

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Part 1: Situation update in the country

In 2018, Bosnia and Herzegovina had one of the most politically challenging years in the post-Dayton Peace Agreement period, as the country continued to struggle with its 1992-1995 war legacy and with the inability to find a durable and mutually accepted vision for the country and its internal arrangements. The rhetoric of division, fear and mistrust that preceded and followed the general elections, and the displeasure of many regional and local leaders with the International Criminal Tribunal's verdicts on the Former Yugoslavia and on-going local trials of war crimes, re-open old wounds and divide Bosnia and Herzegovina's communities.

There was limited progress in the European Union accession process in 2018, as the country was not able to meet the agreed deadline to respond to additional questions from Brussels. Arise in refugees and migrant populations entering the country in 2018 posed additional challenges to a stressed public system, particularly in health and social welfare. Geopolitics continued to generate negative dynamics, as the issue of whether Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) should join NATO fuelled tensions and divided the country.

In the October 2018 general elections, only 53 per cent of eligible voters chose to exercise their right to vote according to the Central Election Commission. The majority of citizens continued to have limited trust in political leaders and government institutions. The growing numbers of youth leaving Bosnia and Herzegovina each year is an alarming trend. Young people are the least inclined to vote, because they believe their voice would make no difference. The launch of U-Report in December 2019, with over 6,000 U-reporters signed up in six weeks, may provide an outlet for young people to express their views, knowing they can inform decision-making. In the lead-up to the elections, decisions related to policy and legal reforms were stalled. The complex, lengthy process of government formation at different levels is likely to delay progress in a number of areas. Overall, civic engagement is not highly developed and civil society organizations often must struggle to position themselves as an independent or objective voice in society. Yet 2018 saw a resurgence in public protests on issues in both entities.

Economically, Bosnia and Herzegovina maintained a stable 3 per cent average annual growth rate for the last few years. In 2018, real gross domestic product growth was 3.2 per cent, according to the World Bank, driven primarily by consumption. Official data show that the labour market improved, with the unemployment rate decreasing from 20.5 per cent in 2017 to

18.4 per cent in 2018, driven primarily by rising demand for labour and a fall in the activity rate. Youth constitute the highest number among the unemployed. According to latest labour force survey, the unemployment rate among those 15 to 24 years old was estimated at 39 per cent in 2018 (36 per cent among men and 46 per cent among women).

Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to face challenges with education, social protection and the standard of living. Young people perceive unemployment and the accompanying economic dependency as a major problem. New data from the World Bank's Human Capital Project, which measures the human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18, estimated that a child born in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018 will reach only 62 per cent of his or her productive potential as an adult.

On average, children in Bosnia and Herzegovina complete 11.7 years of schooling by age 18, however this is equivalent to only 8.6 years of education when taking into account the poor quality of learning. These figures mask the dire situation of socially marginalized groups, including children with disabilities, Roma children and children who live in impoverished communities. Despite gradual progress in social attitudes towards children, those with disabilities in particular, their access to quality, appropriate services in health, education, and social protection remains uneven across the country.

Despite improvement, gender inequality remains a barrier in everyday life for girls and women. While the gender development index put Bosnia and Herzegovina at 0.924 (out of 1) in 2017, the gender inequality index was assessed at 0.166, ranking it 37 out of 160 countries in the 2017 index. The latter reflects a persistent gender gap, especially with employment and wages, accessing financial resources, political participation, representation and violence against women and girls.

Rising numbers of refugees and migrants entered Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018, mainly from the Middle East and South Asia through the new Balkan route trying to reach the European Union. In 2018, the BiH authorities recorded the arrival of over 24,000 refugees and migrants compared to 540 recorded in 2017. An estimated 5,000 refugees and migrants were present in the country as of December, with the vast majority in Una-Sana Canton because of its proximity to Croatia. The number of refugee and migrant children was estimated at almost 1,000, mostly 15 to 17-year-old boys, although exact numbers are not available as the Ministry of Security does not disaggregate data on arrival by sex or age.

By the end of 2018, at least 300 unaccompanied and separated children were identified and assigned legal guardians. Government authorities at different levels faced challenges in mounting a coordinated and timely response to the needs of the refugees and migrants. The international community, civil society organizations and citizen volunteers helped support the response with immediate humanitarian assistance and strengthening public systems in health, child protection and education in the most affected areas.

During 2018, the country made progress in rolling out the Sustainable Development Goals

through multi-stakeholder consultations held in May supported by the United Nations. These included over 250 participants from government institutions at various levels, non-government organizations, academia, the private sector and the international community. Of the initial set of priorities identified for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the most consistent issue was education: poor quality, not focused enough on learning outcomes, not relevant to the demands of the labour market, insufficiently focused on 21st century skills, inefficient and segregated system and not fully inclusive of all children (e.g. children with disabilities, Roma children, children of minority populations in specific areas).

With support from UNICEF, the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Save the Children, and the United States Government, Bosnia and Herzegovina participated for the first time in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test, which will provide internationally-comparable data and allow the country to shift its education debate to learning outcomes.

The Sustainable Development Goal consultations will inform a framework in 2019. As follow-up to the consultations, in December, the Agency for Statistics and UNICEF jointly initiated the Sustainable Development Goals' data sub-group to support the institutions to systematically monitor progress in achieving Goal targets and support evidence-based planning in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Child rights monitoring is constrained by limited coordination between the many actors involved in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2018, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina and UNICEF strengthened coordination on child rights by establishing the 'group for the promotion and protection of child rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina.'

In 2018, UNICEF supported the development of a non-government organization's alternative child rights report and the Children's Convention on the Rights of the Child Report. In December, UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) submitted its confidential report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Disagreements about the sampling methodology related to household surveys (based on the contested 2013 census results) hampered progress on the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey this year.

Part 2: Major Results including in humanitarian action and gender, against the results in the Country Programme Documents

Goal area I: Every child survives and thrives

In the area of health, a step forward in 2018 was the adoption of revised standards and norms of health care services in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to include integrated early childhood development as part of the primary healthcare package. This initiative has been spearheaded and supported by UNICEF over many years. It promotes universal coverage of

integrated early childhood development and early childhood intervention services mainstreamed within the health sector, and funded through 10 Cantonal Health Insurance Funds, thereby ensuring free access to early childhood development/early childhood interventions services for all children in the Federation.

At the request of the Federation Ministry of Education, UNICEF BiH initiated support for the development of a multi-sectoral early childhood development strategy for Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that is aligned with international standards. The strategy includes activities on expanding integrated early childhood development services within the health sector according to the above-mentioned revised standards, and emphasizes the multi-sectoral approach to early childhood development. The strategy is expected to be finalized in early 2019 and will be put forward for adoption by the new Government.

Capacity-building of the public health system at different levels remained a core strategy for UNICEF in 2018. With partners such as USAID and the civil society organization EDUS, UNICEF strengthened the knowledge and skills of over 250 professionals from sectors including health, education and social services, and community workers on early childhood development and early childhood interventions, including using developmental behavioural scales to detect developmental delays in children and providing services. These skills contributed to provision of quality early childhood development services to over 1,500 children and their families. However, challenges remain in ensuring that early childhood development services are readily available across sectors to all children, especially those from vulnerable families, due to a lack of capacity and dedicated funding.

To expand public engagement on early childhood development issues, UNICEF marked Fathers' Day in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a 'super dads' campaign, engaging social influencers, celebrity fathers and media to share their photos, stories and memories as role of father in the first 1,000 days of their children's lives. The campaign reached half a million individuals via social media and approximately 1.8 million via traditional media.

UNICEF with the World Health Organization and partners continued to address low immunization coverage in Bosnia and Herzegovina, estimated at less than 70 per cent according to the latest government data. The comprehensive state-level multi-year immunization plan, developed in 2017 with UNICEF support, was not adopted in 2018; UNICEF and WHO will continue advocating with the new government for adoption and implementation.

Preliminary research findings in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as part of the Tailored Immunisation Programme in 2018 showed that many health workers have difficulties communicating effectively with parents about immunization, and that health centres do not provide reminders to parents on when the next vaccination is due. The UNICEF Regional Office with support from UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina and UNICEF Serbia and with expertise from John Hopkins University adapted a global package on interpersonal communication on immunization to the local context. This was used to train and accredit health professionals in six locations, in collaboration with the entity Ministries of Health and Public

Health Institutes, strengthening the skills of over 300 health professionals who are now communicating more persuasively, respectfully and with facts to parents about the advantages of immunization.

UNICEF BiH in collaboration with Ministries of Health and Public Health Institutes helped develop an innovative immunization app to give parents information on when the next vaccine is due, what each vaccine protects against, the vaccine origins, and information about the closest health centre to make an appointment. UNICEF and public health institutes partnered with a local non-government organisation to develop and run a blog designed to provide parents with evidence-based information on vaccines in user-friendly, local language. In total, 35 posts (articles, videos, tables) were published in 2018 and 5,483 unique user visitors to the blog were recorded.

UNICEF BiH supported the expansion of the nutrition-friendly school initiative to four primary schools in two cities, Sarajevo and Banja Luka, building on the approaches used to promote nutrition at the preschool/kindergarten level. Given that only 13 per cent of three to four year olds attend pre-school in BiH, there was a strong need to scale up interventions to the primary school level. This expansion directly resulted in improved eating habits of over 400 primary school-age children, equipped 170 parents in preparing healthier school meals for their children, and improved the teaching skills and tools of 35 teachers to deliver sessions on healthy eating. Schools will continue implementing the nutrition-friendly school initiative through dedicated healthy-living school committees, with guidance from the public health institutes.

The Agency for Certification, Accreditation and Health Care Improvement of Republika Srpska started assessing compliance of practices in the four maternity wards where baby-friendly hospital accreditation was initiated in 2017; their full accreditation will be completed by June 2019. In the Federation, the accreditation process is now self-sustaining, and maternity wards due for re-accreditation are funding the process with their own resources.

In terms of humanitarian response, UNICEF supported the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Institute of Public Health in procuring additional doses of life-saving vaccines for 300 refugee and migrant children while in the country. More than 200 mothers benefitted from mother and baby corners, providing them access to a safe and private space for breastfeeding, information on infant and young child feeding counselling, and access to psychosocial counselling.

Goal area 2: Every child learns

In 2018, UNICEF with the European Union, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Save the Children, the United States Government, the UK Government, and Open Society Fund supported BiH to participate for the first time in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test. PISA results will provide evidence on the numbers of children learning and will shed light on quality of the education system.

In March, UNICEF BiH in partnership with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education (APOSO) convened a technical workshop on PISA, with the participation of all 13 ministries responsible for education, pedagogical institutes, universities, parents' associations, student councils, school teachers and principals, civil society organizations and members of the international community. The workshop confirmed the value of PISA for a country such as BiH which is struggling to compete in the 21st century labour market in Europe, while aspiring to European Union membership. To ensure use of the 'PISA shock' when the results are published in December 2019, UNICEF and partners initiated preparations for a series of policy roundtables on learning outcomes with different stakeholders.

Further progress was achieved in enhancing inclusive education, mainly through in-service teacher training and the development of institutional mechanisms to support schools and learners. With UNICEF support, 714 school staff and 461 teachers in 10 model schools strengthened their skills in implementing teaching strategies for inclusive education, benefitting over 7,000 students including 427 children with disabilities. Good-practice examples from the 10 model schools were included in a manual distributed to all Ministries of Education and the broader public, covering four aspects of inclusive education practices: partnership with families; peer support; introduction to differentiated instruction; and teaching mathematical concepts. In November 2018, the Senate of Sarajevo University decided to include a module on inclusive education in the professional development programme for teaching staff from all faculties.

Putting to action a recommendation from the 2017 Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities, UNICEF promoted the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health for Children and Youth. The country's current disability categories still mostly reflect the medical model rather than the social model of disability, and therefore need to be aligned to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In two workshops led by an international expert in International Classification of Functioning and organized by UNICEF and the World Health Organization, professionals from the education, health and social protection sectors who work with children with disabilities gained first-hand experience in using the International Classification of Functioning concept and categories. Next steps will include a review of the existing assessment tools for classification and their complementarity to the International Classification, as well as training for the assessment commissions at municipal level.

Limited progress was made in the area of preschool education. Despite having a preschool education platform in the country since December 2017 (currently, the only valid state-level policy document in education), the preschool enrolment rate for five to six year olds remains at 54 per cent, far below the European average, the Sustainable Development Goal targets and the platform's targets. To raise investment and attention to preschool, UNICEF BiH organised a high-level event attended by eight (of 12) ministers of education, and ambassadors, making an evidence-based case for investing in preschool education and linking preschool education with learning outcomes at higher grades and with the transition to work.

Canton 10 in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina continued its excellent work in preschool education, where UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Education to increase the participation rate in preschool from about 20 per cent in 2013 to over 95 per cent in 2018, with local authorities now covering 90 per cent of the costs.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees in developing a Framework Action Plan on Educational Needs of Roma for 2018-2022, which was adopted by the BiH Council of Ministers in September 2018. In addition, the Roma Early Years Network, was strengthened through the development of a three-year strategy (2019-2021), capacity building of members and activation of a website. Because the Roma remain the most under-privileged group in BiH, efforts to highlight their unique challenges and address their needs are critical.

A rapid assessment of educational needs of refugee and migrant children was conducted by Save the Children with UNICEF BiH support. The report assesses the needs of refugee and migrant children in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the capacities of educational institutions to include these children into the system. With advocacy by UNICEF and partners, enrolment of refugee and migrant children began in 2018 in Sarajevo, with a commitment from other parts of the country to start enrolment in January 2019.

Initial concerns expressed by parents and education authorities had included language issues and concerns about the health status of the refugee/migrant children. Sharing experiences from Croatia and manuals from Serbia, and facilitating medical check-ups onsite as a pre-requisite for school attendance, UNICEF BiH addressed concerns, and children are currently enrolled in two Cantons (Sarajevo and Una Sana); advocacy continues with the remaining two Cantons in 2019.

Goal area 3: Every child is protected from violence and exploitation

In partnership with governments at different levels, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations, UNICEF BiH focused on strengthening the protective environment through investments in child protection systems, community dialogue and behaviour change, both in the regular development programme and in the humanitarian response to the refugee and migrant influx.

Over 5,000 children benefitted directly from UNICEF-supported child protection programmes and interventions. This includes more than 2,800 children (561 girls, 1,629 boys, 631 un-noted) in contact with the law, of which 942 victims, 709 witnesses and 1,170 alleged offenders. It also includes 312 children at risk from family separation who benefitted from family support services and 574 children in foster care.

As part of the humanitarian response, over 1,500 children on the move were supported, of which more than 300 unaccompanied and separated children benefitted from child protection services, including psychosocial counselling, child-friendly spaces, case management and legal

guardianship.

A key focus in 2018 was on expanding the social services' infrastructure and introducing uniform, standardised case management systems for the centres for social welfare. Entity and Cantonal Ministries responsible for social welfare and academia, with support provided by UNICEF BiH and SOS Kinderdorf, developed guidelines for child protection case management in both Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and RepublikaSrpska. Implementation of the guidelines will be rolled-out in early 2019, including training and piloting in selected municipalities. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy initiated steps for an online case management system, integrating draft tools into an existing online information management system.

The foster care system was strengthened during the year. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, training on foster care was led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy with the support of UNICEF, SOS Children's Villages and Hope and Homes for Children. The training uses the PRIDE model which is an internationally franchised programme on foster care and adoption. In 2018, a total of 23 core trainers introduced PRIDE to 130 professionals, covering all 78 centres for social welfare in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In RepublikaSrpska, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare rolled out foster care and education to all 49 centres for social welfare, while 78 professionals were certified in foster care and education. In RepublikaSrpska, emphasis was placed on specialised foster care for children with disabilities and supervision to prevent burn-out of foster parents. A total of 441 foster families and 574 children in foster care were supported in 2018. Challenges however persist and need to be urgently addressed, such as the limited availability of different forms of foster care, including foster care for children with disabilities and Roma children, as well as immediate, emergency care.

The UNICEF-supported advocacy campaign 'Every Child Needs a Family' continued throughout 2018, reaching about 450,000 people overall. The campaign consisted of components such as the production of a documentary, 12 human interest stories and four TV shows, complemented by media promotion of key events and training workshops. Local campaigns were conducted in Sarajevo, Mostar and Tuzla with the participation of children. A knowledge, attitudes and practices study on children without parental care showed a doubling of those interested in becoming foster parents, up from 5 per cent in 2013 to 11 per cent in 2018, but the overall percentage remains modest.

In October 2018, UNICEF partnered with the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Association for Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy in the First International Congress of Child and Adolescent Therapy in Sarajevo. The Congress received significant attention and raised awareness about the importance of multi-disciplinary and inter-sectoral collaboration in improving the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents, an unrecognized yet important emerging issue in the country. In 2019, building on the outcomes of the Congress, UNICEF intends to support the development of a university programme on child and adolescent psychotherapy.

As part of UNICEF's global efforts to end violence against children, UNICEF BiH together with partners focused on addressing Bosnia and Herzegovina's legal obligation to prohibit corporal punishment and on addressing social norms condoning corporal punishment against children as a form of child discipline. In partnership with the Human Rights Office Tuzla, the Civil Society Promotion Centre, the Network to End Violence Against Children, the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children in RepublikaSrpska and the law faculty of Tuzla University, UNICEF proposed recommendations for amendments to legislation in RepublikaSrpska and FBiH to ensure legal prohibition of corporal punishment. To garner support for the initiatives, roundtables were convened with key stakeholders from the Government, parliamentary assemblies, primary and secondary schools, the Office of the RepublikaSrpska Ombudsperson for Children, and civil society. Subsequently a petition was initiated, gathering over 16,500 signatures, and commitment secured from Members of Parliament in both entities to submit the initiatives for debate to the Entity Parliamentary Assemblies.

The social mobilization campaign 'guardians of happy childhood' reached up to 500,000 citizens through online and traditional media. It resulted in significant community engagement to find alternative solutions to physical punishment of children through an open call for ideas on examples of positive parenting. Out of 40 entries, 10 were selected through online voting, and applicants trained in project management and communication. After the public presentations, three initiatives were awarded with small grants and implemented in local communities. A 2018 knowledge, attitudes and practices study commissioned by UNICEF showed a 7 per cent increase in those who acknowledged beating, slapping, threatening and insulting children as violence against children compared to 2012.

Supported by the Swiss Government and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), UNICEF's work on justice for children made progress in 2018. The council for monitoring and improvement of criminal justice institutions and sanctions for juveniles, led by the RepublikaSrpska Ministry of Justice, finalized an assessment of the implementation of its law on protection and treatment of children and juveniles in criminal proceedings since the Law's entry into force in 2011. The bottlenecks identified by the assessment will inform amendments to the law in 2019, for application of alternative measures.

Over 500 professionals improved their capacity to work with children in institutionalized training programmes focused on strengthening knowledge and skills on existing legislation, child psychology, development of treatment plans, and the application of diversion and alternative measures. All training curricula and related materials were developed and endorsed by relevant ministries and training institutions, thereby ensuring strong government ownership and sustainability.

The RepublikaSrpska Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, with UNICEF support, finalized a training programme on mediation for social workers to strengthen the implementation of restorative justice principles. This was rolled out in 2018, enabling the establishment of two key diversion measures as per legislation ('personal apology' and 'material compensation') across

RepublikaSrpska. In 12 out of 16 project locations, five of the seven diversion measures prescribed by law are now available, and pronouncement of educational recommendations in BiH increased from 13 per cent in 2014 to 29 per cent in 2017.

The innovative school-based secondary prevention programme, which aims to enhance the well-being and protection of children and youth through the early identification and protection of risk factors, also made progress this year. In collaboration with the RepublikaSrpska Pedagogical Institute, UNICEF finalized the tool for identification of children at risk, consisting of a set of indicators and risk factors to be used by teachers and professional staff (psychologist and/or pedagogue). With the training of school professionals in 2018, all preparations were completed for the roll-out of the programme in all municipalities in RepublikaSrpska as of February 2019. In Canton Sarajevo, the programme was rolled out in early 2018 targeting 14,500 school children in 118 schools. Several issues related to data protection caused some delays, expected to be resolved when two by-laws on the protection of private data, developed by the Cantonal Ministry of Education, are adopted.

Child-friendly facilities and procedures were strengthened through the establishment of additional eight child-friendly rooms at court and prosecutors' offices as well mentoring, coaching and supervision to 24 victim- and witness-support providers. Partly as a result of UNICEF's advocacy efforts, the High Judiciary and Prosecutorial Council endorsed a set of recommendations related to victim and witness support providers, stressing their vital role in the protection of children in contact with the law and the necessity of ensuring this new professional category within the justice system. This will serve as the basis for employing additional victim and witness support providers at court and prosecutor officers in 2019.

The BiH Office of the Ombudsperson completed an assessment of all detention facilities for children in conflict with the law. Findings were presented to prison directors and representatives from the entity Ministries of Justice and ministries responsible for social welfare from the entity and cantonal levels in November. The recommendations led to commitments by the ministries to improve capacities of professionals to work with children in the newly opened Orasje detention facility, strengthen re-socialization and reintegration individual plans, improve the physical conditions in the Tunjice detention facility and remove bars in the detention facility of Hum Sarajevo.

Goal area 4: Every child lives in a safe and clean environment

According to recent World Health Organisation statistics, Bosnia and Herzegovina has the highest mortality rate in Europe due to household and ambient air pollution. Both short and long-term exposure to air pollutants is associated with health effects, especially for those with pre-existing conditions, elderly, children, those living in poverty, and other vulnerable populations. Although air pollution is not a programme area of focus for UNICEF in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF contributed to several initiatives with the international community to educate parents and children on the negative effects of air pollution and support the Government in addressing this serious issue.

Some partners stepped up advocacy to reduce tobacco consumption, especially indoors in public places. With partners such as the World Bank and other United Nations agencies, UNICEF BiH signed a clean-air pledge, 'climate with no smoke,' committing itself to holding all meetings and events in smoke-free hotels and locations.

A new United Nations Joint Programme on disaster risk reduction, involving UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme, Food and Agriculture Organisation, UNESCO, and United Nations Population Fund was finalised and partially funded by the Swiss Government. The Joint Programme will begin implementation in 2019 in 10 locations to improve disaster risk reduction capacities at the local level.

In humanitarian action, UNICEF BiH supported an assessment of the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) situation in the refugee and migrant camps, as well as training on the promotion of hygiene for refugees and migrants and camp staff to increase engagement from refugees and migrants in keeping the communal spaces clean. The training was provided to a total of 90 refugees and migrants and 42 camp staff in four locations.

Goal area 5: Every child has an equitable chance in life

Children with disabilities

In 2018, UNICEF and partners in different sectors and levels made progress on the issue of social inclusion of children and youth with disabilities. There were encouraging advances in legislation and policy, increased access to basic social services for children with disabilities in specific locations, and a gradual shift in public attitudes towards children with disabilities.

In terms of legislation, with UNICEF BiH technical assistance, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska developed and adopted two by-laws that regulate the right of a parent of a child with a disability to work half-time for time for care and support. Special attention was paid to parents of children under three years old, given the importance of the first 1,000 days of life. These two by-laws contributed to the overall disability policy reform which is ongoing with UNICEF's support in Republika Srpska, and has also resulted in bringing Republika Srpska child disability assessment procedures more in line with the international classification of functioning, disability and health methodology.

At local level, with community engagement, UNICEF BiH supported partners to invest local resources and establish referrals between social-sector service providers to ensure children with disabilities access services. A total of 277 children with disabilities (107 girls and 170 boys; 60 per cent aged seven to 14) benefitted from day services care, including therapeutic services. In addition, 429 parents of children with disabilities (263 women and 166 men) benefitted from counselling services offered through municipal centres for social welfare. Also, 173 children with disabilities (61 girls and 112 boys) benefitted from improved referral mechanisms and individual cross-sectoral care plans. The new social services were established by centres for social welfare with a focus on outreach activities for early

identification and treatment.

As mentioned under Goal Area 1, the adoption of revised standards and norms of healthcare services in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to include early childhood development/interventions services as part of the primary healthcare package, will help ensure free access to the services for all children in the Federation, earlier detection of and interventions that address, developmental delays. With partners such as USAID and the civil society organization EDUS, UNICEF strengthened the knowledge and skills of over 250 professionals from different sectors on aspects of early childhood development and early childhood interventions.

Similarly, under Goal Area 2, UNICEF BiH promoted inclusive education, mainly through in-service teacher training and the development of institutional mechanisms to effectively support all schools and learners. Through two workshops led by an international expert in and organized by UNICEF and WHO, professionals from the education, health and social protection sectors who work with or for children with disabilities gained first-hand experience in using the 'information, communication and technology' concept and categories.

To mobilize public awareness and inclusion of children with disabilities, media and high-level events were conducted over the year, in partnership with the information centre for persons with disabilities 'Lotos', with support from the European Union, the European Disability Forum and World Vision International. Participants from the Government, civil society organizations, parents' associations and the international community discussed the key recommendations from the 2017 Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, commissioned by UNICEF as part of an initiative co-funded by the European Union, and agreed on practical steps for children with a disability to achieve their full potential.

Another high-profile event was the social mobilization campaign 'champions of inclusion.' Through social and traditional media, people across the country were asked to nominate those who contributed in an exceptional way to promote social inclusion of children with disabilities. Out of more than 100 nominations, 40 champions of inclusion were selected, including individuals, schools and communities, and recognised during an inspirational ceremony featuring Lucy Meyer, an 18-year old Special Olympic gold medallist and spokesperson for the Special Olympics and UNICEF USA partnership.

A knowledge, attitudes and practices study completed in 2018 showed that the percentage of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina who would accept a child with a disability as their own child's best friend was 83 per cent, a significant level of positive attitudes and acceptance of children with disabilities.

Social protection and inclusion

In the area of social protection, UNICEF BiH continued providing technical support to relevant policymakers to advance social protection policy and legislative reform. Only modest progress was observed, however, mainly because of the election year. In Republika Srpska, the new law

on child protection, regulating cash benefits, was implemented in January 2018. The law expands the scope of cash benefits, both means-tested and universal (e.g. maternity benefits, universal cash benefits for the third and fourth child in the family, and disability-related benefits). The estimated increase of the total budget for child cash benefits increased by estimated US\$ 18 million from 2018 to 2019, ensured through an income tax increase from 1.5 to 1.7 per cent allocated to the RepublikaSrpska children's fund.

The management information system for child cash benefits was improved. While the RepublikaSrpska Government funded the overall investment in hardware enhancement and upgrade of electronic database, UNICEF BiH supported the development of a by-law regulating the data, reporting requirements and procedures between the RepublikaSrpska children's fund and civil society workers. About 130 social workers and other professionals from RepublikaSrpska were supported to administer child cash benefit in line with the new by-law and upgraded information system.

In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the new Law on Financial Support to Families with Children was not adopted in 2018, although it was approved by the Federal Government, it was not submitted to the Federal Parliament as the timing coincided with the general elections.

As part of the integrated social protection and inclusion local governance approach, UNICEF BiH maintained partnerships with five municipalities and one Canton, with initial support provided for establishing permanent multi-sectoral platforms to strengthen cooperation across the social sectors. This resulted in joint evidence-based action planning, implementation and monitoring of social protection and inclusion interventions for children and youth. UNICEF supported local partners to identify gaps in social service provision for the most vulnerable groups, and provided seed funding to establish new social services, with the condition that local authorities sustain the new services from their budgets after the funding ended. Four out of six new target locations since 2017 already committed continuous funding from local budgets to sustain the services as of January 2019, and the remaining two are pending.

In collaboration with the RepublikaSrpska Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the FBiH Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, UNICEF supported a cost analysis of two selected social services: day care services for children with disabilities and family counselling services. The costing analysis included a mapping of best practices from countries in the region, as well as existing practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, both in the public and non-governmental sectors. It provided a framework and guidance on standards and costing options, that will be used to guide policy discussions as part of the development of a new law on social services in FBiH and possible social protection law revisions in RepublikaSrpska.

UNICEF BiH continued policy discussions with the FBiH Ministry of Labour and Social Protection about poverty and the social assistance targeting modalities, including the definition of the monetary, social security minimum for Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The initial three scenarios developed in 2017 were elaborated and fiscal projections made based on variables and eligibility criteria, including families with children. These costing options will

inform the finalization and adoption of the law on social protection in FBiH in 2019.

Adolescents and youth

Results in adolescent programming this year were focused on adolescent girls and adolescent participation and voice. The 'IT Girls' initiative, involving UNICEF, United Nations Women and United Nations Development Programme, raised awareness about the importance of including girls and women in information and communication technology, reaching out to the private sector, portraying inspiring role models with interviews with 56 leading women in Bosnia and Herzegovina's information sector, and initiating a mentoring programme for young women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This innovative approach is relevant for the country, where focus tends on non-traditional skills for girls and women, thus promoting gender equality while addressing youth unemployment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During 2018, 'IT Girls' organized 30 'online challenges', reaching 380 girls and women, including 15 from vulnerable backgrounds (e.g. Roma girls and girls without parental care), and conducted 22 'Become IT Girl' trainings, strengthening girls' skills in mobile app and web development as well as robotics.

In early 2018, a new United Nations Joint Programme kicked off 'dialogue for the future2 - promoting social cohesion and diversity', implemented by UNICEF as convening agency, United Nations Development Programme and UNESCO in close collaboration with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency and supported by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund. The main objective is to strengthen reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a focus on capacities of youth and vulnerable groups to propose solutions for identified problems in communities through local dialogue platforms in 28 municipalities. UNICEF's emphasis is on adolescents and youth in primary and secondary schools as well as promoting media literacy and preventing hate speech. In 2018, 650 people including 240 adolescents benefited from enhanced peacebuilding skills, while about 450 people participated in the first round of local dialogues.

Within the DFF and as part of ongoing scale up working with and for adolescents, UNICEF BiH launched U-Report in December 2018. U-Report is a free social messaging tool that allows young U-Reporters to speak out on a variety of topics. The launch was moderated by young people, including a Special Olympic gold medallist. Many high school students participated in the launch, with representatives from the Government, civil society organizations and the international community. The first poll, conducted live during the launch, asked U-Reporters to share the most critical issues facing Bosnia and Herzegovina today. The number one response was poor quality of education. There are currently over 6,000 U-reporters in Bosnia and Herzegovina as the result of ongoing registration by UNICEF and partners, including Viber.

Response to the refugee and migrant influx

In 2018, Bosnia and Herzegovina struggled with an increasing influx of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants when other popular migration routes to Western Europe through the Balkans shut down in 2017. Over 24,000 people arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018. The majority arrived over land in an irregular manner, mostly from Serbia, while a smaller

proportion came through Montenegro. An estimated 5,000 were stranded in Bosnia and Herzegovina by end of December 2018, the majority in Una-Sana Canton, in attempts to enter Croatia and the European Union.

In May 2018, UNICEF BiH and several child rights non-government organizations conducted a child-focused rapid assessment. The findings showed the most significant challenges faced by refugee and migrant children, including unaccompanied and separated children such as limited access to age-appropriate and safe care including critical services such as education, medical care and psychosocial support. All of the above are significant risks to the safety, protection and well-being of refugee and migrant children.

In partnership with Save the Children, UNICEF conducted an assessment of child safeguarding policies and practices in all open accommodation sites (August 2018), and a rapid education needs assessment (October 2018). In December 2018, UNICEF conducted a rapid water, sanitation and hygiene assessment. All of these assessments were shared with relevant partners in BiH and used to inform the response in the relevant sectors.

The United Nations country team agreed that UNICEF BiH leads the child protection area of responsibility (within the broader protection area of responsibility led by UNHCR) and the education area of responsibility. UNICEF BiH also contributed to the health area of responsibility.

UNICEF's humanitarian response takes a two-track approach: 1) immediate humanitarian assistance and protection to refugee and migrant children, especially unaccompanied and separated children, working in close collaboration with government authorities at all levels, United Nations agencies such as the United Nations high Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, and civil society organizations; 2) strengthening child protection, public health and education systems to provide better services to all vulnerable children in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through building capacity, policy reform and technical assistance. In addition to UNICEF emergency funds, the immediate response was made possible through partnership with Sida, in the form of flexible country-thematic funding to UNICEF BiH's child protection programme. In the fourth quarter of 2018, the European Union provided an instrument for pre-accession assistance/special measures'funds to continue emergency response.

More than 1,500 children and 200 mothers benefitted from UNICEF-supported services, including about 970 children who received psychosocial support, including access to child-friendly spaces with inter-sectoral programming interventions, and at least 300 unaccompanied and separated children who were appointed a legal guardian and referred to relevant support services. More than 200 mothers benefitted from mother and baby corners, providing them access to a safe and private space for breastfeeding; information on infant and young child feeding counselling; and access to psychosocial counselling. At least 1,000 children were provided with winter clothes and shoes.

UNICEF also supported the FBiH public health institute in procuring additional doses of life-saving vaccines for 300 refugee and migrant children. Hygiene training was provided in several locations, and a game on handwashing was developed for children in child-friendly spaces. Enrolment of children into the public education system initially proved challenging as noted under Goal Area 2, but in December 2018 UNICEF BiH reached an agreement with several line ministries for the inclusion of refugee and migrant children into primary and secondary schools as of January 2019. Enrolment began in one school in Sarajevo in December 2018

Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints

The October 2018, general elections affected progress and decision-making across the country, for example with legislative reform in social protection. While RepublikaSrpska implemented the new law on child protection (cash benefits) in January 2018, the new law on financial support to families with children, although approved by the FBiH Government, was not submitted to the Federal Parliament, in view of the elections.

The election campaign slowed down planning and implementation of many initiatives. For example, just before the elections, the RepublikaSrpska Government decided against participating in the multiple indicator cluster survey, a decision the country office plans to revisit with RepublikaSrpska partners in 2019. Overall, the theories of change and results logic of frameworks remained relevant, but the impact of external events should not be underestimated (either the general elections or the unanticipated influx of refugees and migrants). In an election year, especially given the complex situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, expectations and plans need to be adjusted. The country will hold municipal elections in 2020.

Another lesson, while not necessarily new, is that implementing at-scale is often difficult in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to the complex system of governance, with many powers devolved to local levels. (Bosnia and Herzegovina has ministers at state-level, two entities, and 10 cantons, totalling over 160, as well as municipal authorities). Although modest progress was achieved in policy changes at state or entity levels, steps were taken in various cantons and municipalities, for example in advancing the social protection and inclusion model, including through municipal budgets, and the roll-out of the secondary prevention programme focused on early identification and mitigation of risk factors among adolescents. Such local level work is often more time and resource intensive as it requires the same level of political analysis and engagement (with communities) as working with state and entity level counterparts, multiplied many times over in order to have results at scale across different administrative areas. Maintaining the appropriate balance, with real-time adjustments as the country-context shifts, will remain a continuous challenge going forward.

UNICEF support in fostering cross-sectoral and multi-sectoral programming was noteworthy in 2018. Government counterparts, multilateral institutions such as the European Union, and bilateral donors recognized the expertise and capacity of UNICEF BiH in advancing the realization of child rights including, for example, UNICEF's advocacy for social inclusion of

children with disabilities; expertise in child protection in the refugees/migrants response, and technical advice provided for policy development and system strengthening at all levels. As the country office designs its new Country Programme Document in 2019-20, cross-sector and multi-sector approaches will remain focus strategies.

In 2018, direct outreach to young people, parents and communities over social media brought results in terms of reach and also personalised content. For example, the social mobilization 'champions of inclusion' campaign invited people across the country to nominate those who contributed to social inclusion of children with disabilities, and reached up to 500,000 people. Also, for the first-ever celebration of Father's Day in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF asked fathers to share stories about their engagement in their child's first 1,000 days of life. Given its success, the country office will increase similar efforts in 2019, including those related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child@30, early childhood development/early childhood interventions, and adolescents.

One important lesson from the refugees and migrant crisis was that BiH still depends on international support to deal with the unexpected. In this case, the situation overwhelmed government systems and challenged complex, decentralized government system with coordination issues. UNICEF had updated its emergency preparedness plans early in the year as part of the new emergency preparedness platform, but the sudden developments required significant additional work. For 2019, the country office is gauging efficient and effective modalities to continue response while keeping momentum on other initiatives.

Going forward, UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina will use lessons learned to inform programmes, including cross-sector interventions. For example, programmes will increasingly involve adolescents and youth, such as through U-Report and PISA, to strengthen collaboration with young people as role models, whether those with a disability, from minority groups in various social mobilization campaigns to advance child rights. Based on the latest evidence and insights, in 2019 UNICEF will develop programme strategy notes, the new Country Programme for 2021-2025, and conduct a gender programmatic review.

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