

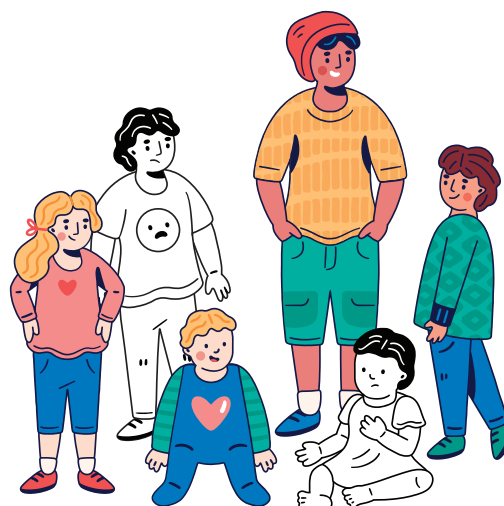
A photograph of two young girls in bright yellow raincoats and black boots splashing in a puddle. The girl in the foreground is smiling and has her hair blowing in the wind. The girl in the background is also smiling and splashing. The scene is set outdoors with green trees in the background.

Generating Results for Children at the Local Level in Ukraine

BACKGROUND

Ukraine initiated decentralization reform in 2015, to increase government accountability, and ensure that the population's needs and rights are fulfilled. To increase accountability, power was devolved to newly formed local authorities. They were given greater responsibilities for service delivery and, often, higher budgets as well. By November 2019, 1,002 new municipalities had been created covering 11.2 million people (31.9 per cent of Ukraine's population). The decentralization process is continuing.¹

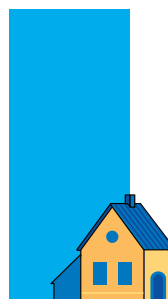
However, decentralization has led to numerous challenges and conflicting priorities. For example, local authorities tended to prioritize economic issues (such as roads and utilities) over social services. Recognizing this tendency, many local governments have assessed community needs and capacities. This reassessment of policy priorities created an opportunity to raise children's issues and ensure that children are adequately invested in at local level. This is important as every third child lives in poverty, and 14 per cent in extreme poverty. Rural poverty is almost twice as high as urban areas (39 per cent and 18.3 per cent respectively).² Moreover, multidimensional deprivation analysis shows that many children in rural areas lack access to basic services and have limited access to urban centres with better infrastructure. Meanwhile children in larger cities suffer from pollution, and limited space to live in and access to green spaces.



1 in 3
children lives
in poverty

14%
in extreme
poverty

39%



Rural poverty

18%



Urban poverty

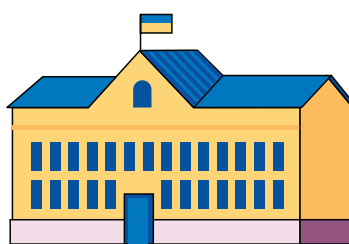
¹ Ministerstvo Rozvitku Gromad ta Teritoriy Ukraini, 'Monitoring protsesu detsentralizatsii vladi ta reformuvannya mistseвого samovryaduvannya [Monitoring of the Process of Decentralization and Reform of Local Self-Government]', 2019. Available at: <<https://decentralization.gov.ua/uploads/library/file/494/10.11.2019.pdf>>, accessed 4 March 2020

² UNICEF Ukraine, Report on Child Poverty and Disparities in Ukraine (forthcoming 2020).

ACTIONS

Given the opportunity presented by decentralization, UNICEF Ukraine deployed UNICEF's global Child Friendly City Initiative (CFCI)³ as a tool to realize children's rights through local commitment and investment. UNICEF partnered with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Ministry of Social Policy, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Regional Development, the Association of Cities, the Association of Amalgamated Communities, the Child Ombudsmen and the National Youth Council, to officially launch the Initiative in Spring 2018 by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government. More than 170 municipalities expressed their willingness to sign up. In this first phase, 32 received UNICEF technical support. Of these, 17 have developed and approved action plans. Broad and strong partnerships were instrumental for ensuring support for and the sustainability of the CFCI.

Municipalities joined the CFCI by signing MoUs with UNICEF, which officially recognized their intention to cooperate. UNICEF signed the MoUs during high-level visits to municipalities, increasing the CFCI's visibility, momentum and support. Subsequently, municipalities performed situation analyses with UNICEF technical support, using UNICEF's Global CFCI methodology, which was adapted for Ukraine's context.



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CFCI implementation guidelines for local municipalities

³ United Nations Children's Fund, 'What is the Child Friendly Cities Initiative?', UNICEF, 2020.

Available at <<https://childfriendlycities.org/what-is-the-child-friendly-cities-initiative>>, accessed 4 March 2020



Signing MoU in the town of Volodymyr-Volynskyy, Western Ukraine

The CFCI methodology proved a rigorous tool to analyse how children's rights can be realized at local level. Based on this analysis, municipalities developed result-oriented 2-3-year action plans with corresponding budgets. The municipalities whose action plans were approved – 17 to date – were granted the intermediate candidate status of being Child Friendly Cities. To earn the full status, municipalities have to satisfy three international CFCI criteria: successful implementation of action plans, ensuring meaningful child participation and practising non-discrimination.

UNICEF also conducted successful high-level advocacy and secured support from the Prime Minister, which elevated the Initiative's status. In May 2018, a joint meeting with children was organized by the Cabinet of Ministers and UNICEF, and chaired by the Prime Minister. The meeting embodied the CFCI principles by enabling the participation of children in discussions and decisions on policies that directly concern them.

UNICEF partnered with an NGO to provide methodological support to 32 municipalities. Using the Global CFCI Handbook,⁴ UNICEF Ukraine developed a Ukraine-specific Manual with its own results framework. Capacity-building activities were critically important for advancing the CFCI. With its partners, UNICEF has delivered multiple training events on the CFCI objectives and methodology for local administrators, youth and



Signing MoU in the town of Novoukrainka, Central Ukraine

CSO representatives. In addition, face-to-face support was provided by the NGO partner 'Eurostrategy', which travelled to each municipality at least twice to support the development of situational analysis and action plans.

UNICEF initiated inter-sectoral collaboration by linking the CFCI to other country office programmatic work. This increased the likelihood that UNICEF priorities would be reflected in the municipalities' action plans.

While CFCI methodology is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), UNICEF's Social Policy Section, leading the initiative, worked closely with colleagues from Education, Health and Child Protection sections. These colleagues were involved as trainers and ensured that relevant sectoral indicators were incorporated in the results framework.

UNICEF adopted a comprehensive external and internal communications strategy. The production of a CFCI brand book for municipalities helped to ensure the correct use of CFCI branding. A quarterly newsletter was also published, featuring success stories from municipalities and programmatic opportunities from UNICEF and partners. Two approaches in social media proved to be effective: a Facebook page, and a Telegram channel for youth. The highlight of 2019 was a 30-day CRC celebration, with 25 CFCI municipalities inviting children to run mayors' offices and city councils for one day, fulfilling the CFCI criteria for child participation.

4 United Nations Children's Fund, Child Friendly Cities and Communities Handbook, UNICEF, Geneva and New York, April 2018. Available at <<https://s25924.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CFCI-handbook-NewDigital-May-2018.pdf>>. Accessed 4 March 2020.



Training for communities in Kyiv, 2018



Youth City Council meeting with parents of children with disabilities (jointly hosted by CFCI and UNICEF Ukraine's Child Protection Section)



Young "mayor" of the city of Kremenchuk, Central Ukraine, opens session of City Council

IMPACT

The CFCI results demonstrate that with the right mix of incentives, recognition and technical support, and even without direct investment, UNICEF can boost public spending on children, establish effective cooperation with municipalities, and ensure meaningful implementation of the CRC at local level. In 2019, the 17 municipalities with approved action plans have already budgeted UAH963 million (US\$38 million) for children in the framework of the CFCI. Arguably, without UNICEF's CFCI it is unlikely that these funds would have been mobilized for future child-related expenditure. Moreover, it is doubtful that coherent action plans would have been created to streamline previously misaligned intersectoral activities and deliver results for children.

The CFCI has received wide support from the national Government, including a proposal to provide additional financing earmarked for children to CFCI-accredited municipalities from the state budget. In March 2019, the Government approved a Decree proposing changes

to the Law "On Child Protection" and a Budget Code stipulating additional funds be disbursed to CFCI-accredited municipalities. However, because of the change of Government in August 2019, the proposal will have to be resubmitted to Verhovna Rada (parliament) and reviewed by legislators. It remains to be seen whether the proposal will receive enough support for additional financing to be approved for the next budget.

The initiative has promoted healthy competition among municipalities in their efforts to close equity gaps and place children at the forefront of their agendas. The recognition and motivation delivered by the CFCI proved to be important for mayors too. The 2019 'Global CFCI Inspire Award' held in Cologne attracted 24 applicants from Ukraine. Vinnytsia, a CFCI-candidate city, won the prize. Its 'Budget for School Projects' was recognized as the best practice in the category for 'meaningful child participation'.

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UNICEF Ukraine representatives at the Awards Ceremony in Cologne



Handover of the award at Vinnytsia City Council

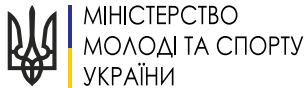
The CFCI has also positively boosted cooperation within municipalities. Situational analysis and action plans were the results of work together by specialists from different sectoral departments, and was often the first time they considered their child-friendliness systematically. Thus, the CFCI engendered an important child-sensitive mindset change in local government.

The CFCI's principal strength is that it can be self-financing and therefore self-propelling. It can operate independently of UNICEF direct financing, as all action plans are predominately funded by local governments, ensuring local ownership and sustainability. Action plans, while shaped by CFCI global methodology, are context-sensitive and principally reflect local priorities.



Summer camp for children with disabilities and their parents in Kremenchuk

This CFCI demonstrated tremendous value for money, providing an effective way to raise children's issues and mobilize local investment with low administration costs. For example, UNICEF's annual CFCI budget was approximately US\$150,000, and resulted in local governments mobilizing and committing to spend US\$38 million on child-wellbeing activities. Thus, for every US\$1 UNICEF spent on the CFCI, US\$253 was leveraged for children. Countries that have experienced similar decentralization reform to Ukraine may find the CFCI approach relevant to their circumstances.



For more detailed information
and if you wish to join the program,
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