

**ONLY BY
BRINGING
EVERYONE
TO THE
TABLE
CAN WE
ADDRESS
EVERYONE'S
NEEDS**



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A close-up photograph of a young boy with short dark hair, smiling and looking upwards and to the left. He is wearing a red and black plaid shirt. A yellow hearing aid tube is visible on the left side of his head, connected to a device around his neck. His hands are in the foreground, holding a small, clear, round object. The background is a blurred blue wall with a wooden trim.

Our priorities

Delivering on the 2030 Agenda during the decade of action

/ In Guatemala, improved public healthcare services are enabling children born with significant hearing disabilities to have a better quality of life. © UNOPS/John Rae

Drive positive change, by working together

Words by Grete Faremo



© UNOPS

Under-Secretary-General and
UNOPS Executive Director

2019 has been a year of immense challenges and opportunities for our world.

At UNOPS, we remain determined that we can all drive positive change, by working together, being bold and embracing new ideas.

Our annual sustainability report is testament to our success. Across more than 80 countries, UNOPS-supported projects created around 5 million days of paid work for local people, of which almost 2 million were undertaken by women and young people. We delivered \$2.3 billion worth of support, the majority of it in the world's most fragile and conflict-affected states.

Our focus remains resolutely on implementation. As a resource, we support Member States, the UN family and partners to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.

This report gives a flavour of the breadth of our support: In the Gambia, for example, we have rehabilitated vital rural roads, connecting people with education, health and jobs while challenging gender stereotypes and providing employment to over 200 local women.

In Indonesia, UNOPS supported the government in its vital work to decrease destructive peatland

fires and protect our planet. In Mexico City, UNOPS helped modernize the transportation network, by helping the government achieve greater transparency, efficiency and value for money in its public procurement. In Gaza, we worked to provide renewable energy solutions for households. And in Ukraine, we supported the government's efforts to ensure families get equal access to early childcare products by providing baby boxes.

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will require significantly enhanced, private investments. And 2019 was also the year when our Sustainable Infrastructure Impact Investments truly took hold. Our bold idea is to engage with the private sector to generate social and environmental impact alongside a financial return. In Kenya, Ghana, India, Pakistan and across the Caribbean, we have now committed to help build more than 860,000 homes over the next decade, one of the largest affordable housing projects the world has ever seen.

We have also made great strides in achieving long overdue gender parity across our workforce. As of 1 January 2020, 43 per cent of UNOPS personnel are women. Having more women working at UNOPS has also allowed us to progress more swiftly on our newly-adopted gender-mainstreaming strategy, which places

gender equality considerations at the front and centre of our work. We know that much more work remains to be done, and I reiterate our commitment to this important issue.

In 2020, we also celebrate 25 years of UNOPS making a positive change in people's lives all around the world. A quarter of a century of meaningful, impactful action on the ground has made us well fit for purpose to support sustainable development globally.

As we finalize this report during the first half of 2020, that experience has been key to our efforts to support countries during the COVID-19 crisis.

UNOPS teams around the world are working tirelessly to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, from providing emergency health procurement and vital health infrastructure, to supporting countries in planning their longer-term recovery.

In this and our other work, our focus remains on building peaceful and prosperous lives for everyone while protecting our planet. And that will only be possible if we all work together.

Delivering on the 2030 Agenda during the decade of action



We are now in a decade of action and we must all play our part. Both the public and private sectors must be fully utilized to combine our skills, knowledge and help fund and build the future of development and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.”

Grete Faremo,
Under-Secretary-General and
UNOPS Executive Director

Financing is a critical challenge for the achievement of the SDGs. All countries – and developing economies in particular – will need large-scale investment to build resilient and sustainable infrastructure, expand capacities and implement new technologies that will help the world meet the promises of the 2030 Agenda.

Official Development Assistance currently leaves an annual shortfall of around \$2.5 trillion. That gap means we will barely scratch the surface of the vast and critical work that needs to be done.

As we enter the decade of action to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, the world can no longer rely on traditional methods of financing development projects. Bold new partnerships with the private sector will be needed to ensure large-scale investment is made in sustainable development initiatives, including quality infrastructure.

Investing for impact

UNOPS Sustainable Infrastructure Impact Investments (S3I) aims to help close the funding gap and drive progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Through the initiative, we are using innovative financing solutions to connect a wide range of stakeholders – from the public and private sectors to bilateral donors and governments – to form new kinds of partnerships for sustainable development.

A new base for S3I

With support from the government of Finland and the city of Helsinki, UNOPS has launched a new dedicated S3I base in the Finnish capital. UNOPS S3I will facilitate investment in major sustainable infrastructure projects in three key sectors: affordable housing, health and renewable energy. All projects developed through S3I are subject to rigorous due diligence processes and aim to generate positive social, environmental and economic impact with a financial return.

Impact investing encourages responsible investment and presents an opportunity for socially conscious investors to contribute to long-term sustainable development in emerging economies.

Large-scale affordable housing

In 2019, UNOPS committed to building more than 300,000 sustainable and affordable homes in Ghana and Kenya, working closely with the respective governments of those countries. These homes will incorporate green technology and will be built using local skills and equipment – providing thousands of new employment opportunities for local people and making a significant contribution to local economic development.

Similar projects were also announced in 2019 in Pakistan and the Caribbean. In total, UNOPS has committed to help build more than 860,000 homes over the next decade, making it one of the largest and most ambitious affordable housing programmes the world has ever seen.

Driving innovation

Innovation and entrepreneurship will play a critical role in helping communities and nations mitigate and respond to some of the world’s biggest challenges, including climate change.

In 2019, UNOPS established a network of Global Innovation Centres, which aim to harness the unique opportunities that public-private partnerships can offer towards advancing the 2030 Agenda.

Throughout the year, UNOPS launched centres in Antigua and Barbuda and Sweden while a third centre was announced in Japan, to be established in 2020 with support from the city of Kobe and the Hyogo Prefecture. Each of the innovation centres aims to attract and develop innovators and start-up companies that could successfully contribute to a more sustainable society and will act as a two-way channel between business incubator services in each country, UN organizations, other UNOPS Global Innovation Centres and a global network of innovation partners. Additional locations for UNOPS Global Innovation Centres are expected to be announced in 2020.

These programmes underscore UNOPS commitment to help find fresh and innovative ways to achieve the SDGs and build a better future for all.



The future of public spending: Why the way we spend is critical to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Published by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) with UNOPS support, this new body of research explores how better public spending will be crucial for local and national economies as they strive to make progress towards achieving their development priorities.

The research investigates both challenges and opportunities associated with improving the efficiency and transparency of public spending activities. This includes how public procurement can be used to drive innovation and sustainability, and the need for governments to look beyond the short-term financial value of their public spending activities, to a lifecycle costing approach that considers the social and environmental value of goods and services over time.

Launched at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, the report features insights from experts representing national and municipal governments, international development organizations, as well as academia – including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank and Transparency International.

The research essay is the second editorially independent research essay produced by The EIU, with support from UNOPS, building on a previous collaboration that explored the critical role of infrastructure for the SDGs.

Read the report online:
<http://unops.economist.com/>

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Public procurement has evolved from being merely a back office supply function to the public sector to now being considered a key tool in economic policy – and arguably the most visible beacon of the quality of governance.”

José Moscoso,
 Lead for Procurement
 Advisory Services, UNOPS



The importance of infrastructure for landlocked developing countries

Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) face particular development challenges. Geographical constraints limit their access to international markets and intensify their vulnerabilities to climate change. On average, the development levels of LLDCs are approximately 20 per cent below those of non-landlocked developing countries.

In a new report produced by UNOPS experts, we highlight the vital role that infrastructure plays in helping LLDCs combat development challenges. The report offers potential solutions to ensure countries reap long-term benefits from improved infrastructure, with a focus on three key infrastructure sectors that are particularly important for LLDCs: transport, digital communications and energy.

Read the report online:
<https://unops.org/publications>

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Infrastructure plays a critical role in society. It is the foundation for development and because it is built to last, can have positive or negative impacts far into the future.”

Nick O'Regan,
 Director of Implementation
 Practices and Standards, UNOPS

- 1.** Improving the efficiency and transparency of health procurement can help save lives. © Getty Images
- 2.** In Afghanistan, UNOPS has rehabilitated more than 10,000 kilometres of roads, which are helping to provide better access to vital services. © UNOPS



Today's world requires new approaches and partnerships that harness the potential of technological change. UNOPS, with a mandate in infrastructure, is a vital part of this future.

By demonstrating how solutions can be delivered on the ground, UNOPS makes a meaningful contribution, bringing innovation to bear as we strive to build a better future for all."

António Guterres,
Secretary-General, UN



With only 10 years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, our future depends on taking meaningful – and urgent – actions, to end poverty, rescue our planet, and build a peaceful world.

Delivering on this ambitious vision to create a better world requires us all to work together. And UNOPS, with its mandate in infrastructure and procurement, plays a vital role in that collective action.

From rapid responses so critical to addressing the world's needs, to bold new partnerships with the private sector to unleash investment and innovation, UNOPS has made a unique contribution towards the 2030 Agenda."

Amina J. Mohammed,
Deputy Secretary-General, UN

Our partners

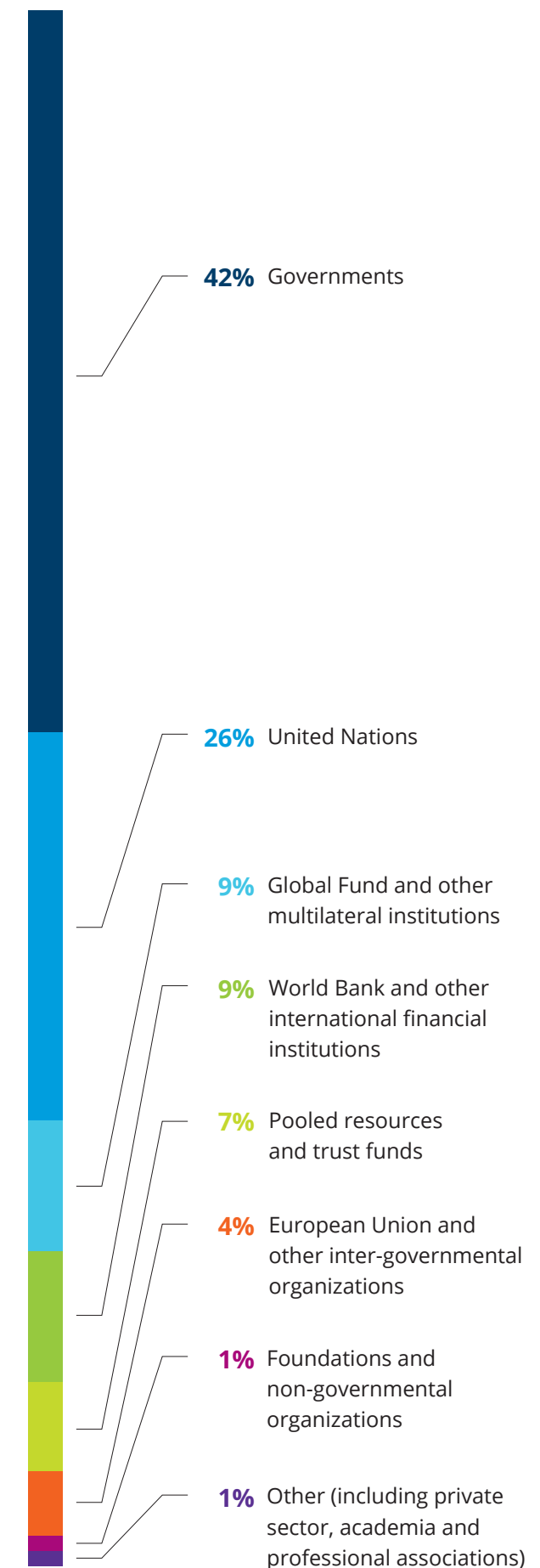
UNOPS is dedicated to supporting its partners by providing services that increase the effectiveness of peace and security, humanitarian and development projects worldwide.

To advance the 2030 Agenda and support the achievement of the SDGs, we aim to engage in collaborative partnerships with a focus on sharing our expertise in infrastructure, project management, procurement, human resources and financial services.

Our partners choose to work with us to complement or expand their own capacities, reduce risks, bring an impartial and trusted advisor, and improve efficiency, speed, quality and/or cost-effectiveness.

For the fourth year in a row, UNOPS support to governments reached a record high in 2019, representing almost \$1 billion of our portfolio for the year and indicating a clear demand for our services. Government partners included Argentina, Guatemala, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Within the UN family, which represented 26 per cent of our portfolio, our largest partner was the UN Secretariat, specifically the Department of Peace Operations, to which we provided a range of services.





Sustainability

Sustainability is at the forefront of UNOPS work around the world. We aim to help our partners maximize the positive impact and sustainability of their projects, to better serve communities in need.

1. To improve living conditions for people across Argentina, UNOPS is supporting government efforts to improve the resilience and sustainability of housing. © UNOPS/ John Rae

2. UNOPS is helping to rehabilitate infrastructure across Darfur, improving access to critical services for over 2 million people. © UNOPS/Elise Laker



How we measure our success

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework measures the impact of UNOPS work on the environment and the societies in which we work, underscoring how our operations contribute to sustainable development around the world.

Through GRI, we speak a common reporting language to both those inside and outside of the United Nations. Here we reaffirm our commitment to measuring ourselves against international standards.

Full details of how we assess our work against GRI standards, including all relevant topics, indicators and datasets, are available in the GRI index, which accompanies this report.



In the Central African Republic, as part of a project to help displaced communities, close to 15,000 temporary construction jobs were created in 2019, of which nearly half were carried out by women. © UNOPS/ Elise Laker



Emissions by source, 2019

- 37% Air travel
- 21% Fuel combustion
- 19% Vehicle fleet
- 14% Electricity
- 8% Refrigerants
- 1% Public transport
- 0.7% Steam for heating

The jobs we create

Our commitment to sustainability is underlined by the jobs we create in the communities where we work.

In 2019, around 5 million days of paid work were created through projects we supported. Of this, women and young people undertook more than 2 million of these days. The majority of this was related to our work in infrastructure.

By providing employment opportunities to local people, we help support more sustainable outcomes. And by providing an income and training people in important skills, we increase the potential for future employment, as well as the chance that these salaries are spent locally.

Building local economies

One of the most reliable ways we help develop local economies is through our expertise in procurement. We encourage local procurement across all of our projects and track these results.

In 2019, more than \$560 million worth of procurement activities went to local suppliers. The use of local suppliers reduced emissions produced during transportation, in turn, reducing the total environmental impact. In addition, these activities directly supported local businesses, ensuring that we help our partners strengthen local and national capacity within the same communities.

The knowledge we bring

We contribute to social sustainability and national capacity by passing on technical skills and experience to the people we work with on the ground.

We take pride in the fact that our expertise is grounded in international best practices. In 2019, we provided over 28,000 days of technical advice to stakeholders across a range of our projects.

Our climate

UNOPS has been climate neutral since 2012. To achieve this, we carefully monitor the effect we have on the environment. Measuring our impact on the planet is a foundation of sustainability. In 2019, UNOPS operations emitted 14,056 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, the common unit for describing greenhouse gas emissions. In comparison, 15,631 tonnes were reported in 2018. All of UNOPS emissions are offset using certified emission reductions, with Gold Standard certification developed under the United Nations Clean Development Mechanism.

Where we work

UNOPS is headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Africa Regional Office also operates from this location while the other regional offices are located in: Panama City, Panama (for Latin America and the Caribbean); Amman, Jordan (for the Middle East); Bangkok, Thailand (for Asia and the Pacific); and Geneva, Switzerland (for Europe and Central Asia).

UNOPS supports partners across the globe, working in some of the most challenging and complex environments. In 2019, our personnel were present in more than 80 countries.

UNOPS has liaison offices that help facilitate our global outreach, including in Copenhagen, Bangkok, Brussels, Geneva, Nairobi, New York, Tokyo and Washington, D.C. UNOPS Sustainable Infrastructure Impact Investments (S3I) office is in Helsinki.

- UNOPS HQ, which includes the Africa Regional Office
- Liaison offices
- Regional offices
- UNOPS S3I office

This map is for illustrative purposes and does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of UNOPS concerning the legal status of any country or territory or concerning the delimitation of frontiers or boundaries.

Connecting communities and advancing gender equality in The Gambia
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Restoring Indonesian peatlands, protecting our planet
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Baby boxes give newborns in Ukraine a stronger start to life
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Modernizing transportation in Mexico City
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Providing reliable and sustainable energy to the people of Gaza
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2019 countries and territories of delivery

Top 10 countries and territories of delivery in descending order

Myanmar
Peru
State of Palestine
Guatemala
Yemen
Somalia
Argentina
Iraq
South Sudan
Bangladesh



UNOPS

Our **mission** is to help people build better lives and countries achieve peace and sustainable development.

Our **vision** is a world where people can live full lives supported by appropriate, sustainable and resilient infrastructure and by the efficient, transparent use of public resources in procurement and project management.

/ A competitive scholarship programme in Georgia is helping build the leaders of tomorrow. © UNOPS/Eleanor Church

How we work

We are focused on implementation, committed to UN values and private sector efficiency. We are the only part of the UN not receiving core funding.

Our partners call on us to supplement their own capacities, improve efficiency and transparency, reduce risks, boost cost-effectiveness and increase quality.



1. Since 2016, UNOPS has been working with the Guatemala Social Security Institute to improve the efficiency and transparency of medicines procurement. © UNOPS/John Rae
2. In East Darfur, Sudan, more than 55,000 people have benefited from a programme to support better natural resource management. © UNOPS/Elise Laker



In 2019, UNOPS delivered \$2.3 billion worth of projects on behalf of our partners.

/ UNOPS in numbers

more than

\$1 billion

worth of goods and services were procured for our partners

around

\$560 million

worth of procurement budgets went to local suppliers

around

5 million

days of paid work were created for beneficiaries; women and young people undertook more than 2 million of these days of work

more than

3,500 km

of roads constructed or rehabilitated

83 schools

constructed or rehabilitated

Our services

Each of our service lines has a focus on sustainability and national capacity development. Our financing model promotes lean, effective delivery. Our flexible structure and global reach means that we can quickly respond to partner needs while gaining the benefits of economies of scale.

We tailor support to the needs of our partners, delivering a key element of a project, offering expert advice, or managing entire projects or programmes.

Our main areas of expertise include:

Procurement

Through transparent and effective methods, we specialize in finding new ways to help governments make public procurement more efficient. We are experts in rapid and transparent procurement, whatever the size, scale, product or service you need.

We advise governments to ensure that public procurement reaps benefits for the whole of society. This includes providing solutions to address fraud and corruption, increasing competitiveness and effectiveness.

Infrastructure

We plan, design, construct and maintain a wide range of sustainable and resilient infrastructure solutions.

From transport, energy, health and education infrastructure, to advising governments on ways to make infrastructure more effective, our experts can help improve the outcomes on investments in infrastructure, for the benefit of local populations and national development.

Project management

We manage projects and programmes of every size while simultaneously enhancing the capacity of developing countries to manage their own initiatives.

With more than two decades of experience gained through thousands of projects, UNOPS brings the agility and technical expertise needed to get the project done – on cost, on schedule and meeting quality requirements.

Financial management

We have provided trustee and fund management services totalling more than \$2 billion on behalf of governments and multilateral institutions since 2010.

Our services include managing grants and pooled funds and providing advice and oversight for project and programme budgets.

Human resources

We offer flexible and tailored human resources solutions to UN partners where speed and efficiency are essential.

We provide specialist human resources support in peace and security contexts, during rapidly changing humanitarian emergencies, or for longer-term development, based on the needs of partners.

How we contribute

UNOPS contributes to broader efforts to help partners realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through three focus areas:

Enable partners to do more with less through efficient management support services, delivered locally or as global shared services.

For example, UNOPS supports mine action, humanitarian, stabilization and explosive management activities, as well as capacity-building on national actors and United Nations missions, and the weapons and ammunition management work of the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and partners in 19 countries and territories around the world. Totalling around \$240 million, UNOPS helped its main partner, UNMAS, deliver a range of results, including:

- In Darfur, 264 dangerous areas were assessed and closed in 1,821 villages. More than 115,000 small arms ammunitions were destroyed while 324,663 beneficiaries received mine risk education.
- In Iraq, 426 police officers, of which 85 were women, were trained to identify, mark and report explosive hazards and more than 446,000 people received risk education

and awareness training in schools, internally displaced persons camps and other high-priority areas.

- In Mali, instructors who had previously been trained on improvised explosive device threat awareness went on to deliver more than 50 training sessions to their own troops and more than 250 survivors of explosive incidents were provided with assistance.
- In Nigeria, a pilot project targeting vulnerable youth in Maiduguri, Borno State, trained 50 young women and 50 young men as trainers and peer educators in explosive ordnance risk education.

Help people achieve individual, local, national and global objectives through effective specialized technical expertise grounded in international norms and standards.

The Safety Net and Skills Development Project, a government of South Sudan project funded by the World Bank, provided cash-for-work

activities through the implementation of minor public works. The UNOPS component of the project provided access to income opportunities and temporary employment to 36,158 poor and vulnerable people. The cash transfer was used to pay school fees, support relatives, and buy food, clothing, soap and medical necessities, among other things. Eighty-nine per cent of beneficiaries indicated that the project has helped move them a step closer to starting small scale income-generating activities. In 2019, 62 per cent of UNOPS infrastructure projects reported an output enabling equal access, 60 per cent enabled equal access for women and 46 per cent enabled persons with disabilities.

Support countries in expanding the pool and effectiveness of resources available to achieve the 2030 Agenda. UNOPS is working to further partnerships between the public and private sectors. One way we do this is by partnering with private sector organizations whose resources and expertise can complement our work in countries and regions around the world.

/ UNOPS S3I committed to building more than 300,000 sustainable and affordable homes in Ghana and Kenya, working closely with the respective governments of those countries.

For example, UNOPS continued to develop its Sustainable Infrastructure Impact Investments (S3I) initiative and explore opportunities for collaborative partnerships to mobilize alternative funding sources for the 2030 Agenda, particularly in the areas of affordable housing, renewable energy, and water and sanitation.

UNOPS S3I committed to building more than 300,000 sustainable and affordable homes in Ghana and Kenya, working closely with the respective governments of those countries. These homes will incorporate green technology and will be built using local skills and equipment – providing thousands of new employment opportunities for local people and making a significant contribution to local economic development. Similar projects were also announced in 2019 in Pakistan and the Caribbean. In total, UNOPS has committed to help build more than 860,000 homes over the next decade, making it one of the largest and most ambitious affordable housing programmes the world has ever seen.



Our projects

CASE STUDIES

1. The Gambia
2. Indonesia
3. Ukraine
4. Mexico
5. Gaza

/ UNOPS helps its partners provide peace and security, humanitarian and development solutions to improve lives around the world.
© UNOPS/John Rae

CASE STUDY 1

Connecting communities and advancing gender equality in The Gambia

The Gambia is the smallest country in the mainland African continent, yet with an average of 176 people per square kilometre, it is also one of the most densely populated. Due to its fragile economy, the country is prone to shocks, particularly to the food supply.

Roads are an essential means of transporting food and other essential items to vulnerable communities throughout the Gambia. Despite a network of high-capacity roads that connect the country's capital Banjul, situated on the African west coast, with its eastern-most areas bordering Senegal, many rural communities face challenges in accessing the network due to poor or barely existing 'feeder roads.' As a result, people residing in these villages face difficulties in accessing nearby produce markets to buy and sell food, as well as other essential services and economic opportunities.

Improving the Gambia's network of lower-capacity feeder roads is an important means of enhancing food security, and advancing social and economic development across the country.

more than
200
local women
employed in
construction
works linked
to the project

labour-based
construction
teams comprising
more than
60%
women

more than
100
kilometres of
feeder roads
built linking
rural villages
with major
motorways



2



3



4

Since 2017, UNOPS has been working with the government of the Gambia to help improve the country's network of feeder roads. Funded by the European Union, a €10.3 million project, implemented by UNOPS, includes the rehabilitation of more than 100 kilometres of roads that link rural villages with major motorways – connecting remote areas to towns and cities across the country. Through the project, some of the Gambia's most vulnerable communities, including many women, have also gained valuable employment opportunities.

"We have never had women working on road construction sites before and UNOPS has shown us that it is possible," said the Vice President of the Gambia, Dr. Isatou Touray.

More than 200 local women have been employed in construction works linked to the project – with the labour-based construction team comprising more than 60 per cent women. This is an unprecedented milestone of women participation in rural infrastructure sub-sector in the Gambia, supporting women's empowerment and helping to close the inequality gap in the country.

"In my community, we have always believed road construction to be for men only, so we were surprised when UNOPS offered us the opportunity to work on this project," said Fatou Sanneh, from Alkali Kunda in the North Bank region of the country.

"I would like to continue in this work – maybe one day I will become a supervisor or road engineer," she said.

The project is also supporting the capacity of the Gambia's National Road Authority (NRA) to effectively manage and maintain the country's road network. This includes helping the NRA to develop a comprehensive road network map to assist with future planning, and establishing new axle load control measures to reduce road damage caused by heavy vehicles, increasing the sustainability of rehabilitated roads.

Construction work is taking place along the Upper River Region, the North Bank Region and the Central River Region of the Gambia, and will focus on sustainability and building local capacity across the country.

As part of the project, UNOPS has also piloted a grievance escalation mechanism, in collaboration with the Gambia's Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of workers. This mechanism will also help facilitate the resolution of payment issues of workers as well as issues surrounding land disputes during the implementation phase of the project. It is expected that in the future this pilot will be adopted by the government and scaled-up as a social safeguard measure in the infrastructure sector.

The project is following environmental management requirements of the National Environment Agency. This will prevent or minimize soil erosion, dust and noise, and damage to the water supply following the rural road rehabilitation. UNOPS is also ensuring that international health and safety standards are applied to every aspect of the project through training and ensuring the correct health and safety equipment is worn at project sites at all times.

- 1.** Poor road conditions can hinder economic opportunities and prevent communities from developing. © UNOPS/Ricci Shryock
- 2.** Binta and her children are among many families in rural Gambia that are now better connected to vital services thanks to road improvements. © UNOPS/Ricci Shryock
- 3.** Women play an important part of the road construction teams and make up over 60 per cent of the workers. © UNOPS/Ricci Shryock
- 4.** A motorbike crosses a rehabilitated road in Illiasa Village in Gambia's North Bank region. © UNOPS/Ricci Shryock



/ Restoring Indonesia's peatlands is crucial for protecting the environment.
© Kemitraan/Marselino Djeer

CASE STUDY 2

Restoring Indonesian peatlands, protecting our planet

Indonesia is home to around 14 million hectares of peatlands – making up approximately 23 per cent of the world's total tropical peatlands. In its natural state, tropical peat occurs in flooded swamps and is one of nature's most effective ways of removing carbon from the atmosphere, helping to mitigate global warming.

Decades of draining peatlands to provide land for palm oil, paper and rubber plantations, as well as a failed rice cultivation project, has left vast areas of peatland dried out, and continues to be one of the key causes of deforestation, biodiversity loss and wetland subsidence.

Peat, essentially, is an early stage of coal – and like coal – is highly flammable. The dried peatland quickly goes up in flames and then can smoulder underground for months until the rainy season starts. Smallholder farmers and concession-holding companies use fire to cheaply clear debris to prepare land for planting.

When peat catches fires, it releases up to ten times more carbon than forest fires.

Seasonal forest and peatland fires now compromise Indonesia’s economic and social development by creating considerable threats to the environment and the health of its residents. In 2015, peat fires and its related toxic haze resulted in the hospitalization of more than half a million people due to acute respiratory infections. These fires, which raged through 2.6 million hectares of forest and peatland areas on the islands of Kalimantan and Sumatra, released 1.6 gigatonne of CO₂ – the equivalent of annual CO₂ emissions of countries such as Germany and France. Direct and indirect damages cost the Indonesian national economy an estimated \$16 billion.

Recognizing the important role peatlands have in storing carbon, biodiversity conservation, water resource management and livelihoods, the government of Indonesia established the Indonesian Peatland Restoration Agency (BRG). The Agency is mandated to prevent land fires – including some peatland areas – and aims to restore over 2.6 million hectares of forest and peatlands devastated by the 2015 fires.

In 2018, the BRG Results Enabling Facility programme was established with funding from the government of Norway. UNOPS manages the programme and supports the BRG in its development of an efficient and integrated peatland restoration model focusing on the effective restoration of peatlands in seven priority provinces – Jambi, Riau, South Sumatra, Central Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, West Kalimantan and Papua.

The programme works to restore peatlands while simultaneously improving education, raising awareness, strengthening institutional and local capacity and supporting environmentally sustainable livelihood options that utilize commodities native to peatlands.

As part of this, UNOPS works in partnership with BRG and Kemitraan – a national NGO – to support communities that are at the forefront of peatland restoration and conservation, which is crucial for the programme’s success. The programme provides assistance to village authorities to develop medium-term village development plans and budgets that integrate peatland restoration activities. It further strengthens cooperation between villages, and supports economic empowerment, local knowledge, and village community preparedness to prevent and overcome peat fires.

Akhmad Baihaki, a 21-year-old man from Pulantani village in South Kalimantan, is the

chairman of a purun artisans group. Akhmad weaves purun – a wild grass that grows on waterlogged peatlands – to make items, such as mats and bags. For Akhmad, and many others, securing a livelihood and building a local economy became increasingly difficult as a number of villages’ traditional lands were converted to mono-crop plantations.

While the BRG programme supports Akhmad’s village in its efforts to restore peatlands, the programme simultaneously supports local residents. Training has been provided to help artists improve their craft and encourage them to organize regular meetings to discuss financial management.

“The training gave me insights on the business development of purun craft,” said Akhmad. “If managed properly, the small business has the potential to improve the economy of purun artisans.”

This programme is one of several that are helping to revitalize livelihoods by promoting alternative peat-based and environmentally sustainable income-generating activities to ensure communities thrive while peatland restoration takes place. Over time, efforts like this across the country will simultaneously decrease destructive peatland fires and protect our planet by leading to measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

23%
of the world’s total
tropical peatlands
are in Indonesia

established
309
restoration villages
across seven priority
provinces

2.67 million
hectares of degraded
peatlands targeted
for restoration

CASE STUDY 3

Baby boxes give newborns in Ukraine a stronger start to life

For nearly three decades, Ukraine has seen a steady decline in its population numbers. A low birth rate is partly the cause of the eastern European nation facing a population crisis that threatens its long-term social, economic and political development.

In an effort to address the issue, the government of Ukraine has introduced a range of measures to address some of the challenges associated with child-rearing and boost the nation's birth rate. Enhancing the social protection standards, health and wellbeing of newborns by improving the care they receive at the beginning of their lives is an important focus.





1.4
births per woman
according to the
World Bank

400,000
boxes provided
to families

over
70
items to help care
for new babies



1. New parents receive a baby box to help them care for their newborn. © UNOPS/ Andrii Krepih

2. In Ukraine, baby boxes are helping to support families and their newborns, ensuring equal access to childcare products. © UNOPS/Andrii KrepihX

3. The boxes contain more than 70 essential items, which help parents provide the care their children need in the first weeks of their life. © UNOPS/ Andrii Krepih

In partnership with UNOPS and UNICEF, the government launched a pilot project to provide the families of newborns with a one-time baby box that contains a range of essential items for infants. The provision of baby boxes helps ensure equal access to early childcare products based on universally accepted standards, during the critical first weeks of a child's life.

In support of the project, UNOPS conducts all tendering procedures to select providers and to deliver the baby boxes to families across the country, including in remote areas.

"In our little town of Rokytno there are not many stores where you can buy things for your child and the money is also an issue, so we have to carefully plan everything to make sure we can cope with the expenses. The baby box is of course a great help, because now we have a whole set of things we'll need and we don't need to worry about finding them and spending the money," said 22 year-old Valentyna Gnatyuk.

Each box, provided within a week after birth, contains over 70 items to help care for new babies, including diapers, hygiene products, blankets, linens and more. Pamphlets with information on safe childcare and early childhood development are also included in the boxes, to help raise awareness amongst caregivers. Father-to-be Vladymyr Scherbinin said that he stayed up all night reading the material.

"It was a good way to spend time and realize how much I didn't know about taking care of a child," he said.

Starting in 2018, the project 'Supporting social protection and responsible parenting in Ukraine' promotes good health and well-being of both newborns and their families. Distributed baby boxes help ensure that every newborn child, regardless of their family's economic situation, benefits from the products and information needed to help get a good start in life.

"The baby box project is not only a true reflection of our dedication to the highest international standards in project management, procurement and the best value for money principle, but is also an illustration of the value we attribute to synergies in partnerships with the governments and other UN agencies on the way towards Agenda 2030 for the benefit of all people," said Irina Sahakyan-Vetter, UNOPS Country Director.

Under the initiative, maternity facilities are now also able to offer early childcare packages to new parents and caregivers.

"We love seeing parents receiving baby boxes happy and smiling, because they view it as a gift and many appreciate such care and support from the country," noted Yulia Baula, a specialist from the Leleka Maternity Hospital.

"I believe that such support will help families become stronger and be able to support each other more," said new parent Andriy Pasko.



CASE STUDY 4

Modernizing transportation in Mexico City



Mexico City is a hub for trade, politics, education and business. With millions of people travelling through the city each day, transportation can quickly become congested, causing delays in commuting times, increasing emissions in the air and raising costs for both the city and users alike. The government of Mexico City is working with UNOPS to modernize the public transportation system, making it more accessible for commuters.

“The metro has to be modernized, we can no longer continue with one that is 50 years old and has not undergone a major modernization and maintenance process,” said Claudia Sheinbaum, Head of Government, Mexico City.

Mexico’s capital city has a wide transportation network that offers its inhabitants the use of buses, a metro system and trolleybuses. However, segments of the transportation network have not been updated since they were developed around five decades ago. Parts of the public transportation run on outdated systems of control, payment and user information systems. This causes delays at the major stations and reduces the number of vehicles that can be put into simultaneous operation. Furthermore, ongoing maintenance of the older vehicles can be a drain on the city’s finances.

Additional challenges have been created by rapid urban sprawl that has been pushing out into the periphery of Mexico City, including highly elevated areas in the surrounding canyons. The current urban layout and roads with controlled access limit people’s ability to reach more central parts of the city. This has meant that inhabitants tend to concentrate their travel on a few roads.

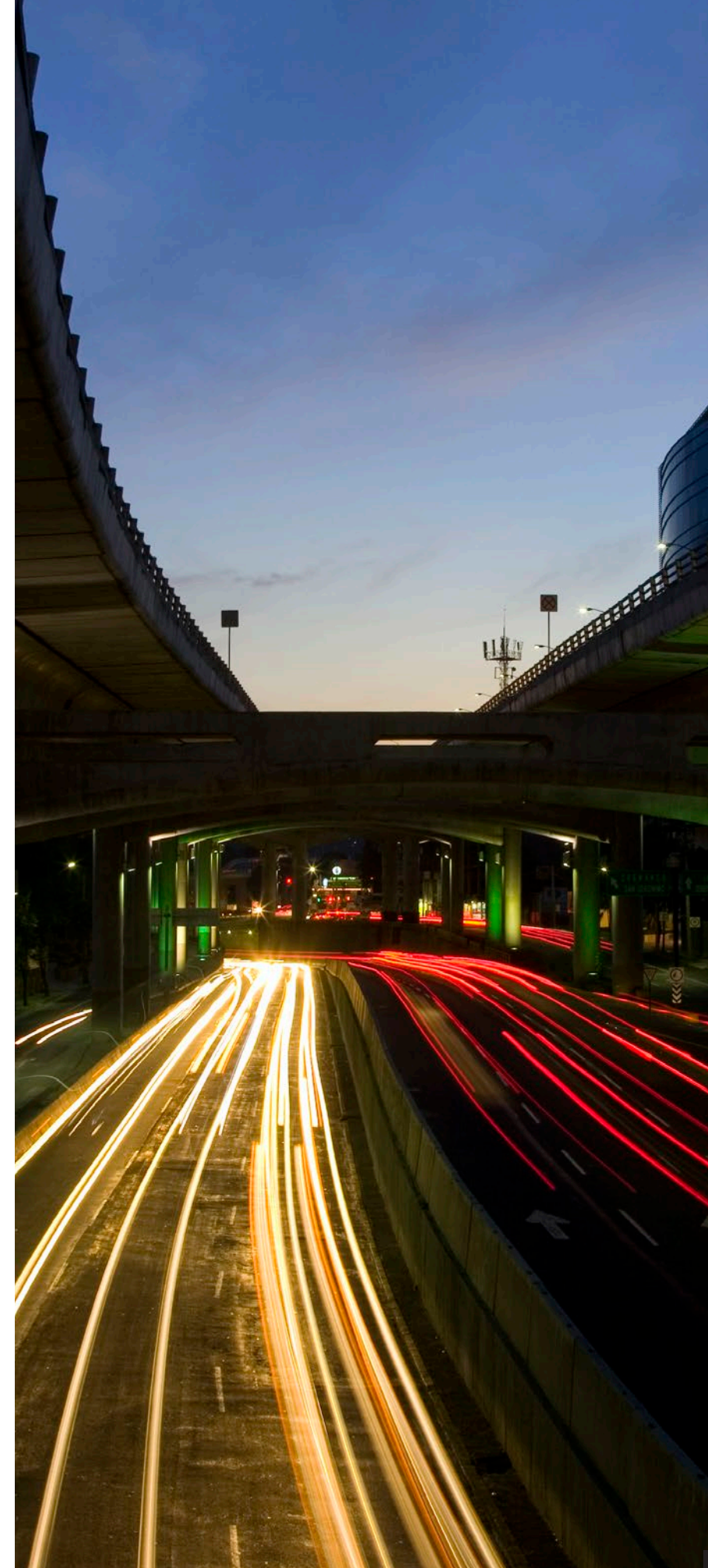
UNOPS is working with the government of Mexico City on a wide range of initiatives to support the upgrade of the city’s transportation network. Through the partnership, UNOPS is

helping the government to achieve greater transparency, efficiency and value for money in its processes for public purchases and contracts. UNOPS is also supporting the city by reviewing existing technical studies and overseeing cost-benefit analyses.

New trains are being procured for one of the metro’s most travelled lines while others are being updated. It is estimated that the trains, in addition to the modernization of the signalling and control systems on multiple metro lines, will boost use and increase the number of trains that can operate per day.

Two new cable car lines will integrate with the metro network and be the most efficient connection system in the city. It will help people cross urban barriers that can cause long and unsafe commutes.

In addition, UNOPS is bringing international best practices to the acquisition of 118 new buses, to the daily benefit of over 72,000 passengers. It is expected that by 2024, once the improvement projects have been implemented, the combined transportation system in Mexico City will be able to efficiently move an additional one million passengers more than it can today. This will contribute to a greener and more sustainable city, and by alleviating congestion, will help to improve access to schools and health clinics.



more than
\$120 million
amount of savings
generated in one
transport tender

10 more electric
trolleybuses were
purchased using the
24%
savings

savings allowed
1.4 million
additional people to benefit
from more efficient and
environmentally friendly
public transport

1. UNOPS is supporting the government of Mexico City to update parts of the city’s transport network – easing congestion and providing a more sustainable way for the city’s residents to move about. © Getty Images

2. New buses will help improve travel for over 72,000 passengers throughout the city. © Getty Images

3. Modernizing the city’s transport network will help provide better access to essential services. © Getty Images

CASE STUDY 5

Providing reliable and sustainable energy to the people of Gaza



Since 2006, Gaza has suffered from chronic electricity shortages. This further exacerbates already difficult living conditions for the majority of its nearly two million residents, who live on just a few hours of electricity every day.

The constant energy shortages disrupt the daily lives of residents, inhibiting access to basic and essential services – including healthcare, water and sanitation – as well as economic opportunities. A lack of electricity further poses risks to the health and safety of Palestinians living in the area, who often resort to using less sustainable and potentially dangerous forms of electricity and light, such as batteries and candles.

Khitam Hassouna Mohammed Saleem, a resident of Al-Shejaiya, Gaza, and her husband, Abu Ayman, lost their home in the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict. Despite rebuilding their house, frequent power cuts have caused major challenges for their family. “I’m an ill woman,” said Khitam. “I suffer from asthma and I need a nebulizer device. My husband is also very sick. He has diabetes and [liver and spleen difficulties].”





- 1.** A contractor shows a resident how to operate a solar energy system that will provide enough electricity to meet his family's daily needs. © UNOPS/Mashareq Agency
- 2.** 1.8 million people in Gaza face chronic electricity shortages on a daily basis. © UNOPS/Mashareq Agency
- 3.** Providing solar energy systems to households is a reliable and cost-effective solution to improve living conditions. © UNOPS/Mashareq Agency
- 4.** In 2012, the Palestinian Energy and Natural Resource Authority set a target of 10 per cent of electricity generation through renewable energy by 2020. © UNOPS/Mashareq Agency

While 500 megawatts of energy is needed on average to meet the daily needs of residents, only 85 megawatts is available – a significant deficit.

In an effort to respond to the ongoing crisis, UNOPS – with funding from the government of Japan – supported the Ministry of Public Works and Housing and the Palestinian Energy and Natural Resources Authority (PENRA) to provide renewable energy solutions for households across Gaza.

In support of PENRA's aims to achieve 10 per cent of domestic electricity generation to come from renewable energy by 2020 – UNOPS installed hybrid solar systems, with a peak capacity of around 3 kilowatts (kW), on the rooftops of households.

Using a transparent process that assessed vulnerabilities, beneficiaries were selected from the most vulnerable affected populations, with a focus on women. Female-headed households

and widows with lower means and ability to get through crises were given priority, as well as elderly-headed households and people living with disabilities.

Khitam and her husband were one of nearly 190 families who have benefitted from improved access to reliable and sustainable electricity sources across eight municipalities.

"Before this, I struggled to breathe at night, said Khitam. "My children would have to take me to the hospital for treatment. Now my treatment is possible at home. I can run the nebulizer device myself, since I have electricity. I can breathe and be relieved."

The hybrid solar systems help provide a sustainable source of power, that is more reliable and cost-effective for households than energy produced by traditional methods.

"For Gaza, renewable energy is not merely an environmentally friendly solution, but also helps

to save lives and livelihoods. We are proud to support these efforts, and help Palestinians who have lived amid conflict for years to rebuild their lives," said Tokumitsu Kobayashi, UNOPS Director in Jerusalem.

"Despite the enormously difficult political and economic situation facing the region, it is important not to lose hope and to work together for a better future," said the Japanese Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to Palestine, H.E. Ambassador Takeshi Okubo.

Following the successful completion of the project, UNOPS and the government of Japan have since extended their partnership to provide renewable energy for the European Gaza Hospital, by installing a 715 kW hybrid solar system. This initiative will help provide critical and essential healthcare services for approximately 100,000 Palestinian patients living in Gaza.

1,160
people are
receiving electricity

over
20%
of the households are
headed by a woman or
person with disabilities

about
15
kilowatts of energy
are provided to each
household every day



Our people

We work hard to recruit and retain the best expertise.

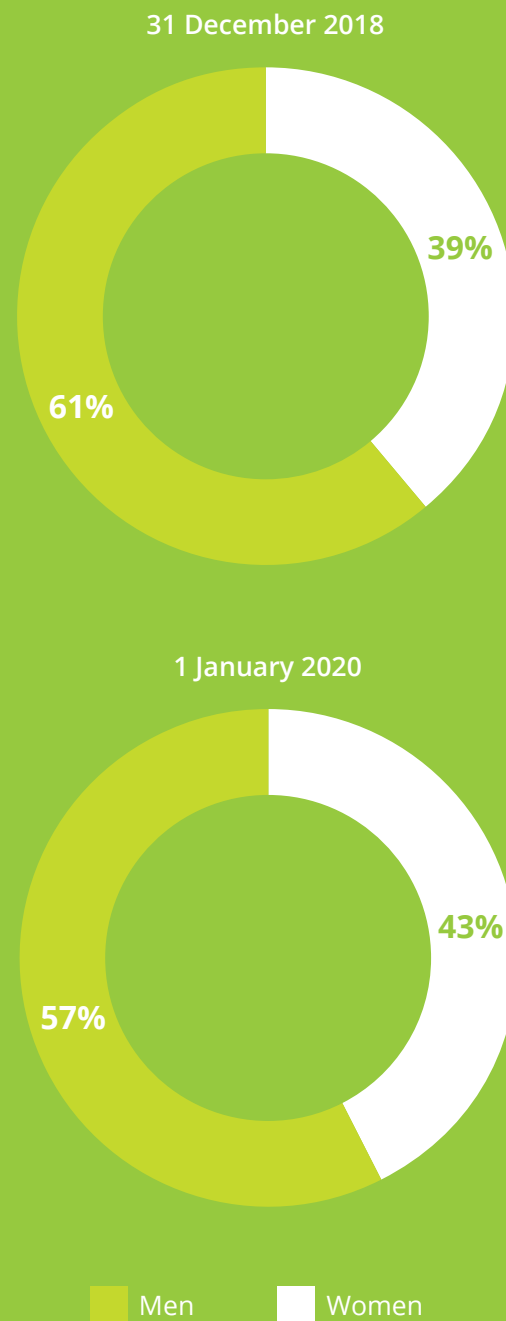
Our partners rely on our professionalism, skills, expertise and innovative ideas to successfully complete projects in some of the most challenging locations around the world.

As members of the UN family strive towards gender equality, we report our personnel data and turnover rate by gender. This helps us to better identify issues and take targeted steps to improve.

/ A UNOPS engineer works on site at a house reconstruction project in Nepal. © UNOPS/ John Rae

Gender balance

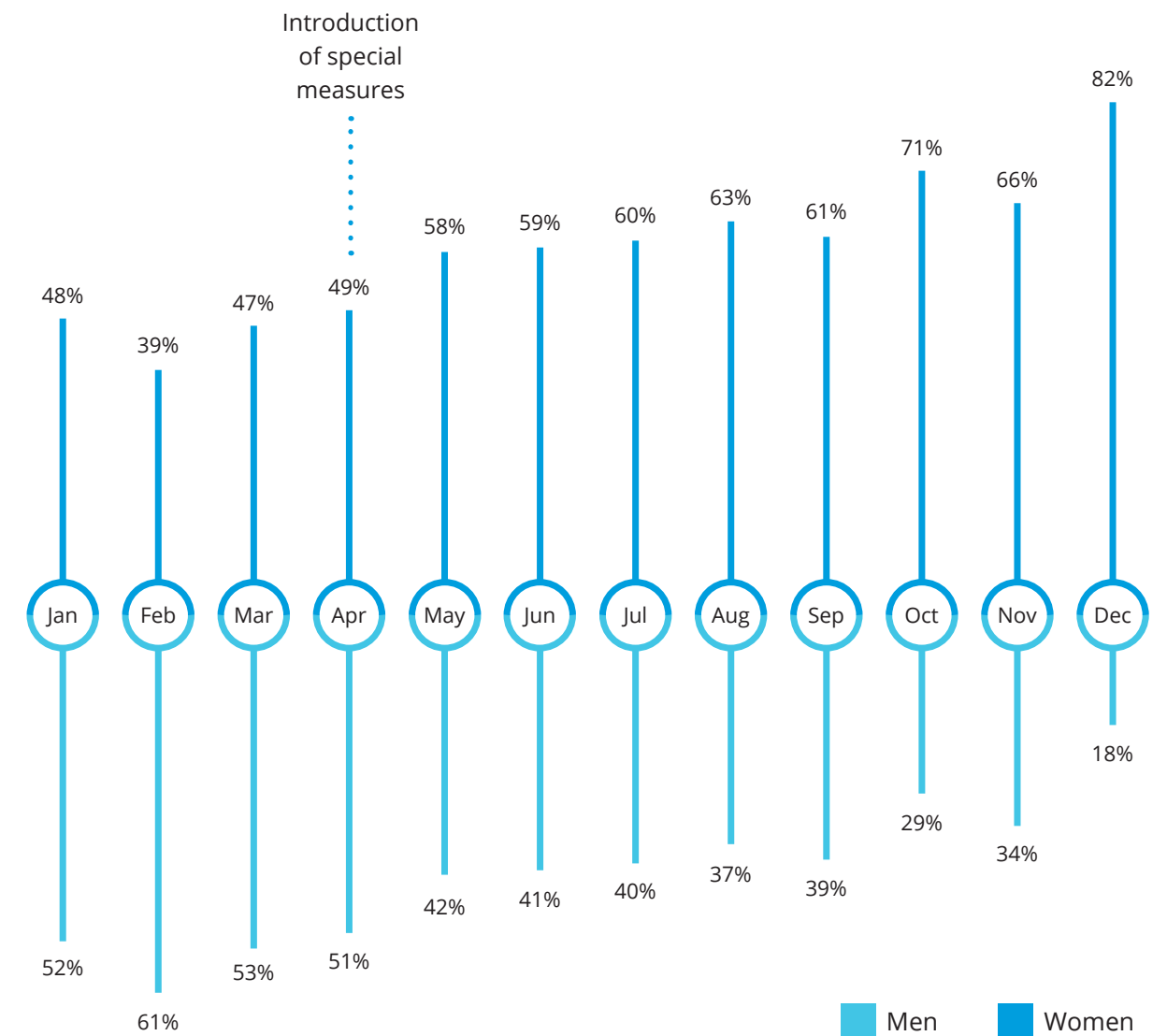
In December 2018, 39 per cent of UNOPS personnel were women. As of 1 January 2020, 43 per cent of UNOPS personnel were women.



We recognize that we have work to do to achieve gender parity at UNOPS and we are committed to addressing this situation.

Introduction of recruitment targets

During 2019, UNOPS executive leadership took decisive action in order to meet the gender parity targets. From April 2019, temporary special measures were introduced instructing all UNOPS managers to ensure that 60 per cent of recruitments under their responsibility were filled with qualified women. By December, 82 per cent of vacancies were being filled by women.



Temporary special measures will continue during 2020 in order to meet the gender parity target of 47-53 per cent of all UNOPS personnel by the end of 2020.



1. Rapid diagnostic kits enable quick on-the-spot testing for malaria in some of the most remote parts of the Greater Mekong.
© UNOPS/Elise Laker



2



2. Bounyai, a health volunteer from Salavan Province in Laos, is responsible for providing malaria testing and treatment as well as health education to his community. © UNOPS/Elise Laker

3. A health volunteer conducts a malaria test at a temporary testing station in Stung Treng Province, Cambodia. © UNOPS/Elise Laker

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Attila Molnar is a specialist of family medicine, a public health physician and a health economist with 25 years of experience in health services, public health, health systems, health financing, management and global health. UNOPS is the Regional Principal Recipient for The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria's RAI2E grant, of which Attila serves as the Programme Director.

HEALTH

Diseases without borders

By Dr. Attila Molnar

Infectious diseases don't respect national borders. To eradicate them, we shouldn't either – here's why.

Over the last 10 years, the number of malaria cases has decreased dramatically in Southeast Asia. So why is malaria still a risk?

Because there is a new threat emerging from countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion: Partial resistance to artemisinin (a critical ingredient for treating falciparum malaria, the deadliest form of the disease) and resistance to its partner drugs used in artemisinin-based combination therapies is increasing.

The north-eastern region of Cambodia – along the forested borders of Laos, Thailand and Vietnam – is most at risk. Cases of malaria have been bucking trends and increasing. Forest goers and mobile migrant populations are the most vulnerable to contracting the disease and contributing to its further spread across borders.

The consequences of artemisinin and its partner drugs losing their effectiveness in these areas



4. Malaria in Cambodia significantly affects migrant workers and people who work in remote forested areas.
© UNOPS/Elise Laker

– and, more widely, with no new antimalarial drug in the pipeline – is unthinkable. Eliminating malaria is the only option to avoid a catastrophe.

So how do you eliminate a cross-border disease like malaria? It requires a combination of efforts: Early diagnosis, treating every case when and where they're found, and tracking the spread of the disease itself.

Since 2014, UNOPS – along with the National Malaria Control Programme, the World Health Organization and civil society organizations – has managed the implementation of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria's Regional Artemisinin-resistance Initiative (RAI). Now in its second phase, RAI2-Elimination (RAI2E) is focused on containing the spread of resistance and eliminating falciparum malaria by the end of 2030.

Regional surveillance, monitoring and collaboration is key to meeting this goal – all of which require data from hard-to-reach areas and from across borders, in order to prepare adequate responses.

The regional Malaria Elimination Database helps track malaria in the Greater Mekong Subregion – and accelerate elimination efforts. The centralized, secure database includes data on all malaria cases from all areas in the region, including mobile migrant populations. National programmes can connect the information to factors linked to malaria transmission, such as drug resistance, and entomological and ecological patterns.

Nearly 33,000 trained integrated community malaria workers participate in active and passive case finding and treatment among forest goers,

in hard-to-reach areas and among mobile migrant workers in forested areas.

Health workers are equipped with smartphones and trained to report their activities on a weekly basis by text message. In the villages without mobile phone networks, runners (or messengers) between villages help ensure information on malaria cases and their treatment is regularly updated in the database.

The dense network of malaria posts, with non-stop coverage of targeted areas and near real-time reporting, ensures the early detection of malaria outbreaks. This enables the health departments of national governments, civil society organizations and United Nations organizations working on malaria elimination efforts to deliver supplies when and where needed.

This also helps organizations on the ground focus their resources on finding and treating people in these areas – before mosquitoes can transmit the disease any further.

For example, in Myanmar, four townships in Karen State – Hpapun, Myawaddy, Kawkareik and Hlaingbwe – are some of the most underserved and hardest to reach in terms of health services.

These townships also border Thailand. The 1,200 villages – with some 385,000 people – experience a lot of internal migration (to logging, mining and agriculture sites within Myanmar) and external migration (to and from Thailand). With no access to formal health care delivery system, malaria cases were high – and were previously the source of malaria crossing to border settlements in Thailand.

After four years of malaria elimination activities targeting this area, the disease has decreased in villages across the townships – falciparum malaria has almost vanished. And in Thailand, the National Malaria Control Programme has noted a dramatic decrease in the number of malaria cases for migrants crossing the border, with less than 4,500 cases reported in 2018 – a decline of more than 45 per cent compared to 2017.

By tracking malaria infection across borders and in the remote areas – and by tracking, tracing and treating every case – malaria will be a disease of the past. This goal is within reach – it's no longer a dream, but a tangible reality.

1. Construction workers in Nepal experience a virtual reality simulation of the house they are helping to rebuild. © UNOPS/ John Rae

GENDER AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Gender parity is necessary when working in challenging locations

By Elyse Ruest-Archambault

Humanitarian aid and development projects often take place in difficult locations. The need for a diverse and gender-balanced workforce to implement these projects can't be ignored – here's why.



/ ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Elyse Ruest-Archambault is a gender, inclusion and diversity specialist with more than 15 years of experience in development, peacekeeping, sport for development and capacity building. She has 10 years of experience working on gender mainstreaming, including with Action Contre la Faim in Bangladesh and the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Timor-Leste. She is currently a Diversity and Inclusion Specialist at UNOPS.

The people working in international development should be representative of the people whose needs are being served. In too many places, that's not the case – especially when it comes to women.

UNOPS implements projects around the world – including in locations where our project teams have uneven gender representation. In conflict-affected countries, in particular, women are underrepresented.

We need the best and brightest workforce – of all genders – to carry out our work.



2. As part of a government-led social housing project in Argentina, UNOPS works with individual families to ensure housing designs meet their priority needs. © UNOPS/John Rae

3. As of the start of 2020, over 40 per cent of UNOPS personnel are women. © UNOPS/John Rae

So how can we improve the gender balance of projects in locations that have historically had very few – if any – women working on the ground? By actively encouraging more qualified women to apply for positions in these locations in the first place.

Outreach activities can be a very effective way of connecting with more women interested in pursuing a career in the humanitarian and development sectors. Targeting different networking groups can help to increase the pool of applicants. In Nepal, for example, we have a women’s network that connects UNOPS recruiters with women working in the construction industry – especially important given our expertise in infrastructure implementation.

But for gender parity to become a reality in any organization, there must also be viable options to balance one’s professional and private life. Opportunities for true work-life balance must exist – for both women and men.

Accommodating the personal commitments personnel have outside of work is important. UNOPS in Afghanistan, for example, has a crèche for children while our office in Kenya has a nursing room. And all UNOPS personnel, regardless of contract type, can request flexible working options.

We’re also taking concrete actions to recruit more women into senior roles. If less than 20 per cent of the applicants for senior level posts are women, the hiring manager must outline the measures initially taken to reach out to and attract female applicants. Without a strong justification, the vacancy announcement must be extended or reopened.

To ensure that there aren’t any unconscious biases written into the vacancy announcement that are preventing qualified women from applying or making it through the selection process, the job requirements are also re-examined. In addition, women must make up at least 50 per cent of the shortlisted candidates for a senior level vacancy.

These efforts are beginning to bear fruit. Although we’re not there yet as an organization, we are making progress – the percentage of women at UNOPS has increased to 39 per cent (January 2019). And by 2020, we aim to achieve full gender parity globally.

So why is this important? Because it’s actually vital to the long-term strength, sustainability and success of the organization, the projects we implement and, most importantly, the people we serve. It will also encourage a more gender-informed approach to project implementation – and ultimately lead to better solutions for our partners.

In my experience, women are often more likely to share their interests and lived experiences with other women. In the Middle East, for example, a UNOPS housing reconstruction project that targeted the most vulnerable groups, utilized gender-balanced teams to improve outreach to single-women headed households. If women aren’t adequately represented on our project teams, that

hinders our ability to meet the needs of all of our beneficiaries.

The benefits of having gender-balanced project teams extends far beyond any one particular organization. It can help to provide long-term socio-economic opportunities for people, local communities and countries alike.

Seeing highly qualified women working across a range of jobs on UNOPS-implemented projects in their local communities can also inspire other women and girls to pursue careers in traditionally male-dominated fields.

Women bring their own unique perspectives to the table. Incorporating those perspectives helps ensure that the needs of everyone are taken into account – and best meet the needs of the people we serve.

Solutions we help provide

"I am well aware of the important role UNOPS plays to support the transparency, relevance and effectiveness of highly complex projects in different neighbouring countries. I am pleased that the municipality and the Ministry of Transport and Public Works are relying on UNOPS to implement the tramway project."

Lenín Moreno,
President, Ecuador

"We want UNOPS to help our government make sure that those who participate in tenders are prestigious companies with an ethical dimension."

Andrés Manuel López Obrador,
President, Mexico

"We made great savings with the implementation of the new procurement systems through the United Nations and UNOPS, and this is a breakthrough in the prevention of corruption that never existed before."

Juan Orlando Hernández,
President, Honduras

"This is a credible partnership with UNOPS which will bring foreign direct investment, that will create jobs and develop an export product. Public servants, particularly teachers, nurses, police and soldiers, will receive special access to the housing projects. We are determined to build a prosperous and inclusive economy where everyone can shine, wherever in Antigua and Barbuda they live, and whatever their socio-economic circumstances."

Gaston Browne,
Prime Minister, Antigua and Barbuda

"This groundbreaking housing initiative is not just a regular project but a massive undertaking that has my full support, and will undoubtedly change for the better the lives of millions of people."

Imran Khan,
Prime Minister, Pakistan

"I believe we are all well aware of the challenges Ghana and most of Africa face when it comes to the provision of decent, well-planned and organized housing for our citizens [...] I believe that with the signing of this project agreement [with UNOPS], we shall be ushering into existence new dawn for Ghana and our citizens."

Nana Akufo-Addo,
President, Ghana

"We are focusing on financing and investment frameworks that will unlock private sector financing. We are very excited about this project [with UNOPS] and we look forward to unlocking similar partnerships that will allow us to fulfil our duties as leaders and pave the way for adequate, decent and affordable housing for Kenyans."

Uhuru Kenyatta,
President, Kenya

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