

### Update on the context and situation of children

Argentina is an upper middle-income country with a [GNI per capita of USD 12,370](#) and a [Human Development Index](#) of 0.825 in 2018 (high human development category).

Argentina is a Federal State with Central State developing norms, policies and strategies while relevant child-related competencies are decentralized to provinces. Challenges persist, as competencies transferred to provinces do not always entail the financial resources and capacities, generating equity gaps among regions and provinces.

Argentina is facing an economic crisis, being in recession with [GDP expected to decrease 3.1% in 2019](#). The country suffered another currency run in August (total 50% devaluation of the Peso in 2019) which accelerated inflation rate ([53.8% for 2019](#)). Primary fiscal deficit will reach 0.5% of GDP and total deficit 2.4%. Public debt is estimated around 100% of GDP for 2019. Unemployment rate grew to 10.6% with a higher rate among young women (23.4%).

To face the precarious economic situation, in 2019 the country modified the [IMF agreement \(US\\$57 billion\) reached in 2018](#). Currently, a high level of sovereign risk may generate a default of public debt. The new administration that took office in December 2019 started negotiations to restructure the external debt, suspended the 2020 National Budget Law and passed a Social Solidarity and Productive Recovery Law, declaring a state of economic, financial, fiscal, administrative, energetical, social and health emergency.

The [latest official information](#) (first semester of 2019) showed that 35.4% of the population and 52.6% of children (7 million) live in monetary poverty. [48.6% of all children lives in multidimensional poverty](#). To address the situation, the new Government launched the programme "Argentina Contra el Hambre", consisting of a bank card exclusively to buy food items for families with children under 6 who are already enrolled in the Universal Child Allowance (UCH).

Argentina [invests 8% of its GDP in public policies directed to children](#): 75% are executed by the provinces. Public spending on children has doubled in the last 20 years, with disparities in budgetary allocations between provinces. Fiscal constraints demanded significant public budget cuts in 2019, with efforts to sustain social expenditures at national level. Regarding child-focused expenditure, the sustainment of cash-transfers is notable; nevertheless, [budget under-execution in some areas](#), such as ECD and initial education might have compromised the fulfilment of national goals.

The social protection system provides income protection for almost [90% of children](#). However, it fails to reach over one million children. Every year, approximately 300,000 children lose this right because of problems with the certification of the conditionalities.

Only [21% of children between 0 and 3 years have access to childcare or education services](#), with disparities according to income levels. [Only 1 out of 2 workers](#) have access to maternity and paternity leaves, due to an unequal system that fails to contemplate all families and doesn't cover all care-related needs. The country invests [1.9% of its GDP in early childhood](#); the effective implementation of the [National Early Childhood Strategy](#), elaborated in 2019 supported by a presidential decree is essential moving forward.

[Initial level education remains a challenge](#): the probability to attend school for children aged 3 and 4 from families in the highest quintile is 15 to 20% higher compared to the lowest quintile.

Despite progress in secondary school enrolment, [500,000 adolescents are out of school](#). Only 50% entering the level manages to complete school, due to early entry into the labor market, economic difficulties, the need to take care of a family member, pregnancy, distance or lack of schools, or not considering school to be relevant to their lives.

Child mortality has been reduced, while further efforts are needed to reduce maternal mortality, which showed high disparities between provinces. More than 50% of maternal deaths could be reduced by adequate care at delivery and postpartum.

Argentina shows [alarming suicide rates \(6.7 per 100,000 adolescents\)](#), and suicide mortality during adolescence tripled during the last decades. Unintended pregnancies represent a risk: [12.7% of births in 2018 were to mothers under 19, and 70% were unintended. Each year, close to 2,300 girls and teenagers under 15 become pregnant](#), which poses the risk of physical complications and are associated to sexual abuse. In most parts of the country, there are few services with adequate quality and confidentiality to attend adolescents.

Malnutrition poses a challenge. At present, 1.8 million children live in households where the income doesn't cover the basic food basket, placing them in [extreme poverty](#). It is estimated that 1 out of 3 school-age children suffer from overweight or

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obesity ([20% in both cases for children aged 5 to 17](#)).

The legal framework on violence, neglect and abuse against children was strengthened in the past years. However, violence against children continues to be a source of concern. Large part of violence suffered is naturalized in the family environment; children also suffer violence in school, social networks and sports institutions.

[9,096 children without parental care](#) lived under institutional care in 2017. While progress has been made, mainly through the enactment of a [Law 27,364](#) bottlenecks persist: insufficient capacity of services to detect, report and address cases of violence, weak reception systems, poor quality standards of institutions and coordination.

The national Juvenile Justice System is not consistent with the CRC, offering fewer guarantees to adolescents than to accused adults and leaving room for discretionary intervention by judges. According to available statistics, there are 5.872 adolescents (mostly from stigmatized and vulnerable social sectors) in penal establishments, including alternative penal measures in the territory, restrictions on liberty and deprivation of liberty (SENNAF, 2019).

Legal and institutional obstacles continue to exist to build a uniform system of comprehensive protection, with limited resources in many provinces and a variable degree of decentralization and coordination. Fourteen years after National Act 26,061 establishing the National Ombudsperson for the Rights of Children, the position has not yet been appointed.

Finally, there are also data gaps on children with disabilities, migrants, indigenous children, trafficking, sexual abuse and violence, children without parental care and in conflict with the law.

### Major contributions and drivers of results

In the context described above, the office's campaign during the country's general elections, framed within the 30 anniversary of the CRC, stands out, as it allowed UNICEF to set children rights squarely at the center of the political debate.

The campaign was run in two stages: [#YoElijoVotar](#) oriented to mobilize young voters. The main piece of the campaign was a modern cover of the national hymn, a one-minute [video](#) that display adolescents' right to vote in their own language. UNICEF impacted with campaign messages in an audience of 20M people (all channels). [#LaDeudaEsConLaNiñez](#) was the *second stage*, to advocate with all candidates to protect public resources for children, in a context in which the country debate was being centered about paying the external debt. UNICEF's campaign alert about the "main debt" that Argentina has as society: the debt with children and adolescents, especially with those who live in poverty.

The campaign was accompanied by an institutional document focused on multidimensional poverty analysis and proposals to overcome it ([English](#)), that UNICEF sent to all candidates to President and Governors, and that was discussed in meetings with [Mauricio Macri](#), (president then) and [Alberto Fernandez](#) (later elected president); the two front runners shared posts about the meeting in their digital channels with a great reach.

The campaign [video](#) ([English](#)) was boosted in different channels allowing to organically reach 4,1K mentions, 69K interactions and a potential impact in 227.2M accounts in social media and more than 240 stories published in traditional media, six opinion columns published in newspapers/news-sites TIER -1, some of them linking the campaign with the SWOC 2019.

Through the implementation of the 2019 AWP, and despite the complex economic and political scenario that risked impacting the programme, ACO kept contributing so that Argentinean children and adolescents, especially the most disadvantaged, can benefited from:

#### *An equitable and inclusive Social Protection System for children*

Regarding **social protection programs**, UNICEF continued to work on child-poverty through: i) monitoring the situation of children living in poverty, ii) generating evidence on the effects of the economic crisis on children, iii) positioning child poverty from a multidimensional perspective at the center of the national elections debate. At the same time, UNICEF kept working with ANSES to advocate for the inclusion of almost 1 million children without any coverage from the social protection system. Evidence generation informed reform plans, and financial and technical support was key to carry on active search operations, that resulted in the inclusion of over 10,100 children from vulnerable indigenous rural communities. Finally, efforts continued to identify and reach children with disabilities in three provinces. In 2019, 381 people (half of them children) were identified and granted access to the Disability Certificate.

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Concerning **early childhood policies**, UNICEF supported the Government in the design of the first Comprehensive Early Childhood National Strategy (ENPI) as well as in the estimation of the current investment and funding gaps to reach the Strategy's goals. The ENPI was approved by presidential decree and publicly presented in November, during the 30 anniversary of the CRC.

At provincial level, UNICEF technical assistance contributed to the development of 3 comprehensive early childhood development (ECD) policies and 4 local initiatives, as well as to build capacities within family, community and institutional agents in the provinces of Salta and Córdoba. The evaluation of Child Centers in CABA was finalized offering recommendations to the MoHD which implemented reforms including an increase of the budget, changes of menus to prevent obesity, on-line registration, further coordination with MoH and MoE.

With regard to **child sensitive budgeting**, MoF, with UNICEF technical and financial assistance, published statistics on Social Investment for children and adolescents both by national and subnational governments after almost 10 years of discontinuation and increased the ways to make those statistics accessible for citizens. UNICEF supported the National Budget Office to i) produce real-time information to monitor children's budget throughout the budget cycle, ii) make reports and datasets accessible through children microsite at Open Budget Portal, and iii) include, for the first time, children and adolescents chapter in the 2020 Citizen's Budget Message.

UNICEF PF4C was key to advocate for the safeguard of funds directed to children within the IMF Agreement, which was used for an extraordinary 46% increase of the AUH in March 2019. Also, UNICEF contributed to identify the investment need and gaps for Unintended Adolescent Pregnancy Plan (ENIA) scaling-up, which has shown good results such as a 20% reduction of adolescent fertility rates in 2018.

In Buenos Aires Province, UNICEF supported a costing study of the Provincial Child Protection System that identified the financial needs to improve the coverage and quality of the system along the province.

As for **information systems**, ACO continued its joint efforts with the Government to strengthen data availability by carrying out MICS6, which includes 132 indicators covering 9 out of 17 SDG as well as additional information to fill data gaps on ECD, violence, water and sanitation, education, health, social transfer among others. Likewise, UNICEF continues to provide technical assistance to 5 provincial Observatories to generate evidence and raise awareness towards the topics above mentioned.

Finally, an evaluation of the current Country Programme was performed in collaboration with LACRO; its recommendations will contribute as important inputs for the 2021-2025 Country Programme Document of UNICEF Argentina.

### *An inclusive and quality education*

To reduce the education inequality gaps and improve the quality and inclusion UNICEF has provided evidence, advocacy strategies and expansion of innovative models.

Regarding **innovative models**, in 2019, the TECH-Rural Secondary School initiative, that provides access to secondary education in remote rural areas, continued to be implemented in 6 provinces, expanding to 8 new rural communities. Since the beginning of the CPD (2016), enrollment in this modality has increased 83.5% and total graduates are 515. As a **GenU** front runner solution supporter, ACO designed a road map to scale up this TECH-RSS model with the ambitious goal that every province with adolescents living in an isolated area has a modality to guarantee their access to secondary education. In this first year of implementation, a multi stakeholder platform was created composed; a map of private sector and OSCs developing educational solutions for adolescents was developed, and the 1st council of rural adolescents was held.

2019 was PLaNEA second year of implementation in Tucumán province. This pilot program aims to develop a skill-for-life approach within secondary schools by introducing active teaching-learning methodologies. In addition, UNICEF introduce this approach in one new province, Santa Fe. Considering the 2 provinces, PLaNEA reached 8,154 students of 36 secondary schools.

'Everyone to Secondary School' initiative continued to be implemented in Tucumán. Yet, due to province educational budget restrictions, goals set on ECD services opening and adolescent's coverage were not as planned (2 out of 8 ECD services). Considering those opened in 2018, the pilot program reached 21 adolescent parents and their children (19). Monitoring data show that 81% of 2019 adolescents under program didn't drop-out.

Regarding the initial level education, CO contributed to expand rural teacher training in Chaco, improving learning opportunities of 500 children of vulnerable rural areas. In 2019, UNICEF succeeded to complete the three-year targeted rural teachers training program reaching in total, 400 teachers and 3250 children.

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With regard to **advocacy and influencing strategies**, UNICEF has been a key player to speak up on the education debts within the context of presidential elections. ACO co-organized the "Leaders for Education Forum" in alliance with Perfil Media Network and the University of Buenos Aires and proposed an agenda for the education sector that was signed by more than 12 National and Private Universities, Think Tanks and OSC and finally subscribed by the Presidential candidates.

Besides, in 2019 UNICEF cooperated with the National Ministry of Education (MoE) to strengthen national policies in key areas providing knowledge generation and high-quality technical assistance on: Integral Sexual Education, Inclusive education, FARO Program (targeted to schools with low learning outcomes), MERCOSUR EDUCATIVO and Initial Education. Furthermore, the sectoral alliance with Voz Foundation, OEI, CLADE, SES, UNIPE and CIPPEC continued fostering the multisectoral forums advocating for "Transform Secondary Education".

Finally, **key evidences** were produced and disseminated: i) a comprehensive case study "Provincial Policies to Transform the Secondary School in Argentina" developed with FLACSO, ii) "Map of initial education in Argentina" developed with CIPPEC. The latter constitutes the first gathering of official 24 provinces normative and curriculums for initial education. Together with National Teacher's Library, these documents were digitalized and made open access. Finally, a research study on education certification for children with disabilities was completed in December.

### *A violence-free environment, protection and justice for children*

During 2019, UNICEF contributed to benefit children and adolescents, especially the most disadvantaged, from a violence-free environment, and child protection and juvenile justice systems that guarantee appropriate responses in compliance with international standards.

Regarding a **nurturing and safe environment for children**, UNICEF through its Program "*Crianza sin Violencia*" trained child protection professionals and developed tools to strengthen parental skills and good treatment in child rearing as e.g. "[Cuentos que Cuidan](#)" collection.

Furthermore, UNICEF, in cooperation with MoJ and UNDP, promoted the extension of the service of the National Team of Lawyers of GVB and its inter-sectoral relationship to the ENIA to ensure specialized technical and legal advice to children in 11 provinces. UNICEF also supported the implementation of an Observatory in Entre Ríos aimed at having a unified register to monitor the implementation of the Interinstitutional *Protocol Observatory on cases of sexual abuse*.

In regard to **increased children' access to a comprehensive protection system** and aligned with CRC's requirements, UNICEF implemented the Case Management Information System (RUN) jointly with the Federal Council of Childhood and the National Secretariat of Childhood. At present, 16 out of the 24 provinces are implementing it. Under this project 85 social workers and lawyers, that are using the system in the provinces of Córdoba and Entre Ríos, were trained. In Tucuman 298 professionals from child protection local services received technical assistance to strengthen their response.

Concerning **children without parental care**, UNICEF reinforced the Support Program for Care Leavers (PAE) by strengthening the technical team within SENNAF in charge of it. At the state level, UNICEF: reach the endorsement of the Law which regulate it in 18 provinces; speed up its implementation in 6 provinces; train 214 representatives who provide support to adolescents; and include 234 adolescents into the Program. In addition, jointly with state, workshops with adolescents without parental care were held, ending with 6 policy asks by the adolescents that were presented at the National Congress.

Finally, UNICEF played a central role in the parliamentary debate on **juvenile justice** reform. For this advocacy strategy, UNICEF developed several partnerships and expressed concerns about aspects of the draft bill not aligned with international standards of human rights. Mr. Pedernera, CRC's President participated, with UNICEF support, in the debate as a specialized juvenile justice practitioner. The debate on the draft was finally suspended due to lack of agreement between congressmen/women.

In addition, an innovative Project named "Training for adolescents in conflict with the law in confinement" provided adolescents with tools for increasing their employability as strategy of the socio-educational process during detention. It linked 91% of the adolescents deprived of liberty in Buenos Aires Province.

Finally, UNICEF created a pilot database for police abuse cases where children are victims in extremely vulnerable neighborhoods aiming to strengthen access to justice and support victims and their families.

### *Better health services to respond to mothers, children and adolescents needs and promote healthy lifestyles.*

Regarding **health services**, UNICEF has contributed to the implementation of ENIA in 12 provinces through the: i) systematization of ENIA and the estimation of its costs; ii) strengthen of its monitoring strategy; iii) expansion of AHAS

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facilitating access to health to 69.215 adolescents; iv) definition of approaches to detect and take action about child sexual abuse and forced pregnancy, and v) 5.570 health workers were trained to take actions against sexual abuse. Additionally, an intercultural approach was developed, helping 4 indigenous communities to recognize signs of sexual abuse and actions that can be taken. Finally, the national roadmap to support almost 2.300 pregnant adolescents below 15 every year was released, correspondingly, in Jujuy and Misiones right-based care to more than 300 girls was provided.

UNICEF has generated policy recommendations to prevent adolescent suicide that were presented to national legislators and contributed to the creation of a national intersectoral commission on suicide.

1.832 adolescent have participated by building different proposals to improve their overall health. Those proposals were presented to authorities and health providers in three provinces and based on that action are being implemented in some jurisdictions.

Related with **policies for NCD prevention** in children and adolescents, UNICEF has consolidated its role as a key player in obesity prevention issues through promotion of policy dialogue, and technical and financial assistance. Some achievements are: i) the presentation of ENNYS2 which give valuable information about obesity epidemic in children and adolescents; ii) the implementation of a national plan to prevent children and adolescent obesity in 14 provinces; iii) the publication of regulatory standards for [Healthy School Environments](#) and for the [promotion of healthy foods](#); and iv) the consolidation of the National Coalition to Prevent children and adolescent obesity.

A law-bill promoted by UNICEF on healthy school environments has received [approval by the Chamber of Representatives' Education Commission](#) and is on track to become a law. The interagency cooperation with other UN agencies has been crucial to encourage evidence-based legislation and advocacy.

The national **infant mortality rate is at its lowest level in twenty years**. UNICEF contributed to this achievement mainly through the implementation of the Safe and Family-centered Maternities (SFCM) initiative at national level with the following strategies: i) On International Week for Respecting Childbirth, awareness has been raised on the rights of mothers and their families at childbirth, according to Law 25.929, ii) An agreement with the National University of La Plata was signed to introduce a rights-based approach in the education of future health professionals; iii) advocacy actions were taken for the sanction of a bill governing the professional practice of obstetricians in the House of Representatives, iv) two studies were initiated to document the implementation of right-based practices in maternities and v) three residence for mothers were open to support mothers during their new born hospital stay.

At provincial level, UNICEF supported training of health workers that resulted in two situation analysis on perinatal health programs in Misiones and Salta; 8 maternities in Salta and Jujuy developed a strategic plan to strengthen the implementation of right-base practices. Four provinces (Córdoba, Santa Fe, Jujuy, and Corrientes) developed situation analysis on vertical transmission of HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis B and Chagas, to inform policy making. A [guidelines](#) to support health access for children and adolescents transgender was launched.

*A mobilized society to drive public actions toward children's rights*

Regarding **public awareness and engagement** to support the agenda of ECD and adolescence's rights, UNICEF Argentina's communication and public advocacy strategy surpassed its 2019 goals, doubling the number of exposures compared to 2018, with 1.600.607.895 exposures to key messages through audio-visual, graphic and social media; and more than 6M engagements by producing compelling equity focused analyses, generating inspiring content and articulating with key influencers.

Beyond #LaDeudaEsConLaNiñez (already described), under CRC 30th anniversary more than 1,800 mentions were generated, and more than 40,8M accounts were reached with key campaign messages through social media and posts in strategic national media. A great contribution to ACO advocacy plan was made through the resource mobilization channels, raising awareness on flagship issues by communication with pledge donors, UNI magazine, B4R initiatives, and events, reaching over 9,994,200 people.

Whit regard to **adolescents participation and engagement**, adding to [#YoElijoVotar](#) (already described), innovative strategies were implemented to facilitate the participation of adolescents such as the Buenos Aires Province's Digital Citizenship Program, a public policy supported by the CO that ran its third year, and a [Digital Rap Contest](#) that raised awareness about the responsible use of communication technologies and sparked the conversation through traditional and social media, with more than 400 videos received and 7,8M accounts reached. In this context, 4,870 teenagers were trained in the responsible use of communication technologies. This, added to the 48.5M accounts reached by the #NoDaCompartir campaign and the U-Report platform, helped improve the exercise of online rights.

Youth voices were also heard and amplified with initiatives to promote social changes like #GenU, the integral health fora,

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and mobilizations around climate change that generated spaces where thousands of adolescents were able to express their ideas, concerns, experiences and propose solutions.

In terms of **fundraising**, despite the difficult context, ACO income in LC grew 36% in 2019, and its high-quality standards remained: largest donation accounted for 1% of total income; 98% was not earmarked; and 95% came from sustainable sources. ACO also maintained and increased the value channels resulting in corporate long-term alliances, high value & major donors and legacies (12 new wills).

As part of an integrated strategy aligned with the **Business for Result** global approach, ACO reinforced its engagement with the Private Sector (PS) achieving results through the entire B4R spectrum (funds, core assets, advocacy, CRB) around the CPD priorities, with remarkable results in ECD care policies. The office supported a Corporate Promoting Group of 30 companies that generated positive changes in their internal family friendly policies, participated in the co-creation of a self-assessment online platform and became strong advocates of UNICEF priorities around ECD. The office also co-organized the Global ECD Summit in NY, achieving an active participation from representatives of the Argentinian government, NGOs and private sector. ACO also provided technical assistance to the Government to finalize the national action plan on business and human rights (NAP) with focus on children rights.

A baseline study about Children Rights and Private Sector was carried out, including data from more than 700 companies. The results were widely disseminated nationally and are being utilized for direct advocacy with PS stakeholders to promote positive changes and the inclusion of best practices in on-going corporate practices towards children and adolescents.

### Lessons Learned and Innovations

The most important lesson from 2019 was UNICEF's unique position and capacity **to turn a high economical restriction and political changes context into great opportunities for visibility of children and adolescents' rights**. On one hand by taking advantage of the focus of the public debate during general elections on the economic crisis and debt (Argentina's greatest concern during the year), to highlight the necessity of **focused public investments to pay the biggest debt Argentina has: with its children and adolescents**, letting more than 30% of them live in poverty during the last 30 years and reaching a 55% level by the end of 2019. On the other hand, by making an extraordinary effort to strengthen the commitment of donors and allies to the cause of children, calling them to joint our conviction that, **despite the difficult economic situation, it's exactly in times of crisis, when children and adolescents need us the most**.

A good example was the way we turned **well-established-fundraising-events into a whole-of-UNICEF efforts for multiple engagement** (social mobilization, advocacy and strategic partnership) well exemplified by the 2019 version of the **"Un Sol para los Chicos"** campaign. In terms of fundraising, the event achieved a new record in local currency. In terms of social mobilization and advocacy, during the 10-hour telethon, UNICEF broadcasted 11 programmatic spots related with Argentina's country program priorities and emergencies listed in the 2019 HAC. In terms of public advocacy, "Un Sol para los Chicos" was linked to the contents developed during the parenting month and to the two stages of the electoral campaign. In terms of strategic partnerships beyond Argentina, the event was a unique opportunity to present the local chapter of the regional alliance with Kimberly Clark for ECD, and to receive colleagues from other UNICEF Country offices to inspire the implementation of successful telethon events in their countries. In terms of reach, apart from the 5 million TV and the 6.4million digital viewers, the messages related to #UnSol2019 potentially reached more than 1 billion accounts, achieving more than 19,500 mentions (with positive comments 5 times higher than negative ones) and generating 245,000 engagements. This was made possible thanks to the participation of more than 150 celebrities and opinion leaders, as well as the contribution of influencers (including young people). Another good example is the work ACO did with the private sector applying the new **B4R approach** -whole spectrum funds, core assets, advocacy, CRB- which boosted engagement, UNICEF's supporters, fundraising results and concrete results for children as those obtained related with family friendly policies for Early Childhood Development.

All these efforts allowed us to overachieve fund raising targets in local currency and, through this, to give continuity to the cooperation program in Argentina as well as to contribute to guarantee the rights of children around the world.

At the same time, the implementation of the regular program has had different lessons learned. First, in order to address the most disadvantaged children and adolescents with quality and accurate education services, it proved worth developing innovative models - TECH-Rural Secondary School initiative and PlaNEA- and building public-private alliances to scale these models up (such as the incipient GenU platform). Second, developing information tools -as the RUN- with a comprehensive approach and based on technology allowed to improve the intersectoral response to children's rights violations. Third, in order to manage sensible topics e.g. suicide, early pregnancy and obesity, a combination of strategies such as building a regulatory framework, raising social awareness, improving services and guaranteeing adolescents participation seems to be essential to obtain pertinent results for adolescents.

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In 2019, we engaged in meaningful and novel ways to operationalize the UN reform at country level. On one hand, participating in the Spotlight initiative, not being a fund Recipient UN Agency, challenged the traditional approaches and procedures and has strengthening result-focused interagency work. On the other hand, receiving the grant to develop the SDG Joint Program on social protection -UNICEF as lead agency- has shown UNAFP the possibility to comprehensively affect systems that determine children's lives e.g. 0 to 6 years boys and girls from the most vulnerable contexts by promoting: Provincial Early Childhood Strategies; innovative instruments using new technologies and big data to improve provincial public management and finances; and a strategy to improve the working conditions and the professionalization of the childhood care workers. Finally, the knowledge and experience UNICEF has developed regarding children on the move, has allowed us to make strategic contributions to the emerging refugees and migrants response plan, led by UNHCR and IOM.

Finally, all of the year's achievements could happen despite the complex external and internal environment, thanks to the efforts ACO has made to **effectively manage the office**. Argentina CO staffing structure has grown from 70 posts in the beginning of the country programme (2016) to 110 posts in October 2019. At the beginning of the year an Office demographic analysis showed that 75% UNICEF's staff members had worked in the organization less than 3 years, putting as key goal to get all of the staff (old and new) to embrace UNICEF's culture and to work harmoniously as One UNICEF.

Establishing open channels to hear staff needs and concerns, keeping an honest and respectful relationship between management and the staff and a healthy and close collaboration with the local staff association (APUBA) proved a very useful strategy to apply the speak up culture principles, prevent abuse and harassment, and react timely and appropriately if any of these issues arise. At the same time, it allowed to identify alternatives to keep staff well-being possible in a very challenging year. According to the September 2019 Argentina's staff association regular survey, 60 out of 68 survey respondents found that actions were taken by management to address staff survey findings.

At the same time, office performance monitoring, financial oversight, and proper risk management were key to maximize results. The 254 contracts issued ensured the best value for money with transparent and robust procurement processes. HACT assurance activities were satisfactorily achieved, (Q4 0% Direct Cash Transfers (DCTs) outstanding over nine months). An internal audit and an external ICT/Cybersecurity audit were carried out successfully. Furthermore, a strategic business-partner model - among UN-AFP operation sections- was promoted to mitigate the intrinsic risks of high inflation and currency devaluation that negatively affect financial resources and vendor contractual relations.

Looking ahead, focusing our cooperation on effectively protecting children, adolescents and families from the adverse consequences of the financial crisis is the main objective of 2020. At the same time, special effort will be required to define ACO next five-year priorities by reviewing the changes in the outside and inside context. To do so, it is crucial to build trust and create a fluid and fruitful relationship with new authorities at both national and provincial level, while nurturing the support and engagement of our allies and donors, in a cooperative UN framework.