



# EDUCATION THEMATIC REPORTS

2025

# SUMMARY OF EDUCATION THEMATIC REPORTS (BRAZIL-PHILIPPINES-GHANA)

## OVERVIEW AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2025

**Education** is more than a fundamental right — it **is the foundation of hope, opportunity and a better future** for every child. Yet today, millions of children are still denied this right. Poverty, climate shocks, conflict, displacement, violence, disability and discrimination continue to keep children out of school — or in learning environments that lack adequately trained teachers and the conditions needed for effective learning. These challenges disproportionately affect the most vulnerable children, particularly girls, who continue to face multiple and intersecting barriers to education.

**Education is a powerful driver of transformation.** It enables children to fulfil their potential, shape their future and make their voices heard. It is also one of the most effective ways to break the cycle of poverty, improve health outcomes and strengthen the protection of children's rights.

Through its **Global Education Thematic Fund**, UNICEF works in over 140 countries to ensure that every child can access **quality, inclusive and resilient education**. Beyond delivering programmes, UNICEF supports countries — particularly the most vulnerable — in building strong education systems capable of withstanding crises and ensuring continuity of learning in all contexts. Powered by flexible, multi-year funding, the Fund enables UNICEF to respond rapidly to emergencies, support national education reforms, scale innovative solutions and connect education with health, protection and social services.

**Education is life-saving. Education is life-changing. Education is life-sustaining.**

Together, we can ensure that every child — regardless of who they are or where they are born — has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

At a time when humanitarian needs continue to grow and available resources are increasingly constrained, partnerships are more important than ever. Thanks to the support of committed partners as TP, UNICEF reaches children living in the world's most fragile and crisis-affected contexts with education, protection and life-saving assistance. Yet, growing needs continue to outpace available resources, putting essential programmes at risk.

**Since 2022, TP and UNICEF** have partnered to **improve access to education and deliver humanitarian relief worldwide**. UNICEF teams express their deep appreciation to TP, whose support makes this commitment possible. Together, we can turn today's challenges into tomorrow's opportunities and ensure that every child, wherever they live, has the chance to survive, grow and thrive.

01

ENSURING QUALITY LEARNING  
FOR EVERY CHILD

BRAZIL

## COUNTRY CONTEXT & PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

In Latin America and the Caribbean, **2.3 million children are out of primary school**, while the situation is even more critical at the secondary level, where **2.5 million children and adolescents are out of lower secondary education** and **7.2 million are out of upper secondary education**. In response to these challenges, Brazil has continued to strengthen its education system through national policy reforms focused on literacy, learning recovery, youth inclusion, and the development of the new National Education Plan (2025–2035). Efforts have also been made to expand full-time education (expanded from 18% to 25,8% between 2022–2025) and improve digital connectivity in public schools. The Connected Schools Strategy reached more than 94,000 public schools (68% of all), advancing digital inclusion – although 18,000 schools lack access to broadband, and 2,104 public schools have no connectivity at all because they lack access to electricity.

Despite this progress, **important challenges remain**. While access to primary education is nearly universal, enrolment gaps persist among children aged 4–5 and adolescents aged 15–17, particularly those in situations of poverty and social exclusion. **The central challenge for education in Brazil increasingly lies in ensuring successful education trajectories**. In addition, learning outcomes decline across the education cycle, with vulnerable groups—including Afro-descendant, Indigenous, Quilombola, rural, migrant and refugee children, and children with disabilities—continuing to face persistent barriers to quality education.

Structural factors such as poverty, territorial disparities, school violence, climate-related emergencies and unequal digital access continue to affect education continuity and learning outcomes. These challenges require integrated, system-level responses combining access, quality, protection and improved transitions to employment. **In this context, strengthening education systems at national and subnational levels remains essential to ensure equitable learning opportunities and reduce persistent inequalities.**



# ACHIEVEMENTS

Guided by a strong equity focus, UNICEF in Brazil prioritizes Afro-descendent, Indigenous, quilombola, riverside-dwelling, rural, migrant, refugee and displaced children and adolescents, as well as those living in contexts of multidimensional poverty or with disabilities.

## Results achieved in 2025:

- **Education systems are stronger**, territorial governance mechanisms are responsive, and more children and adolescents—especially girls and Black youth—are remaining in school, learning, and accessing pathways to decent work.
- Since 2017, **School Active Search (SAS)**, a key UNICEF Strategy, has strengthened the capacity of subnational governments to identify and re-enrol out-of-school children. In 2025, in partnership with the National Union of Municipal Education Managers (UNDIME) and state secretariats, **the initiative reached 2,646 municipalities and 21 states, resulting in the re-enrolment of 11,656 children and adolescents.**
- Under the **Successful School Pathways (SSP) strategy**, more than **3,100 educators were trained and 39,600 students were directly supported** to improve school progression, learning outcomes, and retention in 2025. Since 2019, the strategy helps education systems to adopt inclusive pedagogical practices and to prioritize curricula aligned with students' learning needs.
- In 2025, the **One Million Opportunities (1MiO) initiative** reached a milestone of more than **1.29 million adolescents and young people benefiting from training, apprenticeships, internships, employment, and income-generation opportunities.** During the year, **202,489 adolescents and young people developed skills** through online courses and training initiatives in entrepreneurship, green skills, creative economy, artificial intelligence, STEAM, climate change, and problem-solving. The 1MiO initiative also facilitated access to decent work opportunities for 117,683 adolescents and young people, engaging 240 partner companies and public institutions.



UNICEF/BRZ/João Henrique Santiago

# FUTURE WORKPLAN

Implementation nevertheless continues to face significant challenges. High turnover among municipal administrations requires continuous institutional capacity-building, while persistent territorial inequalities, fiscal constraints, climate-related emergencies and violence continue to affect service delivery and learning environments. Ensuring that digital connectivity translates into meaningful improvements in teaching and learning also remains an ongoing priority.

Aligned with SDG 4, the 2030 Agenda and the Leave No One Behind principle, UNICEF Brazil will continue advancing its Education Programme. By 2028, UNICEF aims to ensure that millions of children and adolescents—especially the most vulnerable—are back in school, learning and prepared to thrive in a digital and complex world. Territorial strategies such as the UNICEF Seal and Agenda Cidade UNICEF will remain central platforms for translating national policies into measurable results at municipal level, strengthening local systems.

## UNICEF will focus on five strategic priorities:

- **Advocacy & policy engagement:** UNICEF will continue to support federal and subnational governments. This includes advancing equitable access, re-enrolment, school connectivity, learning recovery, improving early childhood education, while integrating violence prevention, climate resilience and education in emergencies. In 2026, UNICEF will deliver 43 trainings, reaching thousands of municipal education professionals in 18 states.
- **Data and evidence:** UNICEF will reinforce evidence generation and data-driven decision-making, through SAS and GIGA initiatives, to identify out-of-school children, monitor school connectivity, guiding targeted responses – particularly in Indigenous, Quilombola and rural contexts.
- **Partnerships and learning:** UNICEF will catalyse partnerships with governments, civil society and private sector to accelerate community-driven solutions for quality education.
- **Equity and inclusion:** UNICEF will deepen the integration of equity, gender and ethnicity across the programme. This includes strengthening educators' capacities to implement inclusive, as well as advancing intercultural approaches to ensure access, retention and learning for Indigenous, migrant, Quilombola and other excluded children and adolescents.
- **Adolescent pathways:** UNICEF will expand adolescent participation and strengthen pathways from school to the world of work, building on initiatives such as 1MiO and STEAM.

**By 2028, strengthened territorial systems, improved data use and expanded partnerships will support more children and adolescents—especially the most vulnerable—to access education, learn and thrive.**

# 02

unicef   
pour chaque enfant

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S  
EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

# PHILIPPINES



# ACHIEVEMENTS

Through integrated policy advocacy, systems strengthening, capacity building and service delivery modelling, UNICEF has helped establish the necessary conditions for young children in the Philippines to thrive and transition successfully into formal education. In 2025, UNICEF contributed to the following key achievements in the sector through technical assistance, stakeholder convening, evidence generation, systems strengthening, and innovation modelling.

## 1. Stronger cross-sectoral policy, programme development, and coordination at the national level

UNICEF's evidence-based technical inputs and modelling experience were instrumental in supporting the passage of the ECCD System Act (RA 12199), which mandates local governments to provide comprehensive ECCD services for children under five and ensure smooth transitions to kindergarten and primary education. Beyond legislation, UNICEF advanced ECCD governance and financing through strategic policy engagement and technical support.

## 2. Enhanced capacity of Local Government Units (LGUs) and schools to increase young children's access to quality and inclusive ECE services

To translate policy gains into practice, UNICEF developed and rolled out the ECCD LGU Capacity Assessment Tool. The nationwide ongoing capacity assessment enables local governments to evaluate their readiness to implement the ECCD System Act and design costed ECCD Roadmaps tailored to their specific contexts. The tool provides a systematic framework to identify strengths, gaps, and development needs in local governance. UNICEF modelled the ECCD-ECE and Primary Education LINK in 21 barangays across 7 municipalities in Northern Samar and Zamboanga del Norte to support a smooth transition for young children and strengthen their school readiness. These efforts improved formative assessment practices and promoted inclusive teaching. Based on programme monitoring reports, a total of 3,755 children (1,812 boys and 1,943 girls) 3-5 years old benefited from having CDWs and teachers with improved capacities.

## 3. Strengthened implementation of the system for prevention, early identification, referral, intervention of delays, disorders, and disabilities in early childhood.

UNICEF has taken initial steps to strengthen the child mapping tool and processes to operationalize the CFS tool. This will help ensure children with functional difficulties and disabilities are systematically identified and referred for support. A rapid assessment of the implementation of the Prevention, Early Identification, Referrals and Interventions for Delays, Disorders and Disabilities in Early Childhood (PEIRIDDDDEC) system informed further improvements, ensuring that ECCD systems are responsive to the needs of all children. UNICEF also introduced the capacity readiness assessment tool to implement the Inclusive Education Law.



ECCD Focal person plays with a young learner who received her Learn-at-Home ECCD Kit to support her holistic development, after having been assessed using the Philippine ECCD Checklist Child Record 2.

# COUNTRY CONTEXT

## & PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Philippines continues to face a learning crisis rooted in systemic inequities and fragile early childhood foundations. The SEA-PLM 2024 Regional Report highlights persistent disparities among high and low achievers, girls and boys, rich and poor households, and children who speak the test language at home versus those who do not. While the report recognizes progress made, it notes that gains remain uneven, underscoring the need for targeted interventions.

The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2) reported that climate-related disruptions during SY 2024–2025 caused learners in some regions to miss up to a month of classes, deepening inequities for vulnerable communities with weak recovery mechanisms. Yet beyond these setbacks, the greater challenge lies in fragile early childhood foundations. Participation among children aged 3–4 rose from 19 percent in 2022 to 31 percent in 2024, nearing the 2025 national government target of 33 percent but still considered very low. Seven in ten children in this age group remain outside early childhood education, and nearly three in ten five-year-old children were not enrolled in kindergarten in 2024, despite its mandatory status. These gaps leave many children without the stimulation and structured learning experiences essential for success in primary grades.

Access to Early Childhood Care Development (ECCD) services remains uneven, with thousands of barangays lacking CDCs and many facilities falling short of quality standards. The EDCOM 2 Final Report emphasizes that beyond being an infrastructure issue, this gap reflects deeper systemic weaknesses in governance, financing and workforce development.

It found that children in rural and disadvantaged communities depend heavily on underfunded centres with underprepared and poorly compensated Child Development Workers, which affects service quality and results in highly unequal opportunities for early learning. At the household level, resource constraints compound these challenges: fewer than half of families with young children own educational toys, and only two in five have children's books. With limited stimulation at home, children rely heavily on child development centres (CDCs), which often lack adequate materials and operating budgets.

In view of these gaps, the ECCD System Act marks a critical reform. It mandates local governments to deliver ECCD services, ensuring every barangay provides CDCs or alternative delivery modalities.

Effective implementation of the law is necessary to strengthen accountability, improve service delivery, and ensure ECCD is treated not as optional, but as essential to addressing the learning crisis.



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# FUTURE WORK PLAN

UNICEF and its partners will continue working to ensure that children aged 3–5 years are developmentally on track, ready for school, and able to transition seamlessly into primary education. Moving forward, support will focus on helping the government effectively implement the new ECCD System Act by:

- **Policy and Advocacy:** Advancing evidence-based policies, frameworks, assessments, and advocacy initiatives.
- **Systems Strengthening:** Improving governance structures, quality assurance, and accountability mechanisms for early childhood education.
- **Innovation and Scale-Up:** Expanding and refining the LINK initiative to ensure smooth transition of young children from home to preschool, kindergarten, and primary school, while enhancing inclusiveness and service quality.
- **Resilience in Emergencies:** Embedding ECE in preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, and ensuring its integration within education clusters and subclusters.



*A child development worker in Mondragon, Northern Samar, monitors the use of a Learn-At-Home Kit to support development and learning activities at home. ©UNICEF/Philippines 2025/Psyche V Olayvar*



*DepEd and LGU stakeholders in Northern Samar assessing their capacity in implementing the Inclusive Education Act ©UNICEF Philippines/2025/Psyche Olayvar*

# GHANA

# 03

**EMPOWERING GIRLS IN STEM THROUGH  
TEACHER SUPPORT AND CAREER GUIDANCE**

# COUNTRY CONTEXT

Ghana has made significant progress toward gender parity in basic and secondary education enrollment. However, this progress does not fully translate into equal opportunities for girls, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Deep-rooted gender norms, limited access to career guidance, and a shortage of female role models in STEM continue to influence the aspirations and educational pathways of girls.

While girls enroll in school at similar rates to boys, several barriers persist. Approximately 15% of girls give birth before the age of 18, and one in six girls is married before adulthood, contributing to school dropout and limiting future opportunities. At the same time, girls remain significantly underrepresented in technical and vocational pathways, with **only 26% of students in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes being female.**

Within schools, the lack of trained counsellors and gender-responsive career guidance means that many students, particularly girls in rural and underserved communities, have limited exposure to information about STEM careers. Female teachers, who can serve as powerful role models, are also underrepresented in the STEM teaching workforce, especially at the junior high school level.

## Key points

Country-wide, at Grade 4 (P4, or children aged 9–10 years),

**51%**

of Ghanaian children score below basic proficiency in Mathematics

**49%**

score below basic proficiency in English



**11.6**

years of schooling, but only

**5.7**

years of effective learning



Budget for basic education shrank from **39%** in 2019 to

**19.6%** in 2024



In UNICEF-supported Differential Learning programming, English proficiency improved from **34%** to over **50%** during the 2023/2024 school year, and in Mathematics from **19%** to **44%**



**97%**

of teachers find UNICEF-supported Learning Passport platform effective



**21.6%**

of Ghana's female population are adolescent girls



**6,400**

pregnancy-related school dropouts in the 2020/2021 school year



Without targeted support during the upper primary and junior high school years, when students begin to make decisions about academic pathways, many girls lose confidence or interest in STEM subjects. **Strengthening gender-responsive teaching practices and improving career guidance within schools is therefore critical to expanding girls' participation in STEM and supporting Ghana's broader goals of innovation and inclusive economic growth.**

# UNICEF PROGRAMME APPROACH & ACHIEVEMENTS

**UNICEF Ghana works closely with the Ministry of Education and key sector partners to strengthen gender-responsive education systems and expand opportunities for girls, particularly in STEM-related learning pathways.** Building on ongoing work in teacher professional development, digital education, and girls' empowerment, UNICEF aims to **strengthen career guidance and gender-responsive teaching practices at the basic school level, while also engaging communities to challenge norms that limit girls' aspirations.** UNICEF's gender-responsive STEM programming in targeted districts across Ghana is already generating promising results. On average, teacher scores increased by approximately 15–20 percentage points in mathematics and science content knowledge, alongside improvements of around 20 percentage points in the use of learner-centered, gender-responsive pedagogical skills in the classroom.

As part of this wider effort, **UNICEF is supporting the Government of Ghana to strengthen the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) system for teachers,** which provides in-service learning opportunities that contribute to teacher certification and career progression. In 2026, UNICEF will work with government counterparts and academic partners to undertake a review of existing CPD programming, examining current courses, teacher uptake, and the perceived usefulness of available professional development opportunities. This analysis will help identify gaps within the CPD course catalogue and inform the development of new learning opportunities that respond to the evolving needs of teachers, including strengthening gender-responsive teaching practices and career guidance.

To help create an enabling environment for effective programme delivery, **UNICEF conducted an orientation session for the Ghana Education Service (GES) STEM Directorate.** The session not only introduced the programme but also provided a platform for the Directorate to highlight practical challenges affecting STEM delivery. Following this engagement, the GES STEM Directorate, with technical support from UNICEF, advanced a [STEM CABINET MEMORANDUM.pdf](#) to the Office of the President seeking policy approval for the introduction and institutionalization of STEM/STEAM specialization programmes in female Colleges of Education. This initiative aims to strengthen the pipeline of female STEM educators at the pre-secondary level.

**These efforts will also be closely linked with UNICEF Ghana's newly funded Digital Education initiative, which aims to leverage evidence-based digital tools and teacher support systems to improve learning outcomes.** By integrating gender-responsive approaches within broader teacher development and digital learning efforts, UNICEF seeks to ensure that teachers are equipped with practical tools to support all learners, including girls, to excel in school and have greater opportunities to diverse academic and career pathways, including in STEM fields.

Assuming a conservative uptake of 10% of public primary and junior high school teachers (approximately 17,800 teachers) accessing new CPD coursework, this would translate into improved teaching practices reaching an estimated **580,000 learners annually**, based on average pupil-teacher ratios of 35:1 at primary level and 30:1 at junior high school level. At this scale, strengthening gender-responsive teaching practices and career guidance within the CPD system can contribute to shifting classroom experiences and social norms, supporting more girls to consider and pursue STEM-related pathways over time.

# FUTURE WORKPLAN

In 2026, UNICEF Ghana will focus on strengthening the foundations for gender-responsive teacher professional development and career guidance within the national education system, while working closely with government and sector partners to identify scalable approaches that support girls' participation in STEM.

Key activities included:

- **CPD Systems Review:** UNICEF will support the review of existing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes for teachers, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and teacher training institutions, to better understand current course offerings, teacher uptake, and areas where additional professional development opportunities may be needed. Insights from this analysis will help inform the design and testing of new teacher support tools and learning opportunities that respond to teachers' professional development needs, including strengthening gender-responsive teaching practices and career guidance.
- **Tool Development & Alignment:** UNICEF will also work with education stakeholders to co-develop and refine practical tools, learning materials, and approaches that support teachers and school leaders in encouraging girls to pursue diverse academic and career pathways. UNICEF will engage with government and sector partners to map and align ongoing initiatives related to teacher professional development and career guidance, ensuring that planned activities complemented existing efforts while addressing identified gaps within the teacher support system.
- **Partnerships & Advocacy:** UNICEF will continue engaging national and local stakeholders, including government institutions, academia, civil society organizations, and development partners – to strengthen collaboration around girls' education and STEM participation. These activities will also create opportunities to document stories from schools, teachers, and girls whose aspirations and learning pathways are being supported through these efforts.



## “ Alice, five years old, from Brazil

Alice is five years old and has a whole world ahead of her. At the Municipal School Francisco Alves de Oliveira, in Amapá (AP), where she is currently completing the last year of Early Childhood Education, she learns about colors, listens to stories told by the teacher and plays games with her classmates.

At almost four years old, Alice was still not enrolled in Early Childhood Education because her grandmother, did not know she was already eligible. That changed during a soccer game, on a field near the home of Delmira Matta, operational coordinator of School Active Search in Amapá/AP - a *UNICEF* and partners-supported strategy that helps states and municipalities identify children and adolescents who are out of school or at risk of dropping out - and take action to ensure their enrollment and continued learning.



## HUMAN INTEREST STORIES



*“I asked if everyone was in school and if they knew anyone who was not. Then her brother said Alice was not enrolled,” recalls Delmira.*

At just six years old at the time, Christian already understood the importance of education. *“I study; she has to study too. It is important to have a good future,” he explains, now eight, about why he spoke up for his sister.*

Following this alert, Delmira visited the children’s grandmother, explained Alice’s rights, and encouraged her to enroll the girl. *“Delmira talked to me, the school called, and a few days later she was enrolled,” the grandmother remembers. Since then, Alice has gone to school every day, accompanied by her siblings.*

Teacher Sueli Duarte recalls those early days clearly: *“She was very shy and barely spoke. Over time, she began to open up. She paid attention to everything and completed all the activities with enthusiasm,” she says.*





## Marilyn Andatar,

School Head of Bogabongan Elementary School, Leon Postigo, Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines

Faced with a national reading crisis, **she introduced bold reforms in her school, strengthening foundations in the early grades and ensuring that no child moves on to the next level without the necessary skills.**

Through the UNICEF-supported ECE–Primary Education LINK initiative, **Marilyn helps build connections between schools, families, and communities to ensure that children enter education ready to learn—and stay on track.** From mapping every child to promoting early enrolment, the goal is clear: no child invisible, no child left behind.

## HUMAN INTEREST STORIES

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### Beyond numbers: A school head's dream

For Marilyn, the reforms are not just about statistics or compliance. They are about faces and futures—the shy boy who now reads aloud with pride, the little girl who dreams of becoming a teacher, the parents who finally see hope for their children.

*“Education is not just about promotion from one grade to another,” she reflects. “It’s about ensuring that every child, from preschool to Grade 6, has the chance to succeed.”*

Marilyn’s journey is a reminder that behind every policy and program are real children, real families, and real futures. Her leadership shows that when schools, communities, and government initiatives link arms, the learning crisis can be met not with despair, but with determination.

As she walks through the schoolyard, watching her Grade 2 learners read aloud, Marilyn smiles. **The crisis is real, but so is the hope. And for her, hope begins with a single child, found and nurtured, one step at a time.**

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