

CHINA

Education

Country Specific Thematic Report

January – December 2018



Students playing in Xinzhai Village Primary School in Cang Yuan County, Yunnan Province © Sun Peng/2018

SC189904

Prepared by
UNICEF China
March 2019

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Acronyms.....	3
Executive Summary	4
Strategic Context as of 2018	5
Results Achieved in the Sector	9
Financial Analysis.....	11
Future Work Plan	13
Expression of Thanks	14
Donor Report Feedback Form	14
Annex 1. Human Interest Stories.....	15

Acronyms

ACWF	All-China Women's Federation
CAST	China Association for Science and Technology
CFKG	Child-Friendly Kindergarten
CFS	Child-Friendly School
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Summary

UNICEF worked with its government and technical partners to ensure that all children realise their right to a quality and stimulating education – ranging from increasing access to quality early childhood care and education services to addressing the changing needs of in-school and out-of-school adolescents. Approaches included upstream work to inform and shape policies, guidelines and curriculum; and downstream work to build the skills of teachers and students, improve school and kindergarten environments, and demonstrate child-friendly teaching and learning.

To promote stimulation and early learning of children aged 0–6, **UNICEF supported pilots of community-based early childhood development (ECD) services and the child-friendly kindergarten (CFKG) model in 170 ECD centres and 478 kindergartens, directly benefiting 128,551 children in central and western provinces.** To narrow the quality gap in early childhood care and education services, particularly in poor rural areas, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education (MOE) to develop and test teacher training models and strategies for the national early childhood education (ECE) teacher training programme, kindergarten teacher competency assessment tools, and pilot teacher support systems.

To increase access to child-friendly, equitable, and quality basic education for children aged 6–16, UNICEF, MOE and technical partners continued to implement the child-friendly school (CFS) model in 602 rural primary schools across 19 counties of 12 provinces, with the goal to promote an inclusive, safe, healthy and nurturing environment for children that fosters learning, supports skills development and problem solving and increases exposure to sports and arts. **The total number of beneficiaries increased to 341,300 rural students, 22,160 rural teachers and 602 rural school principals, nearly triple the number reached in 2017.**

Support continued to incorporate life skills modules into the vocational education curriculum through a collaborative effort between UNICEF, MOE and China Association for Science and Technology (CAST), making gender sensitivity a key priority in programme design and implementation. **A total of 19,428 in-school and out-of-school adolescents aged 10–19 received training on self-awareness, communication, inter-personal relations and problem-solving through the life skills programme.**

In 2019, UNICEF will continue to support and develop these initiatives, with the aim of refining and improving government programmes and policies. A critical element of the programme's future work will focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on education, and South–South cooperation for education outcomes.



Figure 1: Children working together during a Chinese language and art lesson delivered by a resource teacher of the METRU Plus programme in Xicheng County, Guangxi Province, March 2018, © UNICEF China

Strategic Context as of 2018

Since the 1990s, the education situation of children in China has steadily improved. Access to basic education, which includes pre-primary, primary, junior secondary and senior secondary education, has continued to increase, reaching the average levels of upper middle-income countries.¹ In 2011, China achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal access to primary education and met the goal of eliminating gender differences at all levels of education in advance of the 2015 timeline. Compared with the MDGs, the SDGs has a broader concept of education development and a larger number of targeted groups. Specifically, the SDG 4 proposes to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. It covers all education stages beginning from ECD and emphasizes life-long learning. In addition to continuing the MDGs’ focus on gender equality in education, the SDGs also target at a wide range of vulnerable groups.

China’s current outlook on education development is highly consistent with the SDG 4. The *Education Law of the People’s Republic of China* was amended in 2015, and it requires “the Government to adopt measures to promote equitable and balanced development of education”, “guarantee the quality of education and teaching”, and “promote lifelong learning for all”.² The Government has repeatedly stressed the need to “develop higher quality and more equitable education”, with special attention to children in areas where education development is lagging behind, including those living in remote areas, poverty-stricken areas, ethnic minority areas, and former revolutionary areas, as well as children with disabilities and children affected by migration.³

0–3 early childhood development

ECD is about the ‘whole child’ – the physical, social, emotional, cognitive thinking and language progression of each young individual. Investment in interventions targeted towards the first three years of life during the period of maximal brain development is the most cost-effective way to realize sustainable development.⁴ China is actively promoting 0–3 ECD through a series of policies and measures, such as the First 1,000 Days Campaign on nutrition and health, and Nutrition Improvement for Children in Poverty Areas, which provides free nutrition supplementation packages to children aged 6–23 months. The Government is also implementing programmes in selected pilot sites, setting up community-based and family-oriented platforms for 0–3 ECD services, to provide integrated ECD services on child development and growth, family nurturing, parenting and child play.

However, there are still clear gaps in the supply of public facilities and service resources for the care of children aged 0–3. More proactive health, education, and protection oriented ECD policies and programmes will be implemented to strengthen the community-based ECD service system.

Pre-primary education

Receiving quality pre-primary education in kindergartens will have an important impact on stimulating children’s curiosity and interest in learning, developing social skills, and building self-confidence. This will help children prepare for primary education and lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning. During 2011 and 2016, China has implemented two rounds of the *Plan of Action for Pre-primary Education* at the county level, and these efforts have led to the continuous improvement of pre-primary education for children aged 3–6. The gross pre-primary education enrolment ratio has increased from 56.6 per cent in 2010 to 77.4 per cent in 2016,⁵ achieving the target of 70 per cent set out in the *National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020)* ahead of the 2020 timeline.

However, in general, pre-primary education remains the weakest component of the overall education system. Consequently, the Government of China initiated a third round of the *Plan of Action for Pre-primary Education (2017–2020)* and committed to “build a basic public service system for pre-primary education with broad coverage, and ensure access and basic quality” by 2020. The Government strives

¹ UNESCO, UNESCO database, <http://uis.unesco.org/>, accessed August 2018.

² State Council, *Education Law of the People’s Republic of China* (27 December 2015, second amendment), http://www.moe.gov.cn/s78/A02/zfs_left/s5911/moe_619/201512/t20151228_226193.html, accessed August 2018.

³ Ministry of Education, ‘New Expectations for Education in China: Higher quality and more equitable’, 21 March 2016, http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/s5148/201603/t20160321_234414.html, accessed August 2018.

⁴ Douglas J. Noble, et al., ‘What Could Cognitive Capital Mean for China’s Children?’ *PsyCh Journal*, vol. 6, 2017, pp. 153–160.

⁵ Ministry of Education, *Essential Statistical Analysis of Education Development in China*, 2017.

to achieve 85 per cent pre-primary education enrolment ratio as set out in the *Thirteenth Five-Year Plan on National Education Development*. Concurrently, to promote the development of 'affordable kindergartens' (or 'universally accessible kindergartens'), the third round of implementation aims to increase the coverage to 80 per cent.⁶ The gross enrolment ratio of pre-primary education reached 79.6 per cent in 2017.

Compulsory education

In 2011, China announced the achievement of its strategic goal of providing universal access to nine-year free compulsory education,⁷ entering a new stage focused on balanced development through improving education quality. In 2013, the Government launched supervision and evaluation work at the county level to ensure balanced development of compulsory education. As of 2017, 2,379 counties have achieved balanced development of compulsory education, accounting for 81 per cent of the total number of counties in the country.⁸

In 2017, the cohort survival rate of the national nine-year compulsory education reached 93.8 per cent.⁹ However, due to various factors such as inadequate school conditions, transportation difficulties, family poverty and loss of interest in studying, there are still children who are out of school in some areas of the country, especially in poor rural areas.¹⁰ To ensure that the cohort survival rate of the national nine-year compulsory education reaches 95 per cent by 2020, the Government is actively taking measures to improve school attendance and minimize school drop-outs, including strengthening establishment of small-scale rural schools (primary schools in villages and teaching points of less than 100 students) and townships boarding schools. The Government guarantees to provide more support to these schools in terms of funding, teacher training, and teaching facilities.¹¹

Senior secondary education

The gross enrolment ratio of senior secondary education has increased from only 26 per cent in 1992 to 88 per cent in 2017,¹² achieving considerable progress. However, when compared with compulsory education, the enrolment ratio is still significantly lower, and the urban-rural and inter-provincial differences are prominent. The Government has set a goal to realize universal access to senior secondary education by 2020, striving to achieve 90 per cent and above gross enrolment ratio at the national and provincial levels. Concurrently, it also proposes to strengthen school conditions, improve education quality, and increase recruitment ratio of secondary vocational education.¹³ In 2017, there were 15.92 million students enrolled in secondary vocational education nationwide, accounting for 40 per cent of the total number of students enrolled in senior secondary education.¹⁴

⁶ Ministry of Education, 'Opinions on the Implementation of the 3rd Round Plan of Actions on Pre-primary Education by Four Ministries including the Ministry of Education', 14 April 2017, http://www.moe.edu.cn/srcsite/A06/s3327/201705/t20170502_303514.html, accessed May 2018.

⁷ Ministry of Education, 'Memorandum on the 'Two Basics' (Basic Popularization of 9-year Compulsory Education and Basic Elimination of Illiteracy among Young People)', 13 November 2012, http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/moe_2082/s6236/s6688/201211/t20121113_144412.html, accessed August 2018.

⁸ Ministry of Education, 'Supervision and Evaluation Report on the Balanced Development of National Compulsory Education in 2017', 28 February 2018, http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/xw_fbh/moe_2069/xwfbh_2018n/xwfb_20180227/sfcl/201802/t20180227_327990.html, accessed August 2018.

⁹ Ministry of Education, '2017 Statistical Communiqué on the National Education Development', 19 July 2018, http://www.moe.edu.cn/jyb_sjzl/sjzl_fztqgb/201807/t20180719_343508.html, accessed August 2018.

¹⁰ State Council, 'Notice of the General Office of the State Council on Further Strengthening School Attendance and Improving Cohort Survival Rate within Compulsory Education', 28 July 2017, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2017-09/05/content_5222718.htm, accessed August 2018.

¹¹ State Council, 'Guiding Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Comprehensively Strengthening the Construction of Small-Scale Schools and Township Boarding Schools in Rural Areas', 25 April 2018, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2018%20-05/02/content_5287465.htm, accessed August 2018.

¹² Ministry of Education, '2017 Statistical Communiqué on the National Education Development', 19 July 2018, http://www.moe.edu.cn/jyb_sjzl/sjzl_fztqgb/201807/t20180719_343508.html, accessed August 2018.

¹³ Ministry of Education, et al., 'Action Plan for Universalizing Senior Secondary Education (2017-2020)', 24 March 2016, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2017-04/06/content_5183767.htm, accessed August 2018.

¹⁴ Ministry of Education, '2017 Statistical Communiqué on the National Education Development', 19 July 2018, http://www.moe.edu.cn/jyb_sjzl/sjzl_fztqgb/201807/t20180719_343508.html, accessed August 2018.

According to incomplete statistics, 20 provinces across the country have implemented the '9+N' free education pilots as of May 2018 to provide universal access to pre-primary and senior secondary education, including all the other 11 western provinces except Chongqing. Specifically, Guangxi, Tibet, Qinghai, and Xinjiang took the lead in implementing free 15-year compulsory education, ensuring universal access from pre-primary education to senior secondary education.¹⁵

However, due to gaps in basic education level between urban and rural areas, differences in students' family education background and other factors,¹⁶ rural students still face challenges to attend senior secondary education and university education. The differences in opportunities are especially apparent in the attendance rate of key senior secondary schools with high education quality and enrolment rates of top universities.

Investment in education

The Government of China has increased investment in education every year, which has guaranteed the implementation of various education policies and benefited hundreds of millions of urban and rural children. In the past ten years, the Government has vigorously developed rural compulsory education, thereby improving universal access and equity of compulsory education. From 2006, China began to establish a new mechanism for guaranteeing funding for compulsory education in rural areas in the central and western regions. It implemented the 'Two Exemptions and One Subsidy' policy (exemption of textbook fees, exemption of miscellaneous fees and subsidy for poor rural boarding school students), and instituted annual increases in the national standards for government spending per student. Empirical studies have shown that the new mechanism has significantly contributed to the rise in the probability of completing compulsory education and led to more years of schooling.¹⁷

The Government also aimed to boost the development of rural compulsory education and reduce disparities among regions and between rural and urban areas by providing special funds to accelerate the construction of rural schools, developing systems to share education resources among schools within a teaching district, and supporting efforts to recruit special post teachers in rural schools in the western region. In recent years, the Government began to improve and integrate the funding guarantee mechanism for compulsory education in urban and rural areas, with specific focus on rural areas. From the spring semester of 2016, the average public funding quota for compulsory education in urban and rural areas was equalized. From the spring semester of 2017, the 'Two Exemptions and One Subsidy' policy was standardized for students attending compulsory education in urban and rural areas.¹⁸

In 2017, the national fiscal education funding reached RMB 3.4 trillion, accounting for more than 4 per cent of GDP for six consecutive years.¹⁹ Although the funding for education has increased year by year, and the allocation of educational resources continues to increase in rural areas, remote poverty-stricken areas, and ethnic minority areas, the investment in education differ among regions, between urban and rural areas, between schools, among different groups, and at different educational stages. As structural imbalances still exist, investment in education quality needs to be further strengthened. In spite of the increased allocations, funds for improving education quality are still inadequate, and the bulk of funding goes into infrastructure, teachers' salaries and textbooks, while teacher training, curriculum reform and monitoring and evaluation remain under-funded.

Education equity and quality

The Government of China has pledged to promote education equity as a national basic education policy, ensuring quality improvement is the core task of education reform and development, and focusing on rural children, children left behind, ethnic minority children, and special education for children with

¹⁵ China Philanthropy Research Institute, UNICEF China, *Child Welfare and Protection in China – Stocktaking Report 2018*, 2018.

¹⁶ YANG Dongping, *China Education Development Report 2018*, 2018.

¹⁷ HA Wei, et al., 'Does Money Matter? The Effects of Block Grants on Education Attainment in Rural China: Evidence from intercensal population survey 2015', *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 62, 2018, pp. 174–183.

¹⁸ State Council, 'Notice of the State Council on Further Improving the Funding Guarantee Mechanism for Urban and Rural Compulsory Education', 25 November 2015, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2015-11/28/content_10357.htm, accessed August 2018.

¹⁹ Ministry of Education, '2017 Statistical Bulletin on the Implementation of Education Expenditures', 8 October 2018, http://www.moe.edu.cn/srcsite/A05/s3040/201810/t20181012_351301.html, accessed November 2018.

disabilities.²⁰ It aims to emphasize education and poverty alleviation, with focus on key poverty counties and counties located in 'poverty blocks', so that the children of poor families can receive equitable and quality education and be protected from intergenerational transmission of poverty.²¹ At the same time, information and communication technology in education has been robustly promoted, and for the first time included into the newly amended *Education Law of the People's Republic of China* in 2015, which provides an effective pathway for the balanced development of education and plays an important role in narrowing differences among regions, between urban and rural areas, and among schools.

While significant achievements have been made, the uneven education development within the country continues to pose a huge challenge for China's education development. In addition to the above-mentioned issues that the Government is aiming to resolve, attention must be given to the following aspects to ensure that all children enjoy equal access to child-friendly, equitable and quality education:

- MOE started monitoring the quality of compulsory education in the country in 2015. The first monitoring report, issued in July 2018, pointed out that key issues still need to be addressed, such as the lack of physical and aesthetic education (in comparison to the emphasis on intellectual education), limited development of comprehensive practical skills of students, and the heavy burden of schoolwork.²²
- Delayed school entry at the compulsory education stage still exists, and it is most common among ethnic minority children and children living in poor rural areas. These children will face more challenges, such as being more likely to drop out of school.²³
- Despite the Government's continuous efforts to improve policies and regulations on prohibiting discrimination against children of migrant populations,²⁴ 20 per cent of migrant children at the compulsory education stage²⁵ still only have the option to study in private schools, particularly in poor quality migrant schools. This is due to several factors, for example, migrant children often move from place to place with their parents and are subject to special regulations (such as paying additional fees) in local public schools.
- The Government has also adopted a series of measures in the education and care of children left-behind in rural areas, including accelerating construction of boarding schools, establishing custodial and support institutions when the School Merger Programme²⁶ was implemented some years ago, and strengthening construction of small-scale rural schools and township boarding schools more recently. However, the management and supervision mechanisms for boarding schools and relevant institutions need to be further improved.
- Participation among children with disabilities at all levels of education still needs to be improved. In 2017, the enrolment ratio in compulsory education among children with visual, hearing and

²⁰ Office of the Working Group for the National Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan, *National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)*, 29 July 2010, http://old.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/info_list/201407/xxgk_171904.html, accessed August 2018.

²¹ Ministry of Education, et al., *Thirteenth Five-Year Plan on Education Poverty Alleviation*, http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A03/moe_1892/moe_630/201612/t20161229_293351.html, accessed August 2018.

²² Ministry of Education, *China Compulsory Education Quality Monitoring Report*, 2018 (<http://www.eachina.org.cn/shtml/4/news/201807/1749.shtml>).

²³ National Bureau of Statistics, UNICEF China, UNFPA China, 'Population Status of Children in China in 2015: Facts and Figures', 2017.

²⁴ As early as 1998, the State Education Commission (Ministry of Education at that time) and the Ministry of Public Security promulgated the *Interim Measure of School Education for Temporary Migrant Children and Adolescents*, and put forward two main practices to ensure access to compulsory education, focusing on the local government and the public schools in the migration destinations. The *Law on Compulsory Education*, which was amended in 2006, specifically indicated that migrant children are entitled to equal access to the nine years of compulsory education. The *National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)* also reiterated the need to focus on local government efforts in the migration destinations and the efforts put forth by full-time public primary and secondary schools to resolve the issue of migrant children's education.

²⁵ Ministry of Education, 'China Education Overview – the National Education Development Situation in 2017', 18 October 2017, http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/s5990/201810/t20181018_352057.html, accessed November 2018.

²⁶ The School Merger Programme in rural areas was introduced in the late 1990s, and expanded nationwide since 2001. Small village schools were shut down and larger centralized schools were established in towns and counties for students to attend.

intellectual disabilities was over 90 per cent,²⁷ but there are still gaps that need to be addressed to achieve universal access. In 2017, the Government promulgated the *Second Special Education Promotion Plan (2017–2020)*, which stated that “by 2020, special education at all levels will be improved comprehensively, the enrolment ratio of compulsory education for children with disabilities will reach 95 per cent or more, and non-compulsory special education will be significantly expanded.”²⁸

Results Achieved in the Sector

This section outlines how UNICEF has been contributing to the Strategic Plan’s goal on ‘every child learns’ in China.

UNICEF worked with MOE, CAST, All-China Women’s Federation (ACWF) and technical partners to ensure that all children realise their right to a quality and stimulating education - from early learning opportunities that lay the groundwork for success in school, all the way through to secondary school, and addressing the changing needs of in-school and out-of-school adolescents. Approaches included upstream work to inform and shape policies, guidelines and curriculum; downstream work to build the skills of teachers and students, improve school and kindergarten environments, and demonstrate child-friendly teaching and learning.

To promote early stimulation and learning for the 0-3 age group, UNICEF supported the delivery of ECD services through 170 community-based ECD centres in Hunan, Hubei, Hebei, Shaanxi, Guizhou, Xinjiang and Jiangxi provinces. As a result, 43,551 children were reached with ECD services, and 20,731 home visits reached more than 10,000 families. Around 7,000 children and their caregivers were also reached through 650 outreach sessions facilitated by volunteers, including play-based activities in communities that do not have ECD centres.

Increased local government ownership of the ECD 0-3 model was particularly evidenced by Hunan province including this model into its provincial Five-Year Action Plan (2016-2020). As of now, provincial governments of Hunan, Hubei and Hebei have committed to fully funding all ECD centres established through the ACWF-UNICEF project, with the intention of extending this to all communities in the future.

Education for children aged 3-6 continued to improve, with gross enrolment ratio in pre-school education increasing from 56.6 to 79.6 per cent between 2010 and 2017²⁹. However, equitable access to quality ECD remains an issue, particularly in poor urban communities and remote rural areas. To cater to the needs of children aged 3-6 who live in rural areas, particularly those who are ethnic minorities, migrants or urban poor, UNICEF supported the CFKG pilot in 478 kindergartens of six provinces, directly benefiting around 85,000 children. Capacities of kindergarten teachers were enhanced, environments of kindergarten were improved, and local institutional capacities were built. Ways to improve the water, sanitation and hygiene dimensions of the CFKG model were also tested in one county.

Ensuring the quality and capacity of kindergarten teachers is also key, including the almost 1 million new recruits in 2018. While the Government has invested heavily in training kindergarten teachers, this has yet to fully translate into improved quality. UNICEF supported MOE develop and test teacher training models and strategies for the national ECE teacher training programme, kindergarten teacher competency assessment tools, and pilot teacher support systems. In 2018, competency assessment tools, that classify teachers based on their current capacity, were tested with 2,000 teachers in eight sites. These are now being incorporated into the national guidelines on kindergarten teachers’ training curriculum so that trainings can better address capacity gaps.

In strengthening the enabling environment, national-level technical workshops were supported to discuss kindergartens in newly established residential communities and the detrimental practice of rote

²⁷ Ministry of Education, ‘From Universal Access to Quality Education: Achieving urban-rural integrated development in compulsory education’, 30 August 2018, http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/s5147/201808/t20180830_346565.html, accessed August 2018.

²⁸ Ministry of Education, et. al., ‘The Second Special Education Development Plan (2017-2020)’, 7 July 2017, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2017-07/28/content_5214071.htm, accessed August 2018.

²⁹ Statistical Communique on educational development in China, the Ministry of Education, 2018

teaching. International experiences in ECD governance in Brazil and OECD countries were used to inform China's thinking. Findings and recommendations from these activities influenced government directives, as published in the *'Opinions on Deepening Reform and Regulating Development of Pre-primary Education'* released by the Central Party Committee and State Council in 2018. UNICEF also supported the development of national kindergarten supervision guidelines and quality monitoring tools and to date - 50,000 kindergartens in 20 provinces have been inspected by the national education supervision office.

To increase access to child-friendly, equitable, and quality basic education for children aged 6-16 years, UNICEF, MOE and technical partners continued to implement the CFS model and principles. This promoted inclusive, safe, healthy and nurturing environments that support children's learning, expand their skills and expose them to sports, art, problem solving and creativity. In 2018, three elements of the CFS model were piloted in over 602 rural primary schools across 19 counties of 12 provinces: (1) social and emotional learning (SEL); (2) teacher pedagogical skills in subject teaching and physical education; and, (3) disaster risk reduction. The pilot schools directly benefited 341,300 students, 22,160 teachers and 602 school principals. As part of the four-year longitudinal CFS impact study (2016-2019), data analysis from 106 schools in four project counties was completed. The preliminary report showed that the CFS model has helped create an enabling environment for teaching and learning which help improve students' learning.



Figure 1: Children receiving an award for warm-up activities at the beginning of a SEL class, Cangyuan County, Yunnan Province, April 2018, © UNICEF China

School-level implementation of the SEL model in 525 rural primary schools in 16 counties of 11 provinces was completed this year. All pilot schools have integrated the SEL class into their course schedules, benefitting 291,300 students, 18,160 teachers and 525 school principals. An end-line assessment of the pilot concluded that children in project schools developed social and emotional competencies faster than their peers in non-project schools, including self-confidence, communication, interpersonal skills and the ability to cope with challenges. The project experiences were disseminated at the 'National SEL Conference', with MOE expressing its support to ensuring schools integrate SEL.

In promoting life-skills education for in-school and out-of-school adolescents, modules were updated to meet the rapidly changing needs of this age group. In collaboration with CAST, eight modules covering topics like interpersonal skills and communication, financial education, environmental protection and climate change, were revised and piloted in junior high and vocational schools in 28 counties across 13 provinces. An estimated 12,768 in- and out-of-school adolescents (5,628 males, 7,140 females) participated in these trainings. Two new modules on interpersonal skills and SEL for senior secondary vocational school students were also drafted. At MOE's request, these were adapted for post-secondary school vocational students (aged 18-19 years), together with two others prepared earlier on self-awareness and problem-solving. To date, a total of 6,660 students (3,391 males and 3,269 females) received training on self-awareness and problem-solving in five provinces.



Figure 2: Children practicing their long jump at Mile County of Yunnan Province, April 2018, © UNICEF China

To strengthen the generation and use of data for SDG monitoring, UNICEF partnered with MOE to align national education management information system (EMIS) indicators with SDG 4 targets. Notable results include China's progress on 16 indicators being reported in the 'Global Education Monitoring Report 2017/8' published by UNESCO, and a booklet documenting the integration of SDG 4 indicators in the national EMIS.

Financial Analysis

Table 1: Planned budget by outcome area

Intermediate Results	Funding Type	Planned Budget
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	RR	877,094
	ORR	853,526
22-02 Learning outcomes	RR	2,617,929
	ORR	637,874
22-03 Skills development	RR	573,187
	ORR	322,954
Total Budget		5,882,564

RR: Resources Regular

ORR: Other Resources Regular

Table 2: Country-level thematic contributions to outcome area received in 2018

Education		
Donor	Contribution Amount	Programmable Amount
US FUND	49,526	47,168
GERMAN COMMITTEE	84,520	80,495
KOREAN COMMITTEE	114,000	108,571
SWISS COMMITTEE	16,954	16,147
UNICEF CHINA	235,000	223,810
Grand Total	500,000	476,191

Table 3: Expenditures in the Outcome Area

Education				
Organizational Targets	Other Resources: Emergency	Other Resources: Regular	Regular Resources	Grand Total
22-01 Equitable access to quality education		853,526	877,094	1,730,620
22-02 Learning outcomes		637,874	2,617,929	3,255,803
22-03 Skills development		322,954	573,187	896,141
Grand Total				5,882,564

Table 4: Thematic expenses by programme area

Education	
Row Labels	Expense
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	40,480
22-02 Learning outcomes	213,935
22-03 Skills development	18,421
Grand Total	272,836

Table 5: Expenses by Specific Intervention Codes

Education	
Row Labels	Expense
22-01-01 Provision of (formal and non-formal) early learning / pre-primary education (including in temporary learning spaces)	142,182.16
22-01-06 System strengthening - inclusive education for children with disabilities	10,723.78
22-01-07 System strengthening - inclusive education for other vulnerable children poorest quintile, ethnic/linguistic minorities, migrant children, non-citizens/undocumented children etc.	45,924.11
22-01-08 System strengthening - risk informed programming, including climate, resilience, disaster, conflict, and emergency preparedness	2,881.01
22-01-09 Peacebuilding education	17,312.23
22-01-10 System strengthening - gender-responsive access (excluding SRGBV)	16,535.55
22-01-11 Other activities for equitable access to quality education e.g. school feeding, school grants	30,710.80
22-01-14 EMIS (excluding learning assessment systems)	24,965.22
22-01-15 Education sector planning including coordinating role, SDG 4, etc.	52,256.98
22-01-16 Public finance management for education	127,540.02
22-01-99 Technical assistance - Equitable access to quality education	665,872.70
22-02-01 Provision or procurement of early learning / pre-primary education learning materials	36,045.02
22-02-04 Provision or procurement of multiple-levels (or alternative pathways of education) learning materials	144,148.26
22-02-06 Digital learning materials and ICT in education	5,830.38
22-02-07 Provision of early learning / pre-primary education teacher training	303,163.03
22-02-08 Provision of primary education teacher training	259,044.20
22-02-10 Provision of multiple-levels (or alternative pathways of education) teacher training	1,071,437.98
22-02-13 Provision of training of other education staff excluding teachers (e.g. inspectors, district, ministry staff, etc.)	68,114.24
22-02-14 System strengthening - early learning / pre-primary policy, leadership, and budget	139,154.44
22-02-15 System strengthening - early learning / pre-primary standards and governance	34,234.85
22-02-16 System strengthening - early learning / pre-primary teaching and learning environment (including curriculum and material design)	25,811.19
22-02-17 System strengthening - curricula and learning materials design (excluding early learning / pre-primary)	91,708.84
22-02-18 System strengthening - learning assessment systems	17,510.98

22-02-20 System strengthening - teacher development, management, and support	503,304.84
22-03-02 Provision of skills development for adolescents (10-19 year-olds) (including in temporary learning spaces)	30,931.34
22-03-04 System strengthening - mainstreaming of skills development within national education/training system	52,293.45
22-03-07 System strengthening - life skills (for personal empowerment, active citizenship, etc.)	26,928.74
22-03-11 Education sector planning including coordinating role, SDG 4, etc.	38,036.68
22-03-99 Technical assistance - Skills development	502,236.78
26-01-01 Country programme process (including UNDAF planning and CCA)	562,909.98
26-02-01 Situation Analysis or Update on women and children	2,062.96
26-02-04 Stimulating demand for and capacity to use data	20.31
26-02-05 Administrative data, registers and non-MICS household surveys and censuses	2,465.50
26-03-01 Advocacy and partnership-building for social behaviour change	5,264.71
26-03-99 Technical assistance - Cross - sectoral communication for development	149,453.99
26-04-01 CO/RO Supply - technical assistance and collaboration in supply chain, procurement of goods and services, and logistics	105,294.11
26-05-10 Research innovation learning, uptake and partnerships for research	6,300.00
26-06-02 Innovation activities	417.89
26-06-04 Leading advocate	18,741.00
26-06-05 Leading voice	22,244.00
26-06-06 Supporter engagement	142,337.02
26-06-07 Leading brand	6,910.40
26-06-08 Emergency preparedness (cross-sectoral)	749.41
26-07-01 Operations support to programme delivery	237,882.18
27-01-06 HQ and RO technical support to multiple Goal Areas	881.04
28-07-04 Management and Operations support at CO	4,580.69
30-01-02 Pledge campaign house list	-
30-01-04 Cash campaign acquisition	156.50
30-01-13 CO/RSC other non-staff indirect	1.24
30-02-08 Pledge – Staff	0.34
Unknown	127,051.27
Grand Total	5,882,564.36

Future Work Plan

UNICEF implements its advocacy and policy-related programmes at the national level. Pilot and project sites include locations in the provinces of Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Inner Mongolia, Gansu, Guizhou, Guangxi, Jiangsu, Liaoning, Ningxia, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shandong, Sichuan, Xinjiang, Yunnan, and the municipalities of Chongqing and Shanghai.

In 2019, UNICEF China will enter the fourth year of implementation of its 2016–2020 country programme. UNICEF will continue to support the Government of China and MOE in realizing its education strategy in the following priority areas: improving the quality and relevance of education, especially the competence of teachers; promoting educational development in rural area and undeveloped regions; mobilizing resources and strengthening the Government's technical capacity to address the challenges faced by children from disadvantaged communities; and accelerating efforts on legislation, regulation and policy development in the education sector, to improve the quality, equity and governance of education.

In line with China's development goals set out in its Thirteenth Five Year Plan, where education goals are focused on equity and quality education for all, UNICEF will continue to use evidence from pilots and its technical expertise, along with harnessing its strong relationship with MOE, to inform child-friendly, equitable and quality education. Support to implement SDG 4 will also be sustained.

UNICEF will continue to support the development of national guidelines and pilots to improve the quality of ECD services. Different models of kindergarten teacher support mechanisms will be tested in various contexts to determine the most cost-effective solution, which will inform national teacher training

programmes and ECE action plans. Successful pilot projects, together with trained provincial expert teams, will facilitate further replication. Ongoing advocacy, which is key to changing mindsets, will be a key strategy for ECD work.

Table 6: Planned budget for 2019 from Annual Work Plan (in USD)

Education	
Planned Budget for 2019	
Outcomes/Outputs	Planned Budget
Outcome 1 – Basic Education	
1.1: Child-friendly schools	544,000
1.2: Social and emotional learning & mental health education	620,000
1.3: Teaching and learning models	1,365,500
1.4: WASH in schools	258,883
1.5: Life skills modules	1,350,000
Outcome 1 Subtotal:	4,138,383
Outcome 2 - Early Childhood Development	
2.1: ECD National guidelines	330,000
2.2: Models & strategies 3-6 years	860,000
2.3: Models for 0-3 years	571,600
Outcome 2 Subtotal:	1,761,600
Grand Total	5,899,983

Expression of Thanks

UNICEF China would like to express its sincere gratitude to US Fund, German Committee, Korean Committee and Swiss Committee for UNICEF for their support to the education and development of children in China. Thanks to their generosity, UNICEF China has been able to leverage thematic funds to consolidate and integrate its various activities thereby contributing to expanding the breadth of educational interventions as well as enhancing the sustainability of our work for children.

Donor Report Feedback Form

UNICEF is working to improve the quality of our reports and would highly appreciate your feedback via this online form ([link](#)). Thank you!

Annex 1. Human Interest Stories

1. A Journey into Social and Emotional Learning and Mental Health Development

“What is social and emotional learning and mental health development (SELMHD)? It is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, and set and achieve positive goals”, says Aiwu, an experienced teacher from Guyi County’s central primary school who has worked with SELMHD for almost four years. “I think SELMHD really grows on you once you understand the ideas behind it.”

Aiwu first heard about SELMHD two days before she was due to deliver a public lecture on the topic, which would be attended by experts from home and abroad. She remembers being terrified, as she had no clue at the time what social and emotional learning (SEL) was – she only knew how to teach Chinese. Under enormous pressure, Aiwu ploughed through the SELMHD textbook and tried her best to conceptualize the ideas. Though she was nervous on stage and avoided any eye contact with the experts. To her surprise, the experts were full of smiles and positive feedback, chatting and providing constructive suggestions. Aiwu was elated and felt encouraged.

Looking back, it dawned on Aiwu that the whole situation showcased the exact qualities that an SELMHD person should exhibit. Aiwu herself successfully managed strong emotions and stress, solving problems effectively; and the experts demonstrated interpersonal awareness, recognizing emotions, having empathy and encouraging others. Aiwu knew that her SELMHD journey had just begun.

Starting from scratch with this pilot class in 2014, Aiwu has sought every opportunity to explore this area of work over the years. She received professional training in SELMHD in Chongqing, which furthered her understanding of the theory and practices. At the end of the training, she had to step onto the stage to give another SELMHD class on behalf of the team. This time, thanks to the collective efforts of the teachers and trainers, she nailed it with confidence and charisma. Looking back, Aiwu says she has definitely gained more SELMHD skills, including communicating clearly and assertively, and managing herself and others.



Teacher Aiwu reflecting on her performance after an SELMHD demonstration class in Guyi Township Centre Primary School, Sanjiang County.
© UNICEF China



Teacher Aiwu delivering an SELMHD demonstration class to Laobao Primary School along with other county experts in Sanjiang County, Guangxi Province.
© UNICEF China

When it comes to developing methods for SELMHD interventions in her own class, Aiwu believes that teachers need the flexibility and freedom to select strategies that best fit the diverse needs of their students and classrooms. Aiwu started to try out SELMHD ideas in her class in practical but innovative ways. SELMHD is not rocket science, she says, but about a positive mindset and pattern of behaviour that can create incentives in life for students. For example, she encourages students to manage their own class, explore their potential in various ways beyond the classroom, and to adopt a positive attitude when facing difficulties. Nurtured by an immersive SEL atmosphere, students are able to participate in group activities more proactively; they solve disputes by themselves more easily; and they take

responsibility for themselves and the class more confidently – and all of this came naturally to them as soon as they adopted the ‘SELMHD mentality’.

“This is how SELMHD grows on you – not from simply digesting knowledge from a textbook, but through cultivating a positive mindset and pattern of behaviour from everyday nurturing of its ideas.” Aiwu feels grateful that, after almost four years of working with the concept and practice of SELMHD, she’s now more confident and articulate, while her students are friendlier and have a much more positive attitude towards life and study. So, what is SELMHD? By following Aiwu’s journey, have you discovered more about it beyond just the definition?

2. Unite School as one Family

Within a few months of arriving at No. 5 Primary School in Pan County in late 2015, the new principal, Mr. Jiang, was puzzled: why did teachers in the school complain so much? Why were they demotivated and reluctant to go the extra mile for their students? Why was there no rapport between teachers and the school’s management team? As time went on, more questions and problems intrigued him. How could he encourage teachers to be more enthusiastic about teaching and take the initiative on various tasks at school?

The SELMHD project arrived just in time, in the middle of 2016. Mr. Jiang quickly grasped the essence of SEL and the mental health approach and started experimenting in order to revitalize his school. “The SELMHD project impressed me with its six structured domains of management and awareness of self, others and the collective.” Jiang was excited, he says, because “when all the teachers are equipped with such awareness and management capacity, it seems I will be free from various worries”.

Inspired by SEL, Mr. Jiang embarked on a journey to harness the potential of the project at school, in a bid to encourage a more supportive school atmosphere for all, starting with improving his own social and emotional competency. Noticing that many teachers lived far from school and therefore tended to skip breakfast in order to get to school on time, Mr. Jiang started a ‘breakfast with love’ campaign on campus. To nurture a sense of belonging and collective awareness, Mr. Jiang and the school management team introduced a series of school ‘rituals’, such as a monthly collective birthday party, and ‘brainstorming for change’ sessions.

“Dear teacher Zou, I am honoured to have such a colleague! Thank you for bringing interesting teaching activities and laughter to our English class. You are a star! I know you are always ready to help with your kindness and energy. Keep up the good work. Just a small suggestion: classroom discipline needs to be improved. Happy birthday! Sincerely yours, Jiang.”

These encouraging handwritten lines on a nice birthday card came from the principal, along with a beautiful bouquet. In fact, every teacher who had a birthday that month would receive a thoughtful gift at the collective birthday party – not always flowers, it might be a book or something else chosen to suit their individual characters, and always accompanied by a positive note from Principal Jiang.

“What a wonderful surprise! This is the first bouquet of flowers I’ve ever received in my life”, says teacher Zheng joyfully, tears welling up. “I feel very grateful to have our principal and everyone’s sincere blessings. I feel this is my family and I am warmed and touched. I know that my hard work has been recognized and my suggestions have been listened to.”

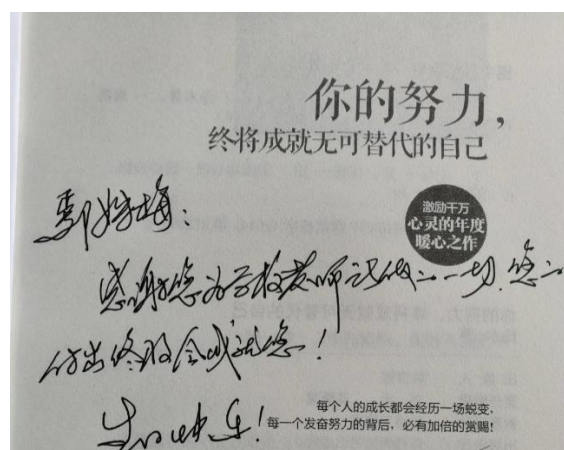
At the staff birthday party, teachers sit together, share ideas and chat as music plays in the background. Everyone seems to be at ease, and the exchange happens naturally. “This has become a monthly ritual of our school life. It’s not only a way to celebrate birthdays and reflect on our work, but it has also whetted teachers’ interest in and passion for their work”, says Mr. Jiang with a wide smile.

Mr. Jiang also took the lead in training teachers to understand SELMHD and guided them on how to best impart their knowledge to the students. Under his leadership and in the spirit of SEL, teachers started to brainstorm ways to have a more positive impact on students. For example, instead of Grade 6 or Class 1, classes were given names such as Stars of Wisdom to encourage the students. Some classes developed their own ‘class convention’, where students manage themselves and the class, while others organized public speaking competitions on various topics to boost students’ confidence

and expand their cognitive abilities. Some students even set up their own study groups to help each other instead of focusing only on their own performance.



Mr. Jiang presents a bouquet of flowers to Ms. Zheng.
© UNICEF China



Mr. Jiang's note to Ms. Wu on the flyleaf of the book she received as a birthday gift, © UNICEF China

From an unpromising start – a sluggish school management system and a demoralized team – the pieces of SELMHD have come together like a jigsaw, helping Mr. Jiang to shape his vision and foster an encouraging and supportive atmosphere in the school. But as Mr. Jiang knows, it's far from complete. He looks forward to witnessing more that SELMHD can offer in the long run.

"What we are striving for is not merely a well-functioning school, but a big 'family' full of love, strength, and positivity", he says. "SELMHD brought us a brand-new perspective on managing our big family and it now serves as the backbone and the key social and emotional bond for this family. Only when the family and the bond is strong can its members – students and teachers – thrive and shine happily and brightly at school, and in society."



Mr. Jiang delivering an SELMHD demonstration class for other teachers in the school, © UNICEF China



Teachers gathering together to celebrate birthdays and reflect on their work, © UNICEF China

3. Small Steps Make a Big Difference

Panpan is a Grade 3 student and is a child left-behind – her parents moved away to find work, and she now lives with her grandma and her younger brother in a shabby house. With freckles and ragged clothes, she looks small and fragile, and rarely speaks in class. "No one in the class liked Panpan. They made fun of her and called her ugly. The kids used to tease her all the time", says Panpan's teacher, Ms. Li, recalling an incident during break when things got physical.

One day, Ms. Li's class was rehearsing a show and Panpan expressed an interest in being part of it. But one of the boys just mocked her, saying "You look ugly and have nothing to show! Why should we

include you in the team?" Another added "Panpan! You're pathetic, you don't even have a mom and a dad!" Annoyed by the way her classmates continued to treat her, Panpan got up and threw a bottle of water at the boy and the crowd of children behind him, who just laughed. One boy was hit and injured.

Bullying can threaten kids' physical and emotional safety and hinder their ability to learn. It is important that kids learn to recognize bullying and respond in safe, positive ways. SAY NO TO BULLYING is one of the themes of SELMHD teaching and learning materials, which Ms. Li had undertaken to teach at the time. "Bullying is a reality in our students' lives. Some never feel it personally and just witness it; others are bullies or victims. This lesson offers bullying scenarios for students, but I thought it would be thought-provoking to use a real-life scenario experienced by all children in the class instead, in the form of role-play, to help them gain a deeper understanding of the act and its consequences." Was it possible and appropriate, Ms. Li pondered, to act out Panpan's scene and have everyone decide what they should have done? She knew she had to be very careful in designing such an SELMHD class with a real-life scenario, as it might hurt Panpan again. It's also important to bear in mind that an activity like this can lead to subtle bullying right in the classroom. She had to look out for any student who appeared agitated or withdrawn during the exercise.



Ms. Li delivering an SELMHD demonstration class on "SAY NO TO BULLYING" in a rural school of Sanjiang County, Guangxi Province, © UNICEF China



Panpan playing with her classmates in school during break, © UNICEF China

First, Ms. Li approached Panpan for her consent. Surprisingly, Panpan was in favour of Ms. Li's idea, as she had been longing for understanding and acceptance from her classmates. Panpan's scene was therefore acted out in the SEL class, and Ms. Li gently guided all the kids to think through the scenario but with the correct actions. In group discussions, the kids were asked to imagine themselves in the bullying situation and describe what they would do. This helps kids to build a critical SEL skill – empathy – which is a natural response when kids listen and think deeply about the experiences, emotions and stories of their peers and suspend judgement. Ms. Li also highlighted the importance of getting to know oneself and others, reflecting the SEL concept of self/others/collective awareness. "Panpan has her own strengths too, like every one of you, which deserves to be seen and recognized. For example, Pan is accommodating. She gave her umbrella to me on the way to school and ran off in the rain", Ms. Li told the class. "She always helps grandma with chores and look after her younger brother", said one kid. The class triggered an in-depth discussion among the kids. In the end, students who used to bully Panpan went up and hugged her, offering sincere apologies. Since then, Ms. Li has noticed that Panpan has become more outgoing, and the other kids have become friendlier towards her.

A few days later, when Panpan bumped into Ms. Li outside her class, she put an orange into the teacher's hand. Chuckling, she told Ms. Li about an incident with Qiang, the boy who used to bully her. "Teacher Li, I accidentally broke Qiang's bottle, I was so terrified and ready to be blamed and bullied, but he just looked at me with a poker face and told me to be careful next time." This is just one of the many benefits that SELMHD has brought to the kids. Ms. Li is motivated by the changes that have happened to the students. She knows that the small steps she has taken can make a big difference to the children, not only in school but also in society.