Executive Summary

The partnership between the Government of Croatia and UNICEF in 2016 addressed goals established for the national child rights agenda. As the final year of the 2012-2016 country programme (CP), it was used to take stock of the progress made over the past five years, celebrate success and identify remaining or new challenges to be addressed in the 2017-2021 cycle of partnership, which was jointly developed and adopted by UNICEF Executive Board in September. As a partner of choice for Croatia’s domestic and international child rights agenda, UNICEF will continue supporting the Government of Croatia to develop its policies and practices towards full realization of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

An influx of refugees and migrants, including a significant number of children and women on the move from Middle East and Central Asia, started in September 2015 and continued through the first trimester of 2016. As a Government partner for the response to the refugee and migrant crisis, UNICEF Croatia continued to provide assistance and advice in the areas of child protection; nutrition; health; water, sanitation and hygiene; and education.

As a result, over 17,000 children benefited from UNICEF-led psychosocial support, more than 16,000 children received basic supplies and over 1,700 women received child feeding counselling and support. Integration of children and families who have sought asylum is a new area of cooperation, for which UNICEF Croatia is using synergies and experiences gained in the past. Lessons learned in responding to emergencies, including flood emergency response in 2014, are being built into a new partnership programme on disaster risk reduction and resilience for school children.

Domestically, 2016 was characterized by two changes of Government (in January and September), which affected the progress of national reforms, including in the areas of child rights. However, several major achievements were accomplished for key components of the 2012-2016 CP.

In early childhood development (ECD), an innovative and scaled-up Croatian model of parenting support for parents of young children, ‘Growing up together’ and its sister programme for parents of children with disabilities, ‘Growing up together plus’, have undergone external evaluation. Having been evaluated very positively for their effectiveness, efficiency and impact on parents and children, these programmes will form part of the Croatian portfolio for beyond-border engagement, and as such will contribute to the wellbeing of children in other countries.

After more than 20 years of joint efforts by UNICEF, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and other partners, in 2016 all 31 Croatian maternity wards met the criteria for baby-friendly hospitals, placing Croatia among the leading countries in the world in this area.

Nationwide support for the quality use of assistive communication technology for children with disabilities began with capacity building for 134 professionals from 31 institutions across Croatia.
In child protection, efforts to strengthen the justice system by building the capacity of justice professionals to work with child victims and witnesses of crime continued in 2016. These efforts were complemented by a process of strengthening the quality of assessment for at-risk youth and youth in conflict with the law. The analysis of current assessment practices, coupled with broad consultations with professionals, resulted in the development of standards, guidelines and tools for quality assessment of at-risk youth and youth in conflict with the law.

During 2016 UNICEF Croatia further strengthened its engagement with media, individual supporters and the corporate sector. Partnership with all national TV stations and the Agency for Electronic Media culminated in a media literacy campaign “Let’s choose what we watch”, which brought significant and measurable positive changes in the behaviour of parents and children. Because of the campaign, unsupervised TV watching among children declined from 35 per cent in 2014 to 11 per cent in 2016, and the number of parents who recognize age rating signs indicating suitability of TV content rose from 89 to 93 per cent, as per the survey conducted after the second wave of airing PSAs on all national TV stations.

UNICEF Croatia promoted international solidarity and support to vulnerable children beyond Croatian borders. Croatian contributions to regular resources in the current programme of cooperation has increased constantly, reaching US$1.186 million by the end of 2016. More than 86,000 children and their teachers in Croatia inspired and mobilized their communities to support education of their peers in Burkina Faso in Africa. In addition, US$101,000 was contributed for emergency response in Syria.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

This past year 101,800 migrants and refugees, mostly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, entered Croatia. A total of 1,822 individuals requested international protection and 61 requested asylum. Nine subsidiary protections were approved. Along their journey, women and children faced multiple hardships, including risks associated with trafficking and exploitation, unsanitary conditions, lack of private space for breastfeeding, irregular meals and a diet based exclusively on dry food; as well as being exhausted due to constant travel and limited rest. Especially vulnerable among refugees and migrants were newborns, infants, children with disabilities, unaccompanied and separated children, children in need of health assistance and pregnant and lactating women.

Since March 8, after the European Union (EU) Summit announcing closure of the ‘Western Balkan route’, no new organized arrivals of migrants at the reception-transit centre in Slavonski Brod took place; the centre was closed in mid-April. But arrival of refugees and migrants being returned from Western European countries under the Dublin decree rose during the last quarter of 2016. In December 707 refugees and migrants were accommodated in two reception centres in Zagreb and Kutina; among them were 128 children (over 19 per cent), of whom five were unaccompanied. An additional 15 unaccompanied children (UAC) were placed in institutions, under the protection of the social welfare system.

In line with UNICEF’s Core Commitments to Children, UNICEF Croatia advocated for child-friendly reception and protection of women and children and supported direct service provision, along with technical assistance to the Government, to address the needs of children in several areas:

**Health and nutrition:** UNICEF Croatia supported breastfeeding and provided technical assistance on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices aimed at improving the provision of appropriate food at reception-transit centres/facilities. Through the establishment
of mother and baby centres, UNICEF Croatia ensured the presence of skilled staff and breastfeeding counsellors to provide assistance to pregnant and lactating women.

Over 1,500 infants (under two years) accessed mother and baby centre nutrition services and over 1,700 women benefited from IYCF counselling at mother-baby centres. UNICEF Croatia provided technical assistance for development of a protocol on IYCF in transit-reception centres, implemented the International Code on Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes in those centres and provided capacity building for frontline workers in IYCF in emergencies.

**Child protection:** UNICEF Croatia supported child-friendly spaces in two reception-transit centres during the refugee and migrant crisis and provided psychosocial support to over 16,600 children on the move. After the closure of the ‘Western Balkan Route’, these activities continued at reception facilities for asylum seekers in Zagreb and Kutina. In addition, capacities of 179 frontline workers and additional social workers to identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable children on the move were strengthened. UNICEF Croatia provided technical assistance to the Government for the development of an interim protocol for unaccompanied children, and ensured direct psychosocial support to UAC placed within social welfare system.

**Education:** Given that a growing number of refugees and migrants in Croatia are likely to remain in the country for extended periods of time, structured learning activities were provided through child-friendly spaces. In addition, UNICEF Croatia equipped children starting school in September 2016 with school supplies and learning materials.

**Non-food items (NFIs):** Some 13,111 children were provided with NFIs to protect them from weather conditions and 16,619 children received hygiene items.

**Prevention of gender-based violence (GBV):** Assuming the lead of the inter-agency working group on gender-based violence, UNICEF Croatia participated in the process of identifying risks in the transit centre at Slavonski Brod, supported activities related to risk reduction and establishment of referral mechanisms and conducted training of first-line responders in gender-based violence prevention and response.

Cross-border coordination and horizontal cooperation in the emergency response was promoted by UNICEF Croatia, in particular through a sub-regional conference (On the move and alone: How to respond effectively to the needs of unaccompanied and separated children in Southeast Europe?), engaging 70 professionals from nine countries in knowledge-sharing and the search for comprehensive solutions to the challenges faced during crisis.

The ongoing humanitarian response in Croatia was interlinked with the gradual strengthening of national capacities to prepare for and respond to the needs of children in any future crisis, including natural disasters. For that purpose, UNICEF Croatia partnered with the National Protection and Rescue Directorate and Croatian Red Cross – two key actors in such situations. UNICEF Croatia supplied the two partners with needed emergency supplies, including a generator, water tanks and lightening towers. A longer-term process of capacity strengthening, including training for staff and educational activities for children, was agreed and initiated in 2016.
Strategic Plan 2018-2021

UNICEF Croatia appreciates the significant efforts invested in developing the Strategic Plan (SP) 2018-2021 draft, which aims to address global challenges that affect boys' and girls' well-being and the full realization of their rights, and offers several observations that will hopefully be taken into consideration in further shaping of the document:

Even though equity issues are particularly burdening in some aspects of children’s life, we suggest considering equity as an overarching principle – like the human rights-based approach, gender equality and children’s participation, relevant for all UNICEF’s goal areas – rather than as a specific goal. In this way, the equity lens would be consistently applied in programming for all UNICEF interventions.

Regarding data disaggregation, it is suggested to include Sustainable Development Goal disaggregation as well; e.g., on ethnicity.

Due to its importance and relevance beyond the transition period, UNICEF Croatia suggests that early learning be addressed separately and have a specific result.

Learning outcomes should be clearly linked with the inclusiveness, participation and quality of learning processes; in general the Office suggests a stronger focus in the document on the quality of provided services, since this if often a key bottleneck.

UNICEF Croatia strongly recommends the inclusion of access to justice and its promotion as a separate result, since it affects all children’s rights and helps to reduce inequalities.

Since alternative care should be considered only as a last resort for children, we recommend including the prevention of children’s institutionalization as a related result. This should be UNICEF’s priority and a very important focus area.

UNICEF Croatia has found that adolescent empowerment and engagement is not only an equity issue, but is also related to all children’s active and meaningful participation. We would like to see in the strategic document the participation as the right of all children, not only adolescents.

Although all programmatic results are relevant for all children, the focus should be clearly on the most disadvantaged children, which supports UNICEF’s equity approach.

Regarding the strategies that will be applied, some of UNICEF’s core roles, e.g. modelling, are not acknowledged in the description of applied strategies, so would like to suggest a change to this segment of the SP 2018-2021.

Emerging Areas of Importance

Refugee and migrant children: Since September 2015, UNICEF Croatia has actively responded to the needs of children and women on the move as part of the refugee and migrant crisis response. Although the uncontrolled movement of people across the borders is now less likely, Croatia is still faced with challenges related to the movement of refugees and migrants, mostly those who continue to use illegal routes and do not wish to stay in Croatia. Increase in the number of refugees and migrants who have been returned to Croatia from Western European countries applying the Dublin agreement was observed in the last quarter of 2016. Of 3,543 requests for readmission from EU member states, the Croatian Government responded positively to 2,978; to date 500 individuals were transferred back to Croatia. The steady increase in the number of refugees and migrants, and in the length of their stay in
Croatia, entailed the need for some additional services for children, such as their integration into the Croatian educational system. Based on UNICEF’s comparative advantage and the presence of other partners, UNICEF Croatia provided technical support in the areas of child protection, education, nutrition and non-food items. In 2016 UNICEF Croatia continued to implement a two-fold approach, whereby humanitarian assistance and service delivery were interlinked with the enhancement of capacities of the national response systems in the areas of child protection, education and infant and young child feeding.

**Accelerate integrated ECD**: In Croatia, the health care system reaches a majority of pregnant women and families of young children. However, assessments have shown that these services are narrowly focused on physical health and that many critical issues – such as responsive parenting, a stimulating and safe home environment, and early detection of risk or vulnerability – are not addressed. To improve healthcare for the youngest children and accelerate integrated ECD, UNICEF Croatia, in line with the objectives of the RKLA7 (Young Child Health and Wellbeing), partnered with the universities of Split and Rijeka to develop a life-long learning programme (LLP) for home visitors. The programme is based on the resource package to support the partnership between families and home visitors for improved young child well-being developed by UNICEF’s Regional Office in partnership with the International Step by Step Association.

Because of this programme, home visitors will have access to quality life-long learning for young child well-being and partnership with families. In the academic year 2016/2017, the expected number of students is 30 per university. Furthermore, the LLP on young child well-being and partnership with families will be accredited by professional associations (part of licensing process), and recognized by the MoH, Croatian Health Insurance Fund and employers as a minimum standard expected for all healthcare professionals delivering home visit services for young children and families. Both faculties have shown great enthusiasm for implementing this LLP, which will strongly contribute to the quality of ECD services in Croatia.

**Summary Notes and Acronyms**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>BCP</td>
<td>Business continuity plan</td>
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<td>BMP</td>
<td>Biennial management plan</td>
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<td>C4D</td>
<td>Communication for development</td>
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<td>CFSH</td>
<td>Children and family support hub</td>
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<td>CMT</td>
<td>Country management team</td>
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<td>CoE</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
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<td>CP</td>
<td>Country Programme</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Country programme document</td>
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<td>CRBP</td>
<td>Child Rights and Business Principles</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil society organization</td>
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<td>CWBI</td>
<td>Child well-being indicators</td>
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<td>CWD</td>
<td>Children with disabilities</td>
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<td>DCT</td>
<td>Direct cash transfer</td>
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<td>DFAM</td>
<td>Division of Financial and Administrative Management</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early childhood development</td>
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<td>ECI</td>
<td>Early childhood intervention</td>
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<td>ERM</td>
<td>Enterprise risk management</td>
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<td>FSC</td>
<td>Fundraising strategy committee</td>
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Based on identified needs, and in order to support leveraging of resources for child rights priorities and strengthen capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) for sustainable and continuous provision of child and family interventions initiated with UNICEF’s support, UNICEF Croatia organized a series of capacity-building activities for a number of its implementing partners (IPs), mostly CSOs.
The initial training on funding opportunities and project design was organized in June, 2016, for 17 organizations (24 participants). Practical exercises, followed by instructive presentations, provided participants with information on available funding sources (with emphasis on EU funds) and on the complete project cycle, including situation analysis, stakeholder analysis, defining project objectives, elaboration of the intervention logic, risk and assumptions analysis, budgeting, project management, monitoring and sustainability. The training was strongly welcomed by partner organizations. The evaluation showed that it was highly beneficial for all participants, especially regarding information on available funding sources and guidelines for preparing proposals.

Since many of the CSOs participating in the training were small organizations with limited experience, most expressed that after the training they felt more motivated, confident and encouraged to design future projects to expand services in support to children and families in their local communities.

Ten of the participating organizations responded to a brief follow-up questionnaire conducted in December 2016. Based on the information collected, the majority utilized their newly gained knowledge and skills to develop new projects or to re-design existing ones and to apply for funds. They also emphasized some remaining challenges that would require additional capacity building (e.g. budgeting, managing different application procedures, etc.). This newly identified need will be addressed by UNICEF Croatia in 2017.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

Although the most recent official data (from the 2011 census) recorded there were 16,975 Roma in Croatia (0.4 per cent of the total population), other more recent estimates put the number of Roma in the country to be from 30,000-to-40,000. Children (0-19) make up 55 per cent of the Roma population (compared to 21 per cent of children in the total population).

With UNICEF Croatia support to the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities (OHRRNM), the needs of Roma children were made one of the key horizontal priorities of the action plan for implementing the ‘national Roma inclusion strategy’ for the period 2016-2018. Collecting data on Roma children in the framework of this plan should enable systematic monitoring of crucial information – such as access to services in segregated, particularly rural, settlements and issues related to inclusiveness in education. The number of Roma students in separate classes or special programmes are examples of previously unavailable data, particularly for groups with multiple vulnerabilities, such as Roma children with disabilities. The new action plan should ensure that this type of data will become part of regular data collection and monitoring systems.

Through this partnership between UNICEF Croatia and the OHRRNM, the action plan was developed with significantly improved instruments for monitoring the implementation of planned measures, and improved horizontal coordination was achieved. Furthermore, for the first time the action plan clearly reflected the accountability of each implementing body, and the quality of implementing mechanisms and relevant impact indicators was increased. This process has also strengthened the coordination role of the OHRRNM, mainly for the purposes of ensuring inter-sectoral cooperation and coordination. Only in this way can a holistic approach to the needs of children and youth in the Roma minority be ensured.
Partnerships

In 2016 UNICEF Croatia strengthened existing partnerships and established several new ones with multiple stakeholders. Partnership with the Government of Croatia was renewed with the adoption of the 2017-2021 Country Programme.

Partnership with more than 44,000 individual supporters (more than 1 per cent of the overall population) has been central for ensuring that UNICEF’s strong voice for the most vulnerable children is replicated in all communities in the country and for securing financial resources for the implementation of country programme activities. Engagement with educational institutions was further increased in 2016, through a broad network of schools and kindergartens that contributed to the Schools for Africa Campaign over the last eight years. This platform has brought together over 86,000 children (14 per cent of all children in Croatia aged 5 to 18) in a combination of child rights education and solidarity actions.

Engagement with the corporate sector was significantly broadened in 2016. Through cooperation with Croatian Association of Employers, Chamber of Commerce and Croatian Business Council for Sustainable Development, UNICEF Croatia was able to address the business community at the highest level and position child rights at the top of its agenda. In parallel, several new partnerships with corporate actors were established. Successful cascading of global partnership to the local context has taken place, such as partnership with IKEA and its contribution to fundraising and programme delivery. Other new corporate partners contributed to awareness-raising campaigns combined with engagement of their customers in the form of solid financial contributions (e.g., Electrolux promoted foster care) or through innovative applications of technology (e.g., partnership with Samsung, which contributed with assistive communication technology for children with disabilities).

Additionally, the business sector’s capacities were strengthened through piloting training in child rights and business principles (CRBP), which will be scaled up in 2017.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

The media literacy campaign ‘Let’s choose what we watch’ launched by the Agency for Electronic Media and UNICEF Croatia was seen by 57 per cent of parents on TV in 2016. The campaign brought measurable changes in the behaviour of parents and children. Unsupervised TV watching among children decreased from 35 per cent in 2014 to 11 per cent in 2016, as reported by parents in a survey conducted after the second wave of campaign. Almost all parents (93 per cent) recognized the age ratings signs indicating suitability of TV content and knew what they mean for children (compared to 89 per cent in 2014). Parents considered the appropriateness of the content to be the most important factor when making decisions on what their child can watch.

More than 7,000 people visited the Museum of Reality in Zagreb and Zadar, an innovative communication project showcasing key UNICEF evidence in an experiential and engaging way. Through extensive media reporting on this project that advocates for the rights of the most vulnerable children, an audience of more than 2.8 million persons was reached with messages on equity, and after visiting the Museum more than 350 individuals pledged to become monthly donors, both offline and online.

More than 9,500 children and adolescents were engaged in advocacy for child rights during eighth Children’s Rights Festival, a unique initiative promoting children’s rights through screenings of films produced by children and adolescents.

Advocacy and capacity building for quality children’s TV programming on national television resulted in the adoption of ‘Communicating with Children’ guidelines for use in all children’s TV productions.
Two media campaigns implemented as part of two major corporate partnerships raised awareness about the rights of children with disabilities and children without adequate parental care, reached 2 million persons and raised more than US$50,000 through customer engagement.

**South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

In 2016 UNICEF Croatia continued to build its portfolio of beyond-border engagement and contribute to the well-being of children outside of Croatia.

Based on the identified need for taking stock of the experiences and lessons learned during more than one year of ongoing response to the refugee and migrant crisis in Southeast Europe, and aiming at fostering knowledge-exchange and sharing of good practices related to the support to unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), UNICEF Croatia convened an international conference “On the move and alone: how to respond effectively to the needs of unaccompanied children?” The conference was organized in October, in cooperation with Croatia’s Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy; Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and Ministry of the Interior (MoI). Representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia gathered to share lessons learned and promising practices related to UASCs, as well as to strengthen and harmonize their approaches in the sub-region. Alongside country delegations, the conference gathered prominent experts and child protection specialists from UNICEF, UN High Commission on Refugees and the International Labour Organization, as well as non-governmental organizations.

Knowledge about Croatian social policies and practices for children and families was also shared with a delegation from Tajikistan, which also learned about UNICEF’s contribution to developing community-based services and evidence-based policies, in November 2016.

Technical support and supplies were provided for the One UNICEF response to the refugee and migrant crisis in Greece.

Sharing of good practices with Slovenia resulted in the opening of a Museum of Reality in Ljubljana, based on the model developed in Zagreb, Croatia.

Education of children in Burkina Faso was supported through the Schools for Africa programme, engaging children and educators from more than 230 schools and 100 kindergartens in Croatia.

**Identification and Promotion of Innovation**

Innovative strategies were used to promote and enhance inclusion and education of children, by making audio-visual content available to children with disabilities (CWD) as well as Roma children who do not speak Croatian as a first language. This activity also served to enable expansion of new technologies in early childhood intervention strategies.

To enhance knowledge about child rights, UNICEF Croatia produced the first inclusive educational computer game in the Croatian language, about child rights, which is now fully accessible to children with visual impairments through the web.

In partnership with national television, UNICEF Croatia supported the production of inclusive versions of children's TV shows for visually impaired and Roma children. These are the first TV shows fully accessible to these children, through an Internet website. Taking into account
the low access of Roma children to pre-school education in Croatia, this programme can have a very important educational impact, as children can watch it in the Romani and Croatian languages from home.

Following a survey conducted by the University of Zagreb that indicated low use of assistive communication by professionals in early childhood interventions, UNICEF Croatia initiated a broad alliance for children with communication disabilities that aims to expand the use of assistive technology in improving their lives and those of their families. In partnership with two corporates and academia, UNICEF Croatia is supporting nation-wide adoption of assistive communication technology and capacity building of 134 professionals and experts working with children with disabilities in 31 institutions across Croatia. Within this project, 60 tablets (in-kind donation by corporate partner) with locally developed applications enabling assistive communication will be distributed to partners working with these children after they complete training, organized in partnership with the University’s Faculty for Education and Rehabilitation Sciences. Through this project, assistive communication should reach up to 60 per cent of young children with communication disabilities.

Support to Integration and Cross-Sectoral Linkages

In 2016 UNICEF Croatia supported the Government to address several gaps in policy implementation that require cross-sectoral cooperation. This especially refers to Roma children and children from low-income or poor families, who due to multiple inequalities face significant challenges when entering school at the age of six or seven.

UNICEF Croatia’s strategy for addressing these inequalities consisted of modelling community-based services and programmes that would support Roma children’s transition to primary education, and that have a potential to be scaled up nationwide. In the framework of this strategy, UNICEF Croatia modelled a programme (Ready Together) between late 2014 and early 2016 with 300 direct (school staff, parents, children, community stakeholders) and 900 indirect beneficiaries (all children from targeted schools).

This resulted in increased readiness of Roma children and children from poor families for entering schools in Sisak and Slavonski Brod, achieved through structured work with key stakeholders: school staff, Roma and non-Roma parents and children prior to entering the first grade, representatives of Roma community and municipalities, education, health care and social welfare professionals. Changes in attitude and new skills needed for working with the most vulnerable boys and girls and their families were gained. Children and teachers received bilingual ICT and other learning tools and related training.

During 2016, UNICEF Croatia continued providing support to ensure the sustainability of gains in both communities. In Sisak, the programme was extended through extracurricular cross-sectoral activities implemented by a network of local institutions (schools, kindergartens, museum, library, theatre, etc.), and UNICEF’s partner IKEA furnished preschool premises to support inclusion of all Roma preschool-aged children into regular preschool programs. In Slavonski Brod, support was extended to community activities of Roma civil society organizations, school and kindergarten, including support for the construction of the first children’s playground in the Roma settlement.

Service Delivery

As in previous years, during 2016 UNICEF Croatia’s service delivery interventions were related to emergency or post-emergency contexts, linking emergency response with systems’ development.

UNICEF Croatia continued to support a non-formal preschool education programme in
Gunja Municipality in eastern Croatia, which was strongly affected by a flood in 2014. As the flood revealed serious deficiencies in the availability of basic services for preschool children, UNICEF Croatia initiated activities to mobilize and build capacities of the municipality, and to ensure continuity and sustainability in service delivery. The roles and responsibilities for sustainable provision of quality preschool education activities were defined within the initial memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Science and Education and municipality, as well as the letter of agreement with the municipality. UNICEF provided substantial financial and technical support, facilitation and advice to the municipality in identifying various sustainability mechanisms, which are expected to result in long-term availability of the service as of 2017.

In relation to the refugee and migrant crisis response in Europe, and following closure of the reception transit centre for refugees and migrants in Slavonski Brod April 13, UNICEF Croatia continued to support programmes and services for children at two reception facilities for asylum seekers and migrants in Zagreb and Kutina. In close collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) and implementing partners, child-friendly spaces were made operational. On average, 40 children benefitted daily from psychosocial support along with recreational and structured learning activities. For pregnant and lactating women, breastfeeding support and other assistance in the areas of nutrition and health were ensured by skilled staff. Roles and responsibilities of all involved partners were described in the agreement with the MoI and programme cooperation agreements signed with partners. A monitoring system was established to closely follow the situation of children in reception facilities.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

The human rights-based approach (HRBA) was fundamental to UNICEF Croatia’s work in 2016 and for developing the 2017-2021 country programme document (CPD). Moreover, UNICEF Croatia supported the promotion of children’s rights and the implementation of the latest recommendations by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and Committee on the Rights of Persons with a Disability, at both the national and local levels, and integrated those recommendations into the new CPD.

Cooperation with the office of the Ombudsperson for Children was further strengthened in 2016. Specific actions were undertaken to support the Network of Ombudsperson’s Young Advisors, whose active participation was sought during the development of the new country programme document. Young advisors’ comments on equity issues regarding children’s access to early childhood development (ECD) services were particularly important for the development of the ECD programmatic area.

UNICEF Croatia provided inputs to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights during his visit to Croatia in March 2016, as well as to the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health, who visited Croatia in November 2016.

In 2016 UNICEF Croatia developed and started implementing an ambitious agenda of engagement with the corporate sector, with a strong child rights and business principles (CRBP) focus. The launch of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and CRBP provided a normative framework that set out the responsibility of businesses regarding human rights, including child rights. This framework, together with the adoption of the EU directive on non-financial reporting and the forthcoming beginning of its implementation in Croatia, presented an excellent opportunity for UNICEF Croatia to support businesses in their efforts to integrate human and child rights considerations into their policies and practices. Engagement with business on child rights was enabled through UNICEF Croatia’s participation at business conferences of national corporate social responsibility networks, which prompted interest by key business in strengthening their
capacity to apply and operationalize CRBP. By guiding companies through learning and dialogue processes, UNICEF Croatia expects to drive the integration of child rights into business policies and practices, and thus maximize the positive impact and mitigate potential negative impacts that businesses can have on child rights in Croatia and abroad.

**Gender Equality**

In 2016 UNICEF Croatia applied equity and gender perspectives within all its programme interventions. Although general data show equal access of boys and girls to early childhood development and child protection services, some critical gender issues and stereotypes (e.g. on traditional parental roles in child’s upbringing) were identified and addressed. In the framework of its justice for children programme activities, UNICEF Croatia engaged in strengthening the capacity of judicial professionals and others involved in supporting child victims and witnesses of violence. The training tackled gender-related issues and strived to increase the knowledge and skills needed by professionals to adequately address gender-related problems within the justice system.

In the framework of its emergency response to the migrant and refugee crises, UNICEF Croatia was actively involved in the gender action plan targeted priority area of addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in emergencies. Assuming the lead of the inter-agency working group on such violence, UNICEF Croatia participated in the process of identifying gender-based violence risks in the transit centre at Slavonski Brod, supported activities related to risk-reduction and establishment of referral mechanisms and conducted training of first-line responders in prevention and response to GBV. Throughout the refugee and migrant crisis, UNICEF Croatia provided a comprehensive and fully functional support system for children and women, with particular focus on women with newborn infants, pregnant and lactating women. Counselling services, sanitation facilities, showers, hygiene materials and a safe place for rest (men not allowed) were ensured. Over 1,700 women were counselled at mother and baby care facilities.

Training on child protection in emergencies, including GBV, was conducted for relevant national partners, reaching 179 frontline workers with increased knowledge and skills on this issue.

During the process of developing the new CPD 2017-2021, UNICEF Croatia invested significant efforts in gender mainstreaming; a programme gender review is planned for 2017.

All studies and evaluations designed and implemented in 2016 anticipated gender issues, to inform future programming.

**Environmental Sustainability**

UNICEF Croatia continued to reduce its climate footprint with the aim of becoming climate neutral by 2020 at the latest, and in order to comply with the United Nations’ climate neutral strategy.

During 2016, UNICEF Croatia incorporated in its daily business various initiatives that were decreasing the offices’ environmental impact in terms of: enhanced waste management, waste pre-sorting and recycling, reduced printing and moving towards paperless office, using laptops/projectors during meetings instead of printed materials, using fuel-efficient and low-carbon vehicles and implementing IT LIGHT office to reduce IT equipment and energy consumption.

Furthermore, advocacy actions by UNICEF Croatia related to child rights and environmental issues targeted the country’s corporate sector. Through promotion of CRBP, UNICEF
Croatia raised awareness and promoted due diligence in terms of the impact of corporate actors on the environment.

Environmental policy in Croatia was shaped by Croatia's accession to the European Union. In accordance with the national strategic reference framework (which guides use of the EU Structural and Cohesion Fund), by 2023 Croatia will spend about US$10 billion on waste management, water management and air protection – the three most important environmental issues addressed by the EU. In implementing its 2017-2021 country programme, UNICEF Croatia will seek to contribute in a progressive manner to the priorities related to climate change and children, in partnership with the Government, civil society organizations and the private sector.

**Effective Leadership**

The country management team (CMT) continued to provide strategic direction, overall management and performance monitoring of the UNICEF Office, with attention to the annual priorities established in the biennial management plan (BMP), key performance indicators for the country office scorecard and implementation of the fundraising strategy. Major tasks dealt with by the country management team during 2016 included: development of the new country programme document (CPD) 2017-2021 and the related staffing structure and management plan, ensuring effective response to the migrant and refugee crisis and further enhancement and full implementation of the harmonized approach to cash transactions (HACT) framework. UNICEF Croatia continued to review, improve and streamline work processes by focusing on bottlenecks, incorporating updates of internal documents and ensuring full compliance and accountability.

In addition to the CMT, other formal governance structures were in place: contract review committee, partnership review committee, fundraising strategy committee, local property survey board, joint consultative committee (JCC) and local staff development committee.

A total of 11 CMT meetings and three all-staff meetings were conducted in 2016. One additional all-staff meeting was held with a special focus on security and business continuity, as a refresher. Three fundraising strategy committee meetings and two JCC meetings were held in 2016. Two internal business processes meetings were organized to discuss changes related to the transition to the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) and other organizational changes.

The table of authority was updated to reflect staff-related changes and responsibilities and to ensure proper segregation of duties; for the latter, conflicts were reviewed and addressed regularly. Risk assessment (ERM) was updated in January 2016, using the ERM module, in preparation for the new CP cycle 2017-2021. The business continuity plan (BCP) was updated based on insights from table top discussion with all staff as well as to include significant infrastructural changes in business continuity and availability of resources with migration to IT LIGHT Office and migration to GSSC.

**Financial Resources Management**

The country management team regularly reviewed, as per standing agenda item, implementation of the biennium management plan, by monitoring set indicators with focus on budget utilization, liquidations of cash assistance and other performance indicators defined in the Scorecard.

UNICEF Croatia reviewed and adjusted work processes and practices for in-scope transaction even prior migration to GSSC to ensure full compliance with the Centre’s standard operating procedures and a smooth transition in April 2016. In line with the
efficiency and effectiveness initiative, UNICEF Croatia abolished several self-imposed procedures that were not organisationally mandated.

Beside in-house software (UNICEF Croatia Business Planner and HACT Manager) that was developed and fully implemented in 2016 to ensure tracking of incoming Invoices, as well as projects, events, absence lists, roster, automated processing of VAT exemption forms, chrono in/out, planning and monitoring of implementation of HACT assurance activities, in 2016 UNICEF Croatia developed its SharePoint page for documentation and information sharing, planning of activities and budget of the new CP. Full implementation is expected in 2017, the first year of the new country programme.

UNICEF Croatia submitted all bank reconciliations before deadlines. All financial closure activities were successfully completed and in full compliance with prescribed deadlines, including on-going 2016 accounts closure activities.

Expenditure rates for 2016 were 100 per cent for regular resources (RR) (excluding PBA GG 150002 which is to be expensed in 2017 and is valid until 1 April 2017), 95 per cent for other resources (OR) and 100 per cent for other resources-emergency (ORE). All expiring Programme Budget Allotments were fully utilized prior to their expiration.

In Croatia, due to limited UN presence, HACT was adopted only by UNICEF. UNICEF Croatia managed all direct cash transfers to IPs as per the HACT framework and procedures. The CO did not have any outstanding DCTs for more than nine months in 2016.

### Fundraising and Donor Relations

Raising and leveraging resources for children is one of the core roles of UNICEF in Croatia. UNICEF Croatia has been progressively integrating its programmatic, fundraising and communications efforts, as well as strengthening its engagement with existing and new donors and extending it beyond financial contributions, in order to maximize the impact of alliances for children that include individuals and corporate sector in Croatia. A new resource mobilization strategy was developed and adopted in 2016, integrating fundraising and leveraging resources from private and public sectors.

UNICEF Croatia raised more than US$3 million through local private sector fundraising activities, representing an increase of 5 per cent compared to 2015 results (in local currency). UNICEF Croatia succeeded in securing 100 per cent of planned targets for the CP’s other resources (OR) ceiling. In addition to successful fundraising for in-country programme activities, UNICEF Croatia contributed US$507,000 to international priorities for children; 16 per cent of total income raised. This includes a contribution of US$320,000 to global Regular Resources (RR), a 10 per cent increase compared to 2015; US$83,000 contributed to the Schools for Africa Campaign (OR-Global), representing a 34 per cent increase compared to 2015; and US$101,000 to the Global Emergency Fund (OR-Emergency) to support UNICEF’s emergency response activities in Syria.

UNICEF Croatia reported to citizens and corporate donors through regular communications, including a quarterly newsletter and thematic digital reports, donor events and an annual overview of achievements promoting child rights and fostering social change.

Quality and timely donor reporting was ensured through an internal quality assurance mechanism. In 2016 UNICEF Croatia submitted two contributions for two UNICEF regional emergency donor reports and one donor report to the German National Committee for UNICEF.

### Evaluation and Research
UNICEF Croatia implemented all quality and ethical requirements for UNICEF-led and supported researches, studies and evaluations. All activities entered into PRIME were regularly monitored, reviewed, updated and implemented as planned. Newly gained information and insights were used for informing programme and advocacy activities, and were also included into the design of the new CP.

Two comprehensive evaluation processes related to the 2012-2016 CP took place in 2016: one related to the ECD/parenting support component, and the other related to the child protection/justice for children component.

A comprehensive formative evaluation of two parenting support programmes (“Growing up Together” and “Growing up Together Plus”) was finalized in December 2016. The conclusions and recommendations will be shared and discussed with all relevant stakeholders in early 2017; UNICEF’s management response will be developed in 2017. The evaluation findings demonstrated the high level of relevance and effectiveness of both programmes and suggested potential sustainability mechanisms.

The inception phase and data collection for the justice for children programme component evaluation were completed in 2016, while the final report will be delivered in 2017.

Both evaluations were external and conducted by teams of highly qualified independent experts in the field. The reports (inception and final) were reviewed by a prominent evaluation company and rated as highly satisfactory. Given this, their conclusions and recommendations can be considered as very useful, objective and impartial. They will support evidence-based approaches to programme designing, as well as final adjustments to the parenting support programmes prior to their transfer to other countries as part of UNICEF Croatia’s beyond-borders engagement in support of knowledge exchange. Furthermore, these evaluation processes contributed to overall better understanding of the evaluation processes and purposes among national stakeholders and decision makers.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

In partnership with media outlets, UNICEF Croatia secured free advertising space and time (equivalent to about US$50,000) for airing PSAs and running banners on media literacy and calls to engagement with UNICEF in the framework of ‘Guardians of Childhood’ campaign. This included airtime on all national TV stations and banners on selected Internet portals.

To improve the use of time and resources, UNICEF Croatia incorporated in its daily business various effectiveness and efficiency initiatives – monthly payment schedule, monthly printing plan, monthly purchasing plan, combining of invoices/reducing of number of payments – leading to a reduction in the volume of transactions.

Efficiency gains and savings were also achieved in 2016 with extensive and advanced use the Office 365 package and use of Lync and Polycom VC for free of charge international calls, video calls, meetings, web-ex sessions for recruitment purposes, replacing both travel and the use of expensive landlines or office mobile phones. UNICEF Croatia conducted market research for printing equipment and concluded that it is more efficient to rent a copy/multifunctional machine. The Office continued to phase out the single printer per room scenario to save funds on expensive cartridges and maintenance of equipment.

In late 2015 UNICEF Croatia migrated to the IT LIGHT environment, and in 2016 it reduced its ICT footprint by removing all servers (except for Donor Perfect DB), from the server room. It is estimated that the savings amounts to US$25,000 per lifecycle of server (four years).
Supply Management

The total value of goods and services procured in 2016 amounts to US$1,452,596. Procurement of goods in total amount of US$441,003 was related to: regular programme activities (35 per cent), emergency response (23 per cent), fundraising activities (28 per cent), and miscellaneous operating items (14 per cent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>(in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme supply</td>
<td>US$152,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency programme supply</td>
<td>US$102,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational supply</td>
<td>US$60,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising supplies</td>
<td>US$125,911</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Programme-related procurement activities mainly consisted of procurement of kindergarten equipment and emergency preparedness items. As a result, implementing partners received programme and emergency supplies in the amount of US$119,984. The rest of procured goods related to direct mail material for fundraising activities and operating items such as fuel, furniture and IT equipment. Eighty-six per cent of procured goods were purchased locally, while 14 per cent were ordered from UNICEF’s Supply Division.

The total value of service contracts amounted to US$1,011,593: 32 per cent for programme, 11 per cent for emergency programme, 49 per cent for fundraising and 8 per cent for operational services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procurement of services – programme</td>
<td>US$324,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement of services - emergency programme</td>
<td>US$114,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement of services - operational</td>
<td>US$81,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement of services - fundraising</td>
<td>US$491,758</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total value of emergency programme supplies in UNICEF’s warehouse (warehouse number 146) on 21 December 2016 was US$12,845. Programme supplies were regularly processed through the VISION warehouse module. Physical counts were conducted twice, while the year-end inventory count was conducted in December 2016. Mandatory activities were performed to control country office assets, including physical counts (twice a year), random checks, monitoring and reporting of all activities related to assets, in compliance with UNICEF policies and international standards. As part of optimization and effective use of resources, the Office established long-term agreements for office supplies, postage delivery service, multi-media messaging and production.

In 2016, no building repairs, maintenance costs or construction projects were delivered via a partnership, nor were there requests from the Government or other partners for support in procurement services.

Security for Staff and Premises

In 2016, the security management team (SMT), in coordination with the regional security advisor, reviewed and updated the country-level security risk assessment and security plan. UNICEF’s business continuity plan (BCP) was updated to reflect the migration to IT LIGHT, availability of data/resources and updated risk assessment. Emergency lists, contact points and warden system lists were updated regularly, as was the list of field emergency response team at the winter reception and transit centre in Slavonski Brod.
UNICEF is a member of the security management team and an active participant in UN security meetings and trainings. All staff members received security training provided by the operations officer, with a focus on the migrant crisis and UNICEF’s presence and operations within the camp; an additional BCP refresher discussion was held, leading to an update of the BCP. A regular fire drill exercise was conducted in December 2016 and the evacuation plan was tested within the drill.

UN House continues to be compliant with minimum operating security standards and Croatia continues to be Security Level 1.

### Human Resources

Although the results of the Global Staff Survey in 2014 showed a very positive trend in UNICEF Croatia, in comparison to 2011 results, the Office continued monitoring the situation and further strengthening a stimulating and cooperative office environment. In 2016 UNICEF Croatia adopted measures to consolidate its performance in several domains, particularly in the areas of office efficiency and effectiveness, inclusive workplace and professional development.

A staffing structure analysis was performed in preparation for new country programme (CP) 2017-2021, which showed that many of the competencies required for the successful implementation of the new programme already existed on the team, but there was a need to strengthen capacities in the areas of child protection, child rights monitoring, advocacy and cross-sectoral partnerships. Staffing needs and new staffing structure were discussed with all current staff.

To secure a smooth start for the new CP, UNICEF Croatia developed an ambitious recruitment plan to fill five new staff positions, and two positions with changes in levels, during the final quarter of 2016 and first quarter of 2017. Six posts were advertised in 2016, three selection processes finished and three more expected to be finalized in early 2017.

In 2016 UNICEF Croatia continued recruiting a significant number of professionals as part of its response to the refugee and migrant crisis, which started in late 2015. In that context, UNICEF Croatia used stand-by personnel arrangements for filling the positions of emergency coordinator, child protection in emergencies specialist and nutrition specialist, while local consultants were recruited for other positions in the field emergency response team.

Performance discussions were held regularly and maintained through the new performance portal “Achieve”. Individual staff members’ responsibilities for performance reviews and work plans are linked to key results of the biennial work plan and management plan, and to overall achievement of country programme priorities and goals.

### Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

In accordance with the UNICEF information technology solutions and services’ objectives, all ICT resources and services were upgraded in 2016 and are in line with UNICEF policies. The major change in ICT was migration to IT LIGHT in late December 2015, with full effect in 2016. The remote solution boosted organizational efficiency and effectiveness and created a fully mobile workspace, with all resources available through an Internet connection. Skype for Business was fully integrated with Office, allowing users to organize and participate in online meetings. These steps resulted in a reduction of the ICT footprint and the use of just one physical server in 2016.

Primary Internet connection speed was retained at 130Mbps/130Mbps and is providing
efficient infrastructure, connectivity and uninterrupted access to all cloud-based business systems: VISION with SAP and MS Office 365. To ensure business continuity, an additional ADSL backup link (4096/512kbit) is available and was tested throughout 2016 as a WiFi guest account.

Backup procedures were additionally streamlined and automated in 2016 to protect and secure data. As per the BCP, all backups were kept on an external hard drive and stored outside of the Office for easy restoration of all Office ICT resources at a remote location in case of emergency.

In 2016 UNICEF Croatia produced an English-language version of the locally created website (www.unicef.hr). UNICEF Croatia is expanding its presence on social media with accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The number of supporters and followers has been growing: Facebook by 13.4 per cent and Twitter by 40 per cent. The Instagram profile was launched at the end of October; by the end of December the profile recorded 43 followers.

Programme Components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 ECD services for vulnerable children ensure that girls and boys from the poorest families, including those with disabilities or developmental risks, and from the Roma minority benefit from i) inclusive, community-based preschool services for children and families; ii) family based early childhood intervention programmes and services and iii) perinatal care services and better parenting education

Analytical Statement of Progress:
This outcome corresponds to the RKLAs 3/4 and 7 and is linked to Strategic Plan outcomes 1 (Health), 4 (Nutrition) and 5 (Education). The outcome also indirectly contributes to RKLA 1, in relation to provision of parenting support to the most vulnerable families, contributing to the prevention of violence against children and separation of children from their biological families. In spite the increased strategic commitment of the Croatian Government during 2014 and 2015 to develop community-based support services for children and families, political instability throughout 2016 resulted in significant stagnation and delays in implementation, widening even more the gap between national strategy/legislative frameworks and implementation at the local/community level. Therefore, access to affordable, quality, early childhood education and parenting support services remains one of the major challenges, particularly in rural areas and for disadvantaged groups of children and families. In this regard, during 2016 UNICEF Croatia focused its efforts on providing support to the development of ECD services for the most vulnerable children, including Roma and children from economically-deprived families, particularly at the community level. In addition to direct facilitation of service delivery, UNICEF Croatia supported capacity development of local civil society organizations, to support leveraging of resources for child rights priorities and to strengthen their capacity for sustainable and continuous provision of child and family interventions initiated with UNICEF’s support.

UNICEF’s work in early childhood intervention (ECI) continues to be the key priority of its early childhood development (ECD) agenda. In partnership with the key stakeholder, UNICEF made significant progress toward increasing awareness and capacities of key stakeholders on transdisciplinary and family-centred approaches to delivering ECI services. However, due to the change of government and lack of political commitment across health, education and social welfare sectors the development of a comprehensive ECI system for children with
disabilities/developmental delays and their families with adequate financial and human resources remains a challenge.

**OUTPUT 1** By the end of 2016, national and local authorities provide quality, inclusive community-based parenting and ECD support services to the most disadvantaged boys and girls and their families.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
This output is linked to Strategic Plan outcomes 5 (education) and 7 (social inclusion), corresponding to RKLAs 3/4 and 7 and, and indirectly to RKLA1.

The parenting support programmes for the general population of parents of the youngest children, and especially for parents of young children with disabilities, received additional support during 2016. Sustainability of the existing models of parenting support services was further strengthened, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, enabling nationwide access to services within the preschool education and social welfare systems. A comprehensive external evaluation of both programmes was conducted, providing evidence of the programmes’ relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Valuable lessons learned and recommendations were identified, providing grounds for further development of the services to match needs and characteristics of different groups of parents, especially those most vulnerable.

The national ECD telephone counselling line, established in 2013, was successfully scaled up and has been funded by the City of Zagreb since 2014. The service continued to provide expert support to parents of the youngest children all over Croatia.

Access to a number of new community-based services was ensured for the youngest children and their families in selected counties (with emphasis on Roma, children with disabilities and children living in poverty) through UNICEF Croatia’s technical support in capacity building and strengthening networks among local service providers.

As part of technical assistance to the MoE and local governments and in partnership with the Open Academy ‘Step by Step’, UNICEF Croatia supported 17 local preschools in three most-deprived counties to improve the quality of their services and enhance the capacity of educators and local community key stakeholder for applying an integrated approach to early childhood education, with a special focus on inclusion of children with disabilities, Roma and children living in poverty.

To improve parent, school and community involvement in supporting successful learning outcomes for Roma children and children from economically deprived families, UNICEF and Open Academy ‘Step by Step’ partnered with primary schools in two towns (Sisak and Slavonski Brod) to model a programme for children and families aimed at successful transition to and better start in primary school. Within families, this model is empowering Roma parents to support their child’s development and learning. At schools, the model has increased the capacity of teachers to involve parents or caregivers in their children’s learning experiences and to collaborate with community resources to meet the needs of children entering primary school. The improvements resulting from the programme are: improvements in the quality of education through teacher training and mentor support; changes in attitudes and social norms, both among teachers/school management and parents; and improved cooperation among local stakeholders (Roma and non-Roma NGOs, education institutions and other community services).
OUTPUT 2 By the end of 2016, the social welfare and health system, in cooperation with local authorities, provides comprehensive, quality, accessible and responsive home-based early childhood intervention services to most vulnerable families and children.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF’s convening role and technical assistance provided to the social, health and education sectors resulted in the establishment of a national framework for early detection and diagnosis of children with autism spectrum disorder, which was reached through consensus among key ECI stakeholders. The process was the first-of-its-kind opportunity in Croatia for key ECI stakeholders to influence the design and contribute to the recommendations put forward to the ministers in preparation for the national framework’s full roll-out. Although the implementation process was a bit delayed due to changes in government, the MoH established a multidisciplinary commission to establish and implement a care system for people with autism; development of the implementation plan is ongoing.

Early detection of children at risk is entrusted to the health care system at the primary health care level, provided by the paediatricians and home visiting nurses. However, UNICEF’s assessments have shown that these services are narrowly focused on physical health and that many critical issues – such as positive parenting and early detection of risk or vulnerability – are not addressed. To address these gaps UNICEF invested in capacity building of primary healthcare providers for timely identification of developmental delays/disabilities, to support developmental outcomes of young children with delays/disabilities. In cooperation with the MoH, UNICEF initiated piloting of the ‘guide for monitoring child development’ and continued to advocate for its regular application and implementation.

To support continued professional education of home visiting nurses, UNICEF partnered with the universities of Split and Rijeka to develop curricula for a lifelong learning programme. These activities are part of the RKLA 7 initiative. The programme will continue during 2017.

To support progress in access to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), UNICEF Croatia partnered with the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences to provide technical assistance in support of national capacity building for AAC as an early intervention method for children aged zero-to-eight years with developmental delay/disabilities. The programme aims to: build the capacity of CSOs, healthcare and social institutions, and increase awareness and knowledge among key stakeholders. To ensure implementation and sustainability, UNICEF signed MoUs with 31 institutions and CSOs working in the health and social sectors.

According to UNICEF Croatia research in 2014, a significant number of children with disabilities continue to live in special hospitals and remain excluded from society, especially in one special hospital in Gornja Bistra. Therefore, UNICEF Croatia focused its efforts at building the hospital’s capacity for ECI, to improve the quality of health services and rehabilitation for patients aged zero-to-eight. Also, UNICEF Croatia supported a programme aiming to optimize health and development outcomes of children in that age group who are placed at the hospital for long-term stays by: (i) establishing a simulating, responsive and developmentally appropriate environment; and (ii) incorporating up-to-date, evidence-based, developmentally appropriate early intervention practices in the daily routine of hospital staff.

OUTPUT 3 By end of 2016, the application of BFHI, including parental education outreach programmes for the most vulnerable groups, has been incorporated in the practices of maternity wards and primary health care services nationwide.
Analytical Statement of Progress:
This output corresponds to the RKLA 7 and is linked to Strategic Plan outcomes 1 (health) and 4 (nutrition).

All 31 maternity wards in Croatia gained baby-friendly maternity ward status and developed a network of community-based postnatal support. Practices and protocols in neonatal intensive care units were significantly improved. Healthcare professionals were additionally trained, and the application of best practices and a national set of indicators was successfully implemented. However, although exclusive breastfeeding rates remain high in the early months, they decline after three months and drop more sharply for infants six months and older. Predominantly due to the lack of legislation required to apply the marketing code for breast-milk substitutes, and its influence on health professionals, the remaining challenge is how to increase breastfeeding rates after infants reach three months. In that respect, UNICEF Croatia continued to advocate for the adoption of an ordinance to ensure application of the marketing code. In terms of sustainability, UNICEF provided support to MoH working groups working on the inclusion of BFHI criteria in an amendment to the ‘Ordinance on quality standards’ and the method of their implementation in health care facilities, as well as defining breastfeeding indicators that will augment national data.

A group of Croatian experts adapted WHO/UNICEF criteria for the mother-friendly hospital initiative to the national context, in order to further improve practices on maternity wards. Although traditional attitudes on the part of medical professionals and their resistance to changing established medical/hospital practices remain a challenge, social circumstances have changed. Pilot implementation of mother friendly practices in four maternity wards is in process.

OUTCOME 2 Country infrastructure-child rights structure for the increased realization of child rights, through: i) increased prevention and intervention for the protection of children from violence, abuse and neglect; ii) the planning, budgeting and monitoring of policies and decisions of national and subnational authorities, which will increasingly address social exclusion of children and iii) the increased engagement of public and private stakeholders in supporting children’s rights.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
This outcome corresponds to the RKLAs 1, 2, 8 and 9 and is linked to Strategic Plan outcomes 6 (child protection) and 7 (social inclusion).

Political instability throughout 2016 strongly affected overall progress and realisation of this outcome. After the parliamentary elections in December 2015, the new Government was constituted in January 2016, but faced a growing number of political controversies, culminating in a Parliamentary vote of ‘no-confidence’ in the prime minister and a decision to dissolve the Parliament by mid-July. This put an end to the Government, which became a technical government only until extraordinary parliamentary elections were held in September 2016.

The process of establishing the new structures in ministries continued until the end of the year. Extensive gaps and delays in activities and initiatives occurred due to these developments, as well as to different concepts, ideas and priorities on the part of each new government. In the beginning of 2016 important and very promising initiatives emerged, especially those focused on further improvements in relation to children without adequate parental care and an increased focus on developing a foster care system, complementing the ongoing deinstitutionalisation process. UNICEF Croatia provided intensive policy advice during the whole process, with focus on improving the quality of foster care. Unfortunately, all further activities were stopped following the crisis in June. The same delays were experienced by the World Bank for its work on social protection system modernization.
In the justice sector a number of promising developments occurred in the second half of 2016, which go hand in hand with UNICEF Croatia efforts to further develop and support child-friendly justice, including an agreement between Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior to equip an additional 20 courts with audio-visual equipment for recording children’s interviews. In 2016 UNICEF continued efforts to strengthen the justice system by building capacity among justice professionals working with child victims and witnesses of crimes, and by developing standards and increasing the quality of assessment for at-risk youth and youth in conflict with the law. The capacity building of experts and practitioners involved with child victims and witnesses of crimes resulted in the establishment of guidelines for cooperation among professionals, as well as the production of child-friendly publications for child victims and witnesses and their parents/legal guardians. Due to changes in the Criminal Code, according to which diversion measures and special obligations were not permitted for acts of aggravated larceny, the number of special obligations significantly decreased. However further changes in the Code in 2015 again allowed diversion measure to be applied for acts of aggravated larceny, which led to a slight increase in the use of out-of-court settlements with children and youth at-risk and in conflict with law. Several needs still must be addressed, such as: shortening the time of trial and adjudication, full implementation of alternative measures, and enhancing the rights of child victims and witnesses in all judicial procedures.

Although the process of establishing child well-being indicators was slowed due to political instability, there was a common understanding on the need for further strengthening child-rights monitoring mechanisms and data collection methodologies to provide reliable, comparable disaggregated data on children and families.

UNICEF’s broad and continuous alliance with the citizens of Croatia – combining financial support with other types of engagement to promote positive change for children – continued during 2016 and resulted, by the end of the year, in more than 44,800 regular supporters and an additional 31,200 one-time supporters contributing to in-country programmes and international activities. The CRBP gave impetus to UNICEF partnerships with the corporate sector and established a new path for implementation of the integrated corporate engagement concept. The number of engagements with the corporate and private sectors increased during 2016 and was broader in size and scope, ranging from monetary contributions, in-kind donations, advocacy campaigns, leveraging resources or a combination. Partnership with the Agency for Electronic Media resulted in the first national guidelines for editors on age-appropriate classification of audio-visual content. Because of the joint campaign implemented in partnership with national and local TV stations, unsupervised TV watching among children decreased from 35 per cent in 2014 to 11 per cent in 2016.

**OUTPUT 1** By the end of 2016, the child protection system applies a case management approach to its child clients and ensures the availability and functioning of specialized services in accordance with international standards and best interests of children

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
This output corresponds to the RKLA 1 and 2 and SP outcome 6 (child protection).

The overall process of deinstitutionalisation, development of community-based services and improvements in foster care and family support were significantly delayed and slowed down due to instability throughout 2016. Despite rich and intensive cooperation between UNICEF and the line ministry during the first few months in planning joint activities, all initiatives had to postponed until 2017. Very intensive policy work had been also conducted during the first half of 2016, with substantial contribution and policy advice by UNICEF in the ministry’s
working group on the ‘National Action Plan for Development of Foster Care in Croatia 2016-2017’. Capacity-building of ministry officials was also supported, with a special focus on developing a comprehensive case management system and continuum of services for families at risk, to support vulnerable families and prevent child separation.

As a continuation of contribution to the emergency response to flood-affected areas in the eastern part of Croatia, UNICEF Croatia continued to support the non-formal preschool education programme in Gunja Municipality. When the floods revealed serious deficits in the availability of basic services for preschool children, UNICEF Croatia initiated activities to mobilize and build capacities of the municipality, and to ensure continuity and sustainability in service delivery. Substantial financial and technical support, facilitation and advice were provided to the municipality to identify potential sustainability mechanisms, which are expected to result in long-term availability of the services during 2017.

In justice, UNICEF provided technical assistance, policy advice and knowledge exchange to increase the capacity of justice professionals working with child victims and witnesses of crimes, through: additional training and professional supervision of non-legal child professionals, establishing guidelines for cooperation among professionals and publishing and distributing widely child-friendly publications for child victims and witnesses and their parents/legal guardians.

UNICEF supported line ministry with the development of standards, guidelines and tools for enhancing children’s access to justice and continued the capacity-building project to strengthen the quality of assessments for at-risk youth and youth in conflict with law. Action research on current assessment practices, coupled with regional professional consultations carried out in 2016, have resulted in a final draft of the publication describing standards, guidelines and tools for assessing at-risk youth and youth in conflict with law.

Because of continuous advocacy, changes in the Criminal Code were introduced in 2015, which re-introduced the use of diversion measures for juveniles who committed aggravated larceny. The number of out-of-court settlements with children and youth at-risk and in conflict with law once again increased in 2016.

**OUTPUT 2** By end 2016 national and local authorities collect, analyse and use disaggregated data in policy making, management and accountability in processes related to addressing the social exclusion of children and their families

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

UNICEF Croatia supported national efforts to strengthen child rights monitoring mechanisms and provide reliable and comparable disaggregated data on children. The platform formed in 2015 for the establishment of national child-wellbeing indicators earned high levels of interest and professional commitment and had great potential to keep improving the data collection and utilization systems. The Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy recognized the document’s potential as an important policy tool for evidence-based charting of the status of children and for identifying key bottlenecks and barriers that undermine child rights realization. The action plan for further operationalization and sustainability is scheduled to be developed in early 2017. UNICEF will continue to encourage and support the work of this platform, which involves experts from the National Office for Statistics, line ministries, academia and national human rights institutions.

In cooperation with line ministries and academic institutions, in 2016, UNICEF initiated a process for conducting two independent evaluations to document and provide evidence for future policy and practice improvements.

UNICEF also supported the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities (OHRRNM) to develop an action plan for implementing the national Roma inclusion strategy.
for the period 2016-2018. Collecting data on Roma children and families in the framework of this plan should enable systematic monitoring of their situation and enable policy measures based on reliable data and information.

In close cooperation with the National Statistics Office and administrative data providers, the TransMonEE national data system that captures a vast range of data relevant to child protection, health, education, social and economic issues, was strengthened, utilized and promoted.

All UNICEF-led research and studies remained a strong and valid support for evidence-based policy development, especially those involving the most excluded children and families.

At the community level, in cooperation with the Union of Societies Our Children, UNICEF worked on strengthening capacities of towns and districts to assess the status of child rights fulfilment at the local level, in line with national and international standards.

**OUTPUT 3** By 2016, alliances for children, involving the private sector, CSOs and the media inform policy and practice, advocate for child rights and leverage resources for national and international programmes for the most vulnerable children

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

The broad and continuous alliance with citizens of Croatia, combining financial support and the promotion of positive change for children, was further strengthened during 2016 and resulted, by the end of the year, with more than 44,800 regular supporters and an additional 31,200 one-time supporters contributing to UNICEF’s in-country programmes and international priorities. This partnership therefore includes some 2 per cent of Croatian citizens. The number of regular supporters surpassed the target for the 2012-2016 period by 12 per cent, while monetary contributions by pledge supporters for 2016 increased by 9 per cent, compared to 2015; pledge income accounted for 69 per cent of total private sector income in 2016.

The CRBP platform gave impetus to UNICEF partnerships with the corporate sector and established a new path for implementation of the integrated corporate engagement concept. The number of engagements with the corporate and private sectors increased during 2016, and grew in size and scope ranging from monetary contributions, in-kind donations, advocacy campaigns, leveraging resources, or a combination.

The Schools for Africa Campaign, with Burkina Faso as a beneficiary country for the third year, entered its ninth year of strong alliances with kindergarten and school children through community fundraising coupled with child rights education, involving more than 86,000 children (14 per cent of Croatian children aged from five-to-18 years) in this endeavour.

In 2016, the Office’s contribution to UNICEF’s RR increased (in local currency) by 10 per cent and amounted to US$320,000. During the 2012-2016 country programme, UNICEF Croatia’s RR contribution amounted to US$1,186,000, triple the original target of US$380,000.

In addition to the RR contribution, individuals and the corporate sector contributed more than US$16,800,000 to country programme activities. The ongoing commitment of Croatian citizens and businesses to UNICEF global activities resulted in an additional US$500,000 (16 per cent of total income raised), and was bolstered by a successful integrated campaign celebrating UNICEF’s 70th anniversary.

Partnership with the Agency for Electronic Media resulted in the first national guideline for editors on age-appropriate classification of audio-visual content. Because of the joint
campaign implemented in partnership with national and local TV stations, unsupervised TV watching among children decreased from 35 per cent in 2014 to 11 per cent in 2016.

**OUTCOME 3** Country programmes are efficiently designed, coordinated, managed and supported to meet quality programming standards in achieving results for children

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Major achievements for this outcome were: correct and timely processing and implementation of activities that enabled smooth functioning of operations and the entire office.

**OUTPUT 1** Actions related to setting the direction and governance of country programme operations and office structures, including business continuity and risk management

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The biannual management plan 2015-2016 was updated in 2016 in a timely manner, and followed up at CMT meetings. ERM and the risk-control and assessment library were updated and reviewed by CMT members. In 2016, the CMT continued to provide strategic direction, overall leadership and oversight to ensure that the country programme is aligned with the changing requirements of the country and that the planned results are achieved, including emergency response to the migrant and refugee crisis. The CMT regularly reviewed, as per standing agenda items, implementation of the BMP and budget utilization, and monitored the fund-raising strategy plan. Major initiatives taken by the CMT during 2016 included: development of the new CPD 2017-2021, as well as the related staffing structure and CPMP; ensuring an effective response to the migrant and refugee crisis; further enhancement and full implementation of the HACT framework.

**OUTPUT 2** Office administration, asset and financial management activities

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
All operational targets and indicators defined in the BMP for 2016 were met. The CMT monitored programme implementation and DCT management through a set of regular management reports. All deadlines for bank reconciliations and reporting were met, as were deadlines for mid- and end-year closure reporting. The programme assurance plan was updated. With a third-party service provider (ANTARES), UNICEF Croatia conducted three spot-checks, 33 programme visits and provided training for IP finance staff and management on how to manage funds received from UN. The total value of all DCTs in 2016 was US$509,578. The Office did not have any outstanding DCT for more than nine months in 2016.

UNICEF Croatia is not eligible for institutional budget (IB), therefore no posts were charged here.

**OUTPUT 3** Human resources have the capacities, skills, morale and motivation to support country operations

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
This output, set by default for IB, was not utilized by the HQ Payroll Unit for payroll processing and therefore not applicable.

**OUTPUT 4** Office administration, asset and financial management activities

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Office administration, asset and financial management activities - used in 2016 in addition to Stewardship of Financial Resources to cover costs for premises from IB.
OUTPUT 5 Governance and Systems

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The 2015-2016 BMP was updated in 2016 in a timely manner, and followed up at CMT meetings. ERM and the risk-control and assessment library were updated and reviewed by CMT members. In 2016, the CMT continued to provide strategic direction, overall leadership and oversight to ensure that the country programme is aligned with the changing requirements of the country and that the planned results are achieved, including emergency response to the migrant and refugee crisis. The CMT regularly reviewed, as per standing agenda items, implementation of the BMP and budget utilization, and monitored the fund-raising strategy plan. Major initiatives taken by the CMT during 2016 included: development of the new CPD 2017-2021, as well as the related staffing structure and CPMP; ensuring an effective response to the migrant and refugee crisis; further enhancement and full implementation of the HACT framework.

OUTCOME 4 Development Effectiveness

Analytical Statement of Progress:
This outcome provided cross-cutting support to all programme areas in the country programme, and is not specific to any one programme area

OUTPUT 1 Strategies to address cross-cutting issues related to child rights are developed and applied

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF provided human resource support through cross-sectoral approaches; funds were mainly utilized to help the organization contribute to the achievement of other outcomes, such as staff costs for communications, operations and consultants providing cross-sectoral support. Also, funds utilized under this Outcome contributed to overall achievement of UNICEF Croatia’s goals through logistics, communication, warehouse service and travels.

OUTPUT 2 UNICEF staff and partners are provided tools, guidance and resources for effective advocacy and partnerships on child rights issues with stakeholders.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2015 and 2016, UNICEF Croatia continued to build capacities of its staff and partners for effective advocacy and partnerships on child rights. More than 10 workshops and trainings were held to strengthen partners’ capacities and those of UNICEF staff and consultants. Two sets of guidance were produced to support effective advocacy.

Document Center

Evaluation and research

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Other publications

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<td>Dobre vijesti (Good News)</td>
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<td>Preparing a child for the court - brochure for children</td>
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Lessons learned

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Programme documents

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