Child Friendly Cities Initiative

unicef
for every child

30 Years of Child Friendly Cities

For three decades, UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Initiative has worked to make children's rights a reality at the city level — where policies, services and everyday experiences directly shape children's lives.

Around the world, cities working with UNICEF and partners, including children themselves, are driving practical, measurable improvements for children while building systems that sustain change over time.

How does the CFCI model work?

- **At the local level, where impact is felt**
  Cities are the level of government closest to children — where their rights are first made real. Working at this level enables governments to translate commitments into concrete, measurable improvements
- **Through collaboration across sectors**
  Cities bring together local government, civil society, academic experts, schools, communities and the private sector to respond to children's needs in a coordinated and sustained way.
- **Through a global network of learning and scale**
  Cities learn from one another, test new approaches and scale what works, accelerating progress across countries.

What has been the impact for children?

- **Increase in child participation**
  Children and young people are increasingly shaping local decisions through councils, consultations and other participation mechanisms.
- **Stronger policies and investments for children**
  Cities are embedding children's rights into policies and budgets, ensuring sustained commitment and accountability.
- **Tangible improvements in children's lives**
  Across the network, cities are expanding services for children, strengthening protection systems and creating safer, more inclusive environments.

Global Results by the numbers (in 2025)

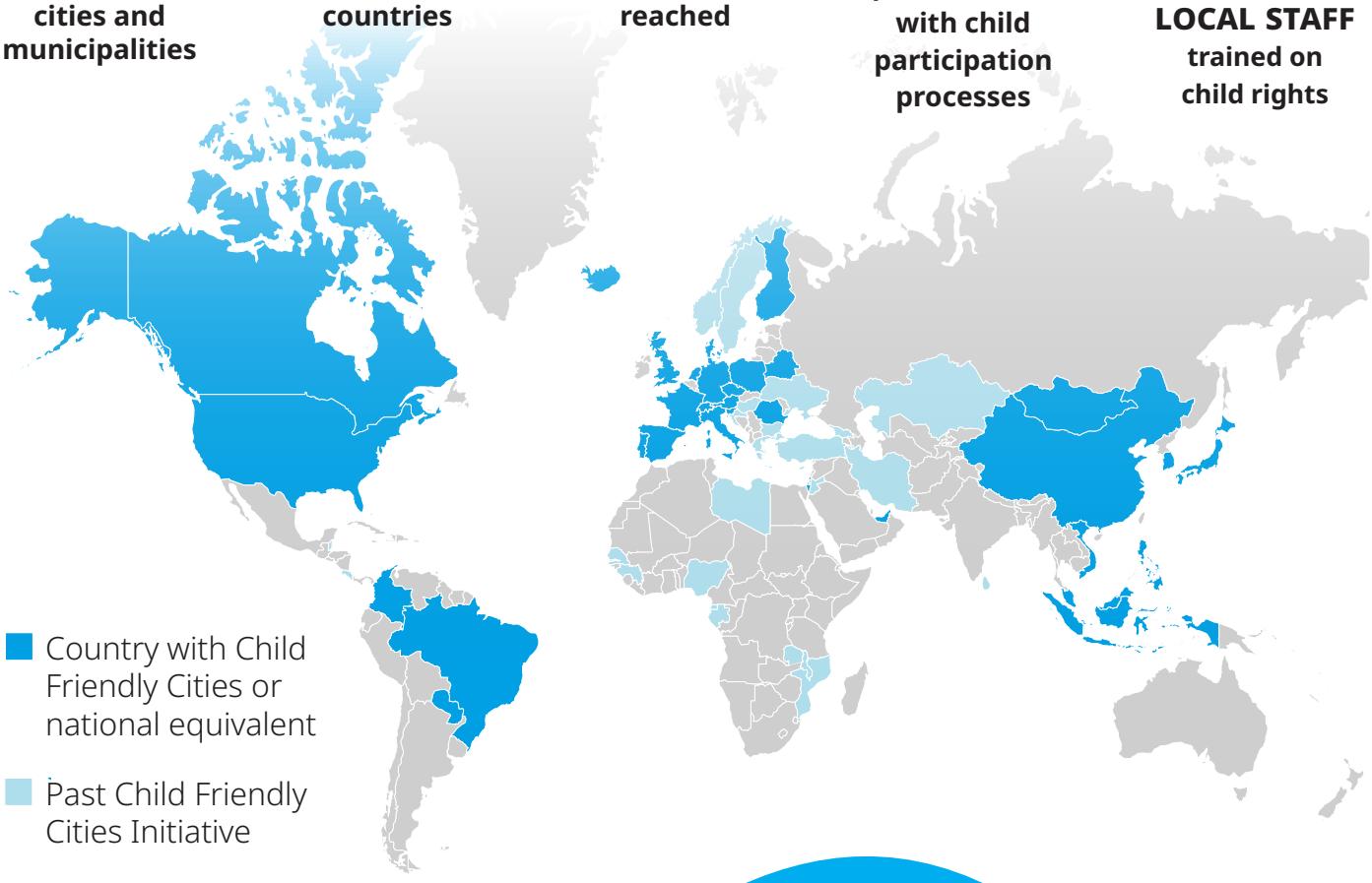
3,000+ cities and municipalities

35 countries

30M+ CHILDREN reached

1,300+ CITIES with child participation processes

100,000+ LOCAL STAFF trained on child rights



Impact Around the World

Child Participation

France

92% OF CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES take children's views into account in local decision-making, with many creating youth councils and other participation mechanisms.

Finland

More than **120,000 CHILDREN** have participated in consultations shaping municipal policies affecting children.

Belarus

47 CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH COUNCILS ENGAGE 1149 ADOLESCENTS across the country, providing a structured way for young people to voice their views and influence decisions affecting their lives.

Better and Inclusive Services for Children

Brazil

Between 2021 and 2024, **209,244 CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS RETURNED TO SCHOOL**. All **2,023 PARTICIPATING MUNICIPALITIES STRENGTHENED CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS AND REPORTING MECHANISMS**, with the 934 UNICEF certified municipalities presenting a higher detection of violence against children compared to the rest of Brazil.

France

74% OF CHILD-FRIENDLY CITIES ADJUST FEES TO FAMILIES' INCOME, so lower-income families pay less.

Spain

Across Spain's network of more than 300 Child Friendly Cities—home to half of the country's children—**87.4% HAVE TAKEN MEANINGFUL ACTION TO STRENGTHEN ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES.**

Spaces to Play and Belong

Austria

The **350 MUNICIPALITIES** that participated in the Child Friendly Cities Initiative since 2014 built and upgraded playgrounds, youth centres and sports parks for children and young people.

Canada (Québec)

The **92 PARTICIPATING LOCAL AUTHORITIES**, home to more than 20% of children living in Quebec, **EXPANDED INVESTMENT IN RECREATION, TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY** programmes benefiting children.

Germany

ALL OF 63 CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES (WHERE MORE THAN 1 MILLION CHILDREN LIVE) have improved mobility, play and open spaces, making municipalities more livable for children, young people, and families.

Children at the Heart of Policy

Spain

Across Spain's network of more than 300 Child Friendly Cities—where one in two children in Spain live—local governments continue to increase investment in childhood policies, with **BUDGETS GROWING YEAR AFTER YEAR.**

Korea

MORE THAN 120 MUNICIPALITIES ESTABLISHED DEDICATED CHILD-RIGHTS units within local administrations.

Japan

Experience from Child Friendly Cities helped **INFLUENCE NATIONAL LEGISLATION** requiring all municipalities in Japan to reflect children's views in policymaking.

Italy

All **26 PARTICIPATING CITIES WHERE MORE THAN 200.000 CHILDREN** live must **EMBED CHILD PARTICIPATION** in their Municipal Statute as a structural principle, and establish an Observatory with civil society and students on policies for children to track progress over time.