UNICEF Annual Report 2017

Afghanistan

Executive summary
The security situation in Afghanistan continued to deteriorate in 2017. The drivers of conflict in the country include weak governance to mitigate the centrifugal powers; serious inequity in the distribution of resources; and a high proportion of the population living below the poverty line. This is combined with a lack of a comprehensive social protection system and serious inequity in opportunities for participation, employment, education and other dimensions of socio-economic upward mobility. The illegal trade of drugs is another source of conflict, which – given a significant reported increase in opium production in Afghanistan (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) – is expected to drive drug abuse, dependence on the illicit economy and rising levels of corruption.

Afghanistan’s population, estimated at 29.7 million (Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, March 2017), is young, with about 54.3 per cent or 16.1 million people under 18 years of age. The World Bank reported a 2.2 per cent economic growth rate in 2016, which is the same or less than the estimated population growth rate (2–2.8 per cent), implying a decline in per capita income. Much higher growth rates are needed to reduce unemployment, as an estimated 400,000 Afghans enter the labour market each year. According to the 2013–2014 Afghan Living Conditions Survey, poverty was estimated to have increased to 39.1 per cent. There have been gains in economic development and in promising regional partnerships formed for trade, as well as significant efforts by the Government to increase domestic revenue. Yet, Afghanistan remains highly aid dependent as the largest recipient of overseas development assistance globally.

Some 546,000 Afghans returned to their country in 2017 from Iran, Pakistan and Europe. In addition, some 500,000 persons are internally displaced, largely due to internal conflict and armed clashes.

The year 2017 marked the mid-point of the five-year UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme (2015–2019) with the Government. A mid-term review (MTR) was conducted that considered various significant changes to the programming context since 2015. The review made 40 strategic recommendations, including the adoption of a larger-scale humanitarian response that incorporates a nexus to development and resilience-building and greater programme intensity to achieve four headline results: 1) eradicate polio; 2) increase immunization coverage through strengthened routine vaccinations; 3) decrease the number and percentage of girls who are out of school at every age; and 4) prevent all forms of malnutrition. The country programme results were also streamlined and aligned with the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework, national priority programmes, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In addition to these strategic adjustments, many significant programmatic results were achieved in 2017. Hence, while the number of polio cases in Afghanistan did not decrease in 2017, efforts to engage in access dialogue with all actors continued and the number of refusals and missed children declined. Most of the cases are from the south and the east and efforts are underway to address the challenges in those regions.
In nutrition, the large-scale advocacy led by UNICEF Afghanistan and the paradigm shift towards an increasing focus on prevention of malnutrition led to Afghanistan affirming its global commitment to tackling nutrition-related challenges by joining the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement. An intersectoral platform was also launched, notably the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition (AFSeN) agenda, and placed at the highest political level in the office of the chief executive officer.

In water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), rural water supply activities were accelerated and reached about 365,000 people (notably, more than 70 per cent of water supply was gravity-fed or involved solar-powered piped systems) while community-led total sanitation (CLTS) was scaled up to 21 districts. Five districts were declared open defecation free (ODF).

UNICEF Afghanistan assumed greater leadership in the education sector, by taking over the coordination role of the development actors in education and by supporting the Government in launching its National Educational Strategic Plan (NESP) III. UNICEF Afghanistan is also collaborating with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to support curriculum reform.

Significant efforts were made by UNICEF Afghanistan in collaboration with sister United Nations agencies and under the leadership of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator in the direction of One United Nations at the request of the Government of Afghanistan. Six thematic priorities were identified for United Nations support and UNICEF Afghanistan was an active contributor to all and led on education.

UNICEF Afghanistan strengthened its humanitarian response to address increasing population movement tied to conflict and inter-country relocation, as well as natural disasters.

**Humanitarian assistance**

In 2017, the number of Afghans who returned to their country was lower than in 2016, especially in the case of those returning from Pakistan, due to less pressure on Afghans living in Pakistan to return. However, the number of returnees from Iran went up; this is more of a revolving-door population movement triggered by economic reasons. The population influx amounted to more than 546,000 persons from both countries, according to the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO 2018).

The year 2017 witnessed increased armed conflict in several locations across Afghanistan. Eighty conflict incidents were recorded each day between July and September 2017 – the highest number in six years – and 16 district administrative centres were attacked and taken over (HNO 2018). This resulted in a higher number of internally displaced persons; in total, over 1 million people live in new and prolonged displacement. UNICEF Afghanistan collaborated with United Nations agencies, notably the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the World Food Programme (WFP), to provide the necessary support for returnees and internally displaced persons.

In line with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action benchmarks, UNICEF Afghanistan invested significantly in enhancing its emergency preparedness, cluster leadership capacity and humanitarian performance monitoring with support from the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) and the UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes. UNICEF
Afghanistan received US$4.8 million from the Emergency Programme Fund for the procurement of ready-to-use therapeutic food for the treatment of children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

In Kabul, the chief of the UNICEF Global Cluster Coordination Unit ran a workshop for key UNICEF-led cluster members and the ROSA regional emergency advisor facilitated one emergency preparedness and response training. UNICEF Afghanistan reached higher integration and collaboration between the nutrition and WASH clusters, the education in emergencies working group (EiEWG) and the child protection sub-cluster. A more streamlined reporting process, as well as fruitful interaction with the UNICEF Afghanistan representative and emergency coordinator was achieved, which will support better advocacy and resource mobilization for humanitarian action, both in the context of the Humanitarian Coordination Team and the advisory board of the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF).

Greater effectiveness and capacity in humanitarian assistance strengthened UNICEF Afghanistan’s reputation within the humanitarian community and among donors, resulting in an increase in funding for UNICEF-led clusters and sectors, coming both from pooled funds, such as the CHF and the Central Emergency Response Fund, and donors such as the governments of Australia and Canada, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and the United States of America’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM).

As a result of generous resource partners mentioned above, board members and administrators of the pooled funds the Afghanistan Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) was fully funded in 2017. Using this funding, UNICEF Afghanistan and its partners managed to respond to a total of 162 humanitarian situations across the country, assisting more than 600,000 people.

In WASH, durable solutions such as small-scale solar pumping networks or gravity-fed system were promoted to cater to the longer-term needs of internally displaced persons, returnees and their host communities, thus strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus. As a result of the humanitarian WASH support provided by UNICEF Afghanistan and partners, 145,819 persons accessed safe drinking water and 62,130 accessed improved sanitation facilities.

UNICEF Afghanistan provided treatment to 170,760 children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM), reached 117,500 children with measles vaccinations and provided 78,000 women who were pregnant with essential health kits.

In child protection, results achieved exceeded the target in terms of psychosocial support, due to high needs among returnee and internally displaced children. Psychosocial support reached 52,239 children through child-friendly spaces and 3,781 children received more specialized case management services. A total of 214,521 children and family members received blankets, winter clothes, family kits and plastic sheets to protect them from the cold. The monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM) recorded 437 individual recruitment cases (38 verified so far) and 2,477 child casualties until the end of September 2017.

In 2017, the EiEWG was strengthened to support returnees from Pakistan and internally displaced persons. As a result of advocacy by UNICEF Afghanistan and Save the Children, and with support from the new Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, the EiEWG was further strengthened and recognized as a separate entity in the humanitarian architecture in Afghanistan. UNICEF humanitarian interventions resulted in more than 39,000 school-aged children (40 per cent girls) accessing education during emergencies.
As a part of the Grand Bargain commitment, UNICEF Afghanistan increased the number of local humanitarian partnerships from six to 11 during 2017.

**Equity in practice**

In Afghanistan, gender is one of the main disparities impacting the lives of children. This is particularly marked in the education sector. The majority (75 per cent) of the 3.5 million out-of-school children in Afghanistan are girls. Gender disparities are often reinforced by geographical inequities and limited access to services in rural areas, with parents reluctant to allow girls to walk long distances to reach school, in addition to cultural and religious barriers.

Community-based education (CBE) is an approach meant to expand access to education in remote and rural communities that are not served by formal education. Community-based education schools and classes are established in community buildings or houses in remote, rural and sparsely populated villages, where no gender-appropriate school exists, public schools are more than 3 kilometres away and a significant number of children are over-aged. To ensure consistency with the education delivered through public schools, community-based education schools and classes follow the required annual hours per grade level as described in the guidelines of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the community-based education policy.

Community-based education is offered through community-based schools as well as accelerated learning centres (ALCs). The establishment of these centers continues to be an effective strategy for addressing the education barriers faced by girls by bringing school to their villages. While not a new approach, ALCs have greatly contributed to increasing the enrolment of girls who would not normally have had the opportunity to attend school. As of 2017, 275,847 children are enrolled in 10,339 community-based schools and 117,606 children are taking part in 4,389 ALCs classes. Seventy-three per cent of children in ALCs are girls, while this proportion is 59 per cent in community-based schools.

Gender inequality is also reflected in the low number of female teachers in Afghanistan. UNICEF Afghanistan continued its advocacy efforts in this regard. Improving the recruitment of female teachers as well as their working conditions is also a key recommendation of the new NESP III (2017–2021) and will be a key priority of the education summit that will be hosted in Afghanistan in 2018.

The focus of UNICEF Afghanistan’s polio interventions is to reach every child under 5 years of age everywhere and to reduce the number of missed children during multiple immunization campaigns. Extra efforts were made in 50 high-risk districts that contributed to 84 per cent of wild poliovirus cases in Afghanistan over the past eight years. Several strategies were followed to achieve this target.

The first was to increase the number of female workers in the polio programme, given that women have easier access to households. Recruitment of women to work in any sector remains a challenge in Afghanistan, due to cultural and religious norms engrained in most rural areas. The deteriorating security situation limits the recruitment of women even in urban areas. Some success has been achieved: the overall proportion of women in the Immunization Communication Network (ICN) that works on polio is 33 per cent nationwide, with 65 per cent in urban areas and 8 per cent in rural areas. This is the result of 1) advocacy with key stakeholders on all sides about the importance of having women in the ICN; 2) ensuring that teams of frontline workers, which include vaccinators and mobilizers, have more than two women so that they can work together going house-to-house; 3) engaging local elders and
community influencers to accept women to work for polio and immunization; and 4) supporting male companions (mahram) with an incentive to accompany the female frontline worker during campaigns.

Other strategies used to reach every child include improving local household-based micro-plans; investigating the reasons for missing certain children; using real-time monitoring data to take decisions in areas with problems; scaling up household and community engagement approaches to enhance demand; and conducting rigorous follow-up on missed children.

Access is a persistent challenge to reaching all children in Afghanistan. Continued emphasis was placed on dialogue to facilitate access and the provision of polio vaccines at transit sites around inaccessible areas. Between January and November 2017, the number of inaccessible children decreased from 386,207 to just under 50,000. Campaign data showed progress in reducing the share of missed children: from 6.8 per cent in 2016 to 4.2 per cent in 2017.

Strategic Plan 2018–2021

The UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme was systematically aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021 following a participatory MTR conducted in 2017 given the significant changes to the programming context. The programme’s planned results were streamlined and aligned with the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework, national priority programmes and the SDGs, as well as the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

The mid-term review documented notable contributions by UNICEF Afghanistan, including technical support to governmental policies, strategies, planning, performance monitoring and generation, analysis and use of data. In line with the Strategic Plan’s emphasis on programming excellence for at-scale results for children, the mid-term review recommended concentrating and converging resources to make a difference on a large scale. This took into consideration the programme challenges, including the deteriorating security situation; increased humanitarian needs; remote, dispersed populations affected by high levels of poverty and illiteracy; and pervasive gender inequality.

In line with the Strategic Plan focus on the humanitarian-development nexus, the MTR made recommendations for a larger-scale humanitarian response that incorporates a nexus to development and resilience-building and greater programme intensity to achieve four headline results: 1) eradicate polio; 2) increase immunization coverage through strengthened routine vaccinations; 3) decrease the number and percentage of girls who are out of school at every age; and 4) prevent all forms of malnutrition. These results are direct contributions to the overall goals pursued by the Strategic Plan, notably around goal 1, every child survives and thrives; goal 2, every child learns; goal 3, every child is protected from violence and exploitation; and goal 4, every child has a fair chance in life.

The revised programme will continue to have six planned outcomes in the areas of: child protection; education; maternal and child health and polio eradication; nutrition; social inclusion and WASH. These are directly aligned with the five goal areas of the Strategic Plan. While there is continuity in priority areas of programming, under the social inclusion outcome there is increased emphasis on child poverty analysis, as per goal area 5. Gender and equity considerations were reinforced in line with the Strategic Plan. The revised country programme structure has adapted its programme indicators to include standard indicators for SDG and Strategic Plan reporting to ensure monitoring of Strategic Plan implementation.

Building on the change strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan, the MTR adopted several
strategies that will enhance results for children. The first builds on gender-based programming; UNICEF Afghanistan will strengthen its capacity in the areas of gender mainstreaming and gender-based programming, especially in the areas of girls’ education, child marriage and prevention of malnutrition among adolescents. The programme will also enhance its child rights advocacy, public engagement, communication and movements for children building on the successful social media outreach. UNICEF Afghanistan will also develop a public advocacy strategy around girls’ education and prevention of malnutrition, which are two of the headline results of the revised programme in line with the mid-term review.

Regarding the humanitarian-development nexus promoted in the Strategic Plan, the MTR recommended a paradigm shift from ‘development in a fragile context with humanitarian responses’ to a continuum of development work, resilience-building and scaled-up humanitarian responses to children affected by both acute and protracted emergency situations. As part of this paradigm shift, a conceptual framework will be developed on how to strengthen the resilience of systems, communities and families.

Building on the Strategic Plan’s call for closer collaboration with the rest of the United Nations system, and the Government of Afghanistan’s call for One United Nations, UNICEF Afghanistan has joined forces with United Nations sister agencies to undertake a comprehensive review of its work in Afghanistan to enhance the integration of United Nations programming. Pursuant to the analysis, together with government counterparts, United Nations agencies identified six thematic areas on which this work will focus: education; food security, nutrition and livelihoods; health; rule of law; return and reintegration; and normative work, including human rights protection and support to the national statistical system.

**Emerging areas of importance**

**Refugee and migrant children.** In 2017, the Afghan border with Iran continued to register a large number of returnees; the flow from the Pakistan side was much lower in 2017 than in 2016. Many of those returning from Iran are under 18 years of age. Though children were also expected to return from Europe, there were fewer than 10 unaccompanied minors returning in 2017. The humanitarian needs of the returnees – including protection, education and basic needs – are immense. These needs exist in their places of destination, during transit and following their return to their areas of origin.

UNICEF Afghanistan’s advocacy on the question of refugee and migrant children included a visit by the UNICEF programme division deputy director, who is in charge of the migration portfolio, during which she met with a number of partners, including the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations and representatives of the European Union, a number of United Nations agencies and some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in the area of child rights. Advocacy carried out with the European Union led to a new partnership on issues related to children on the move. This partnership includes Afghanistan and Iran. UNICEF Afghanistan has also worked with the UNICEF Office in Brussels, which is the focal point interactions with National Committees in several European countries, to advocate for the rights of Afghan children in those countries, since the latter constitute the largest number of migrants in Europe.

Programmatically, the focus of UNICEF Afghanistan’s response regarding children returning with their families from Pakistan included vaccination, screening for malnutrition, awareness raising about education, WASH services and psychosocial support at return points (with IOM, UNHCR and WFP). For returnees from Iran, engagement was on the western borders of Nimroz and focused on care in transit at the border, family tracing and transportation to the city of origin.
This was done in collaboration with two NGO partners, IOM and UNHCR. One key challenge with respect to those children was their reintegration into their areas of origin. Given that most of these children went to Iran looking for work opportunities (largely as a result of poverty), and given the limited employment opportunities on their return, they attempt to return again to Iran, resulting in repeated population movement. For the returnees from Europe, UNICEF Afghanistan coordinated with IOM and the UNICEF National Committees in the areas of origin.

**Greater focus on the second decade.** While adolescence is a time of both opportunity and vulnerability for girls and boys, adolescent girls are a particularly vulnerable population in Afghanistan. In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan strengthened its efforts to support adolescents, especially girls, at risk of child marriage, dropping out of school and thus becoming exposed to higher risks of abuse. The main interventions were education, civic engagement and community mobilization, as well as collecting more robust evidence to ascertain which interventions work best for children in their second decade.

Attention by UNICEF Afghanistan to children in the second decade of life also included the provision of iron and folic acid tablets to some 1.5 million adolescent girls who constitute approximately 95 per cent of all schoolgirls in Afghanistan, covering 33 provinces. This work was carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) and MOE.

Furthermore, to promote hygiene behaviour change at the school and community levels, UNICEF Afghanistan developed a guideline for teachers on menstrual hygiene management (MHM), accompanied by a graphic novel-format storybook for adolescents, the first of its kind in Afghanistan, and a speaking book on menstrual hygiene management. These will assist women and girls with low literacy to understand and improve their MHM practices. The guidelines also incorporate the speech of a high-level Islamic scholar and a note for men, to enable male champions to contribute to destigmatizing menstruation. The MHM package is available in Dari and Pashto. Inputs into the new family life education curriculum were successful in introducing MHM at a much earlier age (from Grades 5 to 8), which is essential to preparing girls for their menstruation. The first Girls’ Hygiene Day in Afghanistan was celebrated in the presence of the First Lady to draw attention to the importance of menstrual hygiene for adolescent girls. Five consultative meetings and trainings on MHM were conducted for a total of 1,057 teachers across the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary notes and acronyms</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFSen</td>
<td>Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALC</td>
<td>accelerated learning centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPHS</td>
<td>basic package of health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBE</td>
<td>community-based education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>community-based school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBNP</td>
<td>community-based nutrition package</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFS</td>
<td>child-friendly schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHF</td>
<td>Common Humanitarian Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLTS</td>
<td>community-led total sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMT</td>
<td>country management team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPAN</td>
<td>Child Protection Action Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Central Statistics Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DACAAR</td>
<td>Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCT</td>
<td>direct cash transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>United Kingdom Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>early child development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EiE</td>
<td>education in emergencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EiEWG</td>
<td>Education in Emergencies Working Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPI</td>
<td>expanded programme on immunization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPE</td>
<td>Global Partnership for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAC</td>
<td>Humanitarian Action for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HACT</td>
<td>harmonized approach to cash transfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HNO</td>
<td>Humanitarian Needs Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRDT</td>
<td>human resources development team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRP</td>
<td>Humanitarian Response Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICN</td>
<td>Immunization Communications Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>information and communication technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFA</td>
<td>iron folic acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMAM</td>
<td>integrated management of acute malnutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVR</td>
<td>interactive voice response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IYCF</td>
<td>infant and young child feeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRC</td>
<td>juvenile rehabilitation centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHM</td>
<td>menstrual hygiene management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOPH</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOLSAMD</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNCH</td>
<td>maternal, newborn and child health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRM</td>
<td>Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRRD</td>
<td>Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTR</td>
<td>mid-term review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAFA</td>
<td>National Assessment Framework for Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESP</td>
<td>National Educational Strategic Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTA</td>
<td>national technical assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODF</td>
<td>open defecation free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORS</td>
<td>oral rehydration salts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCA</td>
<td>programme cooperation agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PED</td>
<td>provincial education directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PND</td>
<td>Public Nutrition Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRM</td>
<td>United States Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRRD</td>
<td>Provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSA</td>
<td>UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RBM</td>
<td>results-based management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ru-WatSIP</td>
<td>Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAM</td>
<td>severe acute malnutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART</td>
<td>Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>School Management Shura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUN</td>
<td>Scaling Up Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>water, sanitation and hygiene</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy

Pursuant to UNICEF Afghanistan’s policy advocacy in 2017, the Government of Afghanistan launched AFSeN, a multisectoral framework involving 11 line ministers and four United Nations agencies – namely, UNICEF, WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) – as well as development partners, civil society organizations and the business community. AFSeN aims to strengthen inter-ministerial coordination, planning and monitoring for food security and nutrition interventions at all levels to ensure that all Afghans, especially children, have adequate physical and economic access to nutritious food at all times. UNICEF Afghanistan’s advocacy was successful in getting Afghanistan to become the 60th country to join the SUN movement, a global partnership for bringing actors together to tackle nutrition challenges. UNICEF Afghanistan collaborated with WFP to support the Government’s efforts to achieve SDG 2 targets and provide a review report on the progress toward this SDG.

UNICEF Afghanistan was elected the new development partners’ lead for education in August 2017. Since then, UNICEF Afghanistan has facilitated the work of the various coordination platforms in the sector to enhance complementarity, synergy and sector dialogue under the leadership of the Government. This new role has been instrumental in policy dialogue leading to the revision of the community-based education policy and the development of draft girls’ education and preschool strategies, among others.

UNICEF Afghanistan supported MOE in the launch of the NESP III (2017–2021), which has generated a renewed focus on out-of-school girls and boys, particularly focusing on girls’ education and increasing the number of qualified female teachers. Furthermore, UNICEF Afghanistan together with MOE conducted a comprehensive out-of-school-children country study, which will help to produce updated data, analyse existing interventions related to enhanced school participation, identify bottlenecks and develop context-appropriate, realistic strategies for increasing enrolment and sustaining attendance rates. UNICEF Afghanistan is closely collaborating with UNESCO on SDG 4 and supporting the Government in this respect.

Partnerships

The medium-term review and the identification of four flagship programmes was an inspiration for the United Nations Country Team in its review of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. In fact, all four flagship UNICEF programmes were retained in the six thematic priorities for the United Nations in Afghanistan for the next three years.

On 16 October 2017, Afghanistan became the 60th country to join the SUN movement, largely as a result of UNICEF Afghanistan’s advocacy efforts with the office of the chief executive officer and the minister of public health. The event was attended by the Secretary General of SUN. In collaboration with WFP and FAO, the AFSeN Secretariat was created at the office of the chief executive officer and a partnership agreement was established between the three agencies to support this Secretariat.

Another strong partnership continues between WHO and UNICEF Afghanistan for polio eradication, which includes, inter alia, joint fundraising. In the education sector, a partnership with UNESCO was established in 2017 to undertake curriculum reform.
A three-way partnership was established between the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation programme of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR) and UNICEF Afghanistan, combining a third-party-monitoring role for DACAAR with a capacity development element for the staff of provincial rural rehabilitation directorates, contractors involved in the construction of community water supply works and members of the community development councils who administer the contracts. This partnership allows DACAAR engineers to immediately advise on corrective action or mitigation measures when they encounter issues while monitoring the implementation of projects.

While there are two programmes that collaborate closely with religious leaders, notably polio and child protection, efforts need to be made in 2018 to ensure that this partnership with religious leaders expands to address several other areas of child rights.

**External communication and public advocacy**

In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan’s Facebook fan base grew, reaching over 240,000; Twitter followers increased fivefold, reaching 16,000. Combined, digital platforms reached more than 5 million users. Strong engagement scores demonstrate that audiences connected with featured child rights issues, including the Fathers’ Day early child development (ECD) campaign, ‘Children on the Move’, the regional WeTheFuture initiative, girls’ education and polio eradication. These featured compelling multi-media content from across the country, collaboration with influencers including the Afghan cricket team and strategic cross-posting with UNICEF Headquarters in New York, UNICEF ROSA, donors, National Committees for UNICEF and partners. Two videos were produced for WeTheFuture initiative that focused on adolescents, especially girls.

Innovative approaches included the production of UNICEF’s first-ever virtual reality film in Afghanistan. Focusing on girls’ education and launched on the International Day of the Girl, the film reached more than 1.1 million globally.

Among 48 local media outlets, UNICEF Afghanistan increased its share of voice on child-related issues (34 per cent), with 88 per cent of coverage including child rights messages. Media engagement was maximized through interviews, capacity development and coverage of the MTR, International Day of the Girl, the inauguration of Menstrual Hygiene Management Day, Afghanistan’s joining the SUN movement, and World Children’s Day.

Through a no-cost partnership with Radio Free Europe, weekly child rights programmes were broadcast nationally in Dari and Pashto. Radio content was produced with BBC Media Action, Voice of America, and Pact Communications.

World Children’s Day events enabled children, in and out of school, to share ideas that were amplified to online and national television audiences. Key media in Kabul participated to let #kidstakeover.

Resource mobilization was supported with targeted communication and coordinated digital outreach acknowledging donors, including the Rotary Foundation and the governments of Australia, Finland, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom. A public advocacy strategy is currently being developed on girls’ education and nutrition.

**Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages**
UNICEF Afghanistan is strongly committed to integration and cross-sectoral linkages. The medium-term review was an opportunity to enhance this approach through intersectoral planning workshops that took place around each one of the programmes. Those workshops brought together not only UNICEF Afghanistan staff to look at the various sectors in an intersectoral way, but also government counterparts from various ministries. The AFSeN Programme that has been heavily advocated for by United Nations agencies, namely UNICEF Afghanistan, FAO, WFP and WHO, finally came to fruition and brought together a number of ministries focused on public health, agriculture, education, information, religious affairs, higher education and information and culture around the topics of food security and nutrition. This is a clear example of how the United Nations has been able to influence an intersectoral and integrated approach in the Government.

Another example of integration and cross-sectoral linkages is an adolescent programme implemented in some parts of Afghanistan that focuses on empowering adolescents, especially girls, to reduce their vulnerability to violence perpetrated through harmful practices and nurture their ability to act as agents of change in their communities. The work on this programme brings together several interventions from the education, health, nutrition, child protection and communication sides.

UNICEF Afghanistan has an explicit plan to converge around polio through strengthening routine immunization and bringing other services into the regions that are difficult for the polio team to access. Results will be reported on in 2018.

**Service delivery**

Amidst limited government capacity to deliver basic services to the population, and the fact that there are large areas of Afghanistan that are outside of government influence, UNICEF Afghanistan continued to support the delivery of basic services for children.

Approximately 1.3 million children under 1 year of age and 2.5 million women of childbearing age received immunization services. UNICEF Afghanistan’s contributions included vaccines, cold chain equipment and social mobilization. In remote and hard-to-reach locations, almost 900,000 women who are pregnant and children under 5 years benefited from life-saving interventions through 70 mobile health teams. Furthermore, 343 health facilities received equipment and ambulances for the timely referral of women and children.

The nutrition programme also had a strong component for supporting service delivery, primarily for the treatment of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. UNICEF Afghanistan was the main provider of all nutrition commodities and equipment for SAM treatment. By October 2017, 170,760 children were admitted for treatment.

In Afghanistan, it is difficult to set up accountability mechanisms for ensuring delivery of basic services. Health services are contracted to NGOs through the basic package of health services (BPHS); the work undertaken by the MOPH unit in charge of BPHS contracts focuses on contract management and not accountability of service providers. UNICEF Afghanistan’s only investment in accountability for service delivery is in polio, for which a real-time monitoring system was set up within communities to assess whether service providers, be the community mobilizers or vaccinators in teams, are doing their work. The polio programme remains the largest component of UNICEF Afghanistan’s service delivery, with the provision of some 108 million doses of oral polio vaccine and 1.5 million inactivate polio vaccine doses for campaigns and case responses in 2017. UNICEF Afghanistan also supports a network of 6,700 social mobilizers who generate demand for polio vaccination.
Human rights-based approach to cooperation

Throughout 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan provided technical support to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to complete its second periodic report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Through a participatory process, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs updated this situational report and will submit it to the Committee in early 2018.

The long-awaited child act is still under parliamentary review. With its focus on various areas of child protection, the act will address the rights of vulnerable children in need of protection.

In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan continued to advocate, with support from the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator for the transfer of children detained on security charges in the largest adult penitentiary in the country (Bagram). Those children would have been more vulnerable if they had continued staying in the adult prison. For this purpose, UNICEF Afghanistan undertook the rehabilitation and equipping of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre (JRC) in Kabul. A total of 57 children were moved to the Centre in November 2017. Through its partners, UNICEF Afghanistan is assuring the provision of free legal aid, psychosocial counselling, reintegration, education and case management services to all children in the juvenile rehabilitation centre, including those transferred from Bagram.

The human rights-based approach to programming was emphasized in results-based management (RBM) training workshops undertaken in 2017 and in which a large number of staff participated.

The overall UNICEF Afghanistan programme, especially the polio programme and the education programme, to reach every child with the polio vaccine and with educational opportunities, are good examples of the human rights-based approach to programming. Through various strategies used in these two programmes, UNICEF Afghanistan continued to ensure that every child is reached wherever they are, regardless of insecurity, access constraints and cultural and religious barriers. Through the medium-term review, UNICEF Afghanistan, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan Human Rights Division jointly advocated for and developed several components of the child protection system to fight and curb child recruitment.

Gender equality

Efforts to prevent child marriage are mostly carried out within the context of the regional ‘Improving Adolescents’ Lives in South Asia’ programme; 3,556 out-of-school adolescents (1,805 girls and 1,751 boys) became members of action groups and received training on life skills. These efforts were supported by ‘Child Rights in Islam’ training for religious leaders that were conducted in seven provinces. In the western and northern regions, provincial governors were involved in raising awareness on the negative impacts of child marriage and highlighting the importance of education, as well as approaches to positive masculinity. At the national level, UNICEF Afghanistan worked with the United Nations Country Team to facilitate inter-ministerial dialogue on child marriage.

Progress was also made to advance girls’ education. UNICEF Afghanistan, in collaboration with relevant education partners, supported MOE to develop the first draft of a comprehensive policy on girls’ education, with a relevant roadmap. Successful advocacy resulted in girls’ education being identified as one of the four priorities of the education sector, which will be presented at the high-level education summit in 2018. In collaboration with MOE, UNICEF Afghanistan
worked to build the capacities of school management shuras (SMS) in 13 provinces to engage communities to promote girls’ education through a communication for development approach. Finally, to increase the number of female teachers in rural areas, UNICEF Afghanistan implemented the ‘Girls’ Access to Teacher Education’ project, through which 953 female students were provided with a two-year scholarship programme and mentoring in order to reach the minimum Grade 14 qualification as teachers. Significant challenges remain, however, with respect to reaching the number of female teachers required to ensure greater girls’ enrolment in school.

With a focus on gender-responsive WASH in Schools (WinS), guidelines accompanied by a graphic storybook on MHM for teachers and adolescents were developed. These also included messages targeting men and messages from an Islamic perspective. The topic of menstrual hygiene management was also successfully introduced at an earlier age in the family life education curriculum (Grades 5 to 8). Overall, 177,488 students benefited from gender-sensitive sanitation facilities and water supply, though challenges remain in disseminating the work started on MHM.

**Environmental sustainability**

A number of large-scale greening investments for UNICEF Afghanistan were initiated in 2017 and will be operationalized in 2018. The Kabul office is dependent on large, expensive, noisy and environmentally harmful diesel generators for its electricity. After a thorough appraisal process, a design and engineering firm was contracted to assist in the large-scale installation of solar panels and smaller hybrid generators. This US$880,000 investment will reduce annual fuel costs by US$100,000 and reduce the Kabul office’s annual generator produced noise, carbon and polluting emissions by 40 per cent.

Similarly, UNICEF Afghanistan manages a substantial number of accommodation units. A major investment project is nearing completion to better insulate all buildings and reduce future energy use and UNICEF Afghanistan’s environmental footprint. Work has also started to explore options for measuring both water and electricity usage by the office and accommodation units to identify ways to both secure the units and reduce consumption.

In the health sector, for the first time, solar-based technology for routine immunization was introduced by procuring 220 solar direct drives.

In the WASH sector, since 2016, the national rural water supply programme has pursued the construction of more durable drinking water systems that provide a higher level of service to the population; these are mostly gravity-fed and solar-powered piped systems. Many of these are equipped with public taps, but are increasingly designed to accommodate house connections. In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan supported the construction of 14 systems with metered household connections serving more than 31,000 people; work has also started in 21 communities to convert diesel-powered piped drinking water schemes into solar-powered schemes, benefiting close to 45,000 people; this will reduce the carbon footprint, increase systems’ resilience and provide more water to communities at a lower cost.

Efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change also focused on the provision of snow and rainwater storage reservoirs in drought-prone areas, which allow communities to bridge the months of drought that increasingly affect many parts of Afghanistan. The Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Irrigation Programme has invested in a network of so-called strategic wells, which are deep boreholes in drought-prone areas.
**Effective leadership**

A country management team (CMT) retreat was organized in February 2017 to agree on common operating principles within the context of UNICEF’s overall values and to enhance team performance. The retreat results called for greater focus in office work and programme areas and the identification of a corresponding vision. An extensive situation diagnosis on a large and representative cross-section of the staff was carried out ahead of the retreat. Some changes were introduced immediately following the retreat, including rendering it a more action-oriented body, reducing its meetings to once every two months instead of monthly and adding three national staff as country management team members to enhance interaction between national and international staff and gain better national insight before taking decisions. The medium-term review, which was carried out later, identified four flagship programmes for UNICEF Afghanistan.

The country management team met every two months, in addition to holding special meetings around key milestones such as the MTR and the revision of the staffing plan. Management indicators were tracked and reviewed by the team and appropriate action was taken. UNICEF Afghanistan finalized a comprehensive and inclusive risk assessment and management plan in August 2017. This is being augmented by a fraud risk plan that is under development. Opportunities to strategically strengthen oversight were addressed through a revision of UNICEF Afghanistan’s management structure and geographical footprint.

Country management team and joint consultative committee meeting minutes were shared with staff and posted on the shared drive; a monthly general staff meeting was held after each country management team meeting. The representative’s trip reports were shared with all staff. The performance of statutory committees was reviewed in mid-2017. The annual management plan, which was developed in a participatory way and shared with all staff, was reviewed at mid-year and to the lessons learned will be taken into consideration in the 2018 annual management plan.

**Financial resources management**

Contribution management and other financial resource management remained key focuses. Direct cash transfers (DCTs) were monitored on a weekly basis. In 2017, unliquidated DCTs in the six to nine months’ category were below 4 per cent against the benchmark of 10 per cent, and those outstanding for more than nine months were within the 1 per cent global benchmark. Thirty staff received capacity building on financial management through a workshop on invoice and payment processing workflows: 95 per cent of the more than 10,000 payment requests submitted to finance in 2017 were processed within set time limits.

A bank communications manager payment method was implemented in June 2017 for all vendors with a valid bank account. Payment instructions are now being wired directly to vendors’ accounts by the Global Shared Services Centre. This shortened the payment processing cycle by two working days.

UNICEF Afghanistan successfully rolled out the easy harmonized approach to cash transfers (e-ZHACT) in November 2017, which resulted in the simplification of transaction processing for all cash transfer modalities.

In contribution management, programme budget utilization, funds expiration and open commitments were reviewed on a monthly basis by the programme management team and once every two months by the country management team. Standard operating procedures on funds utilization were updated and finalized in mid-2017, with training sessions held in Kabul
and zonal offices. Funding expended in 2017 equals US$160 million.

An internal audit report issued in late 2016 made 26 recommendations. A thorough review of the root causes of issues raised resulted in UNICEF Afghanistan implementing system-based control processes where relevant, including the development of country-specific adjustments to its HACT processes and a fraud risk strategy. Five remaining recommendations are expected to be closed by March 2018.

**Fundraising and donor relations**

The country programme was 76 per cent funded at end November 2017. When considering funding in the confirmed Other Resources Regular pipeline (US$21.5 million) and estimations for full Regular Resources funding into 2018–2019 (US$82 million), the funding level reached 91 per cent. However, the overall figure masks discrepancies and does not consider expiry dates and the earmarked nature of available and expected funding. The majority of the confirmed funding pipeline is linked to polio, WASH and health. Child protection and nutrition programmes remain underfunded.

By November 2017, the 2017 HAC appeal was fully funded, with US$31.2 million received, including US$6.7 million carried forward from 2016. Funding gaps remain for in education in emergencies (EiE). The majority of humanitarian funding is earmarked, though flexible money was received from the governments of Australia, Canada and the United States (PRM) for the first time.

UNICEF Afghanistan diversified its donor base to some extent during the year. New funding came online for the first time from the Government of Australia, DFID and the European Union (pledged). Existing donor relationships were maintained and strengthened through regular briefings, reports and events, including a luncheon organized during the visit of the Regional Director, and a meeting on polio held with WHO. The UNICEF Afghanistan representative participated in global annual consultations in Tokyo, Japan, and Seoul, Republic of Korea, and UNICEF Afghanistan engaged with an evaluation mission of the Government of the Republic of Korea in Kabul. In 2017, a quarterly e-newsletter was developed and disseminated to key stakeholders.

Partnership videos were elaborated for Japan and the Republic of Korea, along with press releases for new contributions from the governments of Australia, Italy and Japan and DFID. Human interest stories mentioning donor contributions were developed and widely shared. UNICEF hosted the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea at a CLTS event, and the British Ambassador at a Kabul hospital, and participated in a signing ceremony with the Japanese Ambassador for annual funding to the expanded programme on immunization (EPI) and polio.

**Evaluation and research**

Management of the plan for research, impact monitoring and evaluation / integrated monitoring, evaluation and research plan covered research, evaluations and studies planned for 2017 and others carried over from 2016. As of December 2017, 79 per cent of the plan had been implemented. Challenges and conditions related to the complex environment of Afghanistan caused some delays.

Three evaluations in the areas of child protection and WASH were carried out in 2017. The evaluation of the Child Protection Action Network (CPAN) measured the extent to which UNICEF Afghanistan has made a difference in regard to raising awareness on and changing behaviours related to protecting boys and girls from all forms of violence, promoting their rights
to education, and supporting the case management capacity of the CPANs. Similarly, the evaluation of WinS covered behaviour change and the quality of sanitation and menstrual hygiene facilities supported by UNICEF Afghanistan.

Independent institutions were contracted to conduct the evaluations and deliver objective assessments. Evaluation reference groups consisting of representatives from the donor community, government ministries and implementing partners were involved throughout the processes. The evaluation recommendations, lessons learned and findings were shared with partners. Discussions are underway on how to address the evaluation recommendations and formal evaluation management responses will be finalized shortly.

In the meantime, UNICEF Afghanistan is contracting consultants for two major evaluations to be conducted of ongoing initiatives in 2018: a mid-term evaluation of the community-based education programme and a formative evaluation on girls’ nutrition. UNICEF Afghanistan is also establishing experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation frameworks for three new programmes in the areas of nutrition and adolescent development.

UNICEF Afghanistan did not undertake significant work on strengthening national evaluation capacity development during 2017.

Efficiency gains and cost savings
During 2017, there was an overall focus in operations on streamlining core business processes. Eighteen standard operating procedures were updated covering a wide range of processes, including supply planning, recruitment, information and communication technology (ICT), travel and invoice payments.

UNICEF Afghanistan continued to be involved in inter-agency working groups identify ways of increasing efficiency through collaboration. For example, UNICEF Afghanistan led two joint procurements (within the Joint Procurement Working Group) for ancillary services and phone services. Within UNICEF Afghanistan, a bank communication manager payment method was implemented for all vendors with a valid bank account, shortening the payment processing cycle by two working days.

Training sessions were presented to staff on topics such as invoice and payment processing, contracting for institutional services, performance management, ICT systems and processes. These trainings yielded some concrete results: after a workshop on invoice and payment processing workflows, payment processing improved, with 95 per cent of more than 10,000 payment requests submitted to finance processed within the time limits set in the revised workflows.

UNICEF Afghanistan’s business continuity alternate or recovery site was relocated from Dubai to New Delhi at a reduced cost (US$8,400 per year), with daily scheduled data replication from Kabul to UNICEF New Delhi’s data centre. Through switching Internet service providers, US$210,396 per year was saved on connectivity at all locations and allowed for daily backups.

Programme work in Afghanistan is heavily reliant on an effective vehicle and driver service. An automated vehicle requests system was established to ensure requests are coordinated between sections to increase planning efficiency and ensure vehicle availability.

To further support efficiency gains, UNICEF Afghanistan is exploring moving its premises in
Bamyan and Kandahar to co-locate with other United Nations offices on a cost-sharing basis. The moves are due to take place in the first quarter of 2018.

**Supply management**

Procurement levels stabilized in 2017 from the previous years’ marked increases. The local market is constrained with little manufacturing and a weak local supplier base. Insecurity affected the offshore market for service provision while closures of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan resulted in delays in the delivery of supplies. Alternate shipping routes through Iran were explored.

The supply plan was more accurate against actual procurement. Two periodic reviews were undertaken with programmes to incorporate and reflect changes. As a result, the revised supply plan was created. To ensure the quality of local supply delivery, third-party inspection services were contracted to conduct sample and pre-delivery inspections.

The first tender was issued using a new e-tendering platform. As the first UNICEF office to test the platform, this will make the bidding process more accessible to bidders outside Kabul and will make bid opening processes efficient.

UNICEF Afghanistan continued to actively engage in the United Nations Joint Procurement Working Group, with 17 long-term agreements out of UNICEF’s 78 long-term agreements being piggybacked on by other agencies. UNICEF Afghanistan leads joint procurements for ancillary workers and telecommunications.

To improve service contracting, training was conducted for 27 staff members in Kabul. Four training sessions on warehouse and inventory management were conducted for 155 people from partners across Afghanistan. Support from the Supply Division was received for supply chain strengthening in education, nutrition and health.

The decentralization of supplies to UNICEF-managed storage facilities in Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Jalalabad and Kandahar in addition to the main warehouses in Kabul ensured the availability of supplies for emergency response. Supplies worth over US$37million were dispatched.

Construction-related activities totalling US$1,393,079.90 were undertaken, including the ongoing finalization of the Central Highlands School Project, GAVI Alliance-supported-warehouse construction and rehabilitation work at a JUVENILE REHABILITATION CENTRE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total value of procurement performed by UNICEF Afghanistan, including on behalf of other country offices (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Procurement for own office</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programmatic supplies, including procurement services-funded</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Channelled via programme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operational supplies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Total procurement performed by UNICEF Afghanistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>41,287,855.50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total value of supplies and services received (i.e. irrespective of procurement location) (US$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programmatic supplies, including procurement services-funded</td>
<td><strong>74,707,545.23</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channelled via regular procurement services</td>
<td><strong>5,788,958.86</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channelled via GAVI Alliance</td>
<td><strong>20,897,058.95</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channelled via programme</td>
<td><strong>48,021,527.42</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational supplies</td>
<td><strong>1,652,383.77</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td><strong>26,718,605.27</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International freight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total supplies and services received</strong></td>
<td><strong>103,078,534.27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total value of supplies managed in UNICEF Afghanistan’s controlled warehouses (US$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total inventory in controlled warehouses</td>
<td><strong>11,401,385.60</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-positioned</td>
<td><strong>2,360,337.36</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other inventories</td>
<td><strong>9,041,048.24</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total supplies issued from controlled warehouses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-positioned</td>
<td><strong>4,771,642.82</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other inventories</td>
<td><strong>27,121,837.17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total supplies managed in UNICEF Afghanistan controlled warehouses</strong></td>
<td><strong>43,294,865.59</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Security for staff and premises
The year 2017 witnessed deterioration in the security situation in Afghanistan reflected by an increase in the number of security incidents.

An international consultant conducted blast assessments in 7 out of the 13 UNICEF offices in Afghanistan. Following recommendations from those assessments, security upgrades started in the Kabul, Jalalabad, Mazar and Herat zonal offices; these will be completed in 2018. The move of the UNICEF zonal offices in Kandahar and Bamyan to co-locate with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan is under way to ensure compliance with the Minimum Operating Security Standards.

The level of Minimum Operating Security Standards compliance is above 90 per cent for UNICEF premises; 100 per cent for the online staff tracking system; and 100 per cent for security cell and Security Management Team attendance.

The security section is well staffed and includes 1 international and 10 national staff members in the Kabul and field offices.

The senior security advisor from UNICEF Headquarters in New York and the regional security advisor undertook two support missions to Afghanistan, one jointly with the blast engineer.

Significant investment was made in capacity development in the area of security. Two colleagues passed the security analyst programme course; two colleagues received accreditation in emergency trauma instructor training; and one colleague was certified in a training development course. The training courses increased UNICEF Afghanistan’s capacity to conduct risk assessments and deliver security training courses in-country.

As a result, 64 staff members were trained on safe and secure approaches in field environments, 40 drivers were trained in armoured vehicle driving, 125 staff members were trained in basic first aid, 47 staff members were trained in woman’s security awareness and 84 staff members were trained in radio communication.

Several high-risk, low-profile missions took place in 2017; such missions are expected to increase in 2018. UNICEF Afghanistan also requested and received 2017 security funding.

Human resources
In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan undertook an extensive review of its staffing structure following the medium-term review.

A learning plan was developed and implemented at 85 per cent; four trainings were postponed to 2018, one was cancelled and one was partially completed. The plan primarily included group trainings rather than individual trainings to bring everyone to the same level. The focus was on results-based management (RBM) (86 staff; and 1 RBM refresher for the CMT) – necessary for the medium-term review – and on strengthening capacity for humanitarian action. A total of 359 staff members underwent a minimum of one training.

UNICEF Afghanistan volunteered to pilot the performance management culture change workshops. Twelve workshops were held, covering 240 staff members. The UNICEF Afghanistan representative was identified as a performance management champion for UNICEF, offering her insights in a Division of Human Resources video and introducing a feedback mechanism for country management team members and the practice of allowing staff
members to provide positive public feedback to colleagues during all-staff meetings.

In line with the performance management culture change, the office had six staff members on performance improvement plans in 2017, one of which resulted in separation of the staff member, two of which were successful and three of which are ongoing. UNICEF Afghanistan had three human resources visits in 2017, by the Division of Human Resources to support performance management workshops, the principal ethics advisor to facilitate ethics workshops, and the regional human resources chief.

UNICEF Afghanistan finalized its Global Staff Survey action plan through a widely consultative process. The plan focuses on three priorities: career development, personal empowerment and work-life balance.

**Effective use of information and communication technology**

UNICEF Afghanistan’s business continuity alternate or recovery site was relocated from Dubai to New Delhi, with daily scheduled data replication in readiness for essential staff evacuation from Afghanistan to India. Data from the zonal offices was replicated to Kabul on a daily basis via the Internet.

To improve efficiency and effectiveness and in line with the global ICT strategy, some work processes were automated on the SharePoint platform. These included activities related to individual learning requests and vehicle or transport booking, and an online security unit client satisfaction survey was automated in-house. An online training certificate repository was created on SharePoint to facilitate the monitoring of mandatory training courses in UNICEF Afghanistan. Technical guidance was provided to the programme sector at various stages of ICT for development projects including EduTrac and the EPI dashboard for the education and health sections, respectively.

Migration to digital high-frequency communication with real-time vehicle tracking improved the quality of radio communication and strengthened security measures for staff on road missions. With technical assistance from UNICEF ROSA and UNICEF Headquarters in New York, the extensive work carried out on the internal network resulted in improved network performance, more reliable Skype for Business conference sessions and increased productivity.

For disaster preparedness and business continuity purposes, the disaster recovery plan was tested in August, and 13 of the 14 ICT-related observations were closed; work continues on the last observation. To mitigate exposure to risks and ensure data integrity and high availability of systems, the latest operating systems and security updates were installed on servers and clients.

Over 4,100 service calls were treated locally by the Afghanistan ICT helpdesk. Sixty-seven learning events on telecommunications and standard UNICEF systems or applications were organized, with 964 participants were trained on new and existing technologies.

UNICEF Afghanistan has closely monitored and updated its activities to ensure full compliance with ICT security policies, including anti-virus measures and software version control.

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**
OUTCOME 1 Improved access and increased utilization of quality and equity-focused maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) and immunization services for mothers, newborns, children under 5 and adolescent girls in most deprived provinces and areas.

Analytical statement of progress
The health outcome stayed on track in 2017 through targeted technical support, advocacy and direct inputs to all health system building blocks. Priority was given to scaling-up proven high-impact interventions for ‘quick wins’ to save children’s lives, and building on previous investments in quality MNCH and EPI at the national and provincial levels.

For routine immunization and EPI, a multi-year plan was completed and UNICEF Afghanistan provided continuous support to the national priority primary healthcare programme, BPHS. More than 1.2 million children under 1 year of age were vaccinated (about 60 per cent) and around 6 million women of child-bearing age were able to continuously access immunization services through timely provision of vaccines and non-vaccine supplies. UNICEF Afghanistan supported MOPH on the quality maintenance of the EPI cold chain by training 232 staff members (supervisors, cold chain technicians, managers) on vaccine cold chain management across the country. Afghanistan also developed the plan for introducing rotavirus vaccine in 2018. In order to improve and maintain reliable vaccine supplies, UNICEF Afghanistan and MOPH undertook a forecasting and planning exercise for the procurement and distribution of vaccines and non-vaccine supplies, which resulted in having no stock-outs during the reporting period.

For MNCH, targeted approaches were used to improve coverage, especially for hard-to-reach groups. In 2017, almost 900,000 individuals in including women who were pregnant, children under 5 years of age and children in focus provinces benefited from life-saving interventions through 70 mobile teams.

Further, 343 health facilities received equipment and ambulances for the timely referral of women and children. Approximately 200,000 women who were pregnant, newborns and children under 5 benefited from UNICEF Afghanistan health programme’s emergency response nationally in 2017. Based on a supply assessment conducted by a UNICEF consultant specialized in neonatology, newborn equipment was procured and distributed to 343 health facilities in 10 provinces.

Capacity development of healthcare service providers continued. The knowledge and skills of 22,000 community health workers were enhanced on basic integrated management of childhood illness, an additional community midwifery education programme was developed in Paktika and a capacity-development plan and training was developed for 20 provincial health managers (for implementation in 2018).

For strategic development, data and advocacy, UNICEF Afghanistan contributed to developing MOPH’s reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health strategy, finalizing a costed comprehensive newborn care plan and contracting a consultant to develop an EPI communication plan. As a necessary step toward operationalizing MNCH interventions at the community level, UNICEF and MOPH finalized the maternal and child health handbook and developed a clear evaluation strategy.

UNICEF Afghanistan also more deliberately considered its health systems strengthening inputs and is investing more in information management and strategic topics for implementation research, including outreach services for mobile health teams and community health workers. UNICEF Afghanistan and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
supported Jhpiego to complete a national quality of care assessment for basic and comprehensive emergency obstetric and neonatal care. Data from this survey will be critical to identifying areas for improvement and system-wide issues related to maternal and neonatal readiness and quality of care at facilities. Multiple modalities for improving MNCH knowledge and practice and increasing the utilization of essential services (immunization, maternal health) and life-saving supplies (zinc-oral rehydration salts [ORS], chlorhexidine) were implemented or are being actively researched and planned for launch in 2018.

In addition, in 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan followed through on recommendations from Afghanistan’s high-level advocacy call to action event, ‘renewing the promise for maternal and child survival’, conducted last year by MOPH, UNICEF Afghanistan and USAID.

Some of the key strategic development results from 2017 include:
- Development and formal release of four reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health scorecards to improve accountability on key indicators down to the district level. These are recognized by MOPH as an important tool for viewing performance on specific indicators by location. UNICEF Afghanistan directly supported the Reproductive Health Directorate to organize review workshops at the provincial level, resulting in provincial action plans to address lagging areas.
- Expansion of the primary health care outreach strategy, including mobile health teams to include additional hard-to-reach areas and conflict-affected areas in Nuristan, Kunduz and Faryab.
- Development of a community health worker demand-driven approach with MOPH to improve immunization, antenatal care, PNC and ECD services in the hardest-to-reach areas covered by mobile health teams.
- Development of a strategy for scaling up Afghanistan’s first integrated, personally controlled maternal and child health handbook.
- Introduction of demand-side financing (i.e. conditional cash transfers) for institutional delivery through cash incentives for women (roughly for the cost of transport) and for community health workers.
- Improvement of the referral system through the expansion of mobile ambulances for maternal and child health emergencies and the demand-side financing approach.

**OUTPUT 1** Deprived provinces and other focus areas have skilled healthcare workers, especially women to provide quality and equitable MNCH services that meet minimum national standards.

**Analytical statement of progress**
In 2017, the UNICEF Afghanistan health programme continued the following priority actions: 1) promoting a community-based integrated MNCH outreach service package by introducing and scaling-up high-impact mother, infant and child survival initiatives, including information, education and communication campaigns aimed at underserved districts; 2) continuously supporting national priority programmes such as BPHS; and 3) increasing the coverage and utilization of facility-based reproductive, maternal and child health services.

Capacity development of healthcare service providers and administrators continued as a key priority of the MNCH programme in 2017. Provincial action plans are being implemented in 9 of the 10 focus provinces per 2017 planning. Knowledge and skills of 355 MNCH healthcare providers were enhanced on basic concepts of MNCH. Building on the community midwifery
approach, 30 female students were enrolled in community midwifery education in Paktika province (the previous two cohorts were in Kandahar province).

With more than one third of child deaths in Afghanistan caused by preventable illnesses (i.e. pneumonia and diarrhoea), UNICEF Afghanistan trained 22,300 community health workers on community case management of childhood illness, specifically on zinc and ORS co-packs to manage childhood diarrhoea. Among these community health workers, 2,021 in UNICEF focus provinces also received community-based newborn care training. Preparations for training of provincial health directors took place with a mission by the Indian Institute of Public Health. Pre-training needs assessment questionnaires were completed by 10 provincial health directors. These included areas of expertise and desired areas of learning. UNICEF Afghanistan continued to assess and monitor neonatal units at district hospitals established in focus provinces.

OUTPUT 2 Polio vaccines are effectively managed and communities are adequately mobilized towards interruption of wild poliovirus transmission.

Analytical statement of progress
Access to MNCH services in remote areas remains a concern, especially for locations two or more hours from a fixed health facility. UNICEF Afghanistan continued to support the provision of services for these populations through a total of 70 mobile health teams, an increase of 16 teams since 2016. Target groups benefitting from these services included more than 42,000 women who were pregnant, more than 17,000 newborns and more than 21,700 children under 5 years of age.

UNICEF Afghanistan also continued to bring attention to issues related to the newborn in 2017, including the rollout of the community newborn care package and support to neonatal care units and kangaroo mother care units at provincial and district hospitals in focus provinces. UNICEF Afghanistan procured and distributed newborn equipment to 123 facilities in 10 focus provinces, upgrading the neonatal care units in provincial and district hospitals.

Maternal and perinatal death review committees are being examined through a baseline assessment in five hospitals conducted by the Afghanistan Midwifery Association in coordination with MOPH and with technical support from UNICEF Afghanistan. These committees are now active and will provide their first three-month report on deaths occurring in their facilities in December 2017.

Based on successful implementation in four provinces, UNICEF Afghanistan and MOPH scaled up the use of Zaranj mini-ambulances through the procurement and distribution of an additional 450 mini-ambulances to improve referral to health facilities from remote locations.

UNICEF Afghanistan and MOPH are also piloting a demand-side financing or conditional cash transfer project to improve referral and institutional delivery in Afghanistan. A total of 3,643 post-partum women who gave birth in facilities received their cash incentive and 1,260 community health workers who referred or accompanied a woman who was pregnant also received cash incentives.

More than 1 million co-packs of zinc-ORS were distributed to community health workers to improve the availability of zinc-ORS at the community level for the treatment of childhood
diarrhoea. In 2017, more than 400,000 children under 5 years with diarrhoea were treated with zinc-ORS at the community level.

OUTPUT 3 Deprived provinces and other focus areas have qualified EPI service providers (including primary healthcare workers for outreach, especially females) for quality and equitable immunization services that meet minimum national standards.

**Analytical statement of progress**
In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan continued building capacity for quality and equitable immunization services that meet minimum national standards. An updated multi-year plan that considers equity and gender is in place.

Afghanistan has introduced five vaccines in the past 10 years and is planning to introduce additional vaccines in the near future (rotavirus, rubella).

Continuous and incremental capacity-building of vaccinators at the service delivery level has ensured that target children have been immunized by qualified health personnel. Efforts have been made to train and support more female vaccinators, however the numbers remain low and only 32 per cent of vaccinators are women. Advocacy continues to increase the number of female vaccinators. The terms of reference for the initial training emphasizes the enrolment of a majority female vaccinators. A request for proposal has been developed and disseminated for the initial training for 200 vaccinators. The remaining 200 vaccinators will be trained in a second round after the first round is completed.

Five EPI staff (MOPH and UNICEF Afghanistan) attended overseas workshops or meetings on immunization-related topics. A total of 26 CCTs and EPI supervisors in the southeast region were trained on vaccine management and maintenance and 126 EPI staff were trained on vaccine management across the country.

Increasing the use of refrigerator tags, 30 day data loggers and other advanced temperature monitoring instruments helped to ensure the potency of vaccines until they reach children.

OUTPUT 4 Health facilities in deprived provinces and other focus areas have cold chain, vaccine and adequate infrastructure to provide routine immunization services.

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF Afghanistan supported the EPI programme in Afghanistan by procuring cold chain equipment utilizing GAVI Alliance funds. All EPI service delivery points were provided with data loggers for more stringent temperature control. In addition, online ICE-3 data loggers were installed at national and regional levels for real-time temperature monitoring.

Of the 361 new EPI centres established by the end of 2017, 96 centres were established under the GAVI health system strengthening initiative, 145 centres were identified and covered under SEHAT; and 120 centres are in the process of being established. All new centres have been equipped with the required cold chain equipment.

A total of 103 cold chain technicians and 129 EPI supervisors were trained in repair/maintenance and vaccine management, respectively. Standard operating procedures for cold chain and vaccine management were developed and made available across all supply
chain levels. For the first time, solar-based technology was introduced in Afghanistan through the procurement of 220 solar direct drives.

UNICEF Afghanistan, in coordination with the Government and WHO, developed a detailed cold chain equipment optimization platform proposal for resetting the standard and capacity of cold chain management in the country. This US$9 million proposal was completed and submitted to GAVI Alliance for funding. Real-time temperature monitoring devices have been installed at all national and regional cold room facilities. Capacity-building of cold chain technicians for installation and maintenance is planned.

A detailed site assessment for 11 new EPI construction projects has been completed. The designs for PEMTs have been completed and are awaiting formal approval by NEPI/MOPH. The designs for the regional warehouse have been developed and submitted to NEPI/MOPH. An invitation for pre-qualified bids has gone out and the submission deadline was to be November 2017, and the contract for this work was to be raised by the end of December.

No stock-outs were reported in 2017. The online EPI dashboard was developed and deployed. Preparation is ongoing to introduce rotavirus vaccine.

**OUTPUT 5** National and subnational procurement and supply chain management system for pharmaceuticals, vaccines and equipment improved to manage stock-outs

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF Afghanistan developed a real-time vaccine stock and temperature management system to address the problems of mal-distribution of vaccines and supplies. The system will be launched in 2018. The main objectives of the system are to address the issues of stock-out or excessive number of vaccines at the EPI delivery points, replacing the push system (allocation) with a pull system (needs assessment) for vaccines and logistics at all levels. It will also ensure proper forecasting of vaccines and logistics and stringent temperature monitoring. A plan has been prepared to develop new cold chain rooms and warehouses at 21 sites. The agency for designing and site feasibility assessment has been hired and the construction will ensue shortly. The failure rate of cold chain equipment has been calculated as 15 per cent (0 per cent at the national level, 25 per cent at the regional level and 20 per cent at the provincial level). MOPH has yet to take over responsibility as consignee for shipments.

**OUTPUT 6** Individuals, families and communities, especially from deprived provinces and other focus areas have the relevant knowledge, demand key MNCH services and appropriate behaviours

**Analytical statement of progress**
In 2017, approximately 400,000 caregivers gained knowledge on childhood diarrhoea management through Salamaty zinc-ORS co-pack leaflets. Around 160,000 posters and 70,000 storybooks were distributed to educate families on how to use zinc and ORS. Radio and television spots were aired across the country 51,000 times in Dari and Pashto languages through a four-month campaign to increase household awareness on the utilization of zinc and ORS. A total of 84 journalists and media representatives were oriented on zinc and ORS to support awareness-raising and increase knowledge on how to use Salamaty through radio, television and other media. Assessments will be conducted by zonal communication officers to determine the effectiveness of media orientation. One million copies of Jamila’s storybook were
printed for distribution in schools to increase knowledge on the utilization of zinc and ORS.

The national programme to train community health workers was initiated, with 22,300 community health workers trained to increase their interpersonal communication, counselling and social mobilization skills to effectively treat childhood diarrhoea with zinc and ORS, using chlorhexidine gel and applying the community newborn guideline.

To increase awareness on chlorhexidine gel usage, radio and television spots were aired (7,600 times in Dari and Pashto) and print materials were distributed in 10 priority provinces.

Awareness was raised on routine immunization by media campaigns and broadcasting of radio and television spots (1,404 times through 20 television and 40 radio channels) throughout the country. Approximately 80,000 posters, 500,000 leaflets and 2,000 banners were distributed to encourage community members to seek vaccines at health facilities and during outreach.

In order to influence and empower households to adopt healthy childcare practices, the Golden Villages Initiative shows promising evidence of motivating health workers, informal volunteers and communities to mobilize entire villages to ensure that every child is fully immunized and all deliveries are attended by skilled birth attendants, along with other intersectoral indicators. By the end of November 2017, 118 of the 129 villages had been declared to have 100 per cent of children under 1 year fully immunized and 100 per cent institutional deliveries with active mothers’ groups, and with other indicators achieved, were declared Golden Villages.

A knowledge, attitudes and practices study is planned, contracted and initiated to fully understand the perceptions and normative practices of caregivers and communities in relation to immunization. The study will help develop an evidence-based social and behavioural change strategy and action plan for immunization. Data on other family practices will be obtained from the Afghanistan Health Survey.

MOPH was technically supported to finalize the design, printing and distribution of the mother and child handbook, which contains consolidated messages and home-based records in one convenient package and is being piloted in two districts for the first time in Afghanistan.

A concept and plan were developed to send short message service and IVR messages to community health workers. Twenty-one key messages were developed, an information leaflet was designed and printed and contact details of community health workers were collected. The plan is to commence the IVR messages in December 2017 with MOPH.

**OUTPUT 7** National capacity is increased for polio vaccine management and social mobilization to maintain sustained interruption of wild poliovirus transmission.

**Analytical statement of progress**

There has been progress in regard to Afghanistan’s polio eradication efforts, with improved population immunity and a reduction in the number of polio cases to 11. In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan supported 17 polio campaigns, including case response campaigns, working closely with the Government, WHO, and Emergency Operations Centre partners. As part of the Emergency Operations Centre, UNICEF Afghanistan led the communication strategy with a focus on enhancing demand and acceptance of polio vaccinations in high-risk areas.
The communication strategy was operationalized with the roll-out of full-time ICN in accessible high-risk districts and alternative approaches in other districts, including the formation of cluster-level refusal-resolution committees to negotiate and convert refusals. In total, 7,500 mobilizers were deployed across 45 of 50 very high-risk districts; 37 per cent of these mobilizers were women. Mobilizers registered eligible children, tracked vaccination status, referred unvaccinated children to routine immunization and recovered missed children, while continuously promoting health-seeking practices. In ICN districts, mobilizers recovered 70 per cent of missed children due to absence and 33 per cent of missed children due to refusals. New social research conducted with Harvard University suggested an improvement in attitudes toward vaccination, with more caregivers intending to accept polio vaccination every time (increasing from 77 per cent in 2014 to 88 per cent in 2017). Awareness of campaigns in ICN districts was maintained at 80 per cent, compared with 45 per cent in non-ICN districts.

Advocacy partnerships were further consolidated, with several hundred religious influencers and doctors now supporting polio vaccination. Partnerships with the Afghan Cricket Board and Football Federation facilitated polio vaccination advocacy at key national sporting tournaments, reaching 16 million Afghans. Partnerships with BBC Media Action and Pact Communications expanded the advocacy reach to some 4 million radio listeners with polio-health messages integrated into weekly entertainment-education radio programmes. New partnerships with the painters group Art Lords and circus group Mini Mobile Circus for Children enabled polio messages to be integrated into local painting arts and entertainment events. Orientation of local journalists has maintained ‘earned media’ with more than 300 polio stories every month, in addition to paid media campaigns.

Campaign data shows progress on reducing missed children: the proportion of missed children decreased from 6.8 per cent in 2016 to 4.2 per cent in 2017, and in ICN districts, decreased from 7.6 per cent to 4 per cent over the same period. The percentage of children missed due to refusals decreased from 0.3 per cent in 2016 to 0.27 per cent in 2017, and in ICN districts, from 0.44 per cent to 0.36 per cent over the same period. The proportion of lots with more than 80 per cent coverage through lot quality assurance sampling increased from 73 per cent in 2016 to 90 per cent in 2017, indicating progress on improving campaign quality.

UNICEF Afghanistan assisted the Government to procure and distribute 108.5 million doses of oral poliovirus vaccine and 1.5 million inactivated poliovirus vaccine doses for campaigns, case responses and mobile and returnee populations. UNICEF Afghanistan strengthened national capacity for vaccine management and monitoring of cold chain practices.

The ICN accountability framework was implemented with real-time performance monitoring by internal and external monitors. Monitoring information was used to take actions to address performance issues. UNICEF Afghanistan also supported the Emergency Operations Centre in strengthening remote monitoring through the establishment of a call centre and expanding telephonic surveys.

OUTPUT 8 National and provincial implementing partners have the capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate data relevant for development and monitoring of the health and immunization programme.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Afghanistan continued to work closely with MOPH and other partners on improving the quality and use of data, including routine data, surveys and studies.
UNICEF Afghanistan supports the production of reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health scorecards and encouraged MOPH to re-examine corrective factors based on newly available evidence. Several technical working groups were held with this aim. In addition, workshops were held at the provincial level to disseminate the latest scorecards and provincial profiles (with scorecard and survey data) and encourage active use of the evidence.

UNICEF Afghanistan has been involved in technical working groups led by MOPH and KIT related to the upcoming Afghanistan Health Survey 2017, with technical inputs into the immunization questions (given that WHO is not conducting an EPI coverage evaluation survey in 2017 as originally planned) and for the verbal autopsy module to ensure both neonatal deaths and stillbirths are accurately captured.

UNICEF Afghanistan also participated in technical meetings related to the Afghanistan Demographic and Health Survey 2015 findings, particularly related to the high maternal mortality rate and liaised with colleagues from UNICEF Headquarters in New York who specialize in this area for support in interpretation and messaging.

UNICEF Afghanistan continued working on specific studies to generate evidence in new areas for the country, specifically: finalizing the demand-side financing baseline and planning for the end-line; finalizing review of the quality of emergency obstetric and neonatal care key findings assessment conducted by Jhpiego; hiring an agency for the national EPI knowledge, attitudes and practice survey; initiating the MNCH handbook process evaluation; initiating maternal and perinatal death review in five health facilities and verbal autopsy in Bamyan province; finalizing the community health worker evaluation project publication; and developing a new mobile health teams study.

One peer reviewed article was published (‘Lives saved by scaling up pneumonia and diarrhoea interventions’); two have been accepted for publication (‘Landscape analysis on newborn health’; ‘Advocacy commentary for returnees’); and other manuscripts are in the pipeline, each with co-authors from MOPH and other partners.

**OUTPUT 9** Increased country capacity for evidence-based policy dialogue and advocacy with special focus on improving coverage and quality of MNCH and immunization.

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF Afghanistan supported MOPH and worked with USAID to hold a maternal and newborn summit, which invited representatives from the provincial health departments and key stakeholders to formulate provincial action plans based on newly available evidence and data.

In the annual Afghanistan Health Results Conference held in May 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan and partners shared evidence through seven presentations, including on mobile health teams, Zaranj mini-ambulances, quality of emergency obstetric and neonatal care, vaccine wastage, community-based maternal and newborn health, demand-side financing baseline and the quality of integrated management of childhood illness at facilities.

UNICEF Afghanistan is planning with MOPH, Jhpiego and USAID for widespread dissemination of the quality of emergency obstetric and neonatal care assessment, the largest and most in-depth assessment of health facility readiness and capacities to deal with obstetric emergencies.
UNICEF Afghanistan also routinely reviewed progress on recommendations from the call to action for maternal and child survival (2015) with partners. UNICEF Afghanistan’s specific actions in 2017 included: 1) providing technical support on the development of the new reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health strategy (2017–2021); 2) supporting a symposium on maternal and newborn care and a keynote UNICEF presentation on newborn mortality; 3) facilitating a community-based newborn care consultative workshop including a position paper and publishing a report on a UNICEF-Save the Children pilot project on community-based maternal and newborn care; 4) holding five regional dissemination workshops on the reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health scorecards with United Nations agencies, BPHS implementers and Hemayat project; 5) celebrating national maternal, newborn and child health days, including Prematurity Day, Community Health Workers Day and Pneumonia Day; 6) rolling-out chlorhexidine and zinc-ORS co-packs in the BPHS package; 7) finalizing the first draft of the national MNCH handbook for caregivers and developing the evaluation protocol; 8) providing technical support for BPHS and EPHS contract evaluation for SEHAT NGOs; and 9) providing technical support for the proposal evaluation for the SEHAT NGOs’ contract extension.

For South-South collaboration, UNICEF Afghanistan attended the senior technical advisors meeting in Delhi, India; the MNCH handbook evaluation meeting in Delhi, India; with MOPH, a regional meeting in Jordan for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health managers; the ROSA regional network meeting; and the health system strengthening training in Melbourne, Australia.

UNICEF Afghanistan continued to collaborate with professional associations, including the Afghanistan Midwives Association, the Afghanistan Gynaecology and Obstetrics Association and the Afghanistan National Public Health Institute, supporting the latter to produce the scientific public health journal (Ghazanfar Medical Journal) and a healthcare provider magazine distributed nationally.

**OUTPUT 10** Increased national and subnational capacity for resilience plan and to deliver health services for preventing excess mortality among children and women in humanitarian situations.

**Analytical statement of progress**
A total of 77,000 emergency newborn kits, including warm clothes, family kits, long-lasting insecticidal nets, clean delivery kits and emergency booklets were distributed in 2017. Newborn kits protect newborns from hypothermia, which is one of the main causes of newborn mortality. These were mainly targeted to pregnant women and newborns among the returnees from Pakistan and Iran, as well as conflict-affected populations in high-risk areas. As of the end of September 2017, 117,000 children 6–59 months of age received measles vaccination during emergencies. Among these children, 32,047 were vaccinated against measles in response to 153 outbreaks in 2017.

**OUTCOME 2** Improved and equitable use of safe drinking water, sanitation and healthy environments and improved hygiene practices in deprived provinces and vulnerable areas.

**Analytical Statement of Progress**
The year 2017 was productive for the WASH programme. At the beginning of the year, activities worth US$16 million were planned, while the programme only received 76 per cent of its funding
requirement. At the end of 2017, total programme expenditures exceeded US$18 million – 13 per cent higher than planned and 48 per cent higher than funded at the start of the year. In addition the MRRD’s Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (Ru-WatSIP) was allocated US$20 million by the Ministry of Finance, US$19 million for rural water supply programming and US$1 million for CLTS mobilization activities.

Under the Government’s performance-based budgeting policy, Ru-WatSIP received an additional US$6 million later in the year because it spent its funding in a timely manner. UNICEF Afghanistan provided support to Ru-WatSIP to fund key technical staff positions both in Kabul and in selected provinces. The technical and strategic support that UNICEF staff provided greatly contributed to the enhanced implementation capacity and performance of Ru-WatSIP. Based on the latest household survey estimates, the WHO-UNICEF joint monitoring programme for water supply and sanitation continued to see steady growth in the proportion of people in rural areas with access to drinking water and ending open defecation. The latest available data show a rural drinking water coverage for 2015 of 59.4 per cent, up from 54.3 per cent in 2013 and a decline in rural open defecation prevalence from 20.3 per cent in 2013 to 18.5 per cent in 2015.

In 2017, 298,800 people from 172 communities across 21 provinces gained access to an improved drinking water source due to direct support provided by UNICEF Afghanistan. More than three-quarters of the beneficiaries (226,200 people) gained access to either a solar-powered or gravity-fed piped system. This is a major shift towards more sustainable water supply systems, compared with 2014, when over 90 per cent of the UNICEF-supported population were provided with access to boreholes with hand pumps.

In 2017, the Afghanistan CLTS Movement was created, comprising the MRRD, MOPH, UNICEF Afghanistan and 11 NGO partners. Momentum, carefully built up in 2016, resulted in 657 communities being declared ODF by the end of September, benefitting some 272,000 people who gained access to an improved sanitation facility – almost three times as many as in 2016. A total of 9,688 families constructed new toilets, and 29,240 families upgraded to improved toilets. The first ODF district was celebrated early November in Nili, Daikundi. Another four districts are ready for certification: Balkhab in Sar-i-Pul, Bamyan Centre in Bamyan and Ghash and Kishim districts in Badakhshan.

A strategy was drafted and discussed to expand CLTS activities in 2018 through the facilitating partners of the Citizen’s Charter Afghanistan Programme, which is implemented by the MRRD. Over the coming three years, partners of the Afghanistan CLTS Movement will likely achieve ODF status for half the districts initially covered by the Citizen’s Charter Afghanistan Programme. For the other half of the districts (about 70), Afghanistan CLTS Movement partners will collaborate with the Citizen’s Charter Afghanistan Programme on training the facilitating partner social mobilizers and triggering communities for follow-up by the facilitating partners.

Formative research on menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in Afghanistan led to the development of a guideline for teachers on MHM to be accompanied by a graphic novel-format storybook for adolescents and a speaking book on MHM, which will assist women and girls with low literacy to understand and improve their MHM practices. The guideline also incorporates the speech of a high-level Islamic scholar and a note for men to enable male champions to contribute to destigmatizing menstruation. The MHM package is available in Dari and Pashto. The first Girls’ Hygiene Day in Afghanistan was celebrated in the presence of the First Lady to draw attention to the importance of menstrual hygiene for adolescent girls.
A total of 177,500 students benefited from school water supply and gender-separated sanitation facilities; 108 new toilets were constructed; 598 toilets were rehabilitated; and 61 schools were provided with drinking water systems.

An evaluation of the 2008–2014 WinS programme was completed in 2017 and a new WinS strategy for inclusion in the new school health policy has been drafted based on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation.

UNICEF Afghanistan contributed to 31 per cent of the WASH cluster response by reaching 226,024 people in need of humanitarian WASH assistance, predominantly through three of its programme cooperation agreement (PCA) partners, who together responded to 29 emergencies. In total, UNICEF Afghanistan responded to 47 emergency events with the following results: 140,569 affected people had access to safe water; 56,880 people benefited from gender-separated sanitation facilities and 156,506 people benefited from the provision of a dedicated place for handwashing with soap and water.

**OUTPUT 1** Strengthened capacity of government departments at all levels to cost-effectively deliver sustainable drinking water and sanitation services.

**Analytical statement of progress**

MRRD’s Ru-WatSIP recruited more than 20 National Technical Assistance staff with funding from the Ministry of Finance to increase the assessment and design capacity of both the MRRD and provincial rural rehabilitation and development departments (PRRDs). This resulted in an unprecedented surge in activities. Ru-WatSip’s Ministry of Finance’s performance-based budget was increased from US$17 million in 2016 to US$26 million in 2017 – which is a testament to the increased capacity of Ru-WatSIP at both the national and subnational levels.

UNICEF Afghanistan supported the training of 47 national and subnational Ru-WatSIP engineers in the design of gravity-fed and solar-powered piped schemes and the provision of equipment for assessments (the odolites and hand-held GPS). Within two years, the MRRD’s water supply programming shifted its focus from mainly constructing boreholes with hand pumps to predominantly constructing gravity-fed and solar-powered piped systems. Forty-eight PRRD staff in 17 provinces were trained in using the field-based water quality test kits to test for faecal contamination of drinking water and arsenic prior to commissioning and at hand-over of the water supply systems to the communities. An assessment was conducted of MOPH’s four water quality testing laboratories, with recommendations on how to get them to operate sustainably. The recommendations are under consideration by MOPH.

The Ministry of Finance budget for sanitation was doubled from US$500,000 in 2016 to US$1 million in 2017, and the number of CLTS teams operating under the MRRD expanded from 6 to 10. Six provincial sanitation coordinators were recruited for the MRRD. An ODF-sustainability study was completed and found that 80 per cent of the communities declared ODF before 2014 were still ODF two to five years later.

A new Management Information System manager was recruited and the Management Information System was populated with all Ru-WatSIP data on both water supply and sanitation and the water supply data from the National Solidarity Programme, which ran from 2006–2016. RuWatSIP issues a monthly report and a press release with its achievements during the past month. Under the water and sanitation sector group, preliminary baseline estimates for SDG 6.1 and 6.2 were produced.
The number of National Technical Assistance staff at MOE for WinS was expanded with five regional teams – consisting of one health advisor and one infrastructural services advisors. MOE, however, showed limited ownership of the WinS programme.

The first Afghan celebration of Girls’ Hygiene Day was successfully held in the presence of the First Lady and drew national attention to the importance of addressing menstrual hygiene management, particularly in schools.

**OUTPUT 2** Increased access to and use of improved drinking water supply and sanitation facilities by deprived and vulnerable populations.

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, 298,800 people (150,513 women and 148,287 men) from 172 communities across 21 provinces gained access to an improved drinking water source as a result of UNICEF Afghanistan’s direct support to MRRD’s Ru-WatSIP.

Almost 76 per cent of the beneficiaries (226,200) gained access to either solar-powered or gravity-fed piped systems, which provide a higher level of more sustainable services to communities than the traditional boreholes with hand pumps.

The oversight and outreach capacity of the MRRD and the PRRDs was improved with the signature of an innovative PCA with the NGO DACAAR. In September, DACAAR began to provide technical supervisory services and capacity development to MRRD and PRRD staff, CDC members and implementing partners to increase the quality of the construction works and the future sustainability of the water systems.

Under the water and sanitation sector group, the community-based water safety plan approach was developed and introduced in 20 villages of Kama district, Nangarhar, through the CLTS mobilization teams run by DACAAR.

In 2017, the CLTS programme gained momentum and 272,000 people gained access to an improved sanitation facility – almost three times as many as in 2016. CLTS mobilization teams triggered 1,345 deprived communities, and up to the end of September 2017, 657 communities were certified as ODF. Almost 9,700 families constructed a new toilet, whereas more than 29,000 families upgraded to an improved toilet. The first ODF district was celebrated in early November in the district of Nili, Daikundi. Another four other districts are ready for certification: Balkhab in Sar-i-Pul, Bamyan Centre in Bamyan and Ghash and Kishim districts in Badakhshan.

UNICEF Afghanistan currently supports 36 CLTS mobilization teams with NGO partners (24), the MRRD (6) and MOPH (6). Together they are active in 21 districts.

A total of 357 field staff of the four NGO partners of FHI360 working on CLTS under the initiative for hygiene sanitation and nutrition participated in a six-day CLTS training by the NGO SSDA under a PCA with UNICEF Afghanistan. These 71 CLTS teams also benefited from the coaching and mentoring services provided by SSDA. All staff participated in two more SSDA trainings on hygiene behavioural change (16 x 3 days) and ODF verification and certification (16 x 1 day).
Talks are underway with the MRRD and a strategy has been drafted to expand CLTS activities in 2018 through the facilitating partners of the Citizen’s Charter Afghanistan Programme, which is implemented by the MRRD.

**OUTPUT 3** Deprived and vulnerable populations demonstrate improved hygiene behaviour (washing hands at critical times, safe disposal of child faeces, safe handling and storage of food and use of smokeless stoves). UNICEF supported programmes (polio, nutrition and education).

**Analytical statement of progress**

Behavioural change interventions aiming to increase handwashing with soap and water at critical times is an integral part of the CLTS programme. Success is verified by the presence of a handwashing station with water and soap present in the vicinity of all latrines in ODF-certified communities. Globally this is the best possible indicator that handwashing, especially after using the toilet, takes place. The most commonly used handwashing device is a 10 litre plastic cooking oil jerrycan with a plastic tap screwed in at the bottom. During verification missions, one observes well-used handwashing stations in all households of ODF communities. Use can often be verified by the signs of soap use and run-off water from the place of handwashing.

The community dialogue programme run by MOPH in four districts incorporated CLTS mobilization. The results are very encouraging and MOPH has since declared 62 communities ODF.

Under the polio programme media outreach, UNICEF Afghanistan facilitated WASH specialists from different ministries and partners to engage with the BBC Radio broadcasts highlighting WASH-related issues. Every month, WASH specialists also spoke on Voice of America in both Dari and Pashtu.

Activities on safe disposal of child faeces, safe handling of food and smokeless stoves were not pursued.

**OUTPUT 4** Impact on child health, nutritional status and education is optimized through increased convergence of WASH programming within WASH and in other UNICEF supported programmes (polio, nutrition and education).

**Analytical statement of progress**

The activities carried out under this output pertain to the WASH in healthcare facilities programme undertaken by the MOPH Health Promotion Department. This programme is still under development. Close collaboration is maintained with a group of international professionals working with WHO, UNICEF Afghanistan, WaterAid and other NGOs on the formulation of WASH in healthcare facilities tools and approaches.

MOPH staff working on the programme attended a WHO-UNICEF International Learning Exchange (ILE) on WASH in healthcare facilities in Nepal in March of 2017. Following the ILE, guidelines have been developed for ‘triggering’ health facility staff on the assessment of the hygiene status of their health facilities following the ‘triggering’ success of the CLTS programme. A WASH facilities assessment form for healthcare facilities was developed, as was a WASH facilities improvement form.
Ten BPHS supervisors and four provincial health promotion staff of Badakhshan, Badghis, Bamyan, Kabul, Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces participated in the ‘Hygiene in Health Centre Programme (HHCP) Orientation/Capacity Building for BPHS Implementers’ workshop in July. Following this workshop, staff of nine health facilities in Bamyan, Kabul and Nangarhar were ‘triggered’ and WASH facility assessment and improvement forms were completed for each of the centres. Results on the actual improvements made based on the assessments are not yet available.

A questionnaire to assess knowledge and perceptions of healthcare providers on hand hygiene practices was developed in part to obtain information from healthcare providers, but also as a training tool to remind healthcare providers of the importance of hand hygiene in healthcare facilities. A set of criteria for water supply, sanitation and hygiene for model health centres has been developed based on the WHO-UNICEF JMP core questions for monitoring of WASH in healthcare facilities.

All materials have been translated into local languages and are being tried and tested for moving the programme to scale.

**OUTPUT 5** Increased access for gender-sensitive and integrated WASH services in schools and health centres.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Formative research on menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in Afghanistan led to the development of a guideline for teachers on MHM to be accompanied by a graphic novel-format storybook for adolescents and a speaking book on MHM, which will assist women and girls with low literacy to understand and improve their MHM practices. The guideline also incorporates the speech of a high-level Islamic scholar and a note for men to enable male champions to contribute to destigmatizing menstruation. The MHM package is available in Dari and Pashto.

Inputs into the new family life education curriculum were successful in introducing MHM at a much earlier age (from Grades 5 to 8), which is essential to preparing girls for their menstruation.

The first Girls’ Hygiene Day in Afghanistan was celebrated in the presence of the First Lady, drawing attention to the importance of menstrual hygiene for adolescent girls. At the event, a leading reformist mullah discussed how menstruation should be viewed in Afghan society.

Five consultative meetings or trainings on MHM were conducted for a total of 1,057 female teachers in Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul, Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif. Teachers subsequently held sessions in their schools and served as focal points for girls who have questions about menstruation.

A total of 177,500 students benefited from school water supply and gender-separated sanitation facilities; 108 new toilets were constructed; 598 toilets were rehabilitated; and 61 schools were provided with drinking water systems.

An evaluation of the 2008–2014 WinS programme was completed in 2017 with the following (selected) conclusions:
Relevance
Although WinS was a good response by UNICEF Afghanistan to the Government’s joint call for action, the hurried start affected preparations and course correction based on feedback was insufficient. There was a misunderstanding of UNICEF Afghanistan’s implementation role: MOE felt UNICEF Afghanistan should have provided more support staff, and UNICEF Afghanistan felt MOE did not adequately own WinS. There was little coordination between the UNICEF Afghanistan education and WASH sections, and within the MOE section responsible for hardware and software components of WinS.

Effectiveness
Contracting larger construction companies may have provided economies of scale and infrastructure better adapted to local contexts. Better planning and design, based on lessons learned, is needed for effective WASH facilities. The ineffective hygiene education and MHM trainings need to be integrated into the standard school curriculum and the teacher training curriculum.

Efficiency
Contracting procedures should be reviewed and revised to tackle reasons for delays and cost escalation (including over-design and disputes with contractors), include operations and maintenance and attract larger companies (for economies of scale).

Sustainability
Effective operations and maintenance arrangements (e.g., trained personnel with tools, protocols and adequate operations and maintenance budgets for preventive maintenance and repairs) for all schools are vital to sustain WinS infrastructure. Innovative planning is needed to provide operations and maintenance budgets (since local stakeholders cannot contribute more) to maintain the newly created and expensive WASH facilities.

OUTPUT 6
Increased national and subnational capacity for resilience plans and delivery of services to children and women for protected and reliable access to sufficient safe WASH facilities in humanitarian situations.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, the humanitarian WASH needs of the affected population were met in an effective and timely manner in most of the cases. In 2017, 718,093 people in need of humanitarian assistance (351,866 women and 366,227 men) were collectively reached by 25 active cluster partners with life-saving interventions across 28 provinces in Afghanistan, against the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) target of 880,000 people (81 per cent achievement). Among the assisted, 219,131 (30 per cent) were Afghan returnees from Pakistan and Iran, 177,567 (25 per cent) were conflict-induced internally displaced persons and 107,496 (15 per cent) were from communities hosting internally displaced persons and returnees. UNICEF Afghanistan directly contributed to reaching 226,024 people with assistance (31 per cent of the cluster achievements).

UNICEF Afghanistan responded to 47 emergency events with the following results: 140,569 affected people gained access to safe water (70 per cent of the 200,000 targeted); 56,880 people benefited from gender-separated sanitation facilities (57 per cent of the 100,000 targeted) and 156,506 people benefited from the provision of handwashing places with soap and water (78 per cent of the 200,000 targeted). These results were the outcome of close partnerships with three emergency PCA partners (DACAAR, CoAR and IMC) and several
PRRDs. Twenty-eight projects were implemented with durable solutions for populations likely to remain in their place of settlement for a longer period, thus strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus.

The new per-capita, cost-based standby PCA was instrumental in providing a rapid response to populations in need. Modelled after the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations Emergency Response Mechanism, the PCA allowed NGO partners to provide a response within two to five days after the identification of the needs. Previously, this could take up to several weeks due to proposal preparation and PCA approvals. The three PCA partners responded to a total of 29 emergencies (two thirds of the responses). Two additional partners signed a similar PCA in late 2017, one for implementing a Central Emergency Response Fund-funded response.

The WASH cluster is well managed with some 30 partners attending the regular meetings. The cluster successfully compiled the new WASH-in-emergencies guidelines for Afghanistan and submitted them to MRRD for final review and endorsement. Seventeen provinces have developed their contingency plans through three regional workshops where 116 WASH partner staff also benefited from enhanced knowledge on emergency preparedness and response. The limited capacity of the PRRDs in subnational level coordination, needs assessment and timely response will be areas of focus in 2018.

OUTCOME 3 Improved coverage and increased utilization of quality and equitable nutrition services for under 5 children, adolescent girls and mothers in most deprived provinces and areas.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Afghanistan focused on a mid-term review (MTR) where the nutrition programme was streamlined under four outputs: 1) improved infant and young child feeding (IYCF); 2) adolescent girls and maternal nutrition; 3) SAM treatment; and 4) creating an enabling environment and strengthening systems to implement the programmes.

In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan supported the development and strengthening of nutrition-related policies, strategies, programme planning, monitoring, data collection, analysis and dissemination systems. UNICEF Afghanistan also supported the Government to strengthen SAM services through the provision of essential supplies, equipment and policy and strategy support as well as capacity-building. A total of 1,028 health facilities in the 34 provinces are providing SAM services. Nearly 30 per cent (170,760) of the national numbers of children with severe acute malnutrition were treated by October 2017, of whom 145,146 children (79,830 girls and 65,315 boys) were cured, thus maintaining Sphere standards. Although UNICEF Afghanistan is currently the main provider of all nutrition commodities and equipment for SAM treatment, on-budget support funds have been leveraged for partial funding of ready-to-use therapeutic food. UNICEF’s procurement services will be used to procure ready-to-use therapeutic food. A bottleneck analysis was conducted based on the previous six months’ data (January to June) 2017 observed significant improvement in SAM services as compared with 2015. Geographical access improved from 38 to 41 per cent and the quality (effective coverage) improved from 25 to 47 per cent.

In order to improve infant and young child nutrition services, UNICEF Afghanistan advocated with SEHAT and partners to hire health facility nutrition counsellors. The counsellors have been hired in 18 provinces for all health facilities. UNICEF Afghanistan also provided technical
support during capacity-building of nutrition counsellors to ensure the counsellors have competencies required for IYCF counselling. In terms of micronutrient and vitamin A supplementation, 8,544,672 children aged 6–59 months received one dose of vitamin A supplementation (98 per cent) in the first round of the National Immunization Day 2017 and 8,266,742 (95 per cent) children 6–59 months received one dose of vitamin A in the second round in 2017 for polio.

To address anaemia, a key challenge for adolescent girls and women of reproductive age, the weekly iron folic acid (IFA) supplementation programme for school-going girls continued in 33 provinces. Presently 1,584,585 adolescent girls out of 1,631,359 targeted (97 per cent) received IFA tablets and key nutrition messages. Nutrition cluster partners participated in nutrition programme coordination committees and technical working groups, which provided a holistic approach to programming in both emergency and non-emergency situations.

In addition, UNICEF Afghanistan supported humanitarian action in response to natural disasters and the ongoing conflict, in coordination with the nutrition cluster, which is also represented in inter-cluster coordination, the Humanitarian Country Team and donor meetings. The response for returnees from Pakistan included a standard package of nutrition interventions. A total of 20,399 girls, 20,305 boys and 8,268 women benefited from this.

Efforts were made to improve planning, monitoring and accountability in the National Nutrition Surveillance system, including performance indicators that feed into all decision-making processes for national nutrition coordination activities. National capacities for nutrition interventions are weak, poorly coordinated and limited. The major achievement has been to bring nutrition to the highest platform in the country by signing and launching the AFSeN Agenda, a multisectoral framework aimed at improving coordination, increasing focus, leveraging resources, improving planning and monitoring and supporting SDG2 targets. The framework includes 11 ministries, 4 United Nations agencies, donors, civil society partners and the business community under the leadership of the chief executive. UNICEF Afghanistan also supported the country to join the global SUN movement.

Nutrition is a low priority among some partners due to low capacities and understanding, which in turn affects the quality of SAM services. Afghanistan is still considered an emergency country, with short-term funding that is not sustainable for development activities. The country continues to suffer from a high undernutrition burden, leading to both stunting and wasting. However, the national programmes focus more on facility-based treatment. There is a need for a paradigm shift to focus on the following: prevention, both at facility, community and household levels; addressing stunting issues through behaviour change communication; and focusing on community-based programming to improve positive behaviours at the household level.

In 2017, a standardized and comprehensive community nutrition package, which includes IYCF, hygiene and good nutrition practices for maternal and child nutrition, with a focus on a child’s first 1,000 days was finalized and rolled out in two provinces. This will support improving nutrition behaviours at household level and will be key to preventing stunting. Activity was slow because it was challenging to transform an emergency treatment programme into a more sustainable community-based approach to the prevention of malnutrition.

**OUTPUT 1** Service providers (including community networks and community health workers) in deprived provinces and other focus areas have adequate equipment, supplies and infrastructure
to deliver essential information, counselling, support services to children under 5, adolescent girls and mothers.

**Analytical statement of progress**
The quality of nutrition service delivery has improved since UNICEF Afghanistan supported the hiring of six national technical assistants (NTAs) in MOPH and one in MOE. The improvement is primarily due to the coordination of the NTA’s of five well-functioning technical working groups.

In total, 1,584,585 (97 per cent) girls received IFA tablets in 33 provinces through the Weekly Iron Supplementation (WIFS) programme, which will potentially reduce their chances of being anaemic. Contributing factors included the capacity building of 9,806 teachers (46 per cent women), 7,322 SMS members (12 per cent women), 3,251 religious leaders and 1,395 academic supervisors (4 per cent). However, insecurity in some provinces led to school closures and affected training, data collection, reporting, compliance and monitoring. Another bottleneck was the lack of community awareness and misconceptions about the importance of IFA for adolescent girls. A national media campaign is being established to increase awareness of the WIFS programme through mass media. Due to resource constraints, out-of-school adolescent girls were not targeted in 2017. UNICEF Afghanistan is also working with the Government and partners to improve the quality of the WIFS programme through performance-based intensive, supportive supervision, refresher training and developing a national database at MOE. Lastly, an assessment is currently ongoing to document increases in haemoglobin levels among adolescent girls receiving IFA and their knowledge related to WIFS and programme efficacy.

In addition, 170,760 children aged 0-59 months – boys 46 per cent and girls 54 per cent – with SAM had received life-saving nutrition services by December 2017. UNICEF Afghanistan expects to reach the target of 236,000 children with severe acute malnutrition by the end of December 2017. Overall, 165,315 children with severe acute malnutrition (86 per cent) were cured, 23,372 (12 per cent) defaulted and 1,351 (0.7 per cent) died, thus maintaining the Sphere standards. Key contributing factors to this success were the provision of timely life-saving supplies and equipment, technical support in key strategic documents and supportive supervision, as well as training of health workers (974 male and 597 female) on SAM management, completed in 2017. The number of health facilities providing SAM services also increased from 878 in January to 1,028 in December 2017.

A bottleneck analysis on integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM) services indicated significant improvement in service delivery as compared with 2015. Nationally, the human resources capacity improved from 35 to 62 per cent for clinicians and 37 to 79 per cent for community health supervisors. Similarly, geographical access to outpatient SAM services increased from 38 to 41 per cent. In terms of the initial utilization, admission of children with severe acute malnutrition improved from 34 to 54 per cent, continuity of utilization improved from 33 to 49 per cent and effective coverage (children cured against the SAM burden) from 25 to 47 per cent. A slight improvement was observed in supply chain management, with 64 per cent of health facilities reporting no stock-out of ready-to-use-therapeutic food in 2017. Each of the five regions developed an action plan to remove key bottlenecks and were integrated into the national nutrition plan and UNICEF Afghanistan’s 2018–2019 rolling work plan.

**OUTPUT 2** Individuals, families and communities especially in deprived provinces and other focus areas have relevant knowledge demand key nutrition services and adopt appropriate behaviours.
Analytical statement of progress
Several approaches were undertaken in 2017 (and continued from 2016) to improve knowledge and practices related to optimum nutrition and increase demand for nutrition services. The Golden Villages Initiative in 129 villages in two districts of Bamyan province reflected the power of mobilizing communities and provincial authorities and generating joint commitments to improving the nutritional status of children under 2 years. Communities and nutrition authorities worked together to improve household feeding practices, as well as referral and follow up mechanisms for treatment and recovery.

The appreciative inquiry workshops introduced in Bamyan in mid-2016 contributed to this success. The workshops involved 600 community members, including community health workers, as well as provincial nutrition and other authorities, collectively participating in a transformative process that motivated them to jointly commit to ensuring that all children under 2 are in the green band of the WHO child growth standards within an agreed period of time.

Subsequently, communities from the 129 villages line-listed all children under 2 years to be weighed and plotted in the community growth chart to assess their nutritional status. Twenty-four per cent (589 out of 2,461) were identified as undernourished to different degrees, (27 per cent of girls (341) and 22 per cent of boys (244)). A range of community mobilization and service delivery strengthening measures were undertaken to address this. Mothers groups featured discussions on infant feeding practices, the availability of diverse food sources and food demonstrations, and regular growth monitoring and counselling sessions were initiated. The impact of these interventions on the nutritional status of children under 2 will be tracked each month and monitored by the community and authorities until all the children under 2 are consistently in the green band of the WHO chart. In addition, 101 community health workers (51 women) and 413 village volunteers (243 women) in the 129 villages were trained in growth monitoring, with technical support from UNICEF Afghanistan in collaboration with the Public Nutrition Department (PND).

The harmonized and comprehensive community-based nutrition package (CBNP) was also an initiative. This includes community mobilization and service delivery strengthening. The CBNP has also drawn lessons from the Golden Village experience. It will be rolled-out in 2018 and it is envisaged that it will contribute to the adoption of appropriate nutrition behaviours, especially feeding and caring practices of infants and children under 2 years of age.

Similarly, to support the WIFS programme among school-going girls, 150 members of provincial education directorate (PED) SMS units from 13 provinces were trained as master trainers using the appreciative inquiry approach. They will in turn train SMS network members in their respective provinces to mobilize communities, parents and students to support the programme and counter rumours. In parallel, television and radio spots, jingles and print materials were produced to create an overall environment of acceptance of the WIFS. These will be disseminated over several months in 2018.

OUTPUT 3 Implementation partners at national and subnational levels have capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate data on nutrition programmes.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Afghanistan and WHO are supporting the Government and partners in the implementation of the National Nutrition Surveillance System (NNSS) in 175 health facilities and
868 community sentinel sites in the 34 provinces. Capacity building to improve the quality of data collected by the community health workers was supported through refresher trainings of a total of 1,777 community health workers, community health supervisors and community-based health officers (767 women and 1,010 men). As a result of the refresher training and supportive supervision, the number of community surveillance sentinel sites reporting increased from 564 (64 per cent) in the first quarter of 2017 to 645 (74 per cent) in third quarter of 2017, out of a total of 868 sites.

The fact that community surveillance is not part of the BPHS package makes it challenging to implement because health workers and community health workers view data collection as extra work. There is also a weak linkage in complementing the data collected through the NNSS and other nutrition information systems, which has resulted in the limited use of the data in general. Advocacy and technical support by UNICEF Afghanistan in collaboration with PND, WHO and partners to ensure that nutrition information systems are integrated into the BPHS package and Health Management Information System are ongoing.

The offline version of the nutrition database exists in PND and is maintained with the technical support of UNICEF Afghanistan. However, there has been a challenge in receiving complete reports by implementing partners. Moreover, the offline database allows only analysis of pivot tables. To overcome the challenges, UNICEF Afghanistan is supporting PND to upgrade the offline reporting system to an online one. The online database will improve data quality and provide real-time information for corrective action.

A functional planning and coordination mechanism of the Assessment and Information Technical Working Group (AIM-TWG), chaired by PND-MOPH with the technical support of UNICEF Afghanistan, WHO and other stakeholders, oversees the NNSS and nutrition database implementation and analysis and ensures that the data is used to monitor and improve the quality of the nutrition programme. The AIM-TWG also focuses on strengthening routine data and the standardization of the nutrition information systems and the integration of those systems with the Health Management Information System.

UNICEF Afghanistan supported monitoring and supportive supervision to improve the quality of nutrition services and reporting. The monitoring and supportive supervision team consisted of provincial nutrition officers, UNICEF national and regional nutrition officers, WHO national and regional focal points and PND’s surveillance officer and database manager. Regular monitoring and supportive supervision were health workers and BPHS implementers in different levels of BPHS and EPHS health facilities have been provided with on-the-job support on quality data. In addition, the concept of additional support for supportive supervision by nutrition extenders was introduced by UNICEF Afghanistan in 2017. There are 32 extenders – one per province. UNICEF is also using a third-party monitoring mechanism for independent programme monitoring. As a result of this additional support, quality of services, especially SAM management, has improved and all health facilities are meeting Sphere standards.

**OUTPUT 4** Effective and coordinated nutrition cluster with improved information management at national and subnational levels in humanitarian situations.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Nutrition cluster hubs at national and subnational levels (five regions) work closely with the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), nutrition programme coordination committees (NPCC) and technical working groups under the leadership of PND, which provides a holistic approach to
programming in both humanitarian and non-humanitarian situations. The nutrition cluster is also represented in inter-cluster coordination, Humanitarian Country Team and donor meetings. The SAG has supported the preparation of the HNO, flash appeals and HRP and CHF fund prioritization. Monthly cluster meetings (12) at the national level and 15 cluster meetings at subnational levels have been conducted with active participation from NGO partners, United Nations agencies, the Government and donors. In collaboration with and with technical support from the global nutrition cluster, UNICEF Afghanistan provided cluster coordination training to 25 staff from the Government, NGOs and United Nations agencies to improve coordination.

Assessments informed a gap analysis exercise for humanitarian response. The consolidated findings from Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) surveys conducted in Bamyan, Daikundi, Farah and Jawzjan provinces showed a high prevalence of malnutrition and a deteriorating nutrition situation as compared with the national nutrition survey of 2013. In Dikundi and Bamyang provinces, the SMART survey findings revealed that the burden of malnutrition is above the WHO emergency threshold of 15 per cent global acute malnutrition. The rapid needs assessment conducted in Khost (Gulan refugee camp) and in the Kabul informal settlements shows the global acute malnutrition rate above the WHO emergency threshold. In addition, the Semi-Quantitative Evaluation of Access and Coverage results are showing coverage of IMAM services of less than 50 per cent (which is below Sphere standards) in three provinces – Laghman, Wardak, Ghazni and Herat – as was also revealed in most provinces during the bottleneck analysis.

The main contributing factor is the limited access to community nutrition services as a platform to support active case identification of children with malnutrition referral and follow-up. Although UNICEF Afghanistan has invested in capacity-building of partners on service delivery, a capacity gap still exists among partners in regard to timely assessments. This is being partially addressed through ongoing Common Humanitarian Fund-supported SMART surveys. Meanwhile, nutrition, health, food security and WASH clusters are developing a methodology for rapid and in-depth multisectoral assessments for emergencies.

Although the number of returnees from Pakistan in 2017 was low, the standard package of nutrition services was provided, including vitamin A supplementation of children 6–59 months, deworming of children 24–59 months, IYCF counselling, screening and referral of children aged 6–59 months with acute malnutrition and initial two-week distribution of ready-to-use therapeutic food to children with SAM. A total of 20,399 girls, 20,305 boys and 8,268 women benefited from this.

**OUTPUT 5** Increase national and subnational capacity for nutritional security and resilience plans as well as to deliver essential nutritional services for children and women in humanitarian situations.

**Analytical statement of progress**
The scope of the nutrition cluster coordination mechanism was expanded to provincial level, in addition to the current national and zonal level coordination. A functional provincial coordination mechanism will be led by provincial nutrition officers with support from UNICEF nutrition cluster zonal focal persons. In addition, contingency nutrition plans are in place in all five regions. UNICEF Afghanistan committed to strengthening the capacity of the Government and partners through a series of trainings to ensure the availability of critical skills and expertise required for effective coordination at provincial level. Twenty-five master trainers were trained on the
coordination mechanism, which will be rolled out to the provinces.

In order to improve the ability of the country and community to respond to the increasing malnutrition burden and adapt to the chronic humanitarian situation, UNICEF Afghanistan supported integrated humanitarian and development nutrition programming. Specifically, UNICEF Afghanistan supported the implementation of social behaviour change communication to improve the adaptation of optimal maternal IYCF and caring practices within the context of the IMAM continuum. In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan supported the development of a CBNP and a joint roll-out plan with the leadership of PND to strengthen the implementation of community-based nutrition services within the BPHS. At least 50 per cent (210 out of 417) districts will adopt the CBNP by 2019 with support from different partners. UNICEF Afghanistan will support 77 districts in seven provinces (Laghman, Dykundi, Wardak, Herat, Tarkhar, Baghlan, Nimroz). At the zonal level, the development of micro-plans for the roll-out of CBNP with BPHS NGOs is in progress. To overcome reporting challenges, a community-based nutrition information system will be established to enable the tracking of women, girls and boys who are accessing appropriate IYCF services, beginning in 2018. The roll-out of CBNP will also provide experience to support the development of a home fortification of complementary foods with micronutrient powder programme, which was discontinued in 2016 due to inappropriate utilization at household level. The strategy will ensure the appropriate distribution and utilization of micronutrient powder.

In terms of IMAM services, a joint scale-up plan was developed in coordination with PND, WFP and other partners. As a result of the scale-up, children with acute malnutrition in 86 per cent (358 out of 417) of the districts across the country are being reached. Specifically, UNICEF-supported services for inpatient SAM, expanded to 72 per cent (106 out of 147) of regional, provincial and district hospitals and outpatient SAM expanded to 1,028 health facilities. In terms of outpatient moderate acute malnutrition services, these are provided in 631 facilities in 26 provinces. Active case identification of malnourished children at the community level remains a challenge. The community health workers, who are unpaid, view screening as additional work. The CBNP has a performance-based incentive system to improve case identification.

Despite the achievement, resilience capacity building efforts were delayed. Traditionally, the approach to nutrition programming has been emergency-based and introducing a community-based approach was challenging. Liaison with partners and the Government to obtain their full commitment and ownership took longer than anticipated.

OUTCOME 4 Girls and boys of school age, especially vulnerable children in deprived provinces and areas, access primary education that is progressively child friendly and demonstrates improved learning outcomes.

Analytical statement of progress
An estimated 3.5 million children remain out of school in Afghanistan. There are nationwide gaps, in terms of infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, textbooks and qualified (female) teachers. The latter is one of the numerous obstacles to improving learning outcomes in school. Deeply rooted cultural norms, socio-cultural factors and traditional beliefs undermine girls’ education. Dropout rates are high and 22 per cent of children who are officially enrolled in the primary grades are permanently absent. A recent assessment of MOE’s systemic vulnerability identified multiple areas where greater accountability and transparency are needed. In addition, ongoing crises continued to affect the already fragile education system and insecurity remained a concern for parents who worry about the safety of their children at
The NESP III 2017–2021 prioritizes improving the quality and relevance of education, equitable access to education and efficient and transparent educational management. Two large mechanisms for donors provide on-budget funds that will be merged into a new pooled funding programme entitled Education Quality Reform in Afghanistan in 2018. In addition to the formal education programme, UNICEF Afghanistan and a wide range of national and international NGOs provide community-based education in hard-to-reach areas. To support the Government to meet the targets under SDG 4, UNICEF Afghanistan applied a systemic approach, focusing its support on NESP III implementation through policy development, capacity building and direct implementation modalities.

More children in school:
UNICEF Afghanistan continued to focus on the enrolment and retention of the most vulnerable children, specifically those out-of-school children and girls. UNICEF Afghanistan worked to strengthen the formal schooling system and supported the Government’s efforts to roll-out community-based education by supporting the establishment and maintenance of over 6,000 community-based schools (CBSs) and ALCs, benefiting 176,764 students (49 per cent girls). In an effort to reduce supply-side barriers, the education materials of over 3.5 million children received learning materials. UNICEF Afghanistan further supported MOE to establish or continue 598 community and school-based preschool classes, benefiting 15,308 children aged 4–6 (62 per cent girls).

Improving institutional capacity:
In its new role as coordination agency for the sector (including lead among United Nations agencies with UNESCO), UNICEF Afghanistan facilitated the work of the education development partners’ group and supported MOE and the Ministry of Higher Education to coordinate the NESP-III steering committee and human resource development board to enhance complementarities, synergies and sector dialogue performance under the leadership of the Government. UNICEF Afghanistan also continued to support MOE as co-lead for thematic working groups such as on girls’ education, out-of-school children, ECD, EIE and learning assessment. This partnership has been instrumental, leading to the ongoing revision of the community-based education policy, its costed operational plan and the development of a budgeted girls’ education and preschool policy, strategy and action plan. The out-of-school children study has produced provincial profiles of these children and a set of recommendations to be used for strategy development in 2018. This was complemented by building the capacity of relevant MOE staff and setting up the Government’s database systems and dashboards for tracking teacher salaries, community-based education and out-of-school children via the Education Management Information System and innovative data collection methods.

Quality and relevance of education:
UNICEF Afghanistan worked with UNESCO on the ongoing curriculum reform process, which is based on key life skills and competency-based learning. UNICEF Afghanistan led support to MOE in policy and advocacy dialogue to improve and monitor learning outcomes of children. Based on a contract with the Australian Centre for Educational Research, through 30 workshops and weekly coordination-consultation meetings, a draft National Assessment Framework for Afghanistan (NAFA) has been developed as a first step towards establishing a national assessment system. UNICEF also continued to implement the child-friendly schools (CFS) approach through support provided to in-service CFS trainings in 1,500 schools for 1,759 newly recruited community-based education teachers and the provision of materials to improve classroom-based teaching methodologies.
Girls’ education and adolescents: UNICEF Afghanistan, in collaboration with relevant education partners, supported MOE to develop the first draft of a comprehensive girls’ education strategy and policy. Successful advocacy resulted in girls’ education being identified as a flagship programme for MOE and UNICEF Afghanistan. In collaboration with MOE, UNICEF Afghanistan worked to build school governance capacities of SMS from 13 provinces. A total of 150 staff of SMS departments were trained in planning and implementation of school-, community- and district-based capacity building and social engagement programmes to promote girls’ education (roll-out to 5,450 SMS in 2018). Key interventions for girls and boys to encourage access to education at the community level were supported through adolescent programme interventions via ALCs, which resulted in around 3,556 adolescents participating in multi-purpose action groups.

Emergency preparedness and response: UNICEF Afghanistan continued to support MOE by co-leading the EiEWG with Save the Children. Strategic advocacy resulted in EiE becoming an integral part of the humanitarian architecture within the country, including separate chapters in the HNO/HRP process, and US$10 million secured for response. By the end of December 2017, over 180,000 children had been reached through EiE interventions by 20 organizations working throughout the country. Afghanistan has also been chosen as an Education Cannot Wait recipient, the first allocation of which was facilitated by UNICEF. Furthermore, UNICEF Afghanistan contributed to providing access to education for 69,500 children throughout the country.

OUTPUT 1 Access to primary education for girls and boys in deprived provinces and other focus areas scaled up to meet the minimum defined standards for Afghanistan.

Analytical statement of progress
Increased access to basic education for out-of-school children in remote communities was realized through the maintenance and establishment of over 6,000 CBSs and ALCs. The quality of these CBSs and ALCs was improved through in-service learner-centred pedagogical education trainings for newly recruited teachers.

The classroom learning environment was improved by ensuring that over 3.5 million children received teaching and learning materials. Every community-based education student received learning materials (kits procured for 1,039,000 children in 2017 for distribution in 2018, as well as over 108,000 textbooks). This intervention contributed to the government priority to address inequities so that all children and adolescents have access to transparent, cost-effective, efficient and quality education services.

In addition, 2,847 girls were supported to continue their education through a specific accelerated learning programme for girls. As a strategy to reduce the number of out-of-school children, particularly girls, these community-based education outreach programmes of the formal school system brought the classroom to the communities and remarkable success in increasing the enrolment, retention and completion rates of girls and boys was observed. There is increased capacity of community-based teachers to teach and increased awareness of communities and community leaders on the importance of education and their responsibilities. Concerted efforts through community mobilization have revealed increased demand for these community-based education outreach programmes beyond the 10 focus provinces identified in UNICEF’s Country Programme Action Plan 2015–2019.
UNICEF Afghanistan also extended its partnerships with NGOs to facilitate service delivery in remote and hard-to-reach geographical locations. UNICEF Afghanistan continued to provide financial, technical and direct service delivery support to MOE at the national level, as well as to PEDs and district education directorates, to improve access to education by ensuring that teachers and students receive essential teaching and learning materials and that the teachers are trained and receive their salaries. Furthermore, the completion of the construction and equipment of an additional 5 out of 10 targeted schools in the Central Highlands Region (cumulative completion of 65 out of targeted 70 schools), benefiting more than 26,000 children, addressed the lack of school infrastructure, which remains a country-wide and chronic barrier to education.

OUTPUT 2 National and subnational education authorities (MOE) have management and financial capacity to progressively manage community-based education and ensure higher transition rate from Grade 3 to Grade 4 for girls and boys (including EiE).

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Afghanistan continued to advocate at highest levels of Government for the reduction in the number of out-of-school children and provided technical and financial support to MOE for better and more effective policy development, management practice, advocacy and partnership coordination. UNICEF Afghanistan co-led the Out-of-School Children Working Group alongside MOE, including through active engagement in policy dialogue on access to education and by overseeing the completion of a study on out-of-school children. The study produced provincial profiles of the out-of-school children and a set of recommendations to be used for strategy development in 2018. The study also provided insight into 10 provinces with the highest proportions of out-of-school children in the country, informing a targeted focus on the most deprived areas for all education implementing partners, including UNICEF Afghanistan, in its rolling work plan 2018–2019 and for the next country programme.

UNICEF Afghanistan also co-led the girls’ education, EiE and ECD working groups, ensuring linkages were made to programming related to out-of-school children (see outputs 5.6 and 5.7). As a member of the community-based education steering committee and working group, UNICEF Afghanistan was involved in the revision of the existing community-based education policy, which included the development of a set of harmonized quality standards for community-based education implementation to be used by all implementing partners.

UNICEF Afghanistan was also engaged in ongoing advocacy for more on-budget support to expand community-based education implementation at scale and increase MOE’s capacity to respond to and sustain future community-based education investments. This included work on costing models, including related to potential community-based education expansion to higher grades (up to Grade 9).

UNICEF Afghanistan continued to provide technical support to MOE and 18 PEDs for enhanced capacity and knowledge management to implement the community-based education policy at local levels. Support was provided to improve planning and preparation of hub schools to receive community-based education students, which is important in increasing transition and decreasing dropout rates, especially for girls.

UNICEF Afghanistan supported the integration of innovative Technology for Development initiatives to improve data collection in real-time, including with the introduction of EduTrac software in three regions (north, west, and central), building the capacity of relevant MOE staff
and setting up of the Government’s database systems for RapidPro and EduTrac. These systems will help to track teachers’ salaries, the delivery and use of teaching, learning and classroom materials and improve data collection on community-based education and out-of-school children, which will eventually be integrated into the Education Management Information System.

Enhanced monitoring and reporting capacity through the use of third-party monitors in areas with limited access and technical extenders (north, south, west, and central regions) enabled UNICEF Afghanistan to obtain data to inform programmatic interventions. UNICEF Afghanistan also provided financial assistance to MOE for NTAs at the provincial level to coordinate community-based education (field monitors, provincial coordinators), thereby improving capacity to monitor community-based education interventions aimed at improving access to school. At the national level, UNICEF Afghanistan provided financial assistance for NTAs linked to CBS, ECD, out-of-school children, girls’ education and EiE.

**OUTPUT 3** Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in Afghanistan leveraged for resources and results to meet national education objectives.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Development partners selected UNICEF Afghanistan as the coordinating agency for education in August 2017. Since then, as the main interlocutor between education partners and MOE, UNICEF has been facilitating the work of the development partners’ group. UNICEF Afghanistan supported MOE and the Ministry of Higher Education in coordinating the NESP-III steering committee to enhance complementarities, synergies and sector dialogue performance. UNICEF Afghanistan was also identified to co-lead, alongside rotating ministries, the HRDB, a multi-ministerial platform of eight ministries aiming at enhanced human resources capital in Afghanistan. Furthermore, UNICEF Afghanistan and UNESCO were identified to co-lead the One United Nations education thematic pillar for enhanced coordination and intervention of agencies operating in the education sector.

As SE for GPE in Afghanistan, a US$55.7 million ‘on-budget’ programme, UNICEF Afghanistan supported MOE to increase equitable access to education in 13 provinces, covering 40 remote districts in Afghanistan.

UNICEF Afghanistan provided MOE with technical and fiduciary support in planning, implementation, coordination and reporting of the GPE programme. Through UNICEF’s programmatic support, the following achievements were made: 1) a six month operational plan for 2017, built on assessments of what is achievable in the timeframe and understanding of the capacity of relevant MOE directorates and partners, was developed, endorsed and implemented; 2) a three-day orientation workshop with the participation of 51 programme representatives from 13 target provinces was conducted; 3) social mobilization and community-based education policy development was supported in consultation with relevant stakeholders; 4) MOE’s interdepartmental coordination was strengthened through increased frequency of high-level coordination meetings; and 5) programme closure workshops at provincial levels were conducted with the participation of 319 (22 per cent women) programme representatives, social mobilizers, engineers, community-based education and accelerated learning programme teachers, qualified female teachers and other beneficiaries to document the programme’s overall achievements, challenges and lessons learned.

As a result of UNICEF Afghanistan’s fiduciary support: 1) an external audit of the programme for
the years 2013, 2014 and 2015 was conducted and the long-overdue 2015 and 2016 internal audits were finalized; 2) two isolated situations of misuse amounting to US$121,714 in two provinces were detected and corrective and remedial actions to obtain refunds were taken; 3) the operational plan utilization rate was monitored and implementation challenges were addressed through corrective measures in line with GPE policies (e.g. regarding procurement of school improvement plans); and 4) the request for an extension to June 2018 of the programme’s expenditure closure or grace period until June 2018 was facilitated.

Furthermore, UNICEF Afghanistan supported MOE and the World Bank with an application and assurance reviews for the new GPE indicative allocation, which will be merged with EQUIP II under the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund and International Development Assistance into a new pooled fund modality, entitled Education Quality Reform in Afghanistan. Given that the GPE programme closed at the end of June 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan leveraged and implemented US$5.2 million from USAID to safeguard investments made under GPE I and to ensure that 19,018 girls and 20,000 boys who were enrolled under 1,290 CBS and 440 Accelerated Learning Programme classes funded by GPE continue their education until the start of Education Quality Reform in Afghanistan in 2018.

OUTPUT 4 Strengthened national and subnational capacity to implement child-friendly schools (CFS) especially in targeted schools in deprived provinces and other areas.

Analytical statement of progress
In order to address the learning crisis within Afghanistan and improve learning for children, in 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan continued to support the implementation of nationwide interventions to improve quality education and school-community environments in targeted provinces to make them more conducive to learning and development. This effort was based on MOE’s adopted CFS approach focusing on inclusiveness, child-centred learning and the provision of safe and protective learning environments with active community participation at decentralized levels. Teachers in 1,500 child-friendly schools (CFSs) received teaching materials and guidebooks to improve their teaching practices and pre-service teachers in all 34 provinces received integrated CFS teaching modules. Out of a targeted 300 schools, 365 received small school grants to improve their learning environment (minor repairs, refurbishing of classrooms, water resources, toilets, surrounding walls, school campus and green area) and support improved learning environments for children.

In five provinces with the lowest numbers of female teachers, implementation of the Girls’ Access to Teacher Education Programme continued. Out of the 1,000 targeted female students, 966 students were provided with a two-year scholarship and mentoring support to reach the minimum Grade 14 qualification. A total of 233 female students have graduated since 2016. The remaining students will continue their studies in 2018–2019 and will increase the cadre of female teachers in the provinces where girls’ access to education is lowest.

UNICEF Afghanistan also supported the new curriculum reform process led by UNESCO and MOE through technical and financial assistance and advocated for the inclusion of gender responsiveness and peace-building. To respond to the need for capacity within MOE, UNICEF supported the hiring of three NTAs dedicated to CFS implementation, monitoring and curriculum. These NTAs took the lead on the Inclusive and Child-Friendly Education Working Group, supported curriculum reform and provided technical leadership to the deputy minister for general education in line with the NESP III.
OUTPUT 5 National capacity strengthened to develop and operationalize a system for monitoring of learning achievements and setting of national standards in core subjects for primary grades.

Analytical statement of progress
Throughout the year, UNICEF Afghanistan led support to MOE in policy and advocacy dialogue to improve and monitor learning outcomes of children in Afghan schools. Based on a contract with the Australian Centre for Educational Research, through 30 workshops and weekly coordination and consultation meetings, a draft NAFA was developed as a first step towards establishing a national assessment system. The NAFA contains strategic documents such as a coordination and staffing strategy, capacity building recommendations, and a desk review on current learning assessment practices in Afghanistan. The 30 workshops on NAFA development took aimed to develop the capacity of key MOE teams, including multi-departmental teams, teachers, PEDs, NGOs and development partners to be able to make informed decisions on the objective and scope of the NAFA. Evaluation forms of the workshops showed that over 90 per cent of participants considered the workshops extremely useful. As part of NAFA development, 35 key MOE staff members were equipped with initial skills on how to develop and analyse standardized test items.

MOE’s ownership of the process was given importance and ensured coordination with the MOE and UNESCO co-led curriculum reform process. This resulted in a merging of the learning assessment and curriculum technical working groups, based on the need to align interventions on assessment and curriculum. UNICEF Afghanistan also reinforced MOE’s capacity by supporting two learning assessment NTAs who led the entire process of NAFA development, including coordination of learning assessment activities across relevant partners.

UNICEF Afghanistan also continued supporting MOE in capacity building of community-based teachers and academic supervisors on assessment for learning, also called formative assessment, to improve classroom-based learning. In close collaboration with the Teacher Education Department, assessment for learning training materials, including a facilitator’s guide, a teacher reference manual and innovative DVDs, were developed and printed in English, Dari and Pashto, benefiting 31,161 teachers and trainers. Materials will be used in 34 teacher training colleges across the country.

A total of 2,205 targeted participants (1,759 community-based education teachers and 446 academic supervisors) were trained on the competencies of knowledge acquisition and practical application of assessment for learning in 18 provinces, resulting in a 100 per cent achievement rate. Core trainers from the national level continued to provide coaching and monitoring support for master trainers. In order to increase the number of female teachers, PEDs were asked to target mostly female teachers. However, only 20 per cent of participants were female teachers. Initial discussions were held with the Teacher Education Department on the integration of assessment for learning into the in-service teacher education curriculum in 2018.

OUTPUT 6 Girls’ education and community-based early childhood care and education developed and demonstrated in selected communities in deprived provinces and other focus areas.

Analytical statement of progress
Despite the significant progress that has been made, the situation of girls’ education remained critical in 2017, with social norms/traditional beliefs, poverty and insecurity continuing to hinder girls’ access to quality education. As per the Education Sector Analysis 2016, the proportion of girls enrolled in Grades 1–12 stood at 39 per cent and seems to have stagnated in recent years.

Key achievement throughout the year included: 1) girls’ education being identified as flagship programme for MOE and UNICEF Afghanistan partners (one of the four top priorities for the sector); 2) successful advocacy on the importance of girls’ education resulted in full ownership by MOE of related policy and strategy development processes, including work on an operational plan; and 3) In support of MOE, UNICEF Afghanistan’s co-leadership of the now fully functional girls’ education working group, which involved coordinating and promoting girls’ education within and beyond the sector; and 4) the increased capacity of SMS in their active school-community engagement for girls’ education through initial master trainer’s workshop for 150 SMS members from 13 provinces (roll-out to 5,450 SMS members at provincial and district levels initially planned for 2017 was shifted to 2018 due to constraints linked to disbursement of funds to PEDs).

UNICEF Afghanistan also supported key interventions for adolescent girls and boys to encourage increased participation in and engagement with religious leaders to create behaviour change around harmful traditional practices, focusing on ending child marriage. Programme components included creating an enabling environment where parents, religious leaders and teachers understand the impact of child marriage on the lives of adolescent girls. To support their self-efficacy, 3,556 adolescent girls and boys participated in multi-purpose action groups. A training on child rights in Islam was conducted for 7,380 religious leaders reiterating the detriments of child marriage to the health and well-being of adolescent girls and the negative impacts of girls missing out on education.

Baseline data gathered in key provinces for Improving Adolescents Lives in Afghanistan was also completed and provided improved gender and age disaggregated data for adolescent girls and boys. To monitor results, UNICEF Afghanistan invested in a robust evaluation system to measure the impact of education, community mobilization and cash grants on the lives of adolescent girls at risk of child marriage.

Furthermore, UNICEF Afghanistan continued its support related to access to preschool education. Still a relatively new area of intervention nationally as traditionally only implemented sparsely through mosque-based schooling, efforts in 2017 mostly focused on policy development and harmonization of learning materials. The ECD working group was active in revising the existing preschool policy and strategy. The working group created taskforces on the harmonization of the learning materials for use in all types of preschool classes; on preschool costing; and on teacher training. In parallel, UNICEF Afghanistan supported MOE at the community level in the maintenance of the existing 598 community- and school-based preschool classes, including training of 598 teachers, which translates to 15,308 children aged 4–6 (62 per cent girls) having the opportunity to start primary school at the right age.

OUTPUT 7 Humanitarian education

Analytical statement of progress

MOE, alongside UNICEF Afghanistan and other partners, has made progress in increasing access to basic education for children affected by emergencies, mostly those displaced by conflict and those returning to Afghanistan. Over 180,000 children out of a targeted 375,000 were reached through 20 organizations working throughout the country. Promotion of EiE is
helping children choose peace over war and reintegrate into Afghan communities. By not investing in children’s immediate right to education, development outcomes are at risk of being seriously diminished through exacerbating an already overburdened education system.

Successful advocacy conducted throughout the year resulted in the EiEWG (led by MOE, co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children) becoming a full part of the humanitarian architecture within the country (August 2017). This included separate chapters in the HNO/HRP, and US$10 million secured from the CHF and bi-lateral donors for the sector. Afghanistan was also chosen as an Education Cannot Wait recipient, whereby the first allocation was facilitated through UNICEF support to MOE. The EiEWG presented at the Global Education Cluster annual meeting and received additional coordination support from the Global Education Cluster rapid response team. The EiEWG invested time in strengthening its information and knowledge management function, including by supporting a joint education and child protection assessment and verification of closed schools, the latter which was conducted by UNICEF Afghanistan.

For UNICEF Afghanistan, the objective for the first quarter of 2017 was to establish a well-functioning national EiEWG with fully developed quality information management products in place to manage data analysis, assessment result compilation and identify and coordinate response gaps. In addition, subnational coordination mechanisms were established with UNICEF Afghanistan support in Kandahar, Nangarhar, Herat and Kabul and will continue to merit a special focus in 2018. A series of trainings on EiE, coordination and information management reached 90 education personnel from national and subnational levels, strengthening a well-functioning coordination mechanism.

Furthermore, in order to ensure linkages to development and ensure that all gains made are sustainable, UNICEF Afghanistan has been closely ensuring a systemic approach, linking support to other child-focused sectors particularly with WASH and child protection clusters. By exploring partnerships with entities such as the World Bank and Citizen’s Charter, the EiEWG is linking humanitarian action with mid- and longer-term programming and funding.

As a member of the EiEWG and in collaboration with PEDs and two national and three international NGO partners, UNICEF Afghanistan supported continued access to 69,500 crisis-affected school-age girls and boys (52 per cent girls). While this is fewer than the targeted 100,000 children, it is expected to be much higher in the coming months as bottlenecks related to access and capacity are addressed. Activities included: 1) establishment of temporary learning spaces (either newly established community-based education classes, formal schools or tents); 2) provision of teaching, learning, recreational and classroom materials, including school-in-a-box, blackboards, floor mats and recreational kits; 3) training of teachers; and 4) social mobilization activities on the importance of EiE, especially for girls via trainings for 750 SMS.

OUTCOME 5  Girls and boys vulnerable and exposed to violence, abuse and exploitation are better protected by institutional (formal and informal) and legislative frameworks which include services and systems.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan made progress towards protecting children in Afghanistan against violence, abuse and exploitation by developing stronger child protection systems, establishing better services for vulnerable children and enforcing the Convention on the Rights of the Child-aligned legal framework. This was despite some setbacks related to the flaring of hostilities in
some parts of the country and the consequences of unplanned humanitarian interventions that consumed significant resources and diverted attention from development-oriented system-building activities.

The Government’s progress on accepting and supporting the multi-sectoral system-building approach for child protection was evident in one major achievement in 2017: the re-establishment of the Child Protection Secretariat under the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MOLSAAMD), which is an entity assigned to coordinate all multisectoral work to develop a sound, functional, affordable and accessible framework for child protection services. UNICEF Afghanistan’s technical support, training, supplies and advocacy on behalf of the Secretariat, as well as support from local-level child protection action networks and the growing force of social workers, resulted in the identification, registration, referral and service provision of close to 6,000 child survivors of the worst forms of violence in 33 out of 34 provinces, including 100 out of 400 districts in Afghanistan.

UNICEF Afghanistan’s support and investment in increasing the numbers of social workers and strengthening their ability to provide sound case management touched the lives of many boys and girls: 2,881 undocumented, unaccompanied minor boys who were forced to return from Pakistan and Iran were identified, documented, interviewed, supported, had their families traced and were subsequently reunified with their parents and relatives. An additional 3,781 children of returnee and internally displaced families received case-management services and follow-ups from social workers. In 2017, the very first group of university-educated social workers in Afghanistan completed their four-year studies in Kabul University, using the bachelor’s programme developed with UNICEF support.

Increasing birth registration, the regional flagship child protection programme, is a critical component of child protection systems strengthening in Afghanistan. Through UNICEF Afghanistan’s partnership with the Department of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, 416,367 infants were registered in 2017 (219,220 boys and 197,147 girls). UNICEF Afghanistan’s support in strengthening data collection on birth registration resulted in over 60 per cent of the country’s provinces having a functional, real-time, accurate database.

Significant developments were also noted in regard to strengthening legislative frameworks, with the finalization of the child act in 2017. After a dynamic, participatory consultation process involving multiple ministries, human rights activists, civil society organizations, donors and policymakers, the act was submitted to Parliament for review and approval. UNICEF Afghanistan also supported the drafting of and advocacy for amendments to the current family law that increase the legal marrying age to 18, as well as amendments to the anti-torture law that protect children detained on ‘terrorist’ charges.

Moreover, after a strong combination of UNICEF Afghanistan’s advocacy, space preparation, and appropriate programme development, all children deemed ‘security threats’ and detained in an adult prison in Bagram known for regular and gross violations of detainee rights according to Human Rights Watch, were moved into Kabul’s juvenile rehabilitation centre in November 2017. This was a major achievement for UNICEF Afghanistan in 2017. These children will now receive psychosocial support, psychological counselling, health services, education services, free legal aid, reintegration and case-management services like the rest of the children detained there on criminal charges unrelated to terrorism. UNICEF Afghanistan also supported the provision of free legal aid, psychosocial counselling and case management to over 1,500 children detained in other juvenile rehabilitation centres across the country.
With UNICEF support and under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Human Rights, Women and International Affairs Department, the Convention on the Rights of the Child state periodical report was completed in 2017. In tandem, with support from UNICEF, Afghanistan’s Independent Human Rights Committee produced regular quarterly reports on child rights violations in Afghanistan. UNICEF Afghanistan itself regularly reported on grave child rights violations related to conflict and armed clashes.

In the first three quarters of 2017, the MRM recorded 437 individual recruitment cases, 2,477 child casualties, 30 cases of abduction, 105 reported attacks on schools, 70 reported attacks on hospitals, 51 incidences of denial of humanitarian access and 7 sexual violence cases committed by armed forces. UNICEF’s efforts to prevent recruitment resulted in the establishment of 11 child protection units in 2017, which now cover 32 out of 34 provinces. In 2017, 1,411 children were prevented from being recruited into the Afghan National Security Forces. Despite successes from current initiatives to prevent grave violations, UNICEF Afghanistan also advocated for revisions to the National Plan of Action for Children Affected by Armed Conflict.

One of the most impactful UNICEF interventions related to child protection-in-emergencies and humanitarian work with children of internally displaced and returnee families (some of whom were victims of recent and very violent armed clashes with high numbers of civilian casualties) was the widespread provision of psychosocial support. Through UNICEF Afghanistan’s network of over 240 child-friendly spaces in areas with high internally displaced and returnee populations, almost 53,239 children benefited from psychosocial support through structured play and psychological first aid, receiving integrated services that included health services, literacy and numeracy classes, mental health services, and resilience-building activities.

Progress was made in the prevention of child and forced marriage through partnership with the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs. A total of 2,671 religious scholars from seven provinces shared anti-child marriage messages based in Islamic teachings with over 300,000 parishioners.

**OUTPUT 1** National and subnational institutional management capacity strengthened for child protection systems and services for most vulnerable children.

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF Afghanistan provided technical and financial support to 33 provincial and 100 district CPANs, which, between January and November 2017, reported 5,982 child protection cases (4,609 boys and 1,373 girls who were survivors of violence, engaged in child labour, orphaned, forcefully married, in contact with the law, etc.). Ninety-five per cent of all registered cases were referred to appropriate services. The evaluation of these child protection networks was completed in 2016 and its findings resulted in MOLSAMD and UNICEF Afghanistan agreeing to come up with a plan to fully (financially and structurally) hand over the CPANs to the MOLSAMD by the end of 2019.

UNICEF Afghanistan advocacy resulted in the re-establishment of the Child Protection Secretariat under MOLSAMD in September 2016. Consequent technical and financial support to the Secretariat reaffirmed its coordination role between line ministries and child protection actors within the Government. The Secretariat reviewed a number of studies and evaluations completed in 2016 by UNICEF Afghanistan, including a project on children who work in the
street and a study on children in the carpet weaving industry. The information collected was used to outline the social protection policy drafted in November 2016.

Through UNICEF Afghanistan support and in collaboration with MOI, the Department of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, and MOPH, a total of 416,367 newborns (219,220 boys and 197,147 girls) received birth certificates between January and November 2016. MOPH finalized, approved and mandated a new SOP on birth registration with the aid of UNICEF Afghanistan technical support and advocacy. Some 130 participants from health facilities and vital statistic departments from 34 provinces participated in the launch of the standard operating procedures and parallel orientation workshop. In addition, 343 healthcare practitioners from 16 major hospitals and 75 health facilities received detailed training organized by UNICEF Afghanistan. The Department of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics has become an independent entity and, largely due to UNICEF support, was able to strengthen data collection on birth registration.

In addition, UNICEF Afghanistan supported the development of a child-friendly police training package for the Afghan National Police, which was followed by a training of master trainers for 40 officers, all of whom were instructors at the Police Academy. A total of 424 police officers have already been trained and the training package will, from now on, be used for all new police recruits in police academies across the country.

UNICEF Afghanistan and its partner, World Vision Afghanistan, are working on strengthening community-based child protection systems in two provinces specifically selected for intense work on the prevention of forced and child marriage. In cooperation with Citizens Charter structures and local CPANs, these community-based social workers are identifying and providing sound case-management to girls at high risk. One of the expected results of these partnerships is the development of case management guidelines and capacity building modules to be used to train and provide supervision to local social workers and key child protection actors.

**OUTPUT 2** Key stakeholders participate in, and contribute to strengthened coordination towards a multi-sectoral child protection system/programme.

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, nine government ministries signed a letter of agreement to ensure the cross-country implementation of the Juvenile Code by mandating a multisectoral approach to children processed throughout the justice system. The inter-ministerial monitoring body supported by UNICEF, closely followed up on the roll-out of the letter of agreement implementation in the provinces and conducted joint monitoring visits to evaluate its implementation in the field. Currently, 30 out of 34 provinces implement the multi-sectoral letters of agreement, resulting in 94 per cent of adolescents being processed through the justice system and having their social inquiry reports developed by social workers prior to their court appearance. A similar model supported by UNICEF Afghanistan, is being used in work with children in places of detention—over 985 underage detainees received multisectoral integrated services, specifically education services, health services, psychosocial support, free legal aid or mediation, reintegration services, leisure and rehabilitation services (theatre, sports, vocational skills, training and art), and individual, group and family counselling.

In November 2017, 57 children detained on ‘terrorist’ charges were transferred from the Bagram adult prison to the Kabul juvenile rehabilitation centre. A UNICEF-supported partner is currently assisting the Ministry of Justice in developing individual treatment plans for each of these
children and is working closely with the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and MOLSAMD. This planned, multisectoral approach to working holistically with children deemed to be a security threat is completely new and represents a departure from Afghanistan’s traditional approach to children in conflict with the law, especially those detained on ‘terrorist’ charges. This experience is a good example of a collaborative approach between various sectors to address child protection issues.

In cooperation with the Government’s Department of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics and in close coordination with UNICEF, which provided technical assistance, MOPH has established a standard operating procedure for birth registration at healthcare facilities.

The social workers’ field practice manual for the bachelor’s in social work degree was validated by relevant ministries (MOE and MOLSAMD) and NGOs. It was subsequently disseminated to university students and social work agencies. A technical team from Tata Institute of Social Science trained faculty members from the Kabul University Social Work Department and staff from relevant CSOs on a research methodology while also facilitating the social work field practice manual via a national validation workshop. The Tata Institute of Social Science faculty then provided remedial courses over a two-month period for some 20 social work students graduating in January. This was the first ever group of university-educated social workers in Afghanistan.

In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan completed three major studies - the ‘Child Protection System Mapping’, ‘Financial Benchmarking in Child Protection’ and ‘Child Marriage in Afghanistan’—providing the Government and numerous other child protection partners with clear recommendations on how to develop a well-coordinated, multi-sectoral and evidence-based child protection system. The studies generated the Government’s pledge for an increased budget in 2018 to support the social work force and the establishment of social workers’ posts in other sectors to better protect children (schools, JRCs, etc.).

**OUTPUT 3** Government and non-government functionaries and caregivers in contact with children have the responsibility to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation of children.

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF Afghanistan supported the Ministry of Justice in the development of a comprehensive child act (the Child Rights and Protection Law). The act was approved by the Ministers’ Council Legislative Committee after several rounds of consultations and, in August 2017, the law was officially submitted to Parliament for approval. UNICEF Afghanistan conducted over 15 advocacy sessions with individual parliamentarians and the head of the Parliamentary Commission. The child act is now in the Human Rights, Women and Civil Society Organization Committee and, once it is approved by all the heads of the commissions, will be presented to the plenary for voting and final approval.

A periodic United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child report was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with UNICEF support. A number of technical committee and steering committee meetings were conducted to assure a participatory process for drafting the report. The report is being translated into English to receive further comments by international organizations and, after reflection on these comments, is expected to be sent to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva in the first quarter of 2018.
Radio and television spots developed to raise awareness about the risks and negative consequences of child marriage were aired more than 650 times on television and 2,000 times on radio, reaching over 800,000 individuals (as per radio and television coverage). Thirty-four villages in the Bamyan province, which have a combined population of 80,000, were declared ‘child marriage free’. However, the NAP for the prevention of child marriage has not yet been costed.

In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan’s partnership with the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs grew through the strong involvement of the ministry’s constituents (religious scholars and preachers) in developing a curriculum for ‘Child Rights in Islam’ and, subsequently, the master training for 42 highly respected and widely influential mullahs who, in turn, trained 2,671 religious scholars on child rights and child protection through the lens of Islamic teachings during the second half of the year. The trained imams preached these messages related to child protection in their mosques, reaching over 300,000 community members.

In addition, 1,300 community dialogues related to child protection (non-violent parenting practices, prevention of child marriage and child labour, etc.) involving some 23,390 community members (15,780 men and 7,610 women) were held in the southern and eastern regions of the country and resulted in 464 action plans to prevent and respond to violence against and abuse of children in their local communities.

The Ministry of Defence adopted the Child Protection Policy, committing to zerotolerance for child recruitment.

UNICEF Afghanistan supported the Ministry of Justice to prepare, staff and equip the space in the juvenile rehabilitation centre in Kabul for transferring children detained on ‘terrorist’ charges (57). These children were ultimately moved to the Kabul centre from an adult penitentiary in Bagram in November 2017. Through its partners, UNICEF Afghanistan assured the provision of free legal aid, psychosocial counselling, reintegration, education and case-management services to all children in the centre, including those transferred from Bagram.

**OUTPUT 4** Monitoring, reporting and referral capacity within child protection system for children affected by humanitarian situations including armed conflict, is improved and fully functional.

**Analytical statement of progress**

A total of 53,239 children (32,343 boys and 20,896 girls) accessed psychosocial support services and 3,781 received case-management services through the child protection-in-emergencies programme. UNICEF Afghanistan facilitated the delivery of these services in partnership with several international and local NGOs (Tabish, HRDA and War Child UK) and through more than 200 mobile and static child-friendly spaces operating in areas with high internally displaced and returnee populations. UNICEF Afghanistan’s child protection-in-emergencies programme was a crucial step toward delivering a first line of response for children affected by negative experiences and children who had forcefully returned to the country, while normalizing the everyday lives of these children. A total of 2,881 undocumented adolescent boys who were forced to return from Iran and Pakistan were identified, documented, interviewed, supported (with health, food, shelter, psychological first aid), had their families traced and were subsequently reunified with their parents and relatives. The social workers who provided case management to these children followed up their re-adjustment into their families and assessed their well-being over a period of three months after reunification.
Following violent clashes between government and anti-government elements, more than 2,500 families (with over 10,000 children combined) were exiled from their homes and forced to flee after witnessing violence unleashed upon their family members. In response, UNICEF Afghanistan supported the establishment of child protection services in receiving and host communities. Sixteen new child-friendly spaces, offering structured play, psychosocial support and basic literacy and numeracy programmes are currently serving over 4,000 recently displaced children.

The MRM recorded very high figures for child recruitment and child casualties. By the third quarter of MRM reporting, 437 individual recruitment cases were reported, 38 of which were verified and 2,477 child casualties were documented and verified. Other recorded violations include: 30 cases of abduction (9 of which were verified), 105 attacks on schools (of which 61 were verified), 70 attacks on hospitals (of which 49 were verified), 51 denials of humanitarian access (of which 22 were verified), and 7 sexual violence cases (of which 3 were verified). Despite humanitarian access challenges in some areas, the MRM recorded grave violations against children throughout the country.

To prevent child recruitment, 11 child protection units were opened in 2017 in the recruitment centres of the Afghan National Security Forces, bringing the total number of child protection units in the country to 32. The child protection units have proven useful in keeping children from recruitment and, by the end of October 2017, the recruitment of 1,411 boys had been prevented. UNICEF Afghanistan advocated for updating the National Action Plan for Children Affected by Armed Conflict established in 2011.

The programme supported capacity building in the Ministry of Justice, where 11 counsellors were hired and deployed in nine provinces to support juvenile justice programmes. Twenty-two officers of the National Directorate of Security Officers, mainly from their communication department, were trained on ethical reporting on children and, especially, on children linked to national security charges. Seventeen police commanders from the Afghanistan National Police were also trained on child-friendly procedures for handling children in contact with the law, on general child protection and on the MRM.

OUTCOME 6 Child rights and gender equality prioritized in evidence-based public discourse, national policies, budget allocations, legislation and social protection systems and progressively promoted and protected in social and cultural attitudes, practices and norms, with a focus on the most vulnerable.

Analytical statement of progress
Over the course of 2017, the Government advanced a number of promising measures to strengthen the availability of and capacity to produce data for children; and establish a broader policy base for future child-sensitive social protection measures.

With UNICEF Afghanistan support, the Central Statistics Organization (CSO) redoubled its efforts to enhance the AfghanInfo application, providing a mobile device-based and user-friendly interface with relevant development data generated by CSO, including through major household surveys, such as the Demographic and Health Survey, as well as a dedicated SDG dashboard. This promises to make data more easily accessible to policymakers at the central and regional levels, as well as to civil society and development partners more broadly. Translation into national languages will strengthen its potential to reach wider audiences. CSO’s commitment to
AfghanInfo is an encouraging indication of the priority it places on generating and disseminating evidence that can inform public discourse.

Planned province-level launches of AfghanInfo will provide a base for further engagement with subnational-level governments on strengthening capacity for the use of data for evidence-based planning and programming for children.

CSO has also demonstrated an interest in generating data on child multidimensional poverty, and has requested UNICEF Afghanistan’s support in building related capacity under its partnership with the Oxford Policy and Human Development Initiative. Following the conduct of a pilot study on child multidimensional poverty, in 2018, UNICEF Afghanistan will support the expansion of the initiative, with a view to generating data that can be used by the Government, UNICEF Afghanistan, civil society and other development partners to strengthen advocacy and programming around social protection, child protection and public financing for children, as well as SDG reporting.

During the second half of 2017, MOLSAMD demonstrated a growing commitment to finalizing a draft national social policy paper, in part driven by increased attention from the President on issues of social policy and social protection. This has included the initiation of broader consultations and preparations for discussions with development partners in late 2017 and early 2018. The policy paper, prepared with UNICEF support, focuses on children, persons with disabilities and marginalized population groups, and is expected to provide a blueprint for concrete programme initiatives over the coming years aimed at improving child well-being in Afghanistan.

Following the discontinuation of the pilot cash transfer programme in Balkh Province in 2017, a priority for 2018 will be to re-strategize the social protection programme with MOLSAMD and relevant development partners, building on existing evidence and learning, identifying pathways for reaching the most marginalized children with child sensitive social protection services.

Public advocacy through UNICEF Afghanistan’s combined digital platforms reached more than 5 million people with compelling multimedia content on child rights from across the country in all sectors. UNICEF Afghanistan’s Facebook fan base grew from 174,200 in November 2016 to over 240,000 by November 2017, along with a fivefold increase in the number of Twitter followers to 16,000. Strong engagement scores indicate that audiences are connecting with featured child rights issues. Innovative approaches to raising public awareness included the production of UNICEF’s first-ever virtual reality film in Afghanistan, which focused on girls’ education. The film launched on the International Day of the Girl and reached more than 1.1 million people globally via Facebook.

Strong local media coverage of high-level events and global days are raising public awareness of the situation of girls’ education, challenging negative social norms (e.g. with the inauguration of Menstrual Hygiene Management Day) and publicizing government commitment to tackling under-five malnutrition (launch of the SUN movement in Afghanistan). Media monitoring demonstrates that child-related issues are increasingly being addressed by broadcast outlets (national and principal), with 88 per cent of this coverage including key child rights messages.

World Children’s Day activities with media participation enabled in- and out-of-school Afghan children to be seen and heard in public forums. Two activate talks, held for the first time, were amplified to online and national television audiences. Adolescents raised their own voices to share innovative ideas, demonstrate their capacities as leaders and contribute to efforts to
change the prevailing perception of children in society.

With regional impetus, parliamentarians and religious leaders in Afghanistan were mobilized to support polio eradication, an end to child marriage and the passing of the child act. However, a more strategic approach with a clear and measurable plan of action is required to achieve real impact. Collaborations with trusted local influencers (such as prominent Afghan cricketers) on digital platforms and at sporting events continued to give visibility to these issues, especially polio eradication.

The year 2017 established evidence of the effectiveness of inter-sectoral approaches to shifting community norms and practices and strengthening governmental systems. The Golden Villages Initiative in 129 villages in two districts of Bamyan province used the appreciative inquiry approach to strengthen community and system capacities to address social norms and practices. Committed to achieve five interlinked aspirational goals related to immunization, nutrition, maternal health, education and child marriage, in 15 months (mid-2016 to November 2017) 118 of the 129 villages declared ‘Golden Village status’, having achieved the required milestones for each goal. Qualitative implementation data also shows an increase in community volunteerism, a perceptible shift in the role of women in decision-making and positive healthy competition between communities in regard to school enrolment and immunization.

OUTPUT 1 Government and civil society have the capacity to generate and use data and knowledge on child deprivation and disparities; and to establish child rights monitoring and reporting structure.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017 UNICEF Afghanistan continued working closely with the Central Statistics Organization (CSO) to strengthen capacities for the collection and use of data on children for evidence-based planning and policy making. To this end, the adaptation of AfghanInfo into Dari and Pashto represented a major contribution to strengthening data dissemination. The local language versions will enable AfghanInfo to reach new users, particularly at the subnational level. At the same time, the adaptation of a new administrative module will enable CSO to update the system independently, thereby enhancing government ownership. The AfghanInfo mobile app is well situated within the CSO data dissemination strategy, at the core of which is the move from printing hard-copy publications to increasingly disseminating data online.

Government monitoring and reporting on child poverty has to date not taken place in Afghanistan. Collaboration with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative on a multidimensional child poverty analysis was initiated in 2017 through a regional partnership agreement. Whereas an initial report for internal purposes was completed in 2017, the work plan for 2018 will include capacity-building for CSO staff to enable the organization to independently monitor and report on child poverty under SDG1 on a regular basis. Furthermore, the Oxford Policy and Human Development Initiative will work with CSO and UNICEF Afghanistan to develop a complete government-owned report on multidimensional child poverty with appropriate policy recommendations that will be used for policy advocacy on child poverty and budgeting for children. UNICEF Afghanistan has also began discussions with the World Bank on including a measure of monetary child poverty in national poverty profiles.

The 2015 Demographic and Health Survey was launched in early 2017. While most of the data was of adequate quality, key data gaps on children’s well-being continued to exist, particularly related to early child development, child protection and child functioning. For 2018 a key
Objective will be to engage in the planning process for the Demographic and Health Survey 2019 to advocate for the inclusion of child-related indicators.

OUTPUT 2 Support the Government to develop evidence-based inclusion policies and plans; and to establish social protection systems at the national and subnational levels.

Analytical statement of progress

With the support of UNICEF Afghanistan, MOLSAMD has taken forward the development of the ‘Policy Paper: Consolidated National Social Policy’. The work has proceeded at a slow but steady pace, culminating – towards the end of the year – in a number of inter-MOLSAMD and cross-ministerial consultations on the draft. The latest draft incorporates a range of child-related social protection issues, providing a basis for further discussions over the future direction of social protection in Afghanistan.

As part of the process of developing the policy paper, MOLSAMD expressed its intention to develop a comprehensive Afghanistan Child Programme. Next steps will include further consultations across the Government and the submission of the policy paper to the Office of the President for endorsement. UNICEF Afghanistan will explore options for engagement, including supporting the development of the child programme and contributing to further work on an integrated social protection strategy.

In addition, in 2018, UNICEF Afghanistan will undertake a mapping of the social protection landscape for children in order to generate evidence on the number of children benefiting from the country’s existing social protection mechanisms and the potential for enhancing the child-centred elements of these. A priority in this regard will be to closely engage and consult with development partners already active in the area of social protection.

In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan withdrew its support from a limited cash transfer project in Charkent District of Balkh Province. The project had been conceptualized as a pilot, funded through UNICEF Regular Resources, to demonstrate the effectiveness of social mobilization work in the areas of health, nutrition and education, when combined with unconditional and conditional cash grants. As this pilot was a standalone project with limited connections to established MOLSAMD social protection mechanisms, and given challenges in securing funding for sustainability and scaling up, the decision was taken to discontinue the initiative. A note on the lessons learned, particularly in establishing and administering a cash transfer system with MOLSAMD, is being prepared. In the meantime, a small cash transfer initiative for the families of out-of-school adolescent girls has been conceptualized and will be implemented under the education programme in 2018. The initiative was established to generate evidence on the effect of cash transfers on increasing secondary enrolment rates among girls and reducing the incidence of child marriage.

To determine the feasibility of various cash-in-emergencies options in the context of Afghanistan, UNICEF supported a feasibility study on cash in emergencies funded by DFID and co-authored with WFP and UNHCR. The draft is being finalized for submission to DFID and will serve as a stepping stone for further discussions regarding future joint United Nations initiatives on cash in emergencies and potential partnerships with DFID.

OUTPUT 3 Government and partners have the capacity to identify and respond to gender equality concerns across all areas of UNICEF programme of cooperation.
Analytical statement of progress

With the support of UNICEF Afghanistan, MOLSAMD has taken forward the development of the ‘Policy Paper: Consolidated National Social Policy’. The work has proceeded at a slow but steady pace, culminating towards the end of the year in a number of inter-MOLSAMD and cross-ministerial consultations on the draft. The latest draft incorporates a range of child-related social protection issues, providing a basis for further discussions over the future direction of social protection in Afghanistan.

As part of the process of developing the policy paper, MOLSAMD expressed its intention to develop a comprehensive Afghanistan Child Programme. Next steps will include further consultations across the Government and the submission of the policy paper to the Office of the President for endorsement. UNICEF Afghanistan will explore options for engagement, including supporting the development of the child programme and contributing to further work on an integrated social protection strategy.

In addition, in 2018, UNICEF Afghanistan will undertake a mapping of the social protection landscape for children in order to generate evidence on the number of children benefiting from the country’s existing social protection mechanisms and the potential for enhancing the child-centred elements of these. A priority in this regard will be to closely engage and consult with development partners already active in the area of social protection.

In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan withdrew its support from a limited cash transfer project in Charkent District of Balkh Province. The project had been conceptualized as a pilot, funded through UNICEF Regular Resources, to demonstrate the effectiveness of social mobilization work in the areas of health, nutrition and education, when combined with unconditional and conditional cash grants. As this pilot was a standalone project with limited connections to established MOLSAMD social protection mechanisms, and given challenges in securing funding for sustainability and scaling up, the decision was taken to discontinue the initiative. A note on the lessons learned, particularly in establishing and administering a cash transfer system with MOLSAMD, is being prepared. In the meantime, a small cash transfer initiative for the families of out-of-school adolescent girls has been conceptualized and will be implemented under the education programme in 2018. The initiative was established to generate evidence on the effect of cash transfers on increasing secondary enrolment rates among girls and reducing the incidence of child marriage.

To determine the feasibility of various cash-in-emergencies options in the context of Afghanistan, UNICEF supported a feasibility study on cash in emergencies funded by DFID and co-authored with WFP and UNHCR. The draft is being finalized for submission to DFID and will serve as a stepping stone for further discussions regarding future joint United Nations initiatives on cash in emergencies and potential partnerships with DFID.

OUTPUT 4 Communication platforms and evidence-based tools are produced for advocacy and engagement to promote, protect and fulfil child rights especially for the most vulnerable.

Analytical statement of progress

UNICEF Afghanistan’s public advocacy continued to see steady growth in its social media fan base, from 174,200 Facebook fans in November 2016 to over 240,000 in November 2017, with a noteworthy increase in the number of Twitter followers from 3,650 in November 2016 to nearly 15,400 in November 2017. Combined, digital platforms reached more than 5 million people, and
strong Facebook and Twitter engagement scores indicate that UNICEF Afghanistan’s audiences are connecting with the featured child rights issues.

UNICEF Afghanistan drove engagement in its social media platforms through conscientious management of digital platforms, the production of compelling photo and video content from across the country and covering all sectors and close coordination with the UNICEF Division of Communications, donors and partners. Other contributing factors included receiving the verification badge on Twitter, covering timely issues such as the Children on the Move and Back-to-School campaigns; ongoing coordination on polio campaigns; and the continuous focus on featuring female role models to connect with female and adolescent audiences (which are nationally under-represented on digital platforms).

UNICEF Afghanistan produced its first ever virtual reality film, which focused on girls’ education. Globally, the film received more than 1.1 million views by the end of the year. Social media platforms also received a momentous boost during the Father’s Day campaign for ECD, when UNICEF Afghanistan’s flagship image received the third-largest Facebook engagement rate for a campaign, reaching nearly 2 billion people globally.

Digital outreach activities around World Children’s Day and activate talks held in Kabul and Herat reached more than half a million people online and were broadcast on national television as part of various #kidstakeover activities across the country.

Other successful digital ‘glocal’ campaigns included the launch of the Narrowing the Gaps report, World Immunization Week, the Day of the Girl, and contributions to the South Asia #WeTheFuture movement. Videos, photo essays and stories commissioned around the ongoing Children on the Move campaign were also featured prominently across global channels and used for advocacy purposes by National Committees and partners.

Producing targeted communications assets for government donors and UNICEF National Committees enabled UNICEF Afghanistan to reach a wider audience and better support resource mobilization. These included videos produced in Korean and Japanese, a video for the Norwegian National Committee, active online participation in the ‘Drop to Zero’ global polio pledging event, and coordinated digital outreach with the governments of Australia, Italy, Finland, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom, among others.

OUTPUT 5 Decision makers, civil society, academia, youth groups, religious and community leaders mobilized to support the fulfilment and protection of most vulnerable children and support the participation of children and youth in decisions that effects their lives.

Analytical statement of progress
Regional platforms for action were the driving force behind the mobilization of parliamentarians and religious leaders in Afghanistan in 2017. A meeting of parliamentarians in Kathmandu in March included the participation of two prominent Afghan members of Parliament. Their involvement resulted in personal commitments to work on polio eradication, ending child marriage in Afghanistan and promoting the child act, which is yet to be passed by Parliament. The chairperson of the Parliament health committee followed up with several meetings with the Minister of Public Health and visits to Paktai province to meet with community leaders to encourage their support for polio campaigns. One member of Parliament conducted similar advocacy in her own province of Ghor. These members of Parliament are relying on their personal influence and constituencies of support to promote these issues. However, a more
strategic approach with a clear and measurable plan of action is required to mobilize a wider group of parliamentarians.

In the same vein, Afghan religious leaders were invited to a regional meeting in Kathmandu in September. Although visa issues prevented the Afghan delegation from attending, their contributions were captured in the regional report and follow-up actions will take place in 2018 to develop a more systematic, targeted and results-driven partnership strategy with religious leaders.

In 2017 UNICEF Afghanistan organized activate talks to provide public forums for over 200 adolescents identified through youth and sports groups, to share their views, ideas and innovations with other young people on a peer-to-peer basis. Talks were held in Herat (September) and Kabul in November to coincide with World Children’s Day. Presenters and participants included out-of-school and in-school adolescent girls and boys from Bamyan and Badghis who are members of multi-purpose action groups developed under the IKEA Foundation and United States State Department-funded Improving Adolescents Lives in Afghanistan programme to give young people a voice, provide peer mentoring and empower them to address barriers hindering their education and development. Both events were broadcast on local television and shared and amplified through the WeTheFuture regional adolescents’ campaign. The Kabul Activate Talk aired on education television and reached an audience of at least 255,500.

The polio communication unit continued to mobilize trusted local influencers for support. In 2017, these included some 150 medical doctors (at two regional meetings in Kandahar and Jalalabad), mullahs, athletes and artists. Other partners included Afghan muralists, the Art Lords, and the national football Afghan Premier League – owned by the Moby Group – which promoted public service announcements and halftime polio reports during broadcast matches.

An ongoing partnership with the Afghan Cricket Board utilized star players both in polio media campaigns and UNICEF’s global Father’s Day Super Dads social media activation, which promoted ECD. The inauguration of the final national polio immunization campaign was timed to coincide with the final of the country’s largest sporting event, the cricket ‘spageeza’, at which stars of the national team vaccinated children before the match, in front of a television audience estimated at 16 million.

**OUTPUT 6** Enhanced capacity to eliminate practices harmful to children, adolescent and youth through promotion of positive social norms among families and communities.

**Analytical statement of progress**
Towards generating proof of concept for an effective approach to strengthening community and system capacities for addressing social norms and practices, an innovative Golden Villages Initiative was launched in 129 villages in two districts of Bamyan province using appreciative inquiry.

Appreciative inquiry is an empowering strength-based methodology that encourages participants to drop past negativities, envision a future rooted in their capacities and collectively design a breakthrough plan. When diverse stakeholders of a whole system, such as government counterparts, media, civil society and communities, collectively undergo such a transformative process, the outcome is a synergistic movement for positive change.
In mid-2016, 600 community influencers and community health workers from 129 villages came together in a series of appreciative inquiry-based workshops together with provincial and national authorities. They publicly committed to achieving five interlinked aspirational goals related to immunization, nutrition, maternal health, education and child marriage in order to attain Golden Village status.

Quantitative and qualitative implementation data indicate that within 15 months, by November 2017, the intervention had been highly effective, with demonstrable results, strong indications of mind set shifts and strengthened community and service systems.

Accounting for a margin of error, the provincially monitored data shows:

- 118 of the 129 villages were declared golden villages;
- Four of the 477 under-immunized children under 1 year out of 2,268 remain to be fully vaccinated, for 99.8 per cent full immunization in the 129 villages;
- 785 of the 937 out-of-school girls from a total of 7,373 girls between 7–16 years (84 per cent of out-of-school girls) enrolled in school;
- 10 deliveries of 1,252 pregnancies listed at baseline were at home – that is, 99.2 per cent were institutional deliveries;
- No marriages before 18 were reported and only one engagement before 18 was reported;
- Mothers’ groups and coordination committees were active in all 129 villages, indicating increasing social cohesion;
- Provincial government line departments closely monitored services and strengthened facility level recording, showing equal signs of commitment;
- Stronger communication was established between communities and authorities.

Stories from the field indicate:

- Community volunteerism has become increasingly normal; a cadre of ordinary women and parents emerged that voluntarily committed to supporting every challenged family in their village until solutions could be found, and felt that a positive outcome was the only payment needed;
- Distinct sense of inter-connectedness and shared responsibility, with working and planning together having become the new norm;
- Perceptible shift in the role of women in decision-making;
- Positive competition among communities in regard to enrolment and immunization.

In a similar approach, SMS units from 13 provinces were capacitated as master trainers on the artistry of social engagement, resulting in a joint declaration by three ministries – education, public health, and social affairs– to achieve a fully enrolled district by March 2018 through mobilizing 5,450 SMS. Further, SMS supported Afghan children returning from Pakistan to re-enrol in school in three affected provinces in 2017. In 2018, the number of provinces with this intervention will expand to seven.

The year 2017 established evidence of the effectiveness of inter-sectoral approaches to shifting community norms and practices and strengthening governmental systems.

**OUTCOME 7** UNICEF Programme of Cooperation has the necessary resources (financial, human and systems) to deliver on its programme results efficiently and in a cost-effective method.
Analytical statement of progress

UNICEF Afghanistan ensured timely, effective and coordinated support to children and women through efficient security analysis, mobilization and allocation of resources, enhancing RBM and quality assurance of the services delivered in development and humanitarian contexts. The HAC appeal was fully funded, yet gaps remained in EiE. Most of the funds in 2017 were received from the governments of Canada, the United States and, for the first time, Australia.

With improvements in supply and procurement planning, UNICEF Afghanistan ensured supply availability to emergency responses and delivered supplies worth over US$37 million to implementing partners and communities. More than 10 robust assessments and audits, including more than 100 spotchecks, took place and improved the risk mitigation and quality assurance procedures of the services delivered by partners. In addition to ensuring the quality of the services delivered for children and women, UNICEF Afghanistan achieved new donor partnerships with funding from the Government of Australia, the United Kingdom and the European Union. Overall, the funding level of UNICEF Afghanistan reached 91 per cent out of an estimated US$82 million for the regular resources funding of 2018–2019.

UNICEF Afghanistan simplified transaction processing and improved data management that expedited cash transfer modalities. Moreover, to facilitate timely and efficient staffing for programme sections, two standard operating procedures were developed and introduced on recruiting staff and engaging consultants. Enhanced partnerships between the human resources and programme sections in advanced planning resulted in the efficient recruitment and deployment of staff. The operations sections also ensured disaster preparedness and business continuity by improving the quality of operating systems and data management.

Equipped with adequate financial and human capital, UNICEF Afghanistan has run effective operations and programmes to achieve equitable outcomes for children and implement the agenda for their equality and human rights. The daily monitoring of 48 local media outlets demonstrate that UNICEF had increased its share of voices on child-related issues from 23 per cent in 2016 to 34 per cent in 2017, and 88 per cent of coverage included key child rights messages. Over 100 journalists received trainings on reporting on children’s health issues and at least 60 weekly radio programmes on child rights were aired in local languages. UNICEF Afghanistan also collaborated with local television channels in broadcasting messages raising awareness on gender-based violence and adolescent issues.

Furthermore, a total of 3,556 out-of-school adolescents across Afghanistan were mobilized and became members of multi-purpose groups established for their empowerment and advocacy. The adolescent empowerment and development efforts of UNICEF Afghanistan have also yielded strong interest among and the active participation of religious leaders, communities and governmental partners in promoting awareness of child marriage issues and adolescents’ rights to education, health and other issues. As it is evident from the 2017 evaluations of child protection and WASH interventions, UNICEF Afghanistan also increased accountability mechanisms and partners’ sense of ownership on responding to children’s issues based on evidence. More active partner engagement on RBM and evidence-based programming, have created additional opportunities for UNICEF to deliver sustainable results for children and women in Afghanistan.

Following the MTR results of the country programme, UNICEF Afghanistan is geared towards intensifying risk-informed programming and risk-mitigation measures in its humanitarian and development interventions. The MTR results contributed to enhancing the Country Programme

strategies for implementing activities and will contribute to delivering more positive outcomes that will provide children and women with opportunities, protection and enabling environments for sustainable development.

OUTPUT 1 Strategic evaluations for thematic areas are conducted and results of evaluations are used in programmes and operations

Analytical statement of progress
Out of five planned strategic evaluations in the country programme, UNICEF Afghanistan completed the evaluation of CPAN. In addition, two more evaluations in the areas of child protection and WinS were carried out in 2017.

Conducted in eight provinces of Afghanistan, the evaluation of WinS covered behaviour change and examined the quality of sanitation and menstrual hygiene facilities supported by UNICEF. UNICEF and the Government of Afghanistan are collaborating on the WinS policy and the evaluation results are expected to play a crucial role in formulating the strategies and approach to tackling children’s WASH issues.

The evaluations of the child protection interventions measured the extent to which the work of UNICEF Afghanistan has made a difference in raising awareness and changing the behaviour of the population in regard to protecting boys and girls from all forms of violence and promoting their right to education. In particular, the findings from the CPAN evaluation, which was conducted in more than 10 provinces of Afghanistan, illuminated a number of issues related to children with disabilities and the quality of case management in provinces.

All three evaluations were carried in collaboration with the evaluation reference groups, which consisted of representatives from the donor community, government ministries and implementing partners, all of whom took active roles in reviewing and providing feedback on the evaluation products throughout the process. This ensured the ownership of national partners, as well as enhanced transparency and accountability through the sharing of evaluation results with partners who play influential roles in responding to the evaluation recommendations, lessons learned and findings. Discussions are currently underway on how to address the evaluation recommendations, and formal evaluation management responses will be finalized in 2018.

In the meantime, UNICEF Afghanistan initiated two major evaluations of the country programme (to be conducted in 2018): 1) a mid-term evaluation of community-based education; and 2) a formative evaluation of IMAM. UNICEF Afghanistan is also establishing experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation frameworks for three new programmes, including one on nutrition and two relating to adolescent development.

Despite the progress made in regard to evaluations in 2017, security, seasonal issues and limited national capacity contributed to delays in the implementation of the evaluation activities.

OUTPUT 2 A system of knowledge management, including studies, lessons learned, good practices and evaluations is established, updated and used in programmes and operations.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan focused on strengthening its internal knowledge base and culture of adhering to RBM principles. To this end, three full workshops were arranged and facilitated
by global master trainers with strong support from ROSA to adapt global training to the regional context. In addition, a three-day RBM orientation was conducted with senior staff ahead of MTR sectoral programme planning workshops to refresh key RBM concepts to be used in the workshops. A total of 86 staff attended the regular RBM trainings, and 28 staff, including most CMT members, were reached through the RBM orientation. Each RBM training included a full-day refresher on human rights-based approaches to programming to ensure that a critical mass of staff have working knowledge of human rights principles and that the post-MTR programme would have a solid human rights grounding.

Building the agenda of the programme planning workshops around RBM training exercises helped to ensure that the post-MTR programme was firmly grounded on the principles and logic of RBM. Furthermore, UNICEF Afghanistan undertook an experimental internal workshop using RBM principles for planning related to operations and HACT, proving that RBM is also highly applicable to these functions.

In addition to the programme planning workshops, the MTR was informed by extensive generation and review of evidence, including a conflict analysis and a review of progress against intended results. This exercise supported strategic planning and helped streamline the programme with a reduced number of outputs.

Whereas staff members found the content of RBM workshops highly applicable to their daily work, a challenge will be translating the learning from the workshops into an RBM culture where programme officers consistently ensure that planning documents are in line with key RBM principles, and ensuring that the office supports them in this regard. In 2018, a key priority will be to identify pathways for further strengthening RBM internally, while also strengthening the capacity of the Government and implementing partners on RBM.

The implementation of the integrated planning, monitoring and evaluation plan remained largely on track with some security-related delays that adversely affected the timely implementation of planned activities. Nevertheless, UNICEF Afghanistan managed to complete most of the planned activities, with an implementation rate of 79 per cent. The results of the evidence generation activities have served the programme purposes in the quality assurance, innovation, assurance and risk-informed planning.

OUTPUT 3 Media at the international, national and provincial levels have the capacity, knowledge and motivation to prioritize and promote children’s rights in Afghanistan.

Analytical statement of progress

Daily monitoring of 48 local media outlets (national and provincial print media, web media, television channels and radio stations) aligned to match global key performance indicators demonstrated that throughout 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan increased its share of voice on child-related issues to 34 per cent and that 88 per cent of coverage included key child rights messages. This engagement was driven by media outreach through 10 press releases, interviews with and media coverage of high-profile UNICEF Afghanistan events including the MTR review, the launch of Girls’ Hygiene Day, International Day of the Girl and the launch of the SUN movement in Afghanistan.

Through a no-cost partnership with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, at least 60 weekly programmes on child rights issues were broadcast in Dari and Pashto in 2017. The radio station is one of only three that broadcast nationwide in Afghanistan. The station is eager to continue
this partnership; however UNICEF Afghanistan awaits data on audience reach and response to inform its continuation. Future considerations will include exploration of ways to increase audience participation with listener call-ins, for example.

A memorandum of understanding with the private station Taraqi television in Herat facilitated the no-cost broadcast of a UNICEF activate talk in September at which adolescents were mobilized through local youth groups to share their views and ideas with an audience of young people, on a peer-to-peer basis. Similarly, Education television provided a free broadcast of the activate talk recorded in Kabul for World Children’s Day in November. This programme, which features adolescent innovators and their child rights aspirations, reached an estimated 255,500 viewers in Afghanistan.

During the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the new women’s channel, Zan television, also broadcast public service announcements on child marriage from UNICEF Afghanistan’s YouTube channel. Going forward, UNICEF Afghanistan will continue to develop such media partnerships and encourage media organizations to explore, utilize and distribute UNICEF Afghanistan media assets as long as attribution is given.

Specific outreach to media in Kabul for World Children’s Day resulted in a #kidstakeover at six television stations (RTA, TV24, Shamshad, Tolo, Khourshid, Kabul News), four radio stations (RTA, BBC, Radio Free Europe, Killid), Pajhwok news agency and the Killid media group magazine. Television stations in Herat, Kandahar and Farah also developed programming for World Children’s Day.

Capacity building activities included the training of 84 journalists in western and central regions on ethical reporting on children, utilizing UNICEF guiding principles and a joint United Nations handbook developed in 2016 by the United Nations Communication Group. Such outreach led to increased media interest in UNICEF-supported activities and visits by media in Herat to WASH projects at an internally displaced persons settlement. Subject-specific media orientations were also conducted to raise awareness and reporting on diarrhoea management, zinc and ORS and polio eradication. Trainings on polio were conducted with approximately 200 journalists in Kandahar, Jalalabad, Herat, and Kabul. Generally held before vaccination campaigns, the sessions maximized media attention and led to a noticeable increase in polio coverage.

**OUTPUT 4** Timely, effective and coordinated support to the children and women of Afghanistan to save lives, protect rights of children and women through development-humanitarian continuum, building resilience capacity and reducing vulnerability.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Through the efficient mobilization and allocation of resources and the coordination of technical support from the programme, operations and security sections, UNICEF Afghanistan ensured the delivery of services for children and women in both humanitarian and development contexts. With its presence in 13 strategic locations across Afghanistan, UNICEF Afghanistan’s timely, effective and coordinated support to children and women also included verifying, monitoring and assuring the quality of the implementation of interventions and the results achieved while observing due diligence.

Unavoidable challenges in the form of security risks and direct access restrictions seriously jeopardized the efficiency of the coordinated support provided to children and women.
Nonetheless, UNICEF Afghanistan continuously increased the capacity of staff and partners and ensured that resources were properly used, necessary technical and financial oversight was provided and results were monitored and verified. To mitigate risks and challenges imposed by the security situation and access restrictions, UNICEF Afghanistan enhanced partnerships and effectively utilized the services of third-party monitoring, extenders and implementing partners in the field. In particular, the coordinated delivery of services was instrumental to UNICEF Afghanistan's ability to respond to urgent needs and minimize human suffering during emergencies.

UNICEF Afghanistan developed an accountability framework emphasizing the roles and responsibilities of the country office, field office and outposts. This framework elaborated the role of each part of the organization in planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting on results for children and streamlined the efforts of teams through an effective matrix management model.

**OUTPUT 5 Efficient and effective management of construction, procurement, supply and logistics in support of UNICEF Afghanistan Programme of Cooperation.**

**Analytical statement of progress**

Procurement levels stabilized in 2017 from the previous years' marked increases. The local market remained extremely constrained with little manufacturing and a weak local supplier base. Insecurity also affected the offshore market in the provision of services, with some vendors indicating an unwillingness to send teams to Afghanistan. The year 2017 was marked by extended closures of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, which resulted in months of subsequent delays in the delivery of supplies. Alternate shipping routes through Iran were explored as a viable alternative and this work will continue in 2018 to secure multiple routes of delivery.

There was a marked improvement in the accuracy of the supply plan against actual procurement. Two periodic reviews were undertaken in 2017, with each programme, and UNICEF Afghanistan appears on track for procurement to be within 10 per cent of the final revised plan. To ensure the quality of local supply delivery, a third-party inspection service company was contracted to conduct sample and pre-delivery evaluations. In 2017, the first tender was issued using a new e-tendering platform: as the first UNICEF country office to test the platform, UNICEF Afghanistan is aiming to streamline the bidding process both by being more accessible to bidders not located in Kabul and improving the efficiency of opening bidding processes. UNICEF Afghanistan remains an active member of the United Nations Joint Procurement Working Group with 17 long-term agreements out of its 78 long-term agreements being piggybacked on by other United Nations agencies and offices. UNICEF also leads joint procurements for ancillary workers and telecommunications. To reinforce the UNICEF Afghanistan knowledge base on service contracting, a weeklong training was presented to 27 staff in Kabul. Another four training sessions on warehouse and inventory management were presented to 155 partners in each of the zonal offices. The UNICEF Supply Division undertook a number of support missions to provide supply chain strengthening support to the education, nutrition and health sections.

The decentralization of supplies to UNICEF Afghanistan-managed storage facilities in Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Jalalabad and Kandahar, in addition to the main central warehouses in Kabul, continued to ensure supply availability for emergency responses. Supplies worth over US$37 million were dispatched to implementing partners or communities in 2017.
With respect to construction projects, an additional five schools were completed from the Central Highlands School Project and work has begun on the GAVI Alliance project to support the construction of over 20 storage facilities at the provincial level for MOPH.

**OUTPUT 6** Support analysis of risks and mitigating measures for effective programme delivery and build capacity among UNICEF staff and partners to manage risks and be fully accountable for use of UNICEF resources.

**Analytical statement of progress**
Regarding transfers to partners (civil society organizations and the Government), key components of risk mitigation were micro-assessments, HACT audits, spot-checks and programmatic visits.

Micro-assessments
A contract was signed in June 17 and the first batch of 11 assessments commenced, with 34 planned for early 2018. These assessments will provide an overview of the strengths and weaknesses relating to partners’ internal controls.

HACT audits
A contract was signed in August and 17 and 11 audits have commenced, with over 30 planned for early 2018. (Six audits were completed in early 2016.)

Spot-checks
In 2017, 149 spot-checks were expected to be completed, an improvement on the 109 completed in 2016.

Programmatic visits
Following a review of internal processes, a revised template was rolled out, in addition to a tracking template to monitor high-priority recommendations. Quality will be monitored by the chief of section, who will sign off on all reports.

There was therefore a significant improvement in risk mitigation measures in 2017, though that the initial micro-assessments and HACT audit findings will only be available for review in early 2018. These findings will assist UNICEF Afghanistan in identifying common weaknesses across implementing partners so that capacity-building efforts can be focused where needed.

**OUTPUT 7** Support the UNICEF programme of cooperation in the country with timely security analysis, mission planning and the conduct of security operations; security risks to personnel, assets, facilities and programme implementation are mitigated.

**Analytical statement of progress**
The UNICEF Afghanistan security section supported the programmes in a number of areas, including office protective measures and upgrading works, which resulted from the blast assessment.

Trainings were also delivered to UNICEF Afghanistan staff on various safety and security topics including safe and secure approaches in field environments, driving armoured vehicles, IFAK, women’s security awareness and radio communication. UNICEF Afghanistan delivered timely
analytical outputs and advice to the CMT and other bodies to ensure that staff were fully aware of the ever-changing security situation in the country.

To increase the capacity of the security section, UNICEF Afghanistan has undertaken a recruitment programme and generated four new local security assistant posts in the field to support programme staff with security risk assessments and mission planning, as well as local training and mission attendance.

These initiatives have better prepared staff to deliver programmes and visit hazardous areas, and have enabled the security section to monitor and forecast potential issues for staff to plan for or be aware of.

OUTPUT 8 UNICEF Programme of Cooperation is adequately resourced; the resources are used for intended purposes and stakeholders receive timely quality reports.

Analytical statement of progress
The current country programme funding status (exclusive of Other Resources Emergency) is 76 per cent funded as at end November 2017. When considering funding in the confirmed Other Resources Regular pipeline (US$21.5million) and estimations for full Regular Resources funding into 2018–2019 (US$82million), the funding level reaches 91 per cent overall.

The overall figure masks large discrepancies across and within the programme sectors and does not consider expiry dates of funding and the earmarked nature of funding available and in the pipeline. Most of the confirmed pipeline is linked to specific interventions related to polio, WASH and health. Underfunded outcome areas are child protection and nutrition. In addition, while sectors such as education seem to be very well-funded, elements of the programme, such as interventions linked to quality education (i.e. curriculum reform), are underfunded.

By November 2017, the 2017 HAC appeal was fully funded when considering the US$6.7 million carried forward from 2016. Gaps remained, largely in EiE. Although most humanitarian funding was earmarked, flexible funds were received from the governments of Canada and the United States (PRM) and, for the first time, Australia.

New donor partnerships were cultivated with funding from the Government of Australia, DFID and the European Union (pledged) – all of which had not provided directed country-level funding since 2010. Existing donor relationships were maintained and strengthened through regular engagement with donors at all levels, through briefings, donor reports and donor events, including a luncheon organized during an RD visit and a polio meeting held with WHO. The UNICEF representative also participated in global annual consultations in Tokyo and Seoul and UNICEF Afghanistan engaged with an evaluation mission of the Government of the Republic of Korea in Kabul. In 2017, a quarterly e-newsletter was also developed and shared.

Donor recognition remained an important area of work, with partnership videos elaborated for the annual consultations as well as press releases and related social media engagement for new contributions from the governments of Australia, Italy, Japan and DFID. Human interest stories and material on digital platforms also mentioned donors and were documented and shared with donors. UNICEF Afghanistan hosted the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea at a CLTS event in Nili district, the British Ambassador at the Indira Gandhi hospital and participated in a signing ceremony with the Japanese Ambassador for annual funding for EPI and polio.
Fundraising efforts are linked to UNICEF Afghanistan’s capacity to deliver and report on results and expend funds as per donor agreements. Based on the recognition of this critical interconnectedness, contribution management and quality reporting remained focus areas, with a standard operating procedure on this topic finalized along with annexed donor proposal and reports templates and quality checklists. Key performance indicators were also regularly monitored through monthly key products circulated by RMBU and through Programme Management Team meetings. Building the capacity of UNICEF Afghanistan staff to manage and report on funds was also supported through five training sessions held in Kabul and one in Jalalabad.

OUTPUT 9 UNICEF programme of cooperation receives effective systems support, administration, human resources, finance and IRM support.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, DCT monitoring was done on a weekly basis. DCTs unliquidated for between six and nine months were less than 4 per cent against a standard benchmark of 10 per cent and those under nine months were 1 per cent, which is also within range. Capacity building for financial management was strengthened with a workshop on invoice and payment processing work flows held in April 2017. This helped to improve payment processing, and 95 per cent of the more than 10,000 payment requests submitted to the Division of Financial and Administrative Management in 2017 were processed within the time limits set in the revised workflows.

A bank communication manager payment method was implemented in June 2017 for all vendors with a valid bank account. As a result, payment instructions are now being wired directly to vendors’ accounts by the Global Shared Services Centre. This has shortened the payment processing cycle by two working days. UNICEF Afghanistan successfully rolled out e-ZHACT at the beginning of November 2017, which has simplified transaction processing for all cash transfer modalities and will address data integrity issues and enable better reporting in the longer term.

To facilitate the timely and efficient staffing for programme sections, two new standard operating procedures were introduced on recruitment of staff and engagement of consultants. Human resources partnered with programme hiring managers to plan recruitments in advance and enable the right human resources to be deployed at the right time. This resulted in 85 per cent of 50 programme recruitments in 2017 to be completed within 45–60 days and 13 consultants to be engaged for limited duration specific technical expertise programme tasks. Two standby partners and eight incoming staff from other offices were engaged to support programme sections to fill temporary vacancies and ensure continuous programme delivery. As part of the HRDT, human resources facilitated several learning opportunities for staff on technical programme content, as well as on staff well-being issues and communication.

The ICT disaster recovery plan was tested in August. UNICEF Afghanistan’s business continuity alternate and recovery site was relocated from Dubai to New Delhi, with daily scheduled data replication from Kabul to New Delhi. Data from the four zonal offices was replicated on a daily basis to Kabul. Up-to-date operating systems and security updates were installed on servers and clients to mitigate exposure to risks and ensure data integrity. To improve efficiency and effectiveness and in line with the global ICT strategy, four work processes were automated in SharePoint. Technical assistance and guidance was provided to the programme sector on two
Technology for Development projects. More than 4,100 service calls were treated locally by the ICT help desk, and 67 learning events on UNICEF systems and applications were presented.

In response to audit recommendations, UNICEF Afghanistan invested considerable time in further refining its HACT and construction financial management processes, including contracting special audits to inform future partner training and internal processes such that future efficiency and effectiveness gains can be embedded in control processes. In addition, a country-specific anti-fraud strategy has been developed to ensure targeted and effective fraud prevention guidance for programme activities.

**OUTPUT 10** Mobilize adolescents and youths in priority provinces for adolescent development, gender action plan results and for inter-sectoral action.

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF Afghanistan is working to reduce child marriage as part of a regional programme Improving Adolescents Lives in South Asia, focusing on empowering adolescents especially girls, working with the community and providing education and protection services to the most vulnerable. Starting in July 2017, a total of 3,556 mostly out-of-school adolescents are now members of multi-purpose action groups (1,805 girls and 1,751 boys) and will receive training on life skills and act as a safe space for adolescent girls to come together to learn and share their concerns. Training on child rights in Islam was provided to religious leaders in seven provinces. The training highlighted the implications of child marriage and its detrimental effects on education, health and the mental well-being of adolescent girls.

Key reinforcing messages on ending child marriage via the Afghan Women’s Leadership Initiative were prepared for Friday prayers in local mosques. Community mobilization to end child marriage also took place with a total of 7,380 religious leaders trained across the seven provinces. The other interventions around education and cash grants will start in 2018. Baseline data on adolescents, the community and religious leaders was also gathered. In addition, a robust evaluation mechanism was designed for five provinces to measure the impact of education, community mobilization and unconditional cash grants.

The western and northern regions held workshops chaired by provincial governors to raise awareness on the negative impacts of child marriage and to highlight the importance of education, as well as approaches to positive masculinity. Ongoing coordination of activities with key ministries at the provincial level with key government departments continues to take place. Subnational level approaches to generating dialogue and creating advocacy around ending child marriage are more engaging, though the process at the central level requires a more coordinated approach to facilitate inter-ministerial dialogue to generate political will.

**OUTCOME 8** During emergencies, children and women have access to and utilize child protection, education, health, nutrition and WASH services.

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF Afghanistan leads the nutrition and WASH clusters, coordinates the child protection area of responsibility and co-leads the EiEWG to strengthen leadership, improve coordination and facilitate robust contingency planning. UNICEF Afghanistan targeted 50 per cent of children with SAM for treatment in 24 provinces where the SAM rate was greater than 3 per cent. In collaboration with the health cluster, UNICEF Afghanistan reached affected women and children
through mobile health teams, measles vaccination of children under 5, boosting health awareness, provision of critical supplies and capacity-building of government counterparts, NGOs and BPHS implementers in the area of maternal health and newborn care.

In WASH, durable solutions such as small-scale solar pumping networks or gravity-fed systems will be promoted to cater to the longer term needs of internally displaced persons, returnees and their host communities, thus strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus. As a part of its commitment under the Grand Bargain, UNICEF Afghanistan works with Ground Truth to assess its support to national and local NGOs. Further actions are planned to enhance the number and quality of partnerships with local actors.

All sectors were fully funded except for education. Education received only 15 per cent of its appeal, resulting in under-achieved results. Owing to the lower than expected number of returnees, the results achieved under nutrition, WASH and education were lower than planned. UNICEF Afghanistan achieved 90 per cent of the target for measles vaccination, reaching 117,500 children due to the high number of prolonged displacements and the provision of the same services to returnees. Ninety-six per cent of the targeted women who were pregnant were reached with essential health kits. UNICEF Afghanistan provided 145,819 affected people (73 per cent of the target) with access to safe drinking water.

However, progress in sanitation was lower because a large proportion of internally displaced persons use the facilities of the host families, and thus do not require emergency latrines. The results achieved under child protection surpassed the target due to the high needs among returnee and internally displaced children. A total of 200,000 children and family members were supported with blankets, winter clothes, family kits and plastic sheet to protect against the cold.

**OUTPUT 4** Girls and boys have access to safe and secure education and critical information for their own well-being in humanitarian situations.

**Analytical statement of progress**

MOE, alongside UNICEF Afghanistan and other partners, made progress in increasing access to basic education for children affected by emergencies, mostly those displaced by conflict and those returning to Afghanistan. Over 180,000 children out of a targeted 375,000 were reached through 20 organizations working throughout the country. Promotion of EiE is helping children choose peace over war and reintegrate into Afghan communities. By not investing in children’s immediate right to education, development outcomes are at risk of being seriously diminished through exacerbating an already overburdened education system.

Successful advocacy conducted throughout the year resulted in the EiEWG (led by MOE, co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children) becoming a full part of the humanitarian architecture within the country (August 2017). This included separate chapters in the HNO/HRP, and US$10 million secured from the CHF and bi-lateral donors for the sector. Afghanistan was also chosen as an Education Cannot Wait recipient, whereby the first allocation was facilitated through UNICEF support to MOE. The EiEWG presented at the Global Education Cluster annual meeting and received additional coordination support from the Global Education Cluster rapid response team. The EiEWG invested time in strengthening its information and knowledge management function, including by supporting a joint education and child protection assessment and verification of closed schools, the latter which was conducted by UNICEF Afghanistan.

For UNICEF Afghanistan, the objective for the first quarter of 2017 was to establish a well-
functioning national EiEWG with fully developed quality information management products in place to manage data analysis, assessment result compilation and identify and coordinate response gaps. In addition, subnational coordination mechanisms were established with UNICEF Afghanistan support in Kandahar, Nangarhar, Herat and Kabul and will continue to merit a special focus in 2018. A series of trainings on EiE, coordination and information management reached 90 education personnel from national and subnational levels, strengthening a well-functioning coordination mechanism.

Furthermore, in order to ensure linkages to development and ensure that all gains made are sustainable, UNICEF Afghanistan has been closely ensuring a systemic approach, linking support to other child-focused sectors particularly with WASH and child protection clusters. By exploring partnerships with entities such as the World Bank and Citizen’s Charter, the EiEWG is linking humanitarian action with mid- and longer-term programming and funding.

As a member of the EiEWG and in collaboration with PEDs and two national and three international NGO partners, UNICEF Afghanistan supported continued access to 69,500 crisis-affected school-age girls and boys (52 per cent girls). While this is fewer than the targeted 100,000 children, it is expected to be much higher in the coming months as bottlenecks related to access and capacity are addressed. Activities included: 1) establishment of temporary learning spaces (either newly established community-based education classes, formal schools or tents); 2) provision of teaching, learning, recreational and classroom materials, including school-in-a-box, blackboards, floor mats and recreational kits; 3) training of teachers; and 4) social mobilization activities on the importance of EiE, especially for girls via trainings for 750 SMS.

OUTPUT 6 Rapid assessment, monitoring and evaluation humanitarian action for girls, boys and women is timely, effective and efficient.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Afghanistan enhanced its humanitarian performance monitoring capacity to obtain and maintain real-time information on the progress of the UNICEF response. Training was conducted for key staff by a humanitarian performance monitoring expert deployed from the Office of Emergency Programmes. A monitoring tracking sheet including 10 key indicators was initiated and all sections started to report on these indicators on a monthly basis. This enabled UNICEF Afghanistan to identify and address any gaps, communicate progress and use the information as an advocacy tool to support resource mobilization.

In 2017, UNICEF Afghanistan and with other humanitarian partners – IOM, UNHCR, WFP and CSO – supported 214,521 affected people of which 58 per cent (124,422) were children. The distributed non-food items included blankets, tarpaulins, family kits and winter clothing kits. The major humanitarian situations that UNICEF Afghanistan responded to were conflict-induced internally displaced persons, cross-border returnees or refugees, flooding, landslides, harsh winter and a few cases of disease outbreak.

The Afghan Disaster Management Authority is the coordinating body for the management of the humanitarian situation in the country. In 2017, UNICEF supported the Afghan Disaster Management Authority to manage their supplies and warehouses more effectively. To enhance their stock management capacity, 12 Rubb Halls were installed in 12 prioritized provinces (Panjshir, Samangan, Logar, Jawzjan, Khost, Paktia Wardak, Laghman, Ghor, Daikundi, Parwan, Saripul and Bamyan). In addition, the Afghan Disaster Management Authority’s
national strategic warehouse was partially renovated. In order to better protect the stock, a surrounding wall was constructed for the Afghan Disaster Management Authority in Laghman province.

As a part of capacity development for partners, 116 warehouse managers of line government counterparts in the north-eastern, western and eastern regions of the country were trained on warehouse management and basics of the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. This intervention enabled the Afghan Disaster Management Authority and other government partners to respond to the humanitarian situation in a more effective and professional manner.

Document centre

Evaluations and research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sequence Number</th>
<th>Type of Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Street Working Children's Project</td>
<td>2017/103</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of WASH in Schools</td>
<td>2017/003</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Child Protection Action Network</td>
<td>2017/001</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme to Increase Demand for Maternal and Newborn Health Services Baseline Assessment</td>
<td>2017/005</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan National Maternal and Newborn Health Quality of Care Assessment</td>
<td>2017/004</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottle Neck Analysis (BNA) for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) in Afghanistan – 2017</td>
<td>2017/002</td>
<td>Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative research on effectiveness of Polio communications messaging</td>
<td>2017/008</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of Childhood Diseases, Polio virus and Vaccination in the Polio very high risks districts of Afghanistan</td>
<td>2017/007</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of Child Marriage radio and TV spots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIFS TV, Radio spots and Jingle song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency leaflet - Dari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency booklet- Dari and Pashto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc+ORS: media handbook- Dari and Pashto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc+ORS: Job Aid - Dari and Pashto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc-ORS: Fatima’s storybook- Dari and Pashto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc-ORS: Jamila’s storybook (school storybook)-Dari and Pashto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Friendly Schools (CFS) advocacy / promotional brochure and poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 human-interest stories published on Medium.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video for Eid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video for #ActivateTalks HERAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video for WCD: #KidsTakeOver at the #ActivateTalks KABUL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video for WCD: #KidsTakeOver at the #ActivateTalks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video for #WeTheFuture: The Power of Sports to Shape the Future of Adolescents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video for #ChildrenUprooted: Deported &amp; scared for his future - One teen migrant's story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video for #ChildrenUprooted: Finding hope through education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Reality video: Ready to Learn, Ready to Live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video in Korean: UNICEF and the RoK - A partnership for Afghanistan's children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video in Japanese: UNICEF and Japan - Making a difference for Afghanistan's children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video about community-based education/child labour: From the quarry to the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video about community health workers: A life of love and service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video animation: Courage of a little heart – Protect children from armed conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending Preventable Child Deaths from Pneumonia and Diarrhoea in Afghanistan: An Analysis of Intervention Coverage Scenarios Using the Lives Saved Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving immunization in Afghanistan: results from a cross-sectional community-based survey to assess routine immunization coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaling up new-born care in Afghanistan: opportunities and challenges for the health sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding threats to polio vaccine commitment among caregivers in high-priority areas of Afghanistan: a polling study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lessons learned

#### Document Type/Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme documents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Document Type | Title | Name |
| MTR | MTR Summary Report | MTR Summary Report FINAL.DOCX |