

Bolivia

Update on the context and situation of children

Bolivia is a lower-middle-income country that has sustained economic growth and redistributive policies in recent years, which have helped reduce inequities and poverty. According to the Institute of National Statistics (INE), poverty dropped from 39 per cent in 2014 to 35 per cent in 2018. These same policies also led to greater public investment in social programmes targeting children and adolescents, who together make up 38 per cent of the population.

However, 2019 was a year marked by crises and significant changes that could influence children's wellbeing and UNICEF's future work in Bolivia. Wildfires occurred in Chiquitania, south-east Amazonian lands, between July and October that affected approximately 2.8 million hectares of forests. At its peak, this emergency caused around 2,351 fire outbreaks in eight municipalities of Santa Cruz Department. Many communities lost their livelihoods when families' crops burned, and both the infrastructure and staff of state health, education, water and protection services were affected. The crisis is considered one of the country's worst ecological disasters in the last decade affecting at least 13,000 children (UNICEF SITREP No. 2, 9 Sep 2019).

This year was also marked by political tensions. After a polarizing campaign leading to presidential elections on October, civic strikes and violent clashes erupted throughout the country due to alleged electoral fraud that later triggered President Evo Morales' resignation on November 10. This was followed by the establishment of a transitional government and new elections called for 2020. According to Ombudsmen's records, acts of violence left 35 people dead and 831 injured, including 21 children.

UNICEF estimates that around 960,000 children were exposed to violence during the social conflicts, which affected their well-being, particularly in the areas of La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba, Montero and Sacaba. An estimated 5,350 vulnerable children in institutional care and adolescents in conflict with the law living in remedial homes suffered from food, water and medicine shortages. Among them were 1,350 migrant children from Venezuela. Four Ombudsmen's Offices for Children and Adolescents (DNA) were destroyed, leaving around 313,000 children without protective services. Additionally, 1,393 schools suspended classes. As a result, more than a million students lost between one week and 1.5 months of class, especially in the departments of La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and Potosí.

As result of the mission of the United Nation's Secretary General personal envoy to Bolivia, an agreement by the parties was signed on November, which established the need for the United Nations System to urgently undertake a Post-Conflict Recovery Programme in three areas: 1. Electoral assistance; 2. Human rights, with priority in political rights and gender equality; 3. Dialogue and cooperation. In line with this effort, UNICEF developed in December a conflict response plan to promote effective participation of women, children and adolescents in peacebuilding processes and strengthen institutional capacities to ensure continuity of health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and protection services, mainly in the geographic areas of greatest conflict.

The country's economic growth was affected by a less favorable international context and a decrease in natural gas production. This piqued in the last quarter of 2018 and continued throughout 2019, worsened by the fires in Chiquitania and the social conflict in the second half of the year. While public spending for social programmes remained at the same average levels, concerns on the sustainability of the public deficit used to finance them put their continuity at risk in upcoming years.

Regarding migration from Venezuela, the official data from the General Directorate of Migration shows that from January to December 2019, 19,241 Venezuelans entered and 17,754 left the country, making a migratory balance of 1,487 people. However, there are important challenges to obtaining the exact number of migrants entering the country since official figures only cover cases that are in a regular migratory situation. Estimates made by civil society organizations report that between 5,000 and 6,000 Venezuelans could be living in Bolivian cities. The social conflict in Bolivia increased the risk factors faced by these migrants and deepened the vulnerability of migrant children and Venezuelan shelter applicants.

The country has made significant progress in increasing education, health, protection, and WASH services coverage, which was complemented by the implementation of social protection policies. However, significant disparities remain that mainly affect girls and boys in rural areas and those from indigenous populations.

An analysis was conducted based on the results of the DHS 2016, which highlights important challenges in Early Childhood Development (ECD) that the country needs to address. Infant and child mortality rates are estimated at 24 and 29 (per thousand live births) respectively; 14 per cent of mothers receive less than four prenatal checkups; and 4.4 per cent of deliveries are not attended by qualified health personnel. Furthermore, there is a double burden of malnutrition and obesity: 16 per cent of children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition – figures that increase by 24.6 per cent and 23.5 per cent in children of Quechua and Aymara mothers respectively – while 10 per cent of children under five years old

Bolivia

are overweight and obese. According to a municipal Survey on ECD conducted by INE with UNICEF support, only two out of 10 parents perform some kind of stimulation activities with their children, and only 18 per cent of children have books in their homes.

Regarding education, the Household Survey conducted by INE in 2018 indicated that the attendance rate for primary and secondary education is 99 per cent and 94 per cent respectively, nonetheless for initial education is only 55 per cent. And an analysis on adolescents in Bolivia conducted by Fundación Aru in 2019 pointed out that despite the increase in the average number of years of education accumulated by adolescents – going from 6.4 years in 2000 to 7.6 in 2017 – the figures are below Bolivia's commitments to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals.

Other major challenges Bolivia faces include child labor – which affects 739,000 children and adolescents (ENNA 2016, INE) and violence against children and women. According to the Public Ministry, 117 femicides and 66 cases of infanticide were registered in 2019, across the country. The increase in both the number of cases and the gravity of the situation compared with previous years has led to growing concern among society and state institutions about violence against women and children. In 2019, Fundación Aru also reported that four out of 10 female adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age reported having been the victim of some kind of intimate partner violence.

Finally, forty-two per cent of the rural population in Bolivia practices open defecation (UDAPE, 2016). This is the highest rate in the region and one of the main causes of child morbidity and mortality in the country, along with the lack of access to WASH services at home, schools and health centers.

Considering the circumstances in 2020 – a government in transition and a call for new national and local level elections – UNICEF will prioritize advocacy efforts to ensure children are a top priority on the public agenda. At the same time, UNICEF will expand presence in the most vulnerable territories and strengthen the capacities of institutions to ensure the fulfillment of the rights of children and adolescents.

Major contributions and drivers of results

This report covers the second year of implementation of the 2018-2020 Country Programme. All programmatic interventions are guided by the UNICEF 2018-2021 Strategic Plan (SP) and implemented within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) through four result areas: 1. Every Child Survives and Thrives; 2. Every Child Learns; 3. Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation; and 4. Every Child has an Equitable Chance in Life.

Programme actions during 2019 continued to support the development of regulatory frameworks, public policies and national programmes to adequately address the rights of the most vulnerable children and adolescents. The geographical convergence of the different programme components was strengthened in prioritized geographical areas in La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and Pando departments. The programme actions also contributed to evidence generation and improved information systems to ensure better decision making. Strategic synergies were strengthened with the government, civil society, academia, the private sector and donors, and communication strategies were developed to advocate for and rally public opinion around child and adolescent rights and to generate behavior change.

OCM 1. EVERY CHILD SURVIVES AND THRIVES

Outcome 1 mainly contributes to SDGs 2, 3, 4 and 6, but also to 1, 5, 10, 16 and 17. It is based on the Strategic Plan Goal Area 1 and the UNDAF 2018-2022 Area 1 on Socially Inclusive Development. It aims to foster an enabling environment to improve Integrated Early Childhood Survival and Development. This Outcome is implemented through five Outputs: 1. Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) policy, programme design and implementation at scale; 2. Improved access to integrated services for young children (health, nutrition and birth registration); 3. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); 4. Early learning opportunities; and 5. Parenting skills for caregiving.

With consistent robust support from UNICEF, a strategic milestone was achieved for this outcome area in 2019: the establishment of the National Sub-Council for Early Childhood, an intersectoral coordination mechanism responsible for developing and monitoring public policies and programmes for young children. The Ministry of Justice leads the Sub-Council and multisectoral participants include the Parliamentary Network; the Ministries of Health, Education, Water and Environment, Economy and Finance; and civil society institutions. Largely thanks to UNICEF advocacy efforts, the Sub-Council started reviewing and updating the draft National Early Childhood Law and the ECD National Policy to prepare them for approval in 2020. This process was informed by new evidence gathered in 2019 through a thematic study on IECD, which drew on the 2016 National Health and Demographic Survey and baseline studies developed for implementation of the IECD models at the municipal level.

The IECD model implementation began this year in El Alto and Independencia municipalities with the Autonomous Municipal

Bolivia

Governments and the Ministries of Health and Education. Major results included development of IECD Municipal Policies; organization of "Facilitators Teams" to strengthen ECD services and monitor IECD municipal annual goals; operation of the Single Registry of ECD Beneficiaries (RUBEN DIT) programme; implementation of a multisectoral intervention package covering health, nutrition, early stimulation and birth registration; expansion and improvement of early childhood education services; and a Communication Strategy for Behavior Change for Development on responsive care, prevention of violence and fathers' engagement in child care.

Capacity-building strategies to fortify the IECD model in El Alto and Independencia included equipping all health facilities and training 100 percent of health professionals on surveillance and early stimulation. Other capacity building work included strengthening the parenting skills of 220 families through the "Care for Child Development" and improving the quality of 76 ECD centers and two bilingual nests benefiting 3,657 children under five. The bilingual nest strategy that promotes the transmission of the indigenous language in the first years of age through conversations and play has been implemented in 29 out of 36 indigenous peoples and nations, benefiting 2,343 children.

UNICEF also contributed to achieving a national coverage of 63 per cent for vitamin A supplementation and 61 per cent for iron by training 640 health professionals on the standards for its application in seven departments across the country. Additionally, in 102 centers in eight selected municipalities, which provided health care to 23,799 adolescents and 1,216 pregnant teenagers, 423 health professionals were trained in comprehensive adolescent care, 298 in HIV prevention and 328 in violence prevention and care.

To continue improving WASH interventions' sustainability, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of the Environment and Water to formulate a national strategy to eliminate open defecation, to update the standards for drinking water samples, and to develop a guide for rural sanitation. UNICEF also contributed to create a "WASH virtual library" with sector standards and policies. Regarding capacity building, 70 technicians (35 rural and 35 urban) completed a one-year Diploma course. This training will contribute to improving the operation of WASH systems in four departments prioritized by UNICEF (La Paz, Pando, Santa Cruz and Cochabamba). In Independencia (Cochabamba), UNICEF implemented the Rural Water and Sanitation Information System (SIASAR), which provided information about 1,500 families' necessities linked to WASH services and helped develop a strategy to eliminate open defecation. Also, during the fire emergency in Chiquitania, UNICEF, the Humanitarian Country Team and Save the Children provided 1,043 families access to safe water.

OCM 2. EVERY CHILD LEARNS

Outcome 2 contributes to SDGs 2, 4 and 6 and is based on the Strategic Plan Goal Area 2 and the UNDAF 2018-2022 Area 1 on Socially Inclusive Development and Area 4 on Inter- and Intraculturality and Decolonization. It aims to strengthen implementation of Bolivia's education model in line with global and regional education agendas and to ensure the most vulnerable children – particularly adolescents – have access to quality educational services. This Outcome is implemented through four Outputs: 1. Quality of education, 2. Improving learning opportunities for adolescents, 3. Violence in the school environment, and 4. Community participation in school management.

In 2019, UNICEF led processes to improve access to education and its quality and relevance. Novel areas were promoted on girls' Science, Technology, Engineering and Math skills (STEM), vocational guidance and twenty-first century skills for vulnerable adolescents.

UNICEF and the Ministry of Education strengthened the 'Departmental Tables for Risk Management in Education' in Pando, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. Support included a study on education sector threats and vulnerabilities aimed to inform the development of better contingency and response plans to ensure the right to education during emergencies. UNICEF also responded to three significant emergencies to ensure educational continuity: landslides in La Paz, fires in Chiquitania and post-electoral social conflict.

To improve educational services, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Education and the Plurinational Institute of Language and Culture Studies to design innovative and flexible evidence-based educational modalities that align with Plurinational Education System's policies. Milestones achieved include the design of the "Programme for Adolescents in Conflict with the Law" – through which UNICEF supported 364 teenagers to return to or stay in school until completion – and the implementation of the Productive Community Educational Model (MESCP) in 713 schools where 5,413 teachers work, and 102,826 students attend. This latter effort consisted of teacher training, elaborating materials in indigenous languages, improving municipal investment, and promoting social participation.

To promote STEM skills for girls in rural and urban areas, UNICEF supported initiatives spearheaded by the Government Agency of Electronic, Information and Communication Technologies (AGETIC) and a local non-governmental organization. UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Planification to develop an Employment Generation Plan to provide vocational guidance for over 34,000 adolescents.

Bolivia

UNICEF helped foster an enabling environment to reduce violence in schools by publishing three normative instruments: 1) 'Protocol for prevention, action and reporting cases of violence in educational units and special education centers', 2) 'Prevention protocol and action in the presence, possession, consumption and micro-trafficking of drugs', and 3) 'Ministerial Resolution 2019', which includes new clear guidelines for promoting peaceful and harmonious coexistence. UNICEF also helped develop the Cochabamba Departmental Plan for Violence Prevention. In partnership with the Ministry of Education and the entity in charge of teacher training in Bolivia, a teacher training course and guidelines for making Peaceful and Harmonious Coexistence Plans in each school was developed and will be available in 2020 for its application nationwide.

With regards to participation of the educational community in school management, awareness raising processes were carried out in 66 Educational Units with the participation of 839 students, leading to the establishment and training of 33 educational councils and 37 student governments. Girls' participation will be reinforced utilizing the results of the study entitled "Gender, Perceptions or Social Representation of the indigenous Yuracaré Woman-Girl" concluded in 2019. It will be shared in 2020 with the 'Plurinational Electoral Body', which is responsible for promoting student governments.

OCM 3. EVERY CHILD IS PROTECTED FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

Outcome 3 contributes to SDGs 1, 5, 10, 16 and 17 and is based on the Strategic Plan Goal Area 3 and UNDAF 2018-2022 Area 3 on Public Administration and Plural Justice and Area 4 on Inter- and Intraculturality and Decolonization. It aims to strengthen the national child protection system at all levels, enhance access to child protection services in priority municipalities, contribute to the right of children to live in a family, and prevent and reduce violence against children and adolescents. This outcome is implemented through three Outputs: 1. Prevent and address violence against children; 2. Improve access to a justice system adapted to children and specialized protection services; and 3. Strengthen community-level capacities to reduce, prevent and report violence, neglect and exploitation of children and adolescents.

UNICEF Bolivia continued improving child and adolescent protection by supporting implementation of relevant legislation and developing new legislative tools, while building stakeholders' capacities to enforce the legal framework. UNICEF reached a major milestone by supporting the Ministry of Government to develop a national strategy to prevent violence against children and women, which was endorsed by the President of Bolivia.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Government to develop a protocol and procedures for children visiting their imprisoned parents, which, once implemented across the country, will benefit approximately 30,000 children and adolescents. Additionally, technical support was provided to the Ministry of Justice to implement alternative measures for adolescents in conflict with the law, which according to the latest figures, include 2,823 boys and girls (Ministry of Justice, 2018).

UNICEF worked with the departmental governments of La Paz and Cochabamba to enhance the legislative framework to ensure the right of children to live in a family. Efforts included the development of the law for accreditation of 222 institutional care centers in La Paz, hosting 672 children and adolescents; and the development of standards and regulations that will contribute to reducing the number of children in institutional care in La Paz and Cochabamba.

UNICEF conducted a mapping exercise of the social service workforce in Bolivia to understand the capacity gaps of frontline workers. Based on the results of this analysis, UNICEF helped strengthen the capacities of 1,400 child protection officials (social workers, psychologists, lawyers, educators, prosecutors and policeman), who interact with up to 40,000 children and adolescents. Topics covered included the right to live in a family, juvenile justice, sexual violence, children living in the streets, and violence prevention.

UNICEF along with relevant line Ministries (Justice and Economy) and the Ombudsman Office conducted five studies that provided critical evidence to develop policies, programmes and legal reforms on child protection: 1) 'Situation Analysis of the Child Defender Offices'; 2) 'Situation Analysis of the Children Living in Institutions'; 3) 'Situation Analysis of Adolescents Leaving in the Care System'; 4) an analysis of bottlenecks in the adoption process in Bolivia; and 5) a costing exercise of the institutional response to violence against children.

UNICEF, in collaboration with Departmental and Municipal governments, is strengthening specialized services for vulnerable children and adolescents. In 2019, more than 2,300 child victims of violence received legal and psychosocial support services nationwide; and 143 children living with their imprisoned fathers were reunited with their mothers or extended family in La Paz. Additionally, 302 children living in institutions in La Paz and Cochabamba are being deinstitutionalized and 197 were already reintegrated with their families.

The number of Venezuelan migrant children this year increased in the country. UNICEF provided support to assess their situation and advocated with the Migration Office and the Ministry of Government to protect them. As a result, 70 migrant children and their families received psychosocial and legal support.

During the post-electoral social conflict, UNICEF collaborated with local partners to provide emergency assistance to 195

Bolivia

children living in care homes and 43 children were evacuated to safer locations. Additionally, nearly 4,800 vulnerable children received psychosocial support.

OCM 4. EVERY CHILD HAS AN EQUITABLE CHANCE IN LIFE

Outcome 4 contributes to SDGs 1, 5, 10, 13, 16 and 17 and is based on Strategic Plan Goal Area 5 and UNDAF 2018-2022 Area 1 on Socially Inclusive Development. It aims to advocate for and work with national and sub-national governmental institutions to promote the prioritization of children, especially the most disadvantaged and those affected by climate change. This Outcome is implemented through three Outputs: 1. Social inclusion; 2. Climate change; and 3. Social mobilization in defense of children's rights.

In early 2019, UNICEF actively participated in public policy advocacy with other UN agencies and government actors, through the international missions Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) and Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support for the 2030 Agenda (MAPS) and continued supporting development of a National Urban Policy.

A priority in 2019 was producing evidence on the situation of children and policies that impact them. Two investigations were finalized: a study on the impact of climate change on children and a study on girls', boys' and adolescents' perceptions, opinions and demands on exercising their rights ('The Voice of Children'). Additionally, a study to estimate child and adolescent multidimensional poverty was initiated to inform policy and budget planning and implementation at the national and local levels.

UNICEF continued strengthening sub-national capacities to estimate investments in children and adolescents and shared findings to improve public budget planning and management. This work, historically undertaken with the Ministry of Economy and the Parliamentary Network for Children and Adolescents, included two new actors at the subnational level: The Federation of Municipal Associations (FAM) and the Association of Bolivian Councilors (ACOBOL). Through this partnership, 76 per cent of municipalities strengthened their capacities to estimate public investment in children in 2019. Special efforts were made to strengthen capacities in the Municipalities of El Alto, Independencia and Montero, where tools with a child focus supported budgetary management and public policy costing exercises.

To influence the next medium-term national planning cycle and ensure various planning tools integrate a childhood perspective, UNICEF provided technical support to the Ministry of Planning to develop the new National Development Plan and make National Planning System adjustments.

On climate change, UNICEF helped develop the Plurinational Climate Change Adaptation Policy – with a focus on health and education – and reviewed and developed two subnational plans for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, one in Independencia and another in Cochabamba.

In 2019, UNICEF continued to promote participation and youth leadership in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction by working closely with youth leaders, the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Plurinational Authority for Mother Earth (during the First Youth Summit on Water and Climate Change, held in 2018, the Mother Earth Youth Council (CJMT) was established which included 191 young people from all over the country organized in departmental delegations). UNICEF also works with young people to develop partnerships; promote advocacy campaigns on proposals, plans and policies to protect the environment with a focus on children; promote social awareness mobilizations such as Friday for Future; and ensure the participation of adolescents in international events.

UNICEF also strengthened participation in Child and Adolescent Committees in five local governments. The Committees have been involved in consultations on various topics such as urban policies, climate change and multidimensional poverty.

In June, the U-Report was launched. As of December, 2,822 adolescents and young people participated. During six months of operation, 12 surveys were conducted on topics such as youth participation, HIV, teenage pregnancy, employability, masculinity and technology. The results are analyzed and used by UNICEF teams in their programmatic work to fine tune interventions and advocacy.

PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS

This Outcome contributes to ensuring efficient and effective programme management and enhancing external relations and multi-stakeholder partnerships, institutional communication, monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning and gender mainstreaming.

UNICEF worked with the private sector to promote family friendly policies in the workplace using an innovative strategy advocating for improved business practices in three areas: breastfeeding support, promoting responsible fatherhood and supporting childcare centers. This strategy is being tested in eight companies that employ 4,000 workers in El Alto

Bolivia

Municipality. The programme is expected to expand to more companies through the most important chambers of commerce in the country, which are key UNICEF partners.

UNICEF promoted the SDG agenda through the Global Compact of Bolivia's childhood dialogue table. As part of this work, the study "What are companies doing for children in Bolivia?", which includes research on risks and impacts of business activities on children's rights, was carried out. The findings showed that the private sector has a strong interest in supporting children.

UNICEF signed seven innovative partnerships with prestigious local companies in 2019, including two of the country's most important financial entities. These partnerships helped implement a new way of both raising funds and transmitting messages on early childhood and violence prevention. New agreements signed with the country's most famous soccer club (soccer is the most popular sport in Bolivia) and the leading tourism agency are supporting communication campaigns and advocacy to position child rights on the public agenda. Finally, agreements signed in past years remained strong.

Thanks to partnerships with international donors potentiated locally, UNICEF secured the necessary funds to reach the ceiling established in the Country Programme Document for 2019 and strong plans were implemented to secure their continuous support. Key funding partners have been bilateral donors like Sweden, Canada, Korea and Italy as well as UNICEF National Committees in Spain, France, Switzerland, Canada, Finland, Sweden and other developed countries. However, important gaps persist for UNICEF for the rest of the CPD (2020-2022) which will require innovative planning and execution of financial partnerships.

As part of the strategy to promote a social movement for children, an advocacy strategy was developed to influence the public agenda. This included a conference - Childhood 360 - to discuss public policies for children and adolescents; the preparation of a document on children's and adolescent's priorities within the framework of national elections; and advocacy activities with political parties and media to position these priorities on their agendas. The strategy had a positive impact on the electoral proposals and news coverage, where the themes promoted by UNICEF were reflected.

As part of the second year of Country Programme Implementation, important efforts were made by UNICEF to conduct an in-depth situation analysis of children, adolescents and women, including sectoral studies and analyses that were developed on health, nutrition, child protection, education and social policy to inform both programme decisions and Bolivia's medium-term planning cycle, which will take place in late 2020. Furthermore, baselines were finalized for the development and implementation of the IECD models in El Alto and Independencia.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Within the context of general elections, an atmosphere of increasing political polarization in Bolivia, and unexpected emergency situations, UNICEF Programme priorities during 2019 focused on positioning children and adolescent rights on the public and private agenda; consolidating the implementation of IECD models in prioritized municipalities (for policy development and future scale-up); positioning the adolescence and youth agenda with a gender focus in public debates and political spaces; defining and implementing holistic and intersectoral models to prevent and respond to violence against girls, boys and adolescents; and strengthening national and subnational capacities to respond to emergencies and the impact of climate change on children.

In 2019, the Country Office advanced in the design, rollout and implementation of IECD models in El Alto and Independencia municipalities, achieving recognition as having the required local understanding and technical expertise for this area. Progress in the implementation of the model was sustained despite the change in authorities and the social conflict that occurred after the October elections. The lessons learned with regard to this experience is that achievements are a result of multiple interventions: 1. Investing significant resources to define key problems and solutions; 2. Gaining government and partners' commitment to actively participate in all stages of model definition and implementation; 3. Elaborating guides, protocols and tools; 4. Building technical and operational capacity of front line workers; and 5. Establishing a monitoring plan with a clear baseline. The Country Office must learn from this experience to later utilize this effective strategy to develop other innovative models to advance sustainable results and model scale-up in other programmatic areas.

UNICEF Bolivia demonstrated its ability to plan and implement required rapid and appropriate responses considering the fluctuating national contexts, including landslides in La Paz, wildfires in Chiquitania and the post-electoral social conflict. Working with both governmental counterparts and non-governmental organizations in a coordinated manner, provided the foundation for continuing interventions regardless of the emergency situations and social unrest. This also allowed to accelerate programme implementation while strengthening the capacities of government and civil society organizations. The main lesson learned here was that within this national context, critical steps are required to widen UNICEF's partnerships while implementing multi-level modalities to respond to emerging 'turns of events'; take advantage of

Bolivia

'windows of opportunity'; and sustain an effective capacity to deliver results for children, women and families.

The Country Office recognizes the importance of scaling up work for Venezuelan migrant children, a population that has increased considerably during 2019, requiring immediate social protection actions. The primary response activities included assessing the situation of these children and their families, advocacy with national authorities for the activation of immediate response strategies, and providing psychosocial support and legal assistance to migrant children and their caregivers in La Paz. The geographic coverage of this assistance will be extended to Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and Guayanaamerín (on the border with Brazil) in preparation for what is likely to become a growing emergency during early 2020. For this reason, the Country Office is required to build internal and external capacity, learn from other regional experiences working with Venezuelan migrants, mobilize human/technical resources and funds, and work closely with national and subnational Bolivian authorities and bordering countries in collaboration with other UNICEF Country Offices and UN agencies.

The limited inter-institutional and multi-level government coordination has been and can be a bottleneck to advance the fulfillment of child and adolescent rights. During 2019, UNICEF Bolivia explored additional entry points and spaces for work by approaching the municipal associative system. This system includes the Federation of Municipal Associations of Bolivia, the Association of Councilors of Bolivia, and the Association of Capital Municipalities of Bolivia. These institutions have demonstrated their value as allies for capacity building and advocacy processes, focusing on the development of integrated public policies and budgets at the local level. For example, the organization of budget workshops on aligning investments with children's rights, developed with the Ministry of Economy, are in greater demand because of the new alliance with the Bolivian Municipal Association System.

UNICEF Bolivia is very enthusiastic about this year's innovations and results achieved. Baselines were developed to inform programmatic efforts, legislative frameworks strengthened, and new partnerships established. Also, innovative mechanisms are now in place to provide a collective 'vehicle' to hear children and adolescents' voices and to promote their active participation in political and decision-making platforms. Likewise, important advances have been made to strengthen gender cross-cutting strategies throughout multiple outcome areas. Moreover, the lessons learned will contribute to refining and/or updating programme management strategies; better preparation for upcoming socio-political changes; consolidation of 2019 results achieved; and improving UNICEF's capacity to document, sustain and scale-up successful innovative approaches and models.

With the change of government authorities in 2020, the Country Office will need to invest in efforts to reestablish and strengthen the necessary platforms, partnerships and institutional engagements at the national and sub-national levels. UNICEF will also need to start a new exercise with elected authorities to identify the existing and potential bottlenecks that may hinder current efforts to reduce inequalities, exclusion and discrimination against children and adolescents. This action is required to ensure counterparts are both involved in and fully understand the Theory of Change that will inform and provide inputs for annual work plans and help identify desired results. The Country Programme Mid-Term Review, scheduled for the second half of 2020, will be a very timely and pertinent platform to make adjustments to the Country Programme for the years to come.