

Burundi

Update on the context and situation of children

Burundi has achieved near universal enrolment and gender parity in primary education. Ninety per cent of pregnant women attend antenatal care visits and deliver in appropriate health facilities with skilled staff for maternal and newborn health care. Progress has been made in immunization coverage (75 per cent fully immunized) and the use of children's health-care services. Significant progress has also been made on birth registration thanks to specific measures taken to waive birth registration fees for more than 500,000 children.

Despite a challenging fiscal environment and reduced levels of external aid, the Government continued to prioritize investments in the social sector. The proportion of the 2019-2020 planned budget allocated to the health, education and social protection sectors was impressive, at 10.8, 20 and 10.9 per cent respectively, although child protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services remained severely underfunded at 2 and 1 per cent of the national budget respectively.

About two thirds of Burundian children continue to live in poverty and about 80 per cent among them are deprived in at least three dimensions of well-being (MODA, 2018). Fewer than 1 in 10 Burundian children have access to early childhood development and preschool education. Burundi's maternal mortality ratio is higher than the average for Eastern and Southern Africa Region, and despite some improvement over the past years Burundi has the highest stunting rate in the world, with 54.2 per cent of children under five chronically malnourished in 2019 according to Joint Approach for Nutrition and Food Security Assessment (ENSNSAB, 2019), down from 57 per cent in 2016 (DHS 2016-2017). This persistent high level of chronic malnutrition has adverse consequences on children's cognitive, social and emotional development, with repercussions over their lifetime, and is partially responsible for the slow pace of decline in child mortality. The national completion rate for basic education decreased from 62 per cent in 2017/2018 to 53.5 per cent in 2018/2019 due mainly to an uneven provision of quality education across the country. While the 2009 Criminal Code expressly introduced measures to protect children, some of the most vulnerable children, such as children living or working on the streets, continue to be victims of abuse, exploitation, violence as well as periodic round-ups and detention.

Burundi is ranked 185 out of 188 countries in the 2019 Human Development Index. Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was \$274 in 2018 (\$30 below the level recorded in 2015), making Burundi one of the poorest countries in the world.

Burundi is at a pivotal moment in its development. It is facing demographic pressure with a rapidly growing population, the majority of whom live in rural areas; a largely agricultural economy; and a mostly informal workforce. Burundi's high fertility rate, particularly in the rural population at 4.6 children per woman contributes to an exceptionally large youth bulge. The total population is estimated at 12.04 million of whom 48 per cent are under 18 years of age, and 23 per cent are adolescents (ISTEEBU 2016).

Burundi's economy has shown recovery from the recession in 2015 when GDP declined (-0.4 per cent). Although there are no official statistics on GDP growth in 2018 and estimates by major financial institutions differ (0.1 per cent according to the IMF and 1.6 per cent according to the World Bank), per capita growth remains negative primarily due to the high population growth rate.

The combination of rapid demographic growth and a slow-growing economy that depends heavily on agriculture creates a challenging context for the fulfilment of child and adolescent rights. This is exacerbated by the concentration of activities in the capital Bujumbura and a few other cities, low skill levels, widespread job-skills mismatch and the limited coverage of social protection schemes. The percentage of people not covered by any type of health insurance is still high (78.25 per cent for women and 77.6 per cent for men) (DHS, 2016-2017).

One in every four Burundians is an adolescent. This group is growing faster than all the other age groups and is projected to reach 3.4 million in 2030 (ISTEEBU 2017). Adolescent girls and boys face greater challenges than other age groups, including a high level of vulnerability, health risks and low levels of education and skills. Only one in five female adolescents (one in four male adolescents) is enrolled in high school (UNESCO 2019).

The gender disparity is lower for Burundi than many countries at a similar level of development. Burundi ranks 114 of 160 countries in the Gender Inequality Index (2019 Human Development Report). Despite substantial efforts by the Government to promote gender equality and empower women and girls, some gender norms remain firmly entrenched in society. In combination with socioeconomic factors, they tend to create barriers to the realization of children's rights, either directly by limiting girls' opportunities to fully develop their potential and skills, or indirectly by exacerbating the vulnerability of mothers.

The country faced multiple emergencies in 2019 in addition to the threat of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) spreading from the

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neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). While no Ebola case was detected, the malaria burden was severe in 2019, with 7.7 million cases as of end-October 2019, the highest since 2014. The number of cholera cases was also at an all-time high of 1,074 cases as of week 45 of the epidemiological year. Burundi was also impacted by localized flood hazards, landslides and droughts and, at a relatively stable level, by population movements, internal displacements and refugees from the DRC. Since September 2017, some 79,300 Burundian refugees have been assisted to return mainly from Tanzania, 20,513 of whom returned in 2019.

In 2020, the country will submit its voluntary national review report on the progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Importantly, Burundi will be holding presidential elections in May. This is the first election since the 2015 protracted crisis.

Major contributions and drivers of results

2019 marked the beginning of the new programme of cooperation (2019-2023) between UNICEF and the Government of Burundi. This, the first year of the five-year cycle, provided the opportunity to: (a) further define the new pillar of the programme, focused on **adolescent participation, skills and resilience** with a focus on the most vulnerable adolescent girls and boys; (b) deepen and strengthen a multisectoral approach to address **chronic malnutrition** in Burundi, adding elements of **early childhood development (ECD)** and stimulation and; and (c) start a more deliberate approach linking humanitarian and development interventions, also referred to as **resilience programming** or the humanitarian-development nexus, working closely with sister agencies under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator (RC). As widespread poverty and multidimensional deprivations are among the root causes of some of the issues facing children and women in Burundi, concerted efforts were made on **social protection** interventions in close cooperation with key development partners, notably the World Bank.

A. Adolescent participation and resilience

One in every four Burundians is an adolescent. Thanks to the Peace Building Fund (PBF), since 2018, a joint programme involving UNICEF, UNFPA and UNESCO has been working with government partners and adolescents on social cohesion and violence prevention. This programme has reached thousands of adolescents who have gained new skills and confidence, in addition to social capital and access to credit to actively participate in social cohesion in their communities.

In 2019, the office introduced UPSHIFT, a global good practice for social innovation and building adolescent competencies and entrepreneurship. A roadmap for roll-out and adaptation of UPSHIFT was developed in consultation with adolescents, partners and communities. Working with the Ministry of Youth, with funding from UNDP and support of implementing partners, Bibliothèques sans frontières (BSF), Association of Girl Guides of Burundi, Umunyinya, the Mission of Anglican Church of Burundi, the model was tested in a rural area with a displaced population. Other resources have been secured to expand UPSHIFT to more communities and provinces in 2020. This is one of the key milestones for launching the adolescent skills agenda in Burundi, in line with Generation Unlimited.

In 2019, a study, the first of its kind in Africa, *the Burundi adolescent investment case*, commissioned by UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and UNFPA was conducted providing evidence for the importance of investing in this age cohort as the return on investment promises to lift the country out of poverty over time. The study found that for every dollar spent, Burundi will see an overall return on investment of 16.4 dollars for interventions in health, 10 dollars for investments in formal education interventions and 15.3 dollars for non-formal education interventions. This study serves to put adolescents on the agenda of policy makers and development partners and guide policies, programmes and budgets.

A multisectoral approach is critical to adolescent development programming. UNICEF in collaboration with War Child Holland for the "Schools as Zones of Peace" project, renamed Ntambutsa in 2019, supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) to reintegrate over 8,000 child dropouts in school thanks to strong collaboration between local child protection and education actors (village level). In 2020, with the skills programme taking shape, the referral pathway will be expanded to include referrals for out-of-school children to access non-formal education opportunities such as entrepreneurship.

B. Addressing chronic malnutrition

In partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) and local authorities, with critical funding from the Governments of Switzerland and Germany and the European Union, UNICEF is supporting community-based interventions and capacity-building of service providers in nutrition and infant young child feeding practices at scale.

Using funding from the Government of Canada and GAVI, UNICEF provided support to the Government to conduct two "mother and child health" weeks (MCHW) and supplemented at least 1.6 million children 6-59 months (94 percent) with

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Vitamin A and immunized about 9,000 children for measles second dose and Pentavalent fourth dose. More than 3,900 community workers were trained and deployed to reach at least 800,000 people in the most deprived communities of three provinces. In addition, 1,502 community workers were trained and equipped for integrated community case management of childhood illnesses in 16 of 47 health districts. A package of services for nutrition, health, WASH, ECD and growth promotion and monitoring were implemented with UNICEF support in 9 of 46 districts. As of October 2019, 4,162 community health workers (CHWs) and "Light Mothers" had been trained to provide infant and young child feeding counselling including ECD and received communication tools and kitchen kits for behaviour change communication activities and nutrition rehabilitation sessions.

The ECD programme is integrated in three hospitals as part of the 1,000 days programme and the country office is working closely with the MoH to expand the programme to more health facilities, including possibly in community nurseries. To this effect, generic modules have been developed to strengthen the capacity of health professionals on the parenting programme. These experiences and milestones are critical for the development of the national strategy for ECD expected in 2020.

Critical support was extended to address Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). According to a recent survey, the global acute malnutrition rate increased from 4.1 per cent to 5.1 per cent between the 2018 and 2019 (SMART, 2018; ENSNSAB, 2019). The management of acute malnutrition programme is fully integrated into health services; the target of reaching at least 430 facilities in 2019 was exceeded with 558 facilities reached and 50,000 SAM cases treated. This was supported with funding from USAID, The Government of Germany and global thematic funds from the Government of the Netherlands.

UNICEF is working with partners to ensure that critical WASH interventions accompany nutrition programming to accelerate positive results. This package of intervention is already provided in some communes and with further resources for WASH programming, such convergence between the two sectors can be taken to scale.

"Merankabandi", the national cash transfer programme supported by the World Bank and implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs, is currently reaching over 50,000 of the most vulnerable households in four provinces. One of the key features of this programme is the complementary activities component ensuring that households also receive support and guidance on key family care practices including infant and young child feeding practices as well as financial literacy and income generating activities. In 2019 the partnership was formalized with an agreement for UNICEF to provide quality assurance support to the nutrition and communication for development (C4D) components as well as to ensure availability of sound monitoring and evaluation tools to track, report and ensure ongoing learning from the programme.

One of the partnership highlights of 2019 was an advocacy side event about nutrition in Burundi, hosted by the World Bank during its April 2019 annual meeting. The Government of Burundi's Minister of Finance, the national Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) focal point along with key nutrition partners, the Governments of the Netherlands and Switzerland, and the United Nations agencies, WFP and UNICEF, among others, participated in this event. The UNICEF Executive Director made a keynote speech stressing the need for concerted efforts by multiple partners to tackle child malnutrition.

C. Resilience programming and the humanitarian-development nexus

Burundi faces multiple humanitarian and development challenges and both the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNICEF programme provide a fertile ground for resilience programming. In 2019, under the leadership of the UN RC, UN agencies mobilized around the resilience agenda through efforts to: (i) map vulnerabilities, shocks and capacities in Burundi using data on more than 50 SDG indicators to identify the provinces with greater vulnerabilities; (ii) map investments of agencies per province; and (iii) agree on a set of 'collaborative' outcomes for the resilience agenda. The RC and the UN team were successful in bringing key donors and partners on board for this agenda as well. The plan is poised for implementation and mobilization of resources in 2020.

In 2019, EVD preparedness efforts provided an opportunity for partners to witness in action some good examples of using emergency preparedness to improve health systems. UNICEF is the lead for WASH in humanitarian and development settings and co-lead for communication and community engagement.

Some of the WASH EVD preparedness actions are contributing to strengthening systems and capacities at decentralized level beyond the emergency period serving to prevent and address different types of epidemics such as EVD, cholera and even malaria. Some 78 latrines at 18 entry points were constructed to serve around 7,000 travelers crossing borders daily. EVD awareness and hygiene practices in communities and schools reached 504,030 people including 56,964 schoolchildren (29,052 girls). UNICEF supported the training of 390 community leaders and 247 staff from 50 health centres in priority districts on infection prevention and control and chlorine solution preparation, helping to improve the response capacity of these institutions. Funding from the United Kingdom Department of International Development (DFID), the Government of Korea, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and UNICEF National Committees from France, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia was critical in ensuring availability of latrines and water points and the

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dissemination of key prevention messages.

As sub cluster lead, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Social Affairs in developing a national preparedness plan which provided psychosocial training for 95 social workers and awareness-creation on EVD for 29,750 children, including children in institutions, in six priority districts.

In 2019, 7 million people were reached by key messages to prevent EVD through awareness campaigns held in public places including markets, fishing ports, schools, entry/control points, local churches and mosques, which were conducted in collaboration with the MoH. An Ebola Risk and Communication and Community Engagement strategy was developed with the MoH and other key partners.

In response to the 2nd outbreak of the year declared in June 2019 in four affected provinces (Cibitoke, Bubanza, Bujumbura Mairie and Bujumbura Rural), UNICEF provided cholera kits to the Government and 93,509 persons were sensitized on key hygiene practices and cholera prevention.

In 2019, UNICEF secured funding from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) to address the rights of returnee children to a nationality by providing free birth registration services to 60,000 returnees, internally displaced populations (IDPs) and host community children in Ruyigi province, which has the highest number of returnees from Tanzania. The European Union development funding (DEVCO) came on board later in the year to fund complementary interventions to ensure integration of children and adolescents in the host communities. This will bear fruit in 2020.

In addition to integrated programming, UNICEF has continued to work with the Government and civil society partners to achieve results in the traditional sectors.

(i). On the **supply side**, this work has focused on improving the quality of services such as health, nutrition, education, WASH and protection.

- **Education:** In support of the National Education Sector Plan, UNICEF and partners built the capacities of school management committees nationwide, on school management and their accountability regarding prevention of dropout, with a focus on the most vulnerable children, and strengthened the capacities of decision makers in planning, coordinating and monitoring the education sector. UNICEF and partners have focused on the creation of 72 pedagogy networks for wider spillover effects on teachers' abilities and children's learning outcomes. As a result, 280,408 pupils (143,008 girls) reaped the benefits of improved pedagogy and teaching methods for higher-quality education.
- **In the preschool sector,** UNICEF's partner AVSI delivered "learn and play" modules to 256 preschool educators, and distributed didactic material and manuals, improving the quality of preschool for 12,800 children (7,680 girls). ODEDIM (a faith-based NGO) distributed developmental games, toys and curricula in 309 preschools for 15,450 children (7,880 girls) in Bururi, Rutana, Makamba and Rumonge provinces. Considering the limited funding available for early childhood education and the small sectoral budget, UNICEF continues its advocacy for more resources for early learning.
- **Immunization and child health:** The number of children receiving the third dose of pentavalent vaccine reached 332,590 (87%), of which 77% received MCV2, as of end-October 2019. UNICEF used funds from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance to procure cold-chain equipment, transportation and logistics materials, monitoring tools and for the construction/rehabilitation of warehouse, offices and health centres. As a result, at least 75 per cent of children aged 12-23 months were fully immunized in 2019 [DHIS2] and 98 per cent of people aged 1-29 years were reached during the meningitis campaign [Post-Campaign survey]. On child health, regular resources and funding from the Government of Japan were used to improve coverage from the integrated community case management of childhood illnesses programme.
- **Health in emergencies:** UNICEF contributed to the development of strategic documents for the response and the procurement of a supply buffer stock to ensure smooth implementation of the contingency plans for cholera, Ebola and malaria. UNICEF is actively mobilizing additional resources to help the Government implement its new malaria treatment protocol as there are plausible indications that the current molecule is not efficient enough, hence the need to switch treatment.
- **Child protection:** Some 706 children (241 girls) in contact with the law accessed child-friendly judicial processes. This result was achieved through UNICEF-funded mobile court sessions organized by the General Directorate of Penitentiary Affairs that heard 201 cases involving children and led to the release of 177 children, including 12 girls.

UNICEF in partnership with national NGOs, the Association of Women lawyers in Burundi and FENADEB, conducted 1,188 monitoring visits in 18 detention centres and police cells, resulting in legal aid for 495 children and the release of 261 children. In partnership with Terre des Hommes and Foundation Stamm, UNICEF provided vocational training for 185 children (including 13 girls) in three juvenile rehabilitation centres and piloted a space in the Ngozi women's prison where

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children in prison with their mothers can access basic learning in a stimulating environment.

- In addition, technical assistance was extended for capacity-building of the social workforce through case management training and the progressive establishment of a national case management system.

(ii). On the **demand side**, efforts have been focused on changing behaviours and harmful social norms for improved nutrition and hygiene practices, health seeking behaviours, violence prevention and inclusion of the most marginalized children, such as girls who abandon school due to early pregnancy or motherhood.

- Health-seeking behavior for diarrhea treatment has increased from 59 per cent in 2017 [DHS 2016-17] to 78 per cent as per ENSNSAB 2018-19.
- To increase access of orphans and other vulnerable children to the community-based protection system, 4,157 village savings and loan solidarity groups were created /or strengthened, an increase of 3,424 groups compared to 2018 thanks to contributions from the Belgium cooperation and UNICEF Spanish National Committee. In 2019, the solidarity groups directly supported 124,439 vulnerable children meet their basic needs and access other protective services available in their community.
- An innovation to reduce the number of children in contact with the law was to promote the use and strengthen capacities for alternative measures to detention, including community reconciliation, for petty offences committed by children as an effort to minimize the number of children entering the justice system. This includes promotion of mutual resolution of petty offences through mediation by community-based protection structures.
- UNICEF continued to support community-based approaches to reduce gender inequalities through increasing participation and empowerment of girls and women. For example, UNICEF ensured that three of the seven members of the child protection committees were female (including one girl) and 53 per cent of UNICEF-supported solidarity group members are female. Vulnerable girls were supported to access vocational training and income-generating activities and used the good parenting programmes that reached 165,899 parents to advocate for gender equity.
- Management Committees (teachers, parents and adolescents) from 123 schools received adequate materials to deliver education sessions on Menstrual Hygiene Management targeting girls.

(iii) On creating **an enabling environment**, the office was engaged in reducing multidimensional child poverty and creating a solid evidence base for decision-making related to child rights.

- The strategic partnerships with the Government of Burundi at the level of the National Social Protection Commission (SEP/CNPS), the National Statistics of Institute (ISTEEBU) and at the Ministry of Finance were strengthened so as to ensure that they can better respond to the needs of children and their families across the life cycle.
- UNICEF partnership with the Ministry of Finance and the University Centre for Economic and Social Development resulted in the development of five social sector budget briefs for fiscal year 2018/2019 and fiscal year 2019/2020 (education, child protection, health and nutrition, WASH, social protection). Together with other analyses, this research allowed to revisit the balance between social and economic allocations and strengthened the national equity agenda in both planning and budgeting processes.
- UNICEF contributed to the development of a more comprehensive and integrated social protection system through the development of various tools (monitoring and evaluation framework for the national policy) and contributed to improving sector coordination.
- The newly revised national child protection policy and the related National Child Protection Code were submitted to the Council of Ministers for adoption and promulgation. These new legislatures once enforced can ensure protection of the most vulnerable girls and boys. Furthermore, five provinces have developed child protection action plans that are implemented with UNICEF support.
- 2019 was also the year when a number of studies were completed, such as the secondary analysis of the 2016-2017 DHS in cooperation with UNFPA and UN-Women, the 'Burundi Adolescent Investment Case' a in partnership with UNFPA and in consultation with UN-Women and UNDP, or the ENSNSAB in partnership with the WFP. Each process was led by the Government.
- The evaluation of the Back to School programme undertaken with the MoE provided the opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned from previous years to improve the timeliness, the content of the package, the reach, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme that reaches more than a million vulnerable children every year.
- To strengthen evaluation functions, UNICEF Country office benefited from global evaluation pooled funds and facilitated participation of Government counterparts and staff to two international evaluation events in 2019 including one related to SDG reporting.
- UNICEF leveraged its sector leadership in education, WASH and nutrition and its co-leadership in child protection to ensure engagement of key partners in the development of sectoral strategies and plans such as the groundwork for the upcoming education sector strategy, the new WASH sector strategy and engagement in joint efforts for child protection system strengthening. The SUN secretariat focal point was supported in its engagement with the global

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SUN movement and its work with the MoH and other relevant line ministries in drafting a groundbreaking multisectoral plan for nutrition (2019-2023).

To deliver these results effectively, UNICEF office strengthened its management of culture change with a retreat for team building, frequent engagement with the local staff association and monthly all staff meetings. The office improved internal systems and capacities, boosting the capacities of 50 implementing partners on the harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT); orienting and training UNICEF staff and partners on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and establishing related systems in coordination with other UN agencies; and developing new monitoring and information management systems for tracking results, with testing having started with EVD preparedness work. As of 31 December 2019, UNICEF Burundi's budget was \$37.3 million. UNICEF humanitarian appeal was for US\$ 10 million to sustain provision of life-saving services for women and children in Burundi. Even though the Office was able to mobilize 96% funding against the 2019 target, the analysis per sector shows a funding gap of 20%. Resource mobilization for education and health in emergencies (outside of EVD preparedness) was particularly challenging.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

1. Maximizing the impact of community-based approaches for greater resilience:

In order to provide the most vulnerable with equal opportunities, UNICEF Burundi has tested and implemented the solidarity group approach, sometimes referred to as "Nawe Nuze" ["come, join me" in Kirundi]. Building on the value of solidarity in Burundian communities, the "Nawe Nuze" approach establishes solidarity groups consisting of members of the community that make periodic cash contributions. The solidarity groups are a community-based means to address issues of social protection and functions as a mechanism that can also facilitate access to services in addition to informal community support networks. This approach was first introduced in Burundi by Care International in 2005 and has been used by some UNICEF implementing partners including: Foi en Action, Foundation Stamm, Solidarité de la jeunesse chrétienne pour la paix et l'enfance, United for Children Burundi, FVS-Amade, International Rescue Committee, Terre des hommes and War Child Holland.

Over the past five years, UNICEF has invested over \$2.5 million in the establishment and expansion of Nawe Nuze Solidarity Groups. As a result, there is now a network of 4,157 Nawe Nuze groups, with a female membership rate of 53 per cent, across the country. A total of 124,439 vulnerable children (81,778 girls) benefited from support by these groups including school enrolment, food, clothing, health care and other support. The groups were instrumental in passing on messages on good parenting, school reintegration and for birth registration. The effectiveness of engaging with solidarity groups was recently validated through a UNICEF-commissioned global evaluation on peacebuilding efforts that included Burundi as a case study. The evaluation recognized that solidarity groups serve as a valuable social network when sheltered in supportive spaces for adolescent empowerment and participation. They contribute to social cohesion and economic self-reliance. In 2020, UNICEF Burundi will invest in a formative evaluation on the effectiveness of these groups in child protection and use the outcome to advocate with national authorities and donors to consider "Nawe Nuze" community solidarity groups in the official national social protection framework.

In addition to the solidarity group model, UNICEF has worked with various partners on other successful community-based approaches such as the "Light Mothers" approach to improving child nutrition and the community-based total sanitation intervention that will be evaluated in early 2020 for possible scale-up.

Such platforms are fertile ground for passing on key messages for behavior change on a range of themes such as nutrition, hygiene, ECD, violence prevention and peacebuilding, among others.

2. Adapting innovative programming for adolescents in Burundi

The introduction of innovative adolescent programming may not seem as an obvious choice in a context such as Burundi, which is overwhelmingly rural with a high rate of poverty and limited private sector space. Yet the country office was ready to tackle this challenge, considering the growing size of the adolescent population, the drive to leave no one behind and the importance of adolescent girls and boys being exposed to opportunities to learn about innovative thinking and the impact of social innovation. It is noteworthy that the Government came on board very quickly as the theme of entrepreneurship and employment for young people is one of the priorities of the National Development Plan (2018-2027).

Thus, capitalizing on lessons learned from other countries, in 2019 UNICEF introduced the concept of UPSHIFT to Burundi, and with it the Adolescent Innovation Lab, making Burundi the first francophone country in Africa to do so. The benefit of

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this platform is that it serves multiple purposes: it introduces innovative and entrepreneurial twenty-first century thinking to adolescents, including the most vulnerable; it serves as an additional platform for fostering the participation of adolescents in the lives of their communities; and it helps build greater sense of social cohesion and as such is a means to achieve peace and integration of displaced or returnee/repatriated adolescents in host communities.

The 2019 pilot of UPSHIFT has served to find entry points to ensure that this methodology is adapted to the country context. For example, one lesson learned is the critical need to leverage existing community structures such as the solidarity groups to sustain gains from UPSHIFT, mobilize the community around innovative solutions proposed by adolescents and eventually provide them with access to credit so that they can implement their vision. In Burundi, where radio is still an important conduit for information-sharing, the use of radio programming with UPSHIFT maximizes its country-wide reach and penetration.

The programme will be integrated as one of the pillars of skills-building and referral for adolescents. The adolescent investment case study also served to model the programme and the benefit-cost ratio of this approach was proven more than advantageous.

3. Leveraging partnerships for scale:

As Burundi is a relatively small country, initiatives that are proven to yield results can be taken to scale with strengthened coordination among development partners and between the Government and development partners. Hence UNICEF actively participates in and/or leads dialogue for improved synergy, generating evidence and knowledge that can create the impetus for more coordinated approaches. Examples of such partnerships are the joint high-level event on nutrition in Burundi in coordination with the Government of Burundi, the SUN platform, WFP, the Governments of Netherlands and Switzerland; the joint programming on nutrition with FAO and WFP; the joint programming on peacebuilding with UNESCO and UNFPA; the joint programming on women's livelihoods and child care with UNDP; the joint efforts with WHO and IOM on Ebola preparedness as part of a consortium; the technical support to the World Bank-financed programme on cash transfers; the membership and co-leadership of the newly developed technical platform, policy advisory group for improved technical and development partner coordination since 2019, and the active participation in resilience planning with the Resident Coordinator and other sister agencies.