



Working together

**to prevent childhood overweight and obesity
in Latin America and the Caribbean**



in support of



”The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that when partners work together, listen to one another, and find solutions to an evolving situation, impactful results can happen. Thank you Novo Nordisk for standing with UNICEF to support and encourage our partnership and advance the issues of healthy childhoods and the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity.” — *Carla Haddad Mardini, PFP Director*



About Novo Nordisk

Novo Nordisk is a global healthcare company, founded in 1923 and headquartered just outside Copenhagen, Denmark.

Novo Nordisk's purpose is to drive change to defeat diabetes and other serious chronic diseases such as obesity, and rare blood and rare endocrine diseases. This is done by pioneering scientific breakthroughs, expanding access to medicines and working to prevent and ultimately cure the diseases they treat. Novo Nordisk employs more than 47,000 people in 80 offices around the world, and market their products in 168 countries.



About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children.

Across more than 190 countries and territories, UNICEF works for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone. UNICEF also has a long-standing commitment to improving child nutrition. The prevention of children overweight and obesity is core to UNICEF's vision for a world where all children realize their right to adequate nutrition. This entails addressing all forms of malnutrition – undernutrition (wasting and stunting), micronutrient deficiencies as well as overweight and obesity.

Glossary

CCD Cities Changing Diabetes

EAT A global, non-profit startup dedicated to transforming our global food system through sound science, impatient disruption and novel partnerships

FOPL Front of pack labeling

FSG A consulting firm with a focus on shared value partnerships

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GOF Global Obesity Forum

INSP National Institute of Public Health in Mexico

LMIC Low-and-middle income countries

LAC Latin America and Caribbean

Magenta A social and behavioural change research and communications agency

MOH Ministry of Health

N4G Summit Nutrition for Growth Summit

NCD Non-communicable diseases

RTI International Research Triangle Institute. An independent, nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition.

SBCC Social and Behaviour Change Communication Programmes

SDG Sustainable Development Goals

SLAN The Latin American Society of Nutrition

S.M.A.R.T. The letters generally mean specific, measurable, achievable (or attainable), relevant, and time-bound

Q Quarter

UNFSS UN Food Systems Summit

UNICEF LACRO UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office

WASH Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program

WCD World Children's Day

WHO World Health Organization

WOF World Obesity Federation



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01 Executive Summary

We continue to build on the success of our first year of partnership – accelerating progress with new learnings

In the ‘new normal’ of 2021, we continued to adapt to a world living through a pandemic. This prompted UNICEF to implement programme activities, conduct research and leverage new online platforms and digital solutions. Simultaneously, governments and key stakeholders adjusted and returned to priorities that had been ‘paused’. This has contributed to the acceleration of the UNICEF/Novo Nordisk partnership over the past year.

In 2021, this partnership benefited more than 1 million caregivers and children across the Latin America and Caribbean region through direct programmatic reach and social and behaviour change communication strategies. The knowledge and tools developed through the partnership have been accessed across more than 30 countries, including 24 countries in Latin America. This has been realized both through Novo Nordisk’s \$6 million strategic funding to UNICEF’s programmatic work and through a collaborative effort that leverages the two organizations’ expertise, reach and networks.

UNICEF and Novo Nordisk identified ways to collaborate, convene stakeholders and set the agenda for childhood overweight and obesity prevention. The partnership’s successful model for global coordination and shared value learning continues to engage diverse stakeholders and position the partnership at the forefront of both global thought leadership and prominent in-country programming. Through this innovative model, we continue to lead the way in demonstrating how partners can successfully make change together.

Addressing gaps in knowledge and sharing best practices is a key pillar of work to influence change. Together, UNICEF and Novo Nordisk have contributed to 7 UNICEF publications that have helped to advance the prevention agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean. Furthermore, in 2021, this partnership enabled the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office to release the first thematic report on the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity. We disseminated the report’s key findings through regional webinars, hosted 900 participants from over 40 countries, and reached nearly half a million people through social media content and articles published across 60 media outlets. Another key partnership deliverable was piloting the childhood overweight situation Landscape Analysis Tool, developed in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). The tool was implemented in Costa Rica and Peru, as well as in the regions of South Asia, East Asia Pacific and Eastern and Southern Africa. It continues to help UNICEF build its work with governments, identify priorities, convene stakeholders and drive programming at scale.

To advocate for societal responsibility and enable decision makers to act, Novo Nordisk has enabled UNICEF to collaborate with over 25 leading organizations on at least one joint initiative in support of childhood overweight and obesity prevention priorities at the global, regional, and/or country levels. UNICEF Mexico has reached 20 key decision makers directly through strategic advocacy opportunities and has contributed to six key pieces of legislation. In Colombia, government officials have been involved in defining upcoming studies that will be used to influence key decision makers in 2022. The establishment of the Global Obesity Coalition with WHO and the World Obesity Federation means that UNICEF brings together three lead organizations on this topic to join forces and maximize efficiencies while simultaneously expanding our reach globally.

A strong area of collaboration in 2021 was around urban environments and cities, which was leveraged through several global events. In Mexico, Novo Nordisk participated in a round-table discussion with over 1,000 private companies and showcased its approach to breastfeeding in the workplace. In Colombia, a co-hosted event, ‘Obesogenic Environments, Childhood and Adolescence’, was attended by cross-sectoral participants. In addition, UNICEF and Novo Nordisk worked together to deliver a successful virtual field trip through a live broadcast format to bring the partnership closer to employees and engage with senior leaders and UNICEF experts. This was integrated as part of a broader

World Children's Day campaign, in which Novo Nordisk exercised its communication resources to promote and educate audiences about a child's right to a healthy life.

Strengthening the Novo Nordisk prevention agenda in 2022 will only enhance these opportunities. Plans are underway for UNICEF to co-lead the Novo Nordisk initiative 'The Healthy Childhood Challenge' as a marquee joint event, which will culminate in a broader World Children's Day campaign. Upcoming programme activities include communicating findings from a study on weight stigma in adolescents, which will generate important new knowledge on a topic of vital importance to children's physical and mental well-being. The global advocacy strategy will continue to take shape and mark World Obesity Day – and hopefully the World Health Assembly – with the Global Obesity Coalition continuing to advocate for the acceleration of global action on obesity. Efforts are underway to develop a model for calculating the return on investment as well as cost savings for childhood obesity prevention. A study completed in Mexico suggests that childhood obesity prevention policies could reap economic benefits of \$45 billion over the lifetime of a generation of children. Peru will be the second country in Latin America and the Caribbean to pilot the model. In addition, Colombia will complete studies on the burden of disease relating to overweight and obesity.

The perpetuation of the COVID-19 pandemic against the backdrop of a worsening overweight and obesity crisis highlights a continued urgency for this global partnership to scale up prevention efforts that guarantee every child has the chance to grow up healthy and fulfil their true potential. Before COVID-19, prevention of obesity was essential. Now it is more urgent than ever. Operating at full speed, UNICEF is entering the final year of this initial partnership with Novo Nordisk, with many of the programming activities coming to fruition at scale. We look forward to an open and constructive dialogue to potentially expand and continue to help children grow and thrive.



This annual report highlights the learnings and advances made in 2021 – both programmatically and through collaboration – and sheds light on what lies ahead. The report includes a financial statement.

02 The New Normal

In 2021, UNICEF continued to adapt to a world living through a pandemic. The ongoing impact of COVID-19 on society and ways of working prompted UNICEF to find innovative alternatives for implementing certain programme activities, conducting research and advocacy, and leveraging new online platforms and digital solutions. Simultaneously, governments adjusted to this new normal and returned to priorities that had been “paused” during earlier phases of the pandemic, which contributed to the acceleration of the partnership over the past year.

More than two years into the pandemic, evidence is clear that people with overweight and obesity, including children and adolescents, are at greater risk of suffering severe consequences caused by COVID-19 including being more susceptible to hospitalization, needing intensive care, and requiring mechanical ventilation. In fact, overweight can include a higher risk of death, regardless of other comorbidities.^{1,2,3,4,5} The high prevalence of overweight and obesity in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) means the region has been particularly at risk. Based on recent trends, the number of children under the age of five with overweight will almost double within the next decade and only one in six countries in the region are on track to meet the SDG 2 target on overweight.

The pandemic also made it increasingly difficult for children and families to access nutritious foods, essential nutrition services, and appropriate nutrition practices, which threatens to exacerbate the triple burden of malnutrition characterized by the coexistence of undernutrition, overweight, and micronutrient deficiencies.

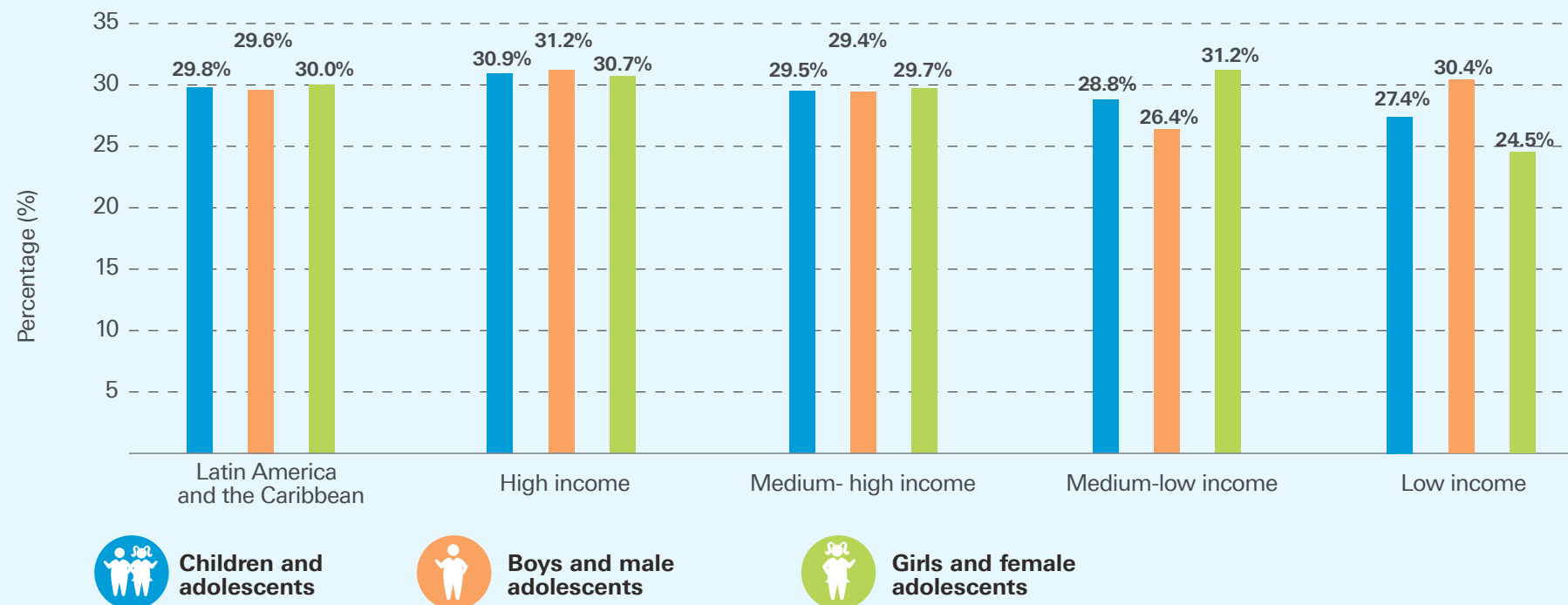
The perpetuation of the COVID-19 pandemic against the backdrop of a worsening childhood overweight and obesity situation highlights the continued urgency of this global partnership. Now more than ever, we need to fill knowledge gaps, disseminate best practices, encourage action from decision makers, and use valuable lessons learned to scale up prevention efforts that guarantee every child has the chance to grow well in a changing world and fulfil their true potential. The partnership with Novo Nordisk is helping UNICEF monitor and respond to the situation, as demonstrated here in Mexico.



*“Before COVID-19,
preventing obesity
was essential.
Now it is more urgent
than ever”*

— **Jean Gough**, UNICEF Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean

Percentage of children and adolescents, aged 5 to 19, affected by overweight in Latin America and the Caribbean, by income level, GDP per capita, in the countries⁶



The nutritional status of children under 5 years of age in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2020⁷

The joint malnutrition estimates (World Bank, UNICEF, WHO) published in April 2021 show that there is insufficient progress to reach the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030.

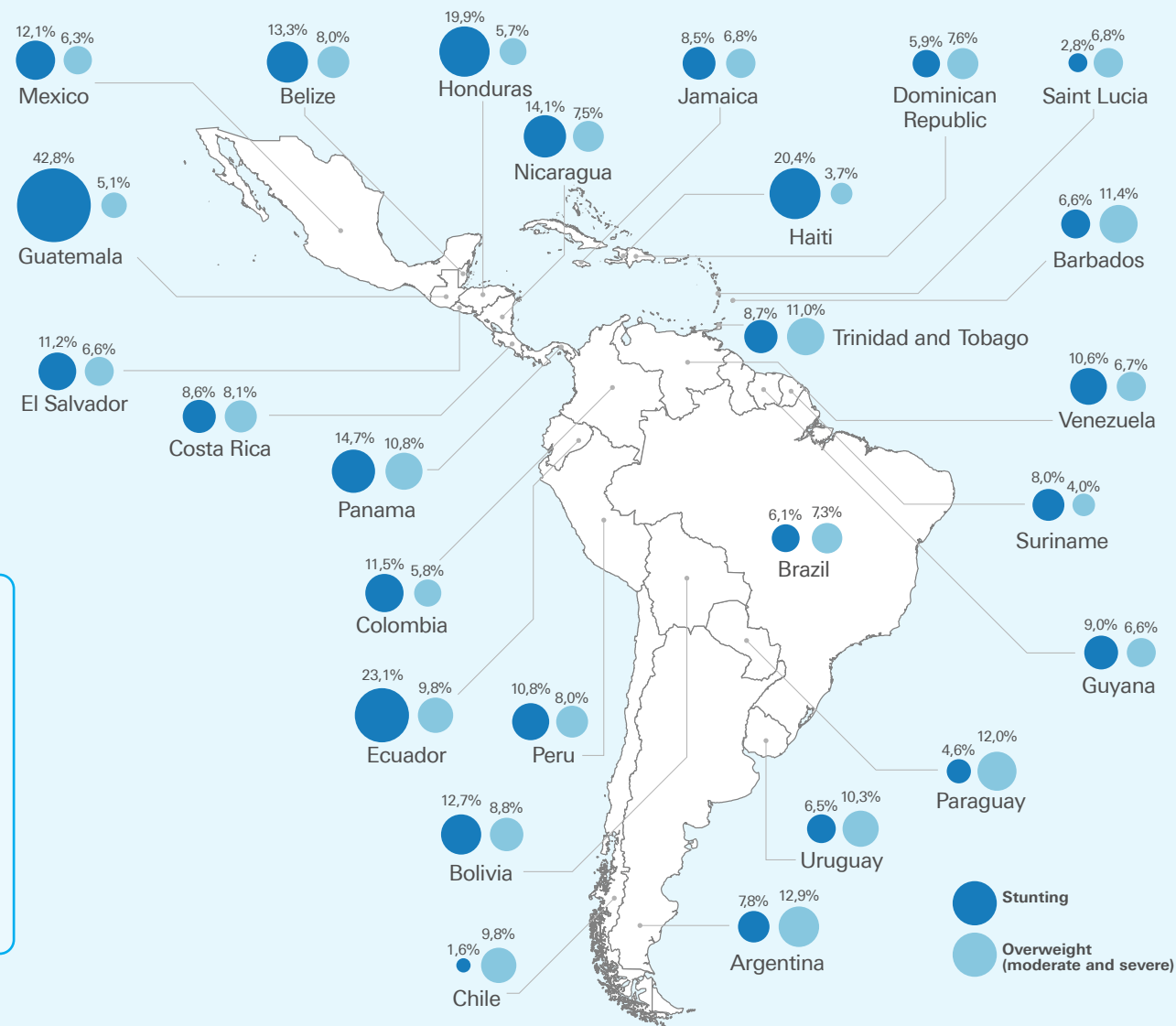
Definitions

Stunting

Height for age < -2 SD of the World Health Organization median child growth standards for children under 5 years of age.

Overweight

Weight-for-height above +2 SD of the World Health Organization median child growth standards for children under 5 years of age. Severe overweight - (above +3 SD) is referred to as obesity.



03 Our Shared Value

Partnership continues to be relevant and much needed

Children affected by overweight are at a higher risk of developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which can also affect their cognitive, emotional, and physical development. The drivers of the rapid increase in overweight in the LAC region are mainly related to obesogenic environments.

The pandemic has made it increasingly difficult for children to access nutritious foods, implement appropriate nutrition practices, and be physically active. In fact, adolescents have reported a reduced availability of healthy foods, higher exposure to marketing of ultra-processed foods, and having less money to purchase healthy food.

Overweight and obesity remain a growing threats to children's well-being globally, and particularly in the LAC region, they impact children's rights on multiple fronts. This includes children's rights to healthy food, where children should be guaranteed nutritious, sufficient, accessible, and safe food, as well as the right to health and information. The need to protect, promote and support good nutrition and a healthy diets has never been greater or more urgent.

When the children's home environments do not support healthy eating and living, overweight and obesity are the body's natural responses to an unnatural situation. This has a costly effect on everyone. In 2019, the global healthcare costs attributed to obesity were estimated at more than USD 990 billion per year.⁸ A recent pilot study of eight countries found that the economic impact of inaction on obesity is projected to double to an average of 3.6 per cent of GDP by 2060.⁹ The same study also shows that by implementing prevention policies now, we can drastically reduce these future economic consequences.

Children's rights are impacted across multiple areas by the issue of overweight and obesity. Highlighted here are those articles from the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

 <p>1 DEFINITION OF A CHILD</p>	A 'child' is every human being below age 18	 <p>18 RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS</p>	Parents or legal guardians have primary responsibility for children's upbringing and development, and governments must offer appropriate assistance
 <p>2 NO DISCRIMINATION</p>	No child can be denied their rights or treated unfairly for any reason	 <p>24 HEALTH, WATER, FOOD, ENVIRONMENT</p>	Highest possible standard of health, combating disease and malnutrition, including the provision of nutritious foods, clean drinking water and preventive health care
 <p>3 BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD</p>	The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all decisions and actions that concern them	 <p>27 FOOD, CLOTHING, A SAFE HOME</p>	Adequate standard of living – nutrition, clothing, housing – and support for families who need assistance
 <p>4 MAKING RIGHTS REAL</p>	Governments must take all appropriate measures to ensure the rights of all children within their jurisdiction, through international cooperation when needed	 <p>28 ACCESS TO EDUCATION</p>	Every child has the right to education
 <p>6 LIFE, SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT</p>	Ensure children's survival and the chance to develop to their fullest potential	 <p>29 AIMS OF EDUCATION</p>	Encouraging development of their personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities
 <p>12 RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S VIEWS</p>	The right to freely express their views, and to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings that affect them	 <p>31 REST, PLAY, CULTURE, ARTS</p>	The right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and to participate in age-appropriate recreational activities
 <p>16 PROTECTION OF PRIVACY</p>	Every child has the right to privacy	 <p>32 PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL WORK</p>	Protection from economic exploitation
 <p>17 ACCESS TO INFORMATION</p>	Access to accurate information from multiple sources and in all types of media, with protection from harmful material	 <p>36 PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION</p>	... and from all other forms of exploitation, including those not mentioned in the Convention

Strong common agenda

The common goal for our shared-value partnership – to contribute to the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity by addressing obesogenic environments, improving diets and changing societal narratives and norms – is therefore more relevant and more needed now than ever.

UNICEF needs partners like Novo Nordisk to accelerate prevention strategies at scale and further mobilize interest and support for this work at the global, regional, and country levels. Our ongoing collaboration successfully demonstrates how we can combine forces within a sensitive sector to advance a shared agenda. Our partnership is now well established across numerous divisions within UNICEF and is fostering promising trust-based collaborations at all levels.

From our regular check-ins and touch points with Novo Nordisk, we appreciate that the partnership has been moving in the right direction. Both partners have continued interest in what we can achieve together by deepening and expanding our ambition for the future. The opportunities we are excited about include leveraging data and research, place-based interventions and advocacy for policy change and investment in prevention. Novo Nordisk's plans to announce a rebooted prevention agenda in 2022 will only strengthen these opportunities.

A key shared ambition continues to be shifting the narrative around childhood overweight and obesity from an "individual problem" to a "societal responsibility". This requires increased knowledge on the issue and broader recognition that the causes of childhood overweight are complex, with interconnected environmental influences. By convening networks and disseminating knowledge and advocacy, this partnership is advancing those critical systemic changes to build healthier environments for children, and positioning early prevention as a key action in global efforts against childhood overweight and obesity.

The Three Pillar Structure remains a solid approach to building an integrated partnership, leveraging strong links between interventions across global, regional and country levels.



1. Address gaps in knowledge and share best practices: Enhance knowledge among decision-makers on successful policies to prevent childhood overweight and obesity in middle-income countries.



2. Support decision makers to act: Build awareness around the impact of overweight and obesity on children and their rights while advocating for systemic changes to address this growing epidemic.



3. Provide tailored in-country support: Advance programmatic work in Mexico and Colombia to develop and strengthen interventions and policies for childhood overweight and obesity prevention while helping to scale successful interventions.

04 Impact from our programme activities

More than 1 million caregivers and children were reached across the LAC region via direct programmatic reach as well as social and behaviour change communication strategies.

The knowledge and tools developed through the partnership have already been accessed in more than 30 countries, including 24 countries in Latin America.



This is realized both through Novo Nordisk's \$6 million strategic funding to UNICEF's programmatic and collaborative work that leverages the two organizations' expertise, reach and networks. As implementation of country-level programming accelerates in 2022, the impact will deepen further.



Our goal

To contribute to the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity by addressing obesogenic environments, improving diets, and changing societal narratives and norms.

Our pillars

1. Address gaps in knowledge and share best practice

2. Support decision-makers to act

3. Provide tailored in-country support: Mexico and Colombia

Our achievements

By December 2021, Novo Nordisk had funded **7 UNICEF publications contributing to the prevention of childhood obesity** globally and in LAC.

By December 2021, **nearly all UNICEF country offices in LAC had participated in the regional childhood overweight and obesity event**. This was in addition to 11 country offices who have either presented at events, implemented landscape analyses, engaged cities to implement urban food environment programming, or actively participated at the SLAN Congress (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Peru)

By December 2021, **two countries in LAC (Costa Rica and Peru) had used the Landscape Analysis Tool** to conduct a childhood overweight and obesity situational analysis. The tool was also piloted in other regions, such as East Asia Pacific (four countries), South Asia (one country), and Eastern and Southern Africa (two countries) for a total of nine countries.

By December 2021, a total of **3,374 internal and external individuals to UNICEF, across 40 countries**, had attended global or regional events on the prevention of childhood obesity.

This is in addition to the research studies on both digital marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes and the marketing on unhealthy food and beverages (digital and retail), which **reached 700,000 people**.

In Mexico, **10 government policy makers, and about 1,500 public health leaders** were reached through webinars on early childhood nutrition, school-age children and adolescent nutrition, SBCC and food environments.

+25 leading organizations (including UN agencies, government ministries, civil society groups, academic institutions, etc.) have collaborated with UNICEF on at least one joint initiative in support of childhood overweight and obesity prevention priorities at either the global (10), regional level (6) or country level in Mexico (7) and Colombia (5). This is in addition to **30 private companies** who attended the regional event.

UNICEF Mexico has strongly contributed to six key pieces of legislation by supporting decision makers, including the Official Mexican Norm (NOM)-050 on breastfeeding protection, the NOM-031 on BMS labelling, the National Marketing Guidelines, the National Regulation of Sanitary Control of Products and Services, National Marketing Regulation and the General Health Law.

In Mexico, **20 key decision makers** (including government, private sector, and civil society) have been **reached directly via strategic advocacy opportunities**.

In Colombia, government officials from three ministries have been involved in defining upcoming studies that will be used to influence key decision makers in 2022.

In Mexico, **UNICEF has reached about 1 million caregivers, children, and adolescents** with social and behaviour change communication strategies.

In Mexico, **the assessment of health worker capacities has been completed** and the training modules nearly finalized using the findings. In 2022, 3,000 health workers will be trained on the prevention, diagnosis, and monitoring of malnutrition.

In Colombia, a total of 50 journalists were reached through the 60' Reconnecting with Experts.

In Colombia, the **intersectoral advocacy and communication strategy for the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity was designed**, with contributions from the Ministry of Health. The plan seeks to be rolled out by December 2022 and will engage parents and caregivers, decision makers, the health sector, the education sector, and children and adolescents.

☼ Pillar 1 Highlights in Year Two: Address gaps in knowledge and share best practice

LAC Regional Thematic Report

In September 2021, UNICEF LACRO released the first thematic report on the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity in the region, "Childhood Overweight: A call for prevention in Latin America and the Caribbean". In addition to its contribution to local government action, civil society groups, academic institutions, and the private sector, the report describes the current regional situation while laying out UNICEF's approach and vision for prevention efforts. The report is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

The report was launched via two regional webinars that hosted 900 attendees from more than 40 countries. There were calls to action from the UNICEF Regional Director and UNICEF representatives in Guatemala, as well as presentations highlighting the work in Mexico, Uruguay, Guatemala, Colombia, Costa Rica, and El Salvador. Both events had great online communication traction, reaching nearly half a million people through social media channels and across 60 media outlets disseminating the report's key findings.

Implementation of UNICEF/WHO landscape analysis tool

In 2020, UNICEF Headquarters, in close collaboration with WHO, developed a tool to conduct a childhood overweight situation analysis. This tool, a partnership deliverable, is useful for countries that seek to identify priority gaps and will help UNICEF refocus its country programming around the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity. In 2021, LACRO supported two countries to pilot this tool in the LAC region of Costa Rica and Peru. The tool was well-received in these two countries, and they also provided comments to further improve it. The country offices will finalize briefs with their main findings in 2022. The tool was also piloted in other regions, such as East Asia Pacific (five countries), South Asia (one country), and Eastern and Southern Africa (four countries). Reports from the implementation are available [here](#). Peer-review publications are in development, as well as an evaluation of the tool, which will lead to final adjustments.

UNICEF e-Learning course

The [Agora course](#) on the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity has been finalized as an online tool in English and was launched internally at UNICEF. The course will provide UNICEF staff members and relevant partner organizations with the necessary technical foundation to begin gathering evidence for programming and reporting on the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity. It introduces the scope and scale of the problem, relevant global mandates, regulatory frameworks to address the problem, evidence-based interventions for implementation, and the role of politics. Additionally, it includes 15 expert videos from global thought leaders working on the frontline to tackle childhood overweight and obesity. Each of the five modules consists of 10-25 lessons that are followed by a summary and a quiz. The Spanish translation is underway and will be online in early 2022 when the online course will be externally communicated to partners.



Childhood Overweight: A Call for Prevention in Latin America and the Caribbean



Screenshots from the regional virtual event, showing the LAC UNICEF Regional Director, the PAHO expert and the UNICEF Mexico Nutrition Chief.



Advancing the agenda around food marketing

UNICEF LACRO has been pushing forward critical studies on the marketing of food and beverages to children in both retail stores and online. The regional team completed a comprehensive Retail Assessment Toolkit based on pilot results from five countries (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico) with recommendations directed towards policy makers, the private sector, and academic and civil society. The toolkit was presented at a symposium for the Latin American Society of Nutrition (SLAN) Congress in November 2021, with plans to pilot the recommendations in Argentina with Cooperativa Obrera in 2022. In addition, successful digital marketing studies have been conducted in both [Argentina](#) and [Mexico](#) where the results and recommendations were also presented at SLAN. A regional version of this digital marketing study is scheduled for early 2022, with plans to expand to Chile, El Salvador, Jamaica, and Paraguay - including the potential to combine similar studies conducted by UNICEF Colombia.



Weight Stigma Among Adolescents

In partnership with RTI International, a formative research study was administered with 1200 adolescents in Brazil, South Africa, and Indonesia to better understand the experience of weight stigma among adolescents in LMICs. As mental health is critical to UNICEF's advocacy, this knowledge generation will inform our future messaging in LMIC settings. The qualitative assessment was successfully completed and presented at the Global Obesity Forum in September 2021. Between 50-70 per cent of young people affected by overweight have received negative comments about their weight and around 50 per cent felt that their weight contributed to negative self-perception. Building on this work, LACRO contracted MAGENTA to undertake a study on the social norms, drivers, and barriers that influence behaviours around diet and body image among children and adolescents in Mexico, Colombia, and Guatemala. The study report, policy brief, and recommendations documents are expected by mid-2022.



Making the case for investment in childhood obesity prevention in Mexico

In a knowledge generation partnership with RTI International, efforts are underway to develop a model for calculating return on investment and cost savings for childhood obesity prevention.

The study was completed in Mexico, with preliminary figures suggesting that childhood obesity prevention policies could reap the economic benefits of MXN 901 billion over the lifetime of a cohort and help save 9 million disability adjusted life years. This significantly outweighs the costs of implementing five key prevention policies of (MXN 5.5 billion).

A scientific article describing the methods and results from Mexico is being prepared for 2022 publication. RTI International is already conducting similar research in China, with plans to study a second LAC country in Q1 2022.

☼ Pillar 2 Highlights in Year Two: Support decision makers to act

Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit

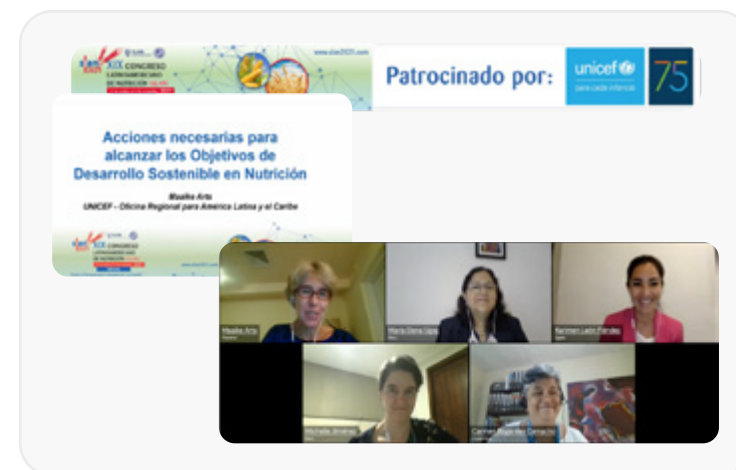
In October 2021, ahead of the N4G Summit in Tokyo, UNICEF and WHO convened two high level consultations with Member States to encourage S.M.A.R.T. commitments for healthy diets and overweight prevention. One consultation focused on front-of-pack labelling and food marketing to children, and the other on fiscal policies, with the Mexico government presenting their work at both. There were a combined 400 participants, with decision makers from nearly 30 countries.

UNICEF's Global Advocacy Roadmap

Multiple simultaneous strategic advocacy processes were undertaken in 2021 to develop UNICEF's global voice on the issue of childhood overweight and obesity. An audience segmentation study was conducted by Glocalities with more than 7,000 people across seven countries to build high-impact target messaging for overweight and obesity campaigns. Additionally, an expert storyteller developed 11 human-centered narratives to put a human face on the growing epidemic. Advocacy messaging workshops have been held with more than 12 frontrunner countries, including Mexico and Colombia, to share best practices and nourish global coordination to support policymakers to act. All of this fed into the finalization of a UNICEF Global Advocacy Roadmap with far-reaching, impactful advocacy plans for 2022 and 2023, including World Obesity Day and the World Health Assembly.

The Latin American Society of Nutrition (SLAN) Congress 2021

The partnership enabled UNICEF to co-sponsor the most important nutrition event in the LAC region, which takes place every three years. UNICEF's support allowed this Congress to be free of conflicts of interest from the food and beverage industry. From 31 October to 4 November 2021, more than 850 researchers, nutritionists, physicians, and policy makers from LAC attended the virtual event. UNICEF's regional adviser for the areas of health and nutrition spoke in the opening session. UNICEF's regional office and country office moderated and/or presented in six symposiums. Four symposiums were related to childhood overweight prevention and provided an opportunity to present results from the studies on the digital marketing of food and drinks in Argentina and Mexico, the retail assessment toolkit, and the childhood overweight landscape analysis pilots in Costa Rica and Peru. UNICEF also had a virtual booth where attendees could consult and download key publications on nutrition, overweight, breastfeeding, digital marketing, and retail environments, including those supported by Novo Nordisk's contribution.

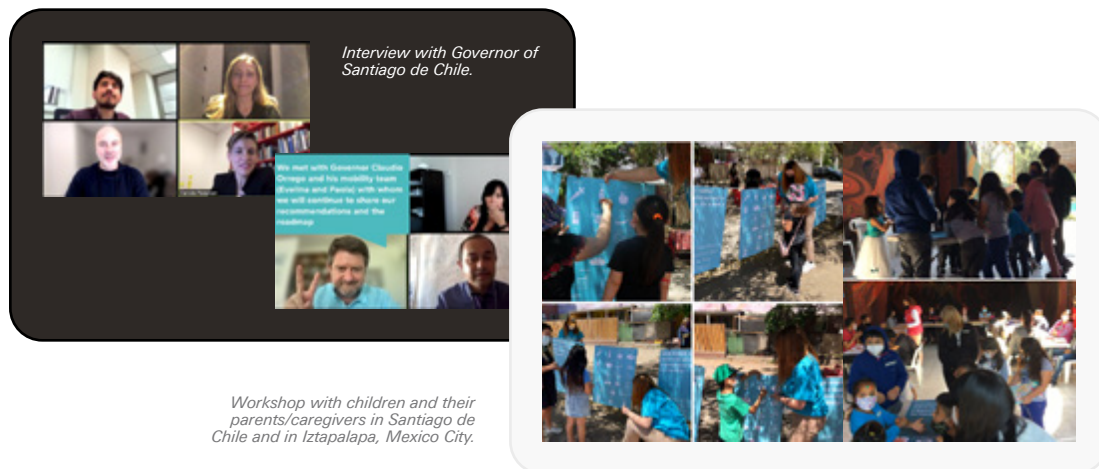


Improving Urban Food Environments in LAC

To engage with cities and local decision makers to improve urban food environments, UNICEF LACRO has partnered with Gehl Architects to build out this agenda in Santiago de Chile and Mexico City. Gehl has been contracted to develop practical guidance, a roadmap, and recommendations for country offices to strategically engage with cities on the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity. More importantly, they will be helping to better understand UNICEF's role in advancing children's nutrition in urban settings. The project will be completed by January 2022 and includes plans to collaborate with the Urban Health Network for LAC to properly disseminate findings towards key researchers, policy makers, and civil society across the region.



Key local stakeholders were interviewed and two workshops with children and their parents/caregivers were conducted in vulnerable communities in both cities:



Fix My Food Report - UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS)

As part of a contribution to the UNFSS, UNICEF partnered with Western Sydney University to host more than 60 food system dialogues with over 700 children and adolescents in nearly 20 countries, including Mexico and Guatemala.

The results from this ambitious global endeavour were featured in [a report](#) that highlights children's and adolescents' perspectives on food, food environments, food practices, and the transformation they desire in their food systems. This report provided seven key recommendations to support decision makers to act, and these recommendations were enshrined in UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Pau Gasol's video messaging displayed at the UNFSS in September 2021. These messages highlight childhood overweight and obesity as a central part of the global malnutrition challenge. The report was launched with a youth-led panel discussion with more than 100 youth engagement professionals from around the world, and a mailing list reaching over 8,000 people. The partnership enabled the team at UNICEF headquarters to support the consultation and publication process.

Fed to Fail Report

For the first time, UNICEF launched a flagship report that examined the latest data and evidence on the status, trends, and inequities in the diets of young children aged 6-23 months, and the barriers to nutritious, safe, and age-appropriate diets. The breakthrough publication highlighted that two in three children between the ages of six months to two years are not getting the nutritious diets they need to grow well. The publication illuminates an alarming increase in the consumption of ultra-processed foods, which has huge consequences for childhood overweight and obesity. Staff supported by this partnership contributed to the report's content and social media dissemination of videos and infographics, which reached more than 1 million people. UNICEF nutrition specialists from PG-Nutrition were interviewed on leading news outlets like Al Jazeera.

Territorial Prevention Networks in Colombia

UNICEF Colombia has been cultivating Colombia's Territorial Prevention Networks of community leaders, institutions, and service providers to support decision makers on multisectoral action to prevent childhood overweight and obesity across the country. Focusing specifically on healthy eating, physical activity, and mental health, UNICEF Colombia has been coordinating with the Ministry of Health to align the network's work at the local level with roll-out planned for 2022. The network model allows UNICEF to work directly with communities for impact at scale. The Territorial Prevention Networks will be implemented in three territories (Cali, Cartagena, and Bogotá). Participating territories are those that are recognized by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection for their potential to advance food and nutrition policies and those that have existing mechanisms for inter-institutional coordination. Topics to be addressed as part of the Territorial Prevention Networks include:

1. NCDs and their major drivers
2. Healthy and sustainable diets, including food-based dietary guidelines
3. Lifetime physical activity recommendations
4. Actions to address obesogenic environments
5. Physical activity recommendations across the life course
6. Social and behaviour change to support healthy eating, including messaging around food groups and local products
7. Water, sanitation and health, and built environments
8. School food environments and the promotion of physical activity in school
9. Social community mobilization and networking



☼ Pillar 3 Highlights in Year Two: Provide tailored in-country support: Mexico and Colombia

Mexico: Innovative Research on Food and Beverage Marketing to Children

In 2021, UNICEF Mexico collaborated with the National Institute of Public Health (INSP) to finalize three innovative studies that were used to support the Ministry of Health and Members of Parliament in strengthening Mexico's national laws and regulations on the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children:

1. Marketing of unhealthy food and beverage directed to children across digital media

Despite existing regulations that prohibit the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages directed to children less than 13 years old online, 70 % of Mexican children and adolescents were exposed to such harmful marketing. The study found that 96% of digitally advertised food and beverages were classified as unhealthy. On top of this, more than 30% of this marketing was pushed across the most popular social media networks by influencers, without declaring that those products were being advertised.

2. Marketing of unhealthy food and beverage directed to children in food retail environments

The results from food retail environments were equally as troubling. The study found that children were targeted by unhealthy food and beverage marketing through attractive child-friendly packaging, the placement of products low on the shelves, and the use of ambience music. This is in addition to the different techniques that were used to attract parents to these unhealthy options with discounts, promotions / loyalty cards, and placement of products near the exit.

3. The digital marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes

When it came to how breastmilk substitutes were being marketed online in Mexico, it was found that 71% of commercial milk formula producers' websites were in direct contact with mothers and fathers. This revelation is contrary to rules enshrined within the International Code of Breastmilk Substitutes, despite Mexico adopting the Code 40 years ago. It was also found that more than 50% of mothers receive recommendations to feed their children with some type of commercial milk formula, often from doctors who operate through online platforms.

These staggering results provided crucial evidence to support the Ministry of Health's modifications to the National Marketing Guidelines, National Mexican Norm 031 on Breastmilk Substitutes' Labelling, National Marketing Regulation, National Regulation of Sanitary Control of Products and Services, and the General Health Law. These changes will be officially published in 2022.

Colombia: 60' Reconnecting with Experts

In the first year of the partnership, UNICEF Colombia and Novo Nordisk Colombia co-designed training workshops for 120 local journalists on how to accurately and ethically report on the prevention of child overweight and obesity. To continue positively reshaping the national narrative around childhood overweight and obesity, the two organizations collaborated again to host five intimate webinars where journalists can reconnect with UNICEF and Novo Nordisk experts on issues relating to childhood overweight and obesity. The sessions covered strategic podcast production, editorial projects for social transformation, journalistic approaches to health issues, and news verification (fake news). Participants included journalists from recognized media in Colombia like *Semana* magazine, *Colombia Check*, and *Caracol Radio*.



How Alexandra will benefit from UNICEF Colombia's Territorial Prevention Network

The clock strikes five in the morning and the alarm rings. Alexandra, a Colombian adolescent from the Pacific coast, opens her eyes. It is a new day and soon the sun will be shining. Alexandra wears her sports clothes and begins her morning jog. With each breath of air that passes through her lungs, she renews her life—she feels it in her body.

Not long ago, she was used to eating unhealthy food. Her family routines and the lack of access to healthy foods in their community all contributed to an unhealthy diet. Back then, she also spent most of her free time on her mobile phone and computer, meaning she was physically inactive. Over time, these factors combined caused Alexandra's weight to increase, which worried her and her mother, Sandra.

Alexandra's school then joined the Healthy Lifestyles project led by UNICEF, which aims to promote the health of children and adolescents through the practice of physical activity, healthy diets, and good hygiene practices. The guidance and support provided by the project was a perfect opportunity for Sandra and Alexandra to take some positive steps—literally.

It was not easy, of course, waking up early to exercise and to give up certain foods and replace these with more fruits and vegetables. But her mother supported her, and the school played a fundamental role in providing tools and advice for the family to put into practice at home.

UNICEF has played a key role in supporting the school to provide appropriate guidance for the family. Today, Alexandra is a healthier teenager, with a nutritious diet and active lifestyle that has improved her well-being. She knows it can be difficult when there is reduced access to healthy food, and that there are many challenges for other children like her in Colombia.

In 2022, UNICEF and Novo Nordisk will reach more children and adolescents like Alexandra through the Territorial Prevention Networks, which will coordinate and support decision makers, families, health workers, and educators to offer support towards achieving a healthy diet, and encouraging physical activity through policies, programmes and guidance to families like Sandra and Alexandra.



Alexandra and Sandra at home










05 Collaboration highlights

The partnership continues to build on the success of our first year of work, despite the sustained challenges posed by COVID-19. UNICEF and Novo Nordisk identified more ways to collaborate, convene stakeholders, and set the agenda for childhood overweight and obesity prevention.

The partnership's successful model for global coordination, based around quarterly updates, an annual meeting, and an inclusive mid-term review process, continues to engage diverse stakeholders from both organizations at country, regional, and global headquarter levels. This has positioned the partnership at the forefront of both global thought leadership and prominent in-country programming, gaining a reputation within UNICEF for being an innovative model.










Tool: Quarterly Short Survey

Each of the UNICEF and Novo Nordisk partnership divisions fill out this scheme prior to each quarterly meeting to guide collaboration discussions.

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Collaboration Levers	Rating traffic lights	Collaboration activity and what was enabled	Recommendations	New collaboration opportunities + feedback	
B1	Combining complementary resource thinking, approaches and networks to enrich content	 /  / 			
B2	Coordination and alignment on key facts and messages to strengthen voice	 /  / 			
B3	Leveraging each others' relationships, channels and networks to amplify dissemination	 /  / 			

Tool: Bi-annual Collaboration Dashboard

The partnership managers across both organizations collect the information from the short surveys across all divisions and any other additional conversations to develop an overview of the entire partnership.

Key Insights				Global Rating
Collaboration Levers	Examples of collaborations	What's going well/ less well	Potential new opportunities/actions	Average
B1	Combining complementary resources thinking, approaches and networks to enrich content			 /  / 
B2	Coordination and alignment on key facts and messages to strengthen voice			 /  / 
B3	Leveraging each others' relationships, channels and networks to amplify dissemination			 /  / 
...	Other important insights?			





Collaboration examples across the partnership

Global Obesity Forum 2021: Launching the Global Obesity Coalition

The Global Obesity Forum (GOF) is an annual meeting of a diverse, focused, and passionate group of obesity experts and advocates from multiple sectors around the globe, with a strong representation from people with lived experience of obesity. For the first time this year, the GOF was co-organized by the World Obesity Federation (WOF), UNICEF and WHO. Bringing together three influential organizations in this space, GOF was used to launch the Global Obesity Coalition at a half-day hybrid event in New York City during the UN General Assembly. The Global Obesity Coalition will be an important vehicle for advocacy efforts this partnership supports moving forward. Aligning messages and activities across the three organizations will ensure effective collaboration and amplification. Nearly 140 experts attended from 36 countries, and Novo Nordisk's Niels Lund, Vice President, Head of Global Prevention and Promotion, was invited to present on "innovative approaches to addressing obesity." Lund's contribution not only influenced critical discussions around setting the coalition's agenda, but also established the critical role of the private sector, while placing our partnership at the forefront of a major global obesity event.



Advancing the Agenda for Healthy Urban Food Environments for Children

In the first year of this partnership, UNICEF worked closely with Novo Nordisk's Cities Changing Diabetes (CCD) team to develop its roadmap for action to support nutritious diets and healthy environments in cities. In collaboration with EAT, UNICEF and CCD, momentum was created to host another Children Eating Well in Cities event at the International Conference on Urban Health 2021 focusing on "Opportunities and Challenges for Urban Action in LAC". This was a credit to the financial and technical support from Novo Nordisk, which gave the partnership a platform at this prestigious global conference. The session on 7 July 2021 convened hand-selected experts from academia, city governments, urban planners, and UNICEF staff to explore urban action to prevent childhood overweight and obesity by shaping healthy and sustainable food environments in cities across LAC. The event was a catalyst for UNICEF LACRO to begin pivotal urban work with Gehl Architects in Santiago de Chile and Mexico City as part of this partnership, with results expected in early 2022.



CCD Rounds: Healthier Food Environments for Children in Urban Settings

In October, UNICEF's urban roadmap was presented during a CCD Round live event together with examples from London, Cape Town and the Philippines. It explored how engaging children and families in research using qualitative methods can help interpret their "lived experience" and unlock new or different policy approaches to promote nutritious diets in urban settings. The partnership has, through Pillar 1, supported the research in the Philippines—a brief developed from the findings will be published in 2022. More than 275 city-level policy makers and urban planners attended the virtual event. Watch the session [here](#).



The Healthy Food Challenge

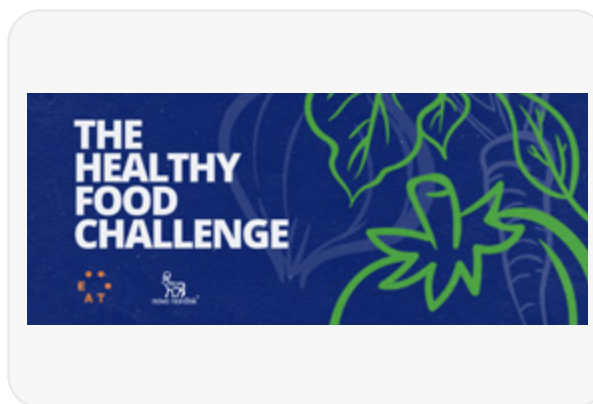
The Healthy Food Challenge is an innovation challenge that was launched in January 2021 by Novo Nordisk in collaboration with EAT. The purpose was to find, pilot, and scale solutions to prevent diabetes and obesity. UNICEF was represented on the Global Selection Panel that selected the winning proposals alongside other representatives specializing in nutrition, community engagement, food and climate, food systems, obesity, and social determinants of health. The challenge received more than 100 submissions from across the globe. The winning solutions were selected because they presented feasible and scalable ideas that address health inequality and sought to create more sustainable food environments for communities that are disproportionately at risk.

Collaboration Highlights from Mexico: World Breastfeeding Week

Recognizing the critical role of breastfeeding in the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity, Novo Nordisk Mexico and UNICEF Mexico continued their collaboration by protecting and promoting breastfeeding in the workplace during World Breastfeeding Week in August 2021. In the spirit of the year's theme – “Protect Breastfeeding, A Shared Responsibility” – a roundtable with over 1,000 private companies was organized to discuss how to implement a successful breastfeeding policy in the workplace. During the event, “The National Guideline to Implement Breastfeeding Friendly Policies in the Workplace” was shared for the adoption by all companies. The Novo Nordisk Mexico General Manager showcased their approach. One learning from the COVID-19 pandemic related to the cost efficiency of working from home. It was proposed that private companies could promote working from home for pregnant and lactating women.

Collaboration Highlights from Colombia: National Day of the Fight Against Overweight and Obesity

On 24 September 2021, UNICEF Colombia and Novo Nordisk co-hosted an event to commemorate Colombia's National Day of the Fight Against Overweight and Obesity. The virtual webinar, “Obesogenic Environments, Childhood and Adolescence” was opened by Valney Suzuki, General Manager of Novo Nordisk Colombia. The discussions focused on how to transform obesogenic environments to reduce their effects on children's health. The event was attended by experts from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the National University, community leaders, school principals, public school cafeteria employees, and parents. The event was well received by the 2,619 participants.



Collaboration overview 2021





06 Partnership communications

In 2021, Novo Nordisk and UNICEF launched two major partnership communications campaigns. With sustained travel restrictions, it was not possible to travel to Mexico and experience the partnership's programmatic work. Instead, Novo Nordisk and UNICEF jointly developed an extraordinary "virtual field trip" event that provided opportunities to reach and engage a broad group of Novo Nordisk employees. On World Children's Day, Novo Nordisk scaled up its efforts to showcase the partnership and the issue, both internally and externally, through our first global partnership campaign.

Virtual Field Visit in Mexico

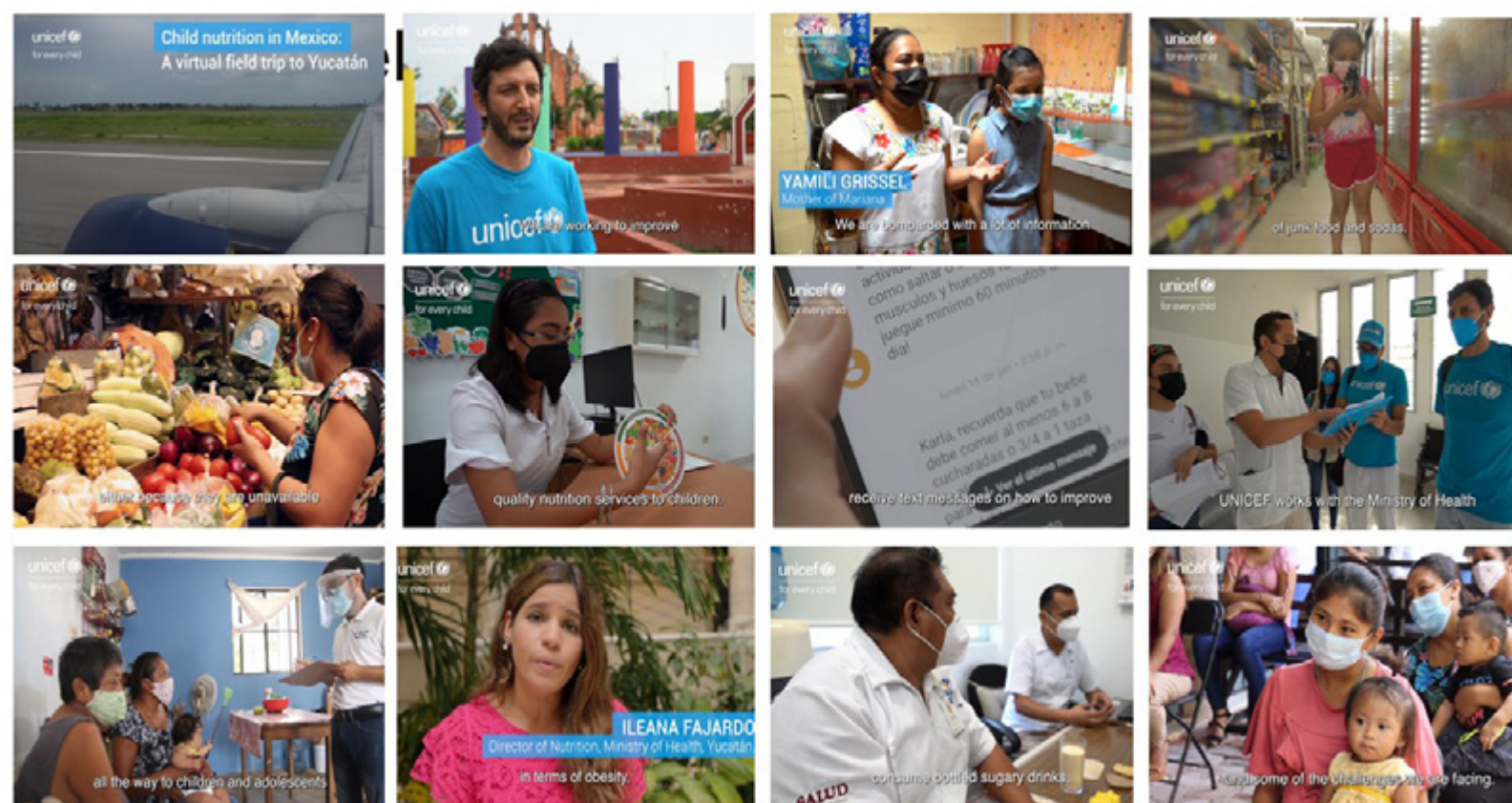
UNICEF made an insightful and impactful video that was designed for Novo Nordisk employees to experience the partnership's programmatic activities to prevent childhood overweight and obesity in Mexico. The video was produced by UNICEF Mexico as they visited Yucatan, a state with one of the highest concentrations of childhood overweight and obesity in Mexico, to showcase how the partnership is supporting UNICEF's work. The video highlighted children and parents in their local communities, including the various challenges they face, such as their food environment. Moreover, the video provided specific insights into UNICEF's work with local authorities and the government to prevent childhood overweight and obesity.



“I am proud of the progress of our shared value partnership with Novo Nordisk, which continues to support UNICEF’s growing agenda on the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity. The video from the innovative virtual field visit captured vividly the impact of our partnership in reaching children living in vulnerable communities. The importance of such a creative video report in bringing a sympathetic human face to the issue of childhood overweight and obesity, and the solutions we propose, should not be underestimated.”

— **Dr. Victor Aguayo**, UNICEF Director of Nutrition and Child Development

Novo Nordisk developed an enhanced “virtual field trip” experience by producing a dynamic TV-show format from their head office in Bagsværd, which was livestreamed to Novo Nordisk employees. The production showcased the virtual field trip video from Mexico, with live dial-in speakers, panel discussions and Q&A sessions from both organisations. Hosted by Can Okar, live studio guests included Mike Doustdar, Executive Vice President of International Operations at Novo Nordisk and Angelin Larsen, Head of Shared Value Partnerships at UNICEF Denmark. In addition, Mauro Brero, Chief of Nutrition at UNICEF Mexico, and Jo Jewell, Nutrition Specialist at UNICEF’s Global Programme Division, presented and joined the panel discussion via video. Additionally, interactive discussions were held with Novo Nordisk employees and panellists on relevant topics including the overall issues of childhood overweight, Novo Nordisk and UNICEF’s roles and priorities in the partnership, and additional needs to impact obesity.



World Children's Day Campaign

Novo Nordisk and UNICEF celebrated World Children's Day 2021 by launching the partnership's first global social media campaign. The main purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness of the partnership and encourage people worldwide to learn more about childhood overweight and obesity.

The campaign featured a photo/video montage featuring children from all around the world doing what they love, expressing what they wish to become, and what they can achieve. All while highlighting children's rights and the importance of giving children a strong foundation and access to healthier environments to grow and thrive. As part of the launch of the global World Children's Day campaign, Novo Nordisk have developed – and now host – a dedicated 'Partnership Hub' on novonordisk.com. For the first time, we now have a dedicated online site that provided information about the partnership's key shared objectives, and provides a central place to share the publications, articles, blog posts and so forth that have been produced to educate around the issue of preventing childhood obesity. The World Children's Day campaign and video were also featured on the site. For the "call to action", the campaign encouraged viewers to learn more about the issues of childhood overweight and obesity by driving traffic to a campaign page, which also included an option to donate directly to UNICEF's global nutrition work.

Results

Novo Nordisk launched the campaign across their own social media channels in 11 markets, in both English and Spanish. The campaign secured substantial awareness around the actions Novo Nordisk and UNICEF are taking together and the need for and importance of preventing childhood overweight and obesity. The video received nearly 40 million impressions. Split across approximately 13 million individuals, the engagement rate was 1.34 per cent. The campaign was successful in creating strong awareness around childhood overweight and obesity on Novo Nordisk's channels and encouraged people worldwide to learn more about the issue. It established our joint actions to promote change to prevent childhood overweight and obesity.

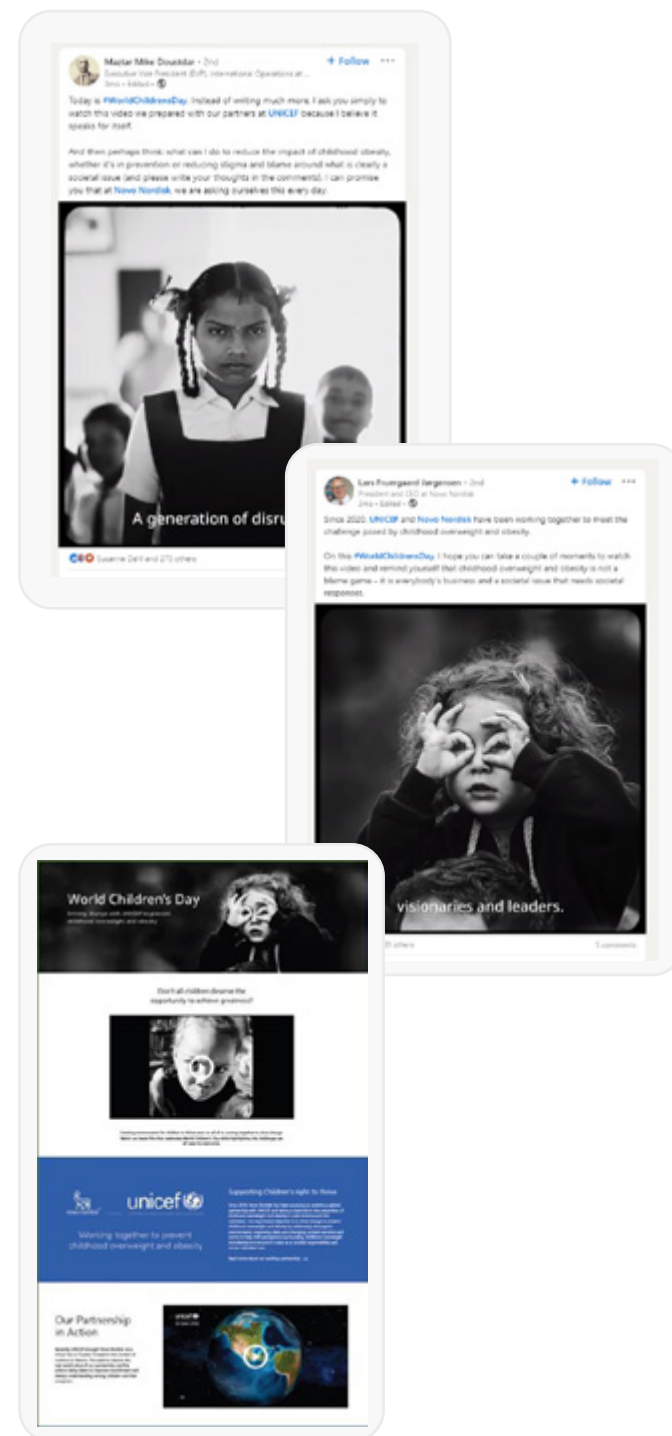
Campaign elements

External

- Novo Nordisk developed and launched a '[Partnership Hub](#)'
- [UNICEF landing page](#) with a donation option
- Social media assets and posts featuring the campaign video
- LinkedIn posts by [Lars Fruergaard Jørgensen](#) and [Mike Doustdar](#)
- UNICEF's 'Parenting Hub' (a platform helping parents give children the best start in life) was updated with two new articles, relating to healthy eating and prevention of childhood obesity:
 - ["How to support your child if you are concerned about their weight"](#)
 - ["How to raise a healthy eater"](#)

Internal

- Partnership SharePoint site refresh
- Video-on-Demand versions of the "virtual field trip" event
- Promotional email and a Yammer post shared by Mike Doustdar



“The campaign around World Children’s Day was a first for Novo Nordisk and could not have happened without the outstanding global collaboration across our two organizations. In particular, the efforts on the ground in Mexico were above and beyond what we could have expected and ensured that colleagues saw the real picture of childhood overweight and obesity.”

— *Can Okar, VP Communication & Public Affairs, Novo Nordisk*

“It was a powerful campaign! It made me think about my responsibilities as a parent, but it also reminded me just how important it is that we give the next generation the opportunity to fulfil their potential.”

— Elin Jäger, Vice President & EA to IO EVP, Novo Nordisk

08 Looking ahead

2022 and beyond

Operating at full speed, UNICEF is excited to enter the final year of this initial partnership with Novo Nordisk, with many of our programming activities coming to fruition at scale.

We are confident that this year will continue to show the benefits of working together and will pave the way for an open and constructive dialogue about continuing and expanding the partnership.

Pillar 1

Under this pillar, we expect the knowledge and evidence generation supported by this partnership will be widely disseminated and will actively inform UNICEF's work. For example.

Pillar 2

The global advocacy strategy will continue to take shape in the form of policy briefs supporting UNICEF's key policy requests as well as engaging video and visual assets, available in both Spanish and English. In addition, UNICEF will.

Pillar 3

Under this pillar, we will continue to have meaningful impact at a country level, closest to where decision makers act.



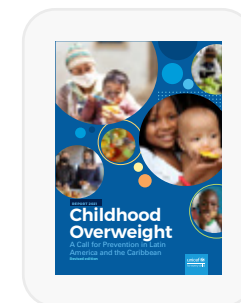
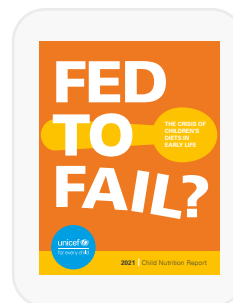
09 Publications

Publications 2021

- [Fed to fail: The crisis of children's diets in early life](#)
- [Fix My Food Report - Children's views on transforming food systems](#)
- [Childhood Overweight: A Call for Prevention in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

Publications 2020

- [Children eating well in cities: A roadmap for action to support nutritious diets and healthy environments for all children in urban settings](#)
- [The Amsterdam Healthy Weight Approach: Investing in healthy urban childhoods: A case study on healthy diets for children](#)
- [Building food and nutrition resilience in Quezon City: A case study on integrated food systems](#)
- [UNICEF advocacy strategy and guidance on the prevention of overweight and obesity in children and adolescents](#)



10

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