

## Croatia

### Part 1: Situation update in the country

#### Economic and social context

In 2018, the Croatian economy continued to grow, with both employment and wages on the rise, accompanied by a fiscal policy that led to the reduction of public debt, currently at 76.1 per cent of gross domestic product. This growth was driven primarily by personal consumption. An important driver of investment in social inclusion, growth and development, the absorption rate of European Union (EU) funds, slightly increased. This is expected to benefit some of the most vulnerable groups of children; with more than US\$250 million of joint EU and government funds secured for investment in facility and services in kindergartens, mostly in rural areas.

Despite progress achieved in the realization of child rights, inequities persist within and across the country in helping children and young persons thrive and in ensuring equitable chances in life. Children living in institutions, Roma children, children with disabilities, children in conflict with law and children living in poverty and/or isolation are among the most who are deprived of chances to develop to their full potential.

In 2018, the total population in Croatia continued to be reduced. The negative population growth is a result of decreasing fertility and birth rates, increasing mortality rates and the increased emigration of working-age (20-64 years) and young persons to other EU member states. Less than 19 per cent of population are aged under 18 years, at around 731,600 children.

The decline in fertility can be mostly be attributed to unfavourable conditions for starting a family, including the high unemployment of young persons, low wages and short-term contracts and consequent inability by young couples to ensure housing from income that they could earn. In addition, there is very little flexibility in the working arrangements for women and a lack of family-friendly work policies and services to support working parents, including kindergartens, which are unevenly spread across the country. The age at which young people in Croatia decide to start a family is constantly increasing, with the average age at which women give birth to be 29 years. In 2016, the fertility rate was 1.4. These trends have impacted on birth rates which are continuously falling, and in 2017 reached 8.9 per 1,000, or around 36,556 newborns.

The leading causes in increased mortality include cardiovascular diseases and lung, breast and colorectal cancer, which are among the highest in the EU. These health challenges point to shortcomings in health care delivery and public health interventions. Infant mortality, at 4.05 per 1,000 live births in 2017, is still above the EU average.

From 2013 to 2016, experts estimated that almost 220,000 Croatian residents moved to other EU countries, for both economic and non-economic reasons. Adverse migration and demographic trends reduced contributions to the already under-resourced national pension and health systems.

The level of the at-risk-of-poverty rate for children continued to rise. In 2017 it was one percentage point higher (21.4 per cent) than in 2016. Single parent households with dependent children and two-adult households with three or more dependent children had the highest poverty risk (37.2 per cent for the former and 31.3 per cent for the latter).

The Croatian Government continued to strengthen its institutional framework to prevent family-based violence and violence against women. In April, the Parliament ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (also known as the Istanbul Convention), with an interpretative statement of the Government. The statement highlights that the Convention is compatible with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, that its aim is to protect women from all forms of violence and that its provisions do not contain any obligation to introduce a gender ideology in the Croatian legal and education system. The Convention entered into force on 1 October 2018. As a result, the Government committed US\$10.7 million annually in 2018–2019 for the implementation of the Convention (mostly allocated for the construction of shelters for women victims of violence).

From May to November, Croatia took over Chairmanship of the Council of Europe. Upholding the rights of children in the digital environment was one of the priority topics under the title 'Efficient protection of the rights of national minorities and vulnerable groups'.

In May, a new Law on Implementation of (EU) General Data Protection Regulation entered into force introducing major changes in personal data protection. This Law has confirmed protection of children's data, especially in the area of information technology, and introduced new norms in the way that personal data is used, processed and protected by public authority bodies and private entities.

### **Major changes in the Government's key policies**

In response to the falling population figures, the Government prioritized measures for demographic revitalization within its 2016–2020 Plan. It established a high-level monitoring body, the Council for Demographic Revitalisation of the Republic of Croatia, chaired by the Prime Minister. The Plan focused primarily on increasing birth rates by improving living conditions through incentives, benefits and the availability of services for families with children.

In April, in response to the recommendations of the European Commission and the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Government adopted a National Programme of Reforms. The Programme includes targets for improving the quality of education and reducing poverty and social exclusion.

Croatia has started implementing several reforms outlined in the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology. The reform of school curricula advanced with experimental curricula in 72 primary and secondary schools across the country. In addition, Computer Science was introduced as a mandatory subject in grades 5 and 6. The relevance of the labour market in vocational education and training programmes that enrol almost 70 per cent of the secondary school student population seems to be limited. This is suggested by the fact that more than half of the registered unemployed are those who have completed vocational education and training.

Significant investments in vocational education and training and early childhood education and care were made in 2018 with the support of European Union funds to meet the EU targets (the Barcelona objectives). The goals are to increase attendance of pre-school education from 65

per cent to 90 per cent of children aged 3-7 years, and improve the labour market relevance of vocational education and training.

### **Every child survives and thrives**

Croatia remained among the leading countries in the world in ensuring 100 per cent compliance with baby-friendly hospital criteria which contributes to high breastfeeding rates during the first two months. There is a growing demand to improve services for women in maternal settings. To support the Government's response to this demand, UNICEF developed mother-friendly hospital criteria which are being piloted in four out of 31 maternity wards. There is concern about the availability of specialized health services for children across Croatia. There is a shortage of physicians, especially in primary care in rural areas and on the country's islands, mostly due to the adverse migration trends.

The share of premature births increased from 5.2 per cent in 2016 to 6.9 per cent in 2017, indicating a growing need for improved post-natal services in the neonatal intensive care units and early childhood intervention services. However, there is still no policy or legal framework for early childhood intervention (ECI) services to enable crucial and time-bound services to support children with developmental delays and disabilities in their early years. For these children, the lack of access to services continued to be the major bottleneck in the realization of their rights. At the end of 2018, as a result of the joint advocacy of UNICEF, the Ombudsperson for Person with Disabilities and the Ombudsperson for Children, the lead role in the establishment of the high-level National Steering Committee for Early Childhood Intervention was taken over by the Ministry of Health. The Committee is expected to develop a National ECI Policy and Action Plan.

Immunization is not part of the partnership between the Government and UNICEF. However, it is important to note that due to the growing influence of the anti-vaccination arguments and parental fears about the negative side-effects of the vaccines, the immunisation rates in Croatia are dropping. The biggest drop is in the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination which fell to just under 90 per cent in 2017. Between May and June 2018, 17 confirmed cases of measles were reported in Dubrovnik by the Croatian Public Health Institute, out of which four were children under the age of 4 years.

### **Every child learns**

With 75.1 per cent of 4-6 year-olds in pre-primary education, Croatia has the lowest pre-primary attendance in the European Union. Conversely, dropout rates for compulsory education are among the lowest in the world, at 3.1 per cent against the EU average of 10.6 per cent. Inequalities in access to quality pre-primary education have increased over the past 10 years, with children of unemployed parents, Roma children and children with disabilities at most risk of not having the access. Only 13 per cent of Roma children attend kindergarten. In conversations with Roma parents held by UNICEF staff and implementing partners, the most frequent reason given is that their children were too young to send them outside the parental home to the kindergarten. Other reasons include distance and unavailability of transport to and from kindergartens, as Roma usually live on margins of towns and cities. Successful strategies leading to increasing participation of Roma children in kindergartens piloted in two towns with UNICEF support included outreach activities in the communities, and system strengthening towards a more flexible approach of local authorities and kindergarten staff towards Roma parents. There are plans to expand this approach to other local communities.

## **Every child is protected from violence and exploitation**

Croatia has been continuously struggling with the challenges to provide high quality, effective and accessible family and community-based child-protection services. As a result, there was an increase in the number of cases recorded by social services where children's rights were violated: 6,141 cases in 2015, 6,347 cases in 2016 and 6,575 cases in 2017. More than 90 per cent of cases refer to neglect and physical and/or psychological violence against children. There were also a considerable number of children being separated from their families due to inadequate parental care and placed in foster families and in social welfare institutions (2,330 in 2017). Nevertheless, there was an improvement in the numbers of children living in family-based care in relation to those in residential institutional care: in 2017 there were 1,147 children in institutions and 2,152 children in foster care.

While the provision of family-based alternative care improved for children without adequate parental care, there was limited progress for children with disabilities and children with behavioural problems living in institutions. The Croatian Government plans to invest more in improving and developing community-based services and family-based care for children and to speeding the process of the deinstitutionalisation and transformation of residential institutions (National Programme of Reforms for 2018). Major improvements in the conditions of foster care brought by the Foster Care Act of December 2018, have been accompanied by a campaign UNICEF-supported campaign, focusing on recruitment of new foster families. Additionally, considerable progress was made in the area of promotion of foster care and the on-going deinstitutionalisation agenda. By the end of 2018, six institutions transformed into community-based service centres.

The number of children in conflict with the law who were placed in closed correctional institutions fell. Crimes committed by children below the age of 14 increased in the past four years, but the number of crimes by older children has fallen in the same period, due to legislative changes of value margins of petty crimes. There has been a slow increase in the share of alternatives to custodial sanctions imposed on juveniles in misdemeanour proceedings in the past three years. This is in part due to the nationwide training of mediators by the Ministry of Demographics, Family, Youth and Social Policy and UNICEF, which led to the increased availability of a mediation service, now available in the whole country.

The refugee and migrant flow through Croatia has decreased significantly but has not stopped. New routes of arrival of refugees and migrants emerged through Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2018, the Government adopted a Protocol for Unaccompanied and Separated Children, for which UNICEF provided technical support.

## **Every child lives in a safe and clean environment**

UNICEF supported education efforts in disaster risk reduction (DRR) for children, led by the National Protection and Rescue Directorate. In 2018, a board game that teaches children DRR, 'Riskland' was launched. The Directorate reached all elementary schools with the board game. There are 67 cities and municipalities that have been awarded child friendly status. This initiative is implemented by the association of organizations Our Children and the Croatian Society for Preventive and Social Paediatrics.

## **Every child has a fair chance in life**

Croatia continued to advance child and youth participation at various levels, including through the Youth Council of the President of the Republic, the Network of Young Advisors of the Ombudsperson for Children and municipal child councils. Being recognized as a champion of youth participation, the Croatian President joined leaders of the Generation Unlimited initiative launched by UNICEF and partners in September. Eurochild, the biggest umbrella organization advocating child rights in the EU, organised its annual conference on child participation in October in Opatija, one of the towns with the greatest tradition and practice of child participation.

A survey on participation of children within the education system found that students in elementary and high schools believe that formal child representative bodies in their schools have minimum or no impact on decisions taken by adults, who hold all the decision-making power. The survey report was commissioned by the Ombudsperson for Children.

With the emerging commitment of UNICEF globally to young persons, it is important to note that compared to other EU countries, in 2017 Croatia had one of the highest rates of 15-19 year olds not in education, employment or training, at 10.5 per cent. Discouragement and a skills gap seem to be among the biggest barriers to the employment of young persons.

### **Support to children living in other countries**

In April, the Government adopted the Annual Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Development Cooperation with the goal to make an inventory of projects with a development and humanitarian assistance component. This plan aims to contribute to the long-term and sustainable reduction of global poverty and to support humanitarian relief in the parts of the world hit by disasters, thus contributing to the SDGs. As per the plan, the Croatian Government supported the implementation of the UNICEF project 'Improvements to Camp Learning Environments in Jordan'. Individuals continued supporting UNICEF Croatia's appeals for children in emergencies resulting in support for UNICEF's relief efforts for Rohingya children and for children affected by the earthquake in Indonesia.

Programme interventions and materials developed within the partnership between the Croatian Government and UNICEF continued to be adapted and used in other countries, including Belarus, Bulgaria, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (now North Macedonia as of January 2019), and Montenegro.

## **Part 2: Major Results including in humanitarian action and gender, against the results in the Country Programme Documents**

### **Goal area 1: Every child survives and thrives**

#### **Programming for at-scale results for children**

In 2018, UNICEF continued to be the key government partner in improving quality of health care for mothers and newborn infants, with a focus on delivering results at scale for prematurely born children and ensuring support for exclusive breastfeeding. UNICEF Croatia's commitment and drive to achieve results at scale in quality mother and newborn health is confirmed in the 100 per cent coverage in implementation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital

Initiative (BFHI) and the Neonatal Wards Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative that have been running with its support. This result was recognized in the survey on implementation conducted by the BFHI Network for Industrialised and Central Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States countries, which ranked Croatia amongst the top countries in the world. In addition, international research on compliance with the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative for neonatal wards in 36 countries rated Croatian Neonatal Intensive Care Units with a high score, confirming the attained quality of care for prematurely born babies. This was achieved through a strong partnership between the Ministry of Health and UNICEF. Regarding growing demand to improve maternity care, UNICEF Croatia developed mother-friendly hospital standards with assessment tools, which were piloted in four maternity hospitals in 2018.

Furthermore, with UNICEF's support, innovative approach was developed so that the criteria for the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, Neonatal wards BFHI (Neo-BFHI) and Mother-Friendly Hospital were integrated and included in the accreditation and quality improvement system for health care institutions, ensuring sustainability of the achieved results.

The importance of sustainability of the achieved results was also reflected in the National Programme for Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding 2018–2020, which the Government adopted in August. The Programme was developed with technical support from UNICEF.

UNICEF continued to be the partner of the Ministry of Health in establishment of the first national Human Milk Bank. Following substantial reconstruction work, equipping, staffing and capacity development, the opening of the bank is expected by mid-2019. In 2018, UNICEF supported capacity building of key experts and preparation of the distribution channels of the first Human Milk Bank. All 13 neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) were supported through capacity building of staff and in the procurement of equipment for human milk storage. In partnership with the private sector, namely Pampers, UNICEF supplied all 13 NICUs with equipment that promotes skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding, that will ensure smooth implementation of the Neo-BFHI standards. The partnership with Pampers was instrumental in mobilizing its consumers and partners in raising almost US\$70,000 through a public campaign.

The above-mentioned results were achieved through a combination of strategies, including risk-informed programming and policy advocacy, communication and advocacy. Together, these led to support from decision makers and wider public, as well as working with civil society and harnessing the power of business that supported changes in the area of neonatal and maternal health. Additionally, gender-responsive programming and innovative solutions were sought to respond to the growing demands to design programming at scale in the area of maternal health.

### **Early childhood intervention (ECI) programming at-scale**

In the development and implementation of resourced multisectoral ECI policies, UNICEF focused on advocacy of steps that need to be taken to develop s strategy, together with the Ombudsperson for Children, the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities and civil society organizations. While at the end of 2017 the Government acknowledged the importance of forming a National Steering Committee to be in charge of developing of a national ECI strategy, a decision on its formation was delayed due to the multisectoral nature of this issue. At the end of 2018, the joint advocacy efforts resulted in a decision of the Ministry of Health to take the lead and initiate a formal process of establishing a governmental multisectoral ECI Committee for the development of an integrated, coordinated and multisectoral early childhood intervention strategy. Besides this, there was a budgeted action plan, clear accountabilities for participating

ministries, and a monitoring and evaluation framework.

### **Harnessing the power of evidence to support changes for children with disabilities**

In 2018 preparatory work for the UNICEF-supported piloting in Osijek-Baranja County of a model for early screening, diagnosis and intervention in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) aged 0–7 years was undertaken. The pilot is based on the previously developed National Framework for early screening, diagnosis and intervention in children with this disorder. UNICEF initiated an in-depth baseline assessment, including the collection of data against which the progress of the pilot project will be assessed. It also began mapping of the existing services in the pilot region and the assessment of local individual and institutional capacities (health, education and social services) for performing early detection and diagnosis of ASD and early intervention. This modelling is expected to provide evidence which will influence multisectoral coordination, programmes and budgets for the national scaling-up of the National Framework for early screening, diagnosis and intervention in children with autism spectrum disorder. Full implementation of the model is expected in 2019.

In 2018, UNICEF initiated a comprehensive situation analysis to examine the state of play and key areas of relevance for the development of a national ECI system. The findings and recommendations of the situation analysis, along with the technical support provided by UNICEF, will enable the ECI committee to develop a fully resourced and cross-sectoral strategic plan and action plan in 2019–2020.

### **Fostering innovation for children**

To strengthen the system and increase national capacities for delivering high-quality ECI services by harnessing technology in support of young children with disabilities, UNICEF partnered with the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences. This partnership resulted in new capacities of the ECI professionals and institutions in assistive and augmentative communication. Almost 1,000 children with complex communication needs directly and 5,000 children with disabilities indirectly benefitted from increased knowledge of 147 professionals from 32 institutions across sectors. Their capacities in using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and information and communication technology (ICT) in early childhood intervention have significantly increased. In addition, to help strengthen the system, key stakeholders developed recommendations for AAC service provision in health care, social welfare and education system. The AAC applications used in the programme were designed in such a way that there is no gender-stereotyping or any other form of bias. In the ICT-AAC application communicator, for example, there is an option to choose a female or male voice. The graphic solutions always refer to both genders.

### **Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children**

Since the current legal framework in Croatia stipulates that only emergency medical services are available to migrants and asylum seekers, in partnership with Médecins du Monde, UNICEF Croatia ensured access to health services in two asylum reception facilities through the first half of 2018. A total of 322 children and 477 women benefitted from health services and psychosocial support. As a result of UNICEF's continuous advocacy of establishing minimum health standards and services to be ensured by the Government, the Ministry of the Interior ensured financial resources through the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for the provision of healthcare services to asylum seekers and migrants from July 2018 onwards.

UNICEF Croatia continued to work on horizontal partnerships among various stakeholders, including countries and regions. In the area of ECI, a study visit to Croatia was organized to

support development of similar services in Azerbaijan. In addition, improvement of immunization services for children aged 0-6 years in conflict-affected areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, Ukraine, was supported through private sector resources mobilised in Croatia in the amount of US\$120,000.

## **Goal area 2: Every child learns**

### **Fostering partnerships and winning support for the most excluded children**

To support the Government of Croatia's plans to reach the goal that 95 per cent of children aged 4-6/7 years are enrolled in pre-school education, UNICEF used its convening role to harness the power of evidence. The evidence helped to advocate for increased investments to ensure equitable access to pre-primary education. Partnerships with researchers, with ministries working on securing investments in pre-primary education (Agriculture, Regional Development, Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, and Education), the President of the Republic of Croatia, and with regional governments and local governments were formed. The successfully achieved objective was to win the support of decision-makers and a wider audience to recognize the importance of equitable access to pre-primary education and the needs of the most vulnerable children thus stimulating dialogue on strategic financing in education. Among others, UNICEF's advocacy contributed to drawing US\$250 million in 2018 alone from the national and EU budgets combined for investments in facilities and services in pre-primary education.

As a result of a national conference A Kindergarten for Every Child, convened by UNICEF, recommendations were widely shared on how to improve governance and financing in pre-primary education. Successful local pre-primary education practices from Slovenia and Montenegro were shared during the conference with national and regional stakeholders. UNICEF also provided professional development related to the new EU Early Childhood Education and Care Policy Framework as a way of strengthening the system of increasing access to pre-primary education.

### **Building successful cases to achieve at-scale results for children**

In collaboration with local partners, UNICEF modelled and achieved full attendance into pre-school of vulnerable children, mainly Roma, in Slavonski Brod for the first time in the town's history. This was accomplished by strengthening the partnership of all parts of the municipal system, by engaging the local community and increasing the professional capacities of kindergarten teachers. The focus was primarily on ensuring the regular, safe and sustainable transport of children from a poor and mostly Roma-populated settlement to the premises where the pre-school was located, since access was one of the major bottlenecks. The continued communication and advocacy efforts of UNICEF towards all stakeholders in Slavonski Brod contributed to raising awareness and reducing misconceptions. These were among parents who considered that the children were too small to leave the parental home and among kindergarten practitioners who had unrealistic expectations of Roma children, including the expectation that they should speak Croatian language. UNICEF built partnerships based on shared values of different local stakeholders to establish a more flexible and sustainable cross-sectoral mechanism to better include vulnerable pre-school children into education. This model has been set for replication in another locality with similar cross-sectoral and flexible partnerships that need to be strengthened.

With UNICEF's support, the professional capacities of teachers in six schools and three kindergartens which serve in the catchment area in the two migrant-reception centres in

Croatia were enhanced to integrate children on the move into regular classroom activities. In collaboration with the Open University Step by Step, a web-repository consisting of various open source materials, publications, tools and brochures in different languages for parents, teachers, schools and kindergartens, the education system and the children was established. This serves to better prepare practitioners to understand the needs of children on the move and to integrate them in regular education. The full school attendance of all children registered in the two reception centres was achieved.

### **Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children in other countries**

During 2018, for the 11th consecutive year, UNICEF continued to build solidarity among children and schools in Croatia and children in other countries through Schools for Africa/Schools for Asia campaigns. These are cross-cutting initiatives that combine education on child rights and fundraising. This activity brings together the largest number of children in Croatia, making them agents of change who actively address equity issues in education in other countries, with a special focus on girls' education and issues related to their lack of access to education. In 2018, 48,000 children in pre-school, primary and secondary schools actively participated in Schools for Africa and Schools for Asia campaigns, raising funds for children in Burkina Faso and Bangladesh and learning about tolerance, child rights education, social justice and international solidarity. Total funds raised through this initiative amounted to US\$71,000, remaining at the 2017 level.

UNICEF Croatia matched priorities of the National Strategy for Development Cooperation 2017-2021 with the current needs of children in the area of education in Jordan. In partnership with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, US\$174,200 was channelled to UNICEF Jordan for support to most vulnerable children and youth and increase the number of children who access to quality inclusive early and basic education in a child-friendly and protective environment.

With the emerging importance of media literacy education and positive results in behaviour change that were achieved through campaigns and initiatives that have been implemented by the Agency for Electronic Media and UNICEF Croatia, similar efforts in raising awareness by UNICEF Montenegro and the Montenegrin regulatory agency were supported through knowledge exchange.

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

#### **Programming at-scale for results in child protection**

In response to the challenges faced by the child protection system, UNICEF contributed significantly to positive and lasting changes in the system, within the strong partnership with the Government and the independent child rights institution. This was possible by focusing on long-lasting and tested improvements in the child protection system in Croatia, targeting the most vulnerable children exposed to violence, abuse and neglect within their families.

In close cooperation with the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy (MDFYSP) and other partners, UNICEF supported implementation of a comprehensive set of initiatives. These focused on strengthening the legislative framework, promoting family-based care, building capacities of service providers, supporting case management and improving and expanding social services for children and families within the initiative 'For a Stronger Family'.

Within this initiative, significant capacity building took place of caseworkers and overall social

welfare system to improve the efficiency of interventions concerning child neglect and abuse. UNICEF supported the training of almost 400 social welfare professionals in case management and effective crisis interventions for families at risk. Additionally, the standardized social work tools for the assessment of child's safety in the family and for planning and monitoring of interventions were improved. New tools for working with families at risk were developed. These focused on the assessment of the child's well-being in the situations of manipulation by divorced or separated parents, which are the biggest burden on the system. The national coverage of the capacity building of professionals and access to standardised professional tools will provide child-focused support to an estimated 3,000 parents, which will ensure coverage for an estimated 6,000 children annually. This will contribute to an efficient response to violence against children in the family, as well as to prevention of separation from their families and consequent public care placement.

With UNICEF's support, a new model of assistance to parents who are beneficiaries of social welfare was developed, and foundations for its wider implementation were set up in 2018. In cooperation with the relevant Ministry and the Centre Growing up Together, a new parenting support programme was tested with 75 parents who benefit from the social welfare system and their 68 pre-school children. The new service focused on building parental skills and parent-child relations in disadvantaged circumstances, to ensure a safe and enabling family environment for children from the earliest age. Following the testing phase, 36 social welfare professionals were trained to implement the parenting support programme and all participating family centres (units within the national social welfare system) were provided with relevant equipment. This will enable the long-term sustainable availability of the new service in support of children and families, within the regular mandate of the county family centres. It is estimated that annually at least 120 parents who are beneficiaries of the social welfare system will have access to the service in the future. Full implementation and expansion to all county family centres in Croatia and promotion of the new service is expected by 2020.

The model used lessons learned in gender-responsive programming. In previous parenting support programmes a gender issue has been noted in that it was mostly mothers who joined the activities. As such, the model adopted measures to promote the equal involvement of both mothers and fathers in child care. Guidelines for professionals on supporting the more active involvement of fathers in group-based parenting support activities, as well as a gender-specific workshop package will be produced in 2019 for fathers only, including a version tailored for the divorced, non-resident fathers.

All materials produced within the programme promote gender equality and the reduction of gender-related prejudice and stereotypes. They include topics that address 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 the risk assessment and in the implementation of interventions in the family.

### **Winning support and leveraging resources for the improvement of quality of foster care**

Significant progress was made during 2018 in the foster care for children. UNICEF provided policy advice in development of the new Foster Care Act, which was adopted by the Parliament in December. With the new Act, the Government strategically allocated additional financial resources for foster care, introducing, among other things, professional foster care, improvements in the overall status of foster families, and providing grounds for specialised foster care for children with disabilities and with behavioural problems.

In response to the National Programme of Reforms, with UNICEF's support, a campaign for recruitment of new foster families was launched in September, resulting in the identification of 513 individuals expressing interest in foster care up to the end of December 2018. Out of these, 249 were found to be potential foster parents. UNICEF mobilized generous financial and in-kind support from the general public, the corporate sector and the media within the campaign entitled 'Every Child Needs a Family'. A total of US\$620,000 was raised for improvement of foster care in 2018. As part of the UNICEF advocacy efforts during 2018, the deinstitutionalization of about 90 children under the age of three was agreed with the responsible Ministry. The Minister for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy committed to their fast-paced family-based placement. An adequate family-based placement for each child currently in an institution will continue in 2019 and 2020, together with joint efforts of the Ministry and UNICEF in developing gate keeping mechanisms, with the priority on the youngest children.

UNICEF provided extensive support and capacity building to 15 foster parents' associations under the umbrella organisation Forum for Quality Foster Care, which all together includes 337 foster families fostering 697 children. Foster parents' associations were empowered during the campaign, with resources enabling them to provide support to foster families and children and to promote foster care at the local community levels. During the three months of the public campaign, foster parents' associations organised more than 80 local promotional events.

UNICEF supported development of the standardized framework for the education of foster families, draft tools for selection of foster families and for monitoring their quality of care, in line with the new Act on Foster Care. New and/or improved methodology will allow for equal professional practice in all centres for social welfare and strengthened capacities of foster families to provide quality care for children. The roles and engagement of foster parents have been considered within the process of developing the curriculum and the assessment tools. As there are many gender specifics related to child development, especially during teenage years and adolescence, these will be also addressed and incorporated into the educational materials.

### **Progress in making the justice system child-friendly**

Following comprehensive training and an institutional needs assessment, and building on the progress achieved over the past few years in strengthening the child-friendly justice system, UNICEF played a critical role and provided significant technical assistance to the justice system. In partnership with the Judicial Academy, a framework for life-long learning curricula for all justice professionals in contact with children was developed. It targets 1,300 judicial officials and non-legal child professionals who are in contact with children involved in criminal, civil, administrative or misdemeanour proceedings. The curricula was adopted by the Judicial Academy. UNICEF's advocacy contributed to lifelong learning for professionals working with children becoming recognised as an objective within the new Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Justice for 2019–2020.

UNICEF's support to the systematic capacity building of judicial officials and investments in a restorative justice system and alternative sanctions contributed to a continued decrease in the number of children placed in closed correctional institutions (juvenile prison and reformatories) and the increase in the share of alternative sanctions imposed on children in conflict with the law. Around 61 per cent of all sanctions imposed on children in conflict with the law were alternative sanctions and restorative measures.

The partnership with the Ministry of Justice related to the rights of children with incarcerated

parents was expanded. During the year, there were around 12,500 children growing up without one or both parents who are in prison, bearing the weight of their parent's actions and imprisonment and facing difficulties on many levels. To enable regular communication and visits, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Justice in piloting video-visitation in the largest penitentiary, Lepoglava. Based on this experience, with UNICEF's support, 13 correctional facilities will have inmate visitation video and establishment of the 'family staff' model following the training of the prison staff.

UNICEF also provided technical assistance in developing a new Protocol for Unaccompanied and Separated Children which the Government adopted in August 2018. The new Protocol provides an operational framework and clarifies the roles and tasks of various actors in fulfilling their responsibilities in protecting the rights and best interest of unaccompanied children. This includes identification and initial assessment, alternative care accommodation, age assessment if deemed necessary, requests for asylum, the identification of durable solutions, integration, access to health services and an educational programme.

UNICEF initiated a Gender Programmatic Review (GPR) to conduct an in-depth analysis and identify the causes and drivers of gender inequalities (including stereotyping and bias) in the child-related justice system, and to contribute to and enhance the UNICEF's programming in the field of gender sensitive justice. The Review will be finalized in the first quarter of 2019.

#### **Partnerships for children beyond borders**

Recognizing the potential of UNICEF Croatia to support the advancement of child rights beyond its borders, several good practices and models were used in other countries in 2018. In cooperation with UNICEF Belarus the 'For a Safe and Enabling Environment in Schools' programme was presented to Belarus experts and the Ministry of Education via an expert mission to that country. In cooperation with UNICEF Bulgaria a parenting programme for parents of children with disabilities known as 'Growing up Together Plus' was piloted in Bulgaria and integrated in the services provided to children with disabilities. The main modality of this horizontal cooperation was training of trainers, which included professionals involved in the provision of services for children with disabilities and their families.

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

##### **Advancing child-friendly cities through collection of new environmental evidence**

Through the partnership with the Union of Societies Our Children which coordinates the Child Friendly Cities Initiative in Croatia, UNICEF supported the development of new methodology to assess the position of children at the community level. The new methodology introduces a set of criteria dedicated to a safe and clean environment which means that all cities participating in the initiative must prioritise, identify and address environmental issues affecting children, their health, development, and safety.

##### **Making national disaster risk reduction efforts child-friendly**

In order to strengthen the country's capacity for disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness, UNICEF has partnered with the National Protection and Rescue Directorate. To support children's learning about the risks and vulnerabilities associated with natural disasters from an early age, Riskland, an educational board game initially developed by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, UNICEF and Red Cross was locally adapted, promoted and distributed to all elementary schools in Croatia.

## **Goal area 5: Every child has a fair chance in life**

Since UNICEF in Croatia has been recognized as an important convener of the multi-stakeholders' partnerships for children, engaging state actors, civil society, academia, children, the corporate sector, and citizens around child rights issues, this unique position was used to facilitate activities that lead toward progress in the area of children's participation.

In 2018, UNICEF established the Children's Participation Advisory Board which:

- 1 Consistently promotes children's participation in all aspects of children's lives;
- 2 Moves children's participation in Croatia from theory and discreet approach to a mainstream practice;
- 3 Fosters networking and exchange of good practices, and;
- 4 Facilitates a generation of new knowledge among researchers, professionals, policy makers and practitioners that work either directly with children or on issues concerning the wellbeing and lives of children.

Apart from adult members, six children, including children from vulnerable groups, actively participate in the Children's Participation Advisory Board, and represent their peers' perspectives regarding further enhancing of children's participation. A group of the Ombudsperson's young advisors are members of the UNICEF's Think Tank on Child Rights and Business and are in a position to influence business practices in Croatia to better respond to children's needs.

UNICEF supported the Ombudsperson for Children in promoting and protecting children's rights, through a project application for the European Economic Area funds that would enable its better access to vulnerable groups of children. The Ombudsperson's Young Advisors Network actively participated in two UNICEF committees: a Think Tank on Child Rights and Business and the Children's Participation Advisory Board. In addition, in 2018, the Ombudsperson contributed to UNICEF's Gender Programme Review aimed at identifying and addressing key gender issues in the area of justice and child protection.

On World Children's Day, UNICEF enabled representatives of adolescents from vulnerable groups, including child protection and social protection sector beneficiaries, to participate in the European Parliament conference and to advise on European child rights policies.

The Eurochild 2018 conference on children's participation in public decision-making was supported by UNICEF through programme design, advocacy, promotional activities. This ensured the participation of children's representatives from five European countries. UNICEF and Eurochild's efforts have jointly helped to raise at governmental level the political visibility of children's rights and, in particular, of child participation. This is especially important in view of Croatia's Presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2020.

The equity approach underpins all the UNICEF Croatia programme interventions and consistently addresses inequities that prevent children from realising their rights. This was particularly reflected in:

- 1 Supporting Roma and other vulnerable children to realise their right to quality and inclusive education, through capacity building of relevant stakeholders and community partnerships;
- 2 Developing the required instruments and strengthening the capacities of relevant

- professionals to better target interventions to families at risk;
- 3 System strengthening to ensure adequate support for children with disabilities and their families, and;
- 4 Mainstreaming gender-responsive programming.

## **Other crosscutting issues**

### **Winning support from decision-makers and wider public**

In 2018, UNICEF continued building support from the wider public and decision makers through engaging communication strategies. UNICEF Croatia was particularly successful in mobilizing support and recruiting new foster parents through a national campaign, Every Child Needs a Family, which integrated advertising, working with the media, high-profile public events, community events organised by partners and engagement through social media. The Milky Way humanitarian race highlighted the campaign launch in September, gathering 2,000 runners who made donations to support foster families with the youngest children. Croatian National Television and RTL television aired pro bono public service announcements, reaching at least one million viewers with the message on importance of foster care for children.

UNICEF Croatia also used an innovative external communication and personal experience platform, the Museum of Reality, to maximise the potential of media-driven support from individuals and private sector partners for children without adequate parental care. The Museum was set up with generous support of the Zagreb Tourist Board. An estimated 20,000 individuals visited the Museum of Reality in 11 days at the beginning of December. More than 200 individuals decided to become regular donors and 400 of them supported UNICEF through on-site single donation.

Partnerships with two national TV stations contributed to strong media presence of key messages on children, with reach peaking during the Milky Way race and the Museum of Reality, reaching between 2.5 million to 3 million individuals.

Eleven high-profile supporters and influencers endorsed the Every Child Needs a Family campaign, adding to the media appeal and high engagement on social media. This achieved a 300 per cent growth in its reach and a 1,000 per cent growth in video engagement during campaign compared with the average engagement and reach during the year.

### **Awareness-raising**

UNICEF expanded its commitment to raise public awareness of the importance of media literacy, to encourage participative approaches and strengthen understanding of media among children, adolescents, teachers and parents, by launching the first national Media Literacy Days in partnership with the Agency for Electronic Media. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Science and Education, the Media Literacy Days were initiated as a national platform to engage children, teachers, top-tier media, civil society, academia, audio-visual authorities, as well as state and local administration, in the organisation of events and in creating new educational resource materials for children aged 4-16 years. These were downloaded by more than 15,000 users. Overall, 6,500 children and adolescents, 600 parents and more than 400 teachers participated in 130 events and activities organised by partners in 60 towns across Croatia. Within this initiative, UNICEF supported development and distribution of the first Picture Book on Media Literacy that reached more than 3,000 children of pre-school age.

### **Developing and leveraging resources for children**

Successful resource mobilization strategies resulted in more than US\$4 million raised in 2018 from the private sector in Croatia. The fundraising efforts allowed UNICEF to fully fund the country programme, while contributing with 25 per cent (US\$1.026 million) of total funds raised allocated to UNICEF regional and global initiatives, its Regular Resources and for emergencies.

UNICEF continued to integrate its resource mobilization strategy with increasing awareness on child rights and strong elements of engagement of individual donors, private companies and youth (through the Schools for Africa initiative) and volunteering.

More than 46,000 donors contributed, with their regular monthly donations to more than the half of the funds raised, ensuring stability of the UNICEF programme in Croatia. To fully tap the potential of regular support from individuals, UNICEF Croatia worked with UNICEF Sweden, which provided technical support in this area.

In response to mobilization appeals for children's causes, an additional 33,000 individuals supported UNICEF through single donations that contributed more than US\$956,000 to national causes and international emergency appeals. Of these, 71 per cent of donations supported national causes and 29 per cent for international emergency appeals. Altogether, including event participants and runners, more than 85,000 individuals contributed financially and were engaged with UNICEF's mission during 2018, or some 2.5 per cent of total adult population of Croatia.

Engagement of individuals and small and medium-sized enterprises with UNICEF was fuelled through regular online and offline communication, which included key messages on child rights and reports on what was achieved with donors' support.

In addition to written communication, individuals were engaged through high profile public events. The Milky Way Race established itself as a relevant sporting event and a strong platform for engagement of individuals and companies with UNICEF's mission. Its second edition brought an increase in the number of individual participants by 33 per cent and growth of corporate sponsorships by 18 per cent compared to the previous year.

Engagement with corporates resulted in four alliances that contributed to the growth of mobilised resources to UNICEF, with some US\$210,000 and engagement of numerous customers that companies engaged through customer fundraising.

Throughout the year, 15 shopping centres and three retail chains supported UNICEF by allowing UNICEF face-to-face representatives in their premises pro bono. This is an extraordinary contribution and allows UNICEF to have a wide reach across the country. These relationships have been successfully managed and nurtured over the past 10 years and, the single largest corporate grant of 2018 was made by one of the partner shopping centres.

To leverage resources for children, UNICEF Croatia contributed to capacity building of implementing partners in resource mobilisation from public donors. This support resulted in 67 per cent positively rated and accepted or financed project proposals to improve the rights of children in Croatia.

### **Harnessing the power of business and markets for children**

In 2018 UNICEF initiated research on the impact of the business sector on child rights. The results provided UNICEF Croatia with a sharpened focus in the area of corporate social responsibility and child rights. The results have been discussed with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Child Rights Think Tank's members, who use their voice and influence to advocate for children and provide leadership to businesses on their impact on children.

In 2018, UNICEF continued capacity building of Croatian companies in child rights and business principles. The second cycle of UNICEF's CSR Academy was successfully implemented, organised in cooperation with the Croatian Employers Association and experts in the area of corporate social responsibility and child rights. In order to keep the companies engaged after the training programme in 2017, UNICEF post-CSR Academy engagement activities were organised, resulting in one telecom company's willingness to conduct the first due diligence process on child rights and business. UNICEF also engaged with relevant business platforms and conferences to mainstream child rights into business initiatives and to disseminate tools and guidance, combining an industry approach with promoting relevant child rights issues with a gender focus (the role of fathers in child's life). Four companies participated in the World Children's Day, which was organized around the theme of learning about available jobs in leading Croatian companies, as proposed by child representatives of the Young Advisers Network of the Ombudsperson for Children.

In addition to capacity building of the corporate sector in the area of the child rights, UNICEF Croatia undertook child rights training for individuals. This which contributed to the empowerment of participants, increased their understanding of the concepts and raised relevance and importance of advocacy for child rights in various occasions.

The partnership with RTL Television (private media company) was successfully renewed with two-year agreement including an in-kind donation of commercial television space and capacity building activities for the journalists on child rights, with an estimated value of US\$77,000. Additionally, the partnership with IKEA continued, with a focus on in-kind donations that fit current needs in UNICEF's programme, corporate pathways to pledge and participation in the Think Tank.

To further enhance media efforts in promoting the child rights and equity agenda, UNICEF provided capacity building for relevant media actors and supported development of relevant content for a children's television programme on child rights.

Successful negotiations with Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Environment and Energy were initiated in order to ensure their support for mainstreaming child rights among tourism sector stakeholders, as well as for resource mobilisation for the benefit of children.

UNICEF recognizes the potential of business in fostering innovation. In 2018, a project in developing innovative solutions that will engage individuals in child rights was agreed with a technology company.

### **Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children**

Built on previous efforts invested in developing national child wellbeing indicators, a new partnership with the Zagreb Faculty of Law on generating evidence through the International Survey of Children's Well-Being, developing new university curriculum and overall awareness

raising on children's subjective well-being was established.

To inform policy and practice, generate new knowledge and help fill data gaps, UNICEF initiated five comprehensive research processes regarding access to justice, pre-school education, early intervention system, and participation of children from vulnerable groups and child rights and business. An in-depth discussion with all relevant counterparts – representatives of the Government, state attorney office, academia, National Statistical Office, CSOs and human rights institutions - was held to identify and examine data-related challenges within the child protection and justice sector. In partnership with the National Statistical Office, an analytical review of available SDG data concerning children and its disaggregation was undertaken. The identified gaps will serve as a platform for future cooperation aimed to increase the availability and quality of data.

### Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints

#### Lessons learned

The value of UNICEF's engagement in Croatia and beyond has been widely recognized. UNICEF's focus, commitment and drive to support the Government of Croatia in delivering results within the unfinished national child rights agenda has resulted in a trusted and fruitful relationship that benefits children and society. This has also resonated with the wider public and the private sector that supports UNICEF's programmes for children in Croatia and beyond through financial and in-kind resources.

Intensive joint planning, dialogue and monitoring of agreed activities resulted in strong partnerships that deliver results for children. In 2018, UNICEF intensified cooperation with the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy (MDFYSP), focusing on families and children at risk of separation. Technical support and capacity building provided by UNICEF, accompanied by continuous dialogue resulted in an improved legislative framework and commitment to de-institutionalisation, with the focus on the youngest children, aged 0-3 years. In partnership with MDFYSP, a broad alliance with civil society organizations and academia was established, with UNICEF in the role of convener and facilitator of joint solutions that bring changes for vulnerable children and their families. Through this collaboration, UNICEF has been recognized as a reliable and strong technical partner, focused on joint delivery of results for the most vulnerable groups of children.

Important lessons in the implementation of the child-friendly justice programme emerged in 2018. Programme interventions can be significantly enhanced if partners are engaged in joint responses to the programme intervention evaluation. Following a presentation and discussion on the recommendations from the evaluation of the programme on child friendly justice, partners undertook dialogue on the next steps. This resulted in the need for capacity building of judiciary professionals being identified, which was agreed as a joint task of the Ministry of Justice, State Attorney's Office, Supreme Court and Justice Academy. Building on the positive experience from previous years, UNICEF initiated and supported the curricula for sustainable capacity building programmes that will support the training of judiciary staff for generations.

UNICEF's responsiveness and flexibility to address new or previously unrecognized issues that were identified during the Annual Review process was another key lesson. As an example, UNICEF followed up on the invitation to engage in providing solutions to the problems of

children whose parents are incarcerated. As a result, in 2018 a video visitation system was piloted in the biggest national penitentiary in partnership with the Ministry of Justice. The recommendations from this pilot will lead to scaling-up. With UNICEF's support, 13 correctional facilities will have the inmate visitation video system and establishment of the family staff model, following training of the prison staff.

Health outcomes for prematurely born children can improve with commitment and action of the Ministry, the wider public, corporates and UNICEF. A network of ambitious and committed partners and experts, convened by UNICEF and the Ministry of Health, led to significant improvements in neonatal intensive care units across the country. UNICEF provided technical support and communication expertise that focused on improving health services for prematurely born children. The results achieved through this partnership, including establishment of the national human milk bank, has seen Croatia recognised for its efforts by the expert community regionally and globally.

Social and cultural habits impeding children from opportunities can be changed if community efforts to understand attitudes and practices different from one's own are combined with actions to include children from minority backgrounds. This was the most important lesson in modelling community support for the inclusion of Roma and non-Roma children living in poverty-stricken settlements into pre-school education in Slavonski Brod. Through partnerships, awareness-raising, capacity building for outreach and the flexibility of local authorities, a pre-school attendance of 100 per cent for Roma children was achieved.

Intensive collaboration with the Agency for Electronic Media on promotion of media literacy brought an important lesson in parental support to children in learning media literacy skills. If properly supported parents can act as children's media guardians, however the efforts need to be continued. In addition, UNICEF has been recognized as a trusted partner by many institutions who joined the first Media Literacy Days, a platform built on the idea that a wide partnership will contribute to sustainability and scaling up of media literacy promotion and education for children.

Collaboration with business professionals and leaders led to an important lesson in awareness-raising, capacity and goodwill building. Through various initiatives implemented in the framework of Child Rights and Business, UNICEF succeeded to engage leading national and international companies in Croatia, whose leaders expressed their desire to actively contribute to expansion of corporate social responsibility towards child rights, together with young people. As a result, in 2019, a first due diligence on the impact of business on child rights will take place, paving the way for many others. This initiative also catalysed four corporate alliances that have contributed to the UNICEF Country Programme in Croatia through resources and engagement of customers.

UNICEF demonstrated that evaluations of key programme interventions designed and implemented in Croatia, coupled with the availability of relevant experts, can support the organisation's technical expertise in other countries. This lesson was gained through work with UNICEF offices in the region who decided to use programme interventions developed in Croatia to address similar challenges in their countries. This was the case for programme interventions that address parenting skills and peer violence in schools that were used by UNICEF Belarus and UNICEF Bulgaria.

UNICEF's investment in communication with the wider public and donors has resulted in long-

lasting support and engagement of new individuals who are willing to support work on behalf of the most vulnerable children. High-profile public events were identified as particularly important in contributing to enhanced engagement.

In 2018, UNICEF Croatia confirmed that increasing the opportunities for children and adolescents to provide opinions and insights has a positive impact on programmes and communication work. Ensuring children participate in the Child Participation Advisory Board and Think Tank on Child Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility has built the belief of children that their opinions matter and are being taken into consideration.

The Country Programme theories of change were revised during 2018 and the Strategy Notes were refined to reflect new data and insights, emerging priorities and to better align with the Government priorities. A two-year Rolling-out Plan (2018-2019) was signed by all Government partners. Following the revision of the Strategy Notes, the new Office Advocacy Plan for 2018-2019 was prepared, with three programme priorities to focus on. The implementation of the Advocacy Plan provided UNICEF Croatia with renewed and sharpened focus, streamlining advocacy efforts by different parts of the programme.

The Annual Review Meeting was an opportunity to reinforce collaboration with the Government and to refocus UNICEF Croatia interventions around national priorities. During the Meeting, all Government representatives expressed their appreciation for UNICEF's support and emphasised the importance of its engagement for the benefit of children in Croatia.

## **Constraints**

Facilitating joint agreements and multisectoral work between different government bodies requires more time than planned, causing delays in country implementation of the Country Programme. An 11-month delay in the establishment of the Government's Steering Committee for Early Childhood Intervention was one example of such a constraint that was resolved through increased advocacy efforts of the UNICEF programme team.

Although UNICEF Croatia has made significant improvements in ensuring quality and timeliness in the development of terms of reference and concept notes for research, identification and commissioning of the expert research teams, on occasions the process was constrained due to unsuccessful advertising.

Decentralized financing and management of services for children in the area of pre-school education was a major constraint to achieving at-scale results in early childhood education. The programme team continued advocating with government partners on this topic and worked on jointly finding ways to overcome this constraint as efficiently and innovatively as possible.

More resources are needed to advocate for frameworks and legislation that are conducive to corporate social responsibility and child rights. Only companies that are listed on the stock exchange have a requirement to report on their social responsibility. UNICEF plans to partner with others to advocate for changes that will facilitate a more positive role of business in child rights.

General Data Policy Regulation (GDPR) enforcement, that took place in May 2018, created limitations for fundraising and communication activities towards individual donors. UNICEF conducted an extensive review of its current practices related to personal data protection with

special attention to fundraising activities, introduced additional measures and protocols in order to align its current practices with the GDPR enforcement. In addition, existing corporate partners became reluctant to collaborate on co-mailings due to the GDPR, which has negatively impacted on the contribution from this model of resource mobilization.

The fundraising team engaged with UNICEF Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division and the Regional Office to implement a new model of resource mobilisation, the legacy. UNICEF Croatia will continue to benefit from their support in 2019 to overcome administrative challenges.

The emigration of Croatian residents has affected UNICEF's resource mobilization efforts, as many donors stopped regular donations after moving abroad.

In 2018, there were 27 staff members in UNICEF Croatia. One national staff member (the Head of Office) was promoted to an international position and two went on stretch assignments or surge missions. The balance between UNICEF's needs, the well-deserved ambitions of national staff and the support to the entire organization was maintained in 2018, but places an additional burden on the human resources team and the overall staff workload.

### **Looking forward**

In 2019, UNICEF Croatia programme implementation will be guided by the revised Strategy Notes. These Notes and the monitoring of progress towards the regional priorities will be key in maintaining the focus on interventions aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan and the SDGs.

UNICEF Croatia will implement recommendations from the Gender Programmatic Review process, which was conducted in 2018.

In 2019, a total of five research/surveys will be conducted, including a Situation Analysis on Children in Croatia that will inform next country programme cycle. In addition, two evaluations will be initiated.

The Resource Mobilisation Plan for 2019-2021 was revised at the end of 2018, and UNICEF will continue to implement the strategy with a focus on expanding fundraising activities in the tourism sector and further grow innovative models of private sector fundraising.

In partnership with the Innovation Fund and the UNICEF Regional Office, three applications for assistive communication for global application will be tested.

In 2019, UNICEF Croatia will intensify collaboration with UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF Montenegro and UNICEF Serbia under the umbrella of Dialogue for the Future programme, financed through the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Through this collaboration, programme activities benefitting young persons will be expanded.

With support of Headquarters and the Regional Office, the new UNICEF Croatia website will be operationalized in 2019, based on the global website platform.

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