spoke on behalf of countries of the Global South to call out the insufficient progress made on a new quantitative goal for climate finance and expressing disappointment at the shifting of the focus of deliberations away from adequate climate finance to an emphasis on mitigation.

India continues to be a prominent voice for developing countries in multilateral fora, with the country joining the UN General Assembly's adoption of the Pact for the Future and its annexes, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations. Home to the world's largest population of young minds and a pioneer in harnessing data-driven governance and promoting digital public infrastructure, India will play a key role in implementing the Pact and driving future multilateral reforms and SDG acceleration.

India's signature vision for Viksit Bharat@2047 – a developed India at the centenary of the country's independence – closely aligns with the country's efforts to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Successful achievement of the SDGs will be a milestone towards the larger vision of Viksit Bharat. The road to 2047 goes through 2030 and India is laying out plans for accelerating economic growth, at the same time aspiring citizens and enhancing their capability to achieve their aspirations.

Outcome 1 – Health and Well-being

BOX: Outcome: By 2027, communities, especially the most disadvantaged, demand for and benefit from an inclusive, universal, affordable, accessible, accountable, and quality health-care services, while adopting positive health practices.

BOX: Theory of change: Outcome 1 aims to progress towards SDG-3, which is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. With a particular focus on gender equality and vulnerable groups, the programmes aiming to meet the targets under SDG-3 will also feed into SDG-5, Gender Equality, and SDG-10, Reduced Inequalities. The work by the UN Country Team on Social Protection under Outcome 1 will also contribute to SDG-1 (No Poverty). Furthermore, given the links between the health sector and the other SDGs, Outcome 1 is also connected to SDG-2, Zero Hunger, and SDG-6, Clean Water and Sanitation.

BOX: Agencies: WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, UNODC, UN Women and WFP.

Introduction. In recent years, the Government of India, with support from the United Nations, has made significant strides in enhancing the nation's health systems. Through a series of strategic initiatives, the capacity of public health systems has been increased to ensure inclusivity and high-quality service delivery. The adoption of a One Health approach, supported by the UN, has strengthened surveillance, monitoring and treatment systems for diseases, fostering a holistic view of health that encompasses human, animal and environmental health.

A robust multisectoral approach has been established and implemented to tackle non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through coordinated efforts across various sectors. UN agencies have played a crucial facilitating role by providing technical assistance and fostering partnerships. Additionally, sustainable health financing and business models have been reinforced through the support of UN agencies, ensuring the health sector remains resilient and capable of meeting the population's needs.

In 2024, the UN supported the development of a guidance document on the strategic approach for reaching so-called 'zero-dose' children in India. This initiative, part of the GAVI HSS 3.0 programme, targeted 143 districts, 1550 blocks, and 214 National Urban Health Mission cities across 11 states, focusing on improved and inclusive microplanning, monitoring and mentorship, institutionalized training, programme monitoring, and behavioral and social drivers' intervention. These efforts have been instrumental in recovering routine immunization coverage after the setbacks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These collaborative efforts between the Government and the UN collectively contribute to a healthier, more resilient society, where health systems are equipped to respond to current and future challenges effectively.

Headline results:

- 292 million vaccine doses given through the U-WIN platform
- 17.9 million hypertension patients and 9.7 million diabetes patients received treatment across 301 districts
- 330,000 children received MR1 and MR2 doses
- More than 320,000 health workers received training to strengthen routine immunization programmes.
- Some 17,885 measles cases detected, lab-confirmed and epidemiologically linked
- 88,000 health functionaries were trained in microplanning for 'zero-dose' implementation.

Beneficiary quote:

"It's as easy as hiring a cab," says Aarti Devi, a 43-year-old nurse, as she deftly manages vaccine logistics for thousands of people with the use of her smartphone.



Output 1.1. Inclusive & High-Quality Health Systems: Government has increased capacity to make public health systems inclusive and of high quality.

UN agencies supported the Government of India in increasing the capacity, inclusivity and quality of public health systems, ensuring equitable access to vaccination services and reducing the burden of zero-dose children.

To ensure equitable access for vaccination services, leaving no one behind (LNOB) and reducing the burden of zero-dose children in India, UNDP supported the nationwide roll out of U-WIN in 2024. U-WIN is a robust digital platform for data management, streamlining the registration and vaccination processes, and developing the digital infrastructure essential for planning, monitoring, and executing targeted health interventions. Since its launch, U-WIN has been implemented in 35 states and Union Territories (UTs), with 1,206,840 session sites established to deliver immunization services. Similarly, UNDP has conducted U-WIN training sessions to ensure relevant authorities can effectively utilize the data for tracking immunization coverage through beneficiary tracking.

With the project electronic vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN) programme, UNDP has ensured adequate, easy and safe access to vaccines to 26.7 million children and 29 million pregnant women in India. Through this programme, the cold chain and vaccine logistics were effectively managed across 30,060 Cold Chain Points (CCPs). More than 40,000 temperature loggers were installed to ensure remote temperature monitoring of vaccines in storage. A total of 55,919 cold chain handlers have efficiently managed logistics through eVIN.

HI-STORY OG1 – Healthy children, healthy communities

Three years ago, when health workers from the State Dispensary Umiam in Meghalaya visited the home of Sbian Kurbah to request her to immunize her children, she used a stick to chase them away.

Three years later, after efforts by health workers to address her concerns and dispel rumours, all four children of Sbian, 32, and her farmer husband are now vaccinated.



WHO National Public Health Support Network (NPSN) Shillong is providing technical and monitoring support for routine immunization and vaccine-preventable diseases to the Government of Meghalaya. Under the Government of India's Universal Immunization Programme, 26.7 million children and 29 million pregnant women are immunized free of cost against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases annually.

Refugees and asylum seekers had access to public health services at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, but barriers such as a lack of government-recognized documents, language barriers, and limited awareness persisted. UNHCR's partners played a critical role in overcoming these obstacles, successfully linking 4,386 individuals to health care – 1,524 for primary health care and 2,902 for secondary or tertiary referrals. Some 62 community health workers across 13 locations provided interpretation, awareness-raising, and support for antenatal care and immunization. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services were also significantly strengthened, particularly for children at risk, benefiting 2,867 individuals – more than double the figures of the previous year.

Output 1.2. One Health Approach: Surveillance, monitoring, and treatment systems for diseases is strengthened through adoption of One Health approach.

The Government, in partnership with UN agencies, strengthened surveillance, monitoring and treatment systems for diseases through the One Health approach, adopted evidence-based strategies for HIV and enhanced disease surveillance and response mechanisms.

To achieve the 95-95-95 target, WHO provided technical support to the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) in the adoption of evidence-based strategies to improve case finding and treatment optimisation. WHO facilitated capacity building in 11 states for integrated HIV and Noncommunicable Diseases Services (NDS) and supported the nationwide adoption of shorter tuberculosis preventive treatment (1HP) for people living with HIV (PLHIV).

With the support of WHO, the NACP rolled out a comprehensive training module for capacity building on integrated services for HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)/Reproductive Tract Infections (RTI). Training sessions reached 1,500 participants. In 2024, India adopted the Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission strategy for HIV and Syphilis. These initiatives enhance testing, treatment, and viral load suppression for people living with HIV.

HI-STORY/OG1: GOING BEYOND THEORY – UN Volunteers help build a talented cadre of midwives in India



Selamawit Lake Fanta and Debra Hope are midwifery educators. The UN Volunteers serve with UNICEF in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, and are part of its support to the Midwifery Services Initiative launched by the Government of India in 2018.

Using a 3D hands-on model that goes beyond theory, Selamawit and Debra equip students with practical knowledge on assessing labour, identifying complications, and learning birthing techniques.

Under this programme, 24 trainees will be trained for 18 months in Gujarat and then placed in colleges and health facilities. These Nurse Practitioner Midwives will then train others as part of India's initiative to decrease maternal and neonatal mortality.

While midwifery is a female-dominated field, the initiative is also helping to break gender stereotypes. Four male students joined the programme, including Ashok Kalasva, who has served for 10 years as a male midwife.



UNAIDS provided technical support to capacity-building initiatives of 34 State AIDS control Societies personnel on technical areas including key population size estimates via national and regional training of trainers held in 2024. UNICEF supported the development of National Eliminate Mother-to-Child Transmission (EMTCT) guidelines which was released by NACO on the occasion of World AIDS Day. Additionally, to improve 95-95-95, UNICEF supported the development and release of EMTCT fast tracking roadmap for the states of Bihar, Mizoram and Andhra Pradesh.

UNFPA's programme for integrated SRH-HIV interventions, implemented in five districts of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh until March 2024 achieved significant results: Some 91% of 162 facilities targeted provided integrated services, and more than 800 women from targeted communities of people living with HIV or at increased risk of HIV received SRH commodities, enhancing their access to essential health services. Additionally, UNFPA's programme reached 2,051 community members with essential information on SRH and HIV, promoting awareness and education. Women and adolescents from the communities received information on menstrual hygiene and reproductive health, empowering them with knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their health.

The WHO NPSN network has been instrumental in supporting the Ministry of Health and Welfare to maintain high surveillance sensitivity in measles and rubella (MR) surveillance. India attained an NMNR rate of more than six per 100,000 population, surpassing the global standard of >2 per 100,000 population.

Through WHO's support, 17,885 measles cases were detected, including lab-confirmed, epidemiologically linked, and clinically compatible in 2024. The Ministry of Health and Welfare, with WHO's support, investigated 979 suspected measles outbreaks, detecting 345 lab-confirmed outbreaks, and initiated appropriate public health response measures. Additionally, 16 lab-confirmed rubella outbreaks were detected, with corresponding public health responses promptly implemented. WHO's support to the Ministry for Health and Family Welfare for Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus (DPT) surveillance resulted in the reporting of 5,630 suspected diphtheria cases, with 1,198 lab-confirmed cases identified. Additionally, 2,374 suspected pertussis cases were reported. These efforts underscored the UN's commitments to strengthening disease surveillance and response mechanisms.

1.3. Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases: A robust multisectoral approach for NCDs established and implemented

The Government of India's "75 by 25" roadmap under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NPNCD) aims to ensure that 75 million people with hypertension or diabetes receive standard care by 2025. In 2024, UN agencies in India strengthened their support to tackle NCDs.

In 2024, WHO support through WHO and Cardiovascular Health Senior treatment Supervisors covered 301 districts across 29 states, bringing essential hypertension and diabetes services. Key efforts included decentralized patient care through 49,429 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Health and Wellness Centres), which made treatment more accessible and facilitated follow-up services for patients. More than 55 million individuals with hypertension or diabetes are now registered for treatment, reflecting improved care delivery. These efforts strengthen primary health-care services, improve patient outcomes, and contribute to achieving better hypertension control rates nationwide, reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease.

HI-STORY/OG1: Assam focuses on vision correction

Five years ago, Mohan Rongpeh, a primary school teacher in Assam, began struggling to read the blackboard. He did not seek help because he did not want to worry his wife.

Over half of Indians experience some form of visual impairment related to refractive errors. A lack of resources and social stigma hinder them from seeking support.

WHO launched the SPECS 2030 initiative in Guwahati, Assam, together with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

WHO is assisting the state Government in the phased roll-out of SPECS 2030, beginning with demonstrating the feasibility and effectiveness of its implementation in diverse health-care infrastructure settings.



Participants at a launch event identified actions for establishing scalable models for saturating refractive care services in Assam. One such model is a Guwahati-based Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya (SSDN) community initiative for vision care that provides comprehensive screening at the doorstep in rural and remote areas, free spectacles to correct refractive errors, and referrals for surgery.

The initiative benefited Mr. Rongpeh and his wife, who were tested and given free spectacles to correct their refractive errors.

WHO India conducted a rapid review of India's Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States (Tele MANAS) – one of the largest phone-based mental health initiatives in the world. The rapid assessment showed Tele MANAS has scaled across 34 states and UTs, with 47 functional call centres providing 24/7 service by trained counsellors. Its unique aspects include a tiered organizational and support framework which ensures provision of continued technical and operational support. In a span of one year, there has been significant progress - more than 1.5 million calls have been received on the Tele MANAS helpline.

1.4. Sustainable Health Financing & Business Models: Financing and sustainable business models around health are strengthened.

In 2024, WHO contributed to the development, piloting and dissemination of the Government of India's Nikshay contract management module for managing the contracting of PPSAs and PPM services. It also supported the establishment of private care provider network for TB elimination through the Association of Health Providers in India (AHPI) in Delhi and formation of City Consortiums of private hospitals in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala with the support of iDEFEAT's Tuberculosis project of the Union. WHO also helped establish private care networks in Delhi and City Consortiums in several states with the iDEFEAT Tuberculosis project's support.

UNFPA, in partnership with Laerdal, Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India, and NHM Government of Madhya Pradesh, conducted a competency-building Training of Trainers on Alternative Birthing Positions, equipping 26 trainers – comprising obstetricians, doctors, and nursing-midwifery professionals – to deliver training within the state system and FOGSI in Madhya Pradesh.

Outcome 2: Nutrition and food security

Introduction: In 2024, the UN supported the Government of India in advancing its effort to achieve SDG-2 (Zero Hunger). Through various initiatives, the UN enhanced food-based social protection systems, improving the efficiency and inclusivity of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). This included supply chain optimization, digitization, and transforming Fair Price Shops into nutrition hubs.

The UN's nutrition programmes reached millions across the country. A total of 12 million people received nutritious fortified foods produced by 5,950 trained self-help group members. Additionally, 1,700 farmers and 200 value chain stakeholders were trained on good agricultural and hygienic practices across four states. Iron-Folic Acid supplements were provided to 55 million adolescents and 28 million pregnant women, with adolescent supplementation coverage increasing from 34.4 million in 2023 to 42 million in 2024.

These efforts collectively contributed to reducing hunger and malnutrition in India, aligning with the country's long-term goals and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

PARTNERSHIPS: WFP's Partnership for Fair Price Shop Transformation: To support the transformation of Fair Price Shops into modern and futuristic SMART Jan Poshan centres, WFP is collaborating with the Department of Food and Public Distribution in implementing a pilot project at 15 shops in two states. Established in 2015, Jumbotail has emerged as India's leading business-to-business marketplace. Under a Letter of Intent, WFP and Jumbotail seek to combine their expertise to make Fair Price Shops financially viable. Doing so, Jumbotail has supported traditional Kirana stores, which cater to over 90% of India's food and grocery demand by leveraging digital infrastructure, data-driven insights, a specialised supply chain by enhancing efficiency and improved market reach.

BOX: Outcome: By 2027, all people, including children, women and marginalized populations, will have increased access to and consumption of adequate, affordable and diverse nutritious food and quality services year-round.

BOX: Theory of change: Outcome 2 is embedded in the UNSDCF theory of change, which aims at contributing to progress on SDG-2 ("end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture"). With a focus on gender equality and vulnerable groups, the programmes undertaken to meet the SDG-2 targets will also inform SDG-5 (Gender Equality) and SDG-10 (Reduced Inequalities). Outcomes related to food security and nutrition are also closely linked to all the SDGs, especially SDG-1 (No Poverty), SDG-3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG-6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG-13 (Climate Action) and SDG-15 (Life on Land).

BOX: Agencies: WFP, UNICEF, FAO, IFAD, UNHCR, UNIDO and WHO

Headline results:

- 12 million people received nutritious fortified foods produced by 5,950 trained self-help group members.
- 1,700 farmers and 200 value chain stakeholders trained across four Indian states on Good Agricultural and Hygienic Practices.
- 55 million adolescents and 28 million pregnant women provided with Iron-Folic Acid supplements.
- 391 million beneficiaries were reached with fortified rice through the Public Distribution System.
- 675,000 people reached with targeted outreach on healthy diets and anaemia prevention.
- 300 million citizens got nutrition literacy.

Output 2.1. Nutrition: Stakeholders and systems at national and state levels have increased knowledge and capacities to improve the nutrition content and increase consumption of nutritious and diverse foods and access to quality services.

Throughout 2024, UN agencies in India provided technical and programmatic assistance on national and state level to enhance knowledge about nutrition.

Working across 11 states, WFP supported and provided technical assistance towards the enhancement of the nutritional effectiveness of the three food-based safety nets namely the Targeted Public Distribution System, the PM POSHAN scheme and Anganwadi services scheme under the National Food Security Act. A total of 391 million beneficiaries were reached with fortified rice through the Targeted Public Distribution System and an additional 15.5 million through Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and 56.8 million through PM POSHAN across 10 states.

To address anaemia and micronutrient deficiencies amongst school children, WFP piloted the supply of fortified wheat flour to 32,000 school children from 546 schools in Rajasthan. Provision of nutritionally superior, quality assured take home rations to 12.1 million ICDS beneficiaries produced through a decentralized women led THR production model across three states. Diversified school meals through the establishment of School Nutrition Gardens in 1800 schools in Rajasthan- this has included the distribution of seeds and implements to all these schools.

Collaborating with 14 state-governments, UNICEF supported the implementation of essential nutrition services under POSHAN Abhiyaan and National Health Mission. Building on the successful release of the Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) guidelines, early identification and management of children with severe wasting reached 1.15 million children under five years in 2024. In 12 of the 14 UNICEF-supported states, adolescent Iron Folic Acid supplementation coverage increased from 34.4 million in 2023 to 42 million in 2024. Mobilising private sector action for nutrition, UNICEF's IMPAct4Nutrition initiative increased its network to a total of 617 pledged partners reaching more than 12 million employees and their families. These efforts culminated in leveraging an investment of \$5.2 million for nutrition-related programmes in Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan.

Refugees and asylum-seekers facing heightened vulnerabilities, particularly those with specific needs and limited livelihood opportunities, received critical support from UNHCR and its partners throughout 2024. UNHCR and its partners provided emergency cash assistance to 2,514 individuals (1,500 men and 1,014 women), while 3,041 refugees benefited from the regular cash programme, ensuring essential support for 657 medically vulnerable individuals, 261 persons with disabilities, 403 elderly without family support, 122 children at risk, and 355 women at risk.

To improve health and education outcomes, 156 Rohingya women received institutional delivery incentives, promoting safer childbirth, while 1,087 Rohingya girls benefited from education incentives, increasing access to learning opportunities.

To help address immediate needs among the Myanmar arrivals in the Northeast, food assistance was provided to 3,423 families in Manipur and Mizoram through dry food ration distributions and food voucher support. Ensuring safe and dignified living conditions remains a priority. 930 Myanmar arrival families in Mizoram were supported with cash voucher assistance for shelter repairs and house rental support, helping them secure adequate housing and rebuild stability in their lives.

HI-STORY/OG2 – How an IFAD project's focus on nutrition tipped the health scale for children in remote Odisha

Pramila Juanga, a farmer from Kundei Village a remote corner of Odisha, and her husband are cut off from many services – including child-care centres. When Pramila was ready to return to the farmlands after delivering, she realized there was nowhere to leave their baby.

Odisha Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups Empowerment and Livelihoods Improvement Programme (OPELIP), co-financed by the UN's International Fund for

Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the state Government, has set up crèches in the far corners of Odisha, allowing families to leave their children with trained caregivers while they work.

The crèches provide nutritious meals and a safe place to rest after lunch, teach hygiene, regularly measure and record the children's weight and height, provides age-appropriate education and learning activities.

The nutrition coordinators for the area, expressed how before the creche, there was a nutrition gap among the children. "Now, this gap is being addressed, and families in other villages are eager to have creches in their areas," said Dilip Kumar Swain.

These creches are just one example of how IFAD works with tribal families develop solutions that have a lasting impact, building healthier, happier rural communities.

HI-STORY/OG2 – Reclination to Organic: Pusaram's Transformation to Organic Cumin Farming in Udaliyawas

The story of Pusaram, a seasoned cumin farmer in the village of Udaliyawas, Rajasthan, is one of transformation and resilience.



Together with his father, Pusaram harbored a desire to switch to organic farming, driven by a shared vision of sustainable and healthy agriculture. After his father's demise, Pusaram spent three years unsuccessfully attempting to adopt natural farming practices. But his lack of knowledge and technical support made the transition difficult.

Since 2020, the Spices Board and the Standards and Trade Development Facility, and the FAO has trained 1,700 farmers in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to produce clean, exportable spices and improve market access. The project provided Pusaram with the guidance he needed to realise his and his father's dream.

The shift to organic farming brought several practical benefits for Pusaram. Local organic buyers now visit his field to purchase his produce, which has significantly reduced his transportation costs. Additionally, Pusaram is an active member of a WhatsApp group that connects him with fellow farmers and scientists, providing a platform for discussing challenges and exchanging ideas. Mr. Pusaram has moreover made soil testing a routine part of his farming practice, allowing him to make informed decisions about his farming practices. After switching to organic food, Mr Pusaram has also noticed improvements in his health and well-being.

Pusaram's transition from conventional to organic cumin farming highlights the significant benefits of informed and supported agricultural practices. His journey demonstrates how education, technical support, and community connections can drive positive change in farming methods and personal well-being.

Output 2.2. Food: Government and other stakeholders have enhanced capacity to ensure availability of diverse and nutritious food through resilient food systems.

UN agencies supported the Government of India and other stakeholders to augment their abilities to ensure the availability of nutritious food through resilient food systems. WFP continued to provide technical assistance in enhancing the implementation of fortified rice, with more than 400 million people benefiting from the programme across ten states. To enhance the overall nutritional value and safety of school meals, WFP provided technical support to set up 1800 kitchen gardens, trained 5,500 school cooks and relevant officials, and provided fortified wheat flour to 32,000 school children under the national school meals programme.

HI-STORY/OG2 – Actions Speak Loud: Mobilising the Paudi Bhuyan Community for Well- Nourished Babies

Rekha, 20 years old, recently became a mother to a new-born girl in a village in Odisha. She belongs to the Paudi Bhuyan tribe, a community categorised as a 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group' (PVTG).

Globally, breastfeeding is recognised as an essential practice for new-borns, and key for optimal growth, development, and lifelong immunity. However, among India's PVTGs, there exist knowledge barriers and superstitions towards breastfeeding, which can be detrimental for the survival of new-born children.

Along with other new mothers in her village, Rekha recently attended the Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Day at her Anganwadi centre in Budhabhuin, where they also celebrated the 'World Breastfeeding Week' which was a part of the awareness campaigns

of the UNICEF–supported ‘Jiban Sampark’ program, implemented by SEWAK and other NGOs in Talabahali and of the Sundergarh district in Odisha.

UNICEF’s support for the activities under the Jiban Sampark program has yielded positive adoption of good practices in Infant and Young Child Nutrition (IYCN), health and sanitation behaviours for good health and nutrition outcomes among Rekha’s and other women of the Paudi Bhuyan tribe.

The event sensitised Rekha on topics like the necessity and importance of breastfeeding, maternal nutrition, health check-ups, micronutrients supplementation and water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices. Rekha and her peers were also educated about IYCN and care in their local language by community mobilisers whom she knew and trusted, in a safe space where they could ask each other questions and clarify myths and misconceptions.

The ‘Jiban Sampark’ programme stands as a stellar example of one that involves community mobilisation for the improvement of better health and nutrition practices for young children and new mothers, particularly among vulnerable groups of India and globally.

In December 2024, the Government of India launched the *Anna Chakra* tool, a cutting-edge supply chain optimization system designed to modernize India's Public Distribution System (PDS). Developed by the World Food Programme (WFP) and IIT-Delhi, the tool uses advanced algorithms and AI to streamline the distribution of food grains, integrating with platforms such as PM Gati Shakti and the Railways' Freight Operations Information System.

Outcome 3: Quality Education

BOX: Outcome: By 2027, all children and young people, especially the most vulnerable, have equitable access to quality learning and skills development within safe and inclusive education environments.

BOX: Theory of Change: Outcome 3 aims to contribute to progress on SDG 4, Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. With gender equality and the principle of “Leaving no one behind” as the underlying principles for the UN system's contribution to Outcome 3, SDG 5, Gender Equality, and SDG 10, Reduced inequalities are also impacted. Quality education is the bedrock of employability, work and overall economic growth of the country; hence, Outcome 3 is intrinsically connected to SDG 8, Decent work and economic growth.

BOX: Agencies: UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNODC, UN Women and UNV.

TEXT: Introduction: In 2024, the UN's efforts in India centered on enhancing quality education through inclusivity, capacity building, and targeted interventions. Initiatives focused on school health and wellness, climate action, and culture and arts education, reaching millions of students nationwide.

India conducted its 3rd national learning assessment with 2.3 million students and addressed dropout rates using AI and machine learning. Strong foundations for learning were established through continuous professional development on play-based learning and structured pedagogy.

The UN agencies collaboration with national and state governments unlocked USD 213 million in domestic financing, enabling scalable reforms. The National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2024 was rolled out to 2.3 million children, bolstering India's education assessment system. Evidence-based planning was supported through comprehensive reports and digital education initiatives, expanding the reach and quality of teaching and learning.

Equitable access to quality learning and skill development was enhanced through digital platforms, early warning systems for dropout prevention, and professional development for ECD workers. The NIPUN Bharat program strengthened foundational literacy and numeracy skills for over 2.1 million children. Inclusive education practices were improved for 450,000 children, and secondary education quality was boosted through career guidance, life skills, and STEM education initiatives. Quality tertiary education saw improvements with the UN agencies life skills education programs and counseling services for over 950,000 students.

PARTNERSHIPS: UN Women India, in collaboration with private sector actors like Micron, Nokia, Suzlon Group, Aditya Birla Capital, Ammara Exports, Aspire for Her, PayNearby, and iHeal HealthTech, launched the WeSTEM initiative to equip over 1,084 young women from tribal communities with STEM skills. This partnership has provided more than 122 hours of training, technical education, career counseling, and industry exposure, leading to over 200 internships, apprenticeships, and full-time positions in STEM fields.

Shobha Bhura, a 19-year-old from Rotla, Madhya Pradesh, benefited from WeSTEM by gaining employability training and professional communication skills. “WeSTEM not only improved my skills but also gave me the confidence to dream bigger,” Shobha shared. She secured a position at TATA Motors, marking a significant milestone in her career and exemplifying the transformative impact of targeted interventions and private-sector partnerships.

BOX: HEADLINE RESULTS

- USD 213 million in funding to 14 States and Union Territories to improve learning for marginalised groups.
- 197,266 Early Childhood Development workers received capacity building, benefitting 6.4 million children.
- Facilitated enrollment of 842,321 out-of-school children through special training programmes in Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh.
- 2.7 million students reached in campaigns to promote reading culture among children
- 950,000 students received health and psychosocial support programs through UN agencies counseling services

- 1,660,296 students across 15 states received career guidance from UN agencies.

Beneficiary quote:



"Science felt like memorizing facts from textbooks. But here, it's about solving real-world problems... Now, I'm not just learning, I'm working with my teammate to create a train accident prevention system that could save lives!"

- Revalla Archana, 9th grade high school student from Andhra Pradesh.

Output 3.1. Evidence-based Planning and Implementation: Increased capacity of Government for evidence-based planning and implementation of programmes for equitable quality learning and skill development (including 21st century and life skills).

UN agencies supported the government in scaling up its capacity for evidence-based planning and implementation of programs aimed at equitable quality learning and skill development.

In 2024, UNICEF mobilised USD 213 million in domestic financing and provided technical assistance and capacity development to 14 states and Union Territories in the use of data to target interventions to improve learning for marginalised groups, including children with disabilities. India's good practices on foundational literacy and learning assessment were shared with 46 countries across the Asia-Pacific and Southern African regions. UNICEF's collaboration with the National Council of Educational Research and Training on among others, development of a learning assessment framework and test items on

the learning conditions in schools enabled the roll out of the National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2024 to 2.3 million children across 75,000 schools, bolstering India's education assessment system.

UNICEF's digital learning platform, UniLearn, was used to strengthen teacher capacities on Early Childhood Education and Foundational Literacy and Numeracy and supported the school to work transition through training on career guidance, resulting in 730,000 users over half of whom were certified (385,000). Early Warning Systems (EWS) to predict risk for dropout were developed in four states leveraging AI and machine learning in two states. Insights from these initiatives were shared during a national consultation with 12 states with the view to scaling best practices on dropout prevention.

HI-STORY/OG3 – Viraj's Inspiring Journey through Inclusive Education at Vadodara Primary School

Viraj Singh Ashok Singh Rathod from the Gandhinagar District has gone from facing learning challenges associated with his autism, to showcasing the outstanding progress possible when educators, administrators, and parents work together to create an environment conducive to every child's unique needs.



UNICEF is working with the Government of Gujarat to create an inclusive learning environment in schools where children with disabilities participate equally with their peers and learn to their optimum potential.

Over eight years, Viraj's teachers and special educators have implemented tailored measures to foster an inclusive learning environment where he can thrive academically

and socially. Viraj's journey encapsulates the spirit of inclusive education—a commitment to providing a supportive and nurturing environment where every child can thrive.

The capacity of frontline ECD workers is a stubborn problem in the delivery of quality early learning. UNICEF supported continuous professional development of 197,266 ECD workers through a blended learning course and regular monthly meetings with supervisors benefiting 6.4 million children (52% girls). India's national flagship program for foundational learning, NIPUN Bharat, was strengthened through training of 93,319 teachers and supervisors (40% female) on structured pedagogy and improving supportive supervision, building Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) skills for over 2.1 million children (51% girls). Classroom transactions on FLN were boosted through reading campaigns including provision of children's literature in three states for 2.7 million students (51% girls). While both national and state government are committed to improving access to quality learning for children with disabilities, technical capacities within the system are limited.

UNICEF's technical support to education functionaries assisted 12 states to effectively implement a comprehensive school safety programme. Capacity of 121,057 education functionaries was strengthened to integrate elements of climate change into Comprehensive School Safety Plans.

Output. 3.2. Equitable Access to Quality Learning and Skill Development: Increased capacity of Government for equitable access to quality learning and skill development (including 21st century and life skills) for children and adolescents, especially the most vulnerable.

The UN agencies supported the government in enhancing its ability to provide equitable access to quality education and skill development, including 21st-century and life skills, for children and adolescents, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable groups.

In 2024, India conducted its 3rd large-scale national learning assessment with 2.3 million students and is addressing dropout through trialling early warning systems using AI and machine learning.

Through UNESCO's School Health and Wellness Programme, school leaders and teachers have been trained to deliver comprehensive health education in inclusive learning spaces. The Climate Leadership Programme has equipped young people to develop practical solutions to environmental challenges. The 2024 State of Education Report for India addressed culture and arts education, providing guidelines to integrate arts and cultural heritage into curricula and teaching while promoting creative thinking and local knowledge. These programmes, developed with government partners, align with India's education priorities and have reached millions of students nationwide.

In 2024, UNFPA extended high quality technical assistance for planning, implementation and monitoring of School Health Wellness Program under Aayushman Bharat in Bihar, Delhi, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan, resulting in program implementation in over 64,321 schools from 134 districts across 6 states benefiting 3.1 million school going adolescents – including 2,350 additional institutions like tribal residential schools hostels, Industrial Training Institutions and Madarsa.

UNICEF collaborated with state governments in 18 states and Union territories, civil society organizations such as Action Aid, Gandhi National Memorial Society India, India BOSCO, Save the Children, academic institutions, and experts to advance foundational literacy and inclusive education for out-of-school children. To increase education access, UNICEF facilitated the enrolment of 842,321 out-of-school children (51% girls; 480 children with disabilities) by enrolling them in special training programmes in schools in Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

HI-STORY/OG3 – From Rote Learning to Innovation

Previously, textbooks were synonymous with memorizing facts for students like Revalla Archana. But Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs), a nationwide initiative by the Government of India's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), go beyond textbooks. Established in schools across the country, these labs allow students from grades 6 to 12 to delve into Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) concepts through hands-on activities.

Students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills by tinkering with tools and equipment, fostering creativity and entrepreneurship as they collaborate on projects and build prototypes.



Recognizing the need for collaboration, UNICEF joined forces with the Andhra Pradesh education department and Vigyan Ashram, a pioneering technical agency. Together, they embarked on a mission to breathe further life into Vijayawada's ATLs. UNICEF provides technical expertise to promote the ATLs, and develop training modules and resources for teachers and students.

With the active involvement of the education department, teachers have begun allocating dedicated periods for ATL activities, with labs providing fertile ground for budding entrepreneurs for students like Revalla. With access to equipment, mentorship, and a supportive environment, students are transforming their innovative ideas into prototypes.

Through UNICEF support, 6 state governments updated their curricula, handbooks and pre-school kits to be gender-responsive and disability-inclusive. To enhance the quality of early learning, UNICEF supported the capacity building of 197,266 Early Childhood Development (ECD) workers through blended programs on play-based learning, benefitting 6.4 million children, out of which a majority (52%) were girls. In 2024, UNICEF strengthened counselling sessions conducted by ECD-workers for parents and caregivers, promoting play-based learning at home, with sessions held in 250,434 ECD-centres.

As a member of the Ministry of Women and Child Development taskforce, UNICEF provided support for the development of the national pre-school curriculum for Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres. In six states, with UNICEF support, governments updated their curricula, handbooks and pre-school kits to be gender-responsive and disability-inclusive. To enhance the quality of early learning, UNICEF supported the capacity building of 197,266 ECD workers through blended programs on play-based learning, benefiting 6.4 million children. Additionally, UNICEF strengthened counselling sessions conducted by ECD workers for parents and caregivers, promoting play-based learning at home, with sessions held in 250,434 ECD centres.

UNFPA's mental health and psychosocial support programs have provided counselling services to over 950,000 students. In 2024, 680 Master Trainers trained by UNESCO further capacitated 9,990 teachers across 30 states and union territories through School Health and Wellness Programme -focused programs in all 30 targeted states and union territories. In 2024, UNICEF leveraged \$9,528,308 from government funds through Samagra PAB to advanced its support in enhancing quality skills and learning opportunities through technical support and strategic partnerships.

UNICEF supported four states (Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Rajasthan) in contextualizing guidance and building the capacity of ECD workers on integrating the nutrition support program with ECE. In three states (Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand), UNICEF's technical assistance to the Department of School Education is enabling the initiation and strengthening of pre-school classes in schools. This includes development of an implementation roadmap, learning resources for children, and establishing monitoring mechanisms. Efforts to improve the enrolment of children with disabilities in ECD centers has yielded positive results in some states. In Uttar Pradesh more than 2,700 children with disabilities were enrolled across 8,000 ECD centres.

UNHCR and partners advocated for access to education which resulted in the enrolment of 3,121 children in schools and National Open Schools. These children were also supported with learning kits and other logistics support. The learning programmes supported by UNHCR's partners benefitted 4,199 children for bridging education gaps and integrate into formal education systems. For learning continuity 3,816 students were provided with scholastic materials, 1,068 students with uniforms, 593 with secondary school fees and 35 students for school transport.

UNICEF collaborated with the National Council for Education Research and Training to revise learning outcomes for early grades and develop tools for documenting state specific Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) programmes. To improve literacy skills, UNICEF provided technical support to states in revising textbooks and developing teaching-learning materials, including reading resources in home languages in four states: Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. UNICEF supported training of 93,319 teachers and supervisors, benefiting 2.1 million children. In addition, planning and implementation of reading campaigns was supported by UNICEF in collaboration with other partners in three states, to promote a reading culture among children, which reached over 2.7 million students in three states.

UNFPA supported the Division for Adolescent Health to commission a rapid assessment study on the Government of India's School Health & Wellness Programme in 10 states to measure the knowledge and attitude of Health Wellness Ambassadors, Principals and students to improve the program. UNFPA supported the Department of Higher Education and Training in the development and roll out of technology-based mobile application for real time reporting of school level program implementation activities during 2024. This led more than 20,000 schools from 282 districts in 32 states to initiate reporting on the Management Information Action system, providing real time data to streamline program implementation across all the schools.

UNFPA also contributed to training state-level and district-level trainers, ensuring the quality of teacher training, and overseeing the rollout of a technology-based Management Information System (MIS) nationwide. UNFPA's mental health and psychosocial support programs have provided counseling services to over 950,000 students.

HI-STORY/OG2 – Bridging cultures, empowering dreams

Sanlun, a young refugee from Myanmar has, since her arrival in India in 2021 been attending English and Hindi classes conducted by UNHCR's partner, BOSCO.

Currently studying in the 7th grade, Sanlun is determined to excel in her schoolwork and participate in her new community.



For Sanlun, BOSCO's classes are more than just an academic exercise. They are a lifeline that helps her keep pace with her school curriculum and feel part of the local Indian community she lives in.

"The Hindi classes help me communicate with my friends and neighbours. I feel more a part of the community now."

In 2024 UNFPA extended technical assistance in the 4 priority states, Bihar, Odisha, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, resulting in operationalizing 1,086 adolescent friendly health clinics benefiting 950,000 adolescents with counselling services to enhance access to mental health and psychosocial support. In 2024, UNFPA operated a tele-counselling helpline in Madhya Pradesh in collaboration with Department of Education to offer high quality counseling on range on adolescent health issues and over 54,000 adolescents availed these services.

Output 3.3 Improved access to and demand for quality tertiary education

UNHCR supported access of refugees and asylum-seekers to tertiary education. Refugee students obtained admission into universities under the foreign student's category. In the academic year 2023/2024, 52 students received a scholarship from the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) to enrol in or continue their university studies. 7 scholars were supported to access education pathways to third countries.

Outcome 4 – Economic growth & decent work

BOX: Outcome: By 2027, people will benefit from and contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth through higher productivity, competitiveness and diversification in economic activities that create decent work, livelihoods and income, particularly for youth.

BOX: Theory of Change: Outcome 4 is embedded in the “Prosperity” pillar of the UNSDCF theory of change, which aims at contributing to ensure that the working population in India continues to benefit from and contribute to inclusive growth. The interventions of the UN system to achieve Outcome 4 will also impact several other SDGs, primarily SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and SDG 10 (reduced inequality). OG 4 also has a close bearing on SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate change) and SDG 15 (life on land).

BOX: Agencies: ILO, UNIDO, APCTT, ITU, IOM, UNEP, IFAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP.

TEXT: Introduction: In 2024, UN agencies collectively focused on promoting equitable opportunities for skilling, decent work, and socio-economic development across India. Their efforts were aimed at ensuring that all employable individuals, particularly women and marginalized communities, had access to the necessary skills and opportunities to thrive in the workforce. Through extensive training programs, job placement drives, and entrepreneurial support, millions of young people were empowered to enhance their employability and secure decent work.

Collaborative initiatives like the Youth Co:Lab and the "Advantage Apprenticeship Campaign" reached millions, raising awareness about skill-based training and connecting individuals with job opportunities. YuWaah's efforts connected over 10 million young people with job support and apprenticeships, with a significant focus on young women. The UN's partnerships with various government bodies and organizations facilitated the development of new job roles, the upskilling of workers, and the promotion of responsible business practices.

Initiatives like the Skill Innovation Challenge and the Digital Girls' Hub program provided financial support and career opportunities to millions. Efforts also included empowering Safai Saathis, supporting transgender persons' registration in the National Transgender Portal, and organizing significant conferences on LGBTQI+ health.

PARTNERSHIPS: Skill Development of 1000 women on Green Technology in Gujarat (Project Surya): To create opportunities for local employment in solar parks and increase the productivity and income in salt-making business in Ran of Kutch, UNEP has teamed up with Renew (India's leading clean energy company), and SEWA (International NGO delivering the project) under the project "Surya" to train 1000 salt pan workers in green technology. In consultation with UNEP and Renew, SEWA – with support from the National Skill Development Council (NSDC) and Electronic Sector Skill Council of India (ESSCI) – developed the training plan for the next 2 years to train the 1000 salt pan workers. More than 450 women are trained, have passed the exams, and received the certificates. 200 Women are undergoing the training. Out of the women trained and certified under the programme, 148 women are already employed in solar or relevant companies with an average monthly salary of Rs. 10,000-12,000. Studies estimate that India's ambitious target of achieving 175 GW of renewable energy (RE) by 2022 could create 3,30,000 jobs in the wind and solar energy sectors alone. SEWA, Renew and UNEP with support from NCDC and ESSCI intend to replicate this training in the entire Gujarat and other key states (Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Odisha).

BOX: HEADLINE RESULTS

- More than 10 million young people gained access to job support, apprenticeships, and work opportunities through UN's support.
- 6.22 million young people across India accessed career guidance and 21st-century skills.
- 12,233 Safai Saathis (waste-pickers) empowered with access to government social security schemes.
- 3 million young people equipped with digital learning.
- 4,000 individuals were trained on the links between entrepreneurship and business development services

Beneficiary quote:

“My experience with the training and business registration has inspired me to start the formal business. I want to develop myself as a leader who will be guiding other entrepreneurs”

– Meera Devi, Meera Crochet & Boutique, Harola, Noida



Output 4.1. Equitable Opportunities for Skilling and Decent Work: All employable persons have equitable opportunities to enhance 21st century and life skills, vocational training, and access to decent work.

The government, in partnership with the UN, worked to strengthen equitable access to 21st-century and life skills, vocational training, and access to decent work.

In 2024, UNDP provided training to over 2,700 individuals (out of which 74% women) in Delhi and Haryana to access livelihood opportunities, resulting in nearly 1900 women linked to jobs through dedicated job placement drives. UN Women equipped 28,341 individuals with employable skills, financial access, and market linkages, enabling sustainable livelihoods and volunteerism opportunities. These efforts enhanced workforce participation, entrepreneurship, and financial inclusion, ensuring that women, especially from marginalized groups, could secure income and contribute to economic growth.

Through UNDP's regional Youth Co:Lab initiative, implemented in collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission and NITI Aayog, 36 young individuals marginalized communities—such as LGBTQIA+ individuals and Persons with Disabilities — participated in bootcamps and training sessions to transform their entrepreneurial ideas into viable startups, leading 6 youth entrepreneurs received seed funding and mentorship to support their ventures. UNDP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and UNICEF, YuWaah, launched a one-month digital campaign, "Advantage Apprenticeship Campaign", which reached over 5 million individuals on social media platforms. The campaign effectively raised awareness about skill-based on-the-job training, emphasizing apprenticeships as a key pathway to bridge the employability gap.

ILO (OG4) Skills Innovation and Challenge Call

The ILO Skills Innovation Challenge Call in India was launched in July 2023, in partnership with UNICEF/YuWaah, to identify, incubate, test, and disseminate innovative solutions in India that support the "upgrading of informal apprenticeships through digital transformation".

As a result, a total of four not-for-profit organizations in India were selected as winner and received a grant and technical support to pilot their solutions in 2024 on the ground. One of them were Grey Sim Learnings Foundation, who has created the Skills D Platform for structured skilling & guidance to youth at every stage of their career.

Case study 1: Rekha, married and a mother at the age of 25, comes from a lower income group of a village in Udham Singh, Nagar Uttarakhand. Seeking to make her own career, Rekha came to know about Grey Sim Learnings Foundation's Skills D Platform in Rudrapur. From the training she did not only got the technical skills but also achieved skills in customer support and relationship management.

Today Rekha is working as a Customer Relationship Executive in Balaji enterprise, a voltas franchise and earning more than 10K every month and assisting his family financially. She is now independent and providing her family and husband financial support.

Case study 2: 29 year-old Himanchal Saini Belong to a lower income group of a village in Moradabad Uttar Pradesh. With the purpose of upskilling and concept awareness, Himanchal took admission in the Skills D Platform. From the training provided by ILO he not only got the technical skills but also achieved customer support and relation skills.

Today Himanchal is working as a freelance technician for Bluestar, Daikin, and Voltas franchise and earning more than 30K every month and assisting his family financially.

In 2024, in partnership with ILO, YuWaah introduced the Skill Innovation Challenge to support groundbreaking solutions that enhance informal apprenticeships through digital transformation. Four winners received USD 20,000 in financial support, along with technical guidance and global visibility for their innovations in skills development. Additionally, 6.22 million young people across India accessed career guidance and 21st-century skills, equipping them to navigate their personal and professional lives.

HI-STORY/OG4 – My HIV status won't prevent me from achieving my career goals

23-year-old Reena Mistry from Surat, India, aspires to a career in the civil service. But when Reena was a child she tested positive for HIV, which created a lot of stigma within her family as well as with her classmates.

Thanks to skills and livelihood project by ILO's in collaboration with the Gujarat State Network of Positive People (GSNP+), 550 people have been identified who are either HIV positive, come from families affected by HIV, or are members of the LGBTQ+ community. The objective is to help build their skills in various trades and link up with employment agencies.

With support from ILO and UNAIDS, Reena received training through the GSNP+ and studied computer literacy and sewing skills. During her training, she met people her age living with the same diagnosis. Motivated by knowing that there are others in the same situation Reena has for the last two years been a volunteer with the GSNP+, committed to support her community. She also writes content about living with HIV.

The project has helped Reena become financially independent. Thanks to her sewing work, she is able to cover her own expenses, as well as to support her family. It has also empowered Reena about her future, where she wants to help her community. Reena is want to join the Indian police service or IPS, and is currently studying online for the civil services exam.

Output 4.2. Improved Productivity and Decent Working Conditions: All enterprises, particularly MSMEs, cooperatives and self-help groups, have access to appropriate business development services and innovation, to enhance productivity and working conditions.

The government, in partnership with the UN, has ensured that all enterprises, particularly MSMEs, cooperatives, and self-help groups, have access to appropriate business development services and innovation to enhance productivity and working conditions.

In 2024, UNDP trained more than 4,000 individuals (46% women) on the linkages between entrepreneurship and business development services. UNDP also provided support to more than 600, out of which 99% were women-owned, micro-enterprises across Delhi NCR and Gujarat regions to help women to start or scale up their businesses.

In 2024, UNDP partnered with the European Union, H&M Foundation, Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UN Women and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office in supporting over 140 businesses in strengthening their human rights due diligence capacity. It also helped 38 businesses integrate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategies to promote responsible business practices, improved corporate governance, and contributed to safer, more equitable work environments, ensuring compliance with labour and human rights standards.

In 2024, UN Women supported the implementation of 2 new value chain development initiatives, integrating women as suppliers and entrepreneurs to enhance their economic participation. Women farmers were integrated into the rice value chain as entrepreneurs under the CORE project, which focused on capacity building, strengthening linkages with

buyers, and ensuring sustainable participation of women in agricultural value chains. Women artisans were trained and integrated into a banana fibre-based handicrafts value chain, diversifying their skills beyond growing banana, effectively enhancing market access and economic opportunities for women, particularly in rural areas.

HI-STORY/OG4 – Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage and Developing Cultural Tourism in Western Rajasthan

UNESCO, in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, is transforming the cultural landscape of Western Rajasthan through the Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Developing Cultural Tourism project.

By engaging with over 1,500 traditional folk artists and artisans across 4 districts of Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Barmer, and Bikaner, this initiative aims to safeguard living heritage while positioning these villages as vibrant cultural tourism destinations and driving economic opportunities for the communities.

During 2024, the project built the capacities of 200 artists as an initiative towards safeguarding the living heritage of the communities. The project also engaged with the folk dancers of the Kalbelia community of Rajasthan.



Kalunath Kalbelia, an artist from the community and beneficiary of the project, saw his family's dances relegated to small gatherings, rarely acknowledged outside of his close-knit community. *"This project helped us find our place in Rajasthan's cultural landscape; it made the world see our dance as an art, not just a spectacle."*, asid Kalunath. Kalunath has also received the prestigious Marwar Ratan Award, bringing recognition to his community and inspiring future generations of Kalbelia dancers.

Today, Kalunath not only perform but also mentor others, helping young artists find their voices and establish themselves. They continue to tell their stories through music and dance, to transmit the knowledge to the younger generation to safeguarding their living tradition.



Recognizing the importance of raising heritage awareness among younger generations, a heritage awareness toolkit is under development stage for children of 7 to 12 years. This educational resource will introduce the concept of living heritage and emphasize the importance of safeguarding living traditions.



4.3. Socio-Economic Development: Policies, institutions, and enabling environment in place to catalyse innovation and digitalization and job rich, low carbon economic growth to foster broad based socio economic development.

In 2024, the government, in collaboration with the UN, established policies and an enabling environment to drive innovation, digitalization, and job-rich, low-carbon economic growth, fostering broad-based socio-economic development.

UNDP, in partnership with ICRIER and the Gates Foundation, established the "Economic Policies for Women-Led Development" network, which influenced Union Budget 2024 priorities by integrating gender-focused economic considerations into national policy frameworks, promoting policies aimed at equitable economic development.

In 2024, UNDP's partnership with Food Industry Capacity Skill Initiative (FICSI) led to development of NSFQ-aligned "Millet Food Processor" new job roles and training of 33 master trainers and 105 trainers to upskill women.

Outcome 5 – Environment, climate, WASH, and resilience

BOX: Outcome: By 2027, Government of India, state governments, communities, the private sector and other actors take informed actions to address climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss and restore ecological integrity through improved knowledge, capacity and mainstreaming of relevant actions across sectoral programmes, policies and plans.

BOX: Theory of change: Outcome 5 is embedded in the “Planet” pillar of the UNSDCF, which aims at strengthening the knowledge and capacity of stakeholders to take informed actions to address climate change, pollution, exploitation of natural resources, biodiversity loss and restore ecological integrity through mainstreaming of relevant actions across sectoral programmes, policies and plans. Outcome 5 is closely linked to all the SDGs, notably SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 6 (water and sanitation), SDG 7 (clean energy), SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities), SDG 12 (sustainable consumption), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 14 (life under water) and SDG 15 (life on land).

BOX: Agencies: UNDP, UNEP, APCCT, FAO, IFAD, ILO, ESCAP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women, WFP and WHO.

Introduction: In 2024, the UN continued its support to the Government of India and various stakeholders in addressing climate change adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk reduction, and ecosystem restoration, in alignment with global environmental goals. The UN's efforts extended to tackling pollution and waste management challenges, while also building capacities for effective sanitation practices.

The UN's contributions to ecosystem restoration and biodiversity protection were significant: 583.89 hectares of degraded watersheds in Maharashtra were restored, and 3.4 million hectares of land in four Himalayan states are now managed through community-led practices. In the realm of pollution and waste management, the UN scaled up its efforts, resulting in the diversion of 2,506.92 tons of plastic waste for recycling. The UN also linked 8,815 "safai saathis," including 4,983 women, with social security schemes, ensuring their access to rights and entitlements. Furthermore, 24,402 individuals were sensitized on social security schemes through a dedicated helpline.

The UN's initiatives in promoting climate-resilient agri-food systems were instrumental in enhancing productivity, sustainability, and resilience. 4,922 farmers were trained in sustainable agriculture practices, and 2,813 hectares were brought under sustainable agricultural practices through various innovative methods. The UN also played a key role in strengthening disaster resilience for vulnerable populations by supporting central and state governments in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

Headline results:

- Enhanced resilience of 41 million farmers to climate shocks.
- Facilitated mitigation of 2.9 million tonnes CO2 through energy conservation initiatives in 124 steel Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- 4,922 farmers trained in 426 Farmer Field Schools on sustainable agriculture.
- 59.3 million people gaining access to safely managed water supply under the Government of India's Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) thanks to the technical support by UN agencies.
- 17.95 million individuals gained access to household toilets.
- 269,564 beneficiaries in three coastal states received training and technical support on climate-adaptive livelihoods such as oyster farming and crab fattening.

PARTNERSHIPS: missing.

Beneficiary story:

"Thanks to the health card, I received free treatment for my injury and can now spend more time with my family," says Padma, 52-year-old sanitation worker from Amritsar, Punjab.



Outcome 5.1. Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction: Mainstreamed climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction across sectors (urban-peri urban and rural).

In 2024, the Government of India, in collaboration with the UN, mainstreamed climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction across sectors, enhancing resilience and promoting sustainable practices. In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's, UNDP India enhanced resilience of 41 million farmers to climate shocks by enabling access to crop insurance scheme (Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna), contributing to a cumulative growth of 29% since the project's inception and a 12% increase from the previous calendar year.

In 2024, UNEP conducted a situation analysis of the status of land degradation in India, towards reporting on India's position on achieving LDN targets under UNCCD. In 2024, UNDP worked closely with National Disaster Management Authority of India to update the National Urban Flood Management Guidelines, initially developed in 2010 to ensure the incorporating of global best practices to enhance urban disaster resilience. UNDP moreover developed a comprehensive Monitoring Evaluation (ME) Framework, including gender considerations, to strengthen the tracking of disaster management effectiveness. UNEP supported MoEFCC, in development of the compendium of best practices on restoration of areas affected by forest fires towards G20 commitment on enhancing cooperation on forest fire mitigation and restoration. UNDP provided technical support to MoEFCC for the finalisation and submission of the Third National Communication and India's first Adaptation Plan as part of the mandatory reporting requirements under the UNFCCC.

In 2024, Odisha successfully expanded UNFPA's gender-transformative DRR program to 15 districts. With a budget of ₹1.26 crore, the programme conducted capacity-building trainings for district- and block-level officials in Bhadrak and Balasore, who have formulated plans to integrate gender into Disaster Management Plans. Following the trainings, Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) recognized gender and inclusion as priorities and has integrated technical expertise into key programs.

WFP has been working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoAFW) to develop Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA) guidelines and ensures that these guidelines align with global best practices, offering hope to farmers confronting the severe challenges of climate variability. In October 2024, WFP launched the regional Adaptation for Resilience (ADAPT4R) project in collaboration with MoEFCC and the Ministry of Environment, Government of Sri Lanka and with support from the Adaptation Fund.

Through the Solar for Resilience (S4R) project, WFP supported the Solar Mission, while the Secure Fishing application aligned with Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) and Mukhyamantri Matsya Kalyan Yojana (MMKY) in the fisheries sector. Moreover, WFP's ENACT and RIISE projects have focused on enhancing the adaptive capacities of smallholder farmers, in line with the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture, ensuring a sustainable and resilient future for farming communities.

5.2. Climate Mitigation: Mainstreamed climate mitigation approaches in socio-economic development strategies and sectors.

In 2024, the government, in collaboration with the UN, mainstreamed climate mitigation approaches in socio-economic development strategies and sectors, achieving significant reductions in CO2 emissions and promoting sustainable practices.

To meet India's NDC targets, UNDP facilitated the mitigation of 2.9 million ton CO2-emissions through energy conservation initiatives in 124 steel MSMEs and the promotion of climate-friendly alternatives to ozone-depleting substances (ODS), supporting India's goal of reducing the emission intensity of GDP by 2030.

Throughout 2024, UNDP supported Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change India's NDCs and clean energy goals through large-scale climate actions and community-driven initiatives. A reduction of 1.83 million tonnes of net CO₂-equivalent emissions was achieved through the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances in the Refrigeration and Air-conditioning and Polyurethane foam manufacturing sectors. This effort, supported by UNDP, enabled compliance with the Montreal Protocol while significantly lowering the carbon footprint of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. This effort, supported by UNDP, enabled compliance with the Montreal Protocol while significantly lowering the carbon footprint of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

In 2024, WFP conducted an Agri food café on Maximizing the Benefits of Carbon Credits in India's Agricultural Sector. An assessment was conducted to explore the potential benefits of carbon markets for agri-food systems.

In 2024, UNDP co-developed the project "Scaling Solar Applications for Agricultural Use" together with the International Solar Alliance for which 10 ISA member countries with the highest demands for solar water pumps were selected. The project deployed 20 solar water pumps each in the 10 countries with the aim of supporting the establishment of national systems for planning, deploying and scaling of solar based irrigation. 12 solar enterprise units which were established by WFP in 2024 processed 167 MT raw material during 2024 for marketing. This effectively led to an additional income of USD 5500 for 36 women micro-entrepreneurs and reduced their post-harvest losses. Furthermore, through UNDP's efforts, energy access was enhanced with the deployment of 430 solar-powered livelihood applications, benefiting 5,900 individuals, 98% of whom were women. These applications, including solar-powered cold storages, irrigation pumps, and food processing technologies, improved energy reliability, reduced dependence on fossil-fuel, and contributed to emission reductions.

Industrial emissions were addressed by UN agencies in 124 mini steel plants across India through the implementation of energy-efficient measures. These interventions are projected to reduce energy consumption and achieve a carbon emissions reduction of 225,166 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent annually, amounting to 1.6 million tonnes over the project lifecycle. Urban emissions were reduced with the provision of 50 electric vehicles (EVs) to local urban bodies, replacing fossil fuel-powered waste collection vehicles. This initiative is expected to result in an annual reduction of 38.7 tonnes of CO₂ emissions and has created alternative livelihoods for over 100 women in self-help groups, fostering income generation and community empowerment.

UNIDO, with support from GEF and MoMSME, worked to promote market transformation for energy efficiency in manufacturing MSMEs across clusters such as textile, tea, chemicals, rice, ceramics, pharmaceuticals, and paper. By 2024, 26 different energy-efficient technologies had been installed and validated in MSME units.

Outcome 5.3. Pollution and Waste Management: Scaled up approaches, actions, and capacities to abate and manage pollution and waste (air, plastic, marine litter, bio-medical, and electronic).

In 2024, the government, in collaboration with the UN, scaled up approaches, actions, and capacities to abate and manage pollution and waste, including air, plastic, marine litter, bio-medical, and electronic waste.

UNDP supported the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India to develop and finalise the Kigali Amendment launched in 2024, aiming to support phasing out of ozone-depleting substances - as a national level strategy in India. India's efforts to eliminate ozone-depleting substances exceeded targets, with 1,008.4 ODP tonnes phased out from refrigeration, air-conditioning, and foam manufacturing sectors, marking substantial progress in protecting the ozone layer and addressing climate change.

India is advancing a circular economy approach to water resource management through the City Water Balance Plan, employing an eco-hydrological strategy that incorporates rainwater harvesting and water body restoration. Recognizing the opportunity of adopting the Integrated Urban Water Management, UNESCO Regional Office for South Asia, under its Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme, partnered with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) by developing a comprehensive database with key water-related parameters for supply, reuse, stormwater, and resource management. Gwalior, a city in the State of Madhya Pradesh, has been selected as a pilot to create this database, which will serve as a decision support tool and provide the foundation for the implementation of IUWM and the City Water Balance Plan in Gwalior and other cities across India.

The "Hyperlocal Mapping of Air Pollution and GHG Emissions in India", commenced in October 2023 and led by UNDP India with the support from GIZ/Lacuna Fund for Climate and Energy aims at creating targeted point sources of air pollution and measure emissions in hyperlocal environments in Patna and Gurgaon. In 2024, the project generated a total procurement of 100 air quality sensors which are actively collecting real-

time hyperlocal air quality, including Carbon Monoxide (CO), Nitrogen Oxides (NOx), Methane (CH₄), PM_{2.5}, and PM₁₀. To support data collection and gather site-specific information, a total of 100 citizen scientists have been engaged, out of which a majority were women, who have received training on data collection techniques and analytical methodologies.

UNIDO conducted 24 training programs in 2024 with focus on sustainable financing, investment, and incentive mechanisms for eco-friendly crop protection solutions, aiming to reduce POPs and HHPs while enhancing livelihoods, food safety, and environmental health for rural youth and women.

ESCAP organized a SANS' Policy Dialogue on "Climate Change and Carbon Regulations – Way Forward for South and South-West Asia" during its Sustainable Development Forum. The dialogue included actionable policy recommendations on carbon taxes for developing countries.

UNDP India's 2024 Return on investment report provides a quantitative assessment of health improvements, and elaborates on three interventions in the transport sector, two in the industrial sector, three for mitigating road dust, and one related to the agricultural sector to help long-term improvements in air quality. A Android mobile application called "VAYU" has been developed by UNDP, providing an user-friendly interface for collecting site-specific data and offers real-time data visualization, geolocation, photographs, and more.

5.4. Circularity and Resource Efficiency: Enhanced circularity and resource efficiency across sectors.

In 2024, the UN agencies supported the Government of India in enhancing circularity and resource efficiency across sectors, advancing waste reduction, resource recovery, and sustainable practices.

In 2024, UNDP made significant strides in advancing the principles of the circular economy by successfully diverting 2,506.92 tons of plastic waste for recycling, contributing to waste reduction and resource recovery. UNEP's analytical studies conducted under PAGE included a comparative assessment of national and international

ecolabels for different product categories which contributed to development of Ecomark Rules 2024, notified by the Government of India in November 2024.

HI-STORY/OG5 – Meet Saifullah - the renewable energy advocate

Meet Saifullah, a 32-year-old refugee from Myanmar, who has been living in Harmada, India since 2012. Short after leaving Myanmar, Saifullah started to develop an interest in electrical circuitry in the local recycling yard.

His interest in circuitry became pivotal when he was selected for a 15-day solar energy training programme organised by UNHCR's partner. This training aimed to equip the young refugees with skills on climate technology and green entrepreneurship.



Saifullah repaired a discarded solar panel and repurposed parts of mobile phones from the recycling yard to build a fully functional solar generator in his aunt's house in Harmada, India. This self-project provided essential light and charging stations, significantly improving the quality of life for his family.

Through UNDP's efforts, 8,815 "safai saathis", waste-management workers, (out of which 56% were women) were linked with social security schemes. Through a dedicated helpline, 24,402 people, including 6740 women, have been sensitized on social security schemes, raising awareness of their rights and available support.

Through its work in Munger, Bihar, UNEP's pilot projects promoted alternatives to single-use plastics such as reusable cloth bags, community utensil banks, and plastic waste recycling into benches contribute to reducing plastic waste and promoting circular solutions in local communities. In 2024, UNEP facilitated the registration of recyclers and the Municipal Corporation of Munger on the Central Pollution Control Board under the Ministry of Environment Extended Producer Responsibility online portal, supporting the generation of Extended Producer Responsibility credits and encouraging circular waste management practices.

Since 2023, UNEP supported the Ministry of Finance market assessment studies on Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) for product categories such as writing and printing paper and room air conditioners, waste management as a service, cleaning and disinfection as a service, and AC as a service. The initiative has witnessed the participation of 211,457 youths with 53% female participation. The various milestones achieved under the initiative over 2024 are inclusive of promotion of traditional alternatives to plastic in rural, peri-urban areas, strengthening of circular solutions to single-use plastic, promotion of innovative solutions to create life saving devices out of plastic.

5.5. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Restoration: Supported conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem restoration.

In collaboration with the Government of India, the UN supported the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem restoration, enhancing resilience and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

With support of UNDP 403.6 hectares of agricultural land across four states was restored through a combination of climate-resilient crops and water-soil conservation methods, building resilience of farmers to climate change. Through UNDP's involvement, 789.67 hectares of coastal ecosystems have been restored in Maharashtra and Odisha, with active community participation, playing a vital role in protecting coastal communities from storms and erosion. Additionally, in Maharashtra, 583.89 ha of degraded watersheds have been restored, supporting local agricultural practices. In four Himalayan states, UNDP has helped strengthen state-level coordination and governance systems where 3.4 million hectares of land are now being managed through community-led practices.

With FAO's support, 248,235.79 hectares of land in Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttarakhand and Mizoram has been integrated into Green Landscape Management Plans (GLMPs) which incorporate several interventions to promote agroecological sustainability and socially inclusive livelihood. Additionally, 42,306 households have actively participated in developing community resource management plans, strengthening local governance structures. Capacity-building efforts have engaged 2,891 local decision-makers through 83 Farmer Field Schools on landscape governance. Further, strategic interventions, including soil moisture restoration and water harvesting initiatives, are being implemented to enhance resilience and ecosystem restoration.

With FAO's support 4,922 farmers were trained in 426 Farmer Field Schools (FFS) on sustainable agriculture, with 47% among these being women. Additionally, 3,484 farmers participated in 418 FFS on livestock management. In 2024, 2,813 hectares were brought under sustainable agricultural practices across two cropping seasons through Direct Seeded Rice (DSR), crop diversification into millets, pulses, and oilseeds, as well as the adoption of green manure and laser leveling. During the Rabi season, sustainable practices such as in-situ crop residue incorporation and zero-tillage were promoted. FAO also collaborated with local institutions to strengthen community seed banks, supporting conservation and capacity-building efforts for local landraces and farmers' varieties, fostering climate resilience and agro-biodiversity.

In 2024, UNDP's North-East India Bio-Cultural Conservation Initiative (NEBI), supported by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) identified potential conservation sites in Northeast India, including Zabo Farming (Nagaland) and the Apatani Landscape (Arunachal Pradesh). This led to the development of 3 community seed banks to conserve indigenous, climate-resilient seed varieties, ensuring food security and sovereignty, including seed banks for medicinal herbs in Phalee, Manipur, paddy varieties in Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh, and native crops in Thembang, Arunachal Pradesh – all supporting sustainable agricultural practices.

HI-STORY/OG5 – Vermicomposting: Hemalini's journey of transforming soil health in Odisha

"I have been farming for many years but I am unable to produce a good crop because my agricultural land is severely damaged from the overuse of chemical fertilizer" – Hemalini

Mohanta member of the women-led Maa Andhamani Self Help Group in Shamakhunta village, Baripada, Odisha.

Hemalini is one of the many farmers facing challenges as increasing use of chemical fertilizers has left their fields less productive, soil depleted, and ecosystems affected.



Recognizing the urgent need for a sustainable solution, FAO's Global Environment Facility 'Green-Ag' project, in association with the Directorate of Agriculture, Government of Odisha, introduced an initiative to rejuvenate agricultural lands through nature-based composting in the landscape.

Hemalini, along with her 20 SHG members, and more than 300 farmers in the landscape received trainings on vermicomposting on key topics such as vermicomposting methods, necessary materials, and proper application techniques. Over 330 vermicompost units were established in the backyards of beneficiary households, covering 150 acres.

Outcome 5.6. Resilient Agri-Food Systems: Supported measures for improved productivity, sustainability and resilience of agri- food systems.

Throughout 2024, the UN agencies supported measures to improve the productivity, sustainability, and resilience of agri-food systems, promoting best practices and enhancing climate resilience.

WFP provided a training to 55 master trainers and 66 Sagar mitras on secure fishing through a mobile application which enables marine fishers to access critical information. Since 2024, FAO and UNEP, with the contribution of the European Union and IKEA Foundation, are implementing an initiative which aiming to ensure a 40% target for gender inclusivity in areas such as sustainable food systems, value chains, and landscape management, promoting equity at all levels from officers to farmers.

Since 2024, through the contribution by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, FAO has been implementing a two-year Technical Cooperation Programme in three districts of Odisha with focus on supporting community-managed seed systems (CMSS) that lays equal emphasis on the involvement of women as seed savers, seed conservers, seed breeders, seed selectors and seed stewards.

WFP supported India's national policy on local adaptation planning through projects in Assam (ENACT) and Odisha (RIISE), focusing on climate services, CRA technologies like stress-tolerant rice, Bao dhan, double cropping, and Smart Seed production. It also enhanced fishing community resilience with the Secure Fishing App and participating in inter-agency collaborations to promote resilience-building policies.

UNEP's TEEB AgriFood initiative contributed to the VCM Framework for agriculture and ongoing discussions on CRA and RADP guidelines, as well as the assessment framework for ecosystem services in organic farming under AINPOF. In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, UNDP India improved the resilience of 41 million farmers (15% women) to climate shocks by providing access to the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna crop insurance scheme, achieving a 29% growth since the project's inception.

2024, WFP conducted capacity-building and training programs on climate services and Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA) in Odisha and Assam, reaching 512 policymakers and officials and 497 farmers. In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's, UNDP India enhanced resilience of 41 million farmers (15% women) to climate shocks by enabling access to crop insurance scheme (Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna), contributing to a cumulative growth of 29% since the project's inception and a 12% increase from the previous calendar.

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5.7. WASH: Strengthened climate resilient and safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services with focus on the most vulnerable including children.

The UN agencies in India supported India in its efforts of strengthening climate-resilient and safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services, focusing on the most vulnerable, including children.

In 2024, UNICEF, in collaboration with government efforts, improved safe water access for over 206,605 people, including 97,980 women. During climate emergencies in 2024, over 196,700 people in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Assam, Bihar, and West Bengal received support: 18,609 people gained access to safe sanitation, benefiting 393 schools and 29 healthcare facilities. UNICEF also provided technical assistance which helped improve basic hygiene services for 127,464 people and addressed the menstrual hygiene needs of 22,756 women and girls in response to floods and cyclones.

UNICEF's technical support contributed to 59.3 million people gaining access to safely managed water supply under the Government of India's Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). UNICEF supported 15 states in developing and implementing Annual Implementation Plans (AIPs), strengthening monitoring, Operations and Maintenance strategies, and climate-resilient water systems. 4.98 million people benefited from climate-resilient water service delivery. Capacity-building efforts empowered 1,001 field-level institutions and Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) on sustainable service management. A strategic collaboration with IIM Bangalore advanced O&M policy for drinking water supply development, while SPM-NIWAS strengthened training for state officials.

UNICEF's support to the Government of India's Swachh Bharat Mission in 2024 contributed to transformative progress in rural sanitation. A total of 17.95 million individuals gained access to household toilets, with 1.55 million directly attributed to

UNICEF's systems-strengthening efforts. At the national level, UNICEF played a key role in supporting an environment that enabled 249,087 villages to achieve ODF+ status.

HI-STORIES/OG5 – 'Jal Sahelis' Lead Water Conservation Efforts in Rajasthan

In the rural heartland of Phalodi, villagers have witnessed a dramatic shift in rainfall patterns over the past three decades. This change, attributed to climate change, has profoundly impacted their livelihoods and their relationship with nature.



The revival of the village pond has not only restored the land but also instilled drought-resilient practices among the villagers. The *Jal Sahelis* didn't stop at restoring water bodies. They mobilised their fellow villagers towards a common goal—achieving domestic water security.

The villagers came together and pooled money to save the centuries-old pond. The *Sarpanch* (Elected village head) and the villagers contributed INR 1.5 million (USD 18,000) for pond restoration and put in place guidelines for its upkeep. Part of the funds came from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

Through the '*Jal Jeevan Mission*', UNICEF has supported the Government of India in promoting traditional water sources. Led by Unnati, UNICEF has been a knowledge management partner to successfully mobilise women like the *Jal Sahelis* who have educated the community on the importance of maintaining traditional water bodies.

In 2024, UNESCO provided technical support to government officials in the National Institute of Urban Affairs in the development of women water quality monitoring team at village level in 15 states, under the Government of India's Jal Jeevan Mission. UNICEF's provided capacity development to 16 states and Union Territories on Menstrual Hygiene Management of adolescent girls in schools. UNICEF's support to the Government of India's Swachh Bharat Mission in 2024 contributed to transformative progress in rural sanitation. A total of 17.95 million individuals gained access to household toilets, with 1.55 million directly attributed to UNICEF's systems-strengthening efforts.

Outcome 6 – Empowering people, communities and institutions

Vision: By 2027, a strengthened and more coordinated, inclusive and accountable governance system is in place at the national and local levels enabling all people, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable, to be protected, empowered, engaged and enjoy human rights and social justice, and lead their lives with respect and dignity.

Theory of change: Outcome 6 is embedded in the "Participation" pillar of the UNSDCF, which aims at contributing to strengthening institutions and empowering people and communities to enjoy human rights and social justice, and lead their lives with respect and dignity, thereby reducing inequalities, particularly gender inequality. Being cross-sectoral, Outcome 6 has a bearing on and is influenced by all the SDGs. However, the UN system's contribution to Outcome 6 will have a direct linkage with SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (partnerships for goals).

PARTNERSHIP: UN in India supporting SSC through Future Readiness in DRR: In a groundbreaking effort to enhance 'future readiness' in development and Disaster Risk Management systems in India, the United Nations in India, facilitated by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office with support from UNICEF and UNDP, is collaborating with Reliance Foundation to host learning exchanges through convenings and field visits across Indian states. The partnership aims to address climate change challenges, foster innovation, and promote South-South learning by showcasing best practices in disaster risk reduction. Inspired by 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family), the initiative supports the Government of India-United Nations 2023-27 Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The first knowledge exchange in Odisha, involving delegations from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, highlighted disaster resilience efforts, including cyclone mock exercises and the role of mangroves. Future exchanges will take place in Bhuj, Gujarat – an earthquake prone coastal area exposed to cyclones, tsunamis and floods.



Agencies: UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Resident Coordinator's Office, ESCAP, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UN Habitat, UNHCR, UNODC, WFP and WHO.

Introduction: In 2024, the UN in India supported the Government of India and various partners in promoting inclusive governance, community resilience, and equitable access to opportunities. A significant focus was on gender-responsive budgeting, where technical assistance was provided to integrate gender considerations into budgetary processes, resulting in a notable increase in national budget allocations for women's empowerment.

The UN also offered technical assistance and capacity-building for 770 newly-created women- and girl-friendly Panchayats, training over 300 master trainers and developing key resources for elected representatives. The 'Ab Koi Bahana Nahi' campaign was launched, reaching 142 million people and providing data to enhance survivor-centered services and disability-inclusive support.

UN agencies engaged over 6.4 million adolescents in 14 states, catalyzing resource allocations to end child marriage and address youth priorities. Social protection coverage was enhanced for 13.98 million girls, 3.07 million poor households, 230,000 orphaned children, and 5,750 disabled children. Additionally, programs supported by the UN engaged 12.3 million young people in climate leadership and social impact actions.

Research conducted several UN agencies identified barriers and policy solutions for women migrant workers in the garment industry, aiming to enhance their social protection, economic mobility, and workplace rights. Through these initiatives, the UN

contributed to building more inclusive and resilient communities, strengthening institutional responses, and supporting India's commitment to sustainable development.

Headline results:

- 309,687 children accessed social protection schemes.
- 278,252 young people actively participated in youth advocacy programs such as U-Report Polls, Youth Ke Bol, and YPATs.
- 37.3% increase in national budget allocations for women's empowerment.
- 70,00 tribal schoolgirls received Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) services in Maharashtra.
- 3,100 marginalized persons gained access to the government's special identity cards and other benefits under the Government of India's SMILE scheme.
- Over 33,200 waste pickers were connected to at least two social security schemes, improving their financial security and workplace safety.

Beneficiary story:



"After learning through Sathvaro, I understood that I can speak for myself, to say that I am not happy in the relationship, that I wanted to study, and I want to ride a bike," she says.

Gopi, 19-year-old from Kachchh, Gujarat who was forced to leave school as she was engaged to be married, on 'Sathvaro' (adolescent empowerment programme) a collaborative initiative by UNICEF Gujarat and UNFPA with the Institute of Social Action and Research (ISAR).

Output 6.1. – SDG Localisation: SDG localisation processes and systems are strengthened, and administration of public services, including public finance and local governance, are more accountable to respond to vulnerable groups.

India has fully embraced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, integrating it into national policies and governance structures, with NITI Aayog leading the effort to mainstream SDGs and coordinate progress across ministries and state governments. Through innovative tracking mechanisms like the SDG India Index and localized initiatives such as the Aspirational Districts Programme, India has developed robust monitoring systems that drive data-driven decision-making and ensure targeted interventions, making sustainable development a shared national priority.

Launched in 2018 in partnership with UN in India, India's SDG Index tracks SDG progress by ranking states and UTs based on their performance across different indicators, fostering competitive and cooperative federalism. The fourth and latest edition was released in 2024. The Northeastern Region (NER) District SDG Index & Dashboard, developed with the support of UNDP, evaluates districts in eight states using 84 region-specific indicators, informing funding decisions for the Prime Minister's Development Initiative for Northeast Region.

Established in partnership with UNDP India, SDG Coordination and Acceleration Centres (SDGCACs) help enhance policy integration, monitoring systems, and stakeholder participation, tailored to state-specific contexts. <here we need more details- number of centres, in which states, a sentence more on their impact etc.>

The participatory approach adopted in 2023 by mainstreaming Bal/ Balika Sabhas and Mahila Sabhas was further strengthened, through the use of technology in 2024. In 2024, UNICEF supported Ministry of Panchayati Raj in introducing a digital technology, RapidPro to help mainstream participation and communication at scale across various levels of government and communities for improved service delivery.

ESCAP with the coordination support of RCO supported the government in preparing its third Voluntary National Review (VNR) through an evidence-based workshop in November 2024. The hybrid-format workshop assessed national progress on SDGs, identified challenges, and shared lessons learned, emphasizing inclusivity and diverse stakeholder perspectives. Over 50 participants from academia, government, civil society, and intergovernmental bodies attended, fostering a dynamic exchange of knowledge. Key outcomes included the importance of continuous monitoring, robust data management, localization of SDG implementation, and a whole-of-society approach to include marginalized voices, enhancing the government's capacity to advance the SDG agenda.

In 2024, UNICEF provided high-level technical support for SDG and the Localization of Sustainable Development Goals monitoring and implementation in several states, facilitating SDG Planning and Monitoring, compiling critical data, and developing infographics to highlight progress across the 9 LSDG themes. Additionally, 12 UNICEF state offices supported the development of the state-level Panchayat Development Index (PDI) and trained local officials on data collection and progress tracking.

Over the past five years, the UN Women India office has significantly contributed to advance the Government of India's efforts to make the national budget gender-responsive. This collaboration has contributed to a historic 37.3% increase in allocations for women's empowerment in the 2024 national budget, amounting to approximately 38 billion USD, which represents 6.8% of total government spending. The institutionalization of gender responsive budgeting has been successfully achieved across 46 central government ministries and 9 states. Additionally, UN Women supported 8 states, including Goa, Assam, and Uttarakhand in building institutional mechanisms for gender-based budgeting.

WHO collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to strengthen gender-responsive budgeting and promote health equity.

Throughout 2024, UNICEF institutionalised child-focused outcome-based budgeting in 11 states and developed a standardized methodology for the Budget Division, Ministry of Finance for Statement 12 of the Union Budget. UNICEF's multi-state studies on girl child cash transfers were strengthened through the CASH-PLUS approach, reaching approximately 14 million girls aged 0-19 years with complementary services.

HI-STORY/OG6 – Doorstep Banking Helps Basanti Secure a Scholarship

Basanti Boraik, 21, lives in Bijulibari Tea Garden, in Dibrugarh District, Assam. She was eager to continue her higher education after completing her class 12 exams, but her family did not earn enough to be able to provide for her tuition fees for under-graduate studies.



UNICEF, in partnership with Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP), the government and NGOs have been working collaboratively to enhance the agency of the adolescents through adolescent clubs etc. Basanti was an active member of one of such adolescent clubs. In fact, she attributes her motivation to pursue higher studies due to her engagement in the club activities along with other girls. In her club she got to know about the scholarship schemes offered by Tea Tribes and Adivasi Welfare Department.

In tandem with this awareness session, there were financial linkage camps organized by Assam Rural Livelihood Mission in her neighbourhood. In one such camps, the Business Correspondent Sakhis (BC Sakhis), the cadre for door-step banking, assured her that she will support her in opening bank.

Basanti opened an account with the bank, she carefully maintained her account and applied for the scholarship. She was selected for the post-metric scholarship scheme. She receives USD 85 per month from September 2023 to pursue higher education.

Sustained advocacy on child deprivation measure leveraged the technical analysis to inform UNICEF programming office-wide, Central Finance Commission and partners to sensitize stakeholders to address child poverty. Partnerships for national child

development measures presented methodology and topline to the national policy commission. Progress is stalled due to leadership changes at the Commission. Stakeholder sensitization conducted across civil society, academia, national governments and UNICEF through knowledge sessions and G-20 publications. States made initial strides on child deprivations indices.

UN Women provided technical support and advocacy for the creation of the Maharashtra State Women Empowerment Policy, addressing gender disparities across various sectors, including health, education, livelihoods, climate change, and governance.

Output 6.2. Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence: Comprehensive policies and programmes on prevention and response to gender-based violence, especially for the marginalized groups, are in place and effectively implemented to realize their social, political, and economic rights.

During 2024, critical partnerships with women and youth led organisations were established; an organizational readiness exercise conducted across the board highlighted the capacity gaps in knowledge and application of Gender Transformative Accelerator. Innovative partnerships on strengthening digital literacy skills among adolescent girls from marginalized communities was established and rolled-out. Overall, there is continued effort to strengthen capacities of gender focals from national and state offices.

HI-STORIES/OG6 – Breaking the Cycle: One Girl's Stand Against Child Marriage Inspires a Community

Shruti belongs to a landholder family in Parbhani, a district in Maharashtra's drought-prone Marathwada region. Her family lives free from the vulnerabilities of poverty and the seasonal migration for sugarcane harvesting that forces many poorer families in the region to relocate from October to March.



Shruti joined the Sakshum programme after she heard Priyanka Jondhe, a volunteer, speak about child marriage and its ill effects. 'Sakshum' - a person who is completely endowed and capacitated – is an innovative, multi-layered programme aiming to end child marriage in Maharashtra state. This collaborative effort between the Department of Women and Child Development, UNICEF Maharashtra, and SBC3 (Center for Social and Behaviour Change Communication), employs gender-transformative programming to tackle the root causes of gender inequality. Using extensive surveys, Sakshum workers understand the ground reality and develop culturally relevant training strategies.

Shruti is now a 'Saksham Doot'. Selected for her leadership skills and commitment, she acts like a peer leader and champions against child marriage. Sakshum has reached 2,000 schools, engaging 230,000 girls and 270,000 boys, along with 12,124 parents using innovative initiatives.

In 2024, UN Women India sensitised a total of 5,677 workers, government officials, students, community members, and farmers on gender and social norms using behavioural change and communication tools. 3,311 women farmers were trained on gender and social norms, enhancing their leadership and decision-making roles in rural economies under the CORE project.

UNHCR and its NGO partners worked closely in 12 states and union territories with refugees and asylum seekers on GBV prevention and response through 253 community-based structures. 240 survivors were supported with multi-sectoral response through

referrals for psychosocial support, health, legal, and safe shelter support. UNHCR and partners conducted 636 GBV awareness sessions for refugees and asylum seekers, including 253 with community structures based on AGD principles, reaching 156,888 individuals. Community leadership training supported 189 female leaders across 253 community-based structures, empowering them to address community concerns. 12,822 women and girls received sanitary materials. 9,621 women and girls engaged in GBV prevention and promoting positive behavioral change, alongside 4,940 men and boys as agents of change. School enrolment of 1,718 girls was facilitated.

Through UNHCR's support, menstrual hygiene access improved with 12,822 women and girls receiving sanitary materials. Gender equity was promoted through financial support for girls' education, benefiting 1,087 Rohingya girls in 2024. Engaging men and boys on gender equality, child marriage, and domestic violence led to community-led interventions preventing some cases of child marriage and encouraging domestic violence survivors to seek help. UNDP's technical support and impact evaluations improved the quality of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) services for over 70,000 tribal schoolgirls in Maharashtra.

UNFPA India provided targeted training on Gender Based Violence to 4,139 elected representatives, OSC staff, judicial officers, police, and government officials to enhance multi-sectoral GBV response. Furthermore, 486 media professionals received training on gender-sensitive reporting, and awards were given to recognize gender-responsive narratives in media and the arts. In partnership with Enfold, UNFPA developed a technical primer on annulment of child marriages under the Prohibition of Child Marriages Act, which is intended to unpack legal provisions and processes in simple, accessible terms for diverse stakeholders working with young people.

6.3. Equitable Access to Opportunities for Participation: Children, adolescent youth, and other vulnerable groups, have increased equitable access to opportunities for participation, inclusion, and to justice and protection services.

In 2024, the UN agencies in India scaled up its efforts to ensure that children, adolescent youth, and other vulnerable groups gained increased equitable access to opportunities for participation, inclusion, justice and protection services, enhancing their social, political, and economic rights.

Leveraging Mission Vatsalya, UNICEF extended technical support to strengthen families at risk by linking them to social protection programmes and sponsorship to prevent and protect children from violence abuse and exploitation.

UNICEF's technical support and engagement with district administration and CSOs in high child marriage prevalence states resulted in development of 139 action plan to address child marriage and violence against children in a consultative manner. UNICEF's collaboration with district, state and national level counterparts led to adolescent platforms such as Shala Adhigam, Advika, SNEHA, Udaan, PURNA, Kanyashree clubs engage about 6,481,270 adolescents on issues affecting them and further catalysing allocation of state resources towards ending child marriage and young people's priorities in 14 states.

Under Youth Advocacy Initiatives, 278,252 young people have actively participated in UNICEF Yuwaah's youth advocacy programs such as U-Report Polls, Youth Ke Bol, and Young People's Action Team.

In 2024, UNFPA's technical assistance and advocacy has ensured presence of trained providers in 80% of Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs) in the focus states that resulted in one million adolescents (0.53 million girls and 0.47 million boys) receiving quality services from 1,086 AFHCs. UNFPA's innovative AI-enabled multilingual chatbot "Just Ask" launched in 2023 has reached 120,000 users by the end of 2024 with 2.04 million user queries and 2.5 million interactions on Chatbot.

Significant strides were made on family-based care for children and prevention of family separation and supporting children's access to essential services for family integration and strengthening. 309,687 children accessed social protection schemes, and 103,721 children reunified with their families or placed in family care.

Across India, UNICEF's efforts have yielded significant results. In Chhattisgarh, the state launched India's first foster parent network, an initiative led by the Minister of Women and Child Development which brings together prospective and existing foster parents to create a supportive community. In West Bengal, UNICEF's guidance ensured that 13,231 children (70% of whom were girls) were reunited with their families. Uttar Pradesh facilitated family-based care for 27,671 children. Rajasthan utilized over 1,100 crore in social protection funds to assist 57,958 children, demonstrating the potential of

leveraging financial resources. Maharashtra made strides in kinship care, preventing unsafe migration for 8,144 children by placing them in stable family or community-based arrangements. UNICEF's role extended to include strengthening capacities and networks. Training programs enhanced the skills of 47,824 child protection officials across 14 states, focusing on case management and monitoring.

Collaborating with the Supreme Court Juvenile Justice Committee, UNICEF highlighted children with disabilities in the child protection system, effectively leading to data collection and analysis on justice access for children with disabilities which now informs quarterly policy reviews. UNICEF's collaboration with district, state and national level counterparts enabled platforms such as Shala Adhigam, Advika, SNEHA, Udaan, PURNA, Kanyashree clubs to engage 6,481,270 adolescents on issues affecting them such as child marriage and gender issues.

The RiseUp4Peace educational initiative strengthened young people's resilience against drugs, crime, and risky behaviours while supporting the National Education Policy and National Curriculum Framework. The initiative has engaged 33,000 educators and students from over 700 schools across India. Over 200 workshops and dialogues were conducted, empowering students to develop solutions for disability inclusion, anti-bullying, cyber safety, drug prevention, and gender equality using art, music, and technology. Capacity-building programs for 6,800 educators were held to integrate SDG16 themes in classrooms. RiseUp4Peace was supported by various partners including the government authorities and celebrities like the badminton star Saina Nehwal and actor Suniel Shetty.

HI-STORIES/OG6 – Shifa Sheikh young entrepreneur with the support from UNICEF YuWaah

Shifa Shaikh, a 19-year-old student from Mumbai, has emerged as a young entrepreneur in the bakery and confectionery industry. Growing up in a modest household, with her father working as a carpenter and her mother a homemaker, Shifa's family income was limited to INR 14,000 a month. Her entrepreneurial journey began when she discovered her passion for baking through the Salaam Bombay Foundation (SBF). Shifa's talent soon turned into a business, and she expanded her offerings to customized cakes, cookies, chocolates, and cupcakes, with her red velvet cake becoming a bestseller.



Her breakthrough came when she pitched her business at SBF's *Dolphin Tanki* initiative, supported by UNICEF YuWaah. Winning seed funding helped her expand her business beyond her local area, and she secured monthly orders from her college canteen. Today, Shifa's monthly income has increased fourfold, and she balances her studies, entrepreneurial venture, and family responsibilities with determination and heart.

UNFPA was instrumental in implementing the School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP) across six states—Bihar, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, and Rajasthan delivering life skills education in 64,341 schools benefiting 3.17 million adolescents in these states.

Output 6.4. Social Protection: Improved policy framework, institutional mechanisms, resources, and capacities are in place for age sensitive, gender transformative, and inclusive social protection services.

In 2024, improved policy frameworks, institutional mechanisms, resources, and capacities were established to provide age-sensitive, gender-transformative, and inclusive social protection services, ensuring equitable access for vulnerable groups.

In collaboration with national and subnational governments, UNICEF enhanced sustainable social protection for 13.98 million girls, 3.07 million poor and vulnerable households, 230,000 orphaned children, and 5,750 disabled children through the CASH PLUS initiative.

UNICEF's Multi-state studies on girl child cash transfers, maternity benefits, and national employment guarantee schemes have improved the targeting of social protection schemes. These efforts have reached approximately 14 million girls aged 0-19 years, provided maternity benefits and public works programs to over 3.7 million households, and ensured access to social protection services for over 210,000 orphaned children.

UNICEF launched the first-ever UN-wide national study on disability inclusion has been launched in collaboration with WHO and UNDP, under the UNRCO. This study aims to provide state estimates on persons with disabilities by the end of 2025.

UNDP's focus on inclusive social protection in 2024 ensured that marginalized groups gained equitable access to government welfare schemes, healthcare and financial support-building resilience from the ground up. As part of the Government of India's SMILE scheme, 3,100 marginalized persons gained access to the government's special identity cards and other benefits, facilitating their legal recognition and economic inclusion.

UNAIDS provided technical assistance to NACO on strategic information. NACO successfully submitted the 2024 Global AIDS Monitoring Report which has informed the 2024 Global AIDS reporting. These were crucial in informing the global and regional epidemic level and trends and take stock of the overall response.

ESCAP developed the Quick Guide and Compendium on Designing and Retrofitting Inclusive Parks, providing technical specifications and best practices for urban planners and policymakers. The training and guide have directly influenced MCD's commitment to developing inclusive theme parks, with the first such project underway in Shahdara.

Partnerships in Odisha and Chhattisgarh digitized forest rights claims for almost 1 million tribal right-holders, ensuring transparency, efficiency, and real-time tracking. UNDP also prioritized the socio-economic well-being of informal waste workers. Over 33,200 waste pickers (35% women) were connected to at least two social security schemes, improving their financial security and workplace safety. These interventions ensured that some of the most vulnerable urban workers could access dignified employment and essential protections.

WFP and Department of Women and Child Development (WCD) in Haryana commenced the implementation of a three-year programme to strengthen the nutrition security and gender equality status in Haryana. WFP developed a customised training package on gender equality for Anganwadi & other frontline workers in Haryana and trained over 260 Master Trainers across all 22 districts. A qualitative needs assessment study looking at the role of Anganwadi workers on gender equality and nutrition security informed the module preparation.

IOM is conducting a first of its kind nationwide study on trends in international migration in collaboration with India's Ministry of External Affairs. The research is spread across 17 states with a sample size of 9000 respondents and will be published in early 2025.

6.5. Data and Knowledge Building: Strengthened data, improved knowledge generation, and sharing at national and sub national levels, especially on and to vulnerable groups.

In 2024, UN agencies scaled up its support to improve the strengthening of data sharing at national and state levels with a particular focus on vulnerable groups.

The Knowledge, Attitude and Practice study, completed in 2023, called for enhanced knowledge on critical behaviours, information on specific schemes and influence attitudes of caregivers. In 2024, UNICEF focused on capacitating a few critical partners to work more effectively on social behaviours change strategies for children to accelerate results across sectors. In six states, UNICEF supported strengthening of governments evidence-based SBC strategies through collaboration with Behavioural Insight Units (BIU) on health, nutrition, gender equality and using Human Centred Design approaches to support decision making.

To strengthen evidence-based interventions, UNFPA engaged the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), to develop a framework for measuring social norm change at the panchayat level. This framework will evaluate the impact of current interventions and serve as a tool for assessing similar initiatives aimed at shifting discriminatory norms at the grassroot level through panchayats.

ESCAP, in collaboration with IOM and UN Women, conducted research on employment-driven internal migration of women in India, focusing on garment industry workers. The study identified structural barriers faced by migrant women workers and offers policy recommendations to improve labour protections and economic opportunities.

467 refugees and asylum seekers accessed varied protection services like GBV/CP, counselling and registration from UNHCR and its partners. Community engagement expanded through awareness sessions on child rights, child marriage, child labour, GBV, and harmful social norms, reaching 11,530 community members. 112 children's groups, youth groups, adolescent groups, and child protection committees with 2,741 members engaged with UNHCR and partners on identifying their protection issues and exploring ways to address them.

Through UNHCR's efforts, menstrual hygiene access improved with 12,822 women and girls receiving sanitary materials. Preventive healthcare remained a focus, with 368 awareness sessions reaching 11,266 community members on reproductive health, children's health, vector-borne diseases, seasonal illnesses, and hygiene. Institutional deliveries were promoted, with 156 Rohingya women receiving cash-based assistance.

6.6. South-South Cooperation: India's experience and best practices are shared, and international technical cooperation facilitated to foster regional and global development.

Through South-South Cooperation, the UN supported India in sharing its best practices and facilitating international technical cooperation, enhancing regional and global development by promoting governance improvements, educational initiatives, health programs, and refugee integration efforts.

To foster technical collaboration through south-south and inter-state cooperation initiatives, UNFPA facilitated the visit of officials from the Government of Rajasthan to Bihar to observe Bihar's life skills education in Madrasas, thereby facilitating its replication in Rajasthan. UNFPA also enabled NITI Aayog's participation in the Asia-Pacific Conference on Ageing and facilitated engagements of Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India and Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on register-based censuses in China.

India assumed the role of chair of the Colombo Process for the first time in May 2024, leading the regional consultative process until 2026. IOM hosted the Secretariat to Colombo Process and has offered administrative & technical support with the Government of India, ensuring all-round coordination with other relevant country missions, regional office and headquarters.

Partnerships were facilitated between the Governments of Rajasthan and Bihar to replicate Bihar's initiative to deliver life skills education in madarasas by UNFPA. WHO India supported participation of India in the 12-country Global Action for Measurement of Adolescent Health (GAMA) feasibility study with the goal to promote harmonized guidance for adolescent health measurement and supporting countries in collecting useful data to track progress in the improvement of adolescent health.

UNODC supported participation of Indian wildlife crime control bureau and Customs officials in regional training and consultation events to showcase good practice investigative techniques being used in India for countering wildlife crime. In alignment with the indicator, UNHCR remained committed to supporting cross-learning opportunities and south-south exchanges to promote the inclusion and self-reliance of refugees in India. A key example of this effort is the collaboration with the Southern India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) through a Letter of Understanding (LoU) to enhance the socio-economic integration of Sri Lankan refugees.

As part of this initiative, UNHCR organized a three-day food festival with the participation of 13 private sector partners. This event not only celebrated the culinary heritage of the refugee community but also served as a platform to raise awareness, foster self-reliance, and strengthen partnerships with state government organizations. To further promote the integration of Sri Lankan refugees into the local economy, UNHCR facilitated community mobilization efforts, connecting 2,545 refugees with the Tamil Nadu state government's skill training programmes. In partnership with SICCI, UNHCR also organized a business boot camp, equipping 23 refugee entrepreneurs with essential business skills to enhance their livelihoods and economic prospects.

UNFPA facilitated impactful engagements with civil society organizations (CSOs) and women's rights groups. A side event at CPD 57, "Localizing the SDGs: Women in local governance in India lead the Way" featured three elected women representatives from India.