

Colombia

Part 1: Situation update in the country

During 2018 Colombia witnessed significant changes in the political, economic and social spheres, creating important challenges and opportunities not only for completing the objectives of the 2015–2019 cooperation programme and its alignment with UNICEF’s Strategic Plan, but also related to advocacy and alignment with main national agendas. These opportunities and challenges are related to: a) the focus of the new development agenda, which has required some adjustment to UNICEF Colombia’s workplans, b) the response to the migratory influx from Venezuela and c) implementation of the 2016 Peace Accords. In all areas, UNICEF has worked with the Government to prioritize children and to implement local and national actions to ensure their full protection and rights.

On August 2018 the newly elected President took office for a four-year term. Colombia's youngest-ever executive branch leader established three priority pacts (on equity, enterprise and productivity and legality) as pillars of the new National Development Plan 2018–2022 (NDP). These three pillars now comprise the fundamental framework for the new United Nations development assistance framework (UNDAF) and for developing UNICEF’s country programme document (CPD) for the period 2020–2024.

The new Government has incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the NDP, with a specific commitment to strengthening institutional structures for children and implementing the new national policy on children and adolescents, including specific policies on early childhood, with a strong emphasis on family empowerment. In addition, the Plan places special emphasis on closing the gaps in health and education, and on the prevention and elimination of violence and discrimination against girls, boys and adolescents. UNICEF is working with the new authorities to ensure that the lessons learned and best practices—including strategies such as educational trajectories, ethno-education, *Seres de Cuidado* (caregivers), *Somos Paz* (we are peace), *Mi Futuro es Hoy* (my future is today), child-friendly territories and others—are strengthened, reviewed and considered for taking to scale.

Beginning in 2018 Colombia became part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The country had an economic growth rate of 2 per cent in 2018 and, according to the World Bank’s 2018 GINI coefficient index, is the most inequitable country in the region. Poverty levels in 2017 had reached 29.9 per cent; 14.5 million Colombians lived below the poverty line. According to a 2017 analysis, total multi-dimensional poverty in Colombia among families with children under 18 years of age was 21.9 per cent (21.3 per cent for girls, 22.4 per cent for boys)—4.9 per cent higher than the multi-dimensional poverty rate for all families. This means that low-income families that have at least one child are at risk of lacking regular fulfilment of basic needs and rights.

In health and nutrition, notwithstanding progress achieved in coverage and quality, Colombia

continues to face challenges related to maternal and infant mortality, malnutrition and adolescent pregnancy— particularly in indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities and in rural areas, where problems associated with the migratory influx and armed conflict coincide. Recent data from the National Institute of Health indicate that 205 children died from acute malnutrition in 2017. Acute malnutrition among children under five increased between 2010 and 2015, from 0.9 per cent to 2.3 per cent, particularly in indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Maternal mortality continues to be a major challenge. According to the country's 2016 health situation analysis report, the maternal mortality rate was 51.1 per 100,000 live births, and was highest among indigenous populations. While adolescent pregnancy continues to fall overall, the number of deliveries among girls aged 10–14 increased from 5,551 in 2016 to 5,804 in 2017, according to the national survey of demographics and health (ENDS). The data highlight the need to strengthen prenatal, natal and post-partum care; prevent maternal mortality, especially in indigenous communities; strengthen care and prevention of malnutrition (both under-nutrition and overweight in children); implement the maternal breastfeeding plan; and prevent and care for adolescent pregnancies among girls aged 10 to 14.

Education enrolment rates have increased (96.4 per cent, SIMAT, 2017), but a continuing challenge is to guarantee educational trajectories that are timely, complete and of quality for girls, boys and adolescents. Repetition of grades, drop-out, lagging in years and low learning levels continue to pose a challenge to the education sector. Data published by the Ministry of Education (MEN) in 2018 show that: around 54 per cent of students in public schools score at the lowest levels and achieve insufficient grades on SABER 11 standardized tests; of every 100 students who enter first grade, only 46 reach 11th grade without dropping out or repeating any academic year; and around 15 per cent of students who reach the final year of each educational level (pre-school, first, fifth and ninth grades) fail to enrol immediately in the next grade level. Along these same lines, 38 per cent scored at low levels on the three areas evaluated by the PISA international test (OECD, 2018). This highlights the need to ensure effective protection for educational trajectories to diminish school drop-out, repetition and lagging and to guarantee that the country's most vulnerable children can access and remain in school.

Seventy-three per cent of the cases of sexual violence reported corresponded to girls and female adolescents in 2017. Moreover, 13.3 per cent of the girls and female adolescents surveyed in urban areas were married, as were 21.5 per cent of those surveyed in rural areas (ENDS, 2015). Fully 7.3 per cent of children aged five to 17 were engaged in work activities during 2017. The serious situation of violence, particularly against girls and female adolescents, has generated a growing call from public opinion and from monitoring agencies to strengthen government commitment to implementing policies, budgets and institutional arrangements that prevent inter-family violence, gender-based violence, community violence and child labour.

On top of these development challenges in 2018, Colombia faced a dramatic increase in the influx of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, which impacted the entire country. According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), Colombia has received over 50 per cent of the almost 3 million refugees and migrants leaving Venezuela, and now hosts the world's second-largest migrant population, after Turkey. The mixed migratory influx includes migrants who move to Colombia with the intention of remaining; others who cross the border for short periods, only to return home; and those who transit through the country seeking to settle in countries further south. The sub-set of the migrant population known as *ascaminantes* (walkers) is considered to be among the poorest and most vulnerable of all migrants, and

therefore one of main targets for humanitarian assistance, including from UNICEF. The country has also received a considerable number of Colombian nationals returning from Venezuela, some of whom had stayed in the neighbouring country for decades and therefore require support to achieve socio-economic inclusion and safe reintegration.

These different population movements taking place simultaneously represent a major challenge for both national and local government. According to a 2018 World Bank report, the magnitude of migration into Colombia is putting significant pressure on institutions, service provision systems, the labour market and the social dynamics of reception areas. According to the regional refugee and migrant response plan, the arrival of refugees and migrants from Venezuela to Colombia rose from fewer than 39,000 by end-2015 to 1,032,000 by end-September 2018. Between 27 and 30 per cent of the migrants are estimated to be children or adolescents.

In February 2018 the Colombian Government formally requested assistance from the United Nations System to deal with the migratory influx. UNICEF, in coordination with other UN agencies and international NGOs, fielded a series of rapid assessment teams to key municipalities along the border, which gathered data to plan a set of strategic interventions implemented in three departments. These rapid assessments served as inputs for the 2018 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal, put together by UNICEF's Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO), through which Colombia obtained US\$8 million of the US\$19 million requested for immediate response to support both migrants from Venezuela and host communities. This included a total of US\$2 million in funding from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

What was initially perceived as a geographically limited cross-border humanitarian situation grew in late 2018 to become an entrenched structural challenge of integrating migrants in all 32 of Colombia's departments. UNICEF, with the six actions to protect all refugees and migrant children, constitutes a major player the inter-agency mixed migration flows group, currently led by UNHCR and the International Organization on Migration (IOM). By the end of 2018 UNICEF Colombia, with support from LACRO and headquarters divisions, had developed eight strategic, inter-sectoral interventions. These ranged from child-friendly spaces and alternative educational spaces, to community and institutional actions in WASH and specialized health and nutritional services via mobile healthcare teams. Some impacts of UNICEF and partner interventions include: 30,927 girls, boys and women benefited from interventions that reduce their risk of gender-based violence. More than 11,500 children and adults of both sexes in mine-contaminated departments received mine risk education messages on safe behaviours to protect themselves and others. A total of 2,587 children (51 per cent girls, 49 per cent boys) received at least minimum vaccine coverage, according to Colombian Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) standards. Safe water was provided to 29,809 people (46 per cent children) at key sites including schools, transit centres, feeding centres and child-friendly spaces. UNICEF and partners ensured formal education for 43,515 girls and boys who would not otherwise have accessed schools, including both migrant and host community children.

Only a few formal crossing points exist between Venezuela and Colombia, but thousands of migrants cross over via *trochas* (illegal pathways), thus it is impossible to calculate with certainty the real number of migrants in country at any given time. The Colombian Government has taken commendable steps to respond to the situation and has called on humanitarian partners and the international community to support its efforts. In November 2018 the Government issued a new social and economic policy paper that estimates a working figure of

'irregular' migrants in the country for 2019 at 654,174, in addition to the hundreds of thousands who had managed to regularize their status via a special stay permit or border mobility card that allows migrants to enter Colombia for up seven days.

Consonant with the principles of 'protection first and rights up front', UNICEF has noted that this migrant situation constitutes first and foremost a protection crisis. The migrant population in general – and girls, boys and adolescents in particular– are especially vulnerable to gender-based violence, trafficking, recruitment and use by armed groups, involvement in illegal activities (including illicit cultivation), child labour, family separation, interpersonal and community violence, landmine accidents and many other ills. UNICEF's response to this situation includes: identification of unaccompanied or separated children; care and prevention of mine accidents, sexual violence and recruitment; and the provision of psychosocial support.

In relation to implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement, in 2018 the new Government adopted the political agenda: 'legality and peace', which summarizes the implementation of agreements to date and defines commitments, institutional arrangements and funding needs. The document calls on the international community and the UN to continue supporting this process, under new rules of legality and national security, in which the Government commits to supporting victims and preventing recruitment by non-State armed groups.

The emergence of new dynamics of organized armed violence has created challenges that not only exacerbate poverty in some difficult-to-reach areas of the country, but also hinder community development. This is particularly problematic in a country with persistent inequality of opportunities for children and adolescents, where poverty is especially apparent in rural, isolated areas and among indigenous and Afro-Colombian children.

Massive population displacements increased during 2018, as did the vulnerability and exposure of children and adolescents to different forms of violence, discrimination and exclusion, with differing impacts on girls and boys. The post-Peace Accord phase has seen a surge in: sexual violence (especially against girls); recruitment and use (especially of boys), accidents and victims of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices, as well as in the displacement and confinement of populations in specific geographical areas of the country. In this context, UNICEF has strengthened its advocacy and activities to ensure the protection of children and adolescents in these areas.

Despite considerable progress by the new administration in establishing inter-sectoral policies and agendas to address these challenges (e.g., national development plan, migration policy paper and the policy on legality and peace), the responsible government agencies--some new and others in the process of restructuring--require technical assistance and adequate funding to fulfil the proposed objectives. The finalization of UNICEF's current cooperation cycle in 2019 and the formulation of a new CPD and UNDAF represent major opportunities to demonstrate the organization's added value and the strategic role that UNICEF can play at both national and regional levels to collaborate with Colombia's development, humanitarian and peace building processes, with the protection of child rights as the *leitmotif*.

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

Child survival and development. UNICEF Colombia, in coordination with the MoHSP, local governments and academia, succeeded in strengthening the capacities of 1,300 health professionals from 14 departments with the highest prevalence of acute malnutrition in management of acute, severe and moderate malnutrition in girls and boys under five years of age. This in turn created better opportunities for care for approximately 3,500 girls and boys diagnosed with malnutrition in prioritized municipalities. This result is aligned with SDGs 2 and 3, with the Government's NDP (pact for equity) and with the national plan for public health. UNICEF played a key role as technical and strategic facilitator to ensure the continued positioning of child malnutrition on the agenda of the new Government, with the aim of expanding coverage to the entire national territory.

Education. The main accomplishment of 2018 for UNICEF's work on inclusive education was the expansion of the programme on protecting educational trajectories, which multiplied from nine schools in 2017 to 64 in 2018, the majority of which are rural schools in the departments of Chocó, Meta, Guaviare, Antioquia, Córdoba, Cauca and Valle del Cauca. This growth enabled UNICEF to reach 4,849 girls, boys and adolescents and to begin strengthening the capacities of 753 school teachers and principals to monitor individualized learning and student backgrounds and to improve the quality of their pedagogical interactions. The joint initiative by UNICEF and the Ministry and Secretariats of Education, seeks to increase school access for traditionally excluded populations so that once they are enrolled they will stay in school, learn what they need to for their age and complete their studies.

This expansion was possible due to several factors: the creation of an internal working group within the Ministry of Education (MoE); the mobilization of local action with education secretariats; the expressed desire of the new Government to support and scale up the project; interest on the part of the multi-partner trust fund (MPTF) to work in areas of conflict/difficult access; and the strengthening of local partners. This programme is aligned with SDG 4, the new NDP and the MoE's new education plan.

Child protection. UNICEF's child protection section supported implementation of the Peace Accords with a focus on children, in two specific contexts: support for demobilized children, and prevention of new recruitment. UNICEF's role centred on the accompaniment of institutions and communities in local processes that permit recognition of and care for child victims of the armed conflict, promoting reconciliation, child protection and local peace building.

Key actions included support and continuing care for the 124 adolescents and youths who were formally demobilized from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army (FARC-EP), through psychosocial and family-based support. This strategy allowed UNICEF Colombia to access the homes of demobilized children in 58 municipalities, mainly in isolated rural areas of 20 departments. In addition, UNICEF implemented a model of community support (Trenzando Paz), piloted in San Vicente del Caguán, Caquetá, where it worked with 90 families and 256 girls, boys, adolescents and youths, along with institutions and civil society organizations, to strengthen the protective environment in host communities. The different actors worked together under the coordination of the national Government, through the Presidential Council for Human Rights and the National Agency for Reincorporation. UNICEF designed and successfully implemented this strategy and model, previously approved by the National Reincorporation Council, which has both a FARC and a Government component.

Some 4,200 girls, boys and adolescents participated in peace building actions in 25

municipalities of nine departments via the strategy of 'Somos paz' (We are peace). The children, their families and their communities gained skills and led 105 local reconciliation initiatives. The exercise also permitted UNICEF to identify and bring into social activities youth and adolescent victims of recruitment not included in earlier demobilization actions. To support stabilization in the territories, UNICEF offered technical and financial support for the 'Mi Futuro es Hoy' (My future is today) programme, which engaged 28,247 girls, boys and adolescents in 166 municipalities and 593 rural zones who suffered direct impacts from the armed conflict. UNICEF provided training to the children and adolescents, their families, schools, communities and government institutions to collectively construct protective environments for children, respecting their rights. UNICEF supported 900 peace building initiatives formulated and led by children. These key results were supported by the European Union, Norway, the MPTF and the U.S. National Committee for UNICEF.

Social inclusion. Through a multi-sectoral national advocacy programme led by UNICEF's social inclusion section, UNICEF provided the new Government with technical inputs for the design of the NDP. UNICEF's policy document, which was welcomed by the Government, included key aspects of the situation analysis of children and recommendations for closing gaps in health, nutrition, education and protection, as well as addressing key barriers to the prevention and protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse and all types of violence. In addition, inputs for the NDP took into consideration the national consultation with children and adolescents led by UNICEF and complemented by the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF).

Other key results

Goal area 1: Every child survives and thrives

The 2018 work plan for child survival and development sought to reduce maternal, perinatal and neo-natal morbidity and mortality; malnutrition and adolescent pregnancy, through actions aimed at improving access and quality of services in health, nutrition and early childhood development (ECD). Key factors contributing to positive results were: a) the empowerment of teachers, families and communities to improve infant, child and adolescent care and education and b) the focus on indigenous, Afro-Colombian and isolated, rural communities. Key achievements included:

- Design of an inter-cultural model and protocol for maternal and peri-natal care. This was carried out by UNICEF, together with the MoHSP, General System of Social Security at local levels, sister United Nations agencies – including the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and World Food Programme (WFP) – and the indigenous Wayúu communities from Uribia and Arhuaca communities from Pueblo Bello.
- Development of a pilot ECD project carried out with families, using basic elements of the *Seres de Cuidado* (Caregivers) strategy. This was undertaken in coordination with the inter-sectoral commission on early childhood, ICBF, MoE and Inter-American Development Bank. The pilot focused on isolated rural populations throughout the country.
- Formulation of the national plan to promote breastfeeding with an inter-sectoral approach, which was implemented with the National Congress and private sector partners.
- Integration of new material on preventing violence and child abuse in the home, as part of the

Seres de Cuidado strategy. UNICEF and partners worked in Chocó and La Guajira with 1,414 families, 1,683 girls and boys under five, and 454 pregnant and lactating women. Seres de Cuidado now covers all age groups of the life cycle of children, guaranteeing their rights during each period of their lives.

In addition to these achievements, in the area of adolescent health and nutrition UNICEF Colombia focused on two separate lines of action: prevention of adolescent pregnancy and promotion of healthy lifestyles. For the former, the child survival and development section worked with the Inter-sectoral commission on sexual and reproductive rights to support capacity building in adolescent health for 716 individuals (370 adolescents) in five departments and designed a plan for inter-sectoral work through networks to prevent adolescent pregnancy. To encourage healthy lifestyles, UNICEF worked with 2,509 teachers, food preparers, shopkeepers and community members and with 12,200 children and adolescents in 16 schools across four departments to promote healthy eating, physical exercise and hygiene practices, using education, training and social mobilization.

Goal area 2: Every child learns

During 2018 the inclusive education section focused on improving educational quality in schools where UNICEF works as the most effective means to prevent school dropout and improve student learning. Working with the Ministry and Secretariats of Education, UNICEF and partners succeeded in improving pedagogical skills of school teachers and principals in the most distant and vulnerable areas of the country. The main results of this work include:

- Targeted schools now understand the factors that determine the educational trajectories of girls, boys and adolescents, beyond grade-levels or academic subjects, and have tools to track in real time the individual risk of dropping out for each student.
- To close gender gaps at schools, UNICEF initiated a programme promoting empowerment, participation and learning for girls and female adolescents, including an emphasis on developing skills in science, technology and math.
- UNICEF dedicated a great part of its resources to consolidating skills for life for students in contexts of armed conflict. This included the design and implementation by the students themselves (accompanied by their teachers) of 35 initiatives for promoting reconciliation, peace building and community strengthening.
- Evidence suggests that isolated ethnic communities tend to receive the lowest quality educational services. As a result, UNICEF finalized the design and launch in 2018 of community education plans in 68 prioritized rural, ethno-education schools.

Despite the progress achieved during 2018, critical changes in the context had an impact on UNICEF's results in education. For example, the emergence of new forms of violence directly affected girls, boys and adolescents, requiring greater preventive efforts to strengthen schools as protective spaces. The education sector also faced an increased demand for school enrolment slots during 2018 due to a surge in the school-age population; mainly migrants from Venezuela. Colombia continues to face the challenge of integrating into the educational system some 1.5 million girls, boys and adolescents who are not in school. This challenge, combined with the continuing quest for educational quality, underlines the continued relevance of UNICEF's actions in areas of the country where the most vulnerable population resides.

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

The 2018 work plan for child protection section was concentrated in two principal areas: children in armed conflict and peace building and prevention and protection from other types of violence in family and community contexts. The basis of both lines of action centred on strengthening the capacities of families, communities and institutions, as well as of girls, boys and adolescents themselves, and on advocating to make visible and include children in decisions and actions by government authorities. Among the main results, highlights were:

- UNICEF support for the transitional justice architecture (including the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, Truth Committee, Centre for Historical Memory and the Victims Unit) through developing guidelines and methodologies to ensure that the voice of children was heard in transitional justice procedures.
- Working with Descontamina Colombia, the Government mine action directorate, UNICEF improved the education sector's ability to mitigate risks in areas highly contaminated by antipersonnel landmines, unexploded ordinance and improvised explosive devices, which put children's right to education at risk. The mine risk education (MRE) model for educational environments was implemented in 24 municipalities across five departments, strengthening the capacities of mayors' offices to manage these risks in prioritized schools. This involved providing training in MRE to 24 community liaisons and 184 teachers, who gained skills in replicating training on safe behaviours and ultimately reached 12,070 girls, boys and adolescents; 1,308 parents; and another 102 teachers.
- UNICEF supported the Presidential Council on Human Rights to develop a new line of public policy on the prevention of recruitment, use and sexual violence against girls, boys and adolescents by illegal armed groups and organized criminal groups. The policy was formally issued via Decree 1434 in August 2018.
- During 2018 UNICEF Colombia continued its work on UN Security Council Resolution 1612, completing global horizontal notes on cases of the six worst violations of child rights during conflict reported by UN agencies and civil society. UNICEF continued to serve as technical secretary to the country-level working group, coordinating the monitoring and reporting effort and ensuring sufficient information to prepare documents such as the Secretary-General's annual report.
- To protect children against sexual exploitation and trafficking, UNICEF provided training to 380 judges, magistrates and judicial personnel; staff of the national police and armed forces ;migration authorities; local officials in Amazonas and Quibdó; and staff at Avianca Airlines and Bogotá airport on issues related to trafficking of persons and smuggling (under the GLO-ACT Project) and about online abuse and exploitation (as part of the 'We Protect' project). UNICEF advocated successfully for the reactivation of working groups against sexual exploitation in the Tri-Border region of the Amazon, and provided technical support for public hearings organized by the Attorney General's Office that resulted in the signing of national and regional commitments on sexual exploitation. UNICEF also supported an agreement to eliminate sexual exploitation in tourism by Colombia's private and public sectors and globally at the summit organized by the NGO Eliminate Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking (ECPAT), as well as an initiative to combat impunity for these crimes by Colombia's Council of State.

- In juvenile justice, UNICEF Colombia supported and accompanied national and local committees by training 750 officials through technical courses, working groups with the judiciary and other juvenile justice events. In addition, UNICEF led a study on the situation of female adolescents within the juvenile justice system. Although girls comprise a much smaller fraction of the total population in conflict with the law than boys, girls often face serious difficulties because of their gender. The study showed an urgent need for further strengthening of the juvenile justice system with a rigorously applied gender approach to avoid mere nominal compliance and/or stereotypical representations of gender. The study was under review by the government counterpart at end-2018.

UNICEF developed a strategic alliance with the Presidential Council on Human Rights and other agencies to implement the strategy for *Mi Futuro es Hoy*, the objective of which is to prevent military recruitment of girls, boys and adolescents in isolated rural areas. The strategy served to bring government institutions to geographic zones traditionally ignored by the State and to strengthen the capacities of 28,247 children and 10,416 families in 166 municipalities where new armed actors have arisen in the post-Peace Accord context.

Leaders of Descontamina Colombia and UNICEF jointly provided technical and financial resources to implement a mine action strategy associated with quality management in MRE, which seeks to strengthen MRE sector capacities within organizations, individuals and projects being carried out. This activity responds to a new decree in Colombian public policy (number 672,2017) and the new MRE standard 12.10, which establishes as a priority the development of technical requirements for the accreditation of MRE organizations and the certification of MRE trainers, to guarantee technically and pedagogically correct exercises to promote safe behaviours in communities.

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

UNICEF's child survival and development section carried out WASH activities in three of its four CPD outputs, addressing underlying causes of morbidity from diarrhoeal disease and acute respiratory infections in children under five years of age. The rural population lags far behind urban dwellers, with a 24 per cent gap in access to safe drinking water. The gap in access to sanitation between rural and urban dwellers is 18 per cent. It has further been estimated that 14 per cent of the rural population practices open defecation (JMP). In this context, for UNICEF Colombia, guaranteeing access to WASH constitutes one of the first measures to be taken in order to model interventions that diminish inequalities and reduce child morbidity in hard-to-reach rural communities. Pilot initiatives in La Guajira, Chocó, Cauca, Antioquia, Putumayo and Nariño successfully provided hundreds of girls, boys, adolescents, women and men with safe water, adequate basic sanitation and hygiene promotion, benefiting 2,214 families. In addition, 12,200 girls, boys and adolescents at schools received information on key hygiene practices. The biggest challenge that UNICEF confronted was the technical weakness of local institutions to implement WASH policy in rural areas, which UNICEF addressed through its presence and technical assistance in the communities, as a key component of the model intervention. As a result of these efforts, the Vice Ministry of Water has expressed an interest in continuing the partnership with UNICEF to implement the community-based model.

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

The Child-Friendly Territories Initiative, adapted from the Global Child-Friendly Cities Initiative,

was implemented in four municipalities. Through this strategy, UNICEF supported municipal authorities in a pilot of the larger programme to be rolled out more broadly in 2019 in 20 municipalities affected by migration and poverty. A key component of the pilots was a toolkit to measure and improve the municipality's progress on social indicators related to child rights. Partnership with the ICBF was a key factor enabling the expansion of this initiative.

Through the Hechos y Derechos (Facts and Rights) initiative, UNICEF helped develop national guidelines to improve local government management in municipalities, addressing the processes of planning, implementation, evaluation and public accountability. These guidelines will be used in 2019 by all 1,102 mayors and 32 governors to demonstrate progress, achievements and gaps on child rights in their territories. Interest on the part of partners, including the Attorney General's Office, was vital to maintaining the momentum of this intervention.

In four municipalities (Quibdó, Paez, Inza and Mocoa) and in the Governor's Office in Boyacá Department, UNICEF trained officials in management of child policies and their integration with other sectors. In the process, hundreds of girls, boys and adolescents participated in roundtables presenting their own proposals directly to local authorities. UNICEF also designed a diagnostic tool to enable local authorities to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities and to facilitate their access to various social services.

In response to the migration crisis UNICEF supported the National Family Welfare System to design and implement a tool for measuring multi-sectoral services available at local level in La Guajira, Maicao, Cúcuta and Arauca. This tool will contribute to the creation of a unified system for monitoring supply and demand of services for migrant children.

Humanitarian situation

Colombia faced a serious humanitarian challenge in 2018, in the form of a massive migratory influx of civilians from Venezuela. By year's end, over 1 million Venezuelans and 300,000 returning Colombians had migrated into the country with the intention of remaining, and were welcomed with a conscious 'open-door' policy. Migrants from Venezuela view Colombia as either a transit route, a destination or temporary oasis for cross-border excursions. The dimensions of the influx necessitated rapid, flexible action by all humanitarian actors, as what was initially diagnosed as a temporary cross-border movement transformed into a national humanitarian situation involving all 32 departments. The situation was complicated by the nature of the territories to which migrants have gravitated— areas of isolated, rural populations, characterized by conflict and the presence of non-State armed groups, with elevated risk of landmine accidents, child recruitment and widespread sexual violence, where institutional presence tends to be limited and basic services scarce.

The number of migrants from Venezuela rose dramatically in early 2018 and continued to grow steadily. On 17 February, the Government formally requested support from the United Nations system to respond to the mixed migratory influx. UNICEF Colombia dispatched rapid assessment teams to Arauca, Norte de Santander and La Guajira, located along the Venezuelan border, based on reports that the influx was greatest in those three departments. The initial evaluation of all three teams pointed to glaring humanitarian needs for children in health, WASH, education and protection, as well as lack of information and access to internet, radio and formal communication channels. UNICEF officials, with support from LACRO, proceeded to take initial actions to catalyze the humanitarian response, reprogramming of

LACRO regular resources, procuring basic supplies, rearranging staff responsibilities, direct implementation of life-saving actions and activating emergency partnerships. Initial funding for UNICEF Colombia's work was mobilized by LACRO and UNICEF Headquarters in the form of HTF and then EPF, complemented by a timely CERF process that brought in over US\$2 million for UNICEF Colombia. The first response at field level—distribution of household water filters and hygiene items and rolling out child protection activities to communities--was launched in May. By the end of 2018, UNICEF had expanded its work to eight departments, offering a package of interventions and services in eight different sectors.

UNICEF launched and implemented several strategic activities in the process of responding to the Government's call for support. In health and nutrition, in close consultation with Ministry officials, UNICEF trained and supported three professional mobile health teams to work in communities where migrants transit or are settled. In protection, UNICEF established 19 child-friendly spaces (both fixed and mobile) as protective sites where UNICEF trained children and their families to recognize their rights, taught them to protect themselves from violence and provided emotional care and support for infant and young children through recreational and education activities. Child-friendly spaces also permitted identification of unaccompanied or separated children as well as those not enrolled in school, and specific actions to notify and refer cases to the corresponding authorities.

In WASH, the strategy prioritized the provision or rehabilitation of water sources, toilets and hygiene promotion in the key sites where migrants congregate (e.g., shelters, border crossing points, schools, child-friendly spaces). Since migrant children face numerous obstacles to accessing education, UNICEF Colombia distributed basic supplies and education kits, including ECD kits; provided technical assistance to education authorities for the implementation of regulations that allow undocumented children from all grades to access and remain in school; and set up alternative classrooms and protective environments to ensure learning, even for those not yet enrolled.

As a cross-sectoral strategy to facilitate delivery of key information and access to services, the communication for development (C4D) section promoted safe, protective and healthy behaviours by delivering key messages to prevent gender-based violence, child recruitment, landmine accidents and family separation, as well as promoting breastfeeding and hygiene practices. These messages were delivered in child-friendly spaces, at community centres, via mobile health teams, at feeding centres and in transportation terminals; and jointly with local health authorities, community leaders and young and adolescents leaders who used non-traditional communication channels (e.g., street theatre and rap) reaching 125,000 people in affected communities. The communications section worked jointly with UNHCR to launch a series of public information campaigns to combat xenophobia, which gained an enormous audience in Colombia via both traditional and social media. The campaigns utilized popular memes, music and animation to prevent stigmatization and promote tolerance for migrants.

In a little over six months, UNICEF Colombia managed to provide vital, life-saving information, supplies and services to tens of thousands of girls, boys, adolescents, and their families. To cite only a few accomplishments: 29,965 girls, boys and women accessed risk-mitigation and response interventions addressing gender-based violence, over 18,000 girls and boys received psychosocial support and interventions to prevent recruitment by armed groups; some 1,000 pregnant or lactating women and families of children under five received information about nutrition on IYCF (breastfeeding, micronutrients and basic hygiene). Another 881 children under five received micronutrients and de-worming supplements, while 44,320 people received

vital information about water-borne diseases, hygiene, menstrual hygiene management (MHM), household water treatment systems and proper management of waste and excreta. For education, 11,429 school-aged children on the move (including adolescents) accessed educational institutions, including schools still functioning in affected areas, re-opened schools, and/or newly established temporary facilities. UNICEF's anti-xenophobia campaign targeting adolescents reached 21 million persons via traditional media and was mentioned 2.5 million times on social media. It should be noted that the numbers above include both migrants and host communities, as UNICEF used this conscious strategy to avoid the creation of resentment or xenophobia by favouring only one target group. These humanitarian results achieved by UNICEF, in close collaboration with implementing partners, government counterparts and UN allies, were complemented by regular, planned UNICEF activities in support of host communities.

UNICEF's results in this emergency effort should not only be viewed in terms of beneficiary numbers. The actual impact of interventions by UNICEF and implementing partners may also be perceived in the advocacy and technical assistance provided to the Government amidst an exceedingly delicate political context. Barely a year after the signature of Peace Accords with FARC, and amidst the intensification of violence by other non-State armed actors, Colombia faced a huge migratory influx across its borders. The country office worked with national authorities to promote education for all, flexible models to protect separated or unaccompanied child migrants, the provision of vaccination and nutritional services to migrants with no health coverage, as well as a model for providing vital services to children in resource-poor, unstable environments, implemented in close coordination with local authorities. In the long run, these upstream initiatives may be just as vital as the life-saving, humanitarian action on behalf of migrant beneficiaries.

In responding to the migration crisis, the office has had to grow significantly. The overall number of personnel, including staff and consultants, increased by 32 per cent. From having only one sub-office in Chocó, with a single staff member, UNICEF Colombia established a second sub-office in Riohacha with two staff members and out-posted staff in four additional locations close to the border. Human resource capacity was increased via recruitments and inter-office loans to cover administration, finance, supply and logistics. Fifteen additional temporary staff were hired to work in the education, protection, health and nutrition, WASH, social inclusion and C4D sections. Two staff members were temporarily borrowed from the protection section and transformed into an emergency coordination team. Additional consultants were hired in information management, violence prevention, education and field support.

The overall office budget doubled in size, as US\$8 million in emergency funding was received during the seven-month period from June to December. Through rigorous financial planning and monitoring, UNICEF Colombia utilized US\$5.5 million for vital programmatic interventions during that period. It should be noted that nearly US\$3.8 million of the total amount received arrived during the last three months of the year.

The overall emergency effort has raised several key challenges and some opportunities for UNICEF Colombia. The endemic insecurity of several prioritized areas where migrants are present (e.g., Catatumbo, Arauca and Tumaco), combined with the complex logistics of reaching isolated and sparsely populated areas such as Uribe in La Guajira and San Miguel in Putumayo, has meant that UNICEF's humanitarian response was perhaps more costly, time-consuming and labour-intensive than in other parts of the LAC region. The complexity of

scaling up humanitarian activities – precisely at a moment when the role of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was being scaled – down placed additional demands on all actors on the humanitarian country team. On the positive side, the office was able to adapt and apply various development actions within the emergency context, resulting in creative interventions that will serve Colombia for some time to come. Such is the case of the mobile health teams, ECD-oriented child friendly spaces and specific alliances to protect and care for adolescents affected by sexual violence, trafficking and family separation. In the spirit of the UN reform, UN agencies have agreed to share common premises in key affected territories and are coordinating activities. UNICEF undertakes joint activities with WFP, UNHCR, IOM and international organizations such as Norwegian Refugee Council, SOS Villages, Save the Children and World Vision, among others.

Gender

UNICEF Colombia mobilized key entities to develop a national strategy to eradicate child marriage and early unions, in alignment with SDG 5, UNICEF's global Gender Action Plan 2018-2021 (GAP) and the Inter-agency regional programme. UNICEF engaged actors such as the ministries of health and education, the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, the Presidential Council for Women's Equity and the National Planning Department, as well as civil society and women's organizations. The office convened female representatives from indigenous organizations, who established a preliminary work plan to address these harmful practices. Advocacy and technical policy guidance were the main strategies employed to conduct this process, which resulted in the explicit inclusion of child marriage in the country's new national development plan.

In 2018 UNICEF Colombia's gender strategy focused on three of the five targeted priorities established in the GAP. The office undertook joint plans and strategies with UN agencies (UN Women, UNFPA, UNCHR, PAHO-WHO), implementing partners and government institutions, focused on: 1) prevention and community-based response to gender-based violence against girls and adolescents; 2) promoting empowerment of and non-discrimination against girls and adolescents in schools; 3) advocacy with national authorities and civil society members on addressing child marriage and early unions, as mentioned above. The strategy also included a human resources component aimed at improving gender relations and applying existing mechanisms to avoid discrimination and promote gender equality within UNICEF.

For the first targeted priority UNICEF initiated implementation of the UN's MPT fund project, 'prevention, protection and care of women and girl victims of violence in public and private spaces', in alliance with UN Women, UNFPA, UNHCR. In selected territories where disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is underway, UNICEF reoriented the scope of the initiative (which originally did not include specific actions and budgets for girls), mobilizing resources to guarantee their participation and protection in a context where they are most vulnerable to the challenges of any DDR process, and to emerging issues such as armed violence and migration. The project includes the creation and equipment of safe spaces where all girls from prioritized communities can interact and build a critical mass to stand up for their rights. Despite difficulties in accessing some territories, unstable security conditions and institutional weaknesses, the project is reaching 15 civil society organizations and helping them to integrate a girls' rights approach into their agenda, developing local capacities of public institutions to respond to gender-based violence and engaging 50 girls and 40 female adolescents in initiatives on girls' rights and preventing gender-based violence.

For the second targeted priority, UNICEF's innovation project 'promoting girl's empowerment within schools, created tools, methodologies and content to address specific needs and interests of girls and female adolescents and to overcome conditions that sustain gender discrimination. The project prioritized two municipalities, mostly populated by rural, Afro-Colombian communities affected by armed violence, socioeconomic vulnerability, structural discrimination and the exclusion of women. Using an inter-sectoral approach, this initiative improved the capacity not only of girls and adolescents, but also of teachers, school members, families and boys – effectively impacting existing gender inequalities in schools. The initial phase strengthened the capacity of 100 girls and adolescents to participate in school spaces, advocate for their rights and create initiatives to fulfil their aspirations. The project supports schools in the development and implementation of protection protocols addressing gender-based violence. UNICEF developed non-formal curricula to enhance girls' self-awareness and agency, which increase knowledge on gender-based violence, MHM and STEM as a means to empower girls.

Regarding gender mainstreaming, UNICEF and partners supported gender-sensitive initiatives within local reconciliation processes in municipalities most affected by armed conflict. A total of 1,000 girls and adolescents identified the problems they face in the post-Peace Accord context (e.g., increased sexual violence and reinforcement of traditional gender norms) and designed local initiatives to mobilize families, community leaders and institutions to confront the causes of gender-based violence and discrimination. These initiatives have facilitated community dialogue on subjects often neglected in peace building processes.

In response to the migratory influx from Venezuela, UNICEF Colombia established specific actions and targets on: 1) prevention and response to gender-based violence in communities and schools, with an emphasis on sexual exploitation and early unions; and, 2) care for pregnant girls between 10 and 14 years, in health and child protection. Some 29,000 people were reached with key messages and assistance on these issues.

Within the human resources component of the gender strategy, UNICEF created a mechanism to promote open dialogue on gender issues involving all personnel. This mechanism (known as 'A Coffee Between Equals') addresses issues of masculinity, parenthood, breastfeeding and gender gaps in learning outcomes. Programme specialists committed to create, within their section's planning, at least one target related to gender equality and non-discrimination. The office created a breastfeeding room, a child-friendly space and disability-friendly bathrooms.

A gender review undertaken in 2018 confirmed that gender mainstreaming had made progress in the areas of child protection, health and education. In those areas, gender analysis was conducted, resources were allocated to achieve specific targets, significant participation of girls and adolescents was assured and alignment with GAP-targeted priorities is explicit. Nevertheless, gender mainstreaming is not systematically applied in all programmatic areas. The review recommended developing consistent gender mainstreaming and creating an explicit working agenda with the national gender mechanism.

Cross-cutting Issues

Adolescents. The Somos Paz methodological framework designed by UNICEF Colombia four years ago makes children and adolescents the main actors of reconciliation in communities seriously affected by violence. Since January 2018, the methodology has been adapted to design and launch the 'Our UNICEF' programme and, as part of the global volunteering

initiative, contributed to the objectives of the Generation Unlimited global strategy. 'Our UNICEF' has created a nationwide network of youth, who actively participate and promote children's rights and the youth agenda in six departments. By December 2018 some 1,162 adolescents had become leaders in 'Our UNICEF' and had strengthened participation by children and adolescents in their communities, which face challenges related to reconciliation and recovering social cohesion. The programme was developed in partnership with local government and youth organizations and has a digital platform that serves as a forum for leaders to exchange experiences and connect with one another. This programme elevating the voice of Colombian adolescents was highlighted at the regional meeting on adolescence organized by LACRO in Santiago de Chile in November 2018.

United Nations working together. During 2018 UNICEF worked with sister UN agencies on several initiatives funded by the MPTF and the Peace Building Fund in the areas of child protection, ECD and gender. UNICEF contributed to the drafting of the common country assessment and contributed actively to the humanitarian needs overview, humanitarian response plan and refugee migrant response plan.

Resource mobilization. After the first six months of 2018, during which the market was constrained due the election process, the total income obtained by the private sector fundraising operation grew by 16 per cent over 2017, reaching US\$7,195,396. This achievement was made possible through a successful pledged donor strategy, strengthening and developing alliances, events and legacies. At the end of December UNICEF Colombia had 63,000 pledged donors. The country office contributed US\$1.8 million to regular resources (representing a 24 per cent increase over the previous year) and US\$162,000 to the regional thematic fund.

Private sector engagement. Some of UNICEF Colombia's most compelling priorities involve child protection and the youth agenda. One key result of these activities was the establishment of a close working relationship with TIGO (a key player in the ICT sector). This resulted in the co-design of an intervention to leverage the power of technology and digital communications to bring to life a platform to strengthen adolescents' life skills (for protection, personal planning and employability.) In addition, a fundraising engagement with the association of bilingual schools of Bogotá promoted a link between students in Bogotá and Chocó Department, raising consciousness on both sides and developing long-lasting connections on the issue of peace building.

Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints

In 2018, UNICEF faced a significant challenge to implement its regular country programme, while at the same time designing and putting into place a comprehensive humanitarian response, in harmony with the Government, to one of the most complex migration situations in the hemisphere: the mixed migratory influx from Venezuela. Three major lessons were gleaned from the emergency response, revolving around the need to: a) integrate emergency response with development activities, b) involve host communities in the planning and implementation of humanitarian activities; and c) adapt development interventions from the regular programme to the humanitarian response.

- **Integrating emergency response with development activities:** Response to humanitarian crises normally implies an immediate action to provide services and supplies to save lives at risk. The current crisis, however, is complex, with a diversity of needs among the migrant population, as some are settled, others in transit and still others travelling back and forth. The areas through which they arrive tend to be among the poorest, most isolated and conflict-affected in the country. Finally, the situation affects not only Venezuelan nationals leaving their country, but also hundreds of thousands of returning Colombians, and the host communities that receive all the migrants. In effect, there are elements of development and resilience-building within a larger humanitarian emergency. As a result, UNICEF Colombia had to develop not only humanitarian actions but also longer-term interventions aimed at overcoming structural barriers to the protection and guarantee of child rights. UNICEF was simultaneously promoting humanitarian and development agendas on behalf of the affected population, including both migrant and local communities.
- **Involving host communities:** The magnitude of the migratory influx has forced Venezuelans and returning Colombians to compete for access to basic services and the fulfilment of basic rights, alongside resident Colombian communities. In this context, demonstrations of xenophobia against migrants have become common. Thus UNICEF had to prioritize community-focused activities that benefit both incoming migrants and host communities. This conscious choice facilitated the promotion of concepts such as peaceful co-existence between Colombians and Venezuelans, through the adaptation of methodologies already developed and used in the regular country programme to promote child rights in the post-Peace Accord context. A major lesson learned was that regular humanitarian responses cannot overlook the critical role that host communities play in facilitating (or inhibiting) the effectiveness of specific actions in any sector, including child protection, health and nutrition, WASH and social inclusion. The involvement of host communities must be considered in a wide range of options; from receiving timely and appropriate humanitarian assistance, under the same condition as migrants, to becoming actors that facilitate a protective and inclusive environment for the most vulnerable migrants. Moreover, host communities must also be part of local strategies for accountability to affected populations.
- **Adapting development interventions to the humanitarian response:** A parallel lesson involved the need for UNICEF to deliberately establish, from the start, a clear nexus between basic humanitarian response and broader development actions. This approach has proven crucial in balancing the implementation of the humanitarian response and the regular country programme. The need for immediate response prompted UNICEF to make use of existing programmatic strategies, adapting them to the emergency context of the migratory influx. In virtually every sector, this type of adaptation took place: a) in protection, UNICEF applied the Somos Paz strategy used to prevent child recruitment among adolescents from both migrant and host communities; b) in health and nutrition, UNICEF refurbished the sectoral strategy of mobile health units from public hospitals to ensure the provision of additional health care services (vaccinations, peri-natal care, nutritional surveillance and sensitization about ECD and violence prevention) for migrant populations based in affected communities; c) in education, the office adapted the practice of child-friendly spaces to the school environment, to provide non-formal educational activities for migrant children not yet registered in the school system.

The key challenges confronting UNICEF in 2018 were twofold: finding implementing partners in isolated regions and enhancing coordination mechanisms. For UNICEF Colombia, identifying implementing partners at the local level in the prioritized areas of the emergency response proved difficult, due to conditions on the ground. This barrier was overcome by selecting smaller local operators who knew the territory and were willing to go to scale, with UNICEF assistance, in areas such as training, transfer of methodologies and funding. When no local organization was present, UNICEF partnered with larger or international NGOs.

Colombia has historically been characterized by a strong humanitarian architecture. The clusters, the humanitarian coordination team and local level coordination working groups functioned well, with support from all agencies. With the advent of the regional platform for migrants and refugees in 2018, a parallel structure was created at both the regional and country level to coordinate the response to the crisis. This situation created some challenges and constraints for the agencies, mainly in sharing a common strategic vision for the response, enhancing inter-sectoral coordination and avoiding duplication of activities at national and local levels. This situation is currently under discussion within the UN country team, including a proposal to enhance the role of the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator to promote coherence between the two existing mechanisms.

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