Executive Summary

The year 2016 marked the third year of the common UN Country Programme 2014 – 2018, aligned with the 11th Five Year Plan of the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB). UNICEF Bhutan utilized 99 per cent of the total programmable budget of US$4,171,594. Highlighted below are key significant achievements, partnerships and shortfalls.

Significant achievements

A survey on violence against children generated important evidence on prevalence as well as information about children’s knowledge and utilization of existing services. More than 60 per cent of children (ages 13 – 17 years) and over half of young adults (ages 18 – 24 years) reported having experienced some form of violence. The survey findings will contribute to evidence-based policy and programmatic interventions aimed at strengthening the child protection system.

UNICEF initiated an investment case study for early childhood care and development (ECCD) aimed at influencing policy-making and scaling-up of ECCD services. UNICEF also supported the establishment of 30 community-based ECCD centres, benefiting about 1,000 children ages 3-5 years. As a sustainable approach to developing in-country capacity for education of children with disabilities, UNICEF supported Paro College of Education to start a Post Graduate Diploma in Inclusive Education.

The Bhutan Newborn Action Plan 2016-2023 was costed by the RGoB in 2016 with UNICEF support. The Plan set out priority actions for accelerating the reduction of newborn deaths. By 2023, Bhutan aims to reduce newborn deaths from 21 to 17 per 1,000 live births, and to reduce stillbirths from 16 to 15 per 1,000 live births. An information booklet on Priority Public Health Issues was developed for health workers and community-based support systems to disseminate key health messages. These will help to address gaps in service utilization, particularly for institutional delivery and post-natal care.

At least 11,800 children accessed group handwashing stations in 20 schools (one school in each of the 20 districts) through UNICEF support in 2016, and scaling up is planned in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. For the first time, in collaboration with the Netherlands Development Organization SNV, Global Handwashing Day was celebrated at a rural Monastic School. Approximately 150 monks and nuns participated in the event, with four monastic institutions showcasing innovative handwashing and ‘Make Handwashing a Habit’ posters.

To build capacity on how to understand, analyse and influence social policies, in early 2016 the Royal University of Bhutan, in partnership with UNICEF, organized the first-ever Social Policy Certificate Course at the Sherubtse College for 28 parliamentarians, civil servants and representatives from civil society organizations. Based on the lessons learned, the course for the second cohort was organized in December 2016.

The visit of the UNICEF Regional Goodwill Ambassador for South Asia to Bhutan was a major highlight in 2016. The Goodwill Ambassador’s interaction with adolescents provided strong advocacy, raised the profile of key challenges facing children and women, including
nutrition, and helped focus attention on the first 1,000 ‘Golden Days’ for child survival and development.

**Shortfalls and unfinished business**

Bhutan has made significant progress in improving key socio-economic indicators over the last decade. However, significant disparities persist among different socio-economic groups. For example, children in the lowest wealth quintile (36 per cent) are over six times more likely to be stunted compared to those from the wealthiest quintile (6 per cent). Similar disparities exist between rural and urban and between western (which is more developed) and eastern regions.

The proportion of newborn mortality remains high in Bhutan, accounting for 70 per cent of infant mortality and 56 per cent of under-five mortality.

Enrolment in pre-primary education remains low at 19 per cent. Further investment is necessary to enhance access to ECCD services.

**Partnerships**

Bhutan’s expected transitioning from a low- to middle-income country has led to diminishing aid flows and reduced presence of partners. UNICEF Bhutan therefore focuses on leveraging additional resources, including expansion of partnerships with UNICEF National Committees.

UNICEF supported the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) in organizing the first national consultation on violence against children (VAC), involving more than 80 participants from the government, civil society organizations, Members of Parliament, youth representatives, the media and several UN agencies. The recommendations of the consultative workshop – including development of a National Plan Child Protection Strategy were presented at the 3rd High Level Meeting on Child Rights held in Malaysia in November 2016, resulting, among other things, in stakeholders’ commitment to improve cross-sectorial collaboration.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

NA

**Emerging Areas of Importance**

The early childhood care and development (ECCD) programme for children ages 3-5 years has seen steady growth in the past five years in Bhutan. This, in addition to the advocacy and intervention support around care and nutrition as part of the ‘1000 golden days’ from a child’s birth to second birthday, has helped provide impetus to create an understanding of the importance of intervention in early years.

Building on this, UNICEF shifted its focus from centre-based early childhood education to an integrated approach of early childhood development. This approach recognizes that ECCD is about holistic development of children, requiring cross-sectorial collaboration to address their needs and rights to not only education, but also health, nutrition, and protection, to facilitate optimal development.

In 2016, UNICEF supported the development of a report outlining an investment case for ECCD in Bhutan. The report was intended to support the Government of Bhutan to work on a strategic plan to expand access to ECCD programmes and services and mobilize resources to meet Bhutan’s national goal to reach out to at least 50 per cent of children ages 3-5 years by 2024, as well as its commitment to achieve the ECCD target of the Sustainable
Development Goals (SDGs), to reach out to all children by 2030.

Two key activities in 2016 were setting in motion the development of a communication for development (C4D) strategy that incorporates the needs and rights of the ‘whole’ child, and stepping up collaboration between the health and education sectors and relevant implementing partners to work on early detection of developmental delays and disabilities. The C4D Strategy development involved inter-sectoral discussion and planning for child development promoting knowledge, attitude, and practices of parents and caregivers that address concerns and issues of care, nutrition, stimulation, WASH, and protection.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

ANC  Antenatal care
BCP  Business Continuity Plan
BHU(s)  Basic health unit(s)
BMIS  Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey
bOPV  bivalent Oral Polio Vaccines
C4D  Communication for Development
C4CD  Care for Child Development
CBSS  Community-based Support System
CEDAW  Conventional on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC  Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO(s)  Civil society organization(s)
CWD  Children with Disabilities
DaO  Delivering as One
ECCD  Early Childhood Care and Development
EMIS  Education Management Information System
GAVI  Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization (now known as the GAVI Alliance)
GBV  Gender-based violence
GNH  Gross National Happiness
GPI  Gender parity index
HIV  Human immunodeficiency virus
HMIS  Health management information system
ILO  International Labour Organization
IMNCI  Integrated management of neonatal and childhood illnesses
IMR  Infant mortality rate
JCV  Japan Committee, Vaccines for the World’s Children
JDWNRH  Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital
JMP  WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme
KAP  Knowledge, attitudes and practices
KGUMSB  Khesar Gyalpo University of Sciences in Bhutan
LDC(s)  Least developed country/countries
MDG(s)  Millennium Development Goal(s)
MMR  Maternal mortality ratio
MOE  Ministry of Education
MOH  Ministry of Health
MOLHR  Ministry of Labour and Human Resources
MNCH  Maternal neonatal and child health
NCD(s)  Non-communicable disease(s)
NCWC  National Commission for Women and Children
NER   Net enrolment ratio
NFE   Non-formal education
NGO(s)  Non-governmental organization(s)
NSB   National Statistics Bureau
ORC(s)  Outreach clinic(s)
PMTCT Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (of HIV)
PNC   Postnatal care
RBP   Royal Bhutan Police
RENEW Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women
RGoB  Royal Government of Bhutan
ROSA  Regional Office for South Asia (UNICEF)
RUB   Royal University of Bhutan
SAARC South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SEN   Special Education Needs
SitAn  Situation Analysis
SNV   Netherlands Development organization
tOPV  trivalent Oral Polio Vaccines
U5MR  Under-five mortality rate
UN    United Nations
UNCT  United Nations Country Team (Bhutan)
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS UN Department of Safety and Security
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
UN Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAC   Violence against Children
WCPD  Women and Child Protection Desks
WASH  Water, sanitation and hygiene
WCPU(s) Woman and Child Protection Unit(s)
WFP   World Food Programme (UN)
WHO   World Health Organization
YDF   Bhutan Youth Development Fund

GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

Dzongkha National Language of Bhutan
Dratshang Lhentshog Commission for Monastic Affairs
Dzongkhag District (political and administrative unit)
Gewog Block (administrative unit made up of several villages)
Je Khenpo Chief Abbot (head of the Central Monastic Body)
Ngultrum (Nu.) National currency of Bhutan
Zhung Dratshang Central Monastic Body

Capacity Development

In 2016, UNICEF Bhutan supported the training of 158 non-formal education instructors, ECCD facilitators, teachers and government officials in Education in Emergencies, creating awareness among households on disaster risk reduction and focusing on the safety of
children with disabilities and young children during disasters. UNICEF also supported the training of 55 parliamentarians, civil servants and civil society representatives in social policy, providing these important stakeholders with the capacity to analyse and influence social policies.

To build the capacity of service providers in providing child-friendly services, 195 professionals, including representatives from law enforcement and the judiciary, were trained on child protection. More than 500 girls were trained on child protection, including those working in ‘drayangs’ (dance and entertainment bars) and young nuns, resulting in increased awareness on access to social services and livelihood support programmes.

UNICEF partnered with the Department of Youth and Sports and two NGOs (Bhutan Youth Development Fund and Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy) to organize capacity development programmes for 1,500 out-of-school adolescents and youth, focusing on building skills in using media and technology creatively to share their voices, enhancing leadership skills and emotional resilience. In 2017, these trainings will be institutionalized in cooperation with the RGoB.

To expand national capacity on equity profiling, UNICEF supported training on data analysis for six officials from the Ministry of Health, the National Statistics Bureau and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests. As a result, equity profiles were developed to enhance advocacy on reaching the most deprived.

UNICEF Bhutan supported training of 24 district engineers and 391 masons to support households in constructing improved toilets. Initial assessment of two districts revealed that access to improved sanitation increased from 25 per cent to 95 per cent through community engagement, behaviour change communication and adoption of improved toilet designs. Further scale-up is under preparation in two additional districts.

Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy

As part of advocacy efforts to enhance investment in early learning opportunities for children, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education (MOE) in developing an ECCD investment case study. The case study outlined options with related costs of scaling up ECCD centres in effective and efficient ways without compromising on quality. It will be used by the MOE and UNICEF to plan the scale up of ECCD centres to meet the national goals as well as the SDG 4.2 target.

Research on violence against children (VAC) completed in 2016 generated important evidence on the prevalence of violence against children as well as information about people’s knowledge and uptake of existing services. The research findings subsequently were shared through a national consultation that resulted in identifying priority action to address VAC, such as increased cross-sectoral collaboration.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to undertake a study on stillbirths, using existing data. The study estimated the stillbirth rate at 9.6 per 1,000 live births, a figure lower than the global estimates for Bhutan (16 per 1000 live births, Lancet, 2016), reflecting data gaps in Bhutan that will be further addressed. Findings on determinants of stillbirth will be used to fine tune interventions specified in the Bhutan Newborn Action Plan 2015-2023.

Through an ongoing knowledge partnership with the UNICEF regional office and Johns Hopkins University, the epidemiology of maternal and child nutrition in Bhutan was documented. The analyses generated time trends, current (2015) distribution and main predictors of stunting, wasting and overweight in children ages 0-59 months and poor breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices in children ages 0-23 months, as well as
knowledge on the current (2015) distribution and main predictors of anaemia in children (6-59 months), adolescent girls (10-19 years) and women of reproductive age (15-19 years) in Bhutan.

**Partnerships**

UNICEF supported the Department of Youth and Sports under the Ministry of Education to improve coordination among various youth groups at national and district levels and an exchange of knowledge and information. As a result, representatives of 10 youth groups developed strategic guidelines on the functioning of youth groups and appointed an overall coordinator.

UNICEF partnered with the World Health Organization (WHO) to support the 2nd international conference on Medical and Health Sciences entitled ‘Celebrate Maternal and Child Health’. The conference recommended further analysis on high rates of maternal and newborn deaths and development of clear policy and programme recommendations to reduce them.

UNICEF, jointly with UNDP, supported the training of the newly appointed assistant research officers of the National Assembly of Bhutan on research methodologies.

In 2016, UNICEF partnered with the Royal University of Bhutan to initiate the process of introducing social work education in the country. A bachelor’s degree in social work and a tailored programme for current practitioners, who are mostly untrained, will be developed over the next two years.

UNICEF, in partnership with the Bhutan National Legal Institute, developed and published a bench book (overview of legal procedure), to increase capacity of judges on child justice court procedures. With UNICEF support, the Royal Bhutan Police rolled out a capacity development programme on child and women friendly policing practices. UNICEF supported the National Commission for Women and Children in organizing the first national consultation on violence against children. The recommendations that emerged from this consultative workshop – including improved cross-sector collaboration of a National Child Protection Strategy and a C4D Strategy – were presented at the 3rd High Level Meeting on Child Rights held in Malaysia in November 2016.

In collaboration with the Royal University of Bhutan, UNICEF supported the introduction of a certificate course on Social Policy at the Sherubtse College in eastern Bhutan.

**External Communication and Public Advocacy**

UNICEF Bhutan developed a communication and advocacy strategy in support of country programme priorities with a focus to ensure equity. The strategy outlines UNICEF’s overall communication and advocacy objectives – to reach and engage target audiences to take action for the rights and wellbeing of children, especially the most deprived – and the approaches and tools to accomplish those objectives.

The visit of the UNICEF Regional Goodwill Ambassador for South Asia to Bhutan was a major highlight in 2016. The Goodwill Ambassador’s meeting with Bhutan’s Prime Minister and his interaction with adolescents provided strong advocacy and raised the profile of key challenges facing children and women, including nutrition. A press conference with local media helped focus attention on the first ‘1,000 ‘Golden Days’ for child survival and development.

The online presence of UNICEF Bhutan on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, along with the
website for UNICEF Bhutan, has further helped to highlight UNICEF’s work in Bhutan.

Using key international days, UNICEF increased visibility and advocated for child rights through traditional and social media. Events included the launch of the State of the World’s Children report 2016 by a Speaker of the Parliament. For the first time, Global Handwashing Day was observed at a monastic school to advocate among child monks and nuns on the importance of water, sanitation and hygiene for a healthier life. World Breastfeeding Week was observed in three referral hospitals and helped advocate on the importance of breastfeeding.

UNICEF Bhutan, through a partnership with the Thimphu City Football Club, empowered adolescent girls from a remote highland village to enjoy their right to play. The partnership helped raise awareness on promoting equity, increasing girls’ participation, as well as on tackling issues such as menstrual hygiene management, teenage pregnancy and early childbirth.

**South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

UNICEF supported Bhutan’s participation in the third High Level Meeting on Child Rights in Malaysia in November 2016. Centred around the themes of social protection, universal health coverage and violence against children, the meeting brought together leaders from 28 Asia-Pacific countries to share and discuss issues, best practices and challenges related to the three themes and commit priority actions to address them.

UNICEF initiated a partnership with the Royal University of Bhutan to explore the establishment of social work education in the university curriculum. A national consultation to identify opportunities for social work education was organized, with participation from more than 10 government and civil society organizations. The President of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) facilitated the discussions. The participation of IASSW led to the establishment of a network between Royal University of Bhutan (RUB), Samtse College of Education and schools of social work across the Asia-Pacific region. Officials from the RUB and Samtse College of Education participated in a study tour to three premier social work institutions in Guwahati and Shillong in India. The study tour highlighted the importance of the need for starting social work education in Bhutan.

UNICEF supported three officials from the Ministry of Health to attend a newborn action plan costing training in Sri Lanka. With support and guidance from UNICEF Bhutan and UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, the trained officials carried out the costing of the Bhutan Newborn Action Plan 2015-2023 using One Health Tool.

A delegation from Bhutan participated in the WASH in Schools International Learning Exchange in Jakarta, Indonesia in November 2016, presenting progress and key results for WASH in Schools, including increased school attendance and learning (reduced absenteeism due to illness), and girls’ participation (improved menstrual hygiene practices/facilities in schools).

**Identification Promotion of Innovation**

Following a learning exchange from WASH in Schools International Learning Exchange (WinSILE) 2015, Bhutan adopted a simplified design to build fixed group handwashing facilities.

The design and local fabrication group handwashing stations are innovative, providing children the opportunity to wash their hands while facing each other, making handwashing more interactive and fun. The facility has the capacity to accommodate 24 children to wash
hands simultaneously. It was locally manufactured by trainers of the Chumey Technical Training Institute, and was installed in 20 schools across the 20 districts (one school in each district).

This new group handwashing facility is expected to significantly reduce point-of-use contamination compared to the current practice of using jerry cans and buckets in most schools. More than 11,800 children now have access to group handwashing stations with additional water storage tanks. Having such an innovative facility has encouraged children to regularly wash hands with soap, reinforced the importance of handwashing at critical juncture, and enabled children to learn and share key hygiene messages with their families and communities. The scaling up of such fixed group handwashing facilities is planned in collaboration with Ministry of Education.

UNICEF supported Bhutan’s participation in the third High-Level Meeting on Child Rights in Malaysia in November 2016. The high-level meeting was further enriched by a Youth Innovation Challenge and a Youth Poll, both of which fed into the meeting deliberations and discussions. Two young innovators from Bhutan were among the six finalists who presented their ideas, including an anti-bullying toolkit and creation of a network for safe schools.

**Support to Integration and Cross-Sectoral Linkages**

To develop a coordinated approach for addressing challenges facing children with disabilities, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education (MOE) to undertake a knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) study on disabilities. The study was led by MOE, with technical support from the UK University of Northampton, and in collaboration with other key sectors such as Ministry of Health, National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), the Gross National Happiness Commission, and National Statistics Bureau, as well as NGOs and CSOs working with children with disabilities.

The study on violence against children conducted in partnership with the NCWC required an integrated approach with engagement of key government sectors, including the Ministries of Education, Health, Labour and Human Resources, the Central Monastic Body, police, judiciary, and relevant CSOs. The research was guided by a cross-sector Steering Committee and Core Working Group, thereby ensuring participation and ownership of the research findings and commitments for action by various sectors.

A National Nutrition Task Force (NNTF) was formed under the chairmanship of the Director of Public Health, Ministry of Health to develop an accelerated plan for addressing undernutrition among adolescent girls, pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants and young children, pre-schoolers and schoolchildren. The task force has representation from the Ministries of Health, Education, Agriculture and Forests, WHO, WFP and UNICEF, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital, and the Faculty of Nursing and Public Health. The accelerated nutrition plan is part of a large multi-sectoral food and nutrition strategic document, involving the Prime Minister and the key Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture and Forests.

The National Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2015-2023 (NHPSP) developed in partnership with the Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF was launched on World Health Day. The NHPSP serves as a guide for all sectors to mainstream health promotion approaches across all key sectors.

**Service Delivery**

Bhutan successfully switched from trivalent Oral Polio Vaccine (tOPV) to bivalent Oral Polio (bOPV) in April 2016. In line with the polio eradication and endgame strategic plan, UNICEF
partnered with the Ministry of Health and WHO to complete the switchover plan from tOPV to bOPV. This included procurement and distribution of vaccines, training of switch monitors, district health officers and health workers, and validation of tOPV disposal.

As a response to the mumps epidemic, in 2016 UNICEF supported the introduction of the combined mumps, measles and rubella (MMR) vaccine. UNCEF supported preparation of micro-plans to increase access and immunization coverage for children and pregnant women among difficult-to-reach nomadic communities in six districts. Currently immunization coverage in these areas is below 90 per cent (83 – 89 per cent) – less than the national coverage of more than 95 per cent.

UNICEF supported the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) in prepositioning emergency supplies for education, health and WASH in three key regions serving as strategic nodal points for easy distribution across the country (western, central, eastern region), capacity building of district officials, and providing telecommunication equipment to the newly established National Emergency Operation Centre.

The prepositioning of supplies will help ensure that, in the event of a disaster, approximately 120 children in each region will be able to continue their education and more than 3,000 people will have water supply and sanitation facilities. Family water kits will be available for 200 households in each region and there will be a proper place to set up temporary clinics in any of the affected districts.

Based on the request from the DDM and Ministry of Education, UNICEF Bhutan supported the procurement and prepositioning of 60 winterized tents that can provide temporary learning space for approximately 2,400 children during emergencies.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

The research on violence against children (VAC) in Bhutan was completed in 2016. This quantitative survey generated important evidence on the prevalence of violence against children as well as information about children’s knowledge and uptake of existing services. More than 60 per cent of children (13 – 17 years) and over half of young adults (18 – 24 years) reported having experienced some form of violence, whether physical, sexual and/or emotional.

The findings will contribute to evidence-based policy and programmatic interventions aimed at strengthening the child protection system. In this regard, UNICEF supported the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) in organizing the first national consultation on violence against children. More than 80 participants from the government, civil society organizations, members of parliament, youth representatives, UN agencies and the media provided their views on the findings and recommendations.

Recommendations from the research and the national consultation include: improved cross-sectorial collaboration; review and revision of a national plan of action on child protection; development of a national child protection strategy; and development of a C4D strategy on child protection.

The launch of the violence against children research report and the national consultation generated increased media attention, both in traditional and social media, and promoted public dialogue on this important issue, which is usually considered a private or family matter. The recommendations of the consultative workshop were presented at the 3rd High Level Meeting on Child Rights held in Malaysia in November 2016, bringing further attention to the issue and resulting in stakeholders’ commitment to increased cross-sectoral collaboration.
In collaboration with UNDP, UNICEF Bhutan advocated for early ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As a sustainable approach to developing in-country capacity for education of children with disabilities. UNICEF supported Paro College of Education to launch a post graduate diploma in inclusive education to increase access to inclusive education for children with disabilities. UNICEF strengthened its partnership with civil society organizations to enhance access to services for ECCD as well as education for children with disabilities.

UNICEF provided inputs to the Pre-Sessional Working Group of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

**Gender Equality**

UNICEF’s support to the training of government officials in equity profiling resulted in the development of four profiles, focusing on early childhood care and development, neonatal mortality, stunting, and water, sanitation and hygiene. These profiles highlight inequities among gender, regions and wealth quintiles in terms of access to and benefits from key programmatic interventions. This new way of presenting data had a powerful impact and generated a greater understanding of evidence-based policymaking and programming focused on equity, and to enhance advocacy on reaching the most deprived.

UNICEF supported the local NGO Respect Educate Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW) in expanding the Druk Adolescents’ Initiative for Sexual Awareness Network (DAISAN) to 15 districts. DAISAN is one of six youth groups in the country focusing on sexuality education and gender-based violence prevention in schools and within communities.

UNICEF Bhutan, through a partnership with the Thimphu City Football Club, empowered adolescent girls from a remote highland village to enjoy their right to play. The partnership helped raise awareness on promoting equity and increasing girls’ participation, as well as on tackling issues such as menstrual hygiene management, teenage pregnancy and early childbirth.

To increase awareness and promote positive attitudes toward prevention and elimination of gender-based violence, more than 300 young nuns from 10 nunneries in six districts were trained on child protection. The young girls shared their ideas about what violence meant to them. They were sensitized on existing legislation that protects children and women, and informed about the services available to victims of violence and children in difficult circumstances.

Because of UNICEF’s WASH interventions in 2016, more than 2,000 children enjoy access to improved water supply and child-friendly, gender sensitive sanitation facilities through construction of water supply schemes and toilets with handwashing facilities in six districts.

**Environmental Sustainability**

UNICEF Bhutan strengthened the Ministry of Education’s capacity to bring education to the forefront during and after emergencies. In partnership with Save the Children Bhutan, UNICEF contributed to the development of an Education Sector Disaster Management (DM) plan that embeds Core Commitments for Children and a contingency plan. The DM plan recommends actions for both preparedness and response mechanisms. UNICEF has plans to roll out the sector plan among national and subnational stakeholders to engage them in a more coordinated preparedness and response. Working with Royal Education Council,
UNICEF also plans to integrate Climate Change and Disaster concepts into the school curriculum in the coming years.

To encourage communities to identify and address issues affecting their localities, the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy, civil society organization, involved residents and local leaders of six communities in one district to organize community mapping focused on identification of problems related to waste management. These trainings resulted in the development of district-level plans to help address issues related to waste management, water shortage and community safety, which were presented to the district government.

**Effective Leadership**

UNICEF Bhutan country management team (CMT) met nine times to review and make decisions on office policies, practices and operational issues in a participatory and transparent manner. The CMT monitored implementation and compliance as a standing agenda item during meetings. The programme implementation meetings served as an effective forum to monitor the programme budget utilization, donor report schedules and tracking of expiring grants. This helped strengthen overall programme coordination. The operations team supported the programme through effective human resources, IT, finance, supply, logistics, and administration.

Three joint consultative committee (JCC) meetings, two human resources development team (HRDT) meetings and four all staff meetings were conducted to provide a forum to effectively discuss staff and management issues, review training needs and priorities, and provide general briefings to all staff on important emerging issues and high level visits.

The 2016 Annual Management Plan (AMP) was prepared based on the Country Programme Document 2014 – 2018, highlighting key management priorities, fundraising and other opportunities, and the office approach to risk management. The three key AMP priorities relate to advocacy, programme quality and operations effectiveness. The key performance indicators (KPI) reflects that in 2016 UNICEF Bhutan met regional benchmarks with respect to meetings, office governance, security, payment advice and harmonized approach to cash transfers (HAICT) reporting.

UNICEF Bhutan also established a business continuity plan and follows a coordinated approach with other UN agencies. There are currently no open audit recommendations. As part of enterprise risk management, UNICEF Bhutan has reviewed and updated both programmatic and operational risks with relevant mitigation measures.

A total of 11 meetings of the UNCT and 7 meetings of the operations management team (OMT) contributed to effective collaboration between UN agencies. A draft business operating strategy was finalized in 2016, serving as a strong basis for OMT recommendations.

**Financial Resources Management**

The country management team (CMT) and programme implementation meetings (PIM) ensured effective monitoring and management of programme budget as well as donor contributions. The donor reporting schedules, expiring programme budget allocations and direct cash transfers (DCTs) over 6 months were regularly monitored during the CMT and PIM.

The overall programme budget utilization was 99 per cent accounting for US$4,117,736. From that, the utilization of regular resources (RR) accounted for 100 per cent (US$1,115,478) and the utilization of other resources (OR) after re-phasing was 98 per cent
For 2016, the outstanding DCT of over 9 months is 0 per cent and DCT of over 6 months is well within the regional benchmark of 10 per cent.

UNICEF Bhutan participated in the sharing of budget for the joint UN HACT implementation, particularly in providing training to auditors of the Royal Audit Authority and implementing partners on the revised HACT framework, policies and procedures.

Effective and efficient implementation of HACT through strong programme monitoring and scheduled spot checks of implementing partners ensured that resources were used for the intended purpose. UNICEF Bhutan carried out 25 spot checks and 71 programmatic visits against the required number of 20 spot checks and 47 programmatic visits. As part of the joint assurance plan, one micro-assessment for an implementing partner was completed. Three scheduled audits were planned and implemented in 2016. UNICEF Bhutan had no violations with ‘Segregation of Duties’ and successfully carried out funds utilization, bank optimization reports and financial reporting.

**Fundraising and Donor Relations**

As part of the Resource Mobilization Strategy 2016-2020, UNICEF Bhutan regularly communicated with several key UNICEF National Committees to discuss possible areas for funding support.

A key outcome of this communication was the creation of the first Bhutan Pooled Grant with contributions amounting to US$900,000 from three National Committees (Switzerland, Czech Republic and Japan) to help ensure that child monks and nuns live in a child-friendly environment with access to improved water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, child-friendly education and appropriate protection services. Three other similar funding proposals related to themes such as adolescent girls as agents of change, enabling environment for children with disabilities and maternal and child health and nutrition also generated interest among National Committees. To close funding gaps, UNICEF Bhutan is working on reaching out to non-traditional funding partners.

UNICEF Bhutan continued to maintain 100 per cent timely submission of donor reports. In 2016, a total of 24 donor reports, including toolkit updates, were submitted. A systematic review process involving heads of section, the communications officer and the representative/deputy representative ensured effective donor reporting and quality assurance. Additional materials such as human interest stories and photo essays were included in most donor reports to add voices from the field.

UNICEF Bhutan successfully hosted the Japan Committee for UNICEF and their donor CO-OP Sapporo in March 2016 and the Swedish Committee for UNICEF in November. Field visits to schools, ECCD centres, health facilities and child protection services provided first-hand information on how the contributions of the UNICEF National Committees have benefitted children in Bhutan.

**Evaluation and Research**

As a part of national evaluation capacity building plan, UNICEF provided technical support in the finalization of the National Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020 developed by the Evaluation Association of Bhutan, an informal network of evaluators in Bhutan. UNICEF also explored opportunities to support the Evaluation Association of Bhutan to participate in the Evaluation Conclave, which will be held in Bhutan from 6 to 9 June 2017, themed ‘Well-being and Sustainable Development – New Frontiers in Evaluation’.
As major research was ongoing in Bhutan throughout 2016, evaluation of the country programme was deferred. The research on violence against children (VAC) was successfully completed, a report was published and a national consultation was carried out. To enable guidance for programmatic interventions and quick follow up of the recommendations, which mainly focused on prevention and response, a summary titled ‘Findings and Recommendations for Priority Action: Research on VAC in Bhutan (2016)’ was published.

With support from UNICEF, in cooperation with the UK University of Northampton, data collection for the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) study on disabilities was completed. The final report is expected to be ready by the first quarter of 2017. The findings of the report will inform the design of a communication for development strategy to create greater awareness on disability and advocate for full inclusion of children with disabilities into education, health, protection and other essential social services.

The integrated monitoring and evaluation plan continued to be a standing agenda item for the country management team meetings, and helped regularly monitor the status of the prioritized research and studies.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

The ‘Delivering as One’ approach enabled UNICEF to improve efficiencies and synergies, help resolve common issues and avoid duplication among implementing partners and UN agencies. The UN HACT and Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation group guided and facilitated joint reviews and planning sessions, supporting consistency and coherence among theme groups. The operations management team ensured functioning of ongoing efforts to streamline common business practices including procurement, human resources, trainings of common interest, salary and daily subsistence allowance surveys, travel, and security.

UNICEF Bhutan continued to make significant savings through common shared services in the One UN House. The establishment of common ICT infrastructure services and migration to fibre technology reduced telecommunications costs. Five UN agencies share common ICT infrastructure such as server room, UPS, network and telephone system. For example, UNICEF Bhutan continued to enjoy volume discount (about 15 per cent) in internet leased line with single subscription. The monthly telephone bill was reduced by 50 per cent for UNICEF with the introduction of new common internet protocol private branch exchange (IP-PBX) system/ PRI lines. A total of US$31,901.77 was directly saved through common ICT infrastructure in 2016, besides other savings in telephone bills and volume discount.

UNICEF entered into a common long-term agreement (LTA) for canteen services on behalf of all UN agencies. Shared services such as maintenance, electricity and generator fuel enabled UNICEF Bhutan to benefit from better services and achieve a 30 per cent reduction in expenditure.

UNICEF Bhutan managed its financial transactions directly through Global Shared Service Center (GSSC). UNICEF Bhutan also outsourced several HR functions to GSSC.

Efforts for non-core operational aspects like security, canteen management, cleaning, air transportation, printing, premises maintenance were considerably reduced due to common services and LTAs. In 2016, a total of US$9,633 was saved due to utilization of the common LTAs.
Supply Management

UNICEF Bhutan’s supply plan was approved by the CMT and was regularly monitored during CMT meetings as part of the standing agenda. The supply plan was regularly updated based on additional requirements.

The overall programme supplies amounted to US$471,697, consisting of services of US$76,103 (16 per cent) and supplies of US$395,594 (84 per cent). Of the total supply volume, US$311,690 (66 per cent) was programme and US$83,904 (18 per cent) was operational supplies. All activities – including procurement of freezers, refrigerators, cold boxes, vaccine carriers, IPV vaccines, tents, printing materials for programme sections, procurement of cards and laptops – were implemented as originally planned.

Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization (GAVI)-funded procurement amounted to US$ 78,499. The total value of support to construction projects of implementing partners and civil society organizations amounted to US$650,461, out of which US$587,456 (90 per cent) were education projects and US$63,005 (10 per cent) were health, nutrition and WASH projects.

In 2016, UNICEF Bhutan established long-term agreements with three agencies for printing services. In consultation with the Regional Office, UNICEF Bhutan developed Supply Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to ensure effective and efficient supply functions.

Security for Staff and Premises

UNICEF Bhutan was compliant with the rules and regulations for safety and security of UN staff and premises. The office ensured proper dissemination of essential safety and security instructions to all staff. Telephone lists detailing both local and international staff contact information were kept up-to-date and shared with the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). All new staff were given an in-house security briefing upon joining.

A national security officer functioned as the local security assistance (LSA) focal point for all UN agencies. Security concerns were discussed and reviewed during regular Security Management Team (SMT) meetings. For emergency communication, all staff were provided with Very High Frequency (VHF) radios. A common system – Crises Coordination Centre – was established in the UN premises with a radio room and communication equipment for operating 24/7 during potential emergencies. The inter-agency Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was revised in November 2016 by the Critical Response Team to further simplify the BCP format and to update BCP format/guidelines of each agency. A BCP simulation exercise was held in coordination with UNDSS representatives from Thailand and India.

Relevant security trainings such as access control procedures, emergency methods of rescue, earthquake and fire safety drills were conducted for all staff.

UNICEF Bhutan ensured that all staff processed security clearance using Travel Request Information Process (TRIP) before proceeding for travels. The UN premises are well-equipped with a proper access control system, fire alarms, CCTV, and emergency exits in place. In 2016, the office incurred an expenditure of US$29,789 for compliance with minimum operations security standards (MOSS).

Human Resources

Following a restructuring exercise to align with GSSC implementation, UNICEF Bhutan now has a lean operations team. A significant transition in senior management took place in
2016, with the Representative, Deputy Representative and Operations Officer changing during the year.

UNICEF Bhutan maintained gender balance on staff, with two male and two female staff members for the international professional (IP) category, 7 male and 5 female staff members for the national professional (NP) category, and 8 male and 5 female staff members for the general service (GS) category.

During the staff retreat, UNICEF Bhutan reviewed programme and operations priorities to address learning gaps in terms of technical and personal career development and designed a realistic learning and training plan. A five-day training on results-based management (RBM) was conducted for 25 staff members, and three staff members were trained in emergency response for field services, ICT and supply.

In 2016, one national staff member took up an international position in UNICEF. Three staff members benefited from development opportunities through stretch assignments.

The 2015 Performance Appraisal System (PAS and ePAS) were completed and objectives were set by the first quarter of 2016. Formal periodic performance discussions between supervisors and supervisees led to 100 per cent timely completion of two mid-year reviews. Following the launch of the new online appraisal system ‘ACHIEVE’, all staff successfully shifted from paper-based to online performance appraisal.

Based on the Global Staff Survey (GSS) report, office management and staff association jointly prepared, implemented and monitored an action plan on work-life balance, leadership management and efficiency and effectiveness.

On UN day, the UN Cares team provided health education and organized a health camp for staff and family members for consultation and voluntary testing on HIV and blood donation campaign. Condoms were provided in all washrooms on UN premises.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

With implementation of the shared ICT infrastructure in the UN House, UNICEF Bhutan made significant savings in recurring payments and operational costs. Five UN agencies share common ICT infrastructure such as a server room, UPS, network and telephone system. For example, UNICEF Bhutan continued to enjoy volume discount (about 15 per cent) in internet leased line with single subscription. The monthly telephone bill was reduced by 50 per cent for UNICEF with the introduction of new common internet protocol private branch exchange (IP-PBX) system/ PRI lines.

Staff members’ use of Skype for Business to conduct online meetings and conference significantly reduced the office ICT hardware footprint (almost 90 per cent reduction in the use of video conferencing infrastructure). Decommissioning of several servers improved power consumption, and Cloud use for hosting critical data (email, One Drive for business) simplified ICT disaster planning and recovery.

The old VHF/HF tower was relocated to the new UN House premises with a fully functional base station and radio room that houses the communication equipment currently utilized by all seven UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, UNFPA, FAO, WHO, UNODC and UN Women). This enhanced a smooth communication service.

UNICEF Bhutan worked closely with the Local Security Assistant (LSA) in the field of security for the common premise. With the introduction of IP-based wireless cameras and wireless access control system, security was strengthened for the common UN House.
The online presence of UNICEF Bhutan on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, along with the website for UNICEF Bhutan, helped further highlight UNICEF’s work in Bhutan.

### Programme Components from RAM

#### ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

**OUTCOME 1** Staff Travel

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Through this outcome, UNICEF ensured accountability and effective programme management and operations to support efficient delivery of programme results.

The standard practice of conducting monthly Country Management Team (CMT) and Programme Implementation meetings helped effectively monitor the programme budget utilization and donor report schedules as well as closely track expiring grants to ensure adherence to management indicators. A total of nine CMT meetings were conducted in 2016. Through these meetings, UNICEF Bhutan reviewed office policies, major progress and operational issues relating to the overall management of the country programme.

The 2016 Annual Management Plan (AMP) was prepared based on the Country Programme Document 2014 – 2018, highlighting key management priorities, opportunities and identified risks and challenges. The three key AMP priorities relate to Advocacy, Programme Quality and Operations Effectiveness. The AMP reflects the governance mechanism with clear terms of reference and membership of advisory bodies incorporating staff at all levels as part of each functional committee. The AMP results were monitored at mid-year and year end. UNICEF Bhutan achieved full compliance with regard to meeting the regional benchmark for the number of CMT, All Staff and Joint Consultative Committee meetings as well as in terms of security, payment advice (PA) and Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) reporting. UNICEF Bhutan did not have violations with regard to Segregation of Duties and successfully carried out fund utilization, bank optimization reports and financial reporting.

UNICEF Bhutan identified priority areas that require improvement. These include work-life balance, office leadership and management, office efficiency and effectiveness, as well as diversity. In consultation with all staff, the staff association and senior management developed a plan with indicators for improving the identified areas. Implementation of the plan is in progress.

The overall Programme Budget utilization was 99 per cent accounting for US$4,117,736. From that, the utilization of Regular Resources (RR) accounted for 100 per cent (US$1,115,478) and the utilization of Other Resources (OR) after re-phasing was 98 per cent (US$2,727,979).

The 2015 Performance Appraisal (PAS & ePAS) completion was achieved in the first quarter of 2016, well within the extended period. The PAS objectives for 2016 were set by end of the first quarter. PAS and ePAS were monitored through formal periodic performance discussions between supervisors and supervisees with 100 per cent completion of two mid-year reviews within the global deadlines.
OUTPUT 1 Effective, Efficient Prog Mgmt, Ops Support to Programme Delivery

Analytical Statement of Progress:
A total of nine Country Management Team (CMT) meetings, five All Staff meetings and three Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meetings were held in 2016.

The CMT meetings were an important forum to discuss programmatic issues, including national as well as global and regional UNICEF programme policy. The meetings provided regular updates on programme implementation in the context of Delivering as One (DAO), and led to improved alignment of UNICEF’s work with other UN agencies.

UNICEF Bhutan organized a total of five All Staff meetings. The meetings were especially helpful as they brought all staff together for discussions on important office issues, including human resources, and helped reach a consensus on common activities such as the office retreat. The All Staff meetings held in 2016 discussed at length office restructuring plans, the impact of the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) on the office, as well as updates related to new staff recruitment. Other issues discussed included implementation of the revised salary scales for national staff, office trainings, and transition to ACHIEVE, the new appraisal system. The all staff meetings also served as important forums to provide updates related to programme activities such as the High-level Meeting in Malaysia of UNICEF Regional Offices and the Regional Goodwill Ambassador’s visit.

In 2016, UNICEF Bhutan organized a total of three Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meetings. One of the most important issues discussed in all the JCC meetings was the progress on the salary survey for national staff, including the review of the proposed salary scales.

UNICEF Bhutan is managing its financial transactions. All transactions were processed by the office directly with GSSC. UNICEF Bhutan also transitioned successfully in outsourcing some of its HR functions to GSSC.

OUTPUT 2 Effective, Efficient Prog Mgmt. and Stewardship of Financial Resources

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Bhutan ensured effective programme management through efficient use of the VISION system, as well as through close monitoring of financial implementation.

The overall Programme Budget utilization was 99 per cent, accounting for US$4,117,736. From that, the utilization of Regular Resources (RR) accounted for 100 per cent (US$1,115,478) and the utilization of Other Resources (OR) after re-phasing was 98 per cent (US$2,727,979).

A robust HACT implementation plan ensured effective use of resources. A total of 25 spot checks were conducted (against the requirement of 20) and 71 programmatic visits were held (against the requirement of 47). As planned, one micro-assessment and three scheduled audits were conducted in 2016. Outcomes of spot checks and programmatic visits were regularly discussed with implementing partners and corrective actions were proposed and incorporated into partners’ accounting and administrative systems as well as programmatic interventions. In partnership with UNDP and UNFPA, UNICEF Bhutan organized a HACT training for 28 implementing partners to brief them on the revised HACT guidelines. The regular programmatic visits helped in improved programme monitoring across all programmes.

In 2016, UNICEF Bhutan ensured that none of the DCTs exceeded nine months. This was done through close follow-up by the programme assistants and officers with their
implementing partners.

Updates on fund utilization, HACT compliance, donor reports and donor visits were a standing agenda item at the Country Management Team (CMT) and monthly Programme Implementation Meetings (PIM). This ensured proper checks and balances in the effective management and monitoring of programme results.

UNICEF Bhutan maintained 100 per cent timely submission of donor reports. A total of 24 donor reports were submitted. A systematic review process involving Heads of Section, the Communications Officer and the Representative/ Deputy Representative ensured effective donor reporting and quality assurance. Additional materials such as human interest stories and photo essays were included in most donor reports to add voices from the field.

**OUTPUT 3 Management of Human Capacity**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Performance Appraisal (PAS & ePAS) completion was achieved in the first quarter of 2016, well within the extended period.

The PAS objectives for 2016 were set by end of the first quarter of 2016. PAS and ePAS were monitored through formal periodic performance discussions between supervisors and supervisees, leading to 100 per cent completion of the mid-year and final reviews within the global deadlines.

Following the launch of the new online appraisal system, ACHIEVE, in the second quarter of 2016, all staff successfully shifted from paper-based to online performance appraisal.

In 2016, one national staff member took up an international position in UNICEF and three other national staff undertook stretch assignments to Afghanistan, Angola and GSSC in Budapest.

During the staff retreat, the Programme and Operations priorities were reviewed to address the learning gaps in terms of technical and personal career development. A strategic learning and training plan was designed. Funds amounting to US$10,000 were provided from the Regional Office to support the training plan. As one of the activities, UNICEF Bhutan organized a five-day training through an external consultant in December on Results-Based Management (RBM) for 25 staff members.

**OUTCOME 2 Development Effectiveness**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in costing the Bhutan Newborn Action Plan, setting priority actions for accelerating the reduction of newborn deaths.

A multi-sectoral National Food and Nutrition Security Strategy was developed, aimed at reducing the double burden of malnutrition (undernutrition and rising overweight). UNICEF support focused on developing specific interventions for reducing micronutrient deficiencies among children under five, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating mothers.

Through a knowledge partnership with the Johns Hopkins University, the epidemiology of Maternal and Child Nutrition was documented. The analyses generated time trends, distribution and main predictors of stunting, wasting and overweight in children ages 0-59 months and poor breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices in children ages 0-23 months, and knowledge on the distribution and main predictors of anaemia in children (6-59 months), adolescent girls (10-19 years) and women of reproductive age (15-19 years) in
Bhutan.

UNICEF Bhutan developed a Communication and Advocacy Strategy, taking recommendations from UNICEF’s Global Strategy. It outlines communication and advocacy objectives and the approaches and tools for achieving them.

The visit of UNICEF’s Regional Goodwill Ambassador for South Asia to Bhutan was a major highlight. His meeting with Bhutan’s Prime Minister and his interaction with adolescents provided strong advocacy and raised the profile of key challenges facing children and women, including nutrition. A press conference with local media helped focus attention on the first 1,000 ‘Golden Days’ for child survival and development.

UNICEF Bhutan shared information via traditional and social media, especially during key international days, including the Representative’s message at the International Day of the Girl event in a school where the Violence against Children report was launched, and at the State of the World’s Children report 2016 launch by the Speaker of the Parliament. For the first time, Global Handwashing Day was organized at a monastic school.

The online presence of UNICEF Bhutan on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, along with the website for UNICEF Bhutan, further highlighted UNICEF’s work in Bhutan.

UNICEF Bhutan partnered with the Thimphu City Football Club to use sports as a means of empowering girls, especially those from remote parts of Bhutan, to become agents of change. As part of the initiative, girls from a remote village visited the capital to nurture their football talents and learn through interactions with civil society and role models on bringing about social change in their community.

**OUTPUT 1** Programme Coordination

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
As part of the One UN and under the ‘Delivering as One’ approach, UNICEF Bhutan continued to work with the UN Country Team (UNCT) to improve efficiencies and synergies, helping resolve common issues and avoiding duplication among implementing partners and UN agencies.

To strengthen coordination and synergy, six interagency theme teams – Disability, Nutrition, Data and SDGs, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Gender-based Violence – were established by the UNCT. UNICEF chairs the theme team on Disability and is a member of all other theme teams.

The UN Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) and Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (UNPME) Group guided and facilitated joint review and planning sessions, ensuring consistency and coherence among the theme teams.

UNICEF participated in the mid-term review of the UNDAF cycle 2014-2018. The result of the review confirmed a Country Strategy (2017 – 2018) which will guide the UN system in Bhutan for the remainder of the current programme cycle.

Based on the request from the Government of Bhutan, UNICEF, jointly with UNDP, UNFPA and WFP, is supporting the Royal Government of Bhutan in the formulation of its 12th Plan. UNICEF’s main focus, along with other partners, is on the data ecosystems mapping and SDGs communication and advocacy components. This joint support to the Government provides an opportunity for the UN agencies in Bhutan to work together toward a common goal.
OUTPUT 2 Advocacy / Communication

Analytical Statement of Progress:
To effectively position public advocacy and communication in support of UNICEF Bhutan’s Country Programme priorities, UNICEF Bhutan developed a Communication and Advocacy Strategy. It outlines communication and advocacy objectives for UNICEF Bhutan, the approaches and tools to accomplish the objectives, as well as monitoring mechanisms.

The visit to Bhutan by UNICEF’s Regional Goodwill Ambassador for South Asia was a major highlight in 2016. The Goodwill Ambassador’s meeting with Bhutan’s Prime Minister and his interaction with adolescents provided strong advocacy for nutrition and other issues affecting children and women in Bhutan. A press conference with local media helped focus attention on 1,000 Golden Days for child survival and development.

Through key international days, UNICEF Bhutan increased visibility and advocated on child rights in traditional and social media. These included the Representative’s message on the International Day of the Girl event where the Violence against Children research report was launched and the State of the World’s Children report 2016 launch with the parliamentarians.

UNICEF Bhutan, through a partnership project with the Thimphu City Football Club, used sports as a means of empowering girls, especially from remote parts of Bhutan, to become agents of change.

UNICEF supported Bhutan’s participation in the third High Level Meeting on Child Rights in Malaysia in November. The meeting brought together leaders from 28 Asia-Pacific countries to share best practices and challenges focused on the three themes – social protection, universal health coverage and violence against children. For Bhutan, the Chair of the National Commission for Women and Children made key commitments related to the recommendations from the violence against children study completed in 2016.

Through a Parliamentary partnership, UNICEF oriented the newly recruited Assistant Research Officers of the National Assembly of Bhutan on key programmatic issues such as maternal and newborn health, nutrition, education, disability, child protection and human rights. This helped strengthen their capacity to understand and analyse relevant social issues to better support the members of parliament.

In 2016, UNICEF Bhutan successfully hosted UNICEF Japan and their donors CO-OP Sapporo and the Swedish Committee for UNICEF. Field visits to schools, ECCD centres, health facilities and child protection services provided first-hand information on how their contributions have benefitted children in Bhutan.

As part of resource mobilization, UNICEF Bhutan created its first Bhutan Pooled Grant, with contributions close to US$900,000 from three National Committees (Switzerland, Czech Republic and Japan) to support child monks and nuns.

OUTCOME 3 By 2018, increased and equitable access, utilization and quality of essential social services for all with a focus on women, children and youth, to sustain the MDGs and address emerging challenge

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The under-five mortality and maternal mortality rates were reported at 37.3 per 1,000 live births and 86 per 100,000 live births, respectively. With institutional delivery at 81 per cent, the proportion of newborn mortality (deaths in the first 28 days of life) is high in Bhutan. Newborn deaths account for 70 per cent of Infant Mortality Rate and 56 per cent of under-
five mortality rate. Stunting or chronic undernutrition in young children has decreased significantly from 33 to 21 per cent.

Three officials from the Ministry of Health participated in a regional training in Sri Lanka, resulting in costing of the Bhutan Newborn Action Plan (BNAP) 2016-2023 using the One Health Tool (OHT) through support from UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA). By 2023, the BNAP aims to reduce newborn deaths from 21 to 17 per 1,000 live births and stillbirths from 16 to 15 per 1,000 live births. To achieve these results, activities were developed to be implemented in the current and next five year plans of the Ministry of Health.

Prematurity is one of the most common causes of newborn death in Bhutan. Providing Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) is an important intervention to ensure survival and development of pre-term and low birthweight babies. KMC guidelines were developed by adopting WHO’s “Kangaroo Mother Care: A Practical Guide”. These guidelines will help policymakers in planning for expansion and monitoring of KMC services, and help health care workers provide appropriate services to pre-term and low birthweight babies. The guidelines also will facilitate the introduction of KMC services in resource constrained settings. A National Neonatal Resuscitation Training guideline was developed to assist health workers in dealing effectively with pre-term babies and those born after prolonged labour.

An analysis of available data from three sources – Maternal and child health records, Annual household survey and institutional delivery records of 2016 – estimated stillbirth rate at 9.6 per 1,000 live births. Inadequate numbers of female health staff and lack of patient diet provision in Grade II basic health units (BHU), limited road access in far-flung remote areas, and nomadic population remain the main challenges for increasing institutional delivery. Delayed referral from settlements to health facilities and further transportation to well-equipped health facilities (Grade I BHU and hospitals) are other reasons for high newborn deaths.

A high level advocacy tour by the UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador Her Majesty the Queen Mother, to Dagana, Tsirang, Sarpang and Zhemgang districts helped create awareness among communities and students on HIV/AIDS, maternal and child nutrition, reproductive and adolescent health, substance abuse and suicide prevention. As part of the advocacy tour in Dagana in which UNICEF participated, Her Majesty the Queen Mother launched an information booklet on Priority Public Health Issues. The booklet was developed with UNICEF support for health workers, community health workers, and members of multi-sectoral task force and community based support systems to help disseminate key health messages to the population.

To enhance equitable access to quality education for the most vulnerable children, UNICEF continued its support towards system strengthening, evidence generation and capacity development. Access to ECCD was only 18.6 per cent in 2016 (EMIS, MoE). To fully reach all children of the ECCD age group (3-5 years), UNICEF aimed to influence policy-making through an investment case study for early childhood care and development (ECCD) in Bhutan. To ensure scaling-up of public services, UNICEF supported the Government of Bhutan to reach very young children through community-based ECCD centres.

In collaboration with UNDP, UNICEF advocated for early ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As a sustainable approach to developing in-country capacity for education of children with disabilities (CWDs), UNICEF supported Paro College of Education to launch a Post Graduate Diploma in Inclusive Education to increase access to inclusive education for CWDs. UNICEF strengthened its partnership with civil society organizations to enhance access to services for ECCD as well
as education for CWDs.

One of the emerging challenges in rural Bhutan is falling enrolment due to low birth rates. This has resulted in fewer children in classrooms, thereby leading to decreased cost efficiency (human and material). To address this situation, the Government has launched central schools with the objective of closing small rural schools. Through the school rationalization project, UNICEF supported the MoE in a pilot in selected schools, to demonstrate the importance of rural education.

In 2016, UNICEF continued its support in of newborn, child and women’s health. The under-five mortality and maternal mortality rates were reported at 37.3 per 1,000 live births and 86 per 100,000 live births respectively. With institutional delivery at 81 per cent, the proportion of newborn mortality (deaths in the first 28 days of life) is high in Bhutan. Newborn deaths account for 70 per cent of the infant mortality rate and 56 per cent of under-five mortality rate. Stunting or chronic undernutrition in young children has decreased from 33 to 21 per cent.

OUTPUT 1 Output 2.1: Strengthened education systems capacity for improved education information and knowledge management for evidence based decision making.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
With support from UNICEF, in cooperation with the UK University of Northampton, data collection for the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) study on disabilities was completed. The final report is expected to be ready by March 2017. The findings of the report will inform the design of a communication for development strategy to create greater awareness on disability and advocate for full inclusion of children with disabilities into education, health, protection and other essential social services.

The Ministry of Education explored the possibility of adopting the OpenEMIS developed by UNESCO. A scoping mission in Bhutan was undertaken by the Community Systems Foundation (CSF), a technical partner in the OpenEMIS initiative. Based on the recommendations of the scoping mission, UNICEF will support the Ministry of Education over a period of two years to put in place a more robust, flexible and sustainable information management system, supporting planning and evidence-based decision making on issues concerning children, particularly the most vulnerable.

Draktsho Vocational Training Centre (a local CSO) was supported to develop a training manual on Life and Vocational Skills. As a result, vocational training and social and life-skills education were provided to children and youth with disabilities. A training on disaster management prepared staff and 60 youth with disabilities for managing basic fire safety and administering first aid.

OUTPUT 2 Output 2.2: Stakeholders have the capacity to effectively coordinate, plan, implement and monitor the provision of quality and inclusive education services.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2016, UNICEF supported the establishment of 30 community-based early childhood care and development (ECCD) centres in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and local non-governmental organizations. The centres were established based on minimum standards outlined in the ECCD Operational Guidelines. The centres are expected to benefit about 1,000 children ages 3-5 years through provision of improved learning environment and services.

Nineteen ECCD centres in two districts provided parenting education classes throughout the year to 300 parents of children enrolled in these centres. As a result, parents in these
districts are able to provide better care and stimulate growth and development of their children.

The revised learning materials for the Basic Literacy Course for the Non-formal Education (NFE) programme were printed and distributed to centres across the country benefiting more than 7,500 learners, mostly women and those who missed their first chance to learn.

To improve the quality of education in rural areas for the most disadvantaged children, UNICEF supported the construction of new facilities, provided furniture, teaching-learning materials and training of teachers and caregivers in selected pilot districts. The project benefited more than 1,500 children (Girls: 820; Boys: 756), 122 teachers (Female: 38; Male: 84) in four Extended Classrooms, 15 Primary Schools and one Lower Secondary school in five districts.

Thirty language instructors from six nunneries and 12 monastic schools were trained to teach basic English literacy and numeracy. As a result, young monks and nuns in 35 institutions now have opportunity to learn basic English. Appropriate English reading materials were supplied in the institutions, resulting in enhanced learning resources. Sports equipment was also supplied to the institutions to engage young monks and nuns in appropriate physical exercise to complement their mainly sedentary life.

Two additional schools were identified and supported to provide education for children with disabilities (CWDs). These two Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools enrolled 47 of these children (21 girls, 26 boys). A total of 14 schools provided education to a total of 495. UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Education to initiate the process of developing standards for Inclusive Education. Once endorsed, the standards will guide all schools in becoming progressively inclusive for all children.

Trainings on inclusive education for more than 100 teachers (40 per cent females) from the two new SEN schools started during the winter break (December 2016 and January 2017). Another 37 teachers (including 17 females) were trained to identify children’s learning difficulties using the Rapid Functional Assessment Tool. As part of early identification of CWDs, 30 female ECCD facilitators were trained on using the Rapid Neurodevelopmental Assessment (RNDA) tool.

A team of experts from Thailand visited Bhutan to further develop Bhutanese sign language. The team worked with the researchers at Wangsel Institute for Deaf. As a result, the researchers could further document phrases and sentences for full sign language communication.

OUTPUT 3 Output 2.8: Women, children, youth and other at risk population have enhanced knowledge and skills to adopt behaviours and practices for improved health, nutrition and well being

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness (IMNCI) was implemented in close to 95 per cent (225 out of 237) of health facilities. A total of 38 newly recruited doctors and health workers were trained on facility-based IMNCI, leading to children receiving better treatment at hospitals. IMNCI charts and forms for Basic Health Units (BHUs) were revised, including HIV and TB identification and treatment, referral, recording and reporting.

As part of the Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013-2018, Bhutan switched from trivalent (tOPV) to bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV) in 2016. As a response to the mumps endemic, UNICEF supported the introduction of the combined mumps, measles and rubella (MMR) vaccine in 2016. UNICEF supported preparation of microplans to increase
access and immunization coverage for children and pregnant women among difficult-to-reach nomadic communities in six districts (Gasa, Dagana, Trongsa, Bumthang, Lhuentse and Trashigang). Currently immunization coverage in these areas is below 90 per cent, which is less than the national coverage of more than 95 per cent.

UNICEF developed adverse event following immunization guidelines for the Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme to improve crisis management and communication.

The Bhutan Newborn Action Plan (BNAP) 2016-2023 was costed in 2016. Complementary feeding guidelines and recipes were developed, which will be used by the health workers to teach mothers and caregivers about improving the nutritional status of young children.

To complement the Ministry of Health’s commitment to newborn health, survival, growth monitoring, improvement of nutrition status and reduction of anaemia among adolescent girls, the National Multisectoral Committee (taskforce) for Nutrition was created and an accelerated plan for nutrition was developed. Consolidated by the three key Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture and Forests, the accelerated plan is a subset of the ‘multisectoral food and nutrition strategy’ developed in 2015, focusing on improvement of infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices for reduction of stunting and anaemia.

Two district hospitals were provided with machines for counting blood cells to support monitoring and follow up of HIV patients. Three HIV counselling and testing camps were conducted for communities with higher prevalence of sexually transmitted infections.

To strengthen skills on identification, assessment, management and referral of children with disabilities, including neurodevelopment disorders, 15 physiotherapy technicians were provided a month-long attachment training at the National Referral Hospital. Four physiotherapists from three referral hospitals were trained in India on paediatric speech therapy to support children with speech difficulties.

OUTPUT 4 Output 2.5: Education systems have improved preparedness and response plans for disaster and emergencies, outbreaks and health security threats and ensure that all communities are able to access minimum basic services

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Once training was completed for all school emergency focal points, training was extended to non-formal education (NFE) instructors, early childhood care and development (ECCD) facilitators and teachers of special education needs (SEN) schools. A total of 158 people in three districts, including 83 NFE instructors (26 female and 57 male), 60 ECCD facilitators (8 female and 2 male), 9 special education needs (SEN) teachers (2 female and 7 male) and 6 government officials (1 female and 5 male) were trained on emergency preparedness. The training enabled the NFE instructors to create awareness on disaster risk reduction among people at the household level and equipped ECCD facilitators to be better prepared in tackling emergencies in their ECCD centres. The training also helped SEN teachers to prepare disaster management plans in their respective centres and be better prepared to support children with disabilities during disasters.

A refresher course on the Safe Schools Initiative consisting of training on education in emergencies, fire safety and first aid supported more than 100 teachers from two vulnerable districts to be better prepared in responding to disasters effectively. The training reached all 20 districts and as a result schools across the country now have at least one teacher trained on education in emergencies.

OUTPUT 5 Output 2.6: WASH in schools, monastic schools and nunneries effectively implemented and water sanitation and hygiene promoted through advocacy and demand,
**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

At least 11,800 children in 20 schools (one school in each of the 20 districts) now have access to group handwashing stations. Having such a facility has encouraged schoolchildren to wash their hands with soap and has reinforced the importance of handwashing at critical times (after defecation and before eating). It has also enabled children to learn and share key hygiene messages with their families and communities.

More than 2,000 children enjoy access to improved water supply and child-friendly gender sensitive sanitation facilities thanks to construction of water supply schemes and toilets with handwashing facilities in six districts.

Using a 3-star approach to further improve WASH in Schools, 24 schools' health coordinators (health promoting schools from 20 districts and four large municipalities) were awarded cash prizes and certificates for their efforts. More than 5,000 schoolchildren from across the country were reached through Global Handwashing Day campaigns to encourage and reinforce the importance of handwashing with soap in school and nearby communities.

A total of 126 school water caretakers (including 24 females) were trained in proper use and maintenance of water supplies. One hundred male and 100 female school health coordinators were trained to promote key hygiene behaviours among schoolchildren and their communities.

Three WASH officials, led by the Education Secretary, attended a WASH in Schools International Learning Exchange of South and East Asian countries in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Four engineers from the Public Health Engineering Division were trained on designing accessible toilets for differently-abled persons. As a result, construction of sanitation facilities for children with disabilities is being piloted in Gelephu Lower Secondary School, in Sarpang district.

The installation of water supply schemes in two monastic schools and one nunneries benefited 180 child monks and nuns. To improve personal hygiene, hair clippers were supplied to 61 monastic schools and nunneries, directly benefiting about 2,500 child monks and nuns. Sports equipment was provided to monastic schools and nunneries, benefiting about 1,000 child monks and nuns. Health and hygiene workshops were conducted in 15 monastic schools and nunneries, and water caretakers were trained in 10 monastic schools and nunneries.

For the first time, in collaboration with Netherlands Development Organization SNV, Global Handwashing Day was celebrated at a rural monastic School. Approximately 150 monks and nuns participated in the event, with four monastic institutions showcasing innovative handwashing and ‘Make Handwashing a Habit’ posters.

**OUTPUT 6 2.7.5:** Enhanced capacity of stakeholders to promote youth participation and provide youth friendly environment

- **2.7.5.3:** Finalize and implement the NYAP
- **2.7.5.4:** Capacity building of Counsellors
- **2.7.5.5:** Youth Leadership Training for at risk youth
- **2.7.5.6:** CPIE manual (printing and roll out)
- **2.7.5.7:** Finalization of BNCA Communication strategy and roll out
- **2.7.5.8:** Capacity building of service providers and awareness on drug education and prevention programs
- **2.7.5.9:** Skills development on drug education and livelihood skills for recovering clients/staff
- **2.7.5.10:** Roll out of Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) Training
- **2.7.5.11:** Roll out of Rights, education and participation training of children with disabilities
Analytical Statement of Progress:
Based on the recommendations of the 2015 annual school guidance counsellors’ conference, UNICEF supported the Career Education and Counselling Division of the Department of Youth and Sports (DYS) to carry out school-level research on counselling and support needs of students. Seventy five counsellors from schools across the 20 districts conducted school situation analyses and shared findings during the 3rd annual school guidance counsellors’ conference held in December 2016.

The conference recommendations formed the basis of the 2017 action plan, addressing improved prevention and response to violence against children in schools, including peer violence, and strengthening psychosocial support services for children, especially in boarding schools.

Following a training workshop for primary school teachers, the DYS conducted its first roll out programme for 68 primary teachers and appointed focal persons in three districts (Lhuntse, Mongar and Samdrupjongkhar). These trained teachers were appointed as facilitators to further train their colleagues and act as reference points to provide psychological support in respective communities. Given the absence of full-time counsellors in every school, this basic facilitation training helps teachers to identify and refer concerned children for necessary support.

To create an enabling environment for service uptake at the integrated youth-friendly services centre, UNICEF supported the Department of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education to organize five capacity development programmes in Gelephu (Sarpang district) focused on education, vocational training, employment; prevention of substance use; adolescent and youth participation; and leadership skills. The programmes were organized in consultation with community and field staff of the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, Ministry of Health, Bhutan Youth Development Fund and Bhutan Narcotics Control Agency and Career Education and Counseling Division, DYS.

More than 1,000 adolescents and youth participated in various capacity building programmes organized by DYS focusing on life skills, leadership skills, and various educational and skills-based opportunities for adolescents and youth.

UNICEF partnered with Bhutan Narcotics Control Agency to organize workshops on substance use prevention intervention for parents of adolescents and youth. As a result, more than 100 parents from two districts (Thimphu and Chukha) were equipped with the knowledge on patterns of substance use, its harmful effects and legal consequences. The parents were also trained on basic parenting skills to help prevent their children from harmful substance use.

OUTPUT 7 Output 2.8: Women, children, youth and other at risk population have enhanced knowledge and skills to adopt behaviours and practices for improved health, nutrition and well being

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The National Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2015-2023 (NHPSP) was launched on World Health Day, and an action plan was developed. The Ministries of Education, Health, Works and Human Settlements, as well as the Road Safety and Transport Authority and Royal Bhutan Police made commitments to incorporate health promotion in their sector specific plans.
The Village Health Worker (VHW) Programme Policy and Strategic Plan were disseminated across sectors and local government. Monitoring and supervision tools were developed and distributed to all districts. A total of 69 VHWs were trained on interpersonal communication skills and provided with job aid materials to facilitate community dialogue on key family health practices. A total of 375 VHWs in 10 districts now have enhanced skills on maternal and child health, antenatal and postnatal care, institutional delivery, six months exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding, hygiene, sanitation and teenage pregnancy. One hundred seventy-seven religious persons and traditional local healers and 173 local government leaders from two districts were also sensitized on these topics.

Through the Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Programme (RSAHP), nearly all rural households and institutions in Mongar and Samdrup Jongkhar districts and about 95 per cent (142 communities) in Wangdiphodrang district were reached. The programme, implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Netherlands Development Organization SNV, has resulted in more than 25,000 people from the three districts now having access to improved sanitation. In the districts of Mongar and Samdrup Jongkhar improved sanitation increased from 25 per cent to 95 per cent within two years, and in Wangdiphodrang district from 20.8 per cent to 40 per cent within a year. During the 2016 World Toilet Day event, through the Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Programme (RSAHP), 20 blocks (14 in Mongar and 6 in Samdrup Jongkhar districts) were certified as open defecation free. Based on these results, the RSAHP support was extended to Trongsa district.

During the World Breastfeeding Week, 230 nurses working in the birthing centre, maternity unit and newborn ward of the national referral hospital were trained on counselling breastfeeding mothers. In all other hospitals, the health staff reinforced mothers’ awareness on the right way to breastfeed babies.

Awareness on themes related to maternal and child nutrition, child protection, early child care and hygiene and sanitation was created using mass media. More than six radio drama series, 10 panel discussions, five radio spots and public service announcements on these themes were aired in four local languages.

**OUTCOME 4 Output 3.3:** By 2018, communities and institutions strengthened at all levels to achieve enhanced gender equality, empowerment and protection of women and children

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
To strengthen evidence and data on violence against children, the third and final phase of the research on violence against children (VAC) in Bhutan was completed in 2016. This quantitative survey generated important evidence on the prevalence of violence against children as well as information about children’s knowledge and uptake of existing services. The findings will contribute to evidence-based policy and programmatic interventions aimed at strengthening the child protection system.

UNICEF supported the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) in organizing the first national consultation on violence against children. More than 80 participants from the Government, civil society organizations, members of parliament, youth representatives, UN agencies and the media provided their views on the findings and recommendations. The launch of the VAC research report and the national consultation generated increased media attention, both in traditional and social media, promoting public dialogue on this important issue. Recommendations of the VAC Consultation call for efforts toward improved cross-sector collaboration, especially at district and sub-district level, and at national level, including with Ministry of Education; review and revision of National Plan of Action on Child Protection; development of a National Child Protection Strategy; and development of a C4D Strategy on Child Protection. The recommendations of the consultative workshop were shared at the 3rd High Level Meeting on Child Rights held in Malaysia in November 2016.
In 2016, UNICEF continued to work closely with partners to enhance the capacities of professionals working with children on child protection. Teachers, professionals working in the field of disability, police and judicial personnel as well as immigration officers have been trained on child protection. To build capacities of the community and young people on existing legislation and protection issues and to create awareness on the existing child protection support services, Community Based Support System (CBSS) volunteers, youth groups, girls working in drayangs and young nuns have been sensitized on child protection. Sensitization programmes on existing legislation and services were also carried out for students.

In 2016, UNICEF partnered with the Royal University of Bhutan to begin the process of introducing social work education in the country. A Bachelors’ degree in social work and a tailored programme for current practitioners, who are mostly untrained, will be developed over the next two years.

UNICEF provided inputs to the Pre-Sessional Working Group of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

OUTPUT 1 Legal and policy environment for the advancement of rights and protection of women and children strengthened

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The quantitative research on violence against children (VAC) was completed in 2016, providing important baseline data for planning prevention and response. The study interviewed 3,187 children and youth between the ages of 13 and 24 years, providing substantive data on the prevalence of violence, including the location, perpetrators, typology and variance of violence as well as important information on the patterns of reporting violence and uptake of services.

The findings demonstrated that children across the country have a comprehensive understanding of violence, which includes physical, sexual and emotional harm. More than 60 per cent of children (13 – 17 years) and over half of young adults (18 – 24 years) reported having experienced some form of violence. More than 64 per cent of children had experienced physical violence at least once in their lifetime. The most common forms of physical violence included corporal punishment administered by parents, caretakers and teachers. Boys and young men also reported physical violence perpetrated by their peers.

The qualitative research indicated that girls experience more sexual violence than boys: 11.5 per cent of boys reported having experienced sexual touching, vis-à-vis 13 per cent of girls. More than 17 per cent of young men (18 – 24 years) and 13 per cent of young women (18 – 24 years) reported experiencing sexual violence at least once. Children (13 – 17 years) who experienced sexual violence reported their peers to be the most common perpetrators.

UNICEF Bhutan participated in and actively facilitated the completion of research on online sexual exploitation of children in five countries of South Asia. The study identified online sexual exploitation as an emerging issue in Bhutan, and made recommendations for strengthening legal provisions and the need to have a better understanding of the nature of online exploitation and youth internet practices. The study also called for more education and awareness on online safety practices.

To strengthen and harmonize legislation to enhance protection for children, UNICEF engaged with, and provided technical assistance to, the Women, Children and Youth Committee of the Parliament to review relevant legislation such as the Penal Code of Bhutan, Child Care and Protection Act and the Marriage Act.
UNICEF supported the NCWC in developing guidelines for shelter management to ensure safe homes for children in difficult circumstances in line with the provisions in the Child Care and Protection Act.

**OUTPUT 2** Output 3.3: Boys, men, girls, and women have increased awareness and display positive attitudes on the prevention and elimination of GBV

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

UNICEF supported the National Commission of Women and Children (NCWC) in observing the International Day of the Girl on 11 October at the Dawakha Lower Secondary School in Paro district. This year’s theme, ‘Girls’ Progress = Goals’ Progress: A Global Girl Data Movement’, provided an opportune moment to launch the research report on violence against children in Bhutan.

To increase awareness and promote positive attitudes toward prevention and elimination of gender-based violence, more than 300 young nuns from 10 nunneries in six districts were trained on child protection. The young girls shared their ideas about what violence meant to them. They were sensitized on existing legislation that protects children and women, and informed about the services available to victims of violence and children in difficult circumstances.

With UNICEF’s technical assistance, RENEW, a local NGO, developed a brochure on child protection and trained 50 Community Based Support System (CBSS) volunteers and youth focal points in 10 districts on key child protection issues as well as legislation, services and support available. The participants were informed on the signs and symptoms of abuse as well as engaging communities in early identification and prevention of abuse. Participants developed an action plan on child protection in their communities, which will provide the basis for awareness generation as well as reporting work on child protection issues.

A review of the Women and Child Protection Desks and Units was initiated in November 2016. The review will take stock of and assess the management capacities of personnel and will examine the relevance to clients of having such facilities. The review will directly contribute to improving the delivery of services in the existing desks in 11 districts. Recommendations will be incorporated before extending such facilities to the remaining nine districts.

**OUTPUT 3** Output 3.4: Institutions, communities, families and children in at least 4 districts have the knowledge, skills, resources and mechanisms to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

To strengthen protection of children with disabilities, UNICEF worked with the Ability Bhutan Society in sensitizing more than 800 teachers and more than 300 professionals working in the field of disability on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This helped enhance their knowledge about vulnerabilities and ways of protecting children with disabilities.

To create awareness among the public, the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources developed a one minute advocacy video on child labour, which was broadcast on national television.

With UNICEF support, 20 officers from the Department of Immigration were trained on child protection and child trafficking. As a result of the training, the immigration officers, who are often the first and last point of contact for children on the move, improved their
understanding of child protection and enhanced their skills to identify unaccompanied children.

UNICEF, in partnership with the Bhutan National Legal Institute, developed and published a benchbook on child justice court procedures.

The Royal Bhutan Police rolled out a capacity development programme on child and women friendly policing practices through training of 100 police personnel from one district.

With support from UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, the Royal Bhutan Police initiated ‘Little Police Partners’ a child-friendly policing programme aimed at equipping primary school students with the necessary skills to be safe. It also helped the children learn about crime prevention and about having trust and confidence in the police. More than 5,700 students from seven schools participated in the initiative in 2016.

As part of sensitization on protection and support services, 300 drayang (dance and entertainment bars) employers were provided information related to sexual harassment at the workplace and available complaint mechanisms and counseling services, as well as opportunities to continue education, vocational training, and access to livelihood support programmes.

A two-day consultative workshop on social work education was conducted jointly by the Royal University of Bhutan and UNICEF, attended by 30 participants from the Government, civil society and UN agencies. A study tour to three premier social work institutions in India resulted in a concept paper outlining steps toward initiating social work programmes in Bhutan. A Bachelors’ programme and a tailored programme for existing untrained social workers will be designed and rolled out over the next two years.

OUTCOME 5 By 2018, Government and civil society have increased capacity for evidence-based decision making, taking into account the views of young people, for equitable and right-based social policy.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
To support evidence-based and equity-focused policy making and programming, in January 2016, UNICEF, in partnership with the Royal University of Bhutan and Sherubtse College, organized the first-ever Social Policy Certificate Course for 28 parliamentarians, civil servants and representatives from civil society organizations at the Sherubtse College.

UNICEF’s support to the training of government officials in equity profiling resulted in the development of four profiles focusing on early childhood care and development, neonatal mortality, stunting, and water, sanitation and hygiene. These profiles highlight inequities among different regions, gender, and wealth quintiles in terms of access to and benefits from key programmatic interventions. This new way of presenting data has had a powerful impact and generated a greater understanding of evidence-based policymaking and focused programming.

UNICEF continued to work with the Department of Youth and Sports and local NGOs to strengthen capacities of adolescents and youth in actively engaging in governance and civic action through various programmes such as youth forums, exchanges, community mapping initiatives, and youth-led initiatives within their own communities. Youth Forums were organized with parliamentarians, providing an important platform for young people to directly engage with their representatives. Community mapping exercises in one district helped improve adolescents’ and youth’s capacities to identify and address local problems in one district. Upon analysis of the problems faced by the population, adolescents and youth submitted recommendations to the municipal body for improving the services available at a
local market, resulting in improved environmental hygiene and cleanliness and benefiting the general population and vendors.

**OUTPUT 1**

Output 4.1: Key national and local institutions strengthen systems for effective public finance management and integrated monitoring of plans and programmes, evidence-based decision making based on harmonized national statistics and information.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

To support evidence-based and equity-focused policy making and programming, in January 2016, UNICEF, in partnership with the Royal University of Bhutan and Sherubtse College, organized the first-ever Social Policy Certificate Course for 28 parliamentarians, civil servants and representatives from civil society organizations at the Sherubtse College. Based on the successes and lessons learned from the first cohort, the course for the second cohort was organized in December 2016, with full ownership of Sherubtse College and with a much higher number of national resource persons and a contextualized content that is expected to build the capacity of key stakeholders to understand, analyse and influence social policies. Participants’ feedback from both cohorts was highly encouraging and resulted in highlighting the importance of social policy in development.

To build national capacity on the use of existing national data to generate information and knowledge about inequities, UNICEF carried out a workshop with representatives from key government and non-governmental organizations to disseminate information on four equity profiles related to early childhood care and development, water, sanitation and hygiene, stunting, and neonatal mortality.

This resulted in a greater understanding of how data, if presented properly, can guide evidence-based policymaking and targeted programming. It is expected that such equity profiling will help analyse gaps in programming, particularly in terms of addressing inequities. UNICEF supported the training of six additional government officials in equity profiling, resulting in the development of three equity profiles related to health, unemployment and food security.

UNICEF supported the National Assembly of Bhutan in training a group of 34 newly appointed Assistant Research Officers (AROs). They were provided a one-day orientation on key areas such as maternal and child health, nutrition, WASH, education, and child protection, as well as on monitoring and evaluation and communication. This was followed by a week-long training on research methodologies, which was done in collaboration with UNDP. These trainings and orientations helped strengthen the knowledge and skills of the AROs to support their respective Members of Parliament in analysing policies, laws and issues for deliberation at the parliament sessions.

**OUTPUT 2**

Output 4.3: Women and youth have increased opportunities to participate in political leadership as well as in planning, decision-making, monitoring and implementation [of policies and programmes at national and local levels.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Based on a needs assessment carried out in 2015, UNICEF worked closely with the Department of Youth and Sports (DYS) to roll out a comprehensive training package for out-of-school adolescents and youth. A total of 24 adolescents and youth and three Youth Centre Managers were identified as facilitators, who in turn trained 68 out-of-school adolescents and youth in two districts.

UNICEF partnered with the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) to initiate creativity and strategic thinking as well as social responsibility among out-of-school adolescents and youth. As part of the initiative, a series of multimedia production and
photography trainings were conducted in two districts (Paro and Thimphu).

UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources to reach out to girls working in ‘drayangs’ (dance and entertainment bars). These out-of-school girls, who have been identified as a vulnerable group by the National Youth Policy, were educated on their rights. They were provided with knowledge related to sexual harassment at the workplace, available complaint mechanisms and counselling services. They also received information on continuing education opportunities, vocational trainings, and access to livelihood support programmes.

UNICEF supported the local NGO Respect Educate Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW) in expanding the Druk Adolescents’ Initiative for Sexual Awareness Network (DAISAN) to 15 districts. DAISAN is one of six youth groups in the country focusing on sexuality education and gender-based violence prevention in schools and within communities.

UNICEF supported DYS to strengthen youth groups at national and district levels. As a result, representatives of 10 youth groups (ages 13-24 years) developed strategic guidelines and streamlined functioning of youth groups through the appointment of an overall coordinator. The coordinator organizes meetings to update progress and discuss key challenges. Twenty such meetings were organized in 2016.

UNICEF partnered with Bhutan Youth Development Fund to pilot a programme on promoting teenage girls as champions of change. A total of 25 girls ages 14-19 years were educated on basic leadership skills, decision-making, strategic thinking, managing stress, and problem solving within their communities. UNICEF supported the Bhutan Youth Development Fund (YDF) to develop a curriculum on resilience building of vulnerable adolescents and youth aimed at increasing emotional resilience among adolescents and youth to avoid risky and self-harm behaviour. The curriculum was piloted in two districts (Thimphu and Samste) for more than 60 out-of-school adolescents and youth.

**Evaluation and research**

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**Other publications**

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<td>Child Poverty in Bhutan: Insights from Multidimensional Child Poverty Index and Qualitative Interviews with Poor Children (2016)</td>
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Findings and Recommendations for Priority Action: Research on VAC in Bhutan
Research on Violence against Children in Bhutan – A Report (2016)
National Nutrition Survey 2015 (published 2016)

Lessons learned

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Programme documents

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