

## Belize

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### Executive Summary

UNICEF Belize has made significant, visible and tangible progress in a number of areas defined in the Country Programme document in 2015. First among the achievements is the progress made in the area of child justice. Belize now has a physical structure in place, the new Child Friendly Family Court. This building is a result of a very successful partnership with the Supreme Court, the Embassy of the United States of America, initiated in 2014, and is a part of a wider reform of the child justice system in Belize. The new Family Court is equipped with high-tech equipment and facilities enabling children to give testimony while remaining in a risk-free, protective environment, shielding them from stress and trauma that usually occurs when they are involved in a criminal or civil law case. Further buildings are approved for construction in 2016.

A second milestone was achieved with the completion of data collection for the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 5) in December 2015. This is the third round of data collection in Belize, and it will enable a comparative analysis of the progress made for children in the various domains of wellbeing in the country over the past 10 years. Several important changes accompanied the implementation of MICS this time around. For the first time data is being collected using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), which is expected to yield many benefits. The use of CAPI was also beneficial to the Statistical Institute of Belize as it provided an opportunity for capacity building and technology transfer that will remain in the country for future data collection needs. Furthermore, in parallel with the data collection process for the fifth round of the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey, Belize hosted the regional and global MICS teams, who spent three weeks testing and refining new tools for MICS-6 data collection. The results will be reported in early 2016, and are expected to generate new approaches to data collection through MICS globally. It is also expected that the MICS-6 data collection will be used to determine a methodology for collection of data for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The third major achievement this year was the roll-out of the campaign on Violence against Children in Belize. This communication strategy, implemented since 2014, involves the production and dissemination of a variety of communication materials aimed at raising public awareness regarding the causes and consequences of all forms of violence on the wellbeing and development of a child. The video-materials were broadcast at no charge on all media outlets in Belize, reaching many families and children. Partners in child protection are also using the campaign as a tool to raise awareness in vulnerable communities.

Finally, the continued successful partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Health (MoH) and Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation (MHDSTPA) led to the adoption of the early child development (ECD) policy and integrated ECD strategic plan. With the recommendations coming from the strategic plan, the Government also launched a global, regional and national training in Care for Child Development (CCD) in the latter part of this year. The launch of CCD is the first joint sector training that will provide early stimulation for vulnerable boys and girls. In 2016, concerted efforts from the three ministries will continue to implement the strategic ECD plan to increase

access to ECD services for children 0-3 in Belize.

In terms of significant challenges faced in implementing activities in 2015, it is important to note that the two rounds of elections in the country (municipal in March and general elections in November) had a negative effect on the completion of two processes: the finalisation and submission of the Country Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the completion of all activities related to harmonised approach to cash transfers (HACT), as required by the HACT implementation framework. Despite continuous advocacy efforts by UNICEF Belize, the country postponed finalisation of the CRC Report until 2016. UNICEF offered to provide technical support in the preparation of the report, and combined advocacy efforts will continue in 2016.

As regards HACT, UNICEF and the other UN Development Group agencies continue to use the framework when transferring funds to national counterparts and monitoring their implementation. However, implementation of the micro-assessments was affected by the two election cycles, postponing the production of the final report and revised assurance plans until early January 2016.

### **Humanitarian Assistance**

On 16th October 2015, an area of low pressure moved into Belize resulting in heavy showers, thunderstorms and gusty winds across much of the country. The Belize, Orange Walk and Corozal districts experienced heavy rains and many low-lying areas were affected by flooding.

Approximately 206,000 people were affected by the rains and floods. Some 251 people were housed in shelters, and schools located in the affected areas were closed between 16 and 22 October, placing over 60,000 children at preschool, primary and secondary levels out of school.

Although there was extensive flooding in Belize City, the National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) did not declare a state of emergency or disaster in the city. UNICEF, which chairs the United Nations Emergency Technical Team monitored the situation closely, collecting information from field reports and national partners in real time.

The total recovery cost remains undetermined, since NEMO did not complete a Damage and Needs Assessment. Two situation reports were produced by UNICEF between the 19 and 23 October, 2015.

UNICEF Belize responded by issuing an emergency note on Sunday night 18 October when the floods started affecting the population. The note advised about health and security and responded to the worrying trend of children bathing in the flood waters. It was widely shared and seen by more than 3,000 people.

Based on an established long-term agreement (LTA) with a local supplier, UNICEF was able to rapidly provide humanitarian assistance by delivering 250 family hygiene kits to the MHDSTPA, which is mandated by law to set and run the shelters. This humanitarian assistance was valued at US\$14,000.00. A note about the intervention was also shared online.

### **Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan**

The Country Programme continued fulfilling the 'core business of UNICEF in LAC', aimed at monitoring the situation of children in all its aspects as well as monitoring the implementation of recommendations of the CRC Committee and the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This role is crucial in all countries, including upper-middle income countries and high-income countries, re-confirming the universal mandate of UNICEF. Moreover, a substantive part of UNICEF-supported actions aim to influence sub-national policies and programmes. Where needed, this work is complemented with the implementation of model projects at the sub-national level, particularly in selected areas where the most disadvantaged populations are living. Further emphasis on the combination of 'upstream' policy work with sub-national level modelling, also in the context of middle-income countries, allows for continuous learning and obtaining evidence from local experiences that could be used in designing and strengthening national policies and programmes.

Increasingly, the programmatic role of UNICEF is evolving and addressing emerging issues that affect the rights of girls, boys and adolescents. Such emerging issues, currently not fully mentioned in the Strategic Plan, include: a) Emerging health agenda - health systems strengthening, non-communicable diseases, obesity, adolescent health; b) integrated early childhood development; c) secondary education, within LAC the particular attention to 'boys education' given high drop-out rates of boys in secondary education as well as sustained attention to enhancing inter-cultural (bilingual) education; and d) prevention of adolescent pregnancy and linking these efforts to addressing (sexual) violence against girls. It was recommended that these areas be better reflected in the Strategic Plan, through specific results and indicators. Moreover, a review of Revised Programme Information Database coding was suggested to ensure that such emerging programmatic issues are adequately reflected. This would also allow for better reporting on results and funds spent.

Several programmes have identified, as part of the analysis of barriers and bottlenecks, the need to address social norms, and therefore include a component of behaviour-change communication (C4D). This is currently not a specific strategy in the Strategic Plan and it was suggested that this strategy be considered for re-introduction as one of UNICEF's corporate strategies. This would also allow better reflection and reporting on the type of work ongoing using C4D approaches. At the same time, a great deal of South-South cooperation (SSC) is ongoing with other countries in the region and beyond. Based on the 2030 Agenda and the evolving changes in the aid environment it is expected that the application of this strategy will only continue to increase. However, so far it has been difficult to demonstrate UNICEF's value added to obtaining specific results for children through SSC. Therefore, it was recommended to continue with efforts, also as part of the MTR of the Strategic Plan, to provide global tools for measuring the results of SSC. Linked to SSC is also the need to strengthen our knowledge management function. Although efforts are made by Country Offices, it was also recommended to increase global efforts to strengthen the knowledge management function. This could also include increased emphasis on supporting evaluation of sub-national policies and programmes rather than focusing on UNICEF programmes only. With limited resources available, a shift in attention to the type of evaluations expected is suggested.

Finally, many country programmes in the region are facing resource constraints, and while income from PFP has been growing and such resources are increasingly re-distributed in the region through the Regional Thematic Fund, many country offices remain highly dependent on income from regional and global thematic funds and Global Set-Aside funding (in addition to Regular Resource allocation). With such income, UNICEF is still in a position to deliver on substantive results and to exercise its mandate and address the persisting inequities in countries in the region. Therefore, as part of discussions of a potential new resource allocation system for UNICEF, it was strongly suggested to ensure that the current minimum levels of Regular Resources are maintained, while at the same time adjustments could be made to

criteria for allocation of global set-aside and thematic funds, re-orienting more of such resources to 'donor-orphan' regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

## Summary Notes and Acronyms

AG – Attorney General  
AMP – Annual management plan  
BCP - Business continuity plan  
BCVI – Belize Council for the Visually Impaired  
Belize UN Inter-agency ERP- Belize UN Inter-agency Emergency Response Plan  
BGI - Belize Gender Info  
BOOST – Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation (Conditional Cash Transfer Programme)  
CAPI – Computer-aided personal interviews  
CCD - Care for Child Development  
CDF – Child Development Foundation  
CEES - Centro de Estudios Educativos y Sociales  
CFS - Child-friendly schools  
CFC- Child-friendly courts  
CMT – Congress of Maya Teachers  
CMT - Country Management Team  
CPMP - Country Programme Management Plan  
CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child  
CSL - Certified sick leave  
DEC - District Education Centre  
ECD - Early childhood development  
ERM - Enterprise risk management  
ERMP - Enterprise Risk Management Plan  
EU - European Union  
FRG- Field results group  
ISP - Internet service provider  
GAP- Gender action plan  
GOB – Government of Belize  
GPS - Global Positioning System  
GSS - Global staff survey  
GSSC - Global Shared Services Centre  
HACT- Harmonised approach to cash transfers  
HFLE - Health and Family Life Education  
HIV – Human immunodeficiency virus  
HRBA - Human rights-based approach  
IPs – Implementing partners  
MDG - Millennium Development Goals  
MoE - Ministry of Education  
MHDSTPA – Ministry of Human Development Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation  
MICS - Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey  
MLLGRD - Ministry of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development  
MNS - Ministry of National Security  
MoEYS - Ministry of Education Youth and Sports  
MoF – Ministry of Finance  
MoH - Ministry of Health  
MoRES - Monitoring of Results for Equity Systems

NAC - National Aids Commission  
NaRCIE – National Resource Centre for Inclusive Education  
NCFC - National Committee for Families and Children  
NGO – Non-governmental organisation  
NPA - National Plan of Action  
OBMS - Online Business Management System  
OPM - Office of the Prime Minister  
PSA- Public service announcement  
P2P - Peer-to-peer  
PAHO - Pan American Health Organization  
PBIS – Positive behaviour intervention and support  
PEP - Parent Empowering Program  
POWA – Productive Organization for Women in Action  
PTA - Parent -teacher association  
QCFS- Quality child-friendly schools  
RC - Roman Catholic  
RNGP – Revised National Gender Policy  
RO - Regional Office  
SCCC – Stann Creek Coordination Committee  
SCFM- Sustainable and child-friendly municipalities  
SDG - Sustainable Development Goals  
SIB – Statistical Institute of Belize  
SIF - Social Investment Fund  
SIP - School Improvement Plans  
SSRE – Secondary School Reform Exercise  
SP (2014-2017) – Strategic Plan (2014-2017)  
TIDE - Toledo Institute for Development and Environment  
TOR - Terms of reference  
UN – United Nations  
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme  
UNDSS - United Nations Department of Safety and Security  
UNICEF - United Nations Children’s Fund  
UWI - University of the West Indies  
UWI OC - University of the West Indies Open Campus  
WASH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

## Capacity Development

Over 50 key stakeholders were trained in HIV prevention for adolescents and youth at a workshop facilitated by a team of Jamaican HIV prevention experts. The workshop provided an opportunity to use evidence to establish priorities for HIV prevention in Belize and contribute to the recently adopted Youth HIV Prevention Strategy for Belize, which will be implemented as of 2016.

UNICEF provided capacity building to partners in storytelling, fundraising and basic photography to improve reporting processes and ensure that good practices, results and stories from the field are well documented and disseminated, while respecting the norms and standards of reporting when interviewing and photographing children.

UNICEF Belize built the capacity of management of the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association, labour officers, and other key stakeholders to raise awareness on child labour and

consider concrete ways that the association can participate. As a result, a network of key stakeholders and an action plan to eliminate child labour in the Belize Sugar Industry was developed.

Fifty school committees were trained in school improvement planning and school curriculum planning; six were trained in hygiene management. An additional 120 district education officers and teachers were trained in ECD standards and assessment. UNICEF also organised a regional and master Care for Child Development capacity building for ECD providers.

Participation of the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) in MICS 5 and the field test exercise for MICS 6 resulted in strengthened human and institutional capacity in methodology for data collection through the use of mobile devices. Additionally, SIB increased its pool of technical personnel knowledgeable about programming using CSPro.

Within the sustainable and child-friendly municipalities (SCFM) initiative, staff from all nine municipalities received capacity building in drafting action plans for children; as a result five such plans were completed in 2015, with the additional four to be completed in early 2016.

### **Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

UNICEF Belize, in partnership with Belize Vital Statistics and Organization of American States (OAS), commissioned a bottleneck analysis of current birth registration coverage. In early 2016, the assessment will provide recommendations for modernisation of the system.

A programme monitoring tool for six community-based organisations working in the area of child protection received UNICEF support. Once operational (early 2016) this will provide data on violence and abuse of children and relevant community interventions.

A nationwide Knowledge, Attitudes, Perceptions and Behaviours (KAP-B) survey was initiated, and a draft was produced in November, providing important information on children and adults' knowledge, attitude and perception of child abuse.

UNICEF supported the establishment of an inter-sectoral mechanism for planning and implementing the ECD policy, adopted by Cabinet this year. A national forum held in May endorsed the final strategic plan for the policy along with policy recommendations and commitments.

Data collection for the third round of MICS was completed. Data gathered from MICS enables the performance of comparative analysis of the situation of women and children. Belize will now have information on men's attitudes toward domestic violence, sexual behaviour and knowledge of HIV and AIDS, among others.

UNICEF supported the evaluation of the National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children (2004-2015), generating recommendations to help strengthen national child rights policies. These are currently being used to draft the new NPA (2016-2026)

UNICEF is supporting evidence-generation on the effectiveness of the national social protection system through two exercises: a mapping of social protection services, and an evaluation of the BOOST programme. Both results will be available in early 2016

With UNICEF's support the Supreme Court produced a costing tool for providing universal legal

aid for all children in conflict with the law. The tool will be used to advocate for financial resources for policy reform in 2016.

## Partnerships

UNICEF Belize continued its strategic partnership with key line ministries to advance the rights of children, and to support the duty-bearers in fulfilling their mandate and obligations to children.

New partnerships were established with four NGOs in the area of Sports for Development. With UNICEF's support, these NGOs are able to implement sports and cultural activities for vulnerable children who would otherwise be exposed to violence and abuse. Four NGOs are currently benefiting from a grant totalling US \$350,000 to reach over 15,000 children in two districts in Belize.

As a result of its strong partnership with the Supreme Court, UNICEF Belize was able to achieve a significant milestone in the reform of the national child justice system – the opening of the first Child-Friendly Family Court. The court meets the highest standards as it includes child-friendly play and interview rooms with video link equipment, a technology that ensures children are protected when required to testify. The reform includes additional construction of another court in San Ignacio, capacity building and further institutional strengthening.

The partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), MHDSTPA and MoH resulted in the endorsement of a final integrated strategic plan for the ECD policy. Furthermore, UNICEF partnered with PAHO/WHO in implementing the global, regional and master training of CCD in Belize as a part of the strategic plan. This partnership, formalised in a MoU, will enable both organisations to support the Government in strengthening national strategies for the improvement of maternal, new-born and child health.

The partnership with SIB resulted in the successful completion of data collection for the MICS-5 national survey, and increased institutional capacity to deliver quality data. In 2015, the Government's contribution to MICS was over US\$200,000, significantly higher than their contribution to the previous two rounds of MICS.

## External Communication and Public Advocacy

The national communication and C4D strategy to end violence against children – 'TIME OUT' – was launched with six behaviour-change videos that were aired on national channels during prime time. The videos generated discussion on social media and one of the videos went viral, reaching more than 1.9 million people. As part of the strategy, the Office supported partners to develop a TIME OUT toolkit for participatory education sessions on violence to be used by child protection partners when facilitating workshops. The toolkit also includes the videos and wrist bands. C4D activities as part of TIME OUT were also included partners' programme cooperation agreements.

Several stories were written to highlight the work of the Country Office and shared with media and internal UNICEF networks. A story was chosen by the EU, translated into 25 languages and shared on all EU platforms, providing visibility for UNICEF Belize. Several videos were produced during the year. One highlighted milestones in the work for child justice, three information videos were produced for early childhood development (ECD) and a short documentary about a violence prevention initiative using music became popular and was featured in a global UNICEF newsletter and shared on an international news page.

Staff participated in popular morning talk shows on several occasions, sharing information and discussing key priorities, initiatives and activities of the organisation.

The UNICEF Belize Facebook page continued its growth during 2015, with a 410 per cent increase in followers and interaction by civil society organisations, international partners and opinion makers in the country. Some 6,880 video views were reported on the UNICEF Belize YouTube channel last year, a 283 per cent increase from 2014.

Belize suffered from a tropical storm and floods in November 2015 and the Office used its online channels to share key messages and advice for child health and safety.

### **South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

To support child justice reform UNICEF Guatemala was invited to provide technical expertise to Belize's reform process. A three-day working session was held to develop a roadmap for the reform process and indicators to monitor the implementation of child-friendly courts. UNICEF Guatemala shared best practices and Belize finalised components of the aforementioned documents.

Additional support was received from a team of experts from Jamaica, providing support to HIV professionals in Belize, as a follow-up of the South-South /Triangular cooperation activity conducted in 2014 between Brazil, Jamaica and Belize. They facilitated Youth HIV prevention workshops and accompanying technical meetings, providing strong technical direction for the finalisation of Belize's HIV prevention strategy for adolescents. Following the workshop a draft strategy was developed and shared with Jamaican counterparts for final review and inputs. The strategy was approved and implementation is scheduled for 2016.

Given the extensive advances in implementing the concept of child-friendly municipalities (CFM) in Costa Rica, UNICEF Belize requested and received support from UNICEF Costa Rica in advancing the actions linked to CFM in Belize. A national workshop with key local government stakeholders was held where the Costa Rican experience served to generate proposals and plans for implementing CFM in Belize. As a result, indicators and plans were drawn up to monitor the advancement of municipalities in realising child rights, and additional South-South activities were planned for 2016

### **Identification and Promotion of Innovation**

2015 was a special year for MICS in Belize for two reasons: the adoption of computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) for data collection for the MICS-5, and the testing of the tools for the future implementation of MICS-6. Even though the CAPI has been widely used in other contexts, in Belize this approach is novel and a considerable amount of training and preparation was required before embarking on the cumbersome process of interviewing 5,200 households. Data collectors at SIB were trained and that capacity, along with the supplied technology (60 tablets) will now remain in the country for use in future surveys.

Belize hosted the regional and global MICS teams who spent three weeks refining old tools and testing new tools for MICS-6 data collection. The field test used two main methods: field testing, where field teams implemented two different versions of questionnaires, and qualitative research, which used feedback from interviewers through debriefings and focus groups, structured observations and interviews of respondents.

The new questionnaires tested some topics which traditionally have not been covered in MICS,

such as victimisation and learning assessments of children. Additionally, there were refinements to several modules, including the Maternal and New-born Health and HIV/AIDS modules, and testing of a new module on 'Child Functioning and Disability', which may replace a previous childhood disability module. Water quality testing for E. coli was also carried out in Belize as part of the household visits. During the field test, results of the field samples were validated by comparison to lab tests conducted by the Belize Ministry of Health. The ability to test water in the field isn't only an important addition to MICS, it also creates an important opportunity for countries to improve and simplify their own water testing practices.

### **Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages**

UNICEF supported an evaluation of the NPA 2004-2015, which looked at the progress in the realisation of child-rights across the sectors. The evaluation was completed successfully and shared internally among key stakeholders. The findings and recommendations will be used for the drafting of the new NPA, valid for the next 10 years. These include sharpened focus on high-impact programmes, greater alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national development goals, increased resources and improved monitoring, evaluation and reporting on child-focused programmes.

In the area of violence against children, which has cross sectoral implications, UNICEF implemented the national 'TIME OUT' strategy aimed at ending violence against children. As part of the communication component of TIME OUT, six public service videos were produced for national television and online dissemination and aired free by all the TV channels during prime time. As part of the strategy, wristbands were produced and distributed in all districts, with the support of children, along with fact sheets about the initiative. TIME OUT is also being included in the work plan of all partners involved in violence prevention.

Lessons learned from the initial CCD trainings at the global, regional and national level in the Belize Country Office demonstrated a potential to prevent and protect young children from violence through the CCD intervention. The expansion of CCD into different implementing areas and delivery systems (beyond health) will be explored, since in Belize three ministries (health, education and human development) are working together for the effective implementation of this strategy. The cross-sectoral work allowed regional and national partners to consider CCD as a violence prevention intervention. A clearer understanding of how CCD can be inserted in social services and violence prevention strategies will be explored in 2016.

### **Service Delivery**

UNICEF Belize supported national partners to ensure that adolescents in Stann Creek have increased knowledge on HIV prevention and early pregnancy and access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. Through an initiative called "Sex Thing", adolescents use 'edutainment' as a tool to reach other adolescents in a series of dialogues about HIV prevention and early pregnancy. The street theatre is a participatory activity that also delivers targeted messages for reduction of high-risk sexual behaviours. The initiative simultaneously offers sexual health services in a discrete location near the activity. Thus far the activity has reached 2,000 adolescents.

Further service delivery support was provided in the area of child justice. The newly built Family Court will provide child-sensitive services in line with the highest standards of protection. UNICEF assisted in rebranding the image of the family court, which has been identified as a key component of the ongoing reform. A fact sheet with "fast facts" was developed and disseminated jointly with information about the family court, and pamphlets with information

about the court's procedures were designed and printed. A child-friendly animated video will be produced to further sensitise children about their right to access justice. The video will feature the voice of a child and will be targeting children directly, and will also be used as a radio PSA.

In an effort to strengthen institutions for increased access to quality learning, UNICEF supported the MoEYS in establishing safe and healthy learning environments. Six primary schools in the most vulnerable districts received support for the upgrading of WASH facilities and programming. The institutional strengthening focuses on the strong delivery of Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) in schools. In 2015, a population of 3,000 students and 160 teachers and administrators were impacted by the programme.

### **Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

Human rights-based approach (HRBA) benchmarks are an integral part of the agreements signed between UNICEF and national partners. They are reflected in the design of activities and indicators targeting the most vulnerable children and families, respecting and protecting the rights of rights-holders and strengthening the capacities of the duty-bearers. In 2015 the country initiated two processes that provide key data and information on children: MICS 5 and the Situation Analysis of Women and Children (SitAn), which are essential in the design and planning of programmatic interventions using gender-sensitive, equity-focused data generation and analysis.

The previously mentioned KAP-B study also had an equity focus and aimed to generate information about the knowledge and attitudes that adults and children have about violence throughout the society. This information will further help with targeting the most vulnerable children and developing key messages to address behaviour change aimed at protecting their rights.

HRBA was also reflected in the area of ECD, particularly during the development of the strategic plan, which stipulated that the provision of comprehensive ECD services with family involvement across the life-cycle is essential for providing the foundation for each child to reach his or her potential. Support to WASH improvement and positive discipline was also provided, and based on evidence of how it would impact the realisation of children's rights in health and development.

UNICEF supported local government in the mainstreaming of the HRBA to programming. Within the SCFM framework, technical and financial support was provided to draft five municipal action plans and train all SCFM steering committees and children's advisory bodies in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Finally, in spite of significant advocacy efforts on the part of the Country Office, including an offer of technical support, Belize has yet to submit its country reports on implementation of the CRC and the optional protocols, due in 2007. Advocacy and support efforts will continue in 2016.

### **Gender Mainstreaming and Equality**

Belize completed the MICS-5 data collection exercise in December 2015, representing the main source of comprehensive data on the realisation of children's rights in several domains, such as nutrition, health, education and others. This data is gender-disaggregated, enabling gender-based analyses and providing essential information on the differences between boys and girls.

“Sex Thing” aims to increase children’s knowledge and access to SRH services. Data indicated that boys were accessing services less frequently and less consistently than girls. The intervention aims to increase both boys’ and girls’ access by providing information. The initiative is expected to span a two-year period; by end-2015 it had seen a 50 per cent increase in boys being tested, and 2,000 young people were reached with services and information.

Interventions in education and ECD continued to be gender-sensitive. The CCD strategy, in particular, focuses on training parents and caregivers to stimulate and create early learning experiences for their child. These interventions are essential at the earliest stages of a child’s life and have long-lasting effects on developing healthy gender identities, and later achieving gender equity and equality. With a commitment to child-friendly schools (CFS) and the global strategy of ‘A Promise Renewed’, programming in education and ECD incorporates gender mainstreaming for vulnerable boys and girls to reach their full potential in an enabling environment.

In general, UNICEF continued to support the mainstreaming of gender in all supported activities, including national level and interagency initiatives. The Country Office serves as deputy chair of the UN Gender theme group. This is the only UN group with representation at both the national and international level. Within this collaborative framework, UNICEF supported the revision of the Gender Policy and the drafting of a child-friendly version and supported the launch of ‘16 Days of Activism’, all in an effort to raise awareness among women and girls in Belize and end gender-based violence. As a member of the National Gender-Based Violence Committee, UNICEF provided support for the drafting of the 2015 National Gender-Based Violence Action Plan.

## Environmental Sustainability

UNICEF Belize continued its partnership with the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE), which provides environmental education to over 2,000 children in the Toledo district, one of the poorest districts in the country. Girls and boys are given the opportunity to play competitive football; however a prerequisite to participating in the tournament is the submission of an environmental project. The environmental project must benefit the community and raise awareness about climate change. This initiative, supported by UNICEF and others, received national and international recognition, since the environmental projects are based on children’s local reality and therefore feasible to apply.

The WASH in school programme, within the education component, impacted school improvement plans to focus on safe and healthy environments. School committees worked with parents and other stakeholders to increase awareness about proper care and management of the school environment, including safe practices for water management and proper sanitation and hygiene. Continued partnerships with TIDE also supported WASH-related work in indigenous communities. TIDE has worked closely with schools in the Toledo district to promote healthy habits in schools, such as regular and proper hand-washing practices and responsible use of water.

Environmental sustainability is one of the priority areas being address by local government under the SCFM agenda. Mayors of all nine municipalities agreed to include environmental education, sustainable energy, green spaces to play, access to water and improved waste management in their municipal child rights action plans and baselines for achieving SGD Goal 11. Under this initiative, the nine participating municipalities have established specific goals and, in a period of two or three years, will be certified as Child-friendly, based on the results

achieved.

The Office participated in the Environmental Footprint Assessment Report, which indicated that its environmental footprint and CO2 emission was 41.1 tonnes. As a result of this low footprint the Office has chosen to continue practicing environmentally friendly measures such as: turning off lights when not in use, printing double sided, black and white, promoting a 'paperless office' and reducing/consolidating travel when possible by using teleconference facilities.

## Effective Leadership

One of the major initiatives taken by UNICEF Belize was its involvement in the business simplification exercises proposed for small country offices. The field results group and LACRO teams facilitated discussions/brain-storming sessions/open-ended questions with colleagues and were able to provide valuable guidance for realising efficiency gains and becoming more effective. Their final recommendations were endorsed by the country management team (CMT): simplifying Country Programme planning, merging office management committees, adjustments to cash transfers to partners (HACT and partnership agreements w/increased ceilings), adjustments to purchasing and procurement practises, archiving documentation and travel. Of the 35 recommendations more than one-third have been implemented; the remaining 65 per cent will depend on HQ revisions and final decisions.

The Office management scheduled and completed the review of the business continuity plan and updated the assigned roles and responsibilities as well as the governance structure, resulting from the turnover in office staff and the filling of the social policy post with programme coordination responsibilities. As a result, programme group meetings (PGM) and in-house committees met with greater frequency and were able to revise monitoring and reporting mechanisms to strengthen control and oversight of programme implementation. PGM and CMT meetings were used to review and update the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and, Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) activities and plans – maintaining one of the highest EWEA completion score in the LAC region – and the annual management plan and indicators. The review enabled the Office to set updated, realistic targets and performance measurements that were continuously reviewed at the CMT meetings.

UNICEF Belize regularly sent audit response reports. The HACT macro-assessment was completed in 2015, and the last of the nine 2014 medium-risk audit recommendations (Micro Assessment of IPs) will be closed during the first quarter of 2016.

## Financial Resources Management

To ensure proper budget and cash management to efficiently meet programme and operation needs, the Office maintained a rolling 'Funding Forecast'. It highlights the Office's cash requirements based on past trends and expected monthly disbursements; direct cash transfers (DCTs), contracts for consultants, supply and procurement, operations costs, travel, staff salaries and others. The forecast is prepared at the beginning of each quarter and reviewed and updated during CMT and PGM; the local account is 'replenished' on this basis. The Country Office will review this practise of a quarterly forecast, as it has been noted that the bank balance to expenditure ratio is higher than recommended.

Donor grants are monitored at CMT and PGM meetings regularly to curtail any loss of funds due to non-utilisation or expiration.

The strategies implemented through monthly liquidation and submission of cash monitoring sheets, spot-checks, quarterly programmatic monitoring and formal HACT training have resulted in timely liquidation of cash assistance and UNICEF Belize currently has no DCTs pending liquidation beyond six months. Expenditure rates for the different funding sources were as follows: 95 per cent regular resources (RR), 82 per cent other regular resources (ORR), and 99 per cent of the institutional budget.

Efficiency gains continued to be realised as a result of new management decisions in the areas of: telephone (US\$3,000); electricity (US\$1,500); fuel (US\$500); office supplies (US\$1,500). The Office continues to work towards greater efficiency gains through 'greening'.

Belize was one of the Country Offices included in the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) pilot. As with the Panama Hub, the underlying principles of the GSSC are to achieve efficiency and effectiveness and to address the issue of segregation of duties; an important internal control that promotes accountability and transparency. With the testing period now complete, going forward the GSSC will perform specific tasks in operations/finance (bank reconciliations) and HR.

### **Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

The Office has absorbed 89 per cent of the total CPD ceiling (US\$6.3 million). The funds implemented by the Country Office in 2015 amounted to US\$3.1 million, of which 72.5 per cent were thematic or donor resources (Other Resources) and 27.5 per cent regular resources. The implementation rate in December 2015 was 89 per cent, partly due to the fact that a considerable number of contributions were made available only in November 2015. The number of donor reports submitted on time was 100 per cent.

The Office managed two major programmatic contributions to complete MICS-related activities (US\$590,000) and Sports for Development activities within the child protection programme (US\$340,000). The latter was a contribution from the UK National Committee for UNICEF, based on a proposal prepared by the Country Office in 2014.

Furthermore, three major fundraising activities took place in the area of child protection. In the first instance the Office was able to successfully partner with the EU, leveraging US\$131,850 to provide support to community-based implementing partners that work to end violence against children at the community level.

Following the implementation of "Sex Thing", UNICEF Belize developed a human interest story featuring a young person involved in peer education. The story assisted in raising an additional US\$50,000 from the Regional Office for further implementation of community-based HIV interventions.

The Belize Country Office successfully utilised US\$500,000 in 2015 for programmes in ECD/Education and WASH in schools. Progress utilisation and donor reports for the WASH in schools programme continue to stimulate private donors' request for further proposals in strengthening CFS standards.

The US Fund for UNICEF recently confirmed an additional donation of US\$100K to expand the work on WASH in schools.

## Evaluation

The 2015 integrated monitoring and evaluation plan (IMEP) brought together prioritised integrated data collection across programmes and was an essential component of the annual management plan. The IMEP was reviewed twice during the reporting year and was shared with the Regional Office for comments.

Two evaluations and a mapping exercise of ECD services were completed, and an evaluation of the BOOST programme was underway at year's end.

The process evaluation of the school community liaison and security programme was undertaken within the policy and legal framework of the NPA and the MoEYS education sector Strategy, to support the Ministry in achieving one of its primary goals: to increase primary enrolment and completion rates. This evaluation, reviewed by Centro de Estudios Educativos y Sociales (CEES), was given an overall rating of "almost confident to act". Discussions are ongoing with the National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC) and MoEYS to strengthen the report and management response based on the recommendations.

The evaluation of the NPA was also reviewed by CEES; the findings and conclusion received a rating of 'confident to act'; nevertheless, the Government has strongly recommended that the evaluation not be disseminated.

The mapping and analysis for ECD services in social sectors provided information, internal inputs and external observations for preparing an inter-sectoral governance framework. As a result, the national ECD policy was adopted by Cabinet, and the inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms (ECD technical working group) was established to support implementation of an integrated strategic plan.

## Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

In August 2015 UNICEF Belize participated in a business simplification exercise with colleagues from the HQ FRG. The team facilitated open-ended discussions with colleagues and provided valuable guidance aimed at realising efficiency gains and becoming more effective. Their final recommendations were adopted by the CMT, simplifying Country Programme planning, merging office management committees, adjustments to cash transfers to partners (HACT and Partnership Agreements with increased ceilings), adjustments for purchasing and procurement practises, archiving documentation and travel.

Management decided to amend the commuting distance to include Orange Walk Town and Belmopan City (both one hour by road from the office), consolidate field visits and implement early procurement of international airfares, contributing to lower travel costs. Other cost-savings continued to be realised in 2015 through measures enacted in 2012 and 2013 for the areas of communications, ICT and supply.

The use of Skype for Business teleconference and video conference links and VOIP lines have led to an average monthly savings for telephone of about US\$250 compared with 2013. Programme and operations saw additional gains in reduced travel costs as a result of using the new communication tools.

Internet service rates continued along the lines previously negotiated with providers; no cost reduction was received in 2015, however the Internet service provider did increase bandwidth. Savings remain at US\$750 monthly, compared with rates paid in 2012. The office benefits from

remote server hosting (via Panama), reducing costs for maintenance and technical support.

UN agencies continue to use long-term agreements established with local vendors to procure airfares, toners and ink and paper, yielding an annual cost savings US\$1,000.

Staff members take an active role in reducing costs by turning off lights when not needed, being conscientious in the use of office supplies and telephones and promoting a green environment by printing/copying less.

## Supply Management

<b>UNICEF Belize 2015</b>	<b>Value in US\$</b>
Programme (services) - individual contractor/consultant	266,235
Programme (services) - corporate	54,954
Programme - supplies	62,283
Programme - emergency supplies	13,588
Operations (services) - corporate	10,249
Operations - office supplies	10,548
Operations - office equipment	5,036
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>422,893</b>

The Belize Country Office supply plan continues to be minimal for consumables, services, emergency and construction. A plan is developed early in the year and submitted to the Head of Office for approval. Since the supply component of the Country Programme is very minimal, the only monitoring required is for Emergency Supplies.

Belize has a potentially high threat for natural disasters. Due to this threat, the Office entered into an LTA with a local supplier for 400 family hygiene kits. Of these, 250 kits were already issued to the Ministry of Human Development in response to the flooding emergency. Emergency supplies stored in two controlled warehouses were donated to Government of Belize (Ministry of National Emergency Management) at the end of 2014. Supplies were also procured for MICS 5, with direct delivery to the Statistical Institute of Belize.

Implementing partners are educated in UNICEF's procurement guidelines and the Office participates in selection panels for goods and services.

As a small country, Belize continues to face some supply challenges: suppliers are very limited and the country does not have a large manufacturing or even private sector, thus the cost of some items is very high due to import taxes, shipping and freight costs.

UN agencies continue to use long-term agreements established with local vendors for airfares, toners and inks and paper. Annual cost savings was US\$1,000.

## Security for Staff and Premises

Safety, security and mitigation measures are regularly monitored by the UNICEF Representative (designated official for security issues), United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Local Security Agent (LSA) and agency security focal point, along with support from the UNSMT and UNDSS Guatemala/Belize. Necessary safety equipment is

installed, maintained and tested regularly. All staff members attend quarterly 'Safety and Security' briefings and are updated regularly regarding potential threats through bulletins, alerts, notices and crime statistics. Guidance is shared on ways to mitigate and report potential threats or negative experiences in their respective environments that might threaten their safety or the programme delivery.

Belize has seen a rise in crime and violence; to address security concerns and threats, UN agencies in Belize implemented a national security clearance system in 2015, making it mandatory for UNICEF staff to obtain clearances to operate /visit certain areas of Belize.

UNICEF Belize continues to work mainly on the south side of Belize City; both the west and south of the country, so security has become part of programme and operations planning. For travel beyond the duty station to areas considered high risk, once a security clearance is given, the local security agent shares with travelling colleagues the contacts for local law enforcement (police), health centres and other relevant information.

Security operational tools were updated, including the minimum operating security standards, minimum operating residential security standards (MOSS and MORSS) and the UN Security Plan. UNICEF Belize increased its' score to 95 per cent on MOSS compliance and areas where adding handheld radios for communication and including some emergencies supplies. Additionally the Country Office scheduled a twice-yearly exercise to update the early warning/early action tool of UNICEF's Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems and our Business Continuity Plan. Both tools were updated.

The office premises passed the UNDSS building inspection early in 2015 and the evacuation plan was successfully tested in December 2015.

## Human Resources

The appointment of two new staff members at the beginning of 2015 completed the implementation of the 2014 PBR submission: Child Protection Officer and Admin Assistant.

Later, the Office submitted changes to the programme budget review (PBR) to reflect actual needs: merging of receptionist and driver into one position (effective October 2015), and abolishing the driver position, effective January 2016. Implementation was postponed due to a severe accident of the staff member that holds a permanent appointment as driver. To fill the gap until he comes back from certified sick leave (February 2016), the Office hired a temporary driver at GS1 level. The office operates with 13 staff; post funding (RR 44 per cent, OR 5 per cent and IB 70 per cent) was approved with the 2015 PBR.

The Office hosted a GS6 programme assistant from Costa Rica for a 14 weeks stretch assignment to back up a staff member on maternity leave.

Belize had a 90 per cent response rate in the 2014 general staff survey. Due to the small size of the office, a specific report was not shared by HQ/consulting company. The CMT and the LSA decided to conduct an additional internal survey to confirm the identified priority areas: knowledge and information sharing, work-life balance, office efficiency and effectiveness, job satisfaction and motivation and career and professional development. An action plan was drafted by the LSA, which was further developed with inputs from all staff. The CMT regularly monitors the work-plan.

All 2014 performance appraisals were completed on time, while the 2015 mid-year PAS completion rate was 90 per cent.

The Office has only one trained volunteer and is planning to train another one in 2016. The LSA and JCC continue to be invaluable resources for addressing staff concerns.

All staff have been trained in UN Cares, face-to-face or online. The office keeps two PEP kits.

## Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

UNICEF Belize is now a server-less field office, lightweight and agile from an IT infrastructure point of view; a very low IT footprint, hence the term 'LIGHT Office'. The idea of a server-less office is to enhance effectiveness and efficiency by significantly reducing a field office's ICT infrastructure while still offering its staff a substantial portion of the IT Service Catalogue through a service centre, as well as the ability to work from anywhere.

'LIGHT' is ideal for UNICEF Belize given its small field presence. It facilitates rapid (re)deployment of office and staff in any situation, including emergencies. It is also ideal for One UN scenarios, requiring only an internet connection when sharing premises with other agencies. Additionally, UNICEF's use of the Microsoft Office 365 online tool enables staff to use applications on the cloud for e-mail, calendaring, instant messaging, multi-party audio and video conferencing, SharePoint and OneDrive application documents. Users can work on their documents from a web browser.

UNICEF supported the Government of Belize in conducting MICS 5 and the Global MICS team in conducting a field test exercise for MICS 6. This was the first time the SIB carried out a household survey using mobile devices - tablets and GPS - significantly reducing the cost of data collection for MICS 5 and improving the overall quality and timeliness of data.

The MICS 6 field test exercise provided an opportunity for the team to test the performance of Windows vs android tablets. The evidence captured will inform the Global MICS Team on how to best support countries.

UNICEF Belize is present on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Its Facebook page continued to grow during 2015, with a 402 per cent increase in followers and active interaction by partners. The most popular post of the year reached 1,929,787 people.

## Programme Components from Results Assessment Module

### ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

#### OUTCOME 1 Special Purpose

##### Analytical Statement of Progress:

In 2015, UNICEF Belize made great strides toward increasing safety and security awareness among its staff. Several mitigation measures were introduced in the form of training, simulation exercises, evacuation drills, agency funds and programme evaluation (announced and unannounced) and regular information fact sheet and presentations. There is now a mandatory Country Security Briefing that highlights safety and security threats and risks.

## **OUTPUT 1 Premises and Security**

### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

The established post of UNDSS local security agent continued to hold the main responsibility for implementing, mitigating and addressing issues related to safety and security for UN personnel in Belize. Safety, security and mitigation measures are regularly monitored by the Representative (designated official for security), UNDSS LSA and the agency security focal point, along with support from the UNSMT and UNDSS Guatemala/Belize. Necessary safety equipment is installed, maintained and tested regularly. All staff members attended quarterly 'Safety and Security' briefings facilitated by the LSA and were updated regularly in regard to potential threats with bulletins, alerts, notices and crime statistics. Guidance is shared on ways to mitigate and report potential threats or negative experiences in their respective environments that might threaten their safety or the programme delivery.

UNICEF Belize's programme is mainly on the south side of Belize City, in the west and south of the country, and security is now part of programme and operations planning. For travel beyond the duty station to areas considered high risk, once a security clearance is given, the LSA shares with travelling colleagues' contacts for local law enforcement agencies (police), health centres and other relevant information as it relates to the area/proposed travel routes, such as problematic radio reception, road hazards, etc. This system is an effective mechanism that provides staff members, visiting representatives and partners with clear guidance on the actions to take in the event of a security and/or safety threat.

Over the past few years, Belize has seen a rise in crime and violence and to address these security concerns and threats, this year UN agencies in Belize implemented a National Security Clearance System (complemented by a vehicle geo-tracking system) making it mandatory for UNICEF staff to obtain clearance to operate in or visit certain areas of Belize.

Security operational tools updated in 2015 include: MOSS, MORSS and the United Nations Belize Security Plan. UNICEF increased its' score to 95 per cent on MOSS. Additionally UNICEF Belize scheduled a twice-yearly exercise to update the EWEA tool on UNICEF's emergency preparedness and response systems and the business continuity plan (BCP). Both tools were updated.

The need for continued security training and capacity development is ongoing. Exercises in disaster management and fire/safety drills were conducted this year to test the BCP and adjustments made to address gaps.

Office premises passed the UNDSS building inspection early in 2015 and as a direct result, an integrated fire alarm system was put in place. In addition, the Office successfully tested its evacuation plan in December 2015.

**OUTCOME 2** CO has increased the efficiency level in its use of all resources by providing a greater level of transparency in the use of regular resources and other grants and ensuring a clear selection process and up-to-date information for advocacy and C4D.

### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

In 2015 the Country Office made great strides toward increasing its financial efficiency and human resource management. Cost-saving continued to be realised in 2015 in the areas of communications, travel, ICT and supply.

In communication, the office currently utilises Microsoft Office 365/Skype for Business, installed teleconference, video conference links and VOIP lines. Programme officers are equipped with cell phones and a monthly plan and are encouraged to stay within the planned amount. A system to track cell phone calls from landlines was also implemented. With these measures in place, the average monthly savings for telephone usage was US\$850.

Programme and operations saw additional reduced costs by using the above-mentioned communication tools. However when travel is required, colleagues are encouraged to consolidate field visits to reduce the cost of transportation and other logistical costs. The Office ensured that international travel was planned well in advance to avoid higher airfares.

Current Internet service rates were negotiated directly with providers; savings amounted to US\$750 monthly compared with 2012. Due to external market conditions, Internet charges continue to be reduced by local providers for the benefit of the office. As part of the "LIGHT" Project, files are hosted on the Panama servers and Microsoft Office 365/OneDrive (Cloud), hence there are no servers in office requiring maintenance, updates or technical support, which incurs potential savings of up to US\$100 per hour. ICT needs are met through the regional ICT officer, with support from an ICT Focal Point in the office.

In promoting the procuring of goods and services as ONE UN, the UN operations management team identified local suppliers and established long-term agreements for procuring flight tickets, toners, ink and paper. Annual cost savings amounted to US\$1,500.

Staff members continue to implement cost-saving measures by: turning off lights when not needed for an extended period, being conscientious in the use of office supplies and telephone calls and promoting a green environment by ensuring a paperless office.

CMT and programme group meetings were used as platforms to plan, manage and monitor resources. Monthly DCT updates were shared and mitigating measures taken to support timely liquidation. In addition, donor reports were regularly tracked, resulting in 100 per cent of these reports being submitted on time.

The current Country Office staffing structure proved to be the right number of people and correct competencies for implementing the 2015 work plan. The back-up system in place has ensured programme continuity through the reporting year. The Office continues to ensure regularly dialogue, through the performance evaluation report (PER) process. This has proven to be very successful, resulting in 100 per cent completion of PERs by end of 2014 and 90 per cent at the 2015 mid-year review.

**OUTPUT 1** CO has a functioning mechanism for operation and programme support.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Monthly liquidation and submission of cash monitoring sheets, spot checks, quarterly programmatic monitoring and formal HACT training has resulted in the timely liquidation of cash assistance and there is currently no DCTs pending liquidation beyond the six months. The HACT macro-assessment was carried out in 2015 and the last of the nine 2014 audit recommendations (Micro Assessment of IPs) will be closed in the first quarter of 2016.

Implementing partners are educated in the procurement guidelines of UNICEF, which participates in selection panels for goods and services.

In addressing rising crime and violence, UN agencies in Belize began in 2015 to implement a National Security Clearance System, making it mandatory for UNICEF staff to obtain a clearance to operate in or visit certain areas of Belize. With the CO programme mainly focused on the Southside of Belize City, the west and south of the country and security is now part of programme and operations planning through the PGM and CMT.

All staff members attended quarterly 'safety and security' briefings facilitated by the LSA and were updated regularly regarding potential threats through bulletins, alerts, notices and crime statistics. Guidance is shared on ways to mitigate and report potential threats or negative experiences in their respective environments that might threaten their safety or the programme delivery.

The appointment of two new staff member at the beginning of 2015 completed the implementation of the 2014 PBR submission: a child protection officer and an administrative assistant. The Country Office subsequently submitted changes in the PBR to reflect its current needs: merging of Receptionist and Driver into one position (effective October 2015).

Finally, with UNICEF Belize is now being a server-less field office, this modality of working has enhanced effectiveness and efficiency by significantly reducing a field office's ICT infrastructure, while still offering its staff a substantial portion of the IT service catalogue through a Service Centre, as well as the ability to work from anywhere – even in the field. It is also ideal for One UN scenarios, requiring only an internet connection when sharing premises with other agencies.

## **OUTPUT 2** Financial stewardship

### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Donor grants were monitored regularly to curtail any loss of funds due to non-utilization and expiration.

The strategies implemented through monthly liquidation and submission of cash monitoring sheets, spot-checks, quarterly programmatic monitoring and formal HACT training have resulted in timely liquidation of cash assistance and the Country Office currently has no DCTs pending liquidation beyond the six months.

The HACT macro-assessment was done in 2015 with scheduled completion of micro-assessments of all implementing partners in Q1 of 2016, making the office fully HACT compliant.

Efficiency gains continued to be realised in new management decisions on telephones, office supplies and local travel. UNICEF Belize continues to work towards greater efficiency gains in 'greening' – reduced printing, fuel and electricity costs.

This September, Belize was one of the Country Offices included in the GSSC pilot. As with the Panama Hub, the underlying principles of the GSSC are to achieve efficiency and effectiveness and to address the issue of segregation of duties; an important internal control that promotes accountability and transparency. With the testing period now complete, going forward the GSSC will perform specific tasks in operations/finance (bank reconciliations) and HR.

## **OUTPUT 3** Human Capacity

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

The creation of a national officer child protection post and GS-4 administrative assistant posts contributed to effective and timely programme implementation; both staff members began their duties in January.

The Office also hosted a GS-6 Programme Assistant for 14 weeks, on staff exchange, who sat in for a staff member on maternity leave. The knowledge exchange is valuable to both the staff member and the Country Office, as it allowed both to experience how processes and programming are carried out in different offices.

The Office established a temporary driver post until mid-February 2016 to fill the gap resulting from a severe accident involving the permanently appointed GS-2 Driver. The Office currently has a total of 13 staff members, which is sufficient to implement the current Country Programme effectively.

The Belize Country Office had 90 per cent participation in the 2014 Global Staff Survey. Management, with the support of the local staff association and learning and development committees reviewed the results of the survey with all staff. Priority areas identified (knowledge and information sharing, work-life balance, office efficiency and effectiveness, job satisfaction and motivation and career and professional development) were used to inform the GSS action plan. The expected actions, responsible persons with timelines are updated in the available forums (CMT, PGM, all staff and L & D committee meetings) and where applicable staff included their learning priorities in developing their individual 2015 e-PAS/PAS. The e-PAS/PAS system is being utilized effectively, using SMART outputs and results. The completion rate continued at 90 per cent at mid-year in 2015.

The peer-to-peer support system remains a vital tool in 'staff well-being'. However, UNICEF Belize still has only one trained PSV, and awaits an open call to country offices to train another staff member in 2016. The LSA and JCC continue to be invaluable resources for addressing staff concerns.

All staff are trained in UN Cares, either face-to-face or online through Agora and the Office has two PEP kits. Belize CO has scheduled a twice yearly exercise to update the EWEA tool of UNICEF's emergency preparedness and response systems and the BCP. Both tools were updated.

The approved funding for posts (RR 44 per cent, OR 5 per cent and IB 70 per cent) are based on submissions from the Country Office to the 2015 regional PBR.

**OUTPUT 4 Advocacy and Communication****Analytical Statement of Progress:**

The national communication and C4D strategy to end violence against children, TIME OUT, was launched with six behaviour change videos that were aired for free on most national channels during prime time. The videos generated discussion on social media and one of the videos went viral, reaching more than 1.9 million people. Furthermore, as part of the strategy, UNICEF also supported partners in developing a manual for participatory education sessions on different types of violence. The manual will serve child protection partners in facilitating workshops with students and teachers, and is part of a toolkit that also includes the videos and branded wrist bands. C4D activities for violence prevention as part of TIME OUT were also included in the programme cooperation agreements of several partners.

Several stories were written to highlight the work of the Country Office and shared with media as well as internal UNICEF networks. One story was chosen by the European Union and translated into 25 languages and shared on all EU platforms, providing great visibility for the UNICEF Belize. Several videos were produced during the year. One highlighted key milestones in UNICEF's work for child justice, three information videos were produced for early childhood development and maternal health. A short documentary about a violence-prevention initiative using music became highly popular, and was featured in a global UNICEF newsletter and picked up and shared by an international news page.

Staff and consultants for UNICEF participated in popular morning talk shows on several occasions, sharing information and discussing some of the key priorities, initiatives and activities of the organisation.

The UNICEF Belize Facebook page continued its growth during 2015, with a 410 per cent increase in followers and active interaction by CSOs, international partners and several popular opinion makers in the country. On the UNICEF Belize YouTube channel 5,254 video views were reported between January 1st and November 29th, a 200 per cent increase from 2014.

Belize experienced heavy rains leading to flooding in November 2015; the Office used its online channels to share key messages and advice for child health and safety – the main Facebook post reached 3,000 people.

**OUTCOME 3** Most-excluded boys and girls in Toledo, Stann Creek, and Belize South Side are reached by policies and programmes with a gender perspective that increases protection, early childhood development, culturally-appropriate and child-friendly education and learning opportunities, across the lifecycle 0-18 including during periods of emergency

#### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Within this outcome the aim is to ensure that the most-excluded boys and girls are reached by policies and integrated programmes with a gender perspective in child protection, early childhood development and education. UNICEF continued to support the ministries of Education, Health, Human Development and Social Transformation, Supreme Court of Belize and NGOs to identify and address inequities, building capabilities and knowledge for the full implementation of quality services.

Success was achieved in strengthening policies and legislation to realise the rights of children, ensuring that they have access to services for justice, HIV, birth registration, ECD and education. The partnership with the Supreme Court and Family Court allowed for the opening of a child-friendly Family Court in Toledo; this success ensures that children who access the justice system are provided with gender-sensitive, child-friendly services that help to avoid re-victimisation. Continued partnerships with the Government of Belize enabled the adoption of the national ECD policy and the accompanying strategic plan. In 2015, increasing awareness of HIV and access to services by children and adolescents was an important part of efforts to close existing legal and policy gaps in the provision of SRH services to children under 18.

Capacity building in the areas of justice reform, utilising child-friendly justice spaces and monitoring for equity were measures undertaken to ensure that the professionals delivering justice for children are equipped to respond to children in vulnerable situations. In the area of HIV, key stakeholders received capacity building to implement prevention strategies targeting at-risk adolescents. To support implementation of the ECD strategic plan, a global and national

training of trainers for CCD was undertaken in Belize to support the national roll-out and increase quality access to ECD services for vulnerable children aged 0-3. To further strengthen quality teaching and learning, education officers, school personnel and school committees were trained in development of school improvement plans and school curriculum planning in support of safe, clean and healthy schools.

This programme component is built on the recognition that a strong human rights-based child protection system will facilitate development across the lifecycle. Institutional capacity was facilitated to support the implementation of programmes to address child labour; in the area of birth registration, bed-side registration in Stann Creek District was piloted. To support work at community level, the Country Office received funds to address violence-prevention strategies that target young adolescents, including children with disabilities, with positive alternatives to violence through Sports for Development. Together these initiatives contribute to the protection of children across the life-cycle.

Systemic bottlenecks were addressed in the area of chronic malnutrition with support from the Guatemala Country Office; a bottleneck analysis of stunting reduction is ongoing. An analysis of malnutrition using the monitoring of results for equity systems (MoRES) approach strengthened partnerships with key agencies such as PAHO/WHO and the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama. The work stemmed from a MoU signed between UNICEF Belize and PAHO/WHO to jointly support the Government of Belize in sharpening national strategies for maternal, new-born and child health.

Some constraints limiting the implementation of activities in Outcome 1 resulted from administrative changes in key line ministries and unexpected municipal and general elections; activities affected included capacity building of personnel and data collection and analysis. During the period of humanitarian crisis in October, the most disadvantaged families in urban and rural settings received support in the area of water and sanitation. UNICEF was able to rapidly provide 250 family kits to the Ministry of Human Development – mandated by law to run the shelters. This immediate emergency response was possible based on an LTA with a local supplier.

**OUTPUT 1** Social services promoting social well-being of children by addressing identified deprivations and by improving supply, quality demand and enabling environment in Stann Creek, Belize and Toledo Districts

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Success in key development initiatives were prioritised through advocacy, empowerment and by strengthening the capabilities of partners in ensuring provision of quality social services in ECD and education.

*Investment in Early Childhood Development:* UNICEF continued to maintain the ministries of Health, Human Development, and Education as key counterparts for establishing an inter-sectoral mechanism for planning and implementing the ECD policy. In May 2015, the final strategic plan for the ECD policy was presented at a national forum of 150 participants. The increased investment and advocacy in ECD over the past two years culminated in this one-day meeting where Government speakers and UNICEF presented the national policy recommendations and commitments for ECD, along with a new strategic plan and roll-out of a national inter-sectoral ECD model.

In developing this model, the Government of Belize supported a global, regional and master

training of CCD in October 2015 to build capacity among ECD providers and ensure the sustainability of CCD roll-out in Belize. This initiative was one of the first recommendations to be implemented from the strategic plan. This specific CCD initiative offers an important and concrete opportunity to undertake and strengthen joint inter-sectoral efforts to expand ECD actions for the 0-3 age group and their families. In total, four global master/regional trainers and 14 national and district level trainers participated in the initiative.

*Strengthening of quality learning in safe, clean and healthy schools:* In an effort to strengthen institutions for increased access to quality learning, the MoEYS implemented a positive school-wide behaviour management system in schools. This initiative was in response to the removal of corporal punishment from the Education and Training Act and complements key area number five of the Quality Child-Friendly School Framework for school improvement: safe, healthy and supportive learning community. Designed to offer information, training and support to the school community, the programme is being piloted in 12 schools, with UNICEF support. The beneficiaries of this work include: 12 school principals, 239 teachers and approximately 3.300 students from primary schools in Belize. In May 2015 there was a positive behaviour intervention and support (PBIS) sensitisation session for 40 school managers of primary schools in Belize. The main objectives were to concretise agreements and support for enhancing the implementation of PBIS in schools. In June 2015 school managers and other selected trainers participated in a PBIS training to support implementation in schools, involving 35 participants.

The MoEYS continued in 2015 to strengthen its adoption of CFS principles, with UNICEF support, through institutional strengthening and capacity building of district-level education officers, school administrators, school committees and teachers: 51 school committees trained in school improvement planning and school curriculum planning; six school committees trained in hygiene management and over 120 district education officers and teachers trained in ECD standards and assessment.

**OUTPUT 2** Required and existing legislation are being enacted and applied to protect girls and boys in Southside Belize City, Stann Creek and Toledo from violence and abuse, including sexual abuse; Justice officials, social workers and police officers are trained on procedures and services for children in contact with the law; and children and families in Belize, Stann Creek and Toledo are accessing targeted birth registration services

### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

UNICEF Belize recognises that increasing awareness of the need to end violence against children (VAC) requires behaviour change – to address this, the Office developed a communication for development (C4D) strategy entitled 'TIME OUT', which takes place over a period of two years and is aimed at inspiring long-term behaviour change. TIME OUT also has a classic communication and public information component. The strategy is based on cooperation with partners, and also incorporates community-level initiatives such as training of teachers on positive discipline, parental training and strengthening of the child justice system. The strategy also includes a classic communication component, with videos aired on national TV and radio.

Additionally, Sports for Development strategies were embedded into the violence prevention work taking place in communities; this work is geared to provide awareness and education on all forms of violence against children and how to report violence, as well as providing support services to children and parents who are victims of violence. In addition to awareness raising, other sports for development methodologies are being used as tools for engaging children and

teaching them preventive and non-violent approaches.

In the area of child justice, UNICEF continues to support the Supreme Court and Family Court as they attempt to promote children's access to justice. Thus far one child-friendly court was built and a second one is being designed, representing an important milestone in the ongoing reform of the child justice system. The new building was designed to be suitable for children as it includes child-friendly play rooms as well as interview rooms with video link equipment. With the use of this technology those working in the court will be able to ensure that children are protected from being exposed to their alleged attackers and the technology will make it less traumatic for children to testify. The child will be allowed to stay in a separate room while questioned, and will be supported by a social worker who will help the child respond to questions posed by the magistrate, defence lawyer and prosecutor.

In addition to new infrastructure, efforts are ongoing to expand institutional reform, such as the update of the Family Court policy and procedural manual, sensitisation and training with court staff and public rebranding of the Family Court. Child justice reform also includes legislative changes, such as the protection of witnesses and children act, juvenile justice amendments and free legal aid for children.

Although not an area planned in the CPD, child labour has emerged as an area of importance of Belize. UNICEF has partnered with the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association to eliminate the worst forms of child labour and reduce violence against children.

**OUTPUT 3** Adolescents in the Stann Creek district have increased knowledge on the prevention of HIV and early pregnancy; adolescents in the Stann Creek District are accessing services to prevent HIV and early pregnancy; and babies born to HIV positive mothers are testing negative for HIV.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

At the beginning of 2015 UNICEF was approached by the National Aids Commission (NAC) to develop a Youth HIV Prevention Strategy. The strategy was developed in consultation with young people, and through the consultation key affected populations were identified as target groups for the strategy. To accompany development of the strategy, UNICEF Belize received support from technical prevention experts from Jamaica. It was decided that in addition to the strategy, a prevention workshop was needed for stakeholders.

Therefore, in 2015 UNICEF and the NAC facilitated a national workshop on HIV Prevention for Adolescents and Youth, involving the participation of over 50 stakeholders from six districts and facilitated by a team of HIV prevention experts from Jamaica. The workshop provided an opportunity for Belize participants to learn from Jamaica's best practices and to engage in hands-on, participatory activities to use evidence to establish priorities for HIV prevention in Belize. Participants were exposed to a number of effective approaches that are necessary to ensure a comprehensive HIV prevention response for young people. During the workshop, benefiting from the presence of the technical team from Jamaica, technical meetings were held, which provided useful guidance for the finalisation of Belize's HIV prevention strategy for adolescents and youth.

Following the workshop the strategy was reviewed and approved by NAC members and presented to stakeholders at the district level. In 2016 measures will be taken for effective implementation.

Additionally, UNICEF and key partners are ensuring that adolescents in Stann Creek District have increased knowledge about the prevention of HIV and early pregnancy. Through an initiative called "Sex Thing", adolescents in Stann Creek are using 'edutainment' as a tool to reach other adolescents in a series of dialogues about HIV prevention and early pregnancy. The street theatre is a participatory process, and also delivers targeted messages for reduction of high-risk sexual behaviours. The initiative simultaneously offers sexual health services in a discrete location nearby. This activity is a pilot and anticipates reaching 2,500 young people in five communities.

**OUTCOME 4** A well-constructed monitoring and evaluation system is being used to direct CRC reporting, social budgets, national plans and legislation, examining delays and bottlenecks impeding child rights policy implementation

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Within this component, major achievements were realised within the enabling environment, both nationally and sub-nationally. UNICEF's actions were focused on the removal of several bottlenecks impeding child rights monitoring, by supporting institutional and human capacity building with a view to ensure systematic management, dissemination and utilisation of data and knowledge.

It is worth noting that Belize, in line with the global trends, is becoming significantly more aware of the need for regular data collection and use of data for policy-making and strategic prioritisation for addressing vulnerabilities and equitable policy-making. Data collection for the MICS 5 started in 2015. For the first time the country is shouldering a significant portion of the cost (nearly half) and is implementing the survey entirely using national staff. MICS results have been and will continue to be used for national policy making by the Government, for planning and donor support by international donor community and development agencies and by civil society. UNICEF will continue to provide support in the data dissemination stage, to ensure that academia and researchers use the data to advance policy development and improvement of social conditions for children in Belize.

The country has been progressing towards implementation of evaluations of key social programmes to enhance the understanding of their functioning and effectiveness, and using that information for programme strengthening. The evaluation of the National Plan of Action for Children (2004-2015) is being finalised and an evaluation of the Conditional Cash Transfers Programme (BOOST) is underway. This marks a shift from more reactive to a more proactive, evidence based policy-making related to children. The results of these evaluations will expand the knowledge base and fill the data gaps that would hopefully generate successful reforms and improved outcomes for children.

In the area of child-focused budgeting, progress has been slower, yet significant. As a result of successful UNICEF advocacy and renewed regional interest in effective social budget policies and transparency, Belize began prioritising actions related to child-focused budgeting. In addition, the ongoing programme budgeting reforms provide a good platform for strengthening child-budgeting as well. As a result, Belize is working on establishing a set of criteria for child-focused expenditures aimed at measuring allocations and actual expenditure going to children, and is also conducting a budget tagging exercise that will provide real-time information on the allocation of funds for children's programmes. This will enable further planning and costing of important strategic documents and action plans for children, including the NPA 2015-2025, which is currently under preparation. It will also help implement the SDGs by ensuring that adequate funding is provided for the key social sectors.

In accordance with CRC Committee recommendations and after years of development, the ECD policy, with accompanying integrated strategic plan, was adopted by the Government of Belize.

**OUTPUT 1** Key outcomes and impact for children and women being measured at national and subnational levels and the situation children and women (across the life-cycle) is regularly and comprehensively analysed.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

*MICS:* Successful advocacy led to acceptance on the part of the GOB to use CAPI and GPS to conduct interviews for MICS 5. This was an innovative and novel decision, as it has never been done before in data collection for any national household survey. The Belize MICS 5 included an individual men's questionnaire, which provides previously unavailable data on the situation of men. MICS is especially important in that the information is obtained not only at the national level but also at the district and urban/rural levels.

Additionally, in preparation for the MICS 6, UNICEF conducted field tests of several new modules and enhanced existing modules in Belize. The field test used two main methods: field testing – where field teams implemented two versions of questionnaires – and qualitative research, which used feedback from interviewers through debriefings and focus groups, structured observations, and interviews of respondents.

The new questionnaires tested some topics that traditionally have not been covered in MICS, such as victimisation and learning assessments of children. Additionally several modules were refined, including modules on maternal and new-born health and HIV/AIDS, and a new module on child functioning and disability was tested. Water quality testing for E. coli was also carried out. The results of the field samples were validated by comparison to lab tests conducted by the MoH. The ability to test water in the field also creates an important opportunity for the country to improve and simplify its own water testing practices.

*NPA:* In 2015 UNICEF supported the NCFC in the completion of two evaluations: an impact evaluation of the NPA and a process evaluation of MoEYS 'School Community Liaison & Security Programme' (SCLSP).

The NPA was developed through the efforts of a bi-partisan working group in 2004, as a response in fulfilling Belize's national and international commitments to its children and adolescents, as provided for in major international agreements. This year the NPA was evaluated and it is anticipated that the knowledge and good practices addressed in the evaluation will inform the upcoming structure of the next NPA. However, the Government has recommended further revision before the evaluation is disseminated.

SCLSP forms an integral element of the MoEYS services. Now in its 15th year of operation, the SCLSP was expanded to include national coverage. Yet the intervention, aimed to reduce dropout rates, has never been evaluated. The evaluation report was endorsed by management and forms the basis of the action plan for improvement.

*DevInfo:* The Government, through the Policy and Planning Unit of the MHDSTPA, supported by UNICEF Belize, designed and is implementing an interagency public safety management information system using DevInfo v.7 and diMonitoring. In 2015 the Ministry made great strides toward populating this database; the process is ongoing. Some constraints were experienced due to the functionality of the DevInfo programme. Capacity building to support the operationalisation of this database is scheduled for 2016.

**OUTPUT 2** The national budgets for social sectors are being analysed in terms of child poverty/disparities and specified policy interventions and targets and forum for public dialogue on budget-related bottlenecks at all levels that affect children are operational.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

In 2015 the social inclusion programme continued to build on actions and efforts initiated in the last quarter of 2014 in the areas of social protection and budgeting for children. Three terms of reference (ToR) were developed for the Government partners for: a) conducting a child-focused social expenditure review, budget tagging and capacity building at the Ministry of Finance, b) evaluation of the CCT programme BOOST, and c) mapping of the social protection system and development of a multi-dimensional poverty index (MDPI). Additionally, UNICEF provided support to the National Commission for Families and Children to evaluate the expiring National Action Plan for Children, as well as to draft a new plan for 2016-2026.

UNICEF's work with the MoF was somewhat constrained because the TOR had to be approved through several rounds of consultations with a number of stakeholders within and outside the country. The final TOR was published in May and the evaluation of the applications took place in early July. The consultant began the work in September, but snap elections were called for November and his work was put on hold until December. Work is currently progressing well and deliverables are expected in February 2016.

The second component of the work plan included participation of MoF representatives at the LAC regional conference on "Investing in Children", held in Ecuador. This was an opportunity to further fine-tune the ToR and learn from other country's experiences that could then be adapted to and adopted in Belize. The conference also enabled Belize to make contributions to the declaration of the "Financing for Development" global conference in Addis Ababa in July 2015.

The work in social protection is progressing well, although the snap elections caused delays in the approval of contracts and the inception meetings. The scope of ToRs (b) and (c) is substantial, and both activities are being conducted in partnership with UNDP, which has provided resources and technical knowledge. The national counterpart is the MHDSTPA, along with an inter-sectoral working group that provides technical inputs and project oversight. Work is well underway for both processes, with inception reports submitted and vetted by the Government. Both processes will be completed in early 2016.

The work with NCFC has focused almost exclusively on the evaluation of the National Action Plan for Children 2004-2015 and the drafting of the NPA 2016-2026. The NPA evaluation was completed and is under review by the Government, while the drafting of the new NPA was expected to be completed by the end of 2015. The new NPA (2016-2026) builds on the lessons learned from the evaluation of the previous NPA and is expected to be in line with the SDGs and targets, with direct technical support from UNICEF.

**OUTPUT 3** At least three municipalities are measuring the performance of actions/ interventions toward improvements in quality of life and gender equality and social inequity

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

*Sustainable and Child Friendly Municipalities*

Building on efforts initiated in 2014, UNICEF Belize continued its support to the Ministry of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development, the Belize Mayor's Association and the

UNDP in employing the child-friendly municipality strategy for institutionalising a mechanism to mainstream the SDGs and monitor child rights achievements at the sub-national level.

In 2015 this successful partnership resulted in 100 per cent of municipal governments in urban areas working to be certified as ‘sustainable and child-friendly’.

To date all nine municipal governments have:

- A signed agreement endorsed by the Minister and UNICEF, committing the local government to work toward being certified as child friendly
- A child rights coordinating mechanism: each municipality has a Steering Committee to ensure the advancement of the SCFM agenda
- A mechanism to maximise children’s participation in decision-making. Each municipality has a children’s advisory body
- A draft action plan (including a budget) highlighting priorities areas to be addressed to improve the lives of children
- A rapporteur, who is a counsellor in the municipality, responsible for ensuring that SCFM issues are on the agenda at town or city council meetings

With a view to ensuring a gender-equitable approach to the development agenda of SCFM, the municipalities, in collaboration with the national statistical institute, are in the process of developing a monitoring tool to track inequities at the sub-national level. This information will form the basis for decisions and policy adopted by the municipal governments to guide interventions aimed at improving the lives of children.

**OUTPUT 4** University of Belize Policy Observatory is directing partnerships with national policy actors through enhanced facilities and modalities of policy dialogue and debate around research findings and policy advice in the areas child protection and education.

#### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

The partnership with the University of Belize presented a challenge during 2015. Several meetings regarding the Policy Observatory were conducted, but no actions were taken to advance this collaboration. The children’s issues national research agenda and synthesis (“Understanding the Role of Student and School Characteristics on High School Dropouts in Belize”) remains unpublished.

In July 2015 a virtual meeting was conducted to review the first year of operation of the Caribbean Child Rights Observatory Network (CCRON). One output was a shared understanding of the progress made by the network and a plan for key activities. A report was to be prepared by the University of the West Indies’ Institute of International Relations.

It was proposed that one of the first steps would be to officially launch CCRON and to produce a joint-study by CCRON members in 2015/2016. It was agreed that even though progress has been slow, the production and release of a joint-study by CCRON members is key to making CCRON known and visible in the Caribbean and allow it to speak on behalf of children. In this regard, several common themes were proposed:

- Migration and its impact on children
- Social exclusion and children
- Child obesity
- Age of criminal responsibility
- Impact of incarceration on children
- Social profiling of children in detention facilities

Discussion was held on establishing a South-South collaboration with Ecuador to learn from its experiences; action is still pending. In regard to the joint study, little progress has been made to date.

A competition was held with students across the Caribbean to design a logo for the network. Among 60 entries from five countries, a student from Belize was awarded third place in the competition and won an Android tablet. A small ceremony was held in the Belize Country Office and the award was featured on social media.

**Document Center**

**Evaluation and Research**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Sequence Number</b>	<b>Type of Report</b>
Process Evaluation Final Report - School Community Liaison & Security Programme	2015/001	Evaluation