2018
Annual Report

Office of Emergency Programmes

15 February 2019

Contents

Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to affected populations
AoR	Area of responsibility
CAAC	Children and armed conflict
CADRI	Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EMOPS	Office of Emergency Programmes (UNICEF)
EPP	Emergency Preparedness Platform
ERT	Emergency Response Team
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GNC	Global Nutrition Cluster
GWC	Global WASH Cluster
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OPSCEN	Operations Centre (UNICEF)
RRT	Rapid Response Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Part 1: Executive summary

In 2018, conflicts, natural disasters, epidemics and other crises continued to undermine development gains across the world. Within this deteriorating humanitarian landscape, the centrality of protection has become the guiding principle for UNICEF humanitarian action – both in terms of providing specialized protection services and growing UNICEF's capacity to operate and deliver critical services to the most vulnerable children in remote, insecure and high-risk/high-threat environments.

EMOPS made progress towards improving UNICEF's access to children for principled humanitarian response in high-threat environments with the development of the organization's first dedicated framework for establishing and maintaining humanitarian access. To strengthen UNICEF's accountability to affected populations (AAP), EMOPS led efforts to endorse an organization-wide strategy for systematically integrating AAP into all humanitarian programmes; and led the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative to promote a collective approach to AAP with partners. In 2018, the Humanitarian Single Business Case funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and managed by EMOPS[1] was instrumental to strengthening the linkages between UNICEF's humanitarian and development programming, including the scaling up cash programmes, improving risk analysis and preparedness and strengthening early warning and early action.

UNICEF's response to emergencies was strengthened with EMOPS support through effective and systematic advocacy and resource mobilization. In January, under EMOPS leadership, UNICEF launched the *Humanitarian Action for Children 2018* global appeal. As of December 2018, provisional available funding for the 2018 appeal reached US$2.77 billion (74 per cent funded).[2] EMOPS continued to manage UNICEF's global thematic humanitarian funds,[3] disbursing US$22.4 million to 38 field offices for humanitarian preparedness and response, and US$8 million to support UNICEF's global humanitarian architecture in 2018. This multi-year flexible funding is critical for EMOPS' ability to plan and operate beyond a one-year horizon. EMOPS also disbursed US$66.7 million from the Emergency Programme Fund[4] to 28 country offices and 2 regional offices to support country responses to Level 2 or Level 3 situations.

EMOPS is taking steps to strengthen UNICEF's preparedness to respond to humanitarian crises in a timely and efficient manner with the global launch of the Emergency Preparedness Platform[5] with other Headquarters divisions and regional offices. All 128 UNICEF country offices had approved their preparedness plans in the system. EMOPS provided timely and efficient support to new and ongoing crises, including five Level 3 and four Level 2 emergencies, as well as responses to several less visible humanitarian situations. Global workshops for regional emergency and security advisors and country representatives, predominately from countries responding to complex emergencies, fostered peer-to-peer exchange and learning on the specific leadership skills needed to reach children in complex and high-threat situations.

---

[1] In close collaboration with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Central Emergency Response Fund.
[2] A total of US$1.85 billion was received in 2018 and US$919 million was carried forward from 2017.
[3] More than 50 per cent of EMOPS posts and activities are fundraised through non-core (other resources) funding.
[4] The Emergency Programme Fund is a revolving fund disbursed to field offices within 48 hours of a sudden humanitarian crisis, before donor resources are available and to underfunded emergencies.
[5] The EPP is a system for tracking risks, anticipating UNICEF emergency response and identifying preparedness actions.

EMOPS strengthened its surge mechanisms to improve results on the ground for UNICEF and the humanitarian system by doubling the number of EMOPS-based Emergency Response Team (ERT) members. The eight EMOPS-based ERT members undertook 33 missions in 25 countries in 2018, totalling 902 days of surge support for humanitarian response in the field. The establishment of EMOPS-based surge capacity for cash enabled the Division to increase its support to countries implementing or establishing humanitarian cash-based programmes. With the support of cluster partners, including standby arrangements, global cluster rapid response teams (RRTs) provided direct coordination and information management support to 28 countries, including four Level 3 emergencies, through 80 missions totalling 3,518 days. Through EMOPS, standby partners continued to support UNICEF programmes, clusters and operations in 2018, amounting to 18,687 days of support provided through 129 deployments – the equivalent of approximately US$9.34 million in in-kind contributions.

EMOPS took action to ensure that UNICEF's humanitarian standards and procedures are fit for purpose by initiating updates of the Corporate Emergency Activation Protocol, the Simplified Standard Operation Procedures and the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. The revised Commitments will reflect key new areas of work, such as humanitarian cash transfers, AAP and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and cross-cutting areas such as adolescents, disabilities and early childhood development.

EMOPS continued to strengthen UNICEF's humanitarian operational partnerships with local, national and international organizations, as well as United Nations sister agencies. Strong engagement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Member States on the development of the Global Compact on Refugees (adopted in December 2018) resulted in the inclusion of dedicated language on children and young people. The language references specific measures, such as integrated and age-sensitive services for refugee and host community children and investment in national child protection systems – which significantly advanced UNICEF's child protection agenda in the context of refugee crisis responses.

Through EMOPS, UNICEF continues to lead the nutrition, education and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) clusters and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (AoR). In 2018, UNICEF used its role as cluster lead agency to conduct advocacy, facilitate inter-cluster coordination for integrated response and ensure the complementarity of organizational strategies and inter-agency action planning. Support to country level clusters was strengthened, especially on cross-cutting issues, including integration of AAP through a common cluster AAP framework designed to standardize AAP across all clusters.

The safety and security of staff and assets were enhanced with the roll out of the UNICEF Framework of Accountability for security to all country and regional offices. The Framework is already facilitating more informed security decisions across the organization and safer programme delivery in the field.

EMOPS faced several challenges in 2018. Despite enhanced engagement on protection and human rights in situations of armed conflict, increasing disrespect for international humanitarian and human rights law by parties to conflict offset our efforts in this regard. Lack of predictable and flexible funding for EMOPS, and the need to continuously fundraise for key posts, continues to challenge the Division's ability to implement and deliver on its annual work plan and may affect its ability to sustain and scale up change strategies.

Part 2: Context and trends

In the last decade, UNICEF has witnessed a rapid deterioration in the humanitarian landscape and a significant escalation in needs. Humanitarian crises are increasingly characterized by protracted conflict, large-scale refugee movements, mass population displacements and health emergencies – all of which present substantial and unique challenges.

Over the past 10 years, the number of children living in conflict zones has increased by 74 per cent[6] and protracted crises persist with no signs of abating. Today, more countries are embroiled in internal or international conflict than at any other time in the past 30 years.[7] Approximately 357 million children are living in areas affected by conflict[8] – in countries such as the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Many of these complex crises have resulted in mass displacement, with nearly 69 million people on the move around the world.[9]

In this context of worsening conflict and increasing population movement, grave violations against children have increased significantly, including the killing and injuring of children, the use of children by armed groups and forces and attacks against schools and hospitals. In countries where armed conflict is compounded by food insecurity and extreme weather events, children are increasingly at risk of malnutrition and exposure to disease outbreaks, and lack access to critical water, sanitation, health, education and protection services. Yet as humanitarian needs continue to rise, reaching children in crisis has never been more challenging. Humanitarian access continues to decrease in the world's most volatile contexts; and attacks on aid workers remained high in 2018 – with 296 aid workers becoming victims of major attacks.[10]

Within this deteriorating humanitarian landscape, the centrality of protection has become the guiding principle for UNICEF humanitarian action – both in terms of providing specialized protection services and growing UNICEF's internal capacity to operate and deliver critical services to the most vulnerable children in remote, insecure and high-risk/high-threat environments. As such, EMOPS's work in 2018 and over the next few years will continue to focus on principled humanitarian access for all children in need.

Part 3: Key results in 2018

Outcome 1: By 2021, UNICEF has comprehensive programmatic and strategic frameworks, and the right capacity, to enable country offices and UNICEF-led clusters/sectors to gain and sustain access for principled humanitarian assistance and protection for children affected by humanitarian crises, including to prevent and respond to the most serious protection risks and violations facing children affected by armed conflict.

---

[6] United Nations Children's Fund, 'Executive Director's Annual Report', UNICEF, 2018.

[7] United Nations Secretary-General, 'Opening remarks at press encounter with Foreign Minister of Norway Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide and Prime Minister of Somalia Hazzan Ali Khaire on the margins of the Oslo Forum', 19 June 2018, <www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/press-encounter/2018-06-19/opening-remarks-press-encounter-foreign-minister-norway-ine>, accessed 2 February 2019.

[8] Save the Children International, *The War on Children: Time to end grave violations against children in conflict*, London, 2018.

[9] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Figures at a Glance', UNHCR, <www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html>, accessed 2 February 2019.

[10] Aid Workers Security, 'Security Incident Data', <https://aidworkersecurity.org/incidents/search?start=2018&end=2018&detail=1>, accessed 5 February 2019.

In an increasingly complex humanitarian environment, where access to those in need is often difficult or even impossible, it is vital that UNICEF's programmes and advocacy remain firmly grounded in humanitarian principles, human rights and international humanitarian law. In 2018, EMOPS developed policies and tools to support UNICEF to prevent and respond to protection violations; deliver principled humanitarian assistance based on need; scale up the use of emergency cash transfers; build capacities for accountability to affected populations (AAP); and strengthen EMOPS' role and business model for improved humanitarian action.

Increasing and sustaining equitable humanitarian access
EMOPS improved UNICEF's ability to reach children with principled and quality humanitarian response with the development of the organization's first Institutional Access Framework. The Framework equips staff and partners with the resources and support they need to gain and maintain humanitarian access to vulnerable children and adults. The process of developing the framework with other operational humanitarian actors[11] has also strengthened collaboration in the humanitarian sector – a critical dimension to improving access.

During the year, EMOPS also strengthened UNICEF's global, regional and country-based capacities on humanitarian access by expanding remote and in-country field support addressing specific access challenges. In 2018, EMOPS responded to 100 per cent of requests from the field for access support. This included a mission to South Sudan and remote advice to Cameroon, Mali, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen that supported the implementation of key access strategies, such as: effective engagement with security management teams, high-level advocacy with parties to conflict to ensure safe passage, the protection of humanitarian facilities from attacks and the lifting of administrative obstacles.

EMOPS supported over 20 UNICEF country offices to stay and deliver in complex and high-threat environments in 2018 with the implementation of the United Nations Programme Criticality Framework. EMOPS support for inter-agency programme criticality assessments – including in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ethiopia and Ukraine – helped to identify critical programme activities to be sustained by the United Nations even in high-risk situations. In the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, inter-agency programme criticality assessments helped UNICEF and United Nations agencies manage acceptable risks and continue operations that contributed to preventing the deaths of tens of thousands of children.[12]

Supporting the implementation of humanitarian cash transfers
To support efforts to scale up the use and coordination of humanitarian cash transfers within UNICEF and across the humanitarian system, EMOPS established dedicated surge capacity for cash. This allowed the Division to increase its support to countries implementing or establishing humanitarian cash-based programmes. For example, in the Central African Republic, with support from dedicated surge staff, an assessment was conducted on the feasibility of implementing a humanitarian cash programme. This led to the inclusion of a cash component in the Rapid Response Mechanism, resulting in more than 2,200 households affected by flash flooding in November 2018 receiving unconditional cash transfers. In partnership with the World Bank, EMOPS also continued to support the flagship cash programme in Yemen, which reached 9 million beneficiaries in 2018.

---

[11] Such as United Nations sister agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
[12] Notably in enclaved areas of Afrin (northern Aleppo), East Ghouta, Rukban and Idlib in the Syrian Arab Republic; and Al Mokha and Hodeida in Yemen.

EMOPS also continued to strengthen and expand the implementation of cash-based programming at-scale in humanitarian situations. In mid-2018, with EMOPS support, UNICEF launched its first programmatic guidance on humanitarian cash transfers to help staff implementing cash programmes in emergencies meet specific organizational objectives. Regional workshops on the guidelines held in Eastern and Southern Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and South Asia gave regional and country colleagues the tools to address region-specific challenges to improve the quality of humanitarian cash programmes.

Humanitarian cash programming was also integrated in UNICEF's new Emergency Preparedness Platform (EPP) to strengthen preparedness at the country level. To measure the advancements made over the course of the year, UNICEF strengthened its global reporting mechanism, which is allowing for more detailed tracking of humanitarian cash transfer programmes at the global level.

Preventing and responding to protection risks facing children affected by armed conflict
UNICEF's voice for children in emergencies was strengthened through effective and systematic humanitarian advocacy on grave violations against children. At headquarters, EMOPS helped to build consensus across relevant divisions on three key advocacy themes for child protection in emergencies: 1) end the targeting of children in conflicts; 2) end the detention and criminalization of children; and 3) end the denial of humanitarian access. These themes cover the most salient protection and assistance needs of children in emergencies today and speak to the changes needed on the ground to enable UNICEF to respond appropriately.

EMOPS advanced these advocacy themes by: a) feeding into UNICEF's public advocacy, including child and global alerts on grave violations affecting children, to increase public awareness, strengthen global condemnation and build more systematic and sustainable pressure on parties to conflict, including governments; b) briefing the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Humanitarian Affairs Segment and the Security Council on the impact of conflicts on children; and c) engaging in more deliberate and direct dialogue with parties to conflict and influential Member States – for example in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen – to achieve greater compliance with obligations under international law.

UNICEF advocacy also built on existing campaigns and coalitions. Through its engagement in the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, EMOPS supported the release of *Education Under Attack 2018,* a major global report documenting attacks on schools, universities, their students and staff. Advocacy by UNICEF and members of the Coalition led Member States to highlight these issues during Security Council open debates, the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment and the Human Rights Council. The year also saw growing support for the Safe Schools Declaration as a cooperation framework for addressing these concerns. In 2018, eight new Member States signed the declaration: Bolivia, Cameroon, Djibouti, Macedonia, Monaco, Peru, San Marino and the United Kingdom.

In December, UNICEF launched a joint EMOPS/Programme Division-Disability discussion paper, 'Children with Disabilities in Situations of Armed Conflict', on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The discussion paper, which explores some of the unique challenges faced by children with disabilities in conflict situations, calls for Member States, armed actors and humanitarian actors to conduct more inclusive, participatory and human rights-based response and better protect and include children with disabilities in conflict settings.

Strengthening global norms and policies for the protection of children
Given the continued disrespect of international human rights and humanitarian law in conflicts around the world, EMOPS continued to put children's rights at the centre of the global policy agenda. This included feeding into global policy discussions related to children and armed conflict (CAAC), protection of civilians, counterterrorism, and the United Nations Human Rights Up Front and United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy to ensure that Member States maintained focus on protecting the most vulnerable.

EMOPS engagement in the CAAC agenda – including through regular briefings and direct advocacy with Member States and the Office of the Special Representative to the Secretary General for CAAC – led to acknowledgement in Security Council Resolution 2427 on CAAC that children recruited by armed groups or forces should be considered victims rather than detained or prosecuted. The Resolution was unanimously adopted in July and co-sponsored by 98 Member States, suggesting broad-based commitment to the CAAC agenda.

In collaboration with the UNICEF Programme Division-Child Protection, EMOPS provided technical support in crisis-affected countries on the Security Council's CAAC agenda. This included supporting field engagement with parties to conflict to foster their compliance with international humanitarian law and child rights. For example, in South Sudan, EMOPS contributed to the development of a revitalized Action Plan with the Armed Forces of South Sudan, which will address all six grave violations being committed against children.[13]

Strengthening accountability to affected populations
To strengthen AAP – a key priority for UNICEF under the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 – an organization-wide strategy for systematically integrating AAP into all UNICEF programmes was endorsed in 2018, with EMOPS support. EMOPS provided technical support and guidance to country and regional offices on implementing the strategy, including developing AAP plans and needs assessment tools.

EMOPS also supported UNICEF country offices to engage emergency-affected communities using U-Report, an innovative short message-based service. In Nigeria, a new emergency U-Report programme provided nearly 71,000 crisis-affected people with a platform for providing feedback on the provision of education, health and water services. In Guatemala, in the three weeks following the Vulcan Fuego eruption, 2,500 people provided inputs into a needs assessment that ultimately informed the crisis response.

Under the interagency Communication and Community Engagement Initiative led by UNICEF, collective approaches to AAP were established in the Central African Republic and Yemen, where the views and feedback of affected people are now informing the humanitarian responses. In Yemen, for example, the results of regular surveys conducted with affected communities have been key to bringing the views of affected people into Yemen's humanitarian response plans and helping to address the disconnects that Yemenis saw between the humanitarian response and their priority needs.

Improving operational efficiency and effectiveness for principled humanitarian action
As part of its ongoing effort to support the implementation of the Grand Bargain and World Humanitarian Summit commitments, in 2018, EMOPS continued to manage the Humanitarian

---

[13] This includes the killing and maiming of children, recruitment and use of children, rape or other sexual violence against children, abduction, attacks on schools or hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access.

Single Business Case funded by DFID, in close collaboration with the programme's six other participating agencies.[14] In 2018, the programme contributed to EMOPS efforts to scale up UNICEF cash programmes, improve risk analysis and preparedness and build stronger linkages between early warning and early action.

EMOPS contributed to mobilizing significant resources for UNICEF emergency response during the year, including with the launch of the *Humanitarian Action for Children 2018* global appeal in January. As of December 2018, provisional available funding for the 2018 appeal reached US$2.77 billion (74 per cent funded).[15] EMOPS continued to manage UNICEF's global humanitarian thematic funds,[16] and in 2018, disbursed US$22.4 million to 38 field offices for humanitarian preparedness and response, and US$8 million to support UNICEF's global humanitarian architecture. This multi-year flexible funding is critical for EMOPS' ability to plan and operate beyond a one-year horizon. For example, through the First Action Initiative (*see part IV for more information on this initiative*) UNICEF is using global humanitarian thematic funds to invest in key preparedness actions – including pre-positioning of supplies – to help the Pacific Islands in the event of the next major tropical storm.

EMOPS senior management regularly engaged with Member States, donors and partners to contribute to humanitarian advocacy on forgotten/underfunded crises and mobilize flexible funds for humanitarian response. During the year, 14 meetings were held with high-level government officials, including six donor consultations. As part of an effort to increase private sector engagement, for the first time, the EMOPS director briefed UNICEF's existing and potential corporate partners (e.g., Lego, Louis Vuitton, Chanel and Football Club Barcelona) to explain UNICEF's humanitarian action and how corporations could get more involved.

In 2018, discussions led by the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division with contributions from EMOPS resulted in the promotion of Islamic financing instruments to support UNICEF humanitarian action. This included the signature of a global Memorandum of Understanding with the World Zakat Forum[17] in December that paves the way for future discussions on how zakat funds can be used to meet the needs of children affected by crisis.

Outcome 2: UNICEF's capacity (country office, regional office and headquarters levels) to prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises in a timely, effective and efficient manner to save lives and protect rights of children is strengthened.

To respond to the greater number and variety of crises, UNICEF needs to be properly equipped to deliver a high quality, timely and effective response. In 2018, EMOPS sought to strengthen preparedness throughout UNICEF; improve risk analysis and monitoring at the global and country levels; refine its policy and operational guidance for better response; foster humanitarian learning, particularly on high-threat environments; and strengthen the links between evidence generation, learning and the use of evidence to steer humanitarian action.

Enhancing preparedness and effective humanitarian response
In 2018, EMOPS significantly strengthened UNICEF's preparedness to respond to humanitarian crises in a timely and efficient manner with the global roll out of the UNICEF Emergency

---

[14] OCHA, UNHCR, WFP, IOM, WHO and the Central Emergency Response Fund.
[15] A total of US$1.85 billion was received in 2018 and US$919 million was carried forward from 2017.
[16] More than 50 per cent of EMOPS posts and activities are fundraised through non-core (other resources) funding.
[17] Zakat is a form of alms-giving treated in Islam as a religious obligation or tax. The World Zakat Forum is a triennial conference that gathers people, from Muslim and non-Muslim countries, interested in zakat initiatives.

Preparedness Platform (EPP)[18] – a system for tracking risks to enhance the organization's early warning and preparedness. By mid-year, 100 per cent of country offices (128) had approved their preparedness plans in the EPP.

This work has also helped country offices progress towards meeting the minimum preparedness standards set in UNICEF's Procedure on Preparedness for Emergency Response – such as the availability of pre-positioned supplies, standby agreements with implementing partners and identification of staff surge needs. For example, in the Philippines, preparedness actions were instrumental to mounting a timely and effective response to the Mangkhut Typhoon. Pre-identified UNICEF staff were immediately deployed to support the government-led inter-agency assessment, and within three days, those staff reported key information on the humanitarian situation to the Emergency Management Team that enabled UNICEF to rapidly initiate response actions.

During the year, EMOPS also renewed its focus on analysing risks for stronger organizational preparedness. The development of the Risk Tracking Tool, a comprehensive list of context-related risks (natural and human-caused) to women and children globally, provided focus for ongoing risk monitoring. The Tool led to the establishment of the Horizon Scan Process, which gives UNICEF a way of identifying risks, prioritizing countries that have large risks to 'watch'; and ensuring that those countries have solid preparedness plans in place to address those risks. In 2018, the Horizon Scan identified eleven countries as high priority for preparedness actions and helped mobilize EMOPS contributions to successful preparedness efforts in these countries. For example, in Uganda, in response to the Horizon Scan process, the country office undertook key actions that enhanced its preparedness for a potential Ebola outbreak, including recruiting new surge staff, supporting risk communication,[19] social mobilization and training of more than 230 health professionals and volunteers.

One of the Division's key accountabilities is to provide timely and efficient support to UNICEF country and regional offices to facilitate effective response to crises. EMOPS continued to provide this support to new and ongoing crises during the year, including five Level 3[20] and four Level 2[21] emergencies, as well as responses to several smaller/less visible humanitarian situations. EMOPS was particularly instrumental in providing tailored support to countries experiencing new emergencies and scaling up their response, including in Papua New Guinea, the migration crises in Latin America and the Caribbean and outbreaks of Ebola.

Over the past several years, UNICEF has found that the deployment of surge support and personnel has had a strong and positive impact on its overall preparedness and ability to respond to emergencies. In 2018, EMOPS took steps to strengthen its surge mechanisms to improve results on the ground for UNICEF and the humanitarian system (*see outcome 3 for information on standby deployments*). The number of EMOPS-based Emergency Response Team (ERT) members was doubled with the recruitment of four additional specialists focusing on emergency coordination, AAP, cash and gender. The eight EMOPS-based ERT members undertook 33 missions in 25 countries over the course of the year, totalling 902 days of surge support for humanitarian response in the field. These missions provided coordination

---

[18] The EPP is an online tool for implementing UNICEF's Procedure on Preparedness for Emergency Response. It guides offices through a logical four-step process of analysis and decision-making. It helps to analyse risks, define UNICEF's role in an emergency, highlight capacity strengths and gaps and identify practical preparedness actions.

[19] Risk communication refers to the exchange of real-time information, advice and opinions between experts and people facing threats to their health, economic or social well-being. The ultimate purpose of risk communication is to enable people at risk to take informed decisions to protect themselves and their loved ones.

[20] Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

[21] The Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan and Syrian refugee-hosting countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey).

leadership, as well as response planning and monitoring support, for a range of humanitarian situations, including disease outbreaks, conflicts, drought, famine, natural disasters and emergency preparedness.

For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the EMOPS-based ERT member filled the Ebola outbreak coordination role based in Beni, managing the field office and the four outbreak sites in Nord Kivu and Ituri. Having this capacity in place led to the establishment of additional outposts and rapid response teams (RRTs), which significantly increased UNICEF's ability to respond to the outbreak. EMOPS ERT support was also critical to scaling up the response in Cameroon, with the deployment of three ERT members covering cash, AAP and gender. The gender ERT in Cameroon helped UNICEF establish a gender-focused field presence in crisis-affected areas, including by integrating gender considerations into Rapid Response Mechanism activities and mobilizing resources (US$2.3 million from DFID) for mainstreaming gender considerations into the humanitarian response.

A key ingredient for effective and timely response is the availability of funds. In 2018, EMOPS disbursed US$66.7 million from the Emergency Programme Fund[22] to 28 country offices and 2 regional offices, including to support country responses to Level 2 or Level 3 situations. For example, US$4 million disbursed to Indonesia in response to the September Tsunami allowed UNICEF to set up an operational presence in Palu, initiate programme partnership agreements, order supplies and deploy surge staff to coordinate the response. Through EMOPS advocacy, UNICEF also received US$47.7 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund for underfunded emergencies in 16 countries. This support was particularly critical in chronically underfunded emergencies such as in Burundi, Eritrea, Haiti and Uganda.

Strengthening policies and operational guidance for effective response
In its effort to better respond to the changing humanitarian landscape, including protracted crises, health emergencies and population displacement, EMOPS took major steps towards updating several of UNICEF's emergency procedures and guidance in 2018. The review of the Core Commitments for Children (to be completed in 2019) will make UNICEF more fit for purpose by reflecting some key new areas of work, such as humanitarian cash transfers, AAP, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as cross-cutting areas such as adolescents, persons with disabilities and early childhood development.

UNICEF's review of the Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure was carried out in line with the review of the inter-agency level procedures and was based on a reflection of the utility of the procedure over the past few years, to make it more useful and conducive to effective response. Proposed changes to the procedure – including clarifying the roles and accountabilities of the Global Emergency Coordinator and limiting the period of Level 3 activation – were submitted to the Global Management Team for review. EMOPS also began the process of revising the Simplified Standard Operating Procedures to guide emergency response in a more timely and effective manner.

Fostering humanitarian learning across the organization
Humanitarian learning is central to EMOPS' contributions to UNICEF's humanitarian action and cuts across programme areas. In 2018, this work focused on improving organizational capacities to more effectively operate in high-threat environments and improve emergency preparedness at all levels of the organization.

---

[22] The Emergency Programme Fund is a revolving fund disbursed to field offices within 48 hours of a sudden humanitarian crisis, before donor resources are available and to underfunded emergencies.

To support the organization's ability to prepare for and respond to emergencies, EMOPS complemented the EPP rollout with the dissemination of related learning packages to regional and country level staff. The learning packages helped emergency focal points develop their country office preparedness plans in the EPP and improve response capacities. In the Eastern and Southern Africa region, EMOPS also facilitated humanitarian learning programmes that strengthened the capacities of 85 national staff who will be added to emergency surge rosters.

EMOPS also improved the knowledge and capacities of its leadership at country, regional and global levels to operate and programme in complex and high-threat environments. As part of UNICEF's effort to increase the centrality of protection in its humanitarian action, global workshops for regional emergency and security advisors and country representatives[23] – predominately working in countries responding to complex emergencies such as Afghanistan, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan – fostered peer-to-peer exchange and learning on the leadership skills needed to reach children in complex and high-threat situations. These include protecting children from grave violations, security management, negotiating access, sustaining critical programmes, operating in high-risk situations, engaging non-state entities and managing risk and the impact of counter-terrorism measures.

Improving evidence and analysis for humanitarian action
EMOPS strengthened country-level programme planning and monitoring during the year through extended missions or remote support to 10 country offices (four mission support; seven remote support). This included scaling up key monitoring systems to track progress in the Rohingya response in Bangladesh and earthquake responses in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea; designing field monitoring systems on the quality of programmes in Afghanistan and Ukraine; scoping information platform options for Myanmar; and developing approaches to linking humanitarian and development planning processes in South Sudan and for the Venezuelan migration response. In addition, 127 staff members across 37 country and 7 regional offices participated in webinars designed to harmonize and increase transparency in target setting and costing in humanitarian appeals and response planning.

With EMOPS support, new country level tools were developed to strengthen humanitarian response monitoring. Working with other headquarters divisions and regional offices, EMOPS finalized the eTools UNICEF Partner Reporting Portal for implementing partners, which is expected to generate dramatic time savings for UNICEF and partners, and facilitate easier sharing, analysis and data quality assurance. Roll out to 20 countries is planned for 2019. EMOPS has been building the evidence-base for innovative humanitarian financing solutions and creating financial models to point out where strategic investments could make our work more efficient, effective and less carbon-intensive. This work will intensify in 2019.

Outcome 3: Strategic alliances, partnerships and advocacy are strengthened and expanded for child-focused humanitarian action.

Partnerships, strategic alliances and advocacy are critical to delivering results for children and realizing their rights in humanitarian situations. In 2018, EMOPS worked to build UNICEF's partnerships, alliances and business models to strengthen the coherence of the humanitarian system, while improving UNICEF's added value in humanitarian action.

---

[23] Participants in these workshops included 17 reps, 7 regional emergency advisors and 15 security advisors.

Promoting awareness and action on children in crisis
EMOPS played a critical role in strengthening advocacy and amplifying key messages on the potential impact of crises on children in Hodeida (Yemen) and in Idleb (Syrian Arab Republic) and on the need for all parties to conflict to adhere to the deconfliction mechanism in Yemen[24] to facilitate life-saving interventions, including the oral cholera vaccine campaign.

In 2018, participation in high level fora such as the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment panel on addressing the impact of armed conflict on children and eight side events, raised the profile of these issues on the global stage (*see results reported under outcome 1*). Throughout the year, EMOPS also ensured regular inputs to the Secretary-General's reports and briefings on the impact of conflicts on children in all countries on the Security Council agenda. With EMOPS support, UNICEF made significant contributions to the Secretary-General's annual report, 'Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations', which highlighted key trends affecting children in humanitarian contexts.

EMOPS and the Public Partnerships Division coordinated UNICEF self-reporting on progress towards the World Humanitarian Summit and Grand Bargain commitments (*see results reported under outcome 1*). EMOPS also expanded UNICEF engagement on the Grand Bargain as a new member of the Facilitation Group to accelerate the collective progress of humanitarian agencies and donors on commitments to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian aid. Within the United Nations system, EMOPS supported the implementation of reforms on strengthening the linkages between humanitarian action and development programmes. Detailed progress will be presented at the first regular session of the UNICEF Executive Board in 2019.

Strengthening strategic alliances and partnerships for humanitarian action
EMOPS continued to build UNICEF's humanitarian partnerships in 2018. This included its partnerships with UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to support the commitments made under the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. Strong engagement with UNHCR and Member States on the development of the Global Compact on Refugees (adopted in December 2018) resulted in the inclusion of dedicated language on children and young people. The language references specific measures, such as integrated and age-sensitive services for refugee and host community children; investment in national child protection systems; cross-border cooperation on providing a continuum of protection and care; and the empowerment and participation of refugee and host community youth.

UNICEF/EMOPS also continued to engage closely with IOM on the global migration process. The flagship of this partnership is the Displacement Tracking Matrix for Children on The Move, which aims to improve the evidence base on child migrants. In 2018, the project was implemented in 16 pilot countries – including Greece, Libya and Nigeria – and instrumental to making data gathering and the analysis of migrant data more child-focused. Forty-eight country offices have requested and obtained support for integrating child protection into their displacement tracking matrices, which will allow for more targeted and protection-focused responses to children on the move.

In December, a joint UNICEF-International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) letter of understanding was signed by the organizations' Principals, reaffirming their joint commitment to strengthening and expanding the partnership in both operational and

---

[24] The deconfliction mechanism informs the Saudi-Led Coalition (SLC) of humanitarian movements and static locations in Yemen. It aims at ensuring the safety and security of humanitarian premises, personnel, equipment and activities in areas of active military operations (airstrikes, shelling, conflict, etc.). The deconfliction mechanism was established in April 2015 upon the request of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Sana'a to ensure a safe delivery of humanitarian assistance in Yemen.

development terms, and moving it beyond a project-based collaboration to a more strategic engagement. The first step will involve building the specialized capacities of National Society volunteers through partnerships under the One Billion Coalition for Resilience, in areas such as health education, hygiene promotion, civic education and social cohesion. This work has the potential to bolster youth engagement in the delivery of community services.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and UNICEF – which focuses on building capacities for using geographical information systems and mapping in humanitarian response – became fully operational in 2018. In Chad, UNICEF utilized[25] the innovative Floods Finder – a portal that provides access to satellite-derived flood data and offers flooding forecasts based on river levels and rainfall – to publish flood monitoring bulletins that provided early warning alerts to the humanitarian community and reinforced government preparedness.

The Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) partnership remained key to UNICEF's preparedness work during the year.[26] To ensure continuity and advance this innovative multi-sectoral approach, in 2018, EMOPS facilitated the development and approval of a new joint CADRI programme for 2019-2022.[27] The programme will bring national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations and United Nations agencies together to improve capacities for risk reduction and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Finally, EMOPS worked closely within the framework of the Inter Agency Standing Committee, including by supporting the reform of its architecture and its new 'scale-up' policy for large-scale emergencies.

Expanding and strengthening standby deployable human resources
The standby partnership mechanism managed by EMOPS continues to be one of the main providers of surge support in UNICEF and a flagship partnership model for generating in-kind support with expertise in emergencies to facilitate rapid scale-up. In 2018, 21 standby partners provided UNICEF with a total of 18,687 days of support,[28] the equivalent of approximately US$9.34 million of in-kind contributions. A total of 129 field deployments were undertaken during the year to 33 countries, including 73 standby personnel and 56 RRT missions by standby personnel to support UNICEF's cluster, programme and operational commitments. Forty-nine per cent of these deployments were to Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies. Deployments also supported smaller and underfunded emergency responses in Chad, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Uganda.

In 2018, EMOPS continued to expand its partnership base and engaged in consultations with governments, civil society organizations and local partners to develop new standby partnerships. Three of these new partnerships – with the Turkish Disaster Management Agency, InterSos (Italy) and Cascos Blancos (Argentina) – are expected to be concluded in early 2019.

---

[25] With funding from the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).
[26] The only capacity development initiative delivering services on the ground in 30 countries, CADRI aims to identify critical capacity gaps in disaster risk reduction at the country level, address prevailing risks and articulate coherent interventions to respond when those risks materialize.
[27] The joint programme involves OCHA, WFP, WHO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as executive partners and IFRC, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the World Bank/Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery as observers.
[28] All deployment figures are as of 11 December 2018.

Partnership engagement was also enhanced with standby partners through joint bilateral reviews and planning exercises and the identification of priorities, opportunities and challenges.

The development and roll out of the external surge dashboard – an interactive, cloud-based, real-time mapping of surge information that has replaced monthly surge reports – gave UNICEF a better, more comprehensive view of external surge support needs. This has been highlighted as an exceptional and innovative accomplishment across the organization and partners.

Outcome 4: UNICEF is delivering safe programming and ensuring security and safety of personnel, premises and assets, as mandated by the United Nations Framework of Accountability for Safety and Security.

In 2018, EMOPS rolled out the UNICEF Framework of Accountability for security to all country and regional offices, establishing efficient and structured oversight and defined internal accountability mechanisms for security management. The Framework is already facilitating more informed security decisions across the organization and safer programme delivery in the field. Carried out through broadcasts, working groups and workshops, the rollout itself provided the organization with a collective understanding of the security roles and responsibilities of senior management and UNICEF security specialists globally.

Proactive security support provided through 13 surge and 5 assessment missions supported critical decision-making and the implementation of security risk measures in a number of countries, including Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Turkey, Venezuela and Yemen.

Investments in learning programmes and capacity building also helped to strengthen the safety and security of UNICEF personnel in 2018. Over 650 female staff members across five regions participated in the redesigned Women's Security Awareness Training in 2018, which contributed to addressing female-related security concerns and promoting empowerment and situational awareness. UNICEF also strengthened the security capacities of 73 operations managers with security functions from four regions in an effort to mainstream security roles and increase the efficiency of security functions, particularly in countries without security specialists.

In 2018, the UNICEF Operations Centre (OPSCEN) continued to provide 24-hour/7-day operational support to UNICEF humanitarian operations and security activities and UNICEF staff globally. This included responding to requests for assistance from the field, including on highly sensitive subjects; rapidly distributing relevant information to colleagues and communicating directly with UNICEF staff worldwide; and supporting emergency management processes. On average, OPSCEN processed and disseminated approximately 600 incoming reports per month. In support of UNICEF's responses to Level 3 emergencies, OPSCEN organized and managed all Emergency Management Team meetings.

OPSCEN monitored and reported on political and security dynamics, events and natural hazards that had the potential to impact UNICEF's programmes, personnel and infrastructure – a key function that helped UNICEF senior management make informed decisions. This included first-line reporting on emergency events such as the December 2018 volcano-induced tsunami in Indonesia, in which OPSCEN compiled breaking news alerts along with updates from other United Nations agencies and scientific research centres that helped senior management at global, regional and country levels act quickly on the latest developments.

During the year, US$9 million from UNICEF Headquarters' "Central Investment Fund" were

allocated to 83 country offices to facilitate compliance with safety and security standards in operations and programme delivery. The funds were used to purchase key security equipment and enhance the safety of office premises in line with security risk management requirements. For example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali country offices received US$1.5 million each to purchase armoured vehicles and facilitate programme delivery in line with security risk management measures in hard-to-reach areas. Countries in high-threat environments, such as Algeria, Egypt and Libya, received support to enhance security perimeters at UNICEF premises.

Outcome 5: Field-based humanitarian coordination mechanisms are strengthened to contribute to the effectiveness of response, through clear accountability to affected populations, preparedness and greater alignment with national systems and sectoral work.

In 2018, EMOPS continued to lead three clusters (nutrition, education and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)) and the child protection Area of Responsibility (AoR) and used its role as cluster lead agency to conduct advocacy, facilitate inter-cluster coordination for integrated response and ensure the complementarity of organizational strategies and inter-agency humanitarian action planning. With the support of cluster partners, including standby arrangements, global cluster RRTs provided direct coordination and information management support to 28 countries, including four Level 3 emergencies, through 80 missions totalling 3,518 days.

All clusters worked to streamline cross-cutting issues in their support to country clusters. This included the further integration of AAP into UNICEF-led clusters and AoRs with the development of a common cluster AAP framework with minimum actions and cluster performance indicators designed to standardize AAP across all clusters. In addition, an AAP lens was integrated into the training curricula for education and nutrition clusters. Support was provided to the development of the WASH Quality and Accountability Assurance Project which will be rolled out in 2019 and the Child Protection AoR received technical support to encourage child and adolescent participation in child protection coordination mechanisms.

During the year, EMOPS improved coordination across UNICEF's operational field support mechanisms. Each UNICEF-led global cluster/AoR now has dedicated UNICEF staff that can be deployed as an RRT member to support cluster coordination and information management. This has increased the predictability of the support that global clusters provide to countries and improved UNICEF's global strategic support to country-based coordination, enabling more targeted national capacity building for coordination and strategic planning.

Working with other headquarters divisions and regional offices, EMOPS finalized the Cluster Partner Reporting Portal, which will serve as a common 'window' to visualize collective humanitarian results across countries and improve joint planning and reporting across the humanitarian system. Partners participating in a testing of the portal in the Whole of Syria response in 2018 noted significant efficiency gains in reporting humanitarian results and appreciated having a central place for joint planning.

Global Nutrition Cluster
In 2018, advocacy conducted by the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) increased global attention on the importance of addressing nutrition in emergencies. In the Sudan and Yemen, GNC advocacy elevated the profile of the nutrition situations and generated clear partner commitments to respond. In Cameroon, advocacy led by the GNC coordination team led to the

activation of a standalone nutrition cluster, which increased the attention of donors and stakeholders to the emergency nutrition situation.

In a milestone towards improving the integration of nutrition-in-emergencies responses, the GNC and the Global Food Security Cluster developed a three-day integrated inter-cluster training package for the WASH, nutrition, health and food security clusters to better address the underlying causes of malnutrition in humanitarian response. The package was piloted in Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Sudan.

In collaboration with World Vision International and the Programme Division, the GNC officially launched the Global Technical Mechanism to provide predictable technical advice, guidance and leadership to country clusters/sectors, and thereby improve the technical quality of emergency nutrition responses.

Despite severe staff shortages,[29] in 2018 the GNC RRT provided 231 days of deployment support, strengthening capacities for coordination and needs assessment in countries such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Nigeria. Through the GNC partner consortium of NGOs technical RRTs, 10 missions were conducted to Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Yemen. By the end of 2018, the GNC had mainstreamed two RRT positions within UNICEF (a cluster coordinator and information management officer), established technical and information management help desks and secured funding for the continuation of the coordination help desk, which supported nine countries to improve the quality of assessment and response planning in 2018.

Global Education Cluster
In 2018, the Global Education Cluster prioritized global advocacy to increase awareness around education in emergencies. In partnership with the Permanent Missions of Switzerland and Norway, the Cluster launched a four-part series of Member State meetings to mobilize support for education in emergencies from donors and global partners. The meetings provided a forum for policy makers and practitioners to discuss the significant role of education for protection and innovative ways to improve the quality of education responses and resulted in increased funding and a stronger public profile for the Global Education Cluster.

During the year, the Global Education Cluster also helped address evidence gaps in the sector. In partnership with UNHCR and the International Network for Education in Emergencies, with support from the Overseas Development Institute and funding from Education Cannot Wait, the Global Education Cluster is developing an evidence based on joint planning, response and coordination for education in emergencies.
In 2018, the RRT provided 318 days of deployment support that helped countries implement more coherent education responses for children living in emergencies. Field support focused on improving the quality of humanitarian response planning, needs assessment and information management, which remains a gap area. For example, the deployment of an RRT member to Bangladesh led to the finalization of the multi-year response plan funded by Education Cannot Wait. Remote support in response to 43 coordination and 30 information management requests was provided to 29 countries through a dedicated Helpdesk and RRT.

With Global Education Cluster support, country education clusters also gained access to operational guidance linked to the humanitarian programme cycle and longer-term sectoral

---

[29] Due to lack of funding for the GNC Rapid Response Team and other planned activities, by March 2018 the GNC no longer had RRT capacity (usually 4 RRTs support the GNC with field deployments).

development plans. Global, regional (Eastern and Southern Africa) and country level trainings (Somalia, South Sudan and northeast Syrian Arab Republic) equipped more than 100 cluster staff and partners from 20 countries with the skills to develop strategies and response plans based on evidence. More than 90 percent of the participants at the global and regional trainings rated the impact of the training on their workplace performance as high or very high.

Global WASH Cluster
In 2018, the Global WASH Cluster (GWC)'s strong engagement with the Sanitation and Water for All partnership helped bring the WASH humanitarian and development agendas closer together, in line with World Humanitarian Summit commitments. The GWC proposed a set of humanitarian indicators, including for preparedness, resilience and disaster risk reduction, that will allow countries to protect development investments and promote the Sanitation and Water for All framework with humanitarian actors.

GWC advocacy also successfully drew attention to cholera risks in specific countries. For example, following the issuance of cholera alerts, international NGOs operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Yemen scaled up their cholera responses to adequately respond to the crises. Collaboration with the Global Health Cluster also strengthened leadership and coordination in cholera situations.

The Mid-Term Review of the 2016-2020 GWC Strategic Plan, which was completed in 2018, confirmed that the GWC had made substantial progress in capacity building, with more coherent training packages – such as the WASH operations training and leadership and coordination trainings – mainstreamed across partners and an average of 150 people trained per year. The review also found that the Field Support Team had provided predictable and relevant support to countries over the last two years, despite lack of predictable funding to support GWC activities.

The GWC continued to support national humanitarian WASH coordination platforms to effectively fulfil their roles and coordination functions. The Field Support Team provided 1,956 days of deployment support, including to Bangladesh and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where deployments helped improve targeting, develop frameworks for monitoring and ensure the quality of services. Additional core staff added to RRT and Field Support Team – which is staffed mainly by partners – will allow for increased and more sustainable support to countries going forward.

Child Protection Area of Responsibility
In 2018, the Child Protection AoR advanced more integrated approaches to child protection-in-emergencies by working with partners to understand how protection risks are tied to a child's food security, health and education. For example, with the World Food Programme (WFP), the AoR conducted an integrated analysis of how food insecurity can give rise to child labour in places such as Mali, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. This kind of work builds synergies and avoids duplication of data collection among different agencies, helping UNICEF and its partners carry out more effective and protective humanitarian action on the ground. Seven countries are now using this approach in their humanitarian needs overview and humanitarian response processes, with additional countries planned for 2019.

The Child Protection AoR also continued to take action on its localization commitments by establishing four local Help Desks in French, Arabic, Spanish and English. Housed within local NGOs on four continents, the local Help Desks are improving access to local NGOs, which form the bulk of coordination group membership and deliver most of the groups' services. In 2018, the local Help Desks responded to more than 90 requests. In addition, in 2018, six countries

were supported to self-assess local partner engagement and develop plans to increase localization.

In 2018, the RRT provided 886 days of deployment support, including to Bangladesh, Cameroon, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic, laying the groundwork for adequate coverage, scale-up and quality of child protection programming. Field support was provided to coordination groups in Iraq, Myanmar, the Niger and the Sudan to improve service quality and access to services for child survivors of gender-based violence. This work will be expanded in coordination with the Gender-Based Violence AoR and the Health Cluster in 2019.

Part 4: Lessons learned and constraints

Protecting children affected by conflict
Despite enhanced engagement on protection and human rights in situations of armed conflict, increasing disrespect for international humanitarian and human rights law by parties to conflict continued to offset EMOPS/UNICEF efforts in this regard, and hindered UNICEF's ability to protect children's rights in complex and high-threat environments. Attacks on aid workers remained high in 2018 – with 296 aid workers becoming victims of major attacks.[30] Going forward, EMOPS will step up its advocacy and develop guidance for UNICEF and its partners to engage effectively on emerging protection issues affecting children in armed conflict, including with the launch of a dedicated website for the Children Under Attack campaign.

Quality of humanitarian programme response in high- threat environments
UNICEF's coverage in complex humanitarian emergencies is significant. UNICEF endeavours to strike a balance between reaching large numbers of affected people that are easier to access, with smaller numbers of the most vulnerable that are harder and more-costly to reach, though the approach varies across country offices. Programme quality is consistently guided by UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in addition to global quality standards, though it is difficult to determine the consistency with which UNICEF meets these standards, which varies across countries according to its access, funding and capacity. Generating evidence on the quality of humanitarian programmes is dependent on the strength and reach of UNICEF's own monitoring which can be variable due to access constraints.

UNICEF often struggles to reach these zones of difficult access, both due to a range of external factors that may be difficult to overcome, as well as internal factors that UNICEF/EMOPS can work to address. These include inconsistencies in the knowledge and understanding of staff about humanitarian principles, the limited capacity that exists for humanitarian negotiation and for finding solutions to ethical dilemmas and weaknesses in engaging with communities affected by crisis.

Addressing these capacity gaps, particularly among front-line staff, will provide an important frame of reference and set of competencies for UNICEF to more consistently gain and maintain principled access. In addition, continuing to promote routine approaches to strengthening the linkages between the organization's humanitarian action and development programmes in conflict-affected and fragile contexts will help to address gaps in humanitarian coverage and strengthen programme quality. EMOPS will support UNICEF to introduce a procedure on strengthening linkages between humanitarian and development programming, including a focus on the systematic review of the quality of UNICEF's response to large-scale crises.

---

[30] Aid Workers Security, 'Security Incident Data', <https://aidworkersecurity.org/incidents/search?start=2018&end=2018&detail=1>, accessed 5 February 2019.e

Enhancing organizational and national preparedness
While the launch of the EPP and UNICEF's new preparedness architecture led to real improvements in country office preparedness in 2018, the experience also illustrated that these tools alone will not be enough to achieve a sufficiently high level of operational preparedness in UNICEF offices worldwide. EMOPS recognizes that an organization shift – a new way of operating that is supported at the highest levels of the organization – will be needed to put preparedness and risk-informed programming at the heart of planning for humanitarian action. In doing so, preparedness will be better embedded in UNICEF's programme planning cycle which will also support organizational efforts to better link humanitarian and development programming.

EMOPS has identified practical steps towards this end that will be initiated in 2019 and beyond. These include: increasing technical assistance and quality assurance; strengthening the capacities of staff and partners; providing evidence and sharing good practices; improving guidance and tools to respond to user demand; finding new sources of funding for preparedness; adapting preparedness to the different contexts; and ensuring that country, regional and headquarters offices enhance their dialogue and mutual support. EMOPS leadership will be vital to accomplishing this work. Going forward, EMOPS will continue to support senior managers at the country level to ensure that their offices engage critically in preparedness planning; allocate adequate staff and funds; and strive for risk and preparedness to be given due attention throughout UNICEF programming.

In line with these next steps, EMOPS is supporting UNICEF to generate evidence on how preparedness can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of UNICEF's humanitarian response – evidence that will be instrumental to enabling this organizational shift. Under the First Action Initiative, UNICEF will use its limited flexible funds in countries in urgent need of preparedness due to imminent risks. The initiative will allow UNICEF to measure the impact of investments in preparedness and demonstrate how these investments make UNICEF's emergency operations faster, greener and more cost-efficient. For example, UNICEF is already using these funds to put in place preparedness measures in the Pacific Islands in the event of the next major tropical storm. If/when the emergency strikes, these investments will provide vital information on how preparedness can yield cost savings in the response, reduce carbon dioxide emissions and increase the efficiency of service delivery.

Strengthening accountability to affected populations
Uptake and understanding of AAP remains limited across UNICEF and there is a need for better evidence of the added-value of integrating AAP into humanitarian programming. In addition, collective approaches remain ad-hoc and stronger support is needed to ensure that they are widely understood, adopted, resourced and supported by country leadership.

In 2018, EMOPS developed the AAP Business Case and Roadmap, which sets directions for scaling up AAP in UNICEF around four strategic objectives, including the integration of AAP into all UNICEF programmes. In 2019, a benchmarking exercise will provide a rigorous and independent assessment of UNICEF's strengths and weaknesses in regard to AAP, which will serve as a robust basis for further strengthening UNICEF's approaches to AAP, particularly at the country level. EMOPS will also continue to reinforce collective efforts to AAP through UNICEF's leadership of the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative to ensure more predictable and systematic approaches to AAP.

Need for greater, flexible and timely financial resources
Inadequate and late funding persisted as a major challenge in 2018. Lack of predictable, flexible and multi-year funding for EMOPS, and the need to continuously fundraise for key posts, continued to challenge the division's ability to implement and deliver on its annual work plan. Multi-year flexible funding in particular is critical to EMOPS' ability to plan and operate beyond a one-year horizon.

For example, lack of predictable and flexible funds for UNICEF's global clusters has a direct impact on UNICEF's ability to deliver on its obligations as cluster lead agency. In addition, ensuring continued funding for EMOPS to support country offices to scale up the routine use of humanitarian cash transfer programmes in line with the global commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit remains a challenge. Additional resources are also needed to strengthen UNICEF's inter-agency engagement on cash transfers in humanitarian response. In addition, due to delayed funding, EMOPS was unable to recruit staff on critical positions leading to delayed implementation of key deliverables.

EMOPS is addressing the need for greater flexible resources by improving its tracking and reporting to donors on the value of flexible funds as well as giving donors stronger recognition and visibility in annual meetings, consultations, corporate reporting and webpages; this work will continue in 2019. EMOPS and PPD senior management will continue to emphasize the need and value of flexible funding in 2019 in donor meetings and consultations.

In addition, working with the Private Fundraising and Partnerships and Public Partnerships Division, EMOPS senior management is making concerted efforts to diversify its donor base through proactive engagement with corporate and emerging/existing public donors. This will help to mobilize multi-year flexible funding in support of UNICEF humanitarian action. EMOPS is also stepping up its technical support to regional and country offices on multi-year humanitarian response plans/appeals to mobilize multi-year funds from donors.

Human resource capacity
Staffing shortages also affected EMOPS' ability to deliver on its work plan across all sections of the Division. For example, overall standby deployments in 2018 were lower than in previous years, due to the more competitive human resources environment, as well as fewer requests and funding/capacity restrictions. Resources have been planned for 2019 to augment internal capacity to address some of the issues, build the visibility of the scheme internally in UNICEF and its complementarity with other UNICEF mechanisms, enhance partnership management, seek new partners and explore alternative standby partnership models. A resource mobilization plan was developed to attempt to address the 50 per cent funding gap for the 2019 annual work plan.