

unicef  | for every child

SUPPLY CHAINS SAVE LIVES

Unlocking access for children,
their families and communities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Supply chains save lives. They are one of the fundamental building blocks of the health, nutrition, education, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems that must work to meet children's rights so every child can meet their full potential.

From product selection and strategic procurement to contracting logistics services through to last mile delivery, UNICEF and our partners are supporting governments to reach all children in need, delivering to the right place, at the right time with quality supplies and services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the whole world the value of resilient, equitable supply chains. Equitable access to lifesaving health, nutrition, education and WASH supplies will require us to work together to be prepared, respond to and reflect on successes and failures.

This report was developed with two objectives:

1. To provide an analysis of the **key health, nutrition, education and WASH supply chain barriers** that limit children's access the products, services and treatments they need.
2. To offer a compendium of resources to address the most critical barriers to strengthening supply chains.

Evidence from the experiences and knowledge of partners including governments, USAID, the Global Fund, the Global Alliance for Vaccines (GAVI) the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the African Centre for Disease Control, SAPICS (the professional body for supply chain management), the private sector, WHO, UNFPA and many others has informed eight recommendations that can increase access to quality, lifesaving supplies and services in a post-pandemic future.

To develop strong supply chains with the aim of saving lives, we must invest in:

1. Accelerating access to **reliable supply chain data and technology** to support decision-making
2. Promoting **environmental, social and economic sustainability**
3. Strengthening **service delivery systems and quality of care** to the last mile
4. Increasing **public financing for supplies and reforming fiscal policies**
5. Supporting **local production and manufacturing of supplies**, including through market-shaping
6. Enhancing **governance, private sector involvement and multi-partner coordination**
7. Empowering the **supply chain workforce**
8. Fostering and strengthening **global shared-value partnerships**



Accelerating action requires a concerted effort to scale global goods, in conjunction with the reinforcement of existing, and establishment of new, partnerships that foster entrepreneurial and well-proven supply chain expertise. For years UNICEF has been partnering with host governments, international development agencies, civil society organizations, industry, private sector organizations and academia to **produce and deploy global innovative tools and public goods** to strengthen supply chains across all the aforementioned areas. These include:

- The **Vaccine Independence Initiative**, a \$234 million fund that governments can tap into to procure health and nutrition supplies and treat tens of millions of children each year.
- The **Traceability & Verification System**, which serves to verify the authenticity of vaccines and other health products and improve patient safety.
- **NutriDash**, which provides a common nutrition monitoring system for internal and child nutrition programming and reporting.
- The **Effective Vaccine Management Initiative and Maturity Model**, which have both been instrumental in identifying supply chain development needs, shaping improvement plans and directing resource allocations.
- **People that Deliver**, UNICEF's supply chain workforce arm, which, through its coalition of public and private partners, supports countries to develop, empower and equip the supply chain workforce.

These partnerships have also been pivotal to support and scale-up UNICEF's unique supply chain management expertise for the benefit of children, their families and communities.

- As the largest UN procurement agency, UNICEF provides, stores and transports critical vaccines, medicines, nutrition, education products and many other critical supplies to children across the globe – including in emergency settings. In 2021 alone, **UNICEF procured a record \$7.2 billion worth of supplies and services, of which a third (\$ 2.7 billion) was sourced locally from low and middle-income countries.**

- UNICEF leverages its purchasing power to diversify and bolster the local production of vaccines, nutrition products and other essential commodities. In 2021, **UNICEF procured RUTF from 22 different suppliers, of whom 18 were located in or close to countries with high levels of child wasting.** Around two-thirds of UNICEF RUTF programme demand was satisfied through local RUTF production.
- UNICEF lends its technical expertise and strengthens the capacity of governments to run and manage their own health, nutrition, education and WASH supply chains. Since 2019, **UNICEF has been leading 639 technical cooperation projects across 20 areas in 66 countries**, from supporting domestic resource mobilization for supplies and deploying cutting-edge last mile innovation to building the skills of the supply chain workforce and improving product visibility from manufacturer to child.

Accelerating the implementation of the eight recommendations will require all partners to work in collaboration and share good practices. Case studies from Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal and Pakistan testify to the added-value of strengthening supply chains to achieve programme outcomes and make a difference in children's lives, from determining when to deploy drones to increase the availability of health commodities or steering a coordinated COVID-19 vaccine roll out, to working with the private sector to improve the supply of clean water for remote communities.

Although remarkable progress in child survival has been achieved over the last three decades, more needs to be done. In 2021, five million children were still missing out on basic vaccines while 13.6 million under the age of 5 suffered from severe wasting and 698 million lacked basic sanitation services at school. As social welfare systems rebuild after the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF and partners have an opportunity to make supply chains more resilient, more sustainable and more efficient. **This report is a call to action to leverage best practices and ensure the global development community is better positioned to achieve our mutual goals together.**



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