

Croatia

Update on the context and situation of children

In 2019, the Croatian economy continued on its moderate path of growth. Croatia ranks as **a high-income country** with US\$14,869 GDP per capita (in 2018). Household consumption contributes most to economic growth, and contributions from foreign funds to GDP is growing (remittances and EU grant funds). Increasing outmigration contributes to the high dependency rate on remittances (6.3 per cent of GDP in 2018, the highest in the EU). A positive trend in absorbing EU funds resulted in growing public and private investments, many of which improved the quality of life of children and their families in rural communities. Economic growth has been coupled with a stable exchange rate, the stabilisation of public finances, decreasing public debt, a new rise in salaries, and falling unemployment.

The **gender pay gap** has increased since 2010 and reached 11.9 per cent according to the latest available data (2017), with women earning less than men. Reports show that there is widespread labour market discrimination of the Roma community, with young people at a disadvantage. Women tend to be at a greater disadvantage than men. According to the survey on Roma Inclusion in the Croatian society three quarters of Roma women are either unemployed or work as housewives. 25 per cent of Roma men and 58 per cent of Roma women comprise the 41.0 per cent of Roma national minority members of working age who have never been in work.

The **population of children decreased** from 775,853 in 2014 to 716,825 in 2018. Depopulation has been recognised by the Government as one of the key issues, and a series of programmes has been put into effect to combat depopulation. In the past year, the number of new-borns has slightly increased.

Croatia has **high antenatal care indicators** and a well-developed maternity protection system. Care for prematurely born babies is systematically and progressively advancing. Among other things, in 2019, with UNICEF's support, the national human milk bank was established to address the needs of premature babies and children with serious illnesses

The **epidemiological situation** in Croatia can be assessed as quite favourable due to the mandatory vaccination programme. The recent downward trend in the number of vaccinated children was overturned in 2018 and it is currently above 93 per cent for DTP, Polio, MMR and Hepatitis B.

Despite progress in ensuring access to **pre-primary education**, Croatia has one of the lowest attendance rates among EU countries - 82.8 per cent in Croatia (82.7 per cent of boys and 83.0 per cent of girls) against 95.4 per cent in the EU-28 in 2017. Access to pre-primary education is by large determined by the capacities, resources and priorities of municipalities, since financing of pre-primary education is decentralised. This bottleneck has been recognised by the Government, which has committed itself to exploring policy options to address the issue.

The **quality of primary education** has not improved in Croatia at the pace envisaged, as measured by the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). In 2019, the comprehensive curricular reform 'Schools for life' was introduced in all primary and secondary schools (after having been piloted in the previous year). A prolonged strike of teachers demanding an increase in job complexity indices (to compare fairly with other public-sector employees) disrupted the first part of the school year. Following negotiations with the Government, the strike ended at the beginning of December, with the requested increase being granted to teachers.

The growing media reports of **domestic and gender-based violence** incidents across Croatia led to the creation of the social movement 'Save Me'. The movement was successful in achieving the accelerated implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (ratified in 2018).

Peer violence and bullying in schools remain an issue of great public concern in Croatia. Preliminary data on children's subjective well-being reveal that children feel the least safe in schools. In response to this issue, the Government engaged an expert team which has finalised an Action Plan for Preventing Violence in Schools 2019– 2024. The Plan is expected to be endorsed soon.

Despite overall progress in the **realisation of child rights**, inequities persist. Children living in institutions, Roma children, children with disabilities, children in conflict with the law, and children living in poverty and/or isolation are among those who are the most deprived of opportunities to develop their full potential. While there has been progress in ensuring access to early intervention services in the past year, official data show that only a small number of children aged 0-7 with neuro developmental risks and disabilities benefited from services in 2018 (591). The number of **children living in institutions** is falling; however, more efforts are needed to ensure family-based care for a total of 1,182 children and adolescents, including 64 children below the age of 3. Among them, 28 per cent are children with disabilities. Roma children continue to be among the most disadvantaged groups in society, as highlighted in the 2018 Annual Report of the Ombudsperson for Children.

Croatia

The **at-risk-of-poverty rate for children** (defined as the share of persons with an equivalised disposable income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60 per cent of the national median equivalised disposable income, after social transfers) has not changed significantly over the years (19.7 per cent in 2018) and is approximately the same as in the EU-28. Still, data show that Croatia is among the countries with the **greatest persistence of poverty among children**. The Government set in motion a series of new policy measures in 2019 to mitigate the negative effects of poverty, such as an increase in the minimum wage, a tax reform that reduced value added tax from 25 to 13 per cent for fresh food, meat, fish, fruits and vegetables, eggs, and diapers. A set of indicators for early identification of poverty among children and their families are introduced. The **social welfare system** continues to face the problem of the uneven accessibility of services to beneficiaries, especially in communities with high poverty rates and a lack of resources for developing social services for at-risk citizens. However, substantial efforts have been made by the relevant Ministry to enhance community-based services for children and families at risk, which is fully reflected in key national strategies, including the 2019 National Reform Programme.

The Government commissioned a comprehensive **disaster risk analysis** which identified floods, earthquakes and fire as risks that might significantly affect the population.

As per the IOM data, a total of 16,738 **migrant persons** were registered in Croatia in 2019, mostly adults. Over the years, national capacities to support migrant, asylum seeking and refugee unaccompanied children and families with children n have been strengthened, but there are still significant gaps that need to be addressed to ensure the full realisation of their rights (e.g. access to territory and right to claim asylum, respect of the non-refoulement principle, alternative care solutions for unaccompanied children, availability of competent guardians, etc.).

Figures show (Eurobarometer, 2016) that over 78 per cent of **young people** aged 16-30 continue to feel excluded from economic, social and democratic life. Formal mechanisms for meaningful youth participation are limited. Societal, generational and gender norms, as well as a history of authoritarian rule, hinder participation; but new opportunities are emerging through digital platforms, such as U-Report soon to be launched in Croatia. Moreover, youth councils are established as advisory bodies of local and regional self-government units to promote and advocate for the rights, needs and interests of young people.

A prominent example of children's and **adolescents' participation** is embodied in the Child-Friendly Cities initiative which celebrated 20 years of implementation in 2019. More than 380,000 children live in 75 communities that have been designated as child friendly.

In 2019, Croatia issued the **Voluntary National Review of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** Implementation and commenced preparation of the 2030 National Development Strategy. Croatia ranked 22nd out of 162 countries for data collection on SDGs. Croatia will take over the **Presidency of the Council of the EU in January 2020**, and youth and children's issues will be included in the programme of the Presidency.

Major contributions and drivers of results

Every child survives and thrives

Thanks to thousands of individual donors, corporate partners and key decision makers, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health, with the support of leading national experts on neonatal care and breastfeeding, established the **National Human Milk Bank** in November 2019. The Human Milk Bank is part of the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding 2018–2020 and its aim is to support the survival, care and nutrition of the most vulnerable infants across the country. The biggest share of UNICEF's financial contribution to this project came from the first significant legacy gift received by the UNICEF CO in Croatia.

The commitment and drive to achieve results at scale in quality mother and newborn health continued with the re-certification of the **Baby-Friendly Hospitals Initiative** (BFHI), further training, and with the supply to maternity hospitals of the most up-to-date equipment for the phototherapy of newborns with jaundice, which prevents the separation of the baby and the mother during phototherapy. The BFHI provides universal coverage thus enabling the same access to Roma mothers and children, women with disabilities etc. The extended BFHI standards for neonatal wards, implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Health, have also had beneficial effects on improving policies and practices in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) situated in hospitals designated as Baby Friendly. In addition, this has led to a significant change of practices in non-delivery NICUs i.e. those not connected to the maternity hospitals (2 out of 13), emphasising the importance of the continuous implementation of a wide range of programme activities, including ensuring comfortable and welcoming NICU environments for both parents, supporting the role of fathers as well as a **breastfeeding** culture.

Croatia

Following intensive and joint advocacy by the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities, the Ombudsperson for Children, civil society organisations and UNICEF, an important milestone has been reached in the development of comprehensive policies and services for **young children with neurodevelopmental risks and disabilities**. In 2019, the Government appointed a high-level Commission for **Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)** to develop ECI policy including the strategy, plan and standards. The ECI is chaired by the Minister of Health and includes six other ministers. The work of this Commission will be informed by the knowledge generated in the Situation Analysis on ECI, commissioned by UNICEF. The thematic Situation Analysis in early 2020, will provide an overview of the status of children from birth to six years of age and of their parents, and an assessment of human, institutional, training, and financial resources in the area.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) technology for children tested in previous years has been significantly scaled up, with the support of UNICEF's Innovation Fund. In partnership with the Government, UNICEF continued to make assistive technology available for more children with complex communication needs through the programme 'For Every Child: A Voice'. Extensive capacity building was provided related to AAC, and knowledge and equipment were supplied to 24 organisations providing early childhood development and/or intervention services across Croatia. This has led to the establishment of an AAC Forum of trained professionals who will assist other colleagues to successfully apply AAC technologies with young children with complex communication needs.

Every child learns

Based on the UNICEF Education Strategy 2019-2030, UNICEF in Croatia continued to strengthen the **early learning opportunities** for every child in Croatia.

UNICEF CO in Croatia has invested in the generation of knowledge and evidence to support the Government's goal to ensure pre-primary education for every child. Following successful experience in ensuring inclusive pre-primary education for Roma and other vulnerable groups of children in two municipalities in the last few years, a booklet documenting the lessons learned was prepared and disseminated to local government representatives across the country.

In support of the Government's decision to invest significant funds in extending access to pre-primary education (US\$250 million), UNICEF Croatia commissioned a **study on the governance and financing of pre-primary education**. The outputs of the study include costing and financing models which should facilitate decisions at local and central levels to enable all children aged 3 to 6 to attend kindergartens. A draft of the study has been prepared, and recommendations of possible governance and financing models were discussed with all relevant ministries, representatives of local government, heads of kindergartens and teachers. A finalised study with recommendations and feedback from stakeholders will be issued in early 2020.

Surveys and field experience indicate that one of the key bottlenecks in ensuring pre-school education for the most vulnerable groups of children is the lack of capacities of pre-school teachers to implement **inclusive pre-school education curricula**. To address the knowledge and skills gap for inclusive pre-school education, including stereotypes and misconceptions, UNICEF joined up with academia in developing a university curriculum for educational inclusion. The new curriculum will be disseminated in 2020 in partnership with five Croatian universities.

Every child is protected from violence and exploitation

In 2019, UNICEF in Croatia supported the strengthening of national capacities for an **improved child protection system and policies**, through strong partnership with the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy (MDFYSP), and cooperation with leading national experts and civil society organisations. The joint working framework '**For a Stronger Family**', set up in 2017/2018, continues to be the main driver of change in the protection of children from violence, abuse and neglect. This working framework includes technical and policy advice, support for the promotion of family-based care, promotion of equal participation of mothers and fathers in parenting, support in building the capacities of service providers, case management, and support for the expansion of social services for vulnerable children and families.

The **innovative parenting support service** for parents and children in crisis, which was developed, tested and adjusted in 2018 and 2019, is about to be scaled up through its integration in the regular service provision of all county family centres across Croatia. To ensure smooth integration within the next two years, relevant social welfare professionals have been trained to provide this complex and **outreach-oriented service** and, with new skills and competences, establish positive and trusting relationships with parents who have already been identified by social welfare professionals as those facing difficult circumstances, including illness and poverty. In addition, all participating family centres have been supplied with play sets and furniture to provide **child-friendly environments**. Vehicles have also been provided to enable more active outreach to families and children living in rural and remote areas with poor access to support services.

It is estimated that annually at least 120 parents of preschool children – beneficiaries of the social welfare system – will have access to the service in the future. In line with gender responsive programming and based on the lessons learned

Croatia

from the implementation of the parenting support programmes, the **equal involvement of both mothers and fathers in child care** has been addressed, and a gender-specific workshop package was produced in 2019 specifically for fathers. All materials produced within the programme promote gender equality and the reduction of gender-related prejudice and stereotypes; they include topics that address the specific and unique roles of mothers and fathers in child care, and provide recommendations for experts on the equal involvement of mothers and fathers in risk assessment and in the implementation of interventions in the family.

Throughout 2019, UNICEF supported the capacity building of an additional 200 social welfare professionals to conduct **efficient case management** and provide effective support and interventions with families at risk of child abuse and neglect. Additionally, professional and gender sensitive **tools for the assessment of the risk of child safety and wellbeing in the family** were finalised and made available to social welfare professionals. The national coverage of the capacity building of professionals and access to standardised professional tools will provide child-focused support to an estimated 2,000 parents and 4,000 children annually, thus contributing to an efficient response to **violence against children in the family**, as well as to the prevention of separation from their families and the consequent placement in public care.

This is particularly important having in mind that at the end of 2018 there were still 1,182 children placed in institutions and 2,244 children placed in foster care. Improvements in the provision of **preventive support services and interventions in biological families** are expected to contribute to an overall decrease in the number of children separated from their families and placed in public care in future.

In line with national priorities regarding public care for children (including within the National Programme of Reforms, in relation particularly to the deinstitutionalisation and transformation of social welfare institutions), UNICEF continued to support and promote **foster care for children**, supplementing the efforts made by the MDFYSP through legislative improvements and in close cooperation with other implementing partners. The national campaign on foster care, which was launched in 2018, continued during 2019, with additional focus on local promotional activities. More than 150 community events were organised with UNICEF's support and in cooperation with the umbrella organisation of foster parents' associations "Forum for Quality Foster Care" with the aim to recruit new foster families. Based on the last available data from MDFYSP, a total of 119 new foster parents for children were registered within the social welfare system. With UNICEF's support, a comprehensive **curriculum for the education of foster parents** was developed (aligned with the new Foster Care Act) and tested with around 100 foster parents, and new trainers were trained in its implementation. New and/or improved methodology will ensure a standardised approach to the recruitment and training of foster care parents in all social welfare centres and also strengthened capacities of foster families to provide quality care for children with disabilities and migrant unaccompanied children.

Annually, state attorneys and non-legal professionals deal with around 3,300 criminal cases involving children and young people in conflict with the law. With UNICEF's support in capacity building, positive trends in **juvenile justice** have continued. The fall in the number of children placed in closed correctional institutions (juvenile prison and closed reformatories) has continued, and the proportion of **alternative sanctions** imposed on children in conflict with the law has increased. Around 61 per cent of all sanctions imposed on children in conflict with the law are alternative sanctions (special obligations, intensified care and supervision) and restorative measures. Girls represent around 11 per cent of juvenile offenders. Following a comprehensive process of developing a framework of **lifelong learning curricula** that targets 1,300 judicial officials and non-legal child professionals who are in contact with children involved in criminal, civil, administrative and misdemeanour proceedings, UNICEF continued to support the systematic capacity building of judicial officials to ensure gender sensitivity and gender responsiveness. Specialised learning curricula were developed to strengthen the capacities of state attorneys for youth and non-legal professionals dealing with children in conflict with the law in criminal proceedings, and for the first time all state attorneys for youth and non-legal professionals participated in training modules aiming to better understand children and young people in conflict with the law, improve communication skills, and enhance collaboration with non-legal psychosocial professionals.

In 2019, the **Gender Programmatic Review (GPR)** and in-depth analysis of the main causes and drivers of gender inequalities (including stereotyping and bias) in the child-related justice system brought important insights for the future plans of UNICEF in Croatia. Areas for improvements in mainstreaming gender issues were identified and a management response plan was developed with the aim of enhancing UNICEF and national capacities to address gender inequalities in the justice system.

Every child lives in a safe and clean environment

In order to strengthen emergency preparedness, the CO maintains a multi-hazard preparedness plan in the Emergency Preparedness Platform and regularly updates it. To further support country's capacities for **disaster risk reduction**, UNICEF provided technical support to the Directorate for Civil Protection of the Ministry of the Interior through the capacity building of civil protection officials. As per the annual management priority, relevant civil protection officers were trained to

Croatia

pursue outreach activities on disaster risk prevention in schools. UNICEF in Croatia continued to promote the **educational board game 'Riskland'** and developed a training package for teaching children about disaster risk reduction in primary schools in Croatia.

Every child has an equitable chance in life

Aiming to advance the **participation of children, adolescents and youth** in decision making and to strengthen their capacities to actively take part in the lives of their communities, UNICEF Croatia used various strategies to amplify their voices and to create platforms for their sustainable participation in decision-making and for co-creating solutions with key stakeholders from the Government, public institutions and the private sector.

In 2019, platforms for the meaningful participation of children and adolescents expanded. All members of the **UNICEF Children's Participation Advisory Board** and the **Think Tank on Child Rights and CSR** – children, young people (12-19 years of age; 8 girls and 4 boys) and adults – were strategically engaged in the promotion of children's participatory rights in all aspects of their living. The aim is to have children influence decision making and policies with their active engagement in these boards. Through the **Child-Friendly City Initiative**, implemented by the 'Union of Societies Our Children' and supported by UNICEF, national priorities in children's participatory rights are being supported. All 75 cities/municipalities that are currently considered as 'child friendly' involve children in their work and planning. In addition to their active role in the assessment of the situation in their cities/municipalities, approximately 1,300 children and young adolescents (10-19 years of age) are directly involved in creating policies and practices at the **local level** through Children's Forums and Children Councils. Overall, it is estimated that 380,000 children and adolescents (0-17) living in these local communities are positively impacted by child-oriented and participatory policies and practices.

UNICEF in Croatia has also ensured platforms for the participation of children and adolescents from Croatia in a high-level EU conference on 'Children's Participation in Decision and Policy Making at the EU level' and the Children's Summit in the Croatian Parliament. More than 100 children and adolescents, including representatives of the most vulnerable groups, gave speeches and discussed issues of key importance to them with the Minister of Science and Education, the Minister of Demography, Family, Social Policy and Youth, Ombudspersons, Members of Parliament, and other high-level decision makers at the Summit in Zagreb. Croatia will take this practice forward during the EU presidency in 2020 by ensuring representation of children and adolescents in policy dialogues regarding children.

A young representative from UNICEF's Advisory Board was one of the keynote speakers at the National Conference on **Business and Child Rights**, along with government officials, and key private sector associations. In addition, UNICEF invested in children's knowledge on the importance of monitoring and protecting child rights by supporting some 200 primary school children from Zagreb and rural areas to hold discussions and visit the offices of the Ombudsperson for Children.

Along with **World Children's Day** takeovers in seven private companies, adolescents produced a report for a top-tier TV station main news programme and took over hosting a top-rated news show on RTL Television on 20 November. Through Media Literacy Days, a national platform for the promotion of **media literacy**, organised in partnership with the Agency for Electronic Media, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Science and Education, more than 1,000 adolescents improved their media literacy and journalism skills, through workshops with media professionals in 11 top-tier media outlets. Their voices and opinions on political and social issues as well as youth participation in decision-making, were amplified nationwide through media reports. Through the **Children's Rights Festival**, films produced by 54 adolescents, about issues concerning lives of their communities and their peers who are champions of child rights, were screened in 22 cities to more than 10 thousand of their peers. More than 550 young people were engaged in debates with peers and experts, sharing experiences and ideas to overcome the challenges of growing up in the digital environment. These initiatives also raised awareness on important gender issues among adolescents and harmful behaviours, with special focus on peer-to-peer violence in digital and real-life environment.

Newly generated evidence on the attitudes and opinions of the public and experts on child rights, with a focus on the participation of children from vulnerable groups, provided insights and guidance that are crucial for further advocacy, awareness raising and programmed efforts towards capacity development.

Humanitarian action

In addition to UNICEF's support in strengthening local capacities for preparedness for humanitarian action in the country, it is important to note that the Croatian public and private sectors increasingly contribute to humanitarian efforts led by UNICEF in international emergencies. In partnership with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA), UNICEF opened **five inclusive playgrounds** in the Za'atari and Azraq refugee camps in **Jordan** in 2019, enabling social integration between children with and without disabilities, benefiting more than 5,000 children. In 2019, more than US \$250,000 was raised by the UNICEF CO for **humanitarian relief in Yemen**, as a result of a campaign that inspired

Croatia

individuals and SMEs, who were joined by the contribution of US\$50,000 from the Croatian Government.

Change strategies and management priorities

More than 50 companies have participated in training on **Child Rights and Business Principles** at the Corporate Social Responsibility Academy set up by UNICEF Croatia and the Croatian Employers' Association in 2017. This has contributed to a better understanding of the impact of business practices and policies on children's rights and has resulted in the first child rights' impact assessment undertaken by a company in Croatia. During UNICEF's national conference on business & children's rights, the results of the first national survey on the impact of the business sector on children's rights were presented to more than 150 business stakeholders, and UNICEF's Advisory Board for Children's Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility was launched. In the next period, the CO will focus on translating and leveraging awareness and business sensitization to shared-value partnerships that support the achievement of results for children. To improve the protection and the realisation of child rights in the tourism sector, UNICEF, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Croatian National Tourist Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding that outlined future activities in this area.

Evidence and good practice generated in parental support programmes, in the prevention of peer violence, and in business engagement, within the partnership between the Croatian Government and UNICEF, were successfully shared and used in Belarus, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

In line with **annual management priorities**, a successful resource mobilisation strategy resulted in more than US\$ 4 million raised in 2019 from the private sector in Croatia. The fundraising efforts allowed UNICEF Country Office to fully fund the country programme, while contributing 19 per cent of the total funds raised to UNICEF regional and global programmes.

Some 48,500 donors contributed to UNICEF programmes through monthly donations and in response to specific appeals in 2019, and an additional 35,000 individuals supported UNICEF through single donations. Altogether, including event participants, more than 85,000 individuals contributed financially and were engaged with UNICEF's mission during 2019 (approximately 2.4 per cent of the total adult population of Croatia). A 2019 survey has shown that UNICEF continues to be among the most recognisable and trustworthy organisations in Croatia, which is the result of continuous inspiring communications and donor relations and care programmes implemented by the Country Office.

UNICEF Country Office continued to integrate its **resource mobilisation strategy** with increasing awareness of child rights and strong elements of engagement of individual donors, private companies and young people (through the Schools for Africa and Schools for Asia initiatives), as well as by engaging volunteers to support these efforts. In 2019, the focus on the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child proved to be a strong platform for integrated communication efforts and mobilisation of corporate partners, opening up additional channels through business networks as well as expanding income stream opportunities through clientele (particularly in the tourism, banking and retail sectors).

Engagement with corporates has resulted in alliances that have contributed to the growth of mobilised resources for UNICEF, as well as the engagement of numerous customers that companies have engaged through customer fundraising. Sectors such as banking and tourism have been identified as partners and as entry points to reach more potential supporters. **Significant in-kind contributions** were received from top-tier media outlets which provided more than 600 pro bono airings of UNICEF Public Service Announcements, and from shopping mall companies that provide pro bono space for fundraising.

In line with the annual management priorities, evidence generation continued to be one of the major drivers of change for children, and in 2019 UNICEF in Croatia initiated or completed **six new knowledge products** that should support changes for children in several goal areas, specifically changes for children with disabilities, access to pre-primary education, participation of the most vulnerable children, child rights awareness of citizens and corporates, and the well-being of children.

Croatia

Lessons Learned and Innovations

In partnership with the Ministry of Justice and the NGO Roda, **new models of support for children of imprisoned parents** were promoted. In Croatia, 12,500 children are growing up without one or both parents who are imprisoned. These children face a unique set of challenges, discrimination, stigma, social exclusion and increased poverty. With UNICEF's support, the Ministry of Justice introduced video visitation and strengthened the capacities of prison officials to support and help child-parent relationships in such circumstances. Prison officials were trained on communication skills, importance of family links and child-friendly procedures that meet both security requirements and children's needs. Within the programme, IT equipment for video visitation was installed in 13 correctional facilities, while in 7 correctional facilities visits rooms for family/children's visits were redecorated, furnished and equipped to create more child-friendly environments for children visiting their parents. All 23 correctional facilities received posters to inform children and adolescents about the daily life of their parents in prison and alleviate the fears and concerns of children. In total, 800 children benefited from these interventions in 2019. Video visitation is not a substitute for in-person contact, but it can support the continuous bond between the child and imprisoned parent. This innovation has already brought significant positive changes and, based on this, the Ministry of Justice has drafted a new law on prison sentences that incorporates video visits.

Investments in raising awareness and knowledge of corporate social responsibility and children's rights are changing the way in which the business community sees children and their rights in Croatia. This will be further enhanced through the work of the **Advisory Board for Children's Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility**. Strategic role of this board is to influence other businesses and be a platform for dialogue with government and other partners on key issues. It is composed of the main national CSR and business networks and platforms and Croatian companies which have committed themselves to the Action Plan based on the recommendations of the first national survey on the impact of the business sector on children's rights carried out in 2019.

Significant potential has been identified in the implementation of the first Corporate Pathways to Pledge initiative with a bank. UNICEF in Croatia will continue to explore this efficient option for the future engagement of regular individual donors, as it also helps diversify outreach methods.

The **strategic and integrated approach to the planning of key CO campaigns and initiatives**, through the alignment of advocacy, fundraising and programme priorities and the optimisation of resources, has enabled multiple synergies in the engagement of key stakeholders, individual donors, corporate partners, digital influencers, offline supporters and the media. The immediate effects of an enhanced media presence, amplified messaging, stakeholder commitments, donations, as well as the offline and online engagement of key audiences, prove the efficiency of such an approach in achieving country programme outputs.

In 2019, **integrated campaigns** led to enhanced cooperation with media companies, focused investments in multimedia content and relations with influencers, which resulted in the stronger amplification of UNICEF key advocacy and brand messages, as well as engagement with key audiences. UNICEF engaged with 34 per cent more people to take offline action for children than in 2018, with young people representing more than 60 per cent of the total.

Strategically planned and meaningful participation of children and adolescent boys and girls in key initiatives has brought new dynamics, perspectives and ideas to public events and campaigns organised by UNICEF and partners in 2019, thus opening new opportunities to engage with key decision makers, broaden private and public partners, as well as to utilise new channels to mobilise resources and advocate for the better lives of the most vulnerable children in Croatia. Thus, the CO will intensify its work with partners on the creation of innovative partnerships and platform for child and adolescents' meaningful participation and contribution in the realization of child rights in Croatia and in development of their 21 century skills.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the CO is working on the establishment of formal mechanisms – Junior Ambassadors to the EU Programme, a sustainable platform to help raise awareness of policymakers on issues of adolescent boys and girls and on the importance of youth participation in decision making processes that will particularly be important in the context of the **Croatian Presidency of Council of the EU in 2020**.