

Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and their application in fragile contexts

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The Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) are a global household survey program developed by UNICEF to provide reliable and comparable data on the health, education, and well-being of women and children. Since its inception in the mid-1990s, MICS has been a key source of data for countries around the world, particularly in low- and middle-income regions. This data helps monitor progress towards national goals and international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

MICS is an adaptive tool that collects data in conflicted and hard to reach areas. For example, 2022-23 Afghanistan MICS showed that it was possible to collect nationally representative data in a fragile context. The aim of this survey was to provide evidence on the situation of children's and women's rights and other vulnerable groups in Afghanistan after significant changes in livelihoods to inform/monitor the progress of the humanitarian response and the development of the 2023-25 UNSCDF (UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework) and to fulfill Afghanistan's obligation to monitor and report on global commitments including the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).

Other surveys such as the baseline/endline surveys from the Building Resilience in Sahel (BRS) programme (2019-2023) are using some of the tools and the same methodology of the MICS in order to ensure robust data collection on resilience in 5 countries in the Sahel. Since 2019, UNICEF in partnership with Germany (BMZ) implements the regional BRS programme across Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. The programme is based on an integrated, people-centered approach that links humanitarian and development programming grounded in an analysis of risks and shocks. To increase the resilience of social systems, the programme supported Sahelian governments to strengthen six social sectors at national, decentralized and community levels.