UNICEF Annual Report 2017

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Executive summary

The situation of children and adolescents remained largely unchanged in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in 2017, while the political context became more strained. After initial progress towards European Union (EU) accession in 2016, the country fell behind in a number of areas. Two verdicts by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in November highlighted the inadequacy of reconciliation since the end of the 1990s war.

Two new situation analyses, one on children with disabilities and one on children without parental care, confirmed that these children often remain ‘hidden’ and are among the country’s most marginalized groups. Immunization coverage for children under five years of age continued to decline, especially for measles from 91 per cent in 2012 to 68 per cent in 2016. With UNICEF BiH technical support, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees prepared the 5th and 6th Combined Periodic Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Major progress was made in the promotion of children’s right to grow up in a family environment, with a focus on deinstitutionalization of children through prevention of unnecessary family separation, strengthening of family-based alternatives to institutional care, and transformation of public children’s homes. A new Foster Care Law was adopted in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), recognizing foster care as a service with financial remuneration and acknowledging the need for the development of a professional cadre of child welfare professionals skilled in foster care. Capacities of the Centres for Social Welfare in FBiH and Republika Srpska (RS) were strengthened on foster care education and supervision, and 246 foster families were registered and trained. With the EU and the Joint Commission on Human Rights of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament, UNICEF BiH organized a parliamentary conference on children without parental care in October 2017, during which the campaign “#Every Child Needs a Family” was launched.

In social protection, UNICEF BiH supported important policy and legal revisions benefiting children. Both entities, the FBiH and RS, increased the scope of cash benefits for children and mothers. The Federation developed a new law that stipulates that child allowances and maternity allowances for unemployed mothers should be budgeted at the Federation level for the first time, thus tackling the significant disparities across the Federation’s ten cantons in terms of access to social benefits. In RS, a revised Child Protection Law was adopted in December, introducing monthly cash benefits for unemployed mothers along with other changes in eligibility criteria and benefit levels. In October, a high-level Conference on Social Protection for Children facilitated the sharing of good practices among eight countries and resulted in a joint call to action.

The Council of Ministers adopted the Platform for the Development of Preschool Education for 2017-2022, after two years of advocacy by UNICEF BiH and partners. This is the first state-level strategic framework in education to be adopted in several years, and it harmonizes preschool education policies with international standards. The preschool enrolment rate for five-year-old children increased to 54 per cent for the 2016/17 school year, compared to 31 per cent in
UNICEF BiH convened a strategic moment of reflection (SMR) in October, which resulted in confirmation of the importance of education and adolescent development for the country and for stronger future UNICEF engagement.

In terms of shortfalls, there were delays in some of UNICEF BiH’s evidence-generation efforts. The situation analyses on children with disabilities and on children without parental care were both delayed and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 6 (MICS) had to be postponed to early 2019 due to delays in reaching agreement among the three statistical institutes on the master sample frame. UNICEF BiH made limited progress in strengthening the capacities of schools to promote peacebuilding and social cohesion. However, a new United Nations (UN) Joint Programme on strengthening reconciliation, with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, will help address this in 2018.

The partnerships with the entity ministries responsible for social welfare proved particularly effective in 2017. These ministries adopted important new laws and policies in support of foster care and cash benefits for children and mothers. High-level events were convened on childcare reform and on social protection for children, which raised the profile of these issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond.

The EU remained a critical partner for UNICEF BiH. A rolling partnership plan with the EU delegation was finalized that outlines common advocacy priorities, messages and opportunities. The EU and its member states strongly supported the advocacy campaign ‘#Every Child Needs a Family’ as well as various World Children’s Day events.

**Humanitarian assistance**

While the number of refugee and migrant children arriving in and/or transiting through Bosnia and Herzegovina was still relatively low in 2017, the number of migrants crossing into Bosnia and Herzegovina during the year was higher than in 2016. The arrivals originated mostly from North Africa and travelled into the country through Albania, Greece and neighbouring Montenegro. The numbers are small in global terms, but nationally significant. Border police detained 735 irregular migrants in 2017, compared with fewer than 100 in 2016. Concerns emerged with regard to the capacities of relevant authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to provide for their protection and care at this scale. Therefore, in 2017, UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina, jointly with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), supported the Service of Foreigners’ Affairs with a mapping of the protection situation of vulnerable categories of foreigners, with a focus on refugee and migrant children. This mapping will be used to inform the finalization of guidelines for the protection of unaccompanied and separated children, which will be completed by early 2018. Around 120 public sector employees, including social workers and border police, received support to strengthen their knowledge on procedural safeguards for children, best interest determination, guardianship and foster care, as part of UNICEF BiH-supported efforts to increase protection for children on the move.

**Equity in practice**

Over the past few years, UNICEF BiH has contributed significantly to the social inclusion of children with disabilities as part of its overall focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable children in Bosnia and Herzegovina. By taking an equity focus to the design and implementation of the current Country Programme Document (CPD) 2015-19, UNICEF BiH has mainstreamed its
work for children with disabilities in all sectors, while also achieving results specifically for this target group.

As a result of UNICEF-supported interventions between 2015-17:

- 2,000 children with disabilities and their families gained better access to social services, such as day care, counselling and referrals;
- 3,000 children with disabilities were reached with early detection and intervention services as part of early childhood development (ECD) services;
- 675 children with disabilities benefited from inclusive education approaches; and
- 150 children with disabilities benefited from improved care and protection services.

To create a more enabling policy environment for children with disabilities, UNICEF BiH helped develop and advocated successfully for rights-based strategies on persons with disabilities. These were adopted in 2016 in both the RS and FBiH, and included specific clauses on the rights of children with disabilities in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In June 2017, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and UNICEF BiH convened a national conference on inclusive education to raise awareness of this issue, and identify follow-up actions to be taken at state, entity, canton and municipal levels.

To increase access to services for children with disabilities at the municipal level, UNICEF BiH enabled the establishment of multisectoral working groups tasked with developing budgeted local action plans to reach the most vulnerable children with quality services in each municipality. As of 2017, there were 12 such working groups, and 10 had identified and put in place specific services (e.g. family counselling, day care, referrals, transportation) to benefit children with disabilities and their families.

The quality of services in Bosnia and Herzegovina is generally not adequate for the needs of children with disabilities, especially in health and education. In order to improve the quality of education for children with disabilities, UNICEF BiH and Ministries of Education promoted pedagogical approaches for teachers to apply child-centred inclusive education teaching and learning approaches for all children, including children with disabilities. Since 2016, over 120 teachers from 14 schools have benefited from such training. In ECD, UNICEF worked with the non-governmental organization (NGO) EDUS to develop and disseminate early detection and intervention guidelines, tools and standards to 32 healthcare centres, kindergartens and social services centres in the country. They also provided training to 100 professionals working with children from all sectors on using these materials.

One of the major issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina affecting the ability of children with disabilities to demand services is social stigma and discrimination. To help reduce this, UNICEF BiH has engaged in a series of public awareness-raising campaigns since 2013, with support from the EU and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Using the slogan “It’s about ability!”, the campaigns featured positive images of children with disabilities engaged in daily activities with their families, friends and communities. In many of its public communication events such as conferences and workshops, UNICEF BiH has included children with disabilities as moderators and speakers. For example, an event at the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament in October 2017 on childcare reform featured several young adults who, as children, had been in the childcare/foster care system. One young woman spoke very compellingly about her experience as a child in a wheelchair in an adoptive family. World Children’s Day 2017 included an event on corporal punishment with the Swedish Ambassador, jointly moderated by two adolescents, including one with a disability.
A critical gap in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the lack of systematic data and analysis on the situation of persons with disabilities, including children. To help address this knowledge gap, UNICEF completed a situation analysis on children with disabilities in December 2017 with financial support from the EU. The analysis will be used to advocate for more action and awareness on issues relevant to children with disabilities. For example, one important finding was that children with disabilities are significantly over-represented in children’s homes/institutions, which indicates a need to work more with social welfare centres and families to prevent family separation in the first place. This could be undertaken through community-based services such as day centres for children with disabilities.

An important lesson learned is the need for sustained engagement across multiple sectors and levels of government. Many of the results described above, from the policy reforms to the local-level action plans and services for children with disabilities to the strengthening of services in social sectors, required years of consistent funding, advocacy, technical assistance and partnership between UNICEF BiH and the relevant actors (government authorities at different levels, civil society organizations [CSOs], disabled people’s organizations).

### Strategic Plan 2018-2021

The new Strategic Plan provides a welcome impetus to four areas where UNICEF BiH is already committed to strengthening its work. First, the Plan’s focus on inter-sectoral goals and approaches is fully consistent with the approach UNICEF BiH is taking in a number of areas, notably children with disabilities, Roma children, child poverty and adolescents. In the area of multi-dimensional child poverty, UNICEF BiH will continue to support reform of the social protection system as it relates to better coverage and adequacy of child and family cash benefits. This will include the promotion of horizontal coherence across sectors by linking cash benefits with increased access to social services such as health, education and social welfare for children with disabilities and their families. At the same time, UNICEF can contribute to vertical coherence across different levels of governance in a country that is as highly decentralized as Bosnia and Herzegovina, with competencies for key child-related accountabilities shared among the state-level, two entities and one autonomous district, tencantons and 143 municipalities. An example of this in 2017 was the convening support role that UNICEF played with respect to the Government’s preparation of the combined 5th and 6th Periodic Report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Across all sectors, UNICEF BiH will place more emphasis on promoting and supporting evidence-based policy development and programming. This will include strengthening of routine data systems, engaging more proactively in the area of public financial management for children, strengthening the social welfare sector as a ‘hub’ for vulnerable families and children, and improving the availability of and access to parenting education and family support services, as well as life skills programmes for adolescents.

The Strategic Plan also includes a stronger set of results focused on the second decade of life. This will help UNICEF BiH to better strategize and re-align its adolescent programming for the remaining three years of the Country Programme (2018-2020), especially in light of the SMR held in September 2017, which focused on the need to intensify UNICEF BiH’s work in adolescent development and education. An important opportunity in 2018-19 will be the implementation of a new UN Joint Programme (with the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO]), which aims to build the capacities of adolescents and youth to be positive agents of
change for social cohesion and peacebuilding. The Programme will promote critical thinking and media literacy skills, the development and roll-out of U-Report, and the use of education and culture to promote respect for diversity.

The Strategic Plan’s common chapeau and emphasis on UN coherence are very relevant to a Delivering as One (DaO) context such as Bosnia and Herzegovina. While UNICEF already plays an active role in DaO in the country, more efforts will be made to ensure DaO in Bosnia and Herzegovina is focused on results for the most disadvantaged in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs will be further localized in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018, presenting an opportunity for the UN system to collaborate even more around a common agenda.

Lastly, UNICEF BiH will continue to invest in monitoring and evaluation, as well as broader evidence generation and its use, throughout all its work. There is a lack of routine, reliable, country-level data in BiH in many social sectors. UNICEF BiH will contribute to improving the data and knowledge available on children in Bosnia and Herzegovina through its work on MICS6 in 2018-19, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2018-19, as well as other evidence-generation efforts in the areas of childcare reform, child poverty, children with disabilities and adolescent participation. The EU accession process also provides opportunities to strengthen the country’s data and monitoring systems to provide reliable data and statistics at the statelevel.

**Emerging areas of importance**

**Greater focus on the second decade of life.** By recognizing the potential for investment and interventions in the period of adolescence, UNICEF BiH continued to give voice, provide opportunities and promote adolescents’ participation in 2017.

For example, in May, UNICEF BiH organized a consultative session with 30 adolescents, who provided their opinions and suggestions about the media’s treatment of children. These were subsequently incorporated in a countrywide series of presentations on the publication “Media Guidelines for Reporting on Children”. Within the Justice for Children Programme, 70 adolescents, 20 of whom were from detention centres in Orasje and Banja Luka and 50 of whom were from ‘at risk’ families, developed photography and video skills as a means of expression and an alternative to risky behaviours. As part of the events for World Children’s Day on November 20th, UNICEF BiH invited 100 adolescents from various backgrounds to participate in an open dialogue with representatives of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council for Children, the Ombudsperson for Human Rights and representatives of sectoral ministries, as well as UNICEF BiH and other representatives of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Furthermore, adolescents, as key stakeholders, were placed at the heart of the Joint UN Programme on “Promoting Social Cohesion and Diversity in BiH”, which was approved by the Peacebuilding Fund in 2017. The joint initiative by UNICEF BiH (as Convening Agent), UNDP and UNESCO will start in 2018. Towards the end of 2017, UNICEF BiH also took steps to initiate the U-Report platform, which will be one of the ways this Joint Programme will engage young people.

During the SMR in September, UNICEF committed to intensifying its work in adolescent development and education during the remainder of the country programme. This decision was
informed by strategic reflections with stakeholders at the SMR, and also based on the 2018-2021 UNICEF Strategic Plan, an assessment of the situation of adolescents in Bosnia and Herzegovina, inputs from Government, academia, UN agencies and NGOs and feedback from 800 adolescents who participated in an online survey UNICEF BiH conducted in August 2017.

It was agreed in particular to:

- build effective, inclusive and sustainable systems and services that adequately respond to adolescents’ needs;
- create and sustain opportunities to enhance adolescents’ participation and meaningful contributions, and change the social norms and behaviours that are preventing this; and
- strengthen the competencies and skills of adolescents, including through innovations, data collection, media and reporting, to enable them to contribute to promoting inclusive societies.

Accelerate integrated early childhood development (ECD). As of the end of 2017, all ten cantons in the Federation, and the RS entity, had officially committed to introducing and sustaining ECD services with UNICEF BiH support. In order to sustain the ECD and early childhood intervention (ECI) services introduced with UNICEF support in previous years, UNICEF BiH provided further technical assistance to the Association of Paediatricians in FBiH. As a result, several innovative services were introduced in the revised Standards and Norms of Health Care Services. This will help promote universal coverage of integrated ECD and ECI services, funded through the health insurance funds, and free access to ECD/ECI services through the health centres for all children. The revision is expected to receive final endorsement by the Federal Ministry of Health in 2018.

Training of trainers modules for ECI were developed to ensure sustainability of the programme. Forty-one professionals from different sectors, including health, education and social services, from 11 municipalities across the country enhanced their knowledge and skills in ECD and ECI. Additionally, over 150 community nurses from eight municipalities were trained in providing ECD services and counselling to parents, with a special focus on how to recognize violence against children in the household. The professionals gained valuable skills they now use to provide quality ECD services to over 2,000 children and their families. Noting the importance of community nurses in the health system, advocacy, modules on ECD and violence were included in the regular curricula of nurses in other locations with UNICEF BiH support. Scaling up of services and enhancing their sustainability are the main priorities to ensure that all children receive ECD services early on to give them the best start in life.

### Summary Notes and Acronyms

**Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMP</td>
<td>Annual Management Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BiH</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4D</td>
<td>communication for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMT</td>
<td>Country Management Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Country Programme Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPMP</td>
<td>Country Programme Management Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>civil society organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSW</td>
<td>Centre for Social Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DaO</td>
<td>Delivering as One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCT</td>
<td>direct cash transfer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Capacity development

Capacity development of systems, communities and individuals is one of the main strategies for achieving results in the country programme document. UNICEF BiH built the capacity of the statistical institutes to collect disaggregated data on the situation of children by training experts on developing a sampling frame for countrywide household surveys, including for MICS 6, and technical support for the aggregation of child rights data for monitoring the situation of children and women in Europe and Central Asia (TransMonEE).

UNICEF BiH strengthened the capacities of 80 front-line health care professionals in communication for behavioural and social change and usage of social media. To guide future efforts in building capacity in communication for development (C4D) related to immunization, UNICEF BiH conducted an assessment of the capacity of local institutions and service providers for communication for development (C4D) in immunization. The findings are expected in 2018. In 2018, UNICEF BiH will strive to increase its investment in C4D capacity building with Government and academic institutions in the interests of sustainability.

To further strengthen the capacities of media outlets and professionals, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees in publishing a ‘Compendium of Good Practices on Media in the Best Interests of the Child’. Follow-up discussions were held in nine locations with media professionals.
Together with international and national NGO partners, UNICEF and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy implemented the PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education) Model of Practice. This resulted in 23 certified trainers from six cantons becoming licensed to provide foster parent in-service training.

A new UN Joint Programme on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was developed in 2017, with the objective of strengthening institutional capacities and coordination across government levels, promoting multisectoral risk reduction and preparedness measures in risk-exposed localities, and reducing vulnerabilities of citizens affected by disasters and climate change.

**Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy**

UNICEF BiH completed a situation analysis of children without parental care and children at risk of losing parental care. The key findings were presented to a broad range of stakeholders at a Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Conference in October. This was a unique opportunity to advocate for reform and leverage commitment and investments for the childcare system. Line ministries agreed to make childcare reform, including deinstitutionalization, a priority going forward. Based on the situation analysis and other data, a C4D strategy was developed, tested and approved by all relevant stakeholders. The strategy puts emphasis on increasing the knowledge of and demand for foster care among the population.

A situation analysis of children with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina was completed and used to inform advocacy to accelerate implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A qualitative study on social norms on violence against children and social inclusion of children with disabilities provided evidence to guide C4D efforts.

The UN Country Team (UNCT) prepared a plan for the roll-out of the SDGs. A mapping of SDG data gaps was completed. UNICEF’s inputs for the planned rapid integrated assessment ensured that child rights will be covered from the outset of the SDG mapping and roll-out process. UNICEF BiH generated an initial update of data availability related to child-specific SDG indicators to inform the development of an overall SDG dashboard.

UNICEF BiH also provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees for the preparation of the combined 5th and 6th Periodic Report to the Convention on the Rights of the Child Committee, through an evidence-based and consultative process involving various actors. The report was endorsed by the Council of Ministers in November.

**Partnerships**

Using its convening role, UNICEF facilitated the process of preparing the Bosnia and Herzegovina 5th and 6th Combined Periodic Convention on the Rights of the Child Report, bringing together institutions and NGOs from FBiH, RS and Brcko District while strengthening their capacity to report on children’s rights.

The partnership between UNICEF BiH and the Office of the Ombudspersons for Human Rights has proven to be extremely valuable for advocacy. The Bosnia and Herzegovina Ombudspersons for Human Rights report on detention facilities for children, supported by UNICEF BiH in 2016, contributed to the RS Law on Elementary Education being amended in 2017 to allow children in detention facilities to enrol in elementary education.

World Children’s Day 2017 saw an unprecedented partnership platform for UNICEF BiH, with over 70 partners directly engaged, including media, private sector, municipalities, schools,
sports clubs, CSOs and the international community. In a large number of cases, these partners were working with UNICEF BiH for the first time, with the potential to build more sustainable partnerships.

For the first time in 2017, UNICEF BiH participated in the Cannes Young Lions competition for Bosnia and Herzegovina, providing ‘ending corporal punishment’ as the main theme for the awareness-raising competition for under-30 advertising industry professionals; the winning campaign design was used by UNICEF BiH in World Children’s Day activities.

The partnership with the University of Sarajevo Medical Faculty was formalized, and two workshops on immunization were organized. A master degree level seminar on justice for children was piloted with 50 university students in Banja Luka with very positive feedback. On that basis, it was decided that a full course will be developed.

Two new joint UN programmes, one on DRR and one on peacebuilding, were developed, both to start in 2018.

UNICEF BiH and the EU delegation in BiH finalized a rolling Partnership Plan 2017-19, which outlines collaboration on selected child rights issues in BiH and includes key messages, facts, reference materials and joint advocacy opportunities.

**External communication and public advocacy**

The communication highlight of the year was World Children’s Day. UNICEF BiH joined the global “Kids Takeover” movement, mobilizing hundreds of children directly and reaching over 860,000 people in Bosnia and Herzegovina through social and traditional media channels. Goodwill Ambassador Edin Dzeko together with many children, parents, officials and professionals celebrated the Day in Bosnia and Herzegovina, taking over 24 educational institutions, 19 media outlets, 8 government institutions, civic groups, sports clubs, small businesses, UNICEF BiH and other international organisations. As suggested by children themselves, the main topic for World Children’s Day was ending violence against children, with a special focus on corporal punishment. This theme will continue to be an advocacy priority in 2018.

During World Immunization Week, UNICEF BiH engaged with health experts to answer parents’ most common questions about immunization, directly reaching over 700 parents and more than 150,000 people. About 30 per cent of 92 monitored traditional media outlets published the key messages, with total media reach estimated at 77 per cent.

External communication actions supported all UNICEF BiH’s programme priorities, reaching over 550,000 Facebook users and engaging at least 8,000 people directly around key messages on equitable access to justice for children, inclusive education and social protection of children.

To further strengthen the capacities of media outlets and professionals in terms of protection and promotion of the best interests of the child, UNICEF BiH supported the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees in publishing a ‘Compendium of Good Practices on Media in the Best Interests of the Child’ and held follow-up discussions in nine locations with media professionals. This included extensive consultations with children and social media interaction via an online platform.
South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation

In 2017, UNICEF BiH facilitated a learning visit to The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for Bosnia and Herzegovina officials from the Service of Foreigners' Affairs in the Ministry of Security, the border police and social welfare staff with the objective of fostering a better understanding of their experiences with the migrant and refugee crisis, including the implementation, effectiveness and impact of the response provided and legal policy discussions. The visit resulted in a detailed mapping of the protection situation of vulnerable children, and the preparation of draft guidelines for the protection of unaccompanied and separated children in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A sub-regional high-level Conference on Social Protection for Children provided an opportunity for an exchange of good practices among various countries including BiH, Serbia, Montenegro, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Slovenia, Moldova and Georgia. A joint call to action consolidated key recommendations, which were then implemented. The conference generated significant media attention. It was organized by UNICEF in cooperation with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Civil Affairs, the RS Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, with support from the UNICEF Regional Office and in close coordination with the EU delegation and the World Bank, positioning the social protection agenda within the broader framework of the EU accession process. Over 100 representatives from Ministries of Social Affairs, social protection institutes, local social welfare units, CSOs, academia and international organizations participated in the conference.

Identification and promotion of innovation

In 2017 UNICEF BiH developed and published Child-Friendly Guidelines for the Prevention of Violence against Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the quiz "Be the Cyber-Detective", an interactive educational Facebook application that aims to educate children on how to recognize and stop violence, and to introduce them to the risks of violence in the digital environment.

Under a joint programmatic intervention with UNDP, UNICEF expanded the network of local social protection and inclusion (SPI) multi-sector actors to include local employment bureaus for the first time in 2017, linking these with the local centres for social welfare (CSWs) and the education sector. This resulted in better synergies between sectors and signed memorandums of understandings in three of five target locations, providing beneficiaries of the centres for social welfare with better access to employment opportunities and eventually a pathway out of poverty. In addition, all SPI local action plans included specific social policy measures to better link secondary education with the labour market, and ensure better access to information about employment opportunities, primarily for young people but also for parents from poor households, parents of children with disabilities and single parents.

IT Girls, a UN-supported initiative by a group of young staff and volunteers from UNICEF, UN Women and UNDP, raised further awareness about the importance of including girls in information and communications technology (ICT), for example by portraying inspiring role models, and advocating with the private sector for better inclusion of girls and women in ICT. This innovative approach attracted significant attention as it is focuses on non-traditional skills for girls and women, hence promoting gender equality, while addressing the high level of youth unemployment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During 2017, the IT Girls initiative supported free training in coding for 65 girls from 3 municipalities, while 23 girls benefited from training in robotics. This also included ten girls from vulnerable backgrounds.
Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages

UNICEF BiH has also supported the implementation of integrated social protection and inclusion (SPI) systems for children at policy and local levels since 2009. This cross-sectoral approach maximizes linkages between different sectors such as education, health, social and child protection, finance and justice. By the end of 2017, integrated SPI systems had been strengthened in 49 Bosnia and Herzegovina municipalities (34 per cent of the total), including through the establishment of targeted social services for the most vulnerable children and families. Overall, the vast majority of the new social services established in the municipalities are now sustained through municipal budgets.

The most recent evaluation of the SPI approach in 2017 confirmed that the SPI institutionalized evidence-based policies and mechanisms to tackle social protection and inclusion at local levels, with multidimensional benefits for children and communities. A lesson learned is that integrated programming across sectors (and levels of governance – in this case, municipalities, cantons and entities) is time-intensive and requires continuous advocacy and engagement by UNICEF BiH. Other lessons include the need to ensure adequate human and material resources, as well as continuity of critical staff from local social service providers in the multisector SPI coordination mechanisms.

A cross-sectoral ECD Working Group including education, social services and health professionals was established in Sarajevo Canton. Within this Group, the Ministry of Health and UNICEF BiH explored ways to integrate ECD services into the public health system as part of ongoing health reform. One lesson learned is that while UNICEF can act as a convener in the short term to promote multisectoral cooperation among ministries, it is more sustainable to create regular, institutionalized communication and planning platforms to bring sectoral ministries together.

Service delivery

In 2017, the large majority of municipalities (11 of 15) that initiated new services under the UNICEF BiH-supported integrated SPI model in 2015 managed to sustain these services through their local budgets. Over 200 children with disabilities and their parents benefited from services provided by the centres of social welfare (CSWs) or local CSOs, from day care services for children with disabilities to referrals to ensure access to education and health services. Significant progress was made in the new target municipalities (Banja Luka, Ljubuski, Bosnia-Podrinje Canton, Kozarska, Dubica, Srebrenik), which established local SPI commissions and referral teams, with clear roles and responsibilities under the SPI approach.

In a strong effort towards sustainability of the services established, three municipalities (Kozarska Dubica, Prijedor and Ljubuski) managed to secure funding for the services through local budgets for 2018 and beyond. Within the Birac region’s five municipalities implementing the SPI approach, all previously established services were sustained, either funded through municipal budgets and/or contributions from the private sector at the local level, reaching over 150 children and youth with disabilities and their families. UNICEF BiH undertook regular programme visits to SPI municipalities, using these as an opportunity to monitor the availability of ongoing services and provide technical guidance and support as needed. In addition, the SPI Commissions also undertook monitoring visits and documented the results achieved. These monitoring reports became integral parts of the annual reports to the Municipal Councils/Assemblies, thus providing an additional argument for continued funding.

Human rights-based approach to cooperation
UNICEF BiH is part of the UNCT Human Rights Task Force, SDG Task Force, Youth Task Force, Social Protection Task Force, Results Group on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, and Results Group on Rule of Law and Human Security, and is leading the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Social Inclusion Results Group. All these contributed directly to the realization of UN Treaty Bodies’ Recommendations through programming and advocacy focused on strengthening gender equality and improving the status of vulnerable groups, such as Roma and persons, including children, with disabilities.

To further strengthen child rights monitoring systems, UNICEF continued to support the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council for Children in implementing the Action Plan for Children 2015-18. The progress report, prepared in 2016, was widely disseminated in 2017 by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees among key national and international stakeholders. With UNICEF BiH technical assistance, the 5th and 6th Combined Periodic Convention on the Rights of the Child Report was prepared by the Ministry and adopted by the BiH Council of Ministers in November 2017. The comments and concluding observation from the Committee anticipated in 2018 will be used as an opportunity to review the priorities for children based on Convention compliance gaps.

With UNICEF BiH support, the NGO Network ‘Stronger voice for children’ initiated the development of the Best Interest of the Child Guidelines in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Human Rights Ombudspersons agreed to support the implementation of the Guidelines through training for government officials, public servants and the police.

In 2017, new evidence was collected on the status of the rights of children to be protected from all forms of violence, rights of children with disabilities, and the rights to education, health, family life and freedom of religion through various studies and evaluations. For example, the situation analysis of children with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina will further inform advocacy for stronger implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Gender equality**

UNICEF BiH achieved modest results in two Gender Action Plan priorities in 2017: advancing girls’ secondary education and ending child marriage. IT Girls, a UN-supported initiative by a group of young staff and volunteers from UNICEF BiH, UN Women and UNDP, provided free 25-hour ‘Postani IT Girls’ training to 65 girls in 4 municipalities. The training featured basic learning in various programming languages, and online security and public speaking components. This training, conducted in cooperation with the private sector and various local NGOs, also included ten girls from vulnerable groups.

Overall, the IT Girls initiative is raising awareness about the importance of including women in the field of ICT, for example through interviewing 50 women role models to inspire and build the confidence of girls to pursue studies in ICT. IT Girls also marked International Women’s Day, International Girls in ICT Day, EU Code Week and EU Robotics Week by hosting a series of events to engage and empower adolescent girls to compete in online challenges, get creative learning with virtual games, raise awareness about online violence against women and girls, and take part in interactive robotics training. Anecdotal feedback from the girls who participated in the programme indicate that they find it empowering to acquire skills such as web design, coding and programming, and that they have increased confidence in pursuing studies in the field of ICT.
As part of efforts to end child marriage, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continued to build capacities of grassroots/community leaders to use forum theatre-based education to impact social norms condoning child marriage and violence, with a focus on municipalities with a higher percentage of Roma. Thirteen grassroots leaders completed three training of trainers modules for eight trainers in forum theatre methodology. Subsequently, 31 adolescents undertook theatre performances on ending child marriage and violence in elementary schools in six municipalities, reaching 860 primary school students, school management, teachers, parents, local authorities, police officers and social workers.

UNICEF will increase its gender mainstreaming efforts in 2018.

**Environmental sustainability**

UNICEF BiH assessed its environmental footprint as part of the "Greening UNICEF" global initiative. It was calculated that the total amount of greenhouse emissions was 2.5 tons of CO2 per staff member. The breakdown was as follows: air travel 11 per cent; vehicles 18 per cent; public transport 0 per cent; refrigeration and air conditioning coolants 5 per cent; on-site fuel combustion 0 per cent; electricity 66 per cent; and heat/steam 0 per cent (natural gas). Water use was estimated at 25.95 litres per staff member per day, and paper use was 12.14 sheets per staff member per day. UNICEF BiH contributed to recycling of paper in the UN House and prepared travel plans on a weekly basis to consolidate travel as much as possible. Lastly, UNICEF BiH is located in an energy-efficient building, which was one of the important conditions considered by UN agencies at the time of the move to the UN building in 2013.

Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to face a major problem with air pollution, and according to available data, the capital Sarajevo ranks 12th among European cities in terms of pollution level. More than 100,000 children live in Bosnia and Herzegovina's most polluted cities (Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica, Lukavac and Kakanj). To mark UN Day in 2017 and mobilize action, UNICEF BiH together with other UN agencies organized and participated in the “Clean Air for All” conference, which included a presentation by the UNICEF Regional Office on the impact on children’s health. UNICEF BiH is part of the UN AIR group, which is developing actions to address the effects of air pollution, in particular on children, pregnant women and the elderly, through a joint UN approach, and in coordination with other international actors such as the United States, the EU and Switzerland. Lack of regular and reliable data, unclear government accountabilities at different levels, and lack of funding for addressing air pollution are some of the most important challenges.

**Effective leadership**

In 2017, the country management team (CMT) discussed the challenges presented by the different practices implemented at the UNCT level with regard to payments for the engagement of government officials and/or academia/university employees in various UN programmes and projects. While the process proved to be very challenging and lengthy due to the different practices and policies of individual agencies, the UNCT aims to finalize a basic harmonized approach in 2018.

UNICEF BiH closed all 2016 audit recommendations by the end of April 2017, as planned.

UNICEF BiH organized a number of training activities on ethics for all staff in order to ensure that staff awareness and knowledge on ethics is at the level required for mitigation of potential risks identified by UNICEF corporately, as well as at the Country Office level. The following training activities were conducted: ethics in procurement, ethics in professional/private life, and
ethics in communication. Activities included work on case studies and Q&A sessions.

UNICEF BiH reviewed and further strengthened procurement practices, considering the risks associated with the fact that procurement for services accounts for the bulk of all procurement activities, and the contextual risks (small market and competition issues). UNICEF BiH requested a peer review mission from the Supply Division, which is expected in January 2018. UNICEF BiH reviewed, simplified, and strengthened a number of standard operating procedures from a risk management perspective, including those related to travel, direct cash transfers (DCTs) and liquidations.

The business continuity plan was updated and tested by mid-year. An updated risk assessment exercise was completed as part of the Annual Management Plan (AMP) 2017 process. Risk mitigation practices in place are reasonable within the Bosnia and Herzegovina context, although these will be reviewed/updated again in 2018 in light of it being an election year.

The UNCT tested its UN House security procedures through a simulated hostage-taking exercise, which was useful for identifying issues for the security management team and NY Headquarters clarification.

**Financial resources management**

UNICEF BiH ensured consistent and timely monitoring of all key performance indicators in 2017. Grants and financial management, including outstanding DCTs, regular resources, other regular resources and other resources emergency utilization, were regularly reviewed by the country management team (CMT) together with all other key performance indicators as a standing agenda item at meetings. In addition, grants and programme funds were closely monitored through monthly monitoring reports. The country management team identified relevant actions to be taken in advance to ensure all key performance indicators were reached. This resulted in timely and full utilization of all programme funds and less than one per cent of outstanding DCTs over nine months.

Preparatory work for bank reconciliation submission to the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) was completed in a timely manner. UNICEF BiH maintained optimal local bank account balances. Monthly cash forecasts, bi-weekly replenishment requests and month-end balances were reviewed and monitored. Reports related to segregation of duties were regularly generated and reviewed and potential risks were mitigated.

Relevant operations staff continued to attend all online training/learning activities/webex sessions organized by GSSC/the Division of Financial and Administrative Management (DFAM).

UNICEF BiH made significant efforts to ensure adequate harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) implementation. In 2017, UNICEF invested resources in capacity building of implementing partners through two HACT training activities, reaching a total of 50 participants. In addition, five one-on-one HACT training activities were organized for new implementing partners before project implementation. Eleven spot checks, out of the initial ten planned, and 78 programmatic visits (45 planned) were completed in 2017.

As a result of the simplification initiative, UNICEF BiH reviewed the DCT/programme cooperation agreement/small-scale funding agreement workflow.
Fundraising and donor relations

The UNICEF BiH Resource Mobilization Strategy, developed in 2015, was revised and expanded to include leveraging resources for children. With intensive resource mobilization efforts throughout the year, UNICEF BiH managed to secure funds and pledges totalling US$7 million until 2021. For the remaining years of the extended Country Programme cycle (2018-2020), the funding gap is estimated at US$9.4 million.

The long-term partnerships with Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the Swiss Development Cooperation were nurtured throughout the year and resulted in agreements for continued funding of the Justice for Children programme beyond 2017. SIDA has pledged to provide country thematic funds for the child protection programme linked to the new UNICEF Strategic Plan. The partnership with the EU was formalized with the development of a rolling EU-UNICEF Partnership Plan for the period 2017-2019; three joint advocacy opportunities were realized with the EU delegation on child rights.

Two new joint UN programmes were developed, one on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and one on social cohesion. In addition, a Joint UNCT Resource Mobilization Strategy was developed by UNICEF, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), on behalf of the UNCT, and is expected to be approved in early 2018.

UNICEF BiH convened a brainstorming day with the UNICEF Croatia team around private sector fund-raising and partnerships; guidance from the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division will be essential in 2018.

All 11 donor reports were submitted on time. Reports due in 90 days were checked regularly through the dashboard and the status was reviewed by the country management team. There is a clear process in place that ensures timely submission and quality assurance of all donor reports.

Fund-raising for children’s rights remains challenging in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is an upper middle-income country that has benefited from an extensive post-war peacebuilding effort over the past 20 years and is now aspiring to EU membership.

Evaluation and research


Both evaluations were conducted by independent external evaluators in an objective and inclusive manner. The Research, Studies and Evaluations Steering Committee provided quality assurance during all phases of the evaluations. Reports underwent an external review for quality assurance. The J4C evaluation was subject to an external ethical review by the Institutional Review Board. For both evaluations, management responses were prepared and actions initiated with some already completed by the end of 2017.

The J4C Evaluation Report was assessed as highly satisfactory by UNICEF’s Evaluation Office through the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System: “Evaluation findings indicate that the Justice for Every Child Project was not only relevant to the process of child justice reform;
UNICEF played an essential role in instigating change. Whilst interviews with stakeholders revealed a consensus that reforms to the child justice system were needed, key stakeholders participating in the evaluation consistently attributed progress toward the implementation of the Laws on Protection and Treatment of Children and Juveniles to the Project, emphasizing that without UNICEF’s leadership and interventions, implementation of the new legal framework would have progressed even more slowly, if at all.

The findings of both evaluations were used in further programme planning and design. Regarding justice for children, UNICEF and government counterparts agreed on priorities for further programming, including strengthening of secondary and tertiary prevention; advocacy for developing victim support services and psychosocial counselling; and further strengthening the social welfare sector’s capacity on case management and specialized support services.

**Efficiency gains and cost savings**

The UN in Bosnia and Herzegovina operates under the DaO approach. The UNCT has a Business Operation Strategy for 2014-2017, which will be extended until the end of 2020 in order to align with the one-year extension of the UNDAF.

The Operations Management Team undertook several actions to ensure that the best value for money principle was applied for the new UN House lease agreement (expiring 31 January 2018), whether by extending the current agreement or identifying a new vendor by advertising a Request for Information. Comprehensive data collection and an analysis of premises costs from other international organizations operating in Sarajevo were prepared and presented to the UNCT to assess market changes and valueformoney of the different options. Based on this analysis, as well as the security analysis by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), the UNCT agreed to proceed with the renewal of the lease for five years, reconfirming the request for the same terms and conditions/prices.

A new joint long-term agreement on travel services was signed. A new joint long-term agreement on mobile and internet service provider was also signed with expected savings of about US$1,000 over the next two years for all agencies involved, based on economies of scale.

UNICEF BiH continued to benefit from the existence of joint UN drivers and vehicle pools established in 2014.

With the completion of the lightweight and agile information technology (IT) Project, UNICEF BiH estimates savings of about US$25,000 as a result of not purchasing a new office server, which was due for replacement as per UNICEF Hardware Life Cycle and Standards.

**Supply management**

The total value of procurement in 2017 amounted to US$785,215.68, which represents 18.63 per cent of the total annual UNICEF BiH budget. Local procurement of goods was valued at US$121,063.13 and off-shore procurement at US$ 48,140.70. Procurement of services accounted for the vast majority of procurement actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (78.45 per cent). Procurement was primarily related to programme activities, office equipment and supplies.

UNICEF BiH reviewed and further strengthened procurement practices, especially related to procurement for services, given the contextual risks (small market and competition issues).
UNICEF BiH requested a peer review mission from Supply Division, which is expected in January 2018.

UNICEF BiH completed three requests for proposal processes, and 23 service contracts were arranged for other services for a total of US$176,208.71. In addition, three institutional contracts were issued to local companies for event management.

The Plan for Procurement of Services and Supplies was completed, amended quarterly and reviewed by the CMT. UNICEF BiH also maintained annual records of procurement undertaken by implementing partners.

UNICEF BiH procured the necessary information technology, communication and vehicle maintenance equipment from additional institutional budget funds allocated in October 2017.

Procurement processes and principles are an integral part of regular HACT training for implementing partners. Training was conducted twice in 2017 for all partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall UNICEF BiH Budget 2017 (US$)</th>
<th>4,214,055.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Supply vs. Country Office Budget</td>
<td>18.63 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme supplies</td>
<td>66,427.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational supplies</td>
<td>102,776.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>616,011.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>785,215.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Security for staff and premises

The security of the UNICEF BiH premises is integrated into the UN House common security system. UNDSS BiH is responsible for the coordination of security and safety of UN staff in the country. The UN security management team security plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina was updated by UNDSS in June 2017.

The Integrated Security Application platform is available and updated quarterly by Security Focal Points. The system, including the data input, was tested this year. An inter-agency warden system exercise was successfully conducted in June 2017, which resulted in 100 per cent of UNICEF staff responding within the first half hour compared to an overall UN response of 64 per cent.

In November 2017, an inter-agency security drill based on a hostage situation scenario simulation involving law enforcement agencies was conducted with the aim of testing staff knowledge and preparedness. Lessons learned were shared with the Security Management Team (SMT) accordingly. Results showed a high level of staff awareness and UNDSS readiness to respond to security treats.
UNDSS continued to organize a security awareness briefing for new staff on a monthly basis, and the UNICEF BiH human resources team coordinated attendance of all new personnel.

Security advisories received from UNDSS and NY Headquarters were regularly shared with all staff, including a reminder to register all international trips in the UNDSS TRIPS system.

New standard operating procedures on access controls and emergency procedures in UN House were prepared and endorsed by the Designated Official in September 2017.

As per SMT decisions on the purchase of new digital VHS hand-held radios, SMT members were trained by UNDSS on their usage. In addition, testing of existing satellite mobile equipment was conducted.

Human resources

UNICEF BiH made minor adjustments to its country programme management plan (CPMP) following the SMR in September, focused on strengthening its capacities in child protection and education. UNICEF BiH initiated the recruitment of seven national positions and two national UNVolunteer positions. By year-end, three staff recruitment processes were completed, while others were ongoing.

Three joint consultative committee meetings were held in 2017 to discuss topics of interest and concern for staff, such as the Global Staff Survey (GSS) results, staff retreats, team-building activities, office events and income tax. UNICEF BiH held two staff retreats in 2017. The first was organized in April and focused on updates from the Regional Management Team and Regional Staff Association meetings, the AMP, the SMR and stress management, as well as team building. The second mini-retreat was held in September with a focus on the preparation of the GSS Office Action Plan. It identified four main areas for improvement: recognition at work; office efficiency and effectiveness; speak up culture; and workload.

All staff utilized a minimum of five learning days during the year, including mandatory courses, face-to face training and self-directed learning. A number of training/learning activities for all staff were held on topics such as learning policy, managing conflicts of interest and regulating conduct with the interest of UNICEF/UN, performance management, ethics in procurement and ethics in personal and professional life. All staff attended an introductory session on the new emergency preparedness platform facilitated by the regional emergency specialist in November.

UNICEF BiH observed the minimum standards on the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in the workplace by having post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) kits, condoms and first aid kits available in the office.

Performance management was encouraged in the office through a coaching workshop in May, facilitated by the Division of Human Resources, as well as several discussions with staff and managers on the culture of performance management.

Effective use of information and communication technology

In 2017, UNICEF BiH completed the implementation of the Lightweight and Agile information technology (IT) Project-LIGHT aimed at reducing the local hardware footprint (server-less office), energy consumption and cost, and enabling full mobility/agility for staff.

The continued availability of ICT resources and efficient user support were ensured through
effective technical maintenance of ICT infrastructure and in accordance with Information Technology Systems and Services objectives and standards. The UNICEF-standard cloud-based business software solution Office 365 was continuously upgraded, boosting organizational effectiveness and efficiency and creating a fully mobile work space. The provision of free access to Office 365 online applications and automatic backup improved business continuity.

As a member of the ICT Working Group, UNICEF BiH continued to work with selected vendors on a “UN Integrated Services Management System”. The Security and Warden System (Integrated Security Application – www.isa.un.ba) was finalized and came into official use. Resource reservation applications and usage (including conference rooms, driver pool and vehicles) were continuously improved. The roster management application (interns, translators, consultants) and provision and operational support (including UN House management and maintenance) were operationalized as part of the first stage release as individual agency usage. The second stage will be implemented in 2018.

Ongoing ICT advice and support was provided to programmes, including for procurement of equipment and selecting different services or solutions, and to other UN agencies upon request.

UNICEF BiH actively participated in the global digital transformation process and will launch a new web page in 2018. The social media accounts measured constant improvements with the number of Facebook fans growing from 16,000 in 2016 to almost 20,000 in 2017, while their engagement increased from 25,000 to 40,000 actions. Other social media channels such as YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Medium and Issuu were used for sharing public information and advocacy content, reaching thousands of additional followers and stakeholders.

**Programme components from RAM**

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**

**OUTCOME 1** By 2019, relevant government institutions are strengthened to monitor child rights, reduce poverty and provide inclusive access to social protection services, including for the most marginalized children, especially Roma children and girls and boys with disabilities.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Child rights monitoring in Bosnia and Herzegovina was further strengthened through the implementation of the Action Plan for Children 2015-2018. With UNICEF technical support, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees prepared the 5th and 6th Combined Periodic Convention on the Rights of the Child Report, which was adopted by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers in November 2017. A multisectoral working group initiated the development of the Best Interests of the Child Guidelines in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had been a recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2012. While the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council for Children strengthened its coordination of child rights monitoring in Bosnia and Herzegovina, obstacles in coordination between lower levels of government and the state level continued, especially with regard to the country’s obligations for Convention on the Rights of the Child monitoring.

In 2017, the three statistical institutes reached agreement on a master sample for household-based surveys in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This will be the basis for the sampling strategy for the 2019 MICS, which will be a critical data source for a large number of SDG indicators, as well as other household surveys to take place in the country.
Both the FBiH and RS conducted an in-depth revision of social and child protection primary and secondary legislation, increasing the scope of cash benefits for children and mothers as well as social services. UNICEF BiH provided significant technical support to the relevant entity ministries throughout this process. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy developed a new Law on Financial Support to Families with Children, which regulates child allowances and maternity allowances for unemployed mothers to be budgeted at the federal level for the first time, thus tackling the huge disparities across the Federation’s cantons in access to social benefits for vulnerable families with children. In RS, a revised Child Protection Law was adopted in December 2017, introducing monthly cash benefits for unemployed mothers along with other changes in eligibility criteria and the level of cash benefits. In addition, the RS Children’s Fund initiated a process of upgrading the electronic database of beneficiaries to better monitor the benefits and simplify the application procedures. With UNICEF BiH assistance, 90 social workers and managers from all CSWs in RS acquired knowledge and skills to comply with the new procedures and administer the data in the new database.

A sub-regional high-level Conference on Social Protection for Children, organized by UNICEF BiH and partners in October 2017, provided an opportunity for an exchange of good practices among various countries including BiH, Serbia, Montenegro, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Slovenia, Moldova and Georgia. A joint call to action consolidated key recommendations, which were then implemented. The conference generated significant media attention. It was organized by UNICEF BiH in cooperation with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Civil Affairs, the RS Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, with support from the UNICEF Regional Office and in close coordination with the EU delegation and the World Bank, positioning the social protection agenda within the broader framework of the EU accession process. Over 100 representatives from Ministries of Social Affairs, social protection institutes, local social welfare units, CSOs, academia and international organizations participated in the conference.

In 2017, the large majority of municipalities (11 of 15) implementing integrated SPI systems managed to sustain the initiated social services through their local budgets. Under an joint programmatic intervention with UNDP, UNICEF BiH further expanded the network of local SPI multisectoral actors to include local employment bureaus, linking them more closely with local CSWs and the education sector. This approach resulted in better synergies between various sectors, with memorandums of understanding signed in three of five target locations, thereby providing CSW beneficiaries (mainly vulnerable/unemployed/impoverished women and men) with better access to employment opportunities through, for example, providing access to day centre services for their children. In addition, measures were included in all SPI local action plans to better link secondary education with the labour market, and ensure that young people have improved access to information about available job opportunities. In general, remaining challenges include the lack of adequate human and material resources at the level of local authorities and CSWs, as well as relatively frequent turnover of staff from local social service providers.

**OUTPUT 1 1.1** Bosnia and Herzegovina Council for Children systematically monitoring child rights and reporting to relevant international and national institutions

**Analytical statement of progress**

In order to further strengthen systems to monitor child rights as part of the country programme goals, UNICEF BiH continued to support the BiH Council for Children in implementing the BiH
Action Plan for Children 2015-18. The progress report prepared in 2016 was widely disseminated by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees among key national and international stakeholders. With UNICEF BiH technical assistance, the 5th and 6th Combined Periodic Convention on the Rights of the Child Report was prepared by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees with inputs from all relevant institutional and other stakeholders. The report was subsequently adopted by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers in November 2017. The comments and concluding observation from the Committee anticipated in 2018 will be used as an opportunity to review the priorities for children based on any Convention compliance gaps, while advocating for further progress on child rights in the country. The Institution of Human Rights Ombudspersons of Bosnia and Herzegovina started preparing their own report on the Convention. In general, some challenges still remain in terms of coordination between state and entity institutions to monitor child rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a comprehensive and regular manner.

With UNICEF BiH support, the NGO network ‘Stronger voice for children’ initiated the development of the Best Interest of the Child Guidelines in Bosnia and Herzegovina by designing a clear methodology for the Guidelines and establishing a multisectoral working group consisting of key institutions and experts. The Human Rights Ombudspersons are also involved, and it was agreed that they would support the implementation of the Guidelines through training for government officials, public servants and the police on the application of the Guidelines.

In 2017, the situation analysis of the rights of children with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina was completed, and the findings and recommendations validated through two workshops with representatives from Government and NGOs. The analysis will further inform advocacy for stronger implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A large number of key government and non-governmental stakeholders were involved in the analysis, thereby strengthening their sense of responsibility towards the rights of children with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

OUTPUT 2 1.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina statistical institutions strengthened in collection and analysis of social statistics, including poverty measures

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, UNICEF BiH supported further capacity strengthening of the statistical institutes in BiH to collect disaggregated data on the situation of children in the country. With UNICEF BiH technical and financial assistance, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics completed the Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity (TransMonEE) database for 2017, thus ensuring another set of data in social statistics for monitoring child rights.

Following the February 2017 MICS Regional Workshop in Georgia attended by representatives of the statistical institutes in BiH and the public health institutes and a June workshop in Sarajevo for sampling experts, in October the state and entity statistical institutes reached agreement on a master sample for household-based surveys in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is the basis for the sampling strategy for the 2019 MICS, which will be a critical data source for a large number of SDG indicators. Agreement was reached with all key stakeholders about conducting MICS6 in early 2019, with a special MICS for Roma, as was done in 2012. Following UNICEF BiH engagement with the main national partners, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics pledged a partial financial contribution from the national budget for the MICS. Towards the end of 2017, UNICEF BiH initiated fund-raising efforts with UN agencies and other...
potential donors for MICS6 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Two evaluations and three studies commissioned by UNICEF BiH were finalized in 2017, analysing the status of children’s rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina and providing evidence for planning, programming and policy-making. During 2017, the UNCT, with input from UNICEF BiH, prepared a comprehensive plan for the roll-out of the SDGs. A mapping of SDG data gaps was completed, and UNICEF BiH’s inputs for the planned Rapid Integrated Assessment ensured that child rights will be covered from the outset of the SDG mapping and roll-out process.

A general challenge with regard to statistics in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the uneven availability of data and a lack of comprehensive countrywide data collection systems in a number of sectors. Through continuously strengthening partnerships with all stakeholders and creating further opportunities for collaboration, UNICEF BiH was able to mitigate these challenges as much as possible.

OUTPUT 3 1.3 Social protection and population policies/strategies and legislation developed and/or amended to reflect the needs of the most vulnerable population

Analytical statement of progress
With UNICEF BiH technical assistance and advocacy efforts, social protection legislation was revised in both entities in 2017. This resulted in the adoption in December 2017 of a new Law on Child Protection in RS, while a new Federal Law on Financial Support to Families with Children was developed in FBiH. The new Federal Law introduced two types of cash benefits that would for the first time be budgeted from the federal level and harmonized throughout FBiH: a child cash benefit and a maternity allowance for unemployed mothers. Although this law may only be adopted after the general elections scheduled for October 2018, it marked a significant step forward in addressing the disparities in accessing social benefits for vulnerable children and unemployed mothers.

In addition, UNICEF BiH supported the revision of the bylaw regulating the assessment and referral of children and youth with disabilities and capacity building of social workers in RS. The bylaw will be adopted in January 2018 and includes significant improvements with regard to social care and support services. Following the adoption of new strategies on disabilities in both entities in early 2017, UNICEF BiH and the respective entity ministries presented the strategies to a wide range of practitioners and policymakers from various sectors, CSOs and the donor community.

As part of social protection legislative reform in FBiH, UNICEF BiH in close cooperation with the state and entity statistical institutes supported the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in defining the monetary social security minimum. Three options will be presented to policymakers for decision in early 2018. The agreed minimum will subsequently be used as a basis for defining the eligibility criteria for a number of relevant cash benefits.

The RS Children’s Fund made significant upgrades of its electronic database to improve the access to benefits for vulnerable families and children, including simplified application procedures. With UNICEF BiH support, 90 social workers and managers from all CSWs in RS acquired knowledge and skills to comply with the new procedures and administer the data in the new database.
A sub-regional high-level Conference on Social Protection for Children, organized by UNICEF and partners on 16-18 October 2017, provided an opportunity for an exchange of good practices among various countries including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Slovenia, Moldova and Georgia. A joint Call to Action consolidated key recommendations that are currently being implemented. The conference generated significant media attention. It was organized by UNICEF in cooperation with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Civil Affairs, the RS Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, with support from the UNICEF Regional Office and in close coordination with the EU delegation and the World Bank, positioning the social protection agenda within the broader framework of the EU accession process. Over 100 representatives from Ministries of Social Affairs, social protection institutes, local social welfare units, CSOs, academia and international organizations participated in the conference.

OUTPUT 4 1.4 Integrated systems of social protection and inclusion developed in selected municipalities with the focus on the most vulnerable population

Analytical statement of progress
The large majority of municipalities (11 of 15) that initiated the new services under the integrated SPI model in 2015 managed to sustain the initiated social services through their local budgets. In 2017, the SPI model was scaled up to an additional five municipalities. More than 350 vulnerable children and families benefited from the services, ranging from day care services for children with disabilities and counselling to referrals to ensure access to education and health services. Significant progress was made in five new SPI target municipalities (Banja Luka, Ljubuski, Bosna-Podrinje Canton, Kozarska, Dubica, Srebrenik), which established local SPI Commissions and SPI referral teams. Initial training on the application of the SPI local methodology related to setting up integrated SPI systems at local levels resulted in situation analyses and evidence-based SPI priority action planning and establishment of new social services. Furthermore, UNICEF BiH closely monitored the SPI work in two previous target locations, Mostar and Prijedor. Both municipalities adopted new SPI Action Plans for 2018/2019 and managed to secure funding for previously initiated social services. The SPI Commissions expanded the scope of actions to include other vulnerable groups, e.g. elderly population in Prijedor.

The most recent evaluation of the SPI approach in 2017, as part of the “Support for Durable Solutions of the Revised Strategy for Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement” project, confirmed previous findings that the model significantly contributes to strengthening SPI systems. The establishment of an evidence base on exclusion and the social context in communities as a foundation for budgeted action plans was found to be a strong investment in selecting the right priorities and measures for vulnerable target groups. The established systems, mechanisms and social services showed positive effects on children and families.

Significant progress was achieved by the five Birac target municipalities that developed, budgeted and adopted new SPI Action Plans for 2017-2018. The municipalities designed several new special focus projects in consultation with local employment bureaus, social service providers and beneficiaries. Under the new Birac project cycle in 2017, UNICEF supported local SPI Commissions in developing concrete social policy measures to support the most vulnerable groups, including parents of children with disabilities, single parents and young people in finding employment. The membership of SPI Commissions was expanded to include representatives from local employment bureaus. In addition, 65 of the most vulnerable parents and young
people from these municipalities acquired new skills and were engaged in various income-generating activities. As a direct result of the special focus projects, three of five Birac municipalities signed memorandums of understanding specifically addressing the unemployment of the most vulnerable groups and committed to further collaboration, including through joint mobilization of the business sector.

While overall the implementation of the SPI model progressed well in the large majority of target municipalities, remaining challenges include inadequate human and material resources and frequent turnover of staff from local social service providers. Improved cooperation and communication between various service providers is also required.

OUTCOME 2 By 2019, an increased number of boys and girls use a continuum of child protection services aimed at preventing and adequately responding to violence, neglect and abuse and family separation, and equitable access to justice is strengthened for all children

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF BiH in 2017 commissioned an independent evaluation to assess the second phase of the Justice for Every Child Project, financially supported by the Swiss and Swedish Governments. The evaluation, corporately rated as highly satisfactory, found that “the Justice for Every Child Project was not only relevant to the process of child justice reform; UNICEF played an essential role in instigating change,” and “key stakeholders participating in the evaluation consistently attributed progress towards the implementation of the Laws on Protection and Treatment of Children and Juveniles to the Project, emphasising that without UNICEF’s leadership and interventions, implementation of the new legal framework would have progressed even more slowly, if at all.”

Key recommendations are being implemented, including: enhanced advocacy for developing a strategy or action plan for the implementation of justice for children reform at the entity level, with clear responsibilities and budget commitments; further strengthening of secondary and tertiary prevention through continued support to Municipal Justice for Children Working Groups; advocacy for the development of victim support services, including specialized psychosocial support services; and further strengthening the social welfare sector’s capacity to work with families through case management and specialized support services.

A key success in 2017 was the modelling of the secondary prevention programme in 29 schools in both entities. This was done in collaboration with the Republic Pedagogical Institute of RS and the Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Education, Science and Youth as well as the NGOs Criminal Policy Research Centre and the RS Association of Psychologists. The programme involves a set of planned activities to reduce, offset or eliminate identified risk factors and thereby contribute to children’s overall well-being and safety. A total of 661 professionals were equipped with knowledge and skills in identifying risk factors and in effective secondary prevention programming, benefiting about 13,000 children, of whom 6 per cent (214 girls and 542 boys) were identified as at-risk. For 193 of these children (53 girls and 140 boys) individual care plans were developed and implemented. There is strong commitment from line ministries to replicate the model across the country.

Considerable progress was made in further developing a sound system of foster care. Social workers from 17 municipal CSWs in the RS enhanced their skills in general foster care education and supervision. A joint roll-out to the remaining 28 CSWs with the RS Ministry of
Health and Social Welfare and the Dutch NGO Knowledge Factory is planned for 2018; this includes training in specialized foster care for children with disabilities to a select number of CSWs. UNICEF BiH and partners advocated for the adoption of the Foster Care Law in the FBiH, which was passed in February 2017. The law lays a good foundation for formalization of foster care, including recognition of foster care as a service that deserves financial remuneration, and the development of a professional cadre of child welfare professionals skilled in foster care. In partnership with the Foundation Op KleineSchaal, and the NGOs SOS Children’s Villages and Hope and Homes for Children, UNICEF BiH supported the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in obtaining a licence for implementing the PRIDE (parent resources for information, development and education) model of practice. This is a standardized structured framework for the competency-based recruitment, preparation, assessment and selection of foster and adoptive (resource) parents, and for foster parent in-service training and ongoing professional development. Twenty-three trainers from six cantons were certified to provide foster parent in-service training and foster care training to other professionals, while 90 foster/adoptive families were recruited and trained, four foster children were placed in families, and one child was adopted.

However, despite this progress there is still need for greater commitment and more resources for preventing unnecessary separation of children from their families in the first place. Progress in transforming selected residential care facilities and deinstitutionalizing children has been rather slow. Stronger advocacy is required to ensure further commitment, resources and technical assistance to cost and implement transformation plans in 2018.

UNICEF BiH in collaboration with international NGOs and local CSOs, including members of the Network for Ending Violence against Children (NEVAC), took further steps to strengthen the legal protection of children from all forms of violence and improve the public availability of data on violence against children. Community-based systems were strengthened in seven municipalities through improvements in multisectoral coordination in the response to and referral of cases of violence against children and prevention of violence in 21 primary schools. Child-Friendly Guidelines for the Prevention of Violence against children in Bosnia and Herzegovina were published, and 80 professionals were trained to identify and respond to cases of online violence against children.

Together with the CSO Romalen, UNICEF BiH modelled a project to improve the protection of children in Roma communities, focusing in particular on addressing violence against children, domestic violence and child marriage through sensitizing local authorities on problems faced by the Roma population. The knowledge and skills of 47 Roma community leaders and Roma mediators were enhanced with regard to child protection and awareness, while 37 Roma families were made aware of the detrimental impact of violence against children, domestic violence, child marriage and non-registration of births on the development and well-being of children, and informed about where and how to access support services. In 2017, two Roma mediators mapped all five Roma communities in the municipality of Kakanj and directly supported 34 high-risk families and referred them to the CSW.

**OUTPUT 1 2.1 Strengthened children and their families capacity to demand child protection services**

**Analytical statement of progress**
With the EU and the Joint Commission of Human Rights of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament, UNICEF BiH launched the campaign “Every Child Needs a Family” at a Bosnia and
Herzegovina parliamentary conference on children without parental care in October 2017. The conference was attended by approximately 120 representatives from line ministries, parliamentarians, child protection professionals, CSOs, the media and young care leavers. The campaign aims to raise awareness of every child’s right to grow up in a family environment, with a special focus on children under three and children with disabilities. It also intends to change social norms and attitudes supporting unnecessary family separation and placement of children in institutions versus family-based alternative care models, as well as raise awareness of and interest in foster care. Entity and cantonal ministries responsible for social welfare committed during a child protection conference in December to prioritize childcare reform, in particular de-institutionalization, in the coming years. A media and communication plan was finalized, pre-tested and adopted by stakeholders from Government, academia, civil society and the media.

UNICEF BiH conducted a survey on social norms and attitudes on violence, with a focus on corporal punishment. The findings showed a high level of tolerance towards using corporal punishment in the home, with it not being perceived as an act of violence but a means to educate and raise children. In line with children’s suggestions, UNICEF BiH chose “Ending Violence against Children” as its theme for World Children’s Day 2017 with a specific focus on ending corporal punishment. Over 50 adolescents from around the country engaged in discussions on corporal punishment with representatives of Government, civil society, the UN and the international community advocating for a complete legal ban of corporal punishment of children, including at home and in alternative care settings. Through various social and traditional media channels, an estimated 860,000 people were reached.

Working closely with the International Forum for Solidarity, Emmaus, UNICEF BiH developed and published Child-Friendly Guidelines for the Prevention of Violence against Children in BiH, targeting children aged 6 to 11 years of age. In addition, a quiz called “Be the Cyber-Detective” was launched as an interactive Facebook application that aims to teach children how to recognize and stop violence, and to introduce them to the risk of violence in the digital environment, targeting children aged 13 and above. Initial feedback was positive and dissemination of the quiz and child-friendly guidelines will continue throughout 2018.

A communication strategy on “Justice for Every Child” was developed, defining key public advocacy messages, target audiences and communication tools and mechanisms aimed at promoting programme results and enhancing public understanding and support for justice for every child principles. Seventeen multi-media features were produced and disseminated, engaging about 1,850 people and reaching an estimated 20,000 followers through social media. The main visuals and messages “Every Child Counts” and “We are all responsible” were adopted and implemented consistently through all advocacy materials to reinforce the effectiveness of communication.

OUTPUT 2 2.2 Service providers better equipped to deliver child protection services

Analytical statement of progress

Significant progress was made in further developing a sound system of foster care in both entities. Continuous training resulted in 56 per cent of municipal CSWs with knowledge and skills in foster care (17 of 47 in RS; 54 of 79 in FBiH), recruitment of and (continuous) education for 246 foster carers (156 in RS; 90 in FBiH), and 233 children placed in foster care (229 in RS and 4 in FBiH), due to direct support from UNICEF BiH and its partners. Slower progress was made in the overall transformation of residential care facilities for children without parental care, in particular in Banja Luka and Mostar, as the finalization of transformation plans took more time.
than anticipated.

In partnership with the NGOs Genesis, Emmaus and World Vision, UNICEF developed guidelines on identifying and responding to cases of online violence against children for professionals. Related training reached 100 child protection professionals; strengthened community-based child protection referral mechanisms in 7 municipalities in FBiH directly benefiting 592 people (240 women, 352 men, 121 girls and 282 boys); and improved mechanisms for identifying and referring cases of peer violence in 11 primary schools across the country through capacity development of 360 school staff (64 per cent women and 36 per cent men), 1,080 children (51 per cent girls and 49 per cent boys) and 144 parents (62 per cent women and 38 per cent men), while benefiting indirectly 12,000 students, teachers and parents.

Progress was made in generating data to inform child protection service delivery. Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of 22 countries involved in the UNICEF Global Study “Review and Assessment of Sources of Administrative Data on Violence against Children” (not yet published), which for Bosnia and Herzegovina built on the findings of the UNICEF BiH-supported 2016 study “Violence against Children: A Review of Data Availability in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. The findings will be used to strengthen routine administrative data collection on violence against children in BiH starting in 2018. Members of the CSO Network for Ending Violence against Children were supported in conducting a report on the situation of violence against children in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The findings and recommendations will be used to engage governments in policy dialogue and advocacy to improve children’s protection from all forms of violence throughout 2018.

A situation analysis of children without parental care and children at risk of losing parental care was finalized and the findings presented during the Bosnia and Herzegovina parliamentary conference “Every Child Needs a Family” in October 2017. Subsequently, UNICEF agreed with line ministries in both entities on key priorities and actions to address identified gaps and bottlenecks in childcare reform, including a review and amendments to the Family Laws, strengthening the capacities of the social welfare workforce in terms of human, technical and financial resources, and more investments in family and community-based services and independent living.

### OUTPUT 3
2015-2016 juveniles in conflict with the law, children at risk, children victims/witness of crime, and children in civil and administrative proceedings better served and protected; 2017-2018 Children at risk, child victims and witnesses of crime, children as parties in civil and administrative proceedings and children in conflict with the law better served and protected

### Analytical statement of progress
As a result of strong advocacy, and building on the findings and recommendations of the 2016 UNICEF BiH-supported Bosnia and Herzegovina Ombudspersons’ assessment of the situation of children in detention, the RS Law on Elementary Education was amended to allow children detained in the Tunjice detention facility to enrol in and complete elementary education. The capacities of professionals to work with children were strengthened in the newly opened Orasje detention facility, and bars were removed in the detention facility Hum Sarajevo, thereby improving the living conditions of children. With UNICEF BiH technical assistance, the RS Ministry of Justice finalized the assessment of the implementation of the RS Law on Protection and Treatment of Children in Criminal Proceedings, with findings and recommendations validated by over 100 key stakeholders from the police, judiciary and social welfare services. This assessment will inform necessary amendments to the law in 2018.
With strong local ownership and inter-sectoral cooperation, 16 municipal/cantonal/city working groups on justice for children contributed to promoting the use of diversionary and community-based alternative measures. As a result, in 12 of 16 project locations, 5 of 7 alternative measures prescribed by law are now available. UNICEF BiH with partners the Criminal Policy Research Centre and the RS Association of Psychologists supported Ministries of Education in both entities to model the secondary prevention programme in 29 primary schools. Overall, 661 professionals were equipped with knowledge and skills in identifying risk factors and in effective secondary prevention programming, benefiting an estimated 13,000 children, of whom 6 per cent (214 girls and 542 boys) were identified as at-risk. For 193 of these children (53 girls and 140 boys) individual care plans were developed and implemented. A total of 36 boys and 33 girls benefited from services provided by day care centres run by CSWs in Bijeljina and Prijedor, with support from UNICEF BiH.

Continued advocacy and exchange of best practices resulted in the establishment of a specialized department for children in contact with the law as decided by the Una-Sana canton government. Police officials in Velika Kladuša and Cazin, upon observing the effectiveness of the child-friendly room in the Bihać police station, equipped by UNICEF BiH, established a child-friendly police questioning room with local government funds. UNICEF BiH supported the development of 11 guidelines and training manuals on justice for children, and over 1,000 professionals increased their knowledge and skills in dealing with children in justice proceedings, the application of diversionary and alternative measures, and interviewing children. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the government of Brcko District and the RS Ministry of Health and Social Welfare developed a training programme on mediation to enable social workers to implement two diversionary measures (personal apology and compensation of damage). The Federal Ministry and the government of Brcko District adopted the programme and conducted a training of trainers activity for social workers. Nearly 70 students participated in legal aid clinics in Mostar, Sarajevo, East Sarajevo and Zenica and served 90 child clients, improving their knowledge and skills in assisting children through various legal proceedings.

OUTCOME 3 By 2019, an increased number of girls and boys have access to and participate in better quality and inclusive education, including Roma children and boys and girls with disabilities

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, progress was made in terms of the policy environment in education, most significantly with the formal adoption by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers of the Platform for the Development of Preschool Education for 2017-2022. After two years of advocacy, this is a significant result since it is the first state-level strategic framework to be adopted after all other education strategies expired in 2015. The Platform harmonizes preschool education policies with UN and EU principles, and ensures these are consistent across the country.

A new training programme on ECI for preschool teachers was designed at the request and in partnership with the two Ministries of Education (RS at the entity level and in Sarajevo Canton). These two Ministries initiated the development of two new bylaws: one on a programme for children with disabilities in preschool institutions and one on professional development of teachers. This is an important first step towards official recognition of teachers who are applying new methods as well as for the institutionalization of training programmes designed to increase teachers’ skills in working with children with disabilities.
In order to reduce financial barriers to preschool education for families living in poverty (mostly Roma families), Kakanj municipality changed their fee structure for preschool education, increasing the municipal contribution and decreasing the financial contribution from parents. This had been advocated for by UNICEF BiH and Roma NGO partners as part of a wider effort to promote preschool education for Roma children in four municipalities. Furthermore, following sustained advocacy efforts, the Roma Early Years Network was formally established in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This network connects over 450 individual early childhood practitioners who work with Roma children, their families and communities in 32 countries across Europe, the Caucasus and the Americas.

In terms of inclusive education, further progress was made in 2017 both at the policy and school level. At the policy level, UNICEF BiH together with the Ministry of Civil Affairs organized a conference in June 2017 focused on General Comment 4 related to Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. About 80 decision-makers and stakeholders were informed on the key principles, concepts, definitions and implementation strategies underpinning inclusive education and the obligations of state parties to ensure its progressive realization. The conference was live-streamed on social media, reaching an audience of over 500,000. The conference resulted in a call for action that was used as a basis for education stakeholders in December to identify priority areas for government policy work in the coming years.

At the local level, the second phase of inclusive education training was initiated in ten model schools. This tailor-made in-service training consists of four modules: differentiated instruction, peer support, working with parents and teaching basic number principles to pupils experiencing difficulties in learning mathematics. After completion of all modules, teachers would be certified by the respective Ministries of Education, and Protocols for Inclusive Education would be introduced in each school. In addition, following a regional workshop with universities to mainstream inclusive education into pre-service training, an action plan was agreed upon with two teacher training faculties to rollout the inclusive education modules in 2018.

In preparation for BiH taking the PISA test for the first time in 2018, a pilot was successfully conducted in 2017 with UNICEF technical and financial support primarily related to database management. UNICEF BiH advocated with various stakeholders throughout the year on the unprecedented opportunity that PISA provides to shift the dialogue on education in Bosnia and Herzegovina from ethnicity-based arguments to the quality of education, and will coordinate from 2018 onwards a group of like-minded members of the international community to strategize on how best to do this.

OUTPUT 1 2015-2016 Preschool Strategy for BiH (2015-2020) developed and strengthened commitment to enhance quality and inclusiveness of education; 2017-2018 Capabilities of preschool institutions strengthened to provide quality ECE and ECI services for most vulnerable girls and boys

Analytical statement of progress
In December 2017, almost two years after its finalization, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers adopted the Platform for the Development of Preschool Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2017-2022. This is the first state-level strategic framework that has been adopted after all other education strategies expired in 2015. The Platform harmonizes preschool education policies with UN and EU principles, grouped into five pillars: increased coverage of children enrolled in preschool, quality assurance, regular funding, inclusion and awareness-
raising. The adoption of the Platform means Bosnia and Herzegovina is eligible for EU financial support under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance II programme.

In terms of capacity development, during the year 30 per cent of all preschool teachers in RS and 25 per cent of those in Sarajevo Canton completed a basic training course on ECI based on a new training ECI programme designed at the request and in partnership with two Ministries of Education (RS at the entity level and in Sarajevo Canton). These two Ministries initiated the development of two new bylaws: one on a programme for children with disabilities in preschool institutions and one on professional development of teachers. This is an important first step towards official recognition of teachers applying new methods. A manual for preschool teachers on successful strategies for group management was also finalized.

Canton 10 continues to provide a free half-day preschool programme for all children aged four to six years of age in all municipalities. The programme for the 2017/2018 pedagogical year started in mid-November 2017 with 493 enrolled children (about 90 per cent of the total). The Ministry of Education initiated the revision and improvement of curricula for the preschool programme. As Canton 10 is the most underdeveloped in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the fact that the cantonal government continues providing 80 per cent of the budget (with 20 per cent funded by UNICEF BiH) clearly demonstrates a strong commitment.

As part of a model developed by UNICEF BiH in partnership with target municipalities and a Roma NGO to increase early learning opportunities particularly for Roma children in four municipalities, Kakanj municipality changed the criteria for financial participation in preschool education, increasing the municipal contribution and decreasing the financial contribution from parents. This was approved by the Municipal Assembly in December 2017 and will be implemented as of January 2018. Overall, the model experienced some constraints such as relatively high drop-out rates of Roma children due to several factors including parents’ lack of employment, frequent migration of families, inadequate coordination among local-level service providers, and limited awareness among parents of the importance of early learning.

Following sustained advocacy efforts, the Roma Early Years Network was formally established in the country. This network connects over 450 individual early childhood practitioners who work with Roma children, their families and communities in 32 countries across Europe, the Caucasus and the Americas. The Network promotes anti-discrimination and respect for diversity and equality, and strives to ensure equity for Roma families and children through access to high-quality ECD services.

**OUTPUT 2** 2015-2016 Expanded availability of education services and increased capacities to ensure quality and inclusive education services; 2017-2018 Quality and inclusive education services enhanced

**Analytical statement of progress**
At the policy level, UNICEF BiH together with the Ministry of Civil Affairs organized a conference on inclusive education in June 2017 focused on General Comment 4 related to Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. About 80 decisionmakers and stakeholders were informed on the key principles, concepts, definitions and implementation strategies underpinning inclusive education and the obligations of state parties to ensure its progressive realization. The conference was live-streamed on social media, reaching an audience of over 500,000. The conference resulted in a Call for Action that was used in December 2017 as a basis for all relevant government education officials to identify priority
After completion of the training on regional modules for inclusive education and based on consultation with schools and relevant ministries, the second phase of inclusive education capacity development was undertaken. The training was initiated in ten model schools, with a tailor-made curriculum consisting of four modules: differentiated instruction, peer support, working with parents, and the Numicon method, which focuses on teaching basic number principles to pupils experiencing difficulties in learning mathematics. Following the completion of all modules, teachers would be certified by the respective Ministries of Education, and Protocols for Inclusive Education would be introduced in each school. Following a regional workshop with universities, an action plan was agreed upon with two teacher training faculties to rollout the inclusive education modules at the pre-service teacher training level.

In spring 2017, a field test for the PISA was successfully conducted. Bosnia and Herzegovina will participate for the first time in PISA in 2018, with the main focus on reading, mathematics and science. The country was selected by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to present the technical report from the field test at the global PISA Technical Meeting in Brussels in November 2017. The objectivity and internationally recognized methodology of the PISA test provides a significant opportunity for UNICEF BiH to take part in the entire process, support a secondary analysis of the results with an equity lens and, in collaboration with the OECD, organize debates and dialogue at the national and local levels about learning outcomes. The overall objective will be to advocate for reforms to improve the quality and relevance of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

OUTPUT 3 2015-2016 Increased participation of children and youth in structured initiatives aimed at promoting diversity and social cohesion; 2017-2018 Capacities of schools and communities to prevent, reduce and cope with conflict and promote peace strengthened

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, UNICEF BiH worked with UNDP and UNESCO as well as the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office to develop a Joint UN Programme on ‘Promoting Social Cohesion and Diversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina’. This is the second phase of the ‘Dialogue for the Future’ (DFF) programme, which aims to strengthen social cohesion focusing on youth, culture and education. In 2014-2016 the first phase of the initiative established a set of peacebuilding standards, networks and tools around the country. The outcomes formed the basis for the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency’s request for a subsequent phase. Following endorsement by the UN Secretary-General and the UN Peacebuilding Fund, the UNCT in Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated the development of a second phase of peacebuilding work that builds upon the lessons learned from the first phase. The Joint Programme was approved by the Peacebuilding Fund in November 2017 for a period of 18 months with a total value of US$2 million, out of which UNICEF BiH will receive US$548,000. UNICEF BiH is the convening agent for the programme.

By providing spaces for dialogue and continued interaction between different groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the local and state levels, the programme will support the collective identification of issues that affect all citizens, and further contribute to enhanced interaction and collaboration between groups. The project has a major focus on youth, connecting young opinion makers, future leaders and key stakeholders with their leadership in Bosnia and Herzegovina and across the neighbouring countries. The Dialogue for the Future2 Joint Programme will start in 2018 and will be complemented by a sub-regional programme involving
OUTCOME 4  By 2019, an increased number of young boys and girls, including hard-to-reach children, Roma children and children with disabilities have access to quality health services including integrated ECD

Analytical statement of progress
As of the end of 2017, all ten cantons in the Federation, and the RS entity, had officially committed to introducing and sustaining ECD services, with UNICEF BiH support. In order to sustain the ECD and ECI services introduced with UNICEF support in previous years, UNICEF BiH provided further technical assistance to the Association of Paediatricians in FBiH. As a result, several innovative services were introduced in the revised Standards and Norms of Health Care Services. This will help promote universal coverage of integrated ECD and ECI services, funded through the health insurance funds, and free access to ECD/ECI services through health centres for all children. The revision is expected to receive final endorsement by the Federal Ministry of Health in 2018.

Training of trainers modules for ECI were developed to ensure sustainability of the programme. Forty-one professionals from different sectors, including health, education and social services, from 11 municipalities across the country enhanced their knowledge and skills in ECD and ECI. Additionally, over 150 community nurses from eight municipalities were trained in providing ECD services and counselling to parents, with a special focus on how to recognize violence against children in households. All the professionals who were trained gained valuable skills they now use to provide quality ECD services to over 2,000 children and their families. Noting the importance of community nurses in the health system, modules on ECD and violence were included in the regular curricula of nurses in other locations.

Throughout 2017, UNICEF BiH together with the World Health Organization (WHO) and others stepped up advocacy and capacity development efforts to increase immunization coverage in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which stood at 68 per cent among children under five according to MICS 2011/12. At the request of the Ministerial Health Conference and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Civil Affairs, UNICEF BiH supported and managed the development of a comprehensive costed multi-year immunization plan at the state level. The plan is the first of its kind for Bosnia and Herzegovina and is significant in bringing all government levels together to agree on the priorities for the immunization programme, including the need for replacement of cold chain equipment and procurement of vaccines. There is also possible interest in procurement of vaccines at state and/or regional level instead of at entity and district level, which would be more cost-effective.

In addition, following sustained advocacy by UNICEF BiH, both FBiH and RS are currently considering the development of an immunization communication plan to strategically improve the communication flow between paediatricians and parents, so families receive clear and accurate information about immunization. It was agreed with entities that UNICEF will support the development of an ongoing professional development training programme in immunization that entity Institutes of Public Health would rollout, thereby standardizing the information delivered to health professionals. In partnership with the Medical Faculty at the University of Sarajevo, UNICEF BiH supported four rounds of one-day training for about 150 health professionals who enhanced their knowledge on evidence-based medicine related to immunization and significantly increased their confidence in immunization communication. In collaboration with the entity governments, UNICEF supported marking of European
Immunization Week in Bosnia and Herzegovina through roundtable discussions, training activities and knowledge exchange forums reaching over 243 health professionals and decisionmakers.

UNICEF BiH provided further support to scale-up the Nutrition-Friendly Kindergarten Initiative following its successful implementation in 16 selected preschools in previous years in RS and FBiH and the adoption of the RS Bylaw on Terms and Conditions to Exercise Nutrition, Care, Preventive Health and Social Protection of Children in Preschools. Following the adoption of the RS Bylaw, in 2017 all preschool directors (or designates) from 41 municipalities were sensitized on the importance of the legislation, and four kindergartens were accredited as “nutrition friendly”. In FBiH, the remaining four cantons that had not been included in the previous phases benefited in 2017 from the accreditation of four kindergartens and the training of their staff. As of the end of 2017, all cantons in FBiH have at least one accredited nutrition-friendly kindergarten. Overall, 270 children in FBiH and 368 children in RS directly benefited from healthy and nutritious meals necessary for their healthy growth.

Due to the low rate of breastfeeding in Bosnia and Herzegovina (19 per cent), accreditation of baby-friendly hospitals is very important. Standards for this accreditation, developed with UNICEF BiH support, were adopted by the RS Government in April 2017. UNICEF BiH provided further support to the Public Health Institute RS Centre for Health Management to prepare the first four maternity wards in RS for accreditation, of 15 in total. The support consisted of conducting a baseline survey of breastfeeding mothers on their experiences, creating protocols for the hospitals to ensure that standards are followed, and preparing staff and management to provide support to new mothers with counselling and information, education and communication materials. In FBiH 14 of 18 maternity wards have been accredited, as has one maternity ward in Brcko District.

A general constraint is that health systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina still face a shortage of adequately trained health professionals, especially for holistically addressing child health and development. Another major challenge is parents’ lack of trust in the benefits of immunization and the lack of confidence among paediatricians to provide clear evidence-based information.

**OUTPUT 1 2017-2018**

**Strengthened capacities for equitable provision of quality immunization services for children, especially for the most vulnerable and excluded groups**

**Analytical statement of progress**

In order to increase immunization coverage in Bosnia and Herzegovina and protect children from vaccine-preventable diseases, UNICEF with WHO, the World Bank and other partners stepped up advocacy and capacity-building efforts with health professionals and decisionmakers. The full immunization rate for Bosnia and Herzegovina is 68 per cent for children under five and the latest estimates indicate that coverage is even decreasing for certain vaccines such as for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). Currently, many parents do not believe in the benefit of vaccines due to a strong anti-vaccine lobby, lack of qualified health professionals who can provide evidence-based information, and occasional stock-outs of vaccines. At the request of the Ministerial Health Conference and the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, UNICEF supported and managed the development of the first-ever costed comprehensive multi-year immunization plan with support from the Regional Office and expert consultants.

In collaboration with the Medical Faculty of the University of Sarajevo and their Centre for
Continuous Medical Education, UNICEF BiH supported two cycles of two-daytechnical immunization workshops for health professionals, providing them with up-to-date evidence-based information on immunization, rebuilding their trust in vaccines, introducing the new vaccines schedule and providing them with an opportunity to exchange information and good practices. A total of 150 health professionals increased their knowledge on immunization and are currently applying it in their everyday practice with patients.

In April 2017, UNICEF BiH supported the European Immunization Week in both entities through two workshops with 68 participants, one for decisionmakers and the other for health professionals to advocate for increased attention to the issue of immunization and ensure that the most vulnerable children have access to immunization services. In May 2017, the RS Institute of Public Health with support from UNICEF BiH strengthened the capacities of 175 health professionals and Institute staff in the field, providing them with quality and evidence-based information on immunization through five workshops conducted across RS. Health professionals gained knowledge that they are now using to increase the immunization coverage.

UNICEF BiH also supported two partners from the entities to attend a Vaccine Procurement Practitioners Exchange Forum in Copenhagen to encourage knowledge exchange and present them with the opportunities for vaccine procurement through UNICEF’s Supply Division. A short action plan was developed and implementation initiated.

Overall, remaining major bottlenecks include many parents’ low level of trust in immunization, along with limited confidence of paediatricians in providing them with up-to-date evidence-based information on the benefits. Capacity gaps persist at all levels in terms of management of immunization programmes, while the budgets for immunization are very limited.

**OUTPUT 2 2017-2018 Enhanced systems and capacities for equitable provision of quality ECD and ECI services, especially for the most vulnerable and excluded children**

**Analytical statement of progress**

To ensure the sustainability of ECD services in Sarajevo Canton, UNICEF signed a Protocol of Cooperation on advancing ECD services with three cantonal ministries: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Welfare and Ministry of Education. The Ministries set up an ECD Working Group in the Canton, which developed a draft action plan to be adopted by the cantonal government in early 2018. In September 2017, a Protocol of Cooperation in ECD was signed in Middle Bosnia Canton. The Ministries in that Canton committed to developing an ECD action plan and nominated members for the ECD Working Group. With these two cantons on board as of 2017, all ten cantons in FBiH have now signed protocols on ECD and declared their full commitment to working across sectors on ECD.

In order to sustain the innovative ECD and ECI services introduced with UNICEF BiH support in previous years, UNICEF provided further technical assistance to the Association of Paediatricians in FBiH. As a result, several innovative services were introduced in the revised Standards and Norms of Health Care Services, such as definition of the standards for staff, services, protocols, continuing professional development and other necessary services for ECD centres that are defined as being a necessary part of the paediatric units in all health centres in FBiH. This will contribute towards universal coverage of integrated ECD and ECI services, funded through the health insurance funds, and free access through the health centres for all children. The revision is currently awaiting final endorsement by the Federal Ministry of Health in early 2018.
Forty-one professionals from different sectors, including health, education and social services, from 11 municipalities across the country enhanced their knowledge and skills in ECD and ECI. Additionally, over 150 community nurses from eight municipalities were trained in providing ECD services and counselling to parents, with a special focus on how to recognize violence against children in the households they visit. All the professionals who were trained gained valuable skills they now use to provide quality ECD services to over 2,000 children and their families. Noting the importance of community nurses in the health system, advocacy modules on ECD and violence were included in the regular curricula of nurses in other locations, with UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina support. Further scaling up of services and enhancing their sustainability is the main priority to ensure that all children receive ECD services early on to give them best start in life. UNICEF BiH also supported the development of a training of trainers manual for ECD training for partners.

A general constraint remains parents’ relatively limited knowledge and application of good ECD practices, including in the area of nutrition, immunization and positive parent-child interactions.

**OUTPUT 3 2017-2018 Strengthened capacities for adequate nutrition of girls and boys**

**Analytical statement of progress**

During 2017, UNICEF BiH provided further support to scale-up the Nutrition-Friendly Kindergarten Initiative, following its successful implementation in 16 selected preschools in RS and FBiH in previous years and the adoption of the RS Bylaw on Terms and Conditions to Exercise Nutrition, Care, Preventive Health and Social Protection of Children in Preschools. In 2017 all preschool directors (or designates) in RS from 41 municipalities were sensitized on the importance of the bylaw, and four kindergartens were accredited as “nutrition-friendly”. In FBiH, the remaining four cantons that had not been included in the previous phases of the programme benefited in 2017 from the accreditation of four kindergartens as nutrition-friendly and the training of 27 of their staff and management representatives on ways to prepare healthy meals and the importance of providing nutritious food to young children. As of the end of 2017, all cantons in FBiH have at least one accredited nutrition-friendly kindergarten. Overall, 270 children in FBiH and 368 children in RS benefitted from healthy and nutritious meals necessary for their healthy growth.

Due to the low rate of breastfeeding in Bosnia and Herzegovina (19 per cent), accreditation of baby-friendly hospitals is very important. Standards for this accreditation, developed with UNICEF BiH support, were adopted by the RS Government in April 2017. UNICEF BiH provided further support to the Public Health Institute RS Centre for Health Management to prepare the first four maternity wards in RS for accreditation, out of 15 in total. The support consisted of conducting a baseline survey of breastfeeding mothers on their experiences, creating protocols for the hospitals to ensure that standards are followed, and preparing staff and management to provide support to new mothers with counselling and information, education and communication materials. The findings of the survey conducted in four hospitals demonstrated that none of the hospitals satisfied even one of the requirements outlined in the ten steps to successful breastfeeding promoted by UNICEF/WHO. In FBiH, 14 of 18 maternity wards have been accredited, as has one maternity ward in Brcko District.

Research on the salt quality on the market of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2017 was carried out by the Food Safety Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the two entities and Brcko District. The data showed that out of 260 samples, only 98 were in accordance with the regulation on salt.
iodization. The most common causes of non-quality salt were incorrect declarations of the product, the concentration of iodine and deviations regarding organoleptic properties (foreign bodies and foreign smell). The data will be used for developing strategic documents as well as scientific professional studies. UNICEF BiH supported the presentation of research in Mostar for key stakeholders who agreed on joint recommendations that will inform the Government on future steps on how to deal with the issue of inadequate salt on the market.

One of the overall constraints is a lack of adequately trained professionals dealing with infant and young child nutrition. Another bottleneck is limited knowledge among parents on the benefits of breastfeeding and adequate nutrition for young children.

**OUTCOME 5** The identity, direction and well-being of UNICEF and staff are managed efficiently and effectively to enable the achievement of results for children in the country

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF BiH maintained effective and efficient management operations in support of programme results throughout the year. Key benchmarks of the AMP were monitored and achieved.

Three pending internal audit action points were completed and closed in Quarter 1 of 2017 as planned. The country management team met regularly and reviewed progress against management indicators.

All office committees functioned as per approved terms of reference.

Financial transactions were processed in a timely way.

UNICEF BiH updated its staffing structure/needs in light of discussions at the SMR and the changing context in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following approval of its updated CPMP by the regional Programme Budget Review (PBR) Committee, UNICEF BiH initiated recruitment of seven national positions and two national UN Volunteer positions. In addition, four selection processes for consultants/individual contractors were initiated. Recruitment and selection processes, both for staff and consultants/contractors, were administered through the talent management system.

UNICEF BiH invested in staff well-being in various ways this year. Two staff retreats were held in 2017. The first was organized in April 2017 and focused on updates from the Regional Management Team and Regional Staff Association meetings, the AMP, the SMR and stress management, as well as team-building activities. The second mini-retreat was held in September with a focus on the follow-up to the GSS and preparation of the GSS Office Action Plan. This retreat identified four main areas for improvement based on the GSS and follow-up small group discussions: recognition at work; office efficiency and effectiveness; speak up culture; and workload. In addition, UNICEF BiH organized a performance management workshop in May 2017 that was facilitated by the NY Headquarters Learning and Development Department, resulting in an action plan that was incorporated in the overall GSS Office Action Plan.

The Local Staff Association held elections in Quarter 4 of 2017 and a partially new Executive Committee was elected. The Association supported a number of events such as the children’s New Year’s party, the 2017 year-end lunch, as well as a number of farewells for staff members
and consultants, and celebration of newborns.

**OUTPUT 1** Governance and systems exist to support the direction of country operations

**Analytical statement of progress**

In September 2017, UNICEF BiH organized an SMR, bringing together a broad range of stakeholders, including national partners from government and civil society, academia and donors, as well as all UNICEF BiH staff and several Regional Advisers. Based on a number of analytical papers prepared on key areas of UNICEF work, the SMR reviewed results, challenges and lessons learned since the start of the CPD in 2015, and agreed on a stronger focus on education and adolescent development in the remaining period of the CPD.

Following the SMR, the CPMP was updated, proposing minor updates to the staffing structure intended to ensure UNICEF BiH’s ability to deliver on planned results, and to more strategically reposition UNICEF BiH in the education and child protection sectors. The process of updating the CPMP was fully participatory and transparent. One of the key elements of the CPMP submission included affordability analyses. The updated CPMP was approved by the PBR in October 2017.

The business continuity plan was fully tested in March 2017. An update was completed in December 2017 and the next testing is scheduled for Q1 of 2018.

The terms of reference of all office standing committees and their membership and the table of authorities were reviewed, updated and shared regularly following staff changes in 2017. All office committees functioned as per approved terms of reference. The country management team met regularly and reviewed progress against the office management indicators throughout the year. The AMP was developed and monitored regularly; the 2016 AMP was assessed by the Regional Office as one of the region’s best AMPs. All 2016 audit recommendations were implemented and closed by April 2017.

Procurement processes were reviewed and further measures were adopted to reinforce transparency and fairness in all procurement actions. A peer review by the Supply Division was requested and will be held in January 2018.

All staff attended an introductory session on the new Emergency Preparedness Platform facilitated by the Regional Emergency Specialist in November 2017. A risk analysis was conducted, several emergency scenarios and response interventions were identified, and preparedness actions were determined. A step-by-step plan was developed to move to the Emergency Preparedness Platform by March 2018.

The UN in Bosnia and Herzegovina operates under the DaO approach. The UNCT in Bosnia and Herzegovina has a Business Operation Strategy for 2014-2017, which will be extended until the end of 2020 in order to align with the agreed one-year extension of the UNDAF and the current UNICEF BiH Country Programme. Work under the Strategy continued efforts to further improve quality common business operations and the timely delivery of operational support, avoiding duplication of efforts and costs. The Operations Management Team in 2017 developed standard operating procedures for UN premises in order to ensure more efficient use of such things as office space allocation, conference facilities and parking spaces.
OUTPUT 2 Stewardship of financial resources creates the conditions to pursue country operations

Analytical statement of progress
Effective and efficient management of UNICEF BiH financial resources in support to programme implementation remained in full compliance with internal control rules and regulations. In addition, identification, assessment and mitigation of financial risks were regularly conducted.

All financial transactions were processed in a timely way throughout the year. The monthly closure of accounts was regularly monitored and actioned as required. Monthly cash forecasts, bi-weekly replenishment requests and month-end balances were reviewed and monitored on a regular basis. Month-end bank balances were fully compliant with the bi-weekly replenishment policy. UNICEF BiH maintained optimal local bank account balances. Preparatory work for bank reconciliation submission to the GSSC was completed in a timely manner. Reports related to segregation of duties were regularly generated, reviewed and potential risks mitigated. The Operations Section coordinated year-end closure activities at the UNICEF BiH level.

Smooth operations with the GSSC led to a minimal number of returned cases that were immediately responded to.

Outstanding DCTs over six and nine months were closely monitored and discussed by the country management team, and remained below the one per cent threshold for the majority of the 2017 reporting period. Any outstanding DCTs over nine months were the result of complex administrative procedures and financial governance (VAT refund procedure). The VAT refund was submitted in a timely manner and closely followed up with authorities in order to ensure compliance with organizational standards for clearing (no outstanding items over six months).

UNICEF BiH ensured adequate HACT implementation throughout the year. The capacities of implementing partners were further strengthened through two HACT training activities in 2017, benefiting 50 participants from a wide range of partners. In addition, five one-on-one HACT training activities were organized for new implementing partners before project implementation. Eleven spot checks, out of the initial ten planned, were conducted in 2017. Inventory records were kept clean with no errors reported, updated and uploaded as per schedule. All Local Property Survey Board (LPSB) decisions were properly reflected in the system.

OUTPUT 3 Human resources have the capacities, skills, morale and motivation to support country operations

Analytical statement of progress
During 2017 UNICEF BiH human resources were effectively managed in full compliance with organizational changes and initiatives including human resources administration and payroll.

Following approval of the 2017 PBR submission, UNICEF BiH initiated the recruitment of seven national positions (one NO-3, two NO-2, two NO-1, one GS-6 and one GS-5) and two national UN Volunteer positions. By year-end, three staff recruitment processes were completed (administrative assistant G-6 FTA; social protection officer NO-2; and programme assistant G-6 TA), while others were in various stages at the end of the year. In addition, four selection processes for consultants/individual contractors were conducted, out of which three had been completed by year-end. Recruitment and selection processes both for staff and consultant contractors were administered through the Talent Management System.
Management and the Local Staff Association cooperated well during the year. Three joint consultative committee meetings were held in 2017 to discuss topics of interest and concern for staff, such as the GSS results, staff retreats, team-building activities, office events and income tax. UNICEF BiH held two staff retreats in 2017. The first was organized in April and focused on updates from the Regional Management Team and Regional Staff Association meetings, the AMP, the SMR, as well as stress management and teambuilding. The second mini-retreat was held in September with a focus on the follow-up to the GSS and preparation of the GSS Office Action Plan. In addition, UNICEF BiH organized a performance management workshop in May 2017 that was facilitated by the NY Headquarters Learning and Development Department. This resulted in an action plan that was incorporated in the GSS Office Action Plan.

All staff utilized a minimum of five learning days during the year, including mandatory courses, face-to-face training and self-directed learning. In 2017, ten staff members benefited from thirteen in-person learning/training workshops organized outside of UNICEF BiH. Furthermore, four staff members participated in stretch assignments in 2017.

Throughout the year a number of training/learning activities covering areas of importance and interest for all staff were facilitated by different staff members. Topics included the learning policy, managing conflicts of interest and regulating conduct with the interest of UNICEF/UN, performance management, ethics in procurement and ethics in personal and professional life, and ethics in communications and social media.

**OUTCOME 6** Country programmes are efficiently designed, coordinated, managed and supported to meet quality programming standards in achieving results for children

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, the third year of the UNICEF BiH 2015-2019 Country Programme, UNICEF BiH worked with partners at all levels to deliver quality results for children, with a continued focus on the most vulnerable children, especially those with disabilities, children without parental care and Roma children. In September 2017, an SMR was organized with a wide array of stakeholders, partners, donors and UNICEF Regional Advisers. Based on in-depth analysis and review, the SMR led to endorsement of a stronger focus by UNICEF BiH on education and adolescent development in the remaining CPD period.

The UNDAF was agreed by the Council of Ministers to be extended for another year, until the end of 2020, and the CPD will be extended accordingly. The extension was requested to enable the UN and BiH to properly plan the strategic partnership for the next UNDAF, given the likely lengthy process of government formation following elections scheduled for October 2018. In addition, the extension will enable a better opportunity to align the UN’s strategic engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina with planning processes in the country, especially those related to the SDG implementation and EU accession.

UNICEF BiH continued to be an active member in the DaO approach in Bosnia and Herzegovina and chaired the largest Results Group, on social inclusion. UNICEF BiH also participated in a number of other joint groups and initiatives aimed at further strengthening synergies among UN agencies, including those on gender, monitoring and reporting, youth and social protection. After more than two years leading the cross-cutting thematic group on monitoring and evaluation, UNICEF BiH handed the chairmanship to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2017. UNICEF contributed to the development of a UNCT Action
Plan to support implementation of the SDGs and a Joint UN Resource Mobilization Strategy, with the latter expected to be finalized in early 2018.

Following the mapping of hazards, vulnerabilities and risks in the country by the DRR inter-agency team, UNICEF along with other UN agencies developed a Joint UN Programme on DRR. With initial funding provided in 2016 by the Swiss Government, UNICEF conducted a comprehensive mapping and gap analysis in relation to the School Safety Framework and implemented Social Protection DRR Action Plans in four targeted high-risk municipalities. UNICEF BiH participated in a global pilot of the new Global Risk-Informed Programming methodology, through a participatory workshop with about 30 stakeholders from government at different levels, UN agencies, CSOs, donors, academia, media professionals and UNICEF BiH staff. Two main risks for child-specific programming were identified for the immediate term: flooding and a weakening of social cohesion.

In 2017, UNICEF BiH was able to meet all its internal priority management indicators, including updating of the AMP (rated as one of the best in the region), Enterprise Risk Management assessment, Early Warning Early Action key actions and preparedness activities and the Planning for Research, Impact Monitoring and Evaluation system (PRIME). During a workshop on the new Emergency Preparedness Platform facilitated by the Regional Office in November 2017, several scenarios were identified and a number of actions initiated to migrate from Early Warning Early Action to the Emergency Preparedness Platform by March 2018.

In terms of donor reporting, UNICEF BiH submitted 100 per cent (11) of the required donor reports on time, meeting UNICEF’s global benchmarks. UNICEF BiH managed to mobilize 61 per cent of the planned other resources in 2017 and achieved a 100 per cent other resources utilization rate. The resource mobilization strategy was updated with a broadening of focus from fund-raising for UNICEF BiH to include leveraging resources for children. A range of meetings were held with current and potential donors with positive perspectives in some cases. UNICEF BiH convened a one-day internal brainstorming discussion with UNICEF Croatia to assess options, risks and good practices related to private sector fund-raising and partnerships, an area where UNICEF BiH has engaged on an ad-hoc basis until now.

During 2017, a total of 11 financial assurance activities were conducted, whereas 10 were initially planned. For programme assurance activities, 45 were planned and 78 were eventually conducted. This was deemed necessary due to the complex and decentralized systems in the country. HACT issues were discussed regularly at CMT meetings, and UNICEF BiH maintained outstanding DCTs over six months below the global standard of less than one per cent for most of the year. Two partnership reviews were held with CSOs, and a scheduled audit for one CSO partner was initiated in December to be completed in 2018.

Communication and advocacy activities helped to provide a voice for children, reach a broad audience and motivate public engagement to improve children’s lives. Overall, positive media coverage (78 per cent positive and 22 per cent neutral) and high visibility (around 40 percent of media content in traditional media relevant for children was linked to UNICEF) supported the overall UNICEF BiH reputation and credibility while at the same time contributing to fund-raising potential and brand recognition. The events organized for World Children’s Day 2017, including the ‘Kids Takeover’ and the various activities advocating for ending corporal punishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, reached an estimated 860,000 people through various social and traditional media channels.
OUTPUT 1 UNICEF staff and partners are provided guidance, tools and resources to effectively design and manage programmes

Analytical statement of progress
Since it was the third year of the UNICEF BiH 2015-2019 Country Programme, an SMR was organized in September 2017 with a wide array of government partners and other stakeholders from all levels, donors, CSOs, and UNICEF Regional Advisers. Based on in-depth analysis and review of the country context and priorities for young people, the SMR led to endorsement of a stronger focus by UNICEF BiH on education and adolescent development in the remaining CPD period.

Throughout the year, regular programme meetings were held to monitor progress on key programme indicators and enhance synergies between the different programmatic areas of work. UNICEF BiH made progress in a number of cross-sectoral areas, including children with disabilities, adolescent development and addressing violence against children through coordinated efforts across different programme sections. The SMR provided an opportunity for UNICEF BiH to take stock of its use of various programme strategies, which will inform approaches in 2018. All UNICEF BiH internal priority management indicator targets were met.

The overall implementation of the rolling joint UN results groups’ workplans remained on track during 2017, with some delays experienced such as in the evidence-generation work (situation analyses). UNICEF, as Chair of the Social Inclusion Results Group under the UNDAF, promoted more coordinated UN approaches in youth, social protection, support to Roma populations and persons with disabilities, with varying degrees of success.

UNICEF BiH staff and partners were provided with regular guidance, tools and resources to design and coordinate a variety of programmes. Capacities of implementing partners were further strengthened through two HACT training activities in 2017, benefiting 50 participants from a wide range of partners. In addition, five one-on-one HACT training activities were organized for new implementing partners before project implementation.

OUTPUT 2 Enhanced knowledge of relevant stakeholders about child rights and increased public engagement to support UNICEF’s activities focused on the most vulnerable children in BiH

Analytical statement of progress
During 2017, UNICEF continued to engage with a broad range of state, entity, cantonal and municipal government counterparts as well as non-governmental partners across the country. For example, UNICEF facilitated the process of preparing the BiH 5th and 6th Combined Periodic Convention on the Rights of the ChildReport, bringing together institutions and NGOs from FBiH, RS and Brcko District while strengthening their capacity to report on children’s rights. In addition, the partnership between UNICEF BiH and the Office of the Ombudspersons for Human Rights proved to be extremely valuable for advocacy, and will be further strengthened in 2018.

The UNICEF BiH Resource Mobilization Strategy, developed in 2015, was revised and expanded to include leveraging resources for children. With intensive resource mobilization efforts throughout the year, UNICEF BiH managed to raise an additional US$7 million until 2021.

The long-term partnerships with SIDA and the Swiss Development Cooperation were nurtured
throughout the year and resulted in agreements for continued funding of the justice for children programme beyond 2017. In addition, SIDA will provide country thematic funds for the child protection programme linked to the new UNICEF BiH Strategic Plan. The partnership with the EU was formalized with the development of a rolling EU-UNICEF Partnership Plan for 2017-2019; three joint advocacy opportunities on child rights were realized with the EU delegation.

Through advance planning and dedicated quality assurance, all 11 donor reports (100 per cent) were submitted on time and with high quality, meeting UNICEF’s global benchmarks. Reports due in 90 days were checked regularly through the dashboard and reviewed by the CMT. There is a clear process in place that ensures timely submission and quality assurance of donor reports.

Collaboration with UN agencies was further strengthened through the development of two new Joint UN Programmes to start in 2018, one on DRR and one on social cohesion. In addition, a Joint UNCT Resource Mobilization Strategy was developed and expected to be approved early 2018.

World Children’s Day 2017 saw an unprecedented opportunity for UNICEF BiH to further expand its relationships with different stakeholders, with over 70 partners directly engaged, including media, private sector, municipalities, schools, sports clubs, CSOs and the international community. In a large number of cases, these partners were working with UNICEF BiH for the first time, indicating the strong potential to build on this initial collaboration to promote children’s rights.

**OUTPUT 3** Strategies to address cross-cutting issues related to child rights are developed and applied

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF BiH has been supporting the implementation of integrated SPI systems for children at policy and local levels since 2009. This cross-sectoral approach maximizes linkages between different sectors such as education, health, social and child protection, finance and justice. The local SPI model was scaled up in five new target locations in 2017, reaching a total of 1,300 most-vulnerable children and parents. By the end of the year, integrated SPI systems had been strengthened in 49 Bosnia and Herzegovina municipalities (34 per cent of the total), including through the establishment of targeted social services for the most vulnerable children and families, such as daycare services for children with disabilities and mobile outreach teams for out-of-school Roma and rural children. Overall, the vast majority of the new social services established in the municipalities are now sustained through municipal budgets. The most recent evaluation of the SPI approach in 2017, as part of the “Support for Durable Solutions of the Revised Strategy for Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement” project, confirmed that the SPI model institutionalized evidence-based policies and mechanisms to tackle social protection and inclusion at local levels, resulting in multi-dimensional benefits for children and communities.

In 2017, UNICEF also continued supporting cross-sectoral ECD interventions through integrating violence prevention and recognition modules into formal trainings on ECD for 150 community nurses in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A cross-sectoral ECD Working Group including education, social services and health professionals was established in Sarajevo Canton and developed a draft ECD action plan with recommendations to improve service delivery for children, including referrals. The action plan is expected to be submitted to the FBiH Parliament
UNICEF BiH also effectively applied a cross-sectoral approach related to the social inclusion of children with disabilities. UNICEF BiH mainstreamed its work for children with disabilities in all sectors. As a result of UNICEF-supported interventions between 2015-17, a total of 2,000 children with disabilities and their families gained better access to social services, such as day care, counselling and referrals. Three thousand children with disabilities were reached with early detection and intervention services as part of ECD services. 675 children with disabilities benefited from inclusive education approaches and 150 children with disabilities benefited from improved care and protection services.

C4D interventions applied a cross-sectoral approach in general, whether through facilitating knowledge, attitudes and practice studies or coordinating UNICEF’s work on adolescent development.

**OUTPUT 4** UNICEF staff and partners are provided guidance, tools and resources to effectively design and manage programmes

**Analytical statement of progress**

Joint 2016-17 work plans for each UN Results Group continued to be implemented and monitored closely. The UNCT started the process of extending the UNDAF for one year to the end of 2020, after which all the CPDs will also be requested to be extended to remain in alignment with the UNDAF. Two new UN Joint Programmes were designed for implementation in 2018, one on social cohesion/peacebuilding and one on DRR.

During 2017, important new evidence was generated in the form of situation analyses on children with disabilities and on children without parental care. These clearly informed the equity focus of UNICEF BiH’s various programme interventions. All research, studies and evaluations were guided and quality assured by the Research, Studies and Evaluations Steering Committee. In line with UNICEF’s core role of knowledge generation and child rights monitoring, cross-sectoral data was also regularly updated and disseminated to partners to inform advocacy and programming. Examples include the background documents for the SMR, i.e. the update of the data on child-specific indicators against the SDGs, which found that out of 48 child-related indicators for Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is estimated that more than half (52 per cent) is available, almost one-third is partially available or has a proxy indicator (31 per cent) and 17 per cent is not available or the availability is not known. A forecasting/scenarios/trends analysis was also carried out on the situation of young people in the country to 2020 and 2030.

The focus on the most vulnerable children, especially those with disabilities, children without parental care and Roma children, was maintained. Throughout the year regular programme monitoring visits were conducted to assess progress and address any bottlenecks in programme implementation across the country. Two partnership reviews were held with CSO partners.

**OUTPUT 5** Enhanced knowledge of relevant stakeholders about child rights and increased public engagement to support UNICEF’s activities focused on the most vulnerable children in BiH

**Analytical statement of progress**
In line with the Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy, the UNICEF BiH Advocacy Strategy and the UN Communication Strategy, UNICEF BiH focused on strategic communication activities to enhance the voice, reach and engagement of key stakeholders and target audiences in support of children’s rights. Overall positive media coverage (78 positive and 22 neutral) and high visibility (around 40 percent of media content in traditional media relevant for children is linked to UNICEF) supported UNICEF BiH’s reputation and credibility, while at the same time contributing to fund-raising potential and brand recognition. The events organized for World Children’s Day 2017, including the ‘Kids Takeover’ and the various activities advocating for ending corporal punishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, reached an estimated 860,000 people through various social and traditional media channels.

Another significant event was World Immunization Week, during which UNICEF BiH facilitated health experts’ answers to parents’ most common questions about immunization, directly engaging over 700 parents and reaching more than 150,000 people overall. About 30 per cent of 92 monitored traditional media outlets published the key messages, with total media reach estimated at 77 per cent.

During the year, external communication actions supported all UNICEF BiH programme priorities, reaching over 550,000 Facebook users and engaging at least 8,000 people directly around key messages on equitable access to justice for children, inclusive education and inclusive social protection of children.

The engagement of stakeholders, media and communication professionals is one of the major aspects of the communication strategy. The direct engagement of children and young people in 2017 contributed to the overall results and credibility of the communication work. At least 20 media institutions and 300 professionals were involved in various events during the year. The online platforms, including two media blogs and several social media channels, maintained direct contact with about 20,000 followers. Thanks to established mechanisms, off-line events such as conferences continued to reach significantly larger online audiences, multiplying the effects of the overall UNICEF BiH outreach (e.g. UNICEF BiH-supported conferences on inclusive education and childcare reform were live-streamed, including interactive Q&A with online participants to the extent possible).

Media partnerships were maintained through networking, engagement and capacity building of key professionals, including through workshops and recognition of best practices. In some instances, the engagement in commercial terms was negotiated with a significant discount to support production, while the media partner provided free-of-charge broadcast or dissemination. Direct engagement with stakeholders remains critical for the best results and sustainability to enhance their knowledge about child rights and increase public engagement to support the most vulnerable children.

To further strengthen the capacities of media outlets and professionals in terms of protection and promotion of the best interests of the child, UNICEF BiH supported the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees in publishing the ‘Compendium of Good Practices on Media in the Best Interest of the Child’ and follow-up discussions in nine locations. This included extensive consultations with children and social media interaction via an online platform.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sequence Number</th>
<th>Type of Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social norms on violence against children and social inclusion of children with disabilities</td>
<td>2017/005</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation Analysis of children at risk of deprivation of family care and children without parental care in Bosnia and Herzegovina.</td>
<td>2017/004</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation Analysis of children with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>2017/003</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violence against Children: A Review of Data Availability in Bosnia and Herzegovina (English and local language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Baby Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts’ answers to the most common parents’ questions on immunization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-Friendly Guidelines on Prevention of Violence Against Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina “All you need to know about violence” (local language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media in the best interest of the child – Compendium of good practices (local language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Guidelines on Identifying and Responding to Cases of Online Violence Against Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina&quot; for professionals working in this field (local language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Self-Reported Delinquency Study III (local language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Protection from Violence - Analysis of Domestic Laws and Policies Related to Violence against Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lessons learned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Type/Category</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Programme for identification and protection of children from risk factors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Programme documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>