

Cambodia

Part 1: Situation update in the country

The implications of Cambodia's social and economic transition are opportunities for, and sometimes risks to, the realization of child and adolescent rights. Cambodia has one of the youngest populations in Southeast Asia; one third of its 16 million people are under the age of 15 years and one fifth are between the ages of 15 and 24 years. This dynamic and highly mobile population is poised to enter the work force and could be a major contributor to sustainable development and economic growth.

Nonetheless, adolescent girls and boys (10–19 years) are at high risk of school dropout, pregnancy, child marriage, violence and child labour due to limited adolescent-friendly services and opportunities for participation.

Cambodia has recorded impressive performance, evidenced by steady economic growth averaging 7 per cent for over two decades. It transitioned from low-income to lower-middle-income country status in 2016, with the gross national income per capita reaching US\$1,070. The country aims to achieve upper-middle-income status by 2030 and high-income status by 2050. However, disparities and inequities persist, and the nation will remain a least-developed country for the foreseeable future.

With improved tax collection and economic growth, total government revenue expanded from US\$1.24 billion in 2007 to US\$6.09 billion in 2017. Total national revenue as proportion of gross domestic product slightly increased from 20.3 per cent in 2010 to 22.6 per cent in 2018. Budget allocation for social sectors in absolute terms increased in 2018, however in terms of share of the total budget, social sectors still receive similar amounts to before (38.1 per cent in 2013, 38.5 per cent in 2016, and 37.2 per cent in 2018). This shortfall undermines the expansion of social services necessary to cope with population growth needs. The social sector recurrent expenditure as proportion of total national recurrent expenditure slightly increased for education from 16.4 per cent in 2010 to 17.8 per cent in 2018; and social affairs from 4.3 per cent in 2010 to 5.8 per cent in 2018. However, it slightly decreased for health 11.9 per cent in 2010 to 9.2 per cent in 2018.

Cambodia's Human Development Index rose substantially in previous decades, from 0.364 in 1990 to 0.582 in 2017, placing it in the medium human development category and making it the

eighth best performing country globally over this period. Despite overall improvements in human development, however, around 4.5 million people in Cambodia remain near poor and vulnerable to falling back into poverty. Multidimensional poverty has fallen more slowly than monetary poverty. The recently adopted National Social Protection Policy Framework (2016–2025), which prioritizes cash transfers for pregnant women and children, provides a good opportunity to address poverty.

Migration is prevalent in Cambodia, with an estimated 4.2 million predominantly internal migrants, of which 8.3 per cent are adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 years (31 per cent female, 27 per cent male). Migration poses opportunities and challenges for the migrants as well as for their families, especially children.

While still largely rural, Cambodia is witnessing rapid urbanization. Projections suggest that by 2030, over one third of the country's population will live in urban areas. Failure by urban authorities to expand social service infrastructure to match the increasing population will result in new dimensions of poverty, calling for a new set of solutions. UNICEF will sharpen its urban focus from 2019 onwards, in collaboration with partners, through the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

Principally due to slow progress in reducing gender gaps in political empowerment, economic participation and opportunity, Cambodia was ranked 99 out of 144 countries in the 2017 Global Gender Gap report. While there has been progress in reducing gaps in education attainment, health and survival, certain social and cultural norms, attitudes and practices remain challenging. In 2018, UNICEF carried out a gender programme review and its findings and recommendations will inform future programming from 2019 onwards.

Children with disabilities are especially invisible in mainstream development programming, a situation compounded by a lack of quality data. There is a need for early detection, inclusive education and social protection. In 2018, UNICEF continued to work on ensuring that children with disabilities remain high on the agenda in health, education and social protection.

Individuals and communities remain vulnerable to several factors, including natural disasters, environmental degradation and economic slumps. Cambodia, increasingly vulnerable to climate change, is classified as a medium risk (stable) country. The country has significant exposure to natural hazards, compounded by limitations in coping capacities. Cambodia continues to be affected by landmines and unexploded ordnance following its civil war. In 2018, flooding in five provinces affected over 370,000 people. UNICEF Cambodia complemented the Government response by providing temporary learning materials and WASH non-food items to affected populations.

2018 was also a significant year in political terms, with general elections held in July. The ruling Cambodia People's Party obtained all seats in the National Assembly and formed a new government in September 2018. The outcome of the election was viewed critically by some development partners. Political reservations coupled with Cambodia's transition to lower-

middle-income status resulted in a further reduction of official development assistance (ODA). Moreover, the European Union initiated a review of Cambodia's preferential trade status under the 'Everything but Arms' agreement. While the review process is likely to last into 2019, withdrawal of the agreement status would potentially reduce employment opportunities, notably for women in the garment sector which is the backbone of the country's little-diversified economy. As this will impact levels of poverty and access to social sectors, UNICEF Cambodia will continue to follow developments closely.

Concomitantly with the reduction in ODA (notably, from mainly western development partners) Chinese investment is increasing, as Cambodia is part of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. While Chinese foreign direct investment and aid bring opportunities to the country, there are also significant challenges, as seen, for example, in the proliferation of casinos in the southern city of Sihanoukville. Young people are increasingly attracted to work at casinos and other entertainment centres; this leads to increased risk behavior including dropping out of school, drug abuse, alcohol, sexual abuse, gambling and violence.

Despite an overall decline in ODA, UNICEF Cambodia was able to leverage funding with new partners: significant, multi-year funding was received from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for social protection; the Global Partnership for Education and USAID joined the existing UNICEF-managed basket fund of the Capacity Development Partnership Fund, with important contributions; and the Japanese Government pledged multi-year funding of US\$ 2 million for child protection.

In 2018, the final year of the three-year country programme (2016-18) came to a close. UNICEF Cambodia developed its new country programme (2019-2023) which was approved in the September 2018 Executive Committee session. UNICEF Cambodia continued to collaborate with United Nations agencies on the UNDAF (2019–2023) which was validated in December by the Royal Government of Cambodia. UNICEF also contributed to various line ministries' strategic plans, and the development of the overarching Rectangular Strategy (2019–2023). In late 2018, the United Nations Country Team embarked on a global pilot Sustainable Development Goals' leadership lab, to focus on the rollout of Goal accelerators (nutrition, social protection, youth and data) within the upcoming five-year UNDAF.

Under Goal area 1, 'every child survives and thrives', UNICEF supported integrated early child survival, care and development services and interventions, and promoted demand and the adoption of healthy practices by families and communities. However, child and maternal mortality rates remain high compared with other countries in the region, with significant geographical disparities due to financial barriers to health services (60.3 per cent out-of-pocket expenditure, the highest in the region) and inferior quality public and private health services.

Malnutrition rates among children under five years old are among the highest in the region, with 32 per cent stunted and 9 per cent severely stunted. Diarrhoea prevalence, improper complementary feeding, and poor WASH are among the main reasons for the lack of progress.

Disparity is evident, with 42 per cent of the poorest children stunted, compared with 19 per cent of the wealthiest children. In 2018, UNICEF supported the launch of an innovative locally produced fish-based ready-to-use therapeutic food. This initiative brought together public and private sectors for the first time in the nutrition sector.

There has been a steady increase in early childhood education enrolment, with 43 per cent of children three to five years old and 68.5 per cent of children aged five years enrolled in early childhood education (2017–2018). However, there are wide urban-rural disparities. Key bottlenecks include the lack of availability and inaccessibility of facilities, and shortages of qualified teachers. In 2018, UNICEF Cambodia supported the Government to launch its inter-ministerial Early Childhood Care and Development National Action Plan 2019–2023.

Under Goal area 2, 'every child learns', UNICEF continued to make gains in equitable access to, and completion of, quality inclusive education. The gross enrolment ratio for lower secondary school increased slightly, from 55 per cent to 56.8 per cent (exceeding the 2018 target of 55 per cent), with similar rates in rural and urban areas. In more remote provinces, fewer secondary schools mean that for some, access remains limited. Children from poor rural families, those with disabilities and those from ethnic and linguistic minorities are less likely to complete primary school and are sometimes excluded from school. While the gender gap in lower secondary schools has narrowed, regional and wealth discrepancies are high. The quality of education is an on-going concern, with many children at all levels of education not reaching age-appropriate learning standards due to malnutrition, limited parental support, non-inclusive teaching and learning and a shortage of qualified teachers. National learning assessment standard test results for grade 8 students showed that only 47.3 per cent and 54.2 per cent passed mathematics and Khmer, respectively.

In 2018, UNICEF Cambodia continued as fund manager for the Capacity Development Partnership Fund Phase III, a four-year programme (2018–2021) with an estimated US\$ 27 million budget. This multi-donor partnership, which directly supports the implementation of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport's Capacity Development Master Plan (under the Education Strategic Plan) attracted new financing partners in 2018 (USAID and the Global Partnership for Education), and renewed funding commitments from SIDA, the European Union and UNICEF.

Within Goal area 3, 'every child is protected from violence and exploitation', a highlight was the UNICEF, World Health Organization, Royal Government of Cambodia jointly-organized Regional Conference Towards the Implementation of INSPIRE: Seven strategies for ending violence against children' held in late 2018 in Phnom Penh. This demonstrated Cambodia's commitment and leadership in ending violence against children, and contributed to promoting south-south and triangular cooperation.

More than half of children in Cambodia experience violence and abuse. One in two children has experienced severe beating and one in 20 girls and boys have been subjected to sexual violence. The online sexual exploitation of children, trafficking, and cross-border issues are

growing challenges. More girls than boys are affected by sexual violence, child marriage and trafficking, mainly due to social and cultural norms and practices regarding gender.

While there was a 56 per cent decrease in the number of children in prison between 2010 and 2014, the number has been steadily increasing in recent years, despite the Juvenile Justice Law (2016) raising the age of criminal responsibility to 18 years and above in Cambodia. However, the court may announce that a minor above the age of 14 years has a criminal liability depending on the circumstances of the offence. Underlying causes include an on-going crackdown on drugs, modern-day slavery where children are forced to be drug couriers, insufficient training of police and limited diversion programmes, as well as a lack of alternatives to pre and post-trial detention.

Under Goal area 4, 'every child lives in a safe and clean environment', despite strengthened WASH systems at the national and sub-national levels, Cambodia has among the highest rates of open defecation in the region. While open defecation practices are reducing in rural areas, they remain widespread and more common among the poorest families: 51 per cent of the rural population practices open defecation. One in three rural Cambodians uses water from non-improved drinking sources; around seven in 10 pre-primary schools do not have WASH services; and one in two rural health care facilities do not have sufficient water all year round. Capital investment in rural WASH depends heavily on development partners and household contributions. Despite improvements, gaps remain in knowledge about safe WASH practices, especially in rural areas.

Under Goal Area 5, 'every child has an equitable chance in life', UNICEF continued to support the Government to implement its Social Protection Policy Framework, specifically the design of the new cash transfer programme for pregnant women and children under two years. In June, the prime minister announced that the national rollout of the cash transfer programme would be fully financed by public funds starting in mid-2019. This ambitious target requires strong technical support by UNICEF. Up to 200,000 pregnant women and children are expected to benefit from the programme when it reaches full scale in 2021. The Government has pledged a budget of US\$5 million in 2019.

In 2018, the multi-dimensional child poverty study was finalized and disseminated. Multidimensional child poverty data were used by the Government, the United Nations agencies and development partners to inform baselines and target setting for the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals as well as for UNDAF 2019-2023.

The Government of Cambodia submitted its report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2018 on time. UNICEF Cambodia will support the implementation of the Concluding Observations; and also supported preparation of the alternative report, to be finalized during the first quarter of 2019.

Part 2: Major results including in humanitarian action and gender, against the results in

Goal area 1: Every child survives and thrives

Between 2016 and 2018, notable achievements were recorded in health and nutrition in UNICEF Cambodia's geographic target areas in north-eastern provinces. Skilled attendance at birth increased from 53.6 percent in 2015 to 74.4 per cent in 2018 in Ratanakiri province; the proportion of children aged 0-59 months treated for severe acute malnutrition increased from 3.4 percent in 2015 to 18 per cent by mid-2018 in Kratie province; and the proportion of infants aged under five months old who are exclusively fed with breast milk increased from 69 per cent in 2015 to 79.5 per cent in 2018 in Ratanakiri province.

UNICEF Cambodia continued to support implementation of the integrated childhood development programme in north-east provinces. Although more efforts are required to accelerate universal access, improve quality and strengthen the regulatory framework, the integrated approach led to improved and more equitable use of integrated services and interventions especially in WASH, maternal, newborn and child health, nutrition and early childhood education.

In September 2018, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to launch three handbooks on the management of severe acute malnutrition in infants and children, integrating all World Health Organization recommendations (2013). With UNICEF Cambodia support, the proportion of health facilities providing severe acute malnutrition treatment and the number of children benefiting from treatment increased considerably. In the north-east, 81 health centres and five hospitals provided nutrition-specific services for severe acute malnutrition, additional 27 health centres were operational end 2018, exceeding the initial target. By mid-2018, approximately 5,100 cases were treated (48 per cent girls). A longitudinal study in six districts showed a drastic reduction in cases (8.4 percentage points) over an 18-month period. The highest decrease of wasting was observed in Kratie (-13.9 percentage points). Explanations for this reduction may include: i) successful treatment of severe acute malnutrition cases; ii) provision of two months' nutritious snack supply during screening for moderate acute malnutrition children; and iii) improved awareness through repeated screenings.

Additional efforts are needed to ensure that children are treated according to international (WHO/UNICEF) standards. Recent analysis of 947 hospital-based, severe acute malnutrition inpatients showed that after three follow-up visits only 30 per cent were completely treated, 56 per cent had moderate acute malnutrition, and 14 per cent still had severe acute malnutrition.

UNICEF Cambodia supported the Royal Government of Cambodia to increase involvement of the private sector in nutrition efforts. With UNICEF support, a new, locally-produced, ready-to-use therapeutic food was launched in December 2018. This is expected to improve procurement processes and reduce costs through use of local fish protein.

In April 2018, UNICEF Cambodia support to the Ministry of Planning collected 566 samples of

salt from 23 provinces of Cambodia. Although only 48 per cent of the samples met Cambodian standards, the amount of non-iodized salt samples decreased from 62.2 per cent in 2014 to 10 per cent in 2018. A difference remains between coarse and refined salt, with 63.5 per cent of coarse salt (used by rural populations) tested (n=63) not adequately iodized. The urinary iodine concentration improved among pregnant and non-pregnant women in urban areas, such as Phnom Penh, with 73.1 µg/L and 75.6 µg/L in 2016 compared to 173.5 µg/L to 199.3 µg/L in 2018. Unfortunately, in the north-east the concentration has decreased among pregnant women from 61.6 µg/L in 2016 to 47.2 µg/L in 2018.

UNICEF Cambodia supported the promotion of sustainability, and the strengthening and enforcement of appropriate legislation. Several changes were proposed and accepted to improve relevant sub-decrees, and an entire new certification mechanism was developed and launched using a new logo.

Data from the longitudinal study highlighted the need to improve the nutritional status of pregnant women to safeguard health outcomes of their children, e.g. one quarter of children under three years old had *Giardia duodenalis* infection. Livestock, particularly pigs near the household dwellings, were identified as a risk factor, highlighting the need to protect children from open animal defecation to prevent stunting.

To ensure continued improvement of feeding practices during the first 24 months of life, UNICEF Cambodia collaborated with the Ministry of Health to: ban the commercialization of Cambodian human milk to foreign markets; implement extensive formative research; and develop a draft strategy for infant and young child nutrition. UNICEF Cambodia also collaborated with two non-government organisations to ensure that appropriate messages were delivered to communities in the north east through the mobile library and mHealth system.

During 2018, UNICEF Cambodia continued to support the strengthening of the health system with an equity focus, reinforcing capacity of service providers to ensure quality maternal, newborn and child health services, including for hard-to-reach and marginalized populations in the north-east. In UNICEF-supported provinces, the proportion of deliveries attended by skilled trained personnel increased from 45 per cent in 2016 to 52 per cent in 2017 and to 62 per cent in the third quarter of 2018, catching up with the national average (61 per cent in 2018). Integrated outreach services with midwives in hard-to-reach areas were conducted at more than 80 per cent of planned outreach service areas. This enabled provision of essential antenatal, delivery and post-natal care, and early essential or immediate newborn and post-natal care at 89 per cent of health centres in the target areas.

Support to outreach services strengthened facility-based service delivery and monitoring mechanisms, with the use of local data for rapid identification and to address bottlenecks towards ensuring steady, quality, essential maternal, newborn and child health interventions. UNICEF Cambodia support improved planning and implementation of integrated post-partum care; community care for mothers and newborns; communication for behavioural impact; integrated management of childhood illnesses; and effective implementation of the vaccine

management improvement plan.

UNICEF Cambodia initiated and supported community-based, integrated services for children to help families, communities and school teachers detect and track cases of illness and potential impairments. School health screenings were conducted in 39 pre-schools and primary schools in two districts in Ratanakiri province, screening a total of 1,170 children aged three to six years old (576 girls and 594 boys). All children requiring medical attention were referred to specialized facilities for appropriate support and management.

Standard operating procedures for immunization supply chain management were developed and finalized with UNICEF support. The Ministry of Health assigned additional officers of the expanded programme on immunization, to manage vaccine storage and cold chain management. This ensured that at least two expanded programme on immunization cold-chain officers operated in each operational district. As part of the standard operating procedure, fridge temperature monitoring devices were introduced in five selected north-eastern provinces.

UNICEF Cambodia supported regular monitoring at health facility level: no health facilities in integrated early childhood development monitoring areas reported stock-ruptures of essential medicines above five per cent, nor stock-outs of HIV test kits. However, periodic stock-outs of vaccines, including Hepatitis B mono-valence, oral polio vaccine and Japanese Encephalitis were a result of inadequate local management and supply and global shortages. Where possible, shortages were solved through vaccine mobilization across facilities (not possible for Japanese Encephalitis due to a global shortage).

Overall, interventions and achievements were constrained by seasonal family migration (e.g. farming); the public health sector's limited capacity to regulate/cooperate with private providers to complement services; and national elections that disrupted routine service delivery and monitoring. Budget limitations remain challenging.

Goal area 2: Every child learns

Much success in this goal area is due to the relationship between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and UNICEF Cambodia. UNICEF provided the ministry with effective and targeted technical and financial assistance to support key education reform processes and policy development.

During the country programme cycle (2016-2018), there were notable achievements in providing equitable access to, and completion of, quality, inclusive education between 2016 and 2018. Enrolment in pre-school increased from 61.4 percent in 2015 to 68.5 per cent of five-year-olds in 2017–2018. However, for three to five year olds, enrolments were lower at 43.1 per cent. The gross enrolment ratio for lower secondary school increased from 55 per cent in 2015 to 56.8 per cent in 2018 (slightly exceeding target of 55 per cent), with similar rates in rural and urban areas. In more remote provinces, fewer secondary schools means access remains limited. Similarly, the basic education survival rate increased from 35.7 per cent in 2015 to 51

per cent in 2017.

UNICEF continued as fund manager for the Capacity Development Partnership Fund Phase III, a four-year programme (2018–2021) with an estimated US\$27 million budget. This multi-donor partnership, which supports the implementation of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports' capacity development master plan, aimed at realizing the Education Strategic Plan, attracted new financing partners in 2018 (USAID and the Global Partnership for Education), and renewed funding commitments from the Swedish International Development Agency, the European Union and UNICEF.

UNICEF continued its technical involvement in formulating several strategies and policies such as the Education Strategic Plan. It mobilized technical assistance and finalized partnerships with partners including VSO and International Institute for Educational Planning to deepen and consolidate investment in the areas of results-based planning, monitoring and evaluation and education system management.

UNICEF Cambodia fostered sector dialogue, inside and outside of its lead role in coordinating the Education Sector Working Group and the Joint Technical Working Group, and as the coordinating agency for the Global Partnership for Education. Through on-going support of the non-government organization Education Partnership, UNICEF Cambodia contributed to local education strengthening initiatives and evidence generation.

UNICEF Cambodia played a crucial role in the provision of education to children of indigenous communities, a vulnerable group in Cambodia. As a result, enrolments in multi-lingual education are increasing for pre-school and primary school, with an increase of 18.7 per cent and 14 per cent respectively in enrolments for 2018 (compared to school year 2016/17). These results were largely achieved with investment in multi-lingual education teacher training. Scholarships to indigenous students in grades 11 and 12, provided by UNICEF, reached 1,095 students (546 girls). An independent review of the scholarship programme in 2018 found that the scholarships were having improving students' education prospects. The accelerated learning programme supported by UNICEF enabled more children to stay in school by combining two years of schooling into one, so that children could 'catch up' on learning. In 2018, 82 per cent of students in the programme were promoted to the next grade. Safe learning environments for children were supported by provision of positive discipline and effective classroom management training to teachers.

UNICEF continued its push for inclusive education for children with disabilities at pre-primary and primary levels. Efforts were made to roll out inclusive-education training course (a 28hours total) for teachers to identify and meet the special needs of their students.

UNICEF Cambodia supported the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in education emergency preparedness and response, including training the disaster management secretariat and developing the ministry's emergency preparedness and response plan.

UNICEF Cambodia strengthened the quality of learning in Cambodia, via life skills curriculum and syllabus development for grades 4 to 6 and grades 7 to 9. The syllabus was distributed to schools in target provinces, where a baseline assessment to measure the impact of the programme will be conducted. UNICEF also supported the expansion of local life skills' education, as well as training young people on entrepreneurship. In 2018, 80 schools were engaged in local life skills education and an additional 66 lower secondary schools received entrepreneurship skills training.

UNICEF supported school inspections based on child-friendly schools criteria. In 2018, 67 districts were trained in child-friendly school data collection using a digital form of monitoring for school inspection. This data will be used to inform national policy and programme development, including school improvement.

By leveraging existing advocacy and capacity-development materials, efforts focused on developing a communication campaign to increase parental awareness of the rights of their children to access inclusive and quality education, with a focus on ethnic minority communities. The campaign focused on communities in Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri provinces, where the student dropout rate is high. 'Communication for education' activities conducted under this output in 2018 reached 14 districts (as planned), including 303 primary schools. This resulted in school support committees and school directors being trained in broadcasting advocacy messages that encourage children to go to school, and their families to send them.

Gender

In 2018, UNICEF Cambodia's education team supported gender-specific activities. Under the Capacity Development Partnership Fund phase III, an outcome was added on gender-equitable leadership with preparation on a medium-term work plan for this critical area. In response to Cambodia-specific research showing gender-related patterns of violence in schools, UNICEF Cambodia revised the existing positive-discipline curriculum to include focus on school-related gender-based violence, with new training for in 2019. In 2019, the gender-sensitive nature of the education programme will be strengthened, specifically based on recommendations in the 2018 gender programme review.

Cross-cutting and integrated programming

WASH and education: UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports' Department of School Health conducted workshops for school directors to implement the minimum requirement guidelines on WASH in schools. UNICEF supported the roll out of the national WASH in schools minimum requirement guidelines, with baseline data collected in four provinces in 2018. Indicators for the minimum requirements for a star-ranking were incorporated into the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports' education management information system to generate data to inform the new Education Strategic Plan. The integration of these indicators was necessary for the ministry to monitor and evaluate the progress and status of WASH in schools nationwide. Forty-five primary schools and two pre-schools improved WASH facilities as a result of UNICEF support in 2018, benefiting an

estimated 17,455 school children (including 224 pre-school children).

However, there are persisting challenges in WASH in rural schools due to low levels of service and a lack of cleanliness in latrines, as well as limited privacy and gender separation. The lack of disposable bins is also barrier for adolescent girls during their menstruation.

Child protection and education: In 2018, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to develop Cambodia's first Child Protection in Schools Policy Action Plan (2019–2023), ensuring proper systems are in place for the protection of children in and around school. UNICEF Cambodia education and child protection collaborated in the area of child protection in schools, resulting in the positive discipline programme and the Policy Action Plan. In 2018, the positive discipline programme expanded its reach from 232 schools in 2017 to 395 schools in 2018. In total, the programme reached 804 schools (2015–2018), representing approximately 50 per cent of schools in target provinces. This exceeds the end of country programme target of 40 per cent. Since 2015, a total of 241,200 girls and boys (109,625 in 2018) benefitted from the flagship initiative on positive discipline in schools.

Nutrition and education: Given the multi-faceted developmental needs of children, inter-sectoral coordination in early childhood development and care is essential in Cambodia. UNICEF advocacy helped establish a national committee on early childhood care and development, involving 13 line ministries. In 2018, a medium-term Action Plan for Early Childhood Care and Development was prepared, with reference to the global nurturing care framework. UNICEF Cambodia developed an inter-sectoral programme cooperation agreement with the non-government organisation, SIPAR, to orient pre-school teachers on nutrition for young children via reading, storytelling and games, and to orient Ministry of Health, Youth and Sports' staff on nutrition. UNICEF Cambodia's education team established a partnership with Pannasastra University on cognitive testing of children (three to five year olds). This will contribute data to inter-sector, longitudinal research on child development, essential for informing broader inter-sectoral programming.

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

UNICEF Cambodia's strategic, financial and technical support enabled the Government of Cambodia to strengthen the child protection system and scale-up programme interventions. Notable progress was recorded between 2016 and 2018 in the re-integration of children and prevention and response to violence against children. In 2018, more than 249,900 girls and boys were protected from violence and unnecessary family separation through strengthened institutional and legislative frameworks, quality child-protection services and a more supportive community environment.

Approximately 21,600 vulnerable children (5,715 in 2018, 49 per cent girls) have received a comprehensive range of child protection services through the Partnership Programme for the Protection of Children since 2016. This is an innovative partnership led by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), Friends International and UNICEF. In

2018, 100,000 children, adolescents and youths were reached with core messages to prevent violence, especially sexual abuse, through the 16-Day Campaign against Violence against Women and Children, with contributions from the UNICEF-supported Adolescent and Youth Reference Group. An additional 28,927 people (majority adolescents and youths) were reached through the Youth Online TV on Facebook with messages to prevent violence against children.

UNICEF advocacy successfully led to no new residential care institutions being approved by the Government since the implementation of the Action Plan for Improving Child Care began in 2016. A reduction of 35 per cent in residential care institutions and 54 per cent of children in RCIs was recorded, compared to the 2015 mapping data, using the more rigorous digital inspection system that enabled inspection of 252 residential care institutions caring for 7,634 children. The inspection helped identify and take corrective measures. A web-based tracking database on all children undergoing reintegration from RCIs was developed and is being used by Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation staff at sub-national level. UNICEF provided technical and financial support to national and sub-national authorities in five priority provinces to implement the action plan, in coordination with the Partnership Programme for the Protection of Children, and Family Care First.

Since 2016, UNICEF has supported the recruitment and capacity building of 33 social workers to work in government and non-government organizations. They have provided 1,010 children in residential care with effective case management. To expand family-based care, UNICEF's support successfully resulted in Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation endorsing and launching the Capacity Development Plan for Family Support, Foster Care and Adoption. As a key priority for its implementation, national guideline procedures are being developed and are expected to be implemented in 2019. To enhance alternative care for children with disabilities, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, with support from UNICEF, established a national team of 13 trainers to strengthen the capacity of 130 care takers from 56 RCIs on daily care for children with disabilities. This included planning for care provision and monitoring of case management plans, feeding and nutritional practices specific to children with disabilities and appropriate stimulation guidelines. Technical guiding documents to enhance family-based care for children with disabilities are being developed.

Girls and boys at risk of and exposed to violence benefitted from the implementation of the Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children 2017–2021, due to an increased number of programmes being implemented in nine provinces initiated by various ministries with technical and financial support from UNICEF. Interventions including the Positive Parenting Strategy and the Child Protection Pagoda Programme were implemented in nine of the 25 provinces. UNICEF accelerated office-wide cross-sectoral approaches to ending violence against children, such as the initiatives on positive discipline in schools with the education section, the Clinical Handbook on Healthcare for Children Subjected to Violence or Sexual Abuse with the health section, and a promising government-led initiative called PROTECT: A Communication Strategy to End Violence and Unnecessary Family Separation, with the UNICEF communication for development officer. Gender dimensions are

mainstreamed throughout the programme. For example, the Provincial Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy in Ratanakiri 2017–2021 was approved and launched in June 2018 and is being implemented to address complex drivers of child marriage and teenage pregnancy that require a multi-sectoral response; to promote girls' education and to prevent child sexual abuse.

Cambodia demonstrated commitment and leadership in ending violence against children, which also contributed to promoting south-south and triangular cooperation. Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, with technical and financial support from UNICEF and WHO at regional and country levels, hosted the first regional conference on INSPIRE– an interagency technical package to support governments, NGOs and other actors to implement evidence-based strategies and interventions to end violence against children, end 2018 in Phnom Penh. The conference inspired the Cambodian Minister of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation to express the government's interest in becoming a Pathfinding Country under the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

UNICEF co-led with Save the Children and World Vision to support the child protection sector in emergency preparedness and response and disaster risk reduction. Approximately 19,500 children gained deeper knowledge and skills to protect themselves from unexploded ordinance and explosive remnants of war such as landmines.

In 2018, UNICEF supported government justice and law enforcement agencies, Legal Aid Cambodia, and provincial courts to provide child friendly justice services to 685 children. The three-year strategic and operational plan to guide the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Law will be implemented from 2019, ensuring that children in conflict with the law receive appropriate care and support. This plan was jointly developed by Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and the Ministry of Justice, with support from UNICEF, and approved by the Minister of Social Affairs and the Minister of Justice in March 2018.

The Formative Evaluation of the UNICEF Child Protection Programme in Cambodia, completed in 2018, demonstrated that since 2016 UNICEF's child protection programme has advocated for the development of a national child protection system, and the delivery of child protection response services for both at-risk and separated children. The evaluation findings evidenced a strong consensus among key stakeholders on the relevance of the programme's aims and design and demonstrated that UNICEF's capacity building approach at national level, among service providers and practitioners and within communities, is conducive to the achievement of sustainable outcomes. However, efforts need to continue to strengthen the legislative and organizational framework to deliver child protection services and increase government investment in the child protection sector to limit over-reliance on NGOs for the delivery of child protection services in the long term.

Publication of the Child Protection Statistical Profile in Cambodia with 13 key indicators was completed, providing baseline data for the child protection information management system. Digitalization and establishment of a database for alternative care is progressing well. UNICEF

supported a Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation digital tracking tool for children reintegrated from RCIs, now used in five priority provinces. UNICEF supports the initial phase of a digital case management system (using mobile technology rather than paper), being used by non-government organisations. To inform the next five-year country programme in Cambodia, new knowledge and evidence were generated through partnerships with the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office. This included: a mapping and assessment of the social service workforce by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance; research on intersections between Violence against Women and Violence against Children; and a review and analysis of lessons learnt from existing parenting programmes, conducted by UNICEF regional office.

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

UNICEF Cambodia has supported programming for results at scale through service delivery, behaviour change, and systems strengthening leading to 156,412 people having increased access to drinking water since 2016, including 36,323 so far in 2018. In Kratie, the proportion of households with access to improved sanitation facility increased from 31.4 per cent in 2014 to 46.2 per cent in 2018. Focusing on vulnerable populations in the north east of Cambodia, known arsenic risk areas, and poor households, results have been achieved through support to a mix of water supply technology options, including community-based treated water bottling plants, the development and extension of private piped water systems (including pro-poor subsidies for household connections to piped water systems), and the protection and upgrading of community springs and water sources, such as boreholes. Water safety plans have been supported, and in three communes have contributed to the allocation of commune budget for WASH. Water quality testing capacity has been strengthened at the national level, as well as in three provinces and 173 villages. Sixty villages in six target IECD convergence districts and 113 villages in other geographical areas have been reached with household water treatment and safe storage education sessions.

Challenges remain in drinking-water quality at the point of consumption (84 per cent of rural Cambodians do not use safely managed drinking water); seasonal climate vulnerability (in rural areas there is a 22-percentage point wet-to-dry season decrease in those using improved water sources); and regulatory frameworks for the growth areas of bottled and piped water supply. Improvements are needed across these areas.

UNICEF Cambodia pursued results through behaviour change, community engagement and planning and monitoring systems in promoting increased access to sanitation. A notable achievement was the increase in the proportion of primary schools with latrines in Ratanakiri from 52.2 per cent in 2015 to 76.1 per cent in 2018. Community-based sanitation activities have been supported in 601 villages (including 117 villages in the target IECD convergence districts) since 2016, and sanitation business has been strengthened in five remote provinces through the provision of moulds for toilet sub-structures. This contributed to increased access to and affordability of latrine products. Since 2016, 143,852 people have gained access to sanitation in UNICEF target areas, including 61,153 so far in 2018. In 2018, an open-

defecation-free commune was achieved in Ratanakiri, as a result of UNICEF support. Sanitation for families with children under five years old was strengthened, with over 3,345 ergonomic child potties procured by UNICEF and supplied to families in eight provinces to support sanitation promotion.

A persisting challenge included the relatively weak markets for sanitation products in north-eastern provinces, with low numbers of suppliers (an average of less than one supplier per district in some provinces, compared to more than 10 per district in provinces closer to Phnom Penh). High latrine costs are also a challenge (the average price of a concrete ring latrine component in some north-eastern provinces is twice that of lower-cost provinces). Open defecation practices are reducing in rural areas yet remain widespread and more common among the poorest families: 51 per cent of the rural population practices open defecation. Risk awareness in rural areas in relation to children and animal faeces remains low and is unchanged/has declined since 2010.

UNICEF continues to co-chair the Technical Working Group for Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene, at sub-national level provincial technical working groups on rural WASH have been established in all 25 provinces. In 2018, progress was made with the rural WASH management information system led by the Ministry of Rural Development. This has the potential to further support strengthened coordination, and progress chasing. UNICEF has been a key stakeholder in providing technical support to the system. In 2018, working with other sector stakeholders UNICEF supported the government to review national and provincial action plans for rural WASH (2014–2018) and to formulate of the next generation of plans (2019–2023).

The use of evidence was supported through UNICEF technical support to the alignment of national survey instruments (specifically the Cambodia socio-economic survey and census), with UNICEF/WHO joint monitoring programme of Sustainable Development Goal definitions, and technical inputs to drafting WASH aspects of Cambodia's Goal results framework. WASH indicators were aligned with global frameworks in the areas of community, school and health care facilities. WASH data and research were supported through the inclusion of WASH in UNICEF's early childhood longitudinal study, with particular inputs provided on capacity development support. This was implemented in partnership with the Royal University of Phnom Penh for government counterparts to conduct microbiological water quality testing at points of water collection and use. UNICEF also supported the analysis and dissemination of results from this work.

UNICEF supported the modelling of WASH improvements in 13 health care facilities in the north east of Cambodia and provided technical support to National Guidelines on WASH in health care facilities. These were endorsed and disseminated by the Ministry of Health in 2018. Sustainability and scale up of these improvements are challenges and need further attention.

In the area of disaster risk reduction, UNICEF Cambodia supported national WASH emergency preparedness and response capacity strengthening in 2018 through the pre-positioning of

WASH non-food items with the Ministry of Rural Development at national and sub-national level, and technical support to the ministry's emergency preparedness and response planning. Disaster risks were reduced with the completion of four climate-resilient water bottling plants adapted for drought (three systems) and flood (one system) in 2018, as well as further work and systems strengthening in this area commissioned for 2019.

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

In 2018, key achievements were made in prioritizing children's issues in national policies, budget and social protection systems. UNICEF Cambodia contributed through: policy and budget advocacy with its strong partnership with the Ministry of Economy and Finance; use of evidence generated from strategic research and evaluations, including a multi-dimensional child poverty study; a catalytic role in bringing stakeholders together to develop policy, programmes and guidelines. Some notable achievements included an increase in public budget allocated to social protection programmes from 0.58 per cent in 2015 to 2.1 per cent in 2018 and a slight increase in the number of children covered by social protection systems from 194,407 in 2015 to 203,062 in 2017.

Building on the successful implementation of the cash transfer pilot project for pregnant women and children, and solid evidence and lessons learned from an external evaluation, UNICEF effectively managed evidence-based advocacy for the national roll out of the cash transfer programme. UNICEF Cambodia supported the costing of the programme at national scale and facilitated dialogue with senior officials of Ministry of Economy and Finance. In response, the prime minister announced in June that the national roll out of the cash transfer programme for poor pregnant women and children would be fully financed by the public budget from mid-2019. Up to 200,000 pregnant women and children are expected to benefit from the programme when it reaches full scale in 2021.

UNICEF provided technical support in designing the national cash transfer programme including behaviour change communication, establishing a mechanism to include those who are excluded in the standard poverty database (IDPoor), removing conditionality linked with cash payments, and selecting women caregivers as recipients of cash transfers. The design is pending approval by the National Social Protection Council.

UNICEF Cambodia provided technical support to Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation to revise tools for identifying beneficiaries of the government-funded disability allowance programme and an operational manual for the disability allowance programme. These tools will facilitate smooth implementation of the programme to reach more people with disabilities, including children.

UNICEF successfully advocated to increase public budget allocation in the area of child nutrition, and rural water and sanitation. This led to the Ministry of Health allocating public budget for treatment of severe acute malnutrition for the first time in 2017 (US\$130,000), increasing the allocation in 2018 by 30 per cent (US\$169,250), and in 2019 an increase by 6.2

per cent (US\$179,750). This benefited around 5,000 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. The Ministry of Rural Development upgraded WASH from a sub-programme to a programme in its new policy (2019–2023) based on UNICEF’s recommendation. This facilitated increased budget allocation in WASH. UNICEF’s advocacy also resulted in increased budget allocation for the rural WASH programme at sub-national level in the 2019 budget to US\$3.4 million from US\$3.1 million in 2018. To support Ministry of Economy and Finance to implement the budget system reform for children, UNICEF supported an assessment of capacity of selected line ministries for programme budget formulation and execution. In 2018, field data collection was completed. A capacity development plan will be developed in 2019.

Advocacy and technical assistance to central ministries (particularly Ministry of Economy and Finance, and Ministry of Planning) in previous years to enhance the monitoring and evaluation system encouraged the Supreme National Economic Council to develop a strategic results framework for the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV which outlines national development priorities for 2019–2023. Key results in human development outcomes were highlighted, as were ensuring that cross-sectoral results, such as multi-dimensional child poverty, were included. The Ministry of Economy and Finance plans to use the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV results framework for annual budget formulation, prioritizing programmes and activities that contribute to achieving the key results.

In 2018, a multi-dimensional child poverty study was finalized and disseminated. Multi-dimensional child poverty data was used to inform baselines and set targets for the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring regular measurement and reporting by the Government. Multi-dimensional child poverty was also included in the strategic results framework of the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV, which facilitates linking budget allocation with multi-dimensional child poverty.

At sub-national level, UNICEF Cambodia successfully advocated for increased budget allocation for social services including for children at the commune/sangkat level from US\$3.7 million in 2015 to US\$8.1 million in 2018 and at provincial/capital level from US\$3.2 million in 2015 to US\$5.3 million in 2018. This was a result of strategic engagement with ministries (Interior, Economy and Finance, Planning) at national level to guide and support sub-national administrations at provincial and commune levels. A partnership with the target capital and provincial administrations was enhanced in 2018 through regular dialogue with senior officials led by UNICEF zone offices.

In 2018, UNICEF Cambodia signed a partnership agreement with Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) to strengthen local governance for delivering social services and social protection to children. Under the partnership, UNICEF Cambodia plans to introduce initiatives in 2019, such as an award for sub-national administrations that promote better services for children. To ensure timely and effective roll out of the new cash transfer programme for pregnant women and children at national scale, UNICEF in partnership with SIDA will train national and sub-national operators for implementation, monitoring and reporting. UNICEF plans to enhance its partnership with non-government organizations to

improve social accountability. Citizen participation, especially adolescent and youth participation in local planning process will be promoted.

Cross-cutting issues

Overall, UNICEF Cambodia's communication and public advocacy expanded its portfolio in 2018, due to collaboration with programme sections and external partners. There was a leap in digital engagement. A high-profile social media campaign focusing on youth education, skills and employability, implemented with a creative agency and a Cambodian digital influencer, reached four million Facebook users and generated over one million video views.

The Voices of Youth blogging initiative was implemented for the third year, offering thought provoking blogs touching on some of the most pressing issues concerning youth. The blog has reached one million Facebook users since 2016. A youth-led internal review of the third edition of the Voices of Youth programme showed that both the bloggers and UNICEF stakeholders found Voices of Youth 2018 to be a highly effective programme. Analysis demonstrates that the bloggers improved both their technical abilities in writing blogs and their soft skills in terms of confidence, teamwork and critical thinking, partly attributed to writing blogs advocating on social issues.

UNICEF Cambodia's digital presence and engagement was boosted by on-going editorial and content planning, and further investment in content creation. Over 34,000 new Facebook followers joined between January and November, compared to 20,000 during the same period last year, bringing the total number of Facebook followers to approximately 100,000. An audience of nine million was reached and one million people were engaged. Some notable social media initiatives include a Father's Day campaign that reached 340,000 and generated about 100,000 video views.

UNICEF Cambodia carried out a gender programmatic review in 2018 to further align the upcoming country programme with the UNICEF Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2018–2021 and the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, and accelerate results for children by strengthening evidence-based gender programming.

Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints

Goal area 1: Every child survives and thrives; and Goal area 4: Every child lives in a safe and clean environment

The adolescent-led review of the 'magic classroom' programme and community pre-school programme produced several key lessons about both initiatives and about adolescent participation in programme review. For magic classroom: interactive education-awareness sessions with approachable content and skilled facilitators improves adult and children's knowledge of water, sanitation and hygiene concepts; and playgrounds encourage children to

attend school regularly; develop cognitive and behavioural skills, and must be maintained as healthy, safe places. The adolescent-led review demonstrated that adolescents aged 15–19 years can be effective data collectors and analysts: with a few hours' training and support from UNICEF staff, they collected high-quality data and performed preliminary analysis. They know the context and can help to reduce barriers between local and external evaluators. For example, one cohort of adolescent evaluators were of an indigenous group, and conducted the data collection in the villagers' local language.

While young people are often interviewed and surveyed in planning, monitoring and evaluation activities, they are rarely involved in the design or evaluation of a programme, which can create a gap between UNICEF programmes and the youth. By involving young people in evaluations, UNICEF Cambodia carried out the commitment to Generation Unlimited. Adolescent participation helps design programmes that are focused on and geared towards the realities of the needs of this age group.

Goal area 2: Every child learns

The 2018 outcome evaluation of the Capacity Development Partnership Fund identified lessons to inform the design of the third and final phase of the Fund (2018–2021) and the new Education Strategic Plan.

Key lessons included: the need to implement capacity development strategies and action plans with a long-term approach to reach all levels of education (individual, institutional and organizational). Also: intervention planning and implementation should be inclusive and participatory among stakeholders; focus placed on coaching and mentoring to develop individual capacities and organizational learning through long-term interventions on-the-job and/or team-based. Efforts should be made to measure capacity-development at the organizational level. In addition, a cascade approach to training and capacity development results in better national coverage, effectively and cost-efficiently, especially in remote and poor schools. Finally, approaches and interventions such as Capacity Development Partnership Fund, should create an environment where local actors can take risks and innovate. Such measures would allow stakeholders to learn and apply new knowledge, and design new practices.

UNICEF Cambodia continued to prioritize evidence generation and lesson learning throughout 2018 in Goal area 2. Findings from the multilingual Education National Action Plan 2015–2018 evaluation and a country-led evaluation of the national scholarship programme commenced in 2018 to be available in early 2019.

Other lessons learned in 2018 from programme implementation and monitoring included: advocacy on politically- and socially-sensitive issues to ministry leadership with an informal 'heads-up' prior to formal discussions is effective, as is well-targeted provision of technical advice. There is a need to diversify UNICEF's approach to training, with consideration of online learning options. The use of government processes (such as recruiting technical assistance)

with UNICEF participation and quality assurance is an effective way to build government institutional capacity and makes for effective programming. Medium-term work plans help implementing partners think strategically and systematically. And the adoption of school-to-school partnerships for capacity building (e.g., in life skills) is more effective compared to capacity-building driven by the central level.

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

An evaluation of the UNICEF Cambodia child protection programme found that the programme's aims and design reflect UNICEF's global priorities, Agenda 2030 and development partner priorities, in particular with: addressing violence against children; family-based care and reintegration; and a system-building approach. The focus on reintegration was highly relevant in the Cambodian context, and a necessary step to child protection system building. While recognizing the relevance of the reintegration programme, a lesson from the evaluation was that the 30 per cent target was ambitious, especially as it should be in parallel to establishing broader child protection and response services to meet the needs of all vulnerable boys and girls. De-institutionalization and reintegration is a long-term and complex process that requires sustained support for the individuals and families affected, and which requires the Government, UNICEF, non-government organizations and other strategic partners to work together.

Based on a sub-decree and accompanying commitment statement on the management of residential care centres; a mapping exercise; the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation national action plan; five provincial operational plans' target to return 30 per cent of children in residential care to their families by 2018; and on-going case management of children from residential care institutions, it is clear that the ministry is committed to a process to reform the child care system. This will be done through legislative reform (including sanctions) and programme services. However, despite ministry commitment, the importance of increasing budget allocations in line with the commitment to ensure funding mechanisms was a valuable lesson.

After the number of institutions and children living in them rose from 2005 to 2015, the numbers are stabilizing and falling. This was made possible through adoption of a holistic approach by Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation in partnership with UNICEF and Partnership Programme for the Protection of Children that addressed all components of the re-integration system from the regulatory environment to tracing children re-integrated to family or community-based alternative care.

The formative evaluation also noted: there is now greater awareness of abuse and the need for child protection; cases of severe violence are coming to the attention of authorities; and increased awareness as a result of better reporting of violence cases should be supported by a referral system and adequate response services. The evaluation cautions that institutional knowledge of dealing with child protection is building slowly, and rests on few individuals.

Cooperating with non-government organizations in the area of social welfare is important, given the strong presence of the organizations and the limited human and financial capacity of the Government. The Partnership Programme for the Protection of Children, established in 2011 as a tripartite partnership between UNICEF, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and Friends International (which coordinates nine additional civil society organizations, six technical partners and 40 community groups) has been a successful model of Government and civil society partnership. However, the child protection formative evaluation reported an over-reliance on non-government organisations. Thus, while non-government organizations will continue to play an important role in providing child-protection services, effort will be invested to support the Government to increase its budget investment in child protection services.

Other successes documented by the evaluation included placement of new social workers at the provincial level; quality, coordinated child protection work at the sub-national level; capacity building resulting in change; and programmes that generated sustainable capacities at national and sub-national level.

The evaluation reported that the UNICEF Cambodia child protection programme sets a strong base for developing a child protection system, but that such a system in Cambodia is a long-term project and has a long way to go. The evaluation recommended that UNICEF: strengthen the child protection system and services; build a new comprehensive child protection law; build government ownership of child protection with clear lines of responsibility and accountability; increase budget and provision of a minimum guaranteed level of service; professionalize child protection; and develop support services and alternative care services.

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

The evaluation of the CARD and UNICEF Cash Transfer Pilot Project for Pregnant Women and Children in Cambodia found that the Government-implemented programme is both possible and beneficial. In this pilot project, unconditional basic payments and conditional bonus payments were made to households with a pregnant woman and/or child(ren) under the age of five years to improve maternal and child health, nutrition and human capital development. The project aimed to reduce the effects of inter-generational poverty and food insecurity. This pilot was intended to test whether a scale up within existing government structures was possible.

Results from the study show that the transfers increased access to better (more nutritious and diverse) food while promoting health-seeking behaviours and improving health and nutrition knowledge. The recipients felt that the transfers helped meet their immediate needs, but they were not sufficient to meet all their health and nutritional needs. The project used the IDPoor card system to target beneficiaries.

Results indicated that the health and nutrition sessions raised awareness and knowledge about health and nutrition. However, it was not clear whether a change in behaviour had been achieved. Conversely, education sessions were not sufficiently accessible or engaging for all,

and there was no formal grievance redress system.

AMK Microfinance efficiently and effectively disbursed the funds and handled related issues. However, poor public transport, lack of rural banking facilities and sub-par internet and telecommunication networks will need to be improved upon scale up.

One success of the pilot was that the programme could be implemented using internal resources and allowances and did not require additional posts. The gaps and bottlenecks, such as insufficient training, could be easily addressed with a one-time expense. There will need to be collaboration between the Government, information system developers and local banks.

This pilot project made equity a priority by requiring that women be account holders for the cash transfers and thus could spend the cash in ways they saw fit. The project did not focus on awareness raising or education for men.

The evaluation team identified the following additional lessons. First, emphasis should be placed on preparation, to ensure smooth implementation of the project and delivery of cash transfers to beneficiaries, both in terms of project details and coordination between organizations and bodies. Second, the health and nutrition education sessions are almost as valuable as the cash transfers: improving education, nutrition and health status will lead to improvements for children.

Third, cash transfers should be smaller, regular payments. These were found to be used to meet nutritional needs and support changes in behaviour. However, whether co-responsibility should be included remains a question, given that it decreases cost-effectiveness and efficiency. If it is used, it should be monitored to track progress and ensure goals are being met. Further, in terms of financing, initially high costs for extra responsibilities should be considered, along with planning for any effects of inflation, climate change and disaster. Adequate resources must be allocated for administrative systems, information systems, supervision and monitoring and evaluation, as without them the project would be less effective and sustainable. Finally, husbands and fathers of beneficiaries should be encouraged to play a role in knowledge and behaviour change by attending education sessions. Women should remain beneficiaries of the cash transfers as this leads to empowerment in the community and increased likelihood that the woman is able to make financial decisions for the family.

END/