

Eastern Caribbean Multi-Country Programme

Executive Summary

The Eastern Caribbean Area (ECA) continued to experience low growth and high debt, resulting in a resource-constrained environment for children. Widening income gaps, high unemployment (ranging between 11 and 27 per cent, with 15-to-24 year old youth unemployment at about 26-to-38 per cent), posed challenges for equitable, sustainable development in the sub-region. In addition ECA remained highly susceptible to the effects of climate change including intense hurricanes and tropical storms, flooding, landslides and drought. Consequently, children continued to be disproportionately affected by poverty, social issues related to violence and abuse and vulnerabilities posed by natural disasters.

Key achievements focused on strengthening knowledge management and institutional capacity, which are the main bottlenecks for effective programming for children. In this penultimate year of the multi-country programme, UNICEF ECA conducted equity-focused and risk-informed situation analyses (SITANs) in nine of 12 countries and territories to prepare the next multi-country programme for 2017-2021. Led by national implementing partners, the SITANs highlighted progress for children and sources of deprivation and exclusion in the context of small-island developing states with small populations and limited resources.

With UNICEF ECA support, progress was achieved in increasing the availability of strategic information – through the completion of seven country statistical digests and one regional digest – providing the data necessary for planning and monitoring education services. Five countries completed “child protection” digests, which provided a new source of information, thereby bridging major information gaps. The “Key Findings Report” for the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) for Trinidad and Tobago was also completed. These reports contribute valuable social data to inform equity-focused programming and advocacy for children.

Progress was also achieved in strengthening institutional capacity, including: (i) the St Lucia budget analysis for investment in children, which influenced budgeting and planning processes to adopt a child-focused lens, reflected in the 2016 first budget call circular; (ii) sustained advocacy led to initial steps to reform youth justice systems among parliamentarians and other key policymakers, with emerging support for the abolition of whipping as an acceptable sentence of young offenders; (iii) an increasing number of schools took action in the direction of more child-centred, protective and inclusive school environments, with half of primary schools and a quarter of secondary schools reporting committed action; and, (iv) several countries moved forward on mandatory reporting protocols for child abuse.

Four main constraints affected programme implementation:

- Capacity gaps among implementing partners continued to affect programming, including weak capacity to (i) effectively mainstream disaster risk reduction; (ii) coordinate disaster responses; (iii) effectively reach vulnerable children; and, (iv) undertake a costing study of diversion models for young offenders.
- Delays in policy development and approval affected programmes; for example, mainstreaming of positive child development principles was constrained by delays in the development and

approval of core policies to complement and facilitate the work in schools.

- Delays in finalisation of surveys and studies, data inadequacies, and lack of systematic use of data to inform evidence-based decision-making and allocation of resources at the national level: weak links between generating and utilising evidence on multidimensional poverty continued to constrain poverty reduction efforts.
- Mobilisation of resources remained a key challenge, despite persistent resource mobilisation efforts by the Country Office.

As a central strategy of the multi-country programme, the Office continued to consolidate and broaden its partnerships. The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) remained a key partner in addressing education, child protection, social policy, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and advocacy for children. Through support from UNICEF ECA and other partners, OECS established a social protection technical committee to enhance policy, research and advocacy. To enhance the M&E capacity of the OECS Commission, UNICEF seconded a staff member in a move to mainstream the children's agenda in the sub-regional agenda of social development and economic integration. Other strategic partnerships included the University of West Indies (UWI), Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC), Caribbean Development Bank, Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU) and Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).

UNICEF actively collaborated with various UN agencies (including UN Women, the UN Development Programme and two United Nations Resident Coordinator's Offices (in Barbados/OECS and Trinidad and Tobago) to implement a joint programme in social protection and facilitate country consultations for the 'Caribbean Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework', an initiative tabled by UNICEF ECA. Through partnership with the UK Department for International Development (DFID), UNICEF programming in United Kingdom overseas territories (UKOTs) was deepened. These partnerships contributed to focusing attention on children's issues in the sub-region.

Humanitarian Assistance

UNICEF ECA continued to improve its preparedness level to respond to emergencies through updating the early warning/early action (EWEA) system and risk assessment in the eight countries and four territories in its programme. The key actions checklist was updated to ensure that the Office met the minimum level of preparedness. For emergency preparedness in the education sector, an assessment of the OECS school safety planning status was undertaken. Following the after-action review, conducted in 2014 in St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, a capacity development workshop focusing on emergency preparedness and response was held in St. Lucia. Communication materials on child protection in emergencies were developed to advance children's rights to protection from violence, abuse and exploitation during emergency situations.

In late August, Tropical Storm Erika passed 90 miles to the north of the Commonwealth of Dominica with sustained, intense rainfall across the island, causing severe damage, primarily to housing, communications, infrastructure and agriculture, especially in the south and south-east and affecting about 10 per cent of the population. Within the first 48 hours, UNICEF ECA responded to the immediate needs of children and their families by providing 500 boxes of adult hygiene kits and 4,000 water purification tablets. Subsequently, 100 boxes of infant hygiene kits, 10 school-in-a-box kits and 20,000 packets of oral rehydration salts (ORS) were dispatched from the emergency stockpile in Barbados, in close partnership with CDEMA, the Barbados

Coast Guard and the Pan-American Health Organisation.

Pre-prepared media messages on keeping children safe and protected in emergencies were immediately aired by media houses in Dominica. To ensure child-responsive interventions, UNICEF deployed a staff member from the UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (LACRO) emergency roster to participate in the World Bank-led rapid assessment, with further deployment of three ECA staff. The Ministry of Planning, Economic Development and Investment, UNICEF ECA's coordinating ministry in Dominica, requested psychosocial support for children through the 'Return to Happiness' Programme. Seven trained facilitators from Saint Lucia were immediately deployed, as those already trained in Dominica were themselves affected and unable to facilitate psychosocial programming for children. Under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Services, Family and Gender Affairs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and ChildFund Caribbean, the programme became fully operational by 13 September.

Through funding received from the Government of Malta, UNICEF ECA provided water tanks for 14 affected schools. Within the context of the Eastern Caribbean Development Partners Group on Disaster Management, UNICEF participated in coordination meetings led by CDEMA. To strengthen data for emergency preparedness and response, the Office completed a rapid risk analysis for each country and territory, which will be used as an input to the ongoing SITAN. In addition, a consultant was hired to identify emergency-related data gaps and formulate a data collection strategy using EWEA, with the aim of better mainstreaming disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience in the next multi-country programme.

Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan

The Country Programme continues to fulfil the 'core business of UNICEF in LAC', aimed at monitoring the situation of children in all its aspects as well as monitoring implementation of recommendations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This role is crucial in all countries, including upper-middle-income countries and high-income countries, re-confirming the universal mandate of UNICEF. Moreover, a substantive part of UNICEF-supported actions aims at influencing (sub-) national policies and programmes. Where needed, this work is complemented with the implementation of model projects at the sub-national level, particularly in selected areas where the most disadvantaged populations are living. Further emphasis on the combination of 'upstream' policy work, together with sub-national level modelling, also in the context of middle-income countries, allows for continuous learning and obtaining of evidence from local experiences that could be used to design and strengthen national policies and programmes.

Increasingly, the programmatic role of UNICEF is evolving and addressing emerging issues that affect the rights of girls, boys and adolescents. These include a) emerging health agenda - health systems strengthening, non-communicable diseases, obesity, adolescent health; b) integrated early childhood development ; c) secondary education, in particular boys' education, given high drop-out rates of boys at secondary education level as well as sustained attention to enhancing inter-cultural (bilingual) education; and d) prevention of adolescent pregnancy and linking such efforts with addressing (sexual) violence against girls. It is suggested that these areas should be better reflected in the Strategic Plan, through specific results and indicators. Moreover, it is suggested to review programme information database coding to more adequately reflect such emerging programme issues.

Several programmes have identified, as part of the analysis of barriers and bottlenecks, the need to address social norms, and therefore include a component of behaviour-change communication (C4D). This is currently not a specific strategy in the Strategic Plan and it is suggested that reconsideration be given to re-introducing this strategy as one of UNICEF's corporate strategies. This will also allow better reflection and reporting on the ongoing work using C4D approaches. At the same time, a great deal of South-South cooperation (SSC) is ongoing with other countries in the region and beyond. Based on the 2030 Agenda and the evolving changes in the aid environment, it is expected that the application of this strategy will only continue to increase. However, so far it has been difficult to demonstrate UNICEF's value-added to obtaining specific results for children through SSC. Therefore, it is recommended to continue with efforts, also as part of the MTR of the Strategic Plan, to provide global tools for measuring the results of SSC. Linked to SSC is also the need to strengthen our knowledge-management function. Although efforts are made at Country Office level, it is also recommended to increase global efforts to strengthen the knowledge management function. This could also include increased emphasis on supporting evaluation of (sub-) national policies and programmes, rather than focusing only on UNICEF programmes. Given the limited resources available, a shift in attention to the type of evaluations expected is suggested.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

AIDS – Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BCP – Business continuity planning
CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPD – Country programme document
CPMP – Country Programme Management Plan
CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child
C4D – Communication for development
DCT – Direct cash transfer
DFID – Department for International Development-United Kingdom
DRR – Disaster risk reduction
ECA – Eastern Caribbean Area
ECD – Early childhood development
ECHO – Early childhood health outreach
E-PAS – Electronic-performance appraisal system
EU – European Union
EWEA – Early warning early action
GSS – Global staff survey
GSSC – Global Shared Service Centre
HACT – Harmonised approach to cash transfer
HIV – Human immunodeficiency virus
ICT – Information and communication technology
IMEP – Integrated monitoring and evaluation plan
IPSAS – International public sector accounting standards
LACRO – Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office
M & E – Monitoring and evaluation
MOSS – Minimum operational security standards
MICS – Multiple indicators cluster survey
MTR – Mid-term review
OECS – Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PAS – Performance appraisal system
RTH – Return to Happiness

SDG(s) – Sustainable Development Goals(s)
UK – United Kingdom
UKOTs – United Kingdom Overseas Territories
UN – United Nations
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF ECA – UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Area
UNWOMEN – United Nations Fund for Gender Equity and the Empowerment of Women
UWI – University of the West Indies
VAC – Violence against children
WICB – West Indies Cricket Board

Capacity Development

As part of continuing efforts to address violence against children (VAC) and to create new norms for interacting with children, UNICEF ECA supported governments on capacity development for key duty-bearers who work with children at the community level. These included early child development (ECD) practitioners, cricket and physical education coaches, religious leaders and lay workers. Children’s capacity was also enhanced to protect themselves from abuse by involving them in the development of communication material relevant to them.

Through an ongoing series of complementary processes, in partnership with the ECSC and the OECS Commission, government and opposition parliamentarians, judges, magistrates, law enforcement and probation officers became aware of i) the strengths and weaknesses of their criminal justice system for children; and ii) impacts on children’s brain development and possible maladaptation. Consequently, they conveyed greater receptivity to the need for diversion efforts and consideration for raising the age of criminal responsibility. This was evidenced in part by public declarations to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 11 to 12 years and to expressly prohibit flogging in Barbados and the express prohibition of flogging in the 2015 Juvenile Justice Act in Antigua and Barbuda.

Eight countries produced national statistical digests on education as an outcome of persistent efforts to improve capacity in planning and production, processing and use of data. A regional education simulation model for projecting and costing education programmes gave planners a viable tool to aid their work and increase capacity.

Collaboration with the University of the West Indies addressed gaps in the range of competencies required by teachers to better support more rights-based, child-centred teaching and learning processes. Efforts focused on exploring relevant adjustments of existing courses to strengthen components related to positive behaviour management, child protection, enhanced parental engagement and student participation.

Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy

UNICEF ECA continued to focus on gathering the evidence required to support its advocacy, policy and programming efforts.

Key efforts were devoted to: (i) conducting equity-focused and risk-informed SITANs in nine territories and countries to strengthen equity-focused dialogues; (ii) initiating child- and gender-responsive budgeting work in the four UKOTs and advancing work in St Lucia, especially in the areas of social policy and social protection reforms; (iii) completing the out-of-school children study to better advocate for more inclusive education and more targeted interventions and; (iv) modelling ongoing interventions by using evaluation findings (ECHO and Highscope) and

conducting a costing and social return on investment study of the national community-based rehabilitation for children in conflict with the law; (v) strengthen administrative data through production of eight country education digests, an OECS education digest and five country child protection digests.

While dissemination of the 2012 MICS data was supported in 2015 for St Lucia and Barbados, efforts to launch the MICS in Trinidad and Tobago launched were delayed due to elections. The new Government is preparing for Cabinet approval and national launch in early 2016.

Overall, the knowledge created by studies, reviews and evaluations was critical to providing UNICEF ECA with in-depth knowledge about the most vulnerable or poorest children's groups and the types of deprivations they face in an (upper) middle-income environment. The evidence created was critical to engaging with governments and development partners on a more equity-focused, child-centred and gender-sensitive agenda.

Partnerships

Partnerships were manifested in all components of the multi-country programme. The OECS Commission offered several opportunities to directly advocate with policy-makers at the highest level. For example, OECS parliamentarians were engaged, through the annual Ministers of Education forum, on education reform and positive disciplinary measures.

Legislators from across the political divide in the OECS, Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago, were sensitised to the need for diversion programmes and raising the age of criminal responsibility during a special forum on juvenile justice.

Through the ECSC, judges, magistrates, law enforcement and probation officers were exposed to the strengths and weaknesses of the criminal justice system for children.

Engagement on a technical level continued with the Caribbean Development Bank, the World Bank and partners in the UN System on social protection and multi-dimensional poverty measurement.

The Break the Silence initiative continued to attract a broad coalition of partners, contributing to the global #EndViolence campaign. Representatives of the Christian faith came on board and developed child protection protocols. Sub-regional sporting bodies, such as the West Indies Cricket Board, continued to engage constituents, while 'Crime Stoppers Barbados' lent considerable weight to the public education campaign.

A curriculum framework to support early learning and development and the development and adaptation of course content to support the certification of early childhood practitioners was made possible through strategic partnerships with the OECS and University of the West Indies. Partnership with the media was strengthened when media workers, through the Association of Caribbean Media Workers, and managers and owners (under the umbrella of the Caribbean Broadcasting Union) developed a Code for Ethical Reporting on Children's Issues.

Corporate engagement continued, especially with a view towards resource mobilisation, with major institutions such as DHL and Republic Bank, a Trinidad-based bank with presence in several Eastern Caribbean countries.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

UNICEF ECA continued to align its external communication and public advocacy with the Global Communication and Public Advocacy strategy as it sought to contribute to increased awareness on child rights, leverage resources, activate public engagement, influence policy and create opportunities for children's participation.

This was especially evident around issues of violence against children, which took centre stage on social media debates across the sub-region. The 'Break the Silence' initiative utilised community engagement, digital messaging and traditional print and broadcast avenues to make further inroads into the culture of silence fuelling child abuse. The immediate effects of these sustained initiatives included heightened public awareness on what constitutes child sexual abuse, neglect and how to respond; and commitment by faith-based organisations in five countries to become involved in the fight to end child sexual abuse, abuse and neglect.

Another deeply-ingrained cultural practice addressed was corporal punishment. The Office influenced debates on this topic through its social media platforms. Messages drawn from the UNICEF ECA public opinion polls showing a reduction in public support for corporal punishment in institutions and schools were developed and shared at public events and through print and broadcast media. The heightened dialogue on corporal punishment reflected a shift in the acceptance of this deeply rooted cultural practice, which was increasingly rejected by policy makers and the public, generating wide debate.

Children's participation was another key pillar of the strategy employed. The Office facilitated the recording of a popular calypso tune by the St Lucia Junior Calypso Monarch that advocates against corporal punishment. Adolescent media networks in Antigua, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago also developed powerful digital messages for their peers and policy-makers, while, through a C4D initiative, over 2,000 children were engaged through approaches such as wall painting expressions, participatory theatre and cartoon books.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

UNICEF ECA promoted and facilitated South-South Cooperation in raising awareness and good practices in child- and gender-responsive budgeting/public finance and strengthening delivery of social protection programmes:

- a. Regional and national workshops were held among managers of ministries of finance and ministries of social development in six OECS and UKOTs with the aim of building capacity of social line ministries. Development and piloting of the "Manual on Child- and Gender-Responsive Budgeting for the Eastern Caribbean Area" guided workshop discussions, along with country-specific lessons learned to support programme-based budgeting for child and women.
- b. UNICEF ECA created knowledge-sharing opportunities to highlight integrated child- and gender-sensitive social protection policies and systems. This was achieved through the launching of the national social protection policy in Saint Lucia; stakeholders in Antigua and Barbuda learned from the Saint Lucia experience as they started their journey. Knowledge products on targeting mechanisms and conditional cash transfers were promoted and the approaches shared in Saint Lucia, Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis.
- c. UNICEF ECA supported the establishment of the OECS social protection technical committee for technical cooperation, joint programming and the sharing of good practices and lessons

learnt in the reform of integrated social protection systems in the region.

d. Saint Lucia's example in budget analysis for investment in children was part of the "Quito Seminar on Investing in Children in Latin America and the Caribbean". The seminar provided a forum for dialogue and exchange on the progress and challenges in the contribution of public spending for children's rights, with a special focus on the quality and impact of investments. Similar efforts abound in education and child protection, where cross-country sharing has been the engine of multi-country programming.

Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages

As a result of UNICEF ECA's advocacy and convening role, inter-ministerial collaboration between the central child protection system and allied systems in education and health to prevent violence and abuse of children was achieved. Collaboration between these departments resulted in: i) progress on operational protocols on working together; ii) heightened sense of professional obligation and accountability onto take action on suspected cases of child maltreatment reported by professionals; and iii) the production of child-appropriate teaching and learning materials at the early childhood level.

Similarly, advocacy and the production of situation analyses on juvenile justice brought into sharp-focus the lack of coordinated policy approaches, resulting in the criminalisation of normal, petty misbehaviour, and often-times further marginalizing vulnerable children.

The launch of the OECS social protection technical committee, with support from UNICEF, provided a platform for an integrated approach to social protection. Efforts focus on addressing the current fragmented approach to social protection, with high levels of wastage of resources and problems of targeting. The OECS committee brought together multiple sectors to address common challenges in social protection.

Efforts to integrate parallel social safety-net programmes in various social sector ministries made some progress in Saint Kitts and Nevis and to some extent in Saint Lucia. However, efforts to establish central beneficiary registries were slow. A continued challenge remains in the coordination of cross-sectoral programmes with limited personnel in the context of small island developing states.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

The human rights-based approach to programming remained a central strategy for the Eastern Caribbean Area multi-country programme.

The Office supported countries to meet their state party reporting (CRC, CEDAW and UPR), with follow-up in Saint Lucia on the implementation of CRC Committee observations and initiation of report preparation in Grenada. UNICEF ECA presented briefings to the CRC Committee in Geneva for state CRC reports submitted in 2014, which will be reviewed with the governments in 2016. Individual notes were prepared for Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and four of the UKOTs in the Caribbean – Anguilla, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands and UK Virgin Islands.

The enabling environment in many ECA countries continued to be challenged in the area of timely state party reporting, due to limited administrative capacity and competing priorities. This has resulted in many overdue reports. Despite persistent follow-up, report submission by the governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Dominica are still pending; Saint Kitts and Nevis gave

feedback on a submission made in the last quarter of 2015.

A comprehensive legal review supported by UNICEF ECA provided critical information on current gaps in the policy and legislative environment.

Nine country situation analyses were conducted with a strong emphasis on equity and risk-informed analysis. The SITAN process provided a good opportunity to advocate for children's rights, and the findings will inform the design of the next multi-country programme for ECA.

In an effort to raise awareness about children's rights, UNICEF strengthened its partnership with the media through the Association of Caribbean Media Workers, and managers and owners, under the umbrella of the Caribbean Broadcasting Union. This led to the development of a 'Code for Ethical Reporting on Children's Issues'.

Gender Mainstreaming and Equality

Gender mainstreaming and equality has long been a key priority for UNICEF ECA, given the fundamental gender issues of the Eastern Caribbean Area (particularly violence against women, boys' drop-out rates and sexual abuse of girls). In 2015 efforts included:

- (i) The Break the Silence (BTS) initiative was sustained and feedback obtained through the SITAN process. The production of child protection digests in selected countries showed clear and positive changes at all levels of society, such as: increased willingness to speak out, mandatory reporting of abuse cases, increased commitment to prosecuting cases of sexual abuse and increased compilation of administrative data. These changes varied from country-to-country, but will form the basis of an assessment of the BTS campaign in 2016 to draw lessons, adjust strategies and follow up with targeted actions.
- (ii) Gender and child-sensitive budget review workshops took place with counterparts in Antigua & Barbuda, St Lucia and all four UK overseas territories. This helped mainstream the child-focused and gender-sensitive agenda into public finance and budget work. It also gave UNICEF ECA strong allies in terms of sustaining the investments for children in countries and territories that still face the negative impact of the 2008 economic crisis, or to promote social protection reforms in favour of gender-equality and disparity reduction.
- (iii) As part of SITAN work conducted in nine countries, the information and data collected allowed more in-depth, gender-based review of the situation of children, confirming known issues (violence against women, teen pregnancy, early age of sexual initiation, boys' school drop-out) and social, economic and cultural factors (social acceptance and tolerance of violence and abuse), but also revealing new facts about gender dynamics (most vulnerable situations of female single-headed households and migrants, lack of job access for educated people and of financial credits for women and taboos about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups).

Environmental Sustainability

While no specific initiatives were taken in environmental sustainability, efforts relating to humanitarian response and emergency preparedness actions highlighted the vulnerabilities of the sub-region to natural disasters. Following tropical storm Erika in Dominica, the Office conducted a risk analysis in the 12 islands under the multi-country programme and prepared

risk-informed situation analyses for nine countries. In partnership with ministries of education, UNICEF provided financial and technical support for strengthening disaster preparedness and response and enhancing school safety.

Effective Leadership

Major initiatives taken by the country management team (CMT) to enhance efficiency in operations and programme management performance revolved around key priorities set by UNICEF ECA for 2015. These related to; (i) timely and consultative preparation of the next Country Programme document; (ii) fundraising in the Office guided by a systematic fundraising plan; (iii) dedicated follow-up to staff issues raised in the global staff survey (GSS), paying attention to staff motivation, morale and team cohesion; and (iv) improved Office efficiency through full and consistent implementation of work processes and recommendations coming out of the 2014 review.

In addition to the formal management structure, a number of oversight committees (such as programme and operations) and all-staff meetings were used to monitor performance. The Office functioned without a local staff association from February until early November, and as a result there was no staff representation on the CMT. However all section heads were encouraged to fill the void by bringing staff matters /issues to the CMT to be addressed as a standard monthly agenda item.

Major initiatives taken by CMT to improve operational and programmatic performance, while focussing on addressing areas of weakness, included:

- Ongoing use of temporary assignments in programming areas to bridge critical capacity gaps
- Regular monitoring of office management indicators, with specific focus on addressing DCTs
- Periodic review and update on RD's letter/matrix 2015 for enhanced office E&E,
- Staff development activities to address key concerns highlighted in the GSS
- Full implementation and review of revised business processes developed by a consultant in 2014
- HACT assurance plan completed and fully executed, using an external audit firm
- Preparation and ongoing review of the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) transition implementation plan
- Regular compliance with mid- and end-year closure reporting requirements
- Adherence to the timelines for completion of personnel assessments
- Updated EWEA and business continuity plan.

Financial Resources Management

UNICEF ECA maintained compliance with financial, human resource, ICT and office management audit requirements and financial policies.

Bank reconciliations were completed monthly and any outstanding reconciling items were expeditiously cleared, along with processing of liquidations.

Continued adherence to IPSAS and VISION and successful completion of mid- and year-end closure activities, following guidelines and feedback from DFAM, continued to be instructive in sustaining improved financial and administrative systems and procedures to ensure efficient, timely, cost-effective and transparent utilisation of resources.

Full utilisation of regular and other resources (RR and OR, respectively) as well as the institutional budget in a timely and effective manner ensured that planned objectives were met. Monitoring was periodically done by the CMT and by the respective programme and operations groups to review both programme and operations budgets as necessary. OR contributions in the form of thematic funds and funding from DFID for the Overseas Territories were closely monitored, with a special focus on managing the funds from DFID, as the only major OR source.

HACT compliance, using micro- and macro-assessments and programme monitoring, took place on an ongoing basis to ensure that any risks identified were mitigated following the revised guidelines of the harmonised approach to cash transfers (HACT) framework. The UN HACT team also collaborated through micro- and macro-assessments of implementing partners.

Monitoring of key management indicators took place through various office committees. The Office maintained low outstanding liquidations through regular follow-up with implementing partners and management oversight, primarily through monthly programme meetings.

Fund-raising and Donor Relations

Despite the bleak fundraising environment, given the limited number of donors, the middle-income status of the countries and donor focus on other regions, the Office continued to reach out to both traditional and non-traditional donors.

To ensure efficiency and effectiveness in funds management, the Country Office systematically monitored donor contributions and prepared a quarterly status report for discussion by programme and management teams. This led to the achievement of a 96 per cent utilisation rate. In addition, the Office ensured 100 per cent timely donor reporting.

DFID funding was pivotal in scaling up the multi-country work in the UKOTs. Other key donors included the UK National Committee, which provided funding for adolescent participation in education, and a joint initiative with UNICEF Jamaica. Private sector funds were received through an initiative by the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO). Following the impact of tropical storm Erika in Dominica, the Office mobilised a contribution from the Government of Malta.

The UN Women and UNICEF joint programme on social protection complemented each of the agencies' technical roles in child- and gender-responsive budgeting and delivery of strengthened social protection services. The shared resources enabled UNICEF ECA to be strategic in supporting the various Eastern Caribbean countries to undergo a social safety-net reform. The education programme was able to leverage resources from the Caribbean Development Bank for capacity building in education sector planning in the OECS sub-region. The Office embarked on joint resource mobilisation with other UN agencies; proposals were submitted to the EU and UN Human Trust Funds.

The Office also identified sub-regional companies as potential donors, based on the results of a prior mapping exercise. Initial meetings were held with Republic Bank, which has a presence in several states in the multi-country programme, with a view toward cementing a new partnership.

Evaluation

During the first four years of the current Country Programme, UNICEF ECA conducted three major evaluations, receiving excellent rating by the Evaluation Office at UNICEF Headquarters (HQ) on two of them. The focus in 2015 was on dissemination of their findings and follow-up of

the management response. These efforts included: (i) aiming to increase regional partners' interest in evaluation work by sharing good examples; and (ii) trying to ensure systematic follow-up of the recommendations, even though they require lengthy national processes going beyond annual reporting timeframes to secure policy change and corrective actions.

In addition, given the nature of some evaluations (one of which was a multi-country evaluation), management response follow-up actually meant working with partners from various sectors and in multiple countries simultaneously. In all cases, implementing partners' reaction to the evaluation reports was positive, with recommendations considered to be sound and very relevant to improving policy frameworks and service delivery.

To enhance knowledge on ongoing juvenile justice programmes, the Office partnered with OECS and USAID to conduct an evaluation of juvenile justice programmes. UNICEF was involved in the development of the terms of reference; the findings will inform the future design of juvenile justice programmes in the region.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

The Office continued to benefit from efficiency gains resulting from previous initiatives, namely the use of multi-trip travel authorisations, wire transfers, utilising other UN drivers to bridge capacity gaps, reduction of travel expenses through the use of virtual meetings and the use of partners to support the co-hosting and organisation of regional meeting. Further benefits were realised in the current reporting period with the implementation of online banking, resulting in reduced administrative time and costs.

Supply Management

The value of supplies and services procured during the reporting period was US\$536,551.

The current value of inventory is US\$65,912. Stock issued totalled US\$78,791 and pre-positioned emergency supplies totalled US\$27,826.64. All in-country warehousing facilities are based at the UNICEF ECA Office, with one warehouse dedicated to programme supplies and the other to emergency supplies to facilitate response to the 12 countries covered by the Multi-Country Programme. The value of programme supplies issued was US\$78,791, and emergency supplies were valued at US\$39,866. The office continued its support to the region through the provision of emergency supplies to the Ministry of Education in St. Lucia, to assist in closing the gaps in their response to post-2013 floods, an estimated value of US\$5,882. The Ministry of Education in the Commonwealth of Dominica also benefited from emergency support from UNICEF ECA in response to tropical storm Erika, to an estimated value of US\$30,000.

There are long-term agreements (LTAs) in place for graphic designers and editorial services, and the Office is endeavouring to utilise LTAs for printing of advocacy materials and procurement of standard and emergency supplies. No supply in-kind assistance was received by the Office.

Security for Staff and Premises

In conjunction with the other UN agencies the following actions were taken to enhance safety and security of staff and premises:

- Further upgrading of security monitoring systems, with additional cameras being installed
- Installation of a new access control system for better monitoring and tracing of access to the building and agencies
- Preparation of a tsunami evacuation plan and conducting of a practice drill

- Updating of the country security plan
- Updating of the agency warden security plan
- Training conducted in defensive driving for UN drivers
- The installation of razor-wire exterior perimeter fencing as cited as a significant gap in the 2014 MOSS self-assessment
- Security training for women – staff and family members
- UNDSS site visit to Saint Lucia for security assessment of newly out-posted staff.

Human Resources

UNICEF ECA has a staff complement of 25 persons, consisting six international professionals(IP); three males, three females; 10 national officers (NO); six females, four males; with three on TFTs; and nine general service – GS (seven females, two males) with one on TFT.

Recruitment was completed for M&E and social & economic policy specialists, one of whom was seconded to the OECS Commission in St Lucia and the other to the UN Office in Trinidad. Due to limited OR funds, the vacancies for a GS7 M&E assistant and NOB child protection officer were not filled. To bridge these capacity gaps, temporary staff contracts were extended: NOA temporary child protection officer with focus on data compilation, NOC social policy officer, and GS4 programme assistant. An NOA programme officer was also recruited to manage DFID funds for the four UK Overseas Territories.

Implementation of the approved 2014 programme budget review results for the GSSC was used to redesign operational requirements in terms of capabilities and competencies required to maintain programmatic results. A special transition plan was prepared, detailing each step to mitigate the impact on staff and programme delivery.

The performance assessment system (PAS) end electronic performance assessment system (e-PAS) objectives and mid-year discussions for staff were completed by the global deadline, with formal and informal discussions, along with coaching, being held throughout the year.

In response to the GSS and development of the GGS action plan, a two-day staff development activity on emotional intelligence, respectful engagement and leadership in action was held to address concerns in relation to team cohesion.

The Office maintained implementation of the minimum standards on HIV/AIDS in the workplace; in an effort to keep awareness high, the on-line course was included in the 2015 staff development plan. Staff were also encouraged to complete the mandatory course on ethics and integrity to ensure compliance.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

ICT initiatives used by UNICEF ECA to improve efficiency and effectiveness included:

- Improved use of Office 365 (cloud) to ensure easier access to office mail while on mission
- Creation of an Office SharePoint teamsite for sharing and collaboration with seconded staff members
- Upgrading of the telecommunication equipment and outfitting of meeting rooms for an improved virtual presence, especially in the context of convening multi-country meetings
- Comprehensive review of office equipment standards to ensure compliance with hardware standards

- Continued recycling of toner cartridges and obsolete office equipment to minimise ICT footprint
- Increased use of OneDrive for business for storage and management of files, especially for out-posted staff members
- Migration of office telecommunication connections to fibre for faster and more reliable access to systems
- Update of the business continuity plan and disaster recovery plan
- Continued use of Facebook and YouTube to post short advocacy messages.

Programme Components from Results Assessment Module

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 Equity-sensitive national policies, programmes and budget allocations are made based on reliable, disaggregated data reflecting the actual situation of girls and boys and their families in line with the CRC, CEDAW and the Millennium Development Goals. By 2014, all countries will have fulfilled their Convention reporting obligations and by 2016 will have taken actions to comply with all Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Key barriers to increased and systematic production and use of social data on children for decision-making remain: lack of internal demand and use of social data, lack of resources (human, financial and technical) for statistical and M&E work in a context of severe budget constraints and readiness to adopt good practices, even if documented and available (Caricom model statistical act, etc.). However, in this context, significant results were achieved in having partners produce and analyse more disaggregated data, as shown by the wide dissemination of the MICS reports in St Lucia and Barbados, the outcomes of the SITAN process in nine territories and countries, the increasing number of sub-regional and national statistical digests for child protection, ECD and education and the use of recent and disaggregated social data on children to support social policy work in an increased number of areas (budget review, social protection, fiscal space analysis) and countries and territories (all four UKOTs, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda). Results were also achieved in supporting institutional change for improved sharing of data and stronger cross-sectoral coordination. However, all of these gains still need to be sustained to result in lasting institutional change. Overall, the Eastern Caribbean countries continue to be among the most data-deprived in the region and the world, and building alliances with international (World Bank, Canadian Development Agency, DfID, etc.), regional (Caricom, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Caribbean Development Bank) and sub-regional (CDMA, OECS Secretariat) development partners remains a priority to address identified structural and chronic barriers and bottlenecks.

CRC reporting continues to lag behind. The environment in many ECA countries is not conducive to facilitate timely reporting, due to limited administrative capacity and low priority for reporting. This has resulted in many overdue reports. Nevertheless, UNICEF sustained high-level advocacy. To date, the following countries have yet to submit their CRC reports: Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago.

By year-end 2015 the three reports from the St. Lucia Budget Analysis Study provided evidence in mapping of child well-being, fiscal space for social protection and budget analysis for investment in children. These are valuable inputs and evidence to prepare the sectoral ministries for the upcoming 2016 budget to be tabled in Parliament April 2016 to implement child- and gender-sensitive programmes. The report also served as part of UNICEF's approach to developing evidence-informed policies through promotion of efficient and effective resource

allocation to achieve sustained results for children. Work in St. Kitts and Nevis on an integrated social protection system advanced slowly due to a change in government administration and dynamics with internal donors.

For 2016 two sets of upcoming budget analysis work will be take place that will be timely, since the countries are undergoing budget and strategic planning reform processes – British Virgin Islands (BVI) and Montserrat. Continued high-level advocacy within each sector in St. Lucia will also take place, in line with each country's budget planning cycle of the country.

UNICEF adopted a two-pronged approach toward supporting the integration and delivery of coordinated social protection programmes. First, through high-level advocacy work in three countries (St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda and Montserrat), working under the umbrella of the UNICEF/UN Women joint programme on social protection, which includes work to begin on a review of social protection legislation. Second, UNICEF together with UN and development partners provided technical support for the creation of a regional OECS advocacy and knowledge sharing platform via the OECS social protection technical committee, which brings high-level government officials and technical experts together to implement social protection systems among member states.

OUTPUT 1 Five countries have strengthened national systems (admin data and survey plan) for the production of social data on children in at least the Child Protection and Education sectors

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Statistics Office, MICS results were discussed with stakeholders and priorities identified for influencing policy in Saint Lucia. During 2015, Saint Lucia and Barbados statistical offices have also used the child-friendly versions to engage with teachers and children, and it was agreed the reports will become part of the teaching material. With assistance from LACRO and HQ and inputs from Trinidad and Tobago partners, the MICS4 report was finalised, but is still awaiting validation. The SITAN process in nine countries and territories has benefited considerably from data produced over the past four years (although significant gaps persist) and the draft reports are equity-based, risk-informed and gender-sensitive. The process helped to engage with non-traditional partners, including at the sub-national level (sister-islands, poorest districts) and this needs to be sustained to build partnerships and alliances for children's rights.

The findings of the early childhood health outreach (ECHO) and Highscope pilot evaluations were shared and followed-up in one (ECHO) and three (Highscope) countries. Grenada requested a review of its Highscope model after reading the report. This shows partner's increased interest in evaluation as a means to improve policies (scaling-up, budget) and service delivery (quality, access). This work needs to be sustained as implementation of recommendations does at time imply lengthy national processes. The three most critical barriers and bottlenecks to administrative data system-strengthening and the corresponding required institutional changes remain: the lack of demand for social data, the lack of resources (dedicated staff, adequate budget for M&E work, skills) and the insufficient cross-sectoral coordination and leadership to set-up administrative data systems in ECD and child protection sectors. Current progress could be further sustained by continuing to produce with national partners "child protection statistical digests" (three produced in 2014, two in 2015 and two still in draft) and ECD snapshots (ongoing in all four UK OTs) for all remaining territories and states.

As part of the work of the Caribbean Children's Rights Network, a website is being developed and the Institute of International Relations (IIR) at the University of the West Indies agreed to

release a special edition of their journal focused on children's rights issues in the Caribbean, in early 2016. Otherwise progress has been very limited and may be additionally hindered with changes in leadership at the IIR. As in the previous four years, UNICEF will in 2016 continue to participate in inter-agency coordination mechanisms such as: the UNDAF process, regional meetings led by the OECS Secretariat (living standards measurements committee), Caricom (statistical regional meeting) and the Eastern Caribbean Development Partner Taskforce on Statistics to advance work on social data harmonisation, standardisation and collection and expansion – in the context of additional demands created by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a stronger focus on coordination and quality. It will be important for UNICEF to play a role in the review of the Caribbean Development Bank "country poverty assessment", to ensure that it is equity-focused, child-centred and gender-sensitive.

OUTPUT 2. By 2016, all 12 countries have submitted any due and outstanding State reports on CRC and ratified CRC Optional protocols

Analytical Statement of Progress:

State CRC reports were submitted by Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the UKOTs, and presented at the UNCRC Geneva in October 2015. UNICEF supported the preparation of the CRC reports and participated at the Geneva CRC meeting. Ratification of Optional Protocols to the CRC remains low; the protocols still not signed by some countries are:

OP- SC not signed by Barbados, Trinidad or St. Kitts

OP-AC not signed by Antigua, Barbados, Trinidad or St. Kitts

OP-CP not signed by any ECA country

The OPs have not been extended to the UKOTs by the UK.

In 2016, priority action will focus on advocacy for countries to take necessary steps to sign the outstanding Optional Protocols.

OUTPUT 4 Duty bearers have increased national capacities to effectively implement a child and gender sensitive budgeting approach in national and sectoral budgets.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The study on multi-dimensional child poverty in Trinidad and Tobago was delayed in 2015 in the areas where the methodology to be utilised was influenced by the SDGs and discussion around the indicators that will be identified for SDG 1 on Poverty and all its dimensions. The study is guided by ECLAC and UNICEF regional partnership principles, building on ECLAC's child poverty study in the Caribbean.

UNICEF chaired the Eastern Caribbean Donor Partner Group PR in 2015; the objectives of the group are anchored in the UNDAF for Barbados and OECS, specifically on Outcome 3: Social protection and poverty reduction with a focus on vulnerable groups. The group includes members from other UN agencies, the Caribbean Development Bank and the World Bank. UNICEF tabled Issues on child poverty and disparity-reduction, stressing the importance of evidence generation to strengthen social protection programmes and help establish an integrated system for children who are poor, vulnerable and excluded. Challenges remain where multiple silos of each agency's programmes are not yet able to be strategically linked together and lack of clarity on the group's common engagement approach in relation to how best to integrate poverty data to strengthen poverty-reduction programmes, including social protection

programmes, all of which is a work in progress.

Focus needs to be placed on strategizing about how data source and measurement on multidimensional child poverty can be more closely linked to strengthening social protection programme delivery, including targeting; this can be an agenda item for discussion in the ECDPG-PR for 2016.

OUTPUT 5 Duty bearers have increased national capacities to effectively implement a child and gender sensitive budgeting approach in national budgets

Analytical Statement of Progress:

In many ECA countries coordination and management of children’s issues are led by social line ministries, which have limited influence on national policies. Although children’s agenda are reflected in national policy documents, translating the agenda into policy implementation remains a continuous challenge. Children require a multi-sectoral response and the opportunities to prioritize children at the centre of national dialogues are few. UNICEF policy and advocacy strategy to influence child-sensitive budgeting approaches in national and sectoral budgets will require intensifying high-level advocacy, particularly with ministries of finance and planning, as well as parliamentarians. This process began in 2015 with UN Women under the UNICEF/UN Women joint programme on social protection. By year-end 2015, the three reports from the St. Lucia “Budget Analysis Study” had provided evidence on mapping of child well-being, fiscal space for social protection and budget analysis for investment in children. All of these knowledge products will serve as valuable inputs and evidence to prepare the sectoral ministries for the upcoming 2016 budget to be tabled in Parliament April 2016 to implement child- and gender-sensitive programmes.

The reports also served as part of UNICEF’s approach to developing evidence-informed policies through promotion of efficient and effective resource allocation to achieve sustained results for children. For example, the reports noted that investment in tertiary education is disproportionate, given the need for investment in ECD. The findings presented multiple examples of where the need to respond with child-focused programmes is multi-sectoral and sector-specific budget planning processes will need to intensify the integration of social services, including social protection programmes.

For 2016, two sets of upcoming budget analysis work will take place that will be timely, since the countries are undergoing budget and strategic planning reform process – BVI and Montserrat. Continued high-level advocacy within each sector of the country in St. Lucia will also take place, in line with the country’s budget planning cycle.

In addition, 2015 the “Child and Gender Responsive Budgeting Manual” prepared by the UNICEF/UN Women joint programme on social protection was completed. UNICEF will focus on systematic capacity building, utilising the manual for child- and gender-responsive budgeting in 2016 so that government partners in BVI, Montserrat, St. Lucia and Turks and Caicos Islands will be able to develop and propose child- and gender-sensitive indicators driven by availability of data in the countries, since many are rolling out programme-based budgeting as part of their national budget reform commitments.

OUTPUT 6 Policies, strategies and plans are in place to increase integration and deliver coordinated social protection programmes which benefit excluded and disadvantaged boys and girls and their families in four countries

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF adopted a two-pillar approach towards support for the integration and delivery of coordinated social protection programmes.

First, through high-level advocacy work in three countries (St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda and Montserrat) working under the umbrella of the UNICEF/UN Women Joint Programme on Social Protection. This involved advocating for the countries to review their social protection legislation where current legal provisions are reactive, based on “relief” to the poor, when they should be pro-active and protecting vulnerable populations, including children. UNICEF and development partners together are contributing to an enabling environments in the three countries to put in place integrated, coordinated social protection programmes through development of national social protection policies; mapping of social services; development of a manual to improve social protection targeting for St. Lucia; and development of a social protection policy, strategy and action plan. Poverty rates in St. Lucia are 28.8 per cent, in Antigua and Barbuda 18.3 per cent and Montserrat 36 per cent, justifying an urgent need for policies and legislation to be conducive for children who are poor and vulnerable to receive appropriate social protection programme interventions. UN Women completed two knowledge products: a “Gender-Aware Beneficiary Analysis” and a paper on conditional cash transfers as part of efforts to influence social safety-net reforms in St. Lucia.

Secondly UNICEF, together with UN and development partners, provided technical support for the creation of a regional OECS advocacy and knowledge sharing platform: the OECS social protection technical committee. The committee brings high-level government officials and technical experts together to implement social protection systems among member states and is housed under the OECS Commission. The group seeks to deliver the following objectives, specific to social protection programmes and development: a) establish a social protection floor for the poor; b) conduct legislative reform and policy development; c) harmonise data collection, analysis, management and utilisation; d) promote rights-based equity approaches; e) institutional capacity development; f) South-South sharing and knowledge management; g) budget and fiscal space analysis; and h) development and implementation of M&E frameworks. The creation of the advocacy and knowledge-sharing platform resulted from the May 22, 2015 Council of Minister’s meeting of the OECS, hosted by the OECS Commission and funded by UNICEF.

OUTCOME 2 All girls and boys in 12 Eastern Caribbean countries benefit from rights-based laws, policies, programmes and institutions that provide equitable systems for positive development, lifelong learning and protection

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Having largely met the obligation with regard to the realisation of children’s right to primary and secondary education through universalised access, states are moving to address the rights of excluded children in the foundational years through the adoption of universal ECD policies. Participation rates range from 71.6 per cent to 96.5 per cent (3-5 age group) and 17 per cent to 31 per cent (0-2+ age group) for the countries for which data is available (Dominica, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Kitts and Nevis).

Supportive policy steps have included: expansion of community-based programmes such as ECHO (St. Vincent and the Grenadines; St. Lucia; St. Kitts and Nevis) and use of available spaces in primary schools in Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda. A major bottleneck yet to be overcome in realising this right is continued low budgetary provision for ECD programming , at

less than 2 per cent, resulting in limited attention given to the situation of boys and girls in the 0-2+ age group.

For the second indicator, rights-based frameworks that affirm responsibilities of governments as duty-bearers in the provision of child-centred, equity-focused education and early childhood services are currently in place in eight countries. Regarding the third, at least 54 per cent of primary schools in eight countries (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) are institutionalising child-centred, protective and inclusive school environments.

For the fourth indicator, 28 per cent of students passed five or more subjects, including English and Math, in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations. For the fifth indicator, the gross enrolment rate (proxy) in early childhood education stands at 68.6 per cent, while the proportion of children (0-to-2) accessing early childhood services stands at only 29 per cent. Regarding the sixth indicator, there were 2.9 per cent (boys 3.7 per cent) and 7.4 per cent (boys 9.3 per cent) repeaters at the primary and secondary levels, respectively. However, attrition between student enrolment at the beginning of secondary and graduation is 24 per cent, meaning that one out of four do not graduate.

The bottlenecks being addressed by this outcome are: management/coordination; legislation/policy; social and cultural practices and beliefs; quality of care; and, budget/expenditure. Barriers included the lack of or failure to approve: ECD policies/standards/regulations; sustainable community-based programmes for quality early childhood services; utilisation of data for programming; education and child protection laws; policies to support inclusive, student-centred learning, as well as weak institutional capacity, planning frameworks and management capacity. UNICEF's direct contribution in this regard has been to strengthen capacity in planning and data management, supporting specific studies (e.g. out-of-school children), quality surveys of ECD environments, curriculum and supporting the development of policies, guidelines and frameworks. Work in these areas will continue in 2016.

According to the review of the Latin America and the Caribbean post-2015 UN Development Agenda, the region continues to advance democratic governance and assure basic services for children. Although child protection child rights remain areas of unfinished business, faced with ultra-conservatism and pleas of sovereignty, governments are slowly making inroads toward bring outdated notions on justice for children into the 21st century. This is evidenced in part by public declarations on raising the age of criminal responsibility from 11 to 12 years and to expressly prohibit flogging in Barbados; and the expressed prohibition of flogging in the 2015 Juvenile Justice Act in Antigua and Barbuda. The Virgin Islands (UK), which has for years resisted attempts to ban the concept of child "illegitimacy" finally passed a law on this topic, achieved in part by apolitical coalition-building for child protection.

OUTPUT 1 By 2016, girls and boys (0-5) living in households in the poorest communities in 9 countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago and Anguilla) have access to quality developmental and education services

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Much progress was made in addressing bottlenecks relating to the enabling environment, with early childhood standards and regulations now in place in 11 countries and ECD policies approved in eight. Advocacy efforts for the operationalisation of these monitoring and regulatory frameworks and the finalisation of outstanding frameworks continue. Several strategies have resulted in a better understanding of the situation of girls and boys in early childhood programmes through the dissemination of quality assessment surveys in Grenada and BVI,

more extensive use of the OECS checklist for routine monitoring of programme standards and through the dissemination of evaluation and review findings in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Systems to manage early childhood data across sectors are being strengthened in four UKOTS, with draft ECD information snapshots being prepared in two territories in 2015.

Participation rates for children in the three-to-five age group in registered early childhood centres ranged from 71.6 per cent to 96.5 per cent, while for the zero-to-two age group participation in institutional programmes is still below 50 per cent. Progress toward assuring the rights of very young vulnerable children to quality developmental programmes and services through low-cost programme interventions in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis has been slow and varied.

Positive results are noted in Turks and Caicos and St. Vincent and the Grenadines where, with UNICEF support, the process for establishing an early intervention system to support systematic monitoring of developmental progress has started. Availability of quality learning and care environments is being realised through a strategic partnership with the OECS that resulted in the development of a comprehensive curriculum framework for the ECD sector and a draft certification programme for caregivers, through a partnership with the UWI School of Education. As a result of direct UNICEF support, approximately 920 ECD practitioners, parents and other stakeholders now have enhanced knowledge in: monitoring and evaluation; managing data in the ECD sector; screening, referrals, assessment and early intervention; active participatory learning; care for child development, positive child rearing and ECD in emergencies .

In 2016 priority attention will be given to policy development and implementation; strengthening of enabling environments through the use of child-centred curriculum; development of knowledge and skills to systematically monitor children for progress/developmental delays; and provision of early stimulation and quality early learning opportunities for children (0-2+) in vulnerable communities through low-cost programming interventions.

OUTPUT 2 Duty bearers in 8 countries have increased capacity, supported with policy frameworks, to employ positive disciplinary and learning practices in student-centred teaching and learning environments within school effectiveness/child friendly schools framework

Analytical Statement of Progress:

A major outcome of sustained advocacy was the political and technical endorsement of the effective child-friendly school framework by OECS ministers, the Council on Human and Social Development and chief education officers, which has resulted in 10 countries – two more than originally projected – adopting the framework. Consequently, 54 per cent of primary and 28 per cent of secondary schools in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines are institutionalising processes towards child-centred, protective and inclusive school environments. A notable achievement was the high proportion of schools teaching ‘health and family life’ education in both primary and secondary schools (90 per cent and above). The latest entrant, Montserrat, commenced key awareness and capacity building actions in 2015.

Implementation bottlenecks continue to be addressed in Trinidad, even though the sister Island of Tobago is on board. The main bottleneck has been slow buy-in, which is being addressed through ongoing advocacy and direct engagement with policy-makers. The change in government in 2016 will provide an opportunity to build on and enhance that engagement. Mainstreaming positive child development principles is hampered by delays in the development

and approval of core policies to complement and facilitate the work in schools. However, St. Kitts and Nevis provided good leadership in this regard, and five relevant policies are currently before Cabinet for review and approval, covering topics such as discipline, drug and substance abuse and anti-bullying.

A sound framework for monitoring effective child participation and learning is in place, and discussions are ongoing on integration into other existing monitoring processes so as not to place an additional burden on teachers and education officers. Efforts at institutional capacity development to aid effective schooling is yielding results with the first steps to integrate effective/child-friendly schools principles into pre-service and in-service teacher education at the UWI School of Education.

In 2016 priority will be given to continued advocacy, policy development and knowledge-generation around barriers to inclusive education. A study was being planned, in partnership with the OECS, to address the knowledge gaps that hinder effective provision of services for children and adolescents to maximise their educational experience, including the constraints facing student support units. The findings are expected to strengthen policy and programme response to these children.

OUTPUT 3 Child centred, equity focused and costed national sector plans reflecting regional frameworks in place in 9 countries (OT 208)

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Rights-based frameworks that affirm responsibilities of governments as duty-bearers in the provision of child-centred, equity-focused education and early childhood services is in place in seven countries (Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Montserrat, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis, Turks and Caicos Islands). This target will be met with one more (Anguilla) sector plan that is rights-informed expected to be in place in the first quarter of 2016 and two (BVI and Grenada) in the first half of 2016. For OECS member territories, the plans are aligned with the regional strategy that provides clear strategies for realising the right of children to quality, inclusive education in the region. The regional strategy accomplished the first indicator in the initial programme year (2012).

Three territories (BVI, Dominica and St. Lucia) lead in meeting their obligation to ensure continuation of education services for children in the event of disasters, DRR programming in the education sector by having put in place the appropriate policy and planning frameworks and thereby creating an enabling environment for mainstreaming DRR. In 2015 UNICEF supported a sector plan that mainstreams DRR in three countries. Clear efforts at school safety planning are in place, reinforced in some cases with relevant and supportive legal frameworks. Ongoing capacity constraints of planning units, lack of clear DRR policies in some countries and diminished resources remain major obstacles. In 2016 priority will be given to continuing capacity strengthening, data availability and reporting and DRR programming, in partnership with relevant stakeholders.

OUTCOME 3 All boys and girls from the poorest communities are accessing pre-school and early stimulation opportunities, are benefiting from positive child-centered approaches at school and are benefitting from law and policies that protect them from neglect, violence, exploitation and discrimination.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Governmental partners have continued to partner with UNICEF to ensure an enabling environment for children to be protected from neglect and violence and promote greater awareness of children's rights.

Ministries of education (including ECD departments) developed strong collaboration with child protection departments to ensure that teachers and students (pre-secondary) were sensitised on child-centred approaches to preventing and responding to child sexual abuse and that gender- and age-appropriate materials were available. Further, collaboration resulted in non-educators who interact with children being sensitised and their capacity enhanced on alternative forms of discipline, in an effort to reduce corporal punishment and other harmful disciplinary practices.

Key regional organisations have continued to play a role, including the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB), which has ensured that educators in all 12 countries have enhanced capacity to used sport-based strategies as a point of departure for preventing abuse violence and neglect of children. The partnership with the OECS also resulted in the development of materials on preventing abuse among their peers that coaches can use to reach adolescents.

OUTPUT 1 Duty bearers in the education sector and rights-holders have knowledge and skills to prevent violence against children in school-based settings.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The administration of corporal punishment in schools remains an issue to be addressed. Nevertheless some key advances were:

- *The issue of positive discipline being placed on the agenda of Ministries of Education.* This was a result of UNICEF's advocacy with education policy-makers for implementation of the child-friendly schools framework in primary and secondary schools. With UNICEF's support to ministries of education, approximately 600 additional educators have enhanced knowledge and skills on positive discipline techniques, reaching over 100,000 students across 10 countries
- *The establishment of key partnerships with national transportation authorities in Barbados and Antigua and with sporting organisations in Antigua, Barbados and Turks and Caicos Islands placed the issue of positive discipline outside the classroom setting.* An additional 219 non-educators (bus drivers, crossing guards, coaches and physical education teachers) now have enhanced skills to employ positive behaviour-management (PBM techniques with children. Additionally, communication materials were developed by the Antigua Transportation Authority to reinforce PBM on school buses, with the potential of reaching approximately 11,000 students.
- *More open debate in public fora on the issue of corporal punishment and strategies to address violence in schools.* This can also be attributed in some respects to UNICEF's support to ministries of education to develop communication campaigns to create new norms around child discipline, as well as inputs by civil society groups and NGOs as instances of abuse and violence among school children were reported by the media.

One bottleneck encountered was reluctance among some policy-makers to accept that there is shifting support for the administration of corporal punishment in schools. For example, UNICEF used the findings of the 2014 opinion poll as an advocacy tool to demonstrate to policy-makers that in some countries the majority of the public did not support corporal punishment in school. But in spite of the data, senior education policy-makers were reluctant to implement interventions to address the social norms that perpetuated corporal punishment by their

teachers and principals.

Cultural and religious socialisation is another bottleneck, and has led to support for the administration of corporal punishment by some students, as well as key opinion-leaders (such as religious leaders), making it difficult to bring this influential group on board.

Some key opportunities include: increasing public debate on the issue of corporal punishment in the media and other public fora, and acceptance by education policy-makers of the value of implementing the child-friendly school framework.

In 2016, the focus will be on:

- Using data from the opinion polls strategically to influence debates in the public domain and to advocate for policy change
- Creating demand for non-use of corporal punishment by supporting interventions to change norms and attitudes of students and empower parents
- Supporting an enabling environment for the administration of positive forms of discipline in schools by supporting interventions targeting non-educators (including religious leaders) who interact with school-based settings and social mobilisation campaigns on positive forms of discipline.

OUTPUT 2 Duty bearers in the protection sector and rights holders have knowledge and skills to protect children from harm and violence

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The Eastern Caribbean continues to wrestle with incidents of sexual abuse and child neglect. Nevertheless the key results were:

- *Heightened public awareness of what constitutes child sexual abuse and how to respond.* This was a result of media's commitment to the airing of the 'Break the Silence' communication campaign; media reporting of cases of child abuse; the involvement of policy-makers in discussion in public fora; and advocacy on the issue by partners such as UN Women, Crime Stoppers, National Organisation of Women and local NGOs at their public fora.
- *Commitment by faith-based organisations in five countries to become involved in the fight to end child abuse.* As a result of UNICEF's advocacy an additional two Christian denominations in Barbados committed to implementing protocols and sensitised their leadership. Protocols for religious leaders in Barbados and Dominica were finalised. Two regional religious denominations are developing regional child protection guidelines for their member churches in the Caribbean and began sensitising their clergy and lay workers.
- *Enhanced inter-ministerial collaboration between child protection and education departments towards strategic protection of pre-primary children from sexual abuse.* As a result of UNICEF's advocacy and convening role, collaboration between these departments resulted in: a) joint work programmes; b) outreach to the ECD sector to enhance the knowledge and skills of practitioners and primary caregivers on how to teach young children about abuse; and c) the development of culturally relevant, age-appropriate materials on abuse for pre-primary children.
- *Strengthening partnerships with the Regional NGO West Indies Cricket Board and with the OECS on using sports to address child sexual abuse and neglect.* With UNICEF's support the WICB finalised sport-based communications materials for primary school

children on child abuse and has enhanced the knowledge of its coaches and of primary school educators on how to use these materials. UNICEF's advocacy with the WICB also led to the inclusion of training in child protection as a new requirement for anyone desirous of coaching children in cricket. With UNICEF's support the OECS developed a sub-regional communication strategy to address child protection issues in sports that will target all sporting disciplines in the OECS.

- *More creative approaches to engaging children on child protection.* With UNICEF's support more than 2,000 children (pre-primary and secondary) were engaged through approaches such as wall painting, expression, participatory theatre and cartoon books.

One remaining challenge is measuring the extent to which this awareness and enhanced capacity of duty-bearers has translated into better protection of children from harm and violence and increased reporting of abuse by adults, children and professionals.

Growing public outrage in all countries about sexual abuse and open public debate on the issue at both the public and political level is an opportunity that should be addressed in coming years.

In 2016, the focus will be on support for:

- Community engagement interventions with outreach to other sporting disciplines, religious faiths and local NGOs
- Intervention targeting men to create demand for end of sexual abuse
- Interventions that engage caregivers around prevention and protection.

OUTPUT 3 Duty bearers and right holders have increased awareness of children's rights issues in the Eastern Caribbean Area

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The explosion of social media in the Eastern Caribbean continued to fuel engagement on children's rights issues. This was especially evident around the issue of child abuse (physical and sexual) where, fed by some high-profile cases, members of the public joined the debate and called for increased state action to address their concerns. The heightened dialogue on corporal punishment was particularly refreshing, as it demonstrated a shift in the acceptance of this deep-rooted cultural practice, which was increasingly rejected by policy-makers and the public during ongoing debates.

The Office joined and influenced these debates through its social media platform on Facebook, which witnessed a 47 per cent increase in active engagement (2,220 to 3,266) over the reporting period. In seeking to align strategically with the new global communication and advocacy strategy, increased use was also made of digital products, resulting in a near 100 per cent increase in engagement (from 55,000 to 109,000 views) on the Office's YouTube channel over the year.

The increased focus on social media was not to the detriment of engagement with the traditional media, as the Eastern Caribbean Area remains a region where traditional mass media is still the main means of news dissemination and opinion shaping for the population. Advocacy messages on a range of children's rights issues – including juvenile justice, budgeting for children and child protection – were therefore developed and shared with an estimated audience of over 250,000 through events supported in nine countries in the UNICEF ECA programme.

In recognition of the key role the media continues to play in shaping attitudes and influencing policy-makers, the Office deepened its partnership with key media stakeholders to ensure that

media practitioners are not only news conduits but also active advocates for children's rights. The Association of Caribbean Media Workers and Caribbean Broadcasting Union facilitated the development of a new code for reporting on children's Issues, which was enthusiastically embraced by media practitioners across the sub-region.

Priorities for 2016 will be (i) expansion of social media platforms with an active Twitter account; (ii) positioning UNICEF as the main voice on children's issues, with at least three "Activate Talk" discussions on burning issues; and (iii) production of more digital advocacy products.

OUTPUT 4 Advocacy for child rights agencies, artistes, sports people and the private sector are engaged in partnerships promoting the rights of all girls and boys in a gender sensitive way (OT 796)

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Sustained efforts by a coalition of non-governmental stakeholders to advance the rights of children in the Eastern Caribbean gained momentum in the reporting year.

Governments in a number of countries – Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines and St Kitts & Nevis – created spaces for rights-holders, especially adolescents, to increase their knowledge and ability to advocate on issues that affect them. Most of these national engagements centred on the observation of their CRC anniversaries, but more sustained participation and engagement was also facilitated through the support and development of adolescent media networks, especially in Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica and Trinidad & Tobago.

UNICEF ECA continued efforts to officially engage more influential nationals to assume the role of Children's Champion, but despite not advancing beyond the current two champions, other independent voices placed children rights issues on the public agenda. Groups dedicated to promoting the rights and interests of children sprung up in Barbados, Dominica and St Lucia and used social media platforms to advocate on issues such as child sexual abuse, corporal punishment and bullying.

The practice of major sub-regional private sector companies in setting up foundations to advance their corporate social responsibility agendas is gaining momentum in the region. However, this means that entities like Sandals Foundation, Digicel Foundation and the Republic Bank Foundation, which fund community and national projects for children, prefer direct interface with beneficiaries to maximize their visibility and advance their commercial interest. Strategies are being designed to leverage these funds to support children's rights.

Media practitioners, managers and owners took an important step to becoming advocates for children when they designed and committed to implementing a new code for reporting on children's issues. In addition to setting out a clear pathway on how journalists can work to protect children's rights, the new code also engages media practitioners on how they can hold duty-bearers accountable for their commitments to international and national laws and conventions.

Priorities for 2016 are: (1) increased capturing of the youth voice through the roll-out of U-Report (ii) expansion of advocates for children's rights at the country level and (iii) increased collaboration with the private sector.

Other Publications

Title
CFS Primary School Guide Booklet
Review of Education Policies
Regional Minimum Standards for Alternative Care Services for Children
Health & Family Life Education Curriculum Framework - Ages 11- 16 Version 2.1
Health & Family Life Education Curriculum Framework - Ages 5 - 12 Version 2.1
Survey of Learning Disabilities in Primary Schools in Barbados
Quality of Learning and Teaching in the Special Education Setting in Barbados
An Introduction to Effective Principles for Secondary Schools
Final Report for the Formative Evaluation of the HighScope Curriculum Reform Programme
25 Years of the CRC - Eastern Caribbean Reflections
In Touch (Volume 8)
2015 Child Protection Statistical Digest (Barbados, Grenada, Montserrat)