In 2017, UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Area (ECA) marked the first year of its new multi-country programme (MCP) for 2017-2021, which is anchored in the Caribbean multi-country sustainable development framework for English and Dutch countries. In 2017 ECA countries continued to experience a combination of low economic growth and high debt (in excess of 75 per cent) coupled with chronic vulnerability to natural hazards. Five Eastern Caribbean countries and UK overseas territories (UK OTs) – Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands (BVI), Dominica and Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) – were impacted by two major hurricanes, Irma and Maria, in September, putting children and families at risk and heightening their vulnerability. UNICEF responded to these emerging challenges by adapting its programme strategies, establishing new partnerships and setting up temporary staff presence in impacted countries.

Key UNICEF ECA achievements in 2017 included:

(1) Service delivery to hurricane-impacted children and families in five countries and UK OTs. Through UNICEF support, over 33,000 people had access to safe water and information on good hygiene; more than 19,000 children and adolescents of school-age and 1,092 of preschool age benefited from the resumption of early childhood and education services; 13,042 children received psychosocial support and 12,869 children and adolescents had access to safe community spaces. Approximately 66 per cent of affected children received messages on how to protect themselves from harm during and after an emergency; 79,849 persons across affected countries were reached with lifesaving text messages.

(2) Evidence-generation enhanced knowledge about the situation of children. Five countries developed action plans in response to findings from the ‘Out-of-School’ study produced in 2016; five countries finalized and disseminated situation analyses on children and women; the UK OTs developed national action plans for child safeguarding and concluded a study on migration and children; child poverty analysis was conducted in 10 countries and the UK OTs, while budget and fiscal space studies were conducted and disseminated in Montserrat and the BVI. These knowledge products helped to bridge information gaps, contributed to national dialogue on the situation of children and led to identification of policy issues for further follow-up.

(3) Institutional capacity strengthening resulted in: (i) the first-ever sub-regional analysis for 10 countries and UK OTs and enhanced capacity of key partners, including the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) in the design and conduct of multi-indicator cluster surveys (MICS); (ii) the BVI and Montserrat carried out a budget analysis for investment in children, to inform budgeting and planning; (iii) judges and magistrates were equipped on case management involving the rights of children; (iv) seven countries developed and implemented gender-focused national action plans for the ‘Out-of-School’ study; (v) communication initiatives led to enhanced capacity to implement school-wide positive behaviour programming, and sustained high levels of advocacy contributed to increased attention to the situation of children impacted by hurricanes.
Four main constraints affected programme implementation:

(1) Capacity gaps among implementing partners continued to affect programming. Gaps included: (a) limited resources for scaling-up access to early childhood development (ECD) services, (b) limited prioritization of child protection system reforms, (c) weak mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction (DRR) in sector plans and (d) the low quality of education.

(2) Continued delays in policy development and approval affected programmes in several countries.

(3) Delays in finalization of surveys and studies, continued data inadequacies and lack of systematic use of data to inform evidence-based decision-making and allocation of resources.

(4) Mobilization of resources for non-emergency results areas remained a challenge, despite persistent UNICEF efforts.

During 2017 partnerships were established with the University of West Indies and Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. In response to hurricane impact, UNICEF established new partnerships with the Israel Forum for International Humanitarian Aid (IsraAid), Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA), Samaritan’s Purse and the Dominica Social Centre. These partnerships accelerated emergency response and led to the delivery of critical services for children. The OECS remained a key partner in addressing education, child protection, social policy, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and emergency-related psychosocial support.

Partnership with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) was critical during emergency response, particularly the warehouse established in Antigua and Barbuda, which served as a hub for distributing supplies.

UNICEF ECA continued to collaborate with various United Nation agencies (including the World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Pan American Health Organization and UNWomen). Two joint initiatives were implemented: with UNDP Trinidad and Tobago on poverty analysis, and on emergency cash transfers in Dominica, co-funded with WFP. These partnerships contributed to focusing attention on children’s issues in the sub-region.

**Humanitarian assistance**

The ECA sub-region is highly vulnerable to natural hazards, and in 2017 was impacted by two major hurricanes. Some 143 000 people from five countries (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and the BVI and TCI) were heavily impacted. In line with UNICEF’s core commitments for children in humanitarian action, UNICEF ECA responded in all affected countries through a combination of service delivery, technical assistance, communication and advocacy.

UNICEF’s humanitarian strategy focused on education, child protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) as well as emergency cash transfers, with a two-track approach: immediate humanitarian relief to affected populations and longer-term recovery and resilience support.

Within the context of regional emergency preparedness and response, UNICEF ECA supported timely dissemination of lifesaving information on child protection, health and hygiene, in collaboration with ministries responsible for health, child protection and education. Other key partners included ADRA, IsraAID, Samaritan’s Purse and FLOW Telecommunications.

Key results included resumption of education services benefiting about 20,000 children and
adolescents, provision of psychosocial support to 13,042 affected children, restoring access to water and sanitation for over 33,000 people, and access to safe community spaces for 12,869 affected children and adolescents. In addition, 66 per cent of affected children were exposed to messages on how to protect themselves from harm during and after an emergency, while approximately 79,849 persons across the five affected countries were reached with lifesaving messages through a text messaging campaign.

UNICEF ECA also supported consultations among affected children and their families in two countries (Barbuda and Dominica) as part of its emergency response. Results from these consultations are being used to guide programme interventions in the implementation and monitoring phase of the humanitarian programme cycle.

The devastation and human impact in the sub-region – already grappling with economic challenges – will be felt for months to come. But the impact on children is already clear and significant, particularly around access to education, due to the heavy damage sustained by schools in the region. Despite high rates of primary education enrolment, many children in Eastern Caribbean countries have no access to school environments that are conducive to learning. They also need more support to acquire life skills.

UNICEF played a key role in emergency coordination. In Dominica, UNICEF was the sector lead for water and sanitation, an area not previously covered by the UNICEF ECA program. To ensure timely and effective emergency response UNICEF had a staff presence in all five impacted countries, initially through surge capacity and subsequently through consultancies. Fundraising efforts led to mobilization of 57 per cent of required emergency funding needs by December.

Focus in the medium- to long- term will be on building resilient communities using the education system as a key entry point. In each of the countries and territories affected by the hurricanes, rebuilding damaged schools to be resilient to future hurricanes and ensuring the availability of adequate water and sanitation facilities and providing continued psychosocial support are critical medium- and long-term priorities. Strengthening child protection systems and ensuring that social protection programmes are agile and responsive to disaster, will also be prioritized. In addition, institutional capacity development for CDEMA will be a key focus of joint UN support.

**Equity in practice**

Collaborative efforts by UNICEF ECA and OECS Commission for the last two years culminated in 2017 in a report on child poverty in the Eastern Caribbean Area, providing the first-ever disaggregated poverty data on children. The data analysis component was guided by the global technical note developed by UNICEF in 2016, which provides recommendations on how to identify and request national poverty data to develop relevant child estimates. The main source for this effort was datasets from country poverty assessments, which by 2012 had been completed for 11 ECA countries and territories.

The initiative was key to understanding child poverty levels in 11 of the 12 ECA islands. It revealed that child poverty varies considerably across ECA countries, and while on average one in every three children in the ECA was poor, the poverty rate reached above 50 per cent for children in Grenada. Moreover, in every ECA country child poverty was higher than adult and overall rates, and the share of children in poverty was always significantly higher than their share of the overall population. The findings confirm that children in ECA are disproportionately
represented among the poor, with a clear concentration of child poverty among children living in households with four or more children. In countries with high levels of immigration, poverty levels were substantially higher among migrant-headed households.

Analysis findings contributed to SDG1 monitoring, and also facilitated engagement in evidence-informed discussions for strengthening social protection systems. The analysis was undertaken in partnership with the OECS Commission, the CDB and central statistical offices (CSOs). The OECS Commission coordinated implementation and UNICEF provided technical contributions throughout the process. A highlight of this initiative was the technical assistance mission in Anguilla, where the country’s social protection programmes were presented and assessed against child poverty results to better understand areas needing further review and focus on vulnerability. As a result the Anguillan Government committed to including the analysis in their plan of statistical activities to be conducted regularly, including in the next survey of living conditions, in response to the SDG indicator “proportion of population living below the national poverty line, disaggregated by sex and age group”.

Given that the analysis demonstrated incontrovertibly that child poverty is a serious issue in the ECA, going forward, UNICEF will build on this good practice and will support the mainstreaming of child poverty as an integral component of the upcoming round of CPAs in all ECA countries and territories. Additionally, although the current analysis examined monetary poverty, the OECS Commission, CDB and CSOs are now convinced that income poverty does not tell the full story. Of equal importance is non-income (multidimensional) poverty, which covers a range of issues, which although they often correlate with income poverty, can also affect non-income-poor children and limit their ability to achieve their full potential.

While the objective of the ECA child poverty analysis was to assess the severity and characteristics of child poverty, the initiative’s strength lies in its potential to inform the development of policies and programmes to mitigate existing child poverty and prevent it from occurring in the future. It also creates opportunities for UNICEF to conduct national awareness-raising activities on issues related to child poverty. Such communication initiatives will target key stakeholders working in all aspects of poverty reduction and child-related policy making, including child care, parenting, education, child protection, social services, social assistance, and adolescent issues.

**Strategic Plan 2018-2021**

The UNICEF ECA MCP (2017-2021) is fully aligned with UNICEF’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021 goals related to learning, protection and equitable chance in life.

The programme addresses children’s vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters, in line with the Strategic Plan. The planned outcomes and outputs provide a vehicle for contributing to the corporate goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. One area requiring strengthening is DRR and the resilience agenda, in view of the vulnerability of small island developing states. This will receive increased attention and benefit from lessons learned after the major hurricanes that affected the Caribbean region.

As a contribution to the Strategic Plan goal “every child learning”, the Eastern Caribbean sub-regional out of school study, conducted with UNICEF ECA support, confirmed a gender dimension in education, which is skewed against male retention. To achieve the goals of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, which aligns with SDG4, the office will need to work collaboratively with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Global
Partnership for Education, as well as the CDB and University of the West Indies (UWI) to achieve more gendered programming as countries seek to build capacity for strengthened delivery, including data collection and monitoring systems for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of rights-based education.

The ECD Programme focused on ensuring that boys and girls ages 0-8 years, especially those aged five and under, have equitable access to high-quality, inclusive and holistic ECD, early learning opportunities and responsive care in safe and interactive environments, including in emergency situations. These focus areas are already being addressed by Goal Areas 1-5.

The L-2 emergency declared for the ECA following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which devastated five programme countries, underscored the critical importance of ensuring coherence between humanitarian and development programming. In small-island developing states there is an urgent need to ensure synergy between development and humanitarian programming, in order to maximize limited resources and achieve efficiency.

The lessons learned from the hurricane season’s impact in the Eastern Caribbean sub-region highlighted the importance of building a more resilient education system in order to achieve SDG4 and also the other SDGs, and underscored the relevance of strategic partnerships with national authorities, universities, the private sector and other actors and of South-South cooperation among Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) countries.

**Emerging areas of importance**

The UNICEF ECA multi-country programme incorporates three emerging areas: refugee and migrant children, a greater focus on second decade of life and early childhood development (ECD).

**Refugee and migrant children.** In 2017, to enhance knowledge on the situation of migrant populations in UK overseas territories, UNICEF ECA concluded a study on children in situations of migration and statelessness in Caribbean UK OTs. The study revealed that many children and their families face significant challenges in accessing social programmes and other benefits. These impacts are attributed to the British Overseas Territories Act 2002. The findings of the study will inform ongoing advocacy aimed at highlighting barriers to equitable access to basic social services.

The readiness with which other Caribbean countries have accepted families and children displaced by hurricanes brought the issue into full public dialogue. Moreover, the fact that some children and families fled affected islands without being registered revealed the need for inter-country protocols to manage displaced and unaccompanied children. This will require regional efforts to further strengthen child protection systems in emergency contexts.

**Second decade of life.** UNICEF ECA supported adolescents’ participation on issues affecting their lives. In partnership with the Barbados Red Cross, more than 1,000 Barbadian adolescents now have improved knowledge and skills to conduct community mapping at their schools, as part of vector control. UNICEF also supported peer-to-peer mechanisms for children and adolescents to become agents of change in the fight against sexual abuse and cyber abuse and bullying. UNICEF’s partnership with the Child Care Board in Barbados and with the Office of the Prime Minister in Trinidad saw more than 6,000 students reached through these peer mechanisms across the two countries.
Efforts were made in 2017 to systematically address adolescent issues, leading to fledgling efforts to explore cross-sectoral approaches that integrate education, child protection, C4D and communication programming to better support struggling and at-risk students. Efforts commenced with the compilation of information in Grenada and St. Lucia, which was then used to help guide modelling of cross-sectoral approaches and actions that could contribute to policy and programmatic changes to address equity and equality gaps and better support adolescent learning, protection and overall development.

**Early childhood development.** Within the ECD programme, efforts to prevent the loss of development potential in young children were accelerated in 2017. Intersectoral collaboration brought together stakeholders (parents, caregivers, practitioners, teachers, social workers, health workers) from the education, health and social development sectors who are now better equipped to support early education and holistic development through the use of appropriate communication, play and early stimulation strategies, as well as to improve surveillance in ECD settings to support early identification and intervention for children with disabilities. Several capacity building opportunities increased the knowledge base of approximately 900 stakeholders on positive child development and improving their skills for creating safe and stimulating ECD spaces for children in Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the BVI.

**Summary notes and acronyms**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADRA</td>
<td>Adventist Development Relief Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOS</td>
<td>Business operations strategy</td>
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<td>BVI</td>
<td>British Virgin Islands</td>
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<tr>
<td>C4D</td>
<td>communication for development</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community and Common Market</td>
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<td>CCD</td>
<td>care for child development</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td>Caribbean Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDEMA</td>
<td>Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency</td>
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<td>CDGC</td>
<td>child development guidance centre</td>
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<td>CMT</td>
<td>Country management team</td>
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<td>CPA</td>
<td>country poverty assessment</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Country programme document</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>CRPD</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Central Statistical Office</td>
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<td>DCT</td>
<td>direct cash transfer</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development-United Kingdom</td>
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<td>DRR</td>
<td>disaster risk reduction</td>
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<td>ECA</td>
<td>Eastern Caribbean Area</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>early childhood development</td>
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<td>ECHO</td>
<td>early childhood health outreach</td>
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<td>ECSC</td>
<td>Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court</td>
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<td>GAP</td>
<td>gender action plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEROS</td>
<td>Global evaluation reports oversight system</td>
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<td>GSS</td>
<td>Global staff survey</td>
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<td>GSSC</td>
<td>Global Shared Services Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>HACT</td>
<td>harmonized approach to cash transfers</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRBA</td>
<td>human rights-based approach</td>
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C4D capacity development is one of the multi-country programme strategies aimed at inculcating positive social norms and enhancing skills to prevent and respond to violence against children. UNICEF ECA supported individual capacity development of rights-holders and duty-bearers to prevent and respond to both child abuse and mosquito-borne illnesses. This work involved collaboration with key partners: line ministries, the OECS Commission, the West Indies Cricket Board, departments responsible for environment and the Red Cross.

Key results included improved knowledge and skills of all teachers in Anguilla, the BVI and TCI to implement positive behaviour management practices in their classrooms and more than 3,000 professionals across five countries have improved knowledge and skills to identify, prevent and respond to child sexual abuse in their various settings. Approximately 90 percent of ECD practitioners in Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have enhanced knowledge and skills to prevent mosquito-borne illnesses and provide psychosocial support for pre-school children affected by Zika. Further, the partnerships resulted in enhancing the capacity of about 5,000 Barbadian students to undertake practices at their schools to reduce mosquito breeding.

UNICEF’s ongoing investment in training national facilitators in Return to Happiness (RTH)—a
community-based psychosocial support programme for children – yielded dividends in relation to standby capacity to support children in the immediate aftermath of the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

UNICEF ECA built country capacity for developing comprehensive disaster risk management plans, including for the education system. To ensure evidence-based planning, workshops were held on data strengthening. UNICEF ECA deployed teams to hurricane-impacted countries to provide technical support and expertise, as well humanitarian relief.

Approximately 85 practitioners were equipped to identify and refer children demonstrating signs of developmental delay, which will benefit approximately 1,000 children.

**Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy**

In 2017 UNICEF ECA used evidence generation as a key strategy. Collaboration between UNICEF and the OECS Commission resulted in a report on ‘Child Poverty in the ECA’, providing unique disaggregated data for understanding child poverty levels on 11 islands. The findings not only contribute to SDG1 monitoring, but also facilitated engagement in evidence-informed discussions on strengthening social protection systems. St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the OECS Commission and the CDB were equipped with knowledge on child rights and SDG-monitoring tools (such as MICS and CPA), and UNICEF’s consistent support led to the successful release of the Trinidad and Tobago MICS4 report.

Social surveys in UK OTs in 2017 provided social, attitudinal and behavioural data on child sexual abuse, corporal punishment and bullying. The information was used for advocacy to inform C4D strategies with stakeholders responsible for child protection and education in Anguilla, BVI and TCI. However, counterparts were unable to implement planned interventions due to the hurricanes that impacted these countries in September 2017. Additionally, a study on migrant children and their access to basic social services highlighted and promoted dialogue on the rights of migrant children in the UK OTs.

The OECS-UNICEF assessment of child protection systems found that while all OECS countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and some have developed policies, action plans and programmes to protect children, concerns remain regarding actual implementation and service delivery. The assessment revealed significant gaps in coordination of institutional arrangements and lack of interaction between community-based mechanisms and national systems for child protection.

National consultations to review findings and identify priority action areas related to the out-of-school children’s study were conducted in seven countries. Follow-up implementation plans will guide and inform advocacy, policies, programmes and resource mobilization to ensure an early start and more efficient and effective schooling.

**Partnerships**

Strategic partnerships across all programme areas continued to be a key avenue for driving results for children. The OECS remained a key strategic partner, along with other regional bodies, such as the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court and CDEMA.

Partnerships with ministries responsible for child protection and ministries of education led to improved knowledge and skills among educators in Antigua and St. Lucia, for preventing and responding to violence against children.
UNICEF also supported partnerships between environmental departments and departments responsible for education, which resulted in educators in Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines having enhanced skills to teach young children about Zika and carry out practices to prevent mosquito breeding.

UNICEF ECA’s partnership with CDEMA led to swift response in the five countries impacted by hurricanes.

New partnerships were established with Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA), Samaritan Purse, and the Dominica Social Centre, resulting in emergency relief services for children.

Partnership with FLOW Telecommunication resulted in children and affected populations having access to timely lifesaving information on health, hygiene, and WASH and child protection.

In addition, UNICEF ECA’s partnerships with the Barbados Red Cross, Trinidad’s Office of the Prime Minister and the Child Care Board in Barbados led to enhancing children’s and adolescents’ knowledge about disaster risk reduction, prevention of mosquito-borne illnesses and harm and violence.

Following the signing of a partnership agreement between UNICEF and the CDB, opportunities for joint work in education, psychosocial support and child poverty analysis were prioritized.

Within the context of Delivering as One, UNICEF ECA and the WFP jointly supported emergency cash transfers in Dominica, while a joint programme on poverty analysis was implemented with the UNDP in Trinidad and Tobago.

**External communication and public advocacy**

The first full year of adapting to the global communication and public advocacy strategy spurred an expansion in the Office’s digital engagement and increased targeting of millennials. However, traditional media engagement continued, to ensure that key advocacy messages reached a broad-based general public and that visibility was maintained across the ECA.

In support of achieving its programme objectives, the Office identified three priority areas for advocacy: ECD, violence against children and equity. These areas are aligned with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (particularly Goals 1, 4 and 10) and fit in with three of the focus areas of the Cause Framework.

Since ECD is a key focus area in the Eastern Caribbean programme, the Early Moments Matter campaign served as a platform to galvanize attention and action in this critical area. The multi-faceted campaign featured an ‘activate talk’, public events (rallies and workshops), traditional media messages and online digital media engagement, reaching 117,600 people. This success was a key example of UNICEF ECA’s leveraging of the sub-region’s rich social media environment to amplify messages, and was achieved by increasing Facebook presence, while expanding to include Twitter and Instagram. As a result 3.4 million people were reached via social media in 2017, with over 600,000 video views – up over 2000 per cent from 2016.

The two devastating category five hurricanes which impacted five of the 12 countries in the multi-country programme, demonstrated the importance of keeping traditional media, especially
radio, as a key plank in the advocacy strategy. With electrical power and modern communication methods knocked out in impacted countries— in some cases for months— the Office relayed post-disaster messages and UNICEF actions on radio stations, which were back on air soon after the disaster.

**South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation**

In 2017 UNICEF ECA facilitated South-South collaboration to foster joint learning and sharing of good practices. There was significant cross-border cooperation between the Government of St. Lucia and the hurricane-impacted Governments of Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, and TCI for the provision of psychosocial support to affected children. Facilitated by the OECS Commission, a key UNICEF ECA partner, teams of psychosocial support facilitators assisted affected countries to train national facilitators and provide services to affected children and teachers.

In the area of ECD services, UNICEF ECA facilitated South-South exchange to Anguilla following hurricane Irma. Certified trainers from Antigua, Barbados and Barbuda facilitated training on the CCD approach, an ECD strategy to support children aged 0-3 and their families to regain a sense of psychosocial well-being. The training programme was multi-sectoral, with participation by ECD stakeholders from the ministries of health, education and human development, including public health nurses, midwives, community health aides, day care providers and pre-school teachers.

In social protection UNICEF ECA, in collaboration with the OECS, facilitated joint learning on management information systems for social protection programmes. St Vincent and the Grenadines, which recently designed a new management information system for social protection, hosted a workshop to share its experience within the sub-region. The workshop served as useful platform for knowledge-sharing and identifying entry points for other countries to enhance their management information systems for social protection programmes.

**Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages**

In an effort to promote positive behaviours to prevent violence against children, UNICEF ECA continued to promote cross-sectoral collaboration between government departments. In Antigua and Barbuda and in St. Lucia, UNICEF supported collaborative efforts between the education and child protection sectors to enhance educators’ knowledge and skills for implementing practices to address child abuse in schools.

UNICEF also supported collaboration between environment departments and those responsible for pre- and primary school education in Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This collaboration led to improved knowledge and skills among educators regarding measures to safeguard children from Zika and other mosquito-borne illnesses.

Such collaboration was underpinned by national protocols for safeguarding children, and through multi-sectoral capacity-enhancement programmes for frontline professionals that work with children.

Within UNICEF ECA, efforts to enhance cross-sectoral linkages focused on: (i) violence against children, (ii) adolescents and (iii) gender.
Service delivery

Service delivery is not a routine UNICEF ECA strategy; however, due to major hurricanes affecting five countries it became a key emergency response strategy.

Key results include reaching 13,042 (76.3 per cent) of affected children with psychosocial support and 12,869 (62.2 per cent) of affected children and adolescents with access to safe community spaces. Approximately 66 per cent of affected children were exposed to messages on how protect themselves from harm during and after an emergency, and 79,849 persons across the five affected countries were reached with lifesaving messages through a text-messaging campaign. More than 19,000 school-age children and adolescents (of a total 25,000) and approximately 1,092 of preschool age benefited from UNICEF support to resume post-hurricane early childhood and education services in the form of ECD kits, School-in-a-Box kits, recreational kits and tents, allowing national authorities to resume education activities.

UNICEF ECA continued to advocate for quality basic social services, including scaling-up ECD services for vulnerable populations.

Human rights-based approach to cooperation

The human rights-based approach to programming is a key programme strategy. In 2017 UNICEF ECA promoted this approach through ongoing advocacy to ensure that countries meet their obligations to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Office continued its high-level dialogue with the Governments of Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago to submit their long-outstanding state reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child implementation, and with other governments on follow-up of concluding observations and recommendations relating to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and on adoption of the CRC Optional Protocols. Strategically, UNICEF’s provision of sustained technical assistance on human rights programming facilitated the preparation and submission of Barbados’ Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report, which will be reviewed in 2018. This State-driven process provided an opportunity for stakeholders to confirm actions they have taken to improve the human rights situation in the country and reflect on how better to fulfil their obligations.

UNICEF ECA sought to strengthen accountability mechanisms for the realization of the rights of all children by generating evidence on emerging issues. In 2017, a key issue was the right of migrant children to access basic social services in the UK OT. This sensitive human rights issue is being tackled through joint work with UN agencies, DFID and agents of the British Government.

Following the conclusion of the study on out-of-school children, UNICEF ECA facilitated national dialogue on the right to education for children and adolescents, as well as the main bottlenecks that impact realization of this right. During the discussions, duty-bearer roles and responsibilities were identified at all levels with all relevant governmental and civil society organizations, as well as with parents and students.

Gender equality

Gender continued to be mainstreamed across all programme sectors, especially in countries affected by hurricanes in 2017.
One of the key results of including gender in emergency programming was minimizing gender-based violence against boys, girls and women by ensuring that standards were met and implemented at shelters. Another key result was improving the knowledge of boys and girls about how to protect themselves in emergencies. This was achieved by raising awareness on the issue among boys and girls residing in shelters and providing information on how to report violations.

As part of the out-of-school study discussions at the national level, UNICEF ECA and partners promoted discussions and bottlenecks analyses to identify the needs of adolescent boys and girls in relation to secondary education, as well as the main bottlenecks that limit their rights to quality education. In the ECA more adolescent boys drop out of education in this period, requiring the application of special measures at the national level to address this situation. The countries that conducted the out-of-school study developed national action plans to address key challenges in secondary education for adolescents, including gender disparities.

### Environmental sustainability

The ECA is a disaster-prone sub-region, and one of the most vulnerable to climate change. UNICEF ECA has been working with all 12 countries and territories to mainstream climate change adaptation measure into national policies, legislation and programmes, especially in the education system. In the first quarter of 2017, countries signed the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration, adopted in December 2016 at the 10th Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster, in partnership with CDEMA, as part of climate change adaptation in all countries covered by UNICEF ECA.

UNICEF ECA successfully completed its 2016 environmental footprint assessment report in July 2017. The report concluded that the majority of the office’s emissions were generated from electricity (67 per cent). It is anticipated that the transition in 2016–2017 from fluorescent bulbs to LEDs will have a palpable impact on this emission level over time. The second-highest emission generator was travel (23 per cent). Under the Office’s multi-country mandate, air travel is inherent to effective programme delivery. However, the purchase of new equipment to improve communication with out-posted staff, along with continued focus on coordinated travel planning to maximize travel results by making the fewest required number of trips, are ongoing priorities. The Office did see a marked reduction in travel when comparing the 2015 environmental assessment (32 per cent) to that of 2016 assessment (23 per cent). Staff are more conscious of using alternative methods as well as improving trip coordination.

The new UNICEF ECA standard operating procedure for travel requires each traveller to assess whether travel could be avoided by using alternative means (e.g., video-conference), further ensuring that travellers make informed decisions prior to submitting travel requests. In 2017 UN agencies collectively established the UN House Greening Committee to provide oversight and promote activities for effective implementation of sustainable measures among UN resident agencies. The Committee has interagency representation, the support of heads of agencies, a workplan and an energetic membership whose actions and impact should lead to tangible results in 2018.

### Effective leadership

The country management team (CMT) identified resource mobilization, staff motivation and team cohesion, as well as office effectiveness and efficiency, as key priorities.
A participatory process led to the development of action plans to address these areas, as outlined in the 2017 annual management plan. Implementation of the action plans was reviewed regularly by the CMT and during the mid-year review and the staff retreat.

In regard to resource mobilization, 2017 saw a rapid increase in emergency funding following the September hurricanes. However, mobilizing other resources (OR) faced ongoing constraints.

Six standard operating procedures (SOPs) were prepared and are in the implementation phase. SOPs aimed at enhancing efficiency and effectiveness were reviewed during the staff retreat to ensure staff involvement.

Staff morale and staff motivation remained a priority, as reflected in the 2017 Global Staff Survey (GSS) and feedback during the staff retreat. In 2018, the CMT will collaborate with the newly elected staff association executive committee to follow up on staff morale and team cohesion.

Managing risk was guided by the risk areas identified in the country programme management plan and enterprise risk management: (a) funding constraints, (b) results-based management and reporting, (c) natural disasters and epidemics, (d) human resources (attracting and retaining staff given funding constraints, governance and accountability).

To strengthen emergency preparedness and response, UNICEF ECA hosted a regional emergency workshop with CDEMA, UN agencies, and staff from four UNICEF offices in the Caribbean region. The workshop led to the identification of key focus areas for joint collaboration and served as a platform for sharing good practices. To ensure business continuity, 2017 annual workplans integrated emergency-related outputs. The business continuity plan was not updated in 2017 but is a priority for 2018.

**Financial resources management**

The CMT continued to monitor key performance indicators, and efforts were made to improve efficiencies in payments, resulting in improved timelines and reduced direct cash transfers (DCTs) aged over six months. UNICEF ECA on-boarded a GS06 finance associate in March, consolidating responsibility for financial transactions into one post. The office migrated to eZ-HACT, reducing steps for HACT-related transactions, thereby improving efficiencies. Further training should result in continued good results. An SOP for payments was introduced to further streamline and simplify this function. The SOP is modelled to retain key internal controls and legacy functions while reducing paperwork. The SOP promotes increased use of petty cash and places a high premium on pre-payment processes (vendor management, budget control and goods/services receipts), ensuring accountability for receiving officers and budget owners.

The office reconciled aged bank reconciliations that had compounded during the period when the office did not have a dedicated finance associate. ECA adhered to IPSAS and VISION and worked towards successful completion of year-end closure activities. HACT compliance was a continued focus. Due to the declared L2 emergency, UNICEF was unable to complete spot-checks for partners impacted by the hurricanes. Of the seven required spot-checks, three were completed and the others are scheduled for completion in early 2018. The office completed 24 micro-assessments and 37 programmatic visits.
Utilization of regular resources reached 99 per cent. The outstanding balance or direct cash transfers (DCTs) was US$2.524M; 89.2 per cent representing 0–3 months, 7 per cent representing 3–6 months, 2.4 per cent representing 6–9 months and 1.3 per cent over nine months. The percentage utilization of Support Budget was 99 per cent. The office received US$2.4 million in emergency funding with a deadline of end-year 2017. The office utilized 100 per cent of the emergency grants expiring at the end of the year.

**Fundraising and donor relations**

This year UNICEF ECA implemented the resource mobilization strategy developed in 2016. It identified: (i) private sector fundraising; (ii) traditional sources, such as national committees; (iii) innovative strategies; and (iv) leveraging funds as ways of ensuring that UNICEF ECA mobilized enough funds to deliver programme results and maintain staff on OR funding. Investment cases that were developed for all programme components of the 2017-2021 MCP served as a basis for ongoing donor engagement.

The Office fundraising strategy focused on non-traditional donors, including the private sector. A mapping of potential private sector funding in the ECA was produced, in collaboration with LACRO. The mapping will inform future UNICEF ECA positioning for partnering with the private sector.

The Office submitted all donor reports on time, and quality assurance was maintained under the guidance of the Deputy Representative. The communication team sought to invest in human interest stories, videos and photographs to illustrate the situation in ECA, and UNICEF was able to mobilize US$954,302 of other resources (OR) for that purpose.

Following the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September, fundraising efforts were intensified, resulting in the mobilization of $6,199,377 in emergency funding, achieved in close collaboration with LACRO, the UN sub-regional team and UNICEF national committees.

In addition, building on the UNICEF/CBD partnership agreement signed this year opportunities for close collaboration in education and psychosocial support were identified and will be prioritized in 2018.

The Office achieved high financial utilization rates: 99 per cent for regular resources (RR), 98 per cent for other resources (OR) and 100 per cent for emergency grants expiring in 2017.

**Evaluation and research**

Implementation of the 2017-2021 costed evaluation plan commenced with an evaluation of human rights training and application of normative principles and standards by judges and magistrates in the ECA. Terms of reference were being finalized at end-2017, and data collection is scheduled to begin during Q1 2018. The multi-country evaluation of the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of social protection programme implementation in four OECS countries was rescheduled to 2018. The evaluation of pilot MEND and RISE cash transfer programmes in St. Kitts and Nevis is under desk review.

The global evaluation reports oversight system (GEROS) was used in all evaluations for quality assurance throughout the process, from development of terms of reference to final reports.
Deliverables from key stages of evaluations, concept notes, terms of reference, research tools and draft reports were reviewed by ECA and LACRO M&E teams.

UNICEF ECA continued to use the PRIME tool for planning and regular oversight of M&E activities. At year-end, 50 per cent of the activities in the 2017-2018 rolling plan had been completed, 40 per cent were on track and one activity was temporarily delayed. PRIME enabled generation of progress reports and graphs for decision-making and added efficiency to the M&E function and cross-sectoral collaboration.

As part of humanitarian response, UNICEF participated in initial rapid assessments in two hurricane-affected islands, which proved useful for understanding the hurricane’s impact on the population and infrastructure, and thus for planning UNICEF’s initial response. Additionally, UNICEF along with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and Canada, supported implementation of the CDEMA-led rapid review of the regional response to Hurricanes Irma and Maria, for which UNICEF ECA provided technical inputs.

**Efficiency gains and cost savings**

Two team sites (emergency response and UNICEF ECA) were introduced, aligning the office with the goal of migrating from hosted-servers, reducing costs and requiring manpower. The increased use of Skype for Business for tele- and video-conferencing continued to yield cost savings as the office shifted from landline and cell phone modalities as primary communication modes. New hands-free speaker and 360 conference systems were procured for the Trinidad outpost and ECA Barbados offices, respectively, alleviating system interruptions and resulting in better communication with the Barbados and out-posted staff, as well as reducing the manpower needed for frequent troubleshooting. UNICEF, as part of UN House, completed replacement of all lighting to LED, reducing the office’s energy footprint. The anticipated result is a savings in electricity costs of one third over time.

The 2017 programme budget review approved a post upgrade from NOB operations officer to NOC operations manager and GS04 HR/administrative assistant to GS06 HR associate. This transition positions the office with sufficient talent to assume full HR functions, thereby reducing future need and cost outlay to the Multi-Country Support Facility (MCSF). In 2017 UNICEF ECA’s office management team was actively involved in the development of the BOS,a UN-mandated management tool to review common operational areas to eliminate redundancies and establish a unified approach to common operational needs. To date the purchase of bathroom supplies by individual agencies was eliminated, and consolidated into one agency while others contribute via the common services modality. UNICEF has already realized savings in staff time dedicated to this administrative task. The practice is expected to carry into 2018 through further areas of consolidation, thereby maximizing efficiencies and reducing costs in staff time.

**Supply management**

The value of supplies procured during the reporting period was over US$939,567, the vast majority of which (over US$852,101) was directly related to the emergency response, while US$87,466 was for routine operations. For services, UNICEF ECA paid over US$2.2M in contracts with individual contractors, consultants and institutions, of which more than US$1.48M was related to the emergency response, and approximately US$721,982 was for routine operations. The current value of inventory in pre-positioned warehouses is US$2,041. The total for supplies issued from ECA controlled warehouses was $111,148.91. In 2017, the office retired its programme supplies warehouse. Overtime, this warehouse was used primarily as a clearinghouse for advocacy and consumables. This decision reduced the office’s liability for
non-programme supply stock and the manpower required to maintain and manage the warehouse.

Long-term agreements (LTAs) are in place for graphic designers and editorial services, and the Office is endeavouring to utilize LTAs for printing of advocacy materials. No in-kind assistance was received by the Office. UN agencies continue to use LTAs with local vendors for airline ticketing and are working towards a unified vendor approach among common vendors under the Delivering as One platform, using the BOS, to reduce redundant systems and maximize economies of scale across UN House.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNICEF ECA 2017</th>
<th>Total Value in US$</th>
<th>Non-emergency</th>
<th>Emergency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Services - individual contractor/consultant</td>
<td>$1,915,773.91</td>
<td>$486,181.61</td>
<td>$1,429,592.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services - corporate/institutional</td>
<td>$287,101.04</td>
<td>$235,801.04</td>
<td>$51,300.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency supplies</td>
<td>$787,390.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assets</td>
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<td>$0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumables</td>
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<td>$0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local purchase orders</td>
<td>$69,499.68</td>
<td>$4,788.50</td>
<td>$64,711.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$3,142,442.34</td>
<td>$809,448.86</td>
<td>$2,332,993.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Security for staff and premises

UNICEF ECA took several actions in 2017 to enhance the safety and security of staff and premises:

- A comprehensive update to the warden system was implemented, expanding it to align UNICEF staff residing in outlying areas of the country with staff from other agencies who reside in closer proximity, as co-wardens. This step was the result of a UN-wide mapping of staff residences.
- Updating its satellite phone inventory and replaced outdated models
- Coordinating with UNDSS to procure radios for staff out-posted in Trinidad (ensured alignment with the UNDSS-endorsed digital radio network hosted by the country’s Ministry of National Security
- Completing the 2017 minimum security standards assessment, with an overall compliance score of 93.05.
- Minimum operating security standards were approved through a UN-wide consultative process for Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados
- The UNDSS country security plan was updated through a UN-wide consultative process for Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados.
Two country office warden briefings were conducted by UNDSS and the UNICEF operations section, respectively.

In June, the business continuity plan was activated due to a country-wide water outage, leading to activating and testing the warden plan.

During the declared L2 emergency, security protocols established by UNDSS for staff travelling to affected areas were implemented and enforced.

Dominica-specific emergency-related UNDSS security briefings were prepared and shared with affected parties.

An emergency-specific medical evaluation plan was prepared for Dominica. Fortunately, the plan was not activated during the emergency for UNICEF personnel.

Human resources

UNICEF ECA completed seven recruitments to strengthen human capacity of the office. Three national office (NO) posts and two general services (GS) staff were recruited, bringing the staff balance to 10 GS, 9 NOs and 5 international professionals (IPs). Two posts were upgraded to align with UNICEF’s global and regional objectives, including HR Reform. The office continued to build a culture of open and honest feedback. Training sessions on the employee review process were planned but were postponed due to the emergency, restarted in late December and will continue into 2018. Based on the results of GSS, the office prioritized three topics for immediate attention. To develop a baseline, three focus groups were formed to compile inputs from staff to better understand the underlying issues. An action plan was developed to address each area of concern.

Efforts were made to implement the 10 minimum standards on HIV in the workplace. Two staff members were nominated to undertake face-to-face training in Trinidad, which was postponed. The office encouraged all staff to complete UN Cares mandatory training. While progress was slow, the office increased its efforts to standardize knowledge on HIV in the workplace through an awareness campaign on all mandatory trainings.

Following the hurricanes, an L2 Emergency was declared. Emergency response included development of an HR plan to meet human resources needs for an effective response. The plan anticipated human resources comprised of surge staff, standby partners and consultants, and was realized through deployment of 37 UNICEF surge staff, two standby partners and 10 consultants. Over US$613,000 was invested in human resources: US$282,000 in surge staff travel and US$613,000 for consultancies. The office did not use RR to temporarily bridge the funding gap for an OR-funded post.

Effective use of information and communication technology

Effective information-sharing contributed to office efficiency and effectiveness in 2017. With the declared L2 emergency, the CO adapted to rapid communication by forming a WhatsApp group, allowing the core and extended teams to communicate via brief updates. UNICEF ECA ensured that all professional staff were equipped with smartphones, to effectively deliver support to the affected islands. The office supplemented communications by deploying satellite phones in each affected country. The L2 emergency generated numerous daily reports. To ensure that they were properly stored and available for future reference, the office created two team sites, the ECA team site and the ECA emergency response team site. Staff were trained on and held accountable for sharing their information and that of their technical unit through the team site portal as standard practice. The sites further underscored UNICEF’s commitment to maximizing collaboration among Barbados-based and out-posted staff to establish opportunities for
electronic databases and shared spaces, in alignment with the goal of reduced printing and maximized efficiencies.

The office ensured that staff had adequate equipment and devices. Over 90 per cent of devices were migrated to the latest Windows 10 operating system, and obsolete devices earmarked for disposal. UNICEF ECA updated its inventory of ICT equipment. The ICT office profile was updated with a hardware compliance and replacement plan and the office floor plan was updated. Staff members were informed of the importance of social media through information-sharing forums, particularly Yammer, Twitter and various blogs.

UNICEF policy on social media was shared with staff, along with “dos” and “don’ts”. With the new global ICT strategy in place, efforts to enhance ICT use among implementing partners will continue. Recruitment of a GS07 Senior ICT associate to sustain progress made in 2017 is underway.

Programme components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 Country programmes are efficiently designed, coordinated, managed and supported to meet quality programming standards in achieving results for children

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF ECA’s multi-country programme implementation contributed toward realization of children’s rights in 12 countries and UK OTs.

2017 marked the first year of the five-year multi-country programme, anchored on the first ever Caribbean UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development framework for English and Dutch speaking Caribbean. Key results achieved in programme effectiveness included finalization of programme strategy notes for all programme components. The notes outline key results for children, strategies for achieving results and partnerships that are key for achievement of the results. The programme effectiveness component supports focused, interlinked programme delivery and managing for results.

To ensure evidence-based programming, baseline data were established for all three programme components: life-long learning, safety and justice for children and social inclusion and child rights monitoring. The OECS, a key UNICEF partner was instrumental in coordinating the establishment of baseline data for the safety and justice programme component. UNICEF ECA technical and financial support contributed toward strengthening national and sub-regional data on children. Five situation analysis reports were finalized and disseminated. These publications and related advocacy contributed to stimulating public dialogue on children’s issues in ECA countries.

In the areas of communication, advocacy, resource mobilization and partnerships, a revised strategy, aligned with the global communication and public advocacy strategy, drove UNICEF ECA’s work in a middle-income country environment. The strategy identified violence against children, ECD and equity as key advocacy priorities, and increasingly relied on social and digital media to reach a growing audience, including millennials. A revised resource mobilization strategy was designed with the aim of mobilizing and leveraging resources to drive results for children in the new MCP.
To address the sub-region’s increasing vulnerability to weather-related events and climate change, key planning instruments such as annual work-plans, annual management plans and programme priorities all mainstreamed emergency preparedness and response. In addition, the Early Warning/ Early Action system was updated to ensure office preparedness.

UNICEF participated in UN-wide coordination mechanisms under the Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago Resident Coordinator system. UNICEF co-led the UN multi-country development assistance framework pillar on a ‘safe and just Caribbean’ and participated in the pillar on ‘inclusive, equitable and prosperous Caribbean’. In addition, UNICEF was a key member of the Eastern Caribbean development partners group on disaster management, which was instrumental in supporting CDEMA’s coordination of emergency response following the two major hurricanes.

OUTPUT 1 Programme Coordination

**Analytical statement of progress**
Effective coordination was ensured through regular programme coordination meetings and mid-year reviews. Regular programme meetings led to internal coordination and joint work on three convergence areas identified in the 2017 programme priorities. Violence against children, adolescents and gender were prioritized as key convergence areas for all programmes.

Programme coordination meetings were held consistently, allowing better follow-up of commitments on key management indicators and strengthening of cross-sectoral team thematic discussions for coherent, efficient delivery of results. Following the hurricanes in September and the increase in staff deployed to the five countries, coordination was ensured through weekly discussions with team leaders in the field. Visits to field-based teams contributed to improved coordination.

To ensure adequate funding for the new MCP, the programme team developed investment cases for all programme pillars, which served as a framework for coordinated resource mobilization.

To ensure effective coordination of emergency preparedness and response, the Early Warning/ Early Action system was reviewed and updated. Pre-positioning of supplies was coordinated in the first quarter of 2017 to ensure preparedness before the onset of the hurricane season.

Management reports were discussed in programme meetings, and follow-up on poorly performing indicators prioritized. Management of DCTs posed a chronic challenge for the office in 2017; but sustained efforts led to improvement towards the end of December. The outstanding DCT balance was US$2.524M: 0–3 months, 89.2 per cent; 3–6 months 7 per cent; 6–9 months, 2.4 per cent; over nine months, 1.3 per cent. The percentage of support budget utilization reached 99 per cent.

HACT compliance was another continued focus area. Due to the L2 emergency, the office was unable to complete spot-checks on partners impacted by the hurricanes. Of the seven required spot-checks, three were completed and the balance are scheduled for completion in quarter one of 2018. The office completed 24 micro-assessments and 37 programmatic visits. Utilization of RR was 99 per cent, and 100 per cent for emergency grants expiring at end-2017.
Within the context of Delivering as One, programme coordination with other UN agencies focused on the development of country-level and sub-regional implementation plans, which outline key UN results. UNICEF participated in outcome groups and co-led, with USAID, the safe and just Caribbean group. Programme management team meetings convened by the Regional Coordinators offices in Barbados, OECS and Trinidad and Tobago were regularly attended by relevant UNICEF staff.

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

**Analytical statement of progress**

The first full year of adapting to the global communication and public advocacy strategy spurred an expansion in the Office’s digital engagement and increased targeting of millennials. However, traditional media engagement continued, to ensure that key advocacy messages reached a broad-based general public and that visibility was maintained across the ECA.

The recent trend whereby social media emerged as the main vehicle for conveying news and views and spurring discussions across the Eastern Caribbean continued throughout the year. In many cases traditional media entered the debate and did follow-up articles after issues were first explored on social media.

A scan of the digital media landscape in the Eastern Caribbean indicates that Facebook maintained its dominance as the social media tool of choice, although other tools such as Instagram and Snapchat continued to grow, especially among the key millennial market. UNICEF took advantage of this rich social media environment to amplify its messages by increasing its Facebook presence, while expanding its footprint to include Twitter and Instagram. As a result 3.4 million people were reached via social media in 2017, with over 600,000 video views; up by more than 2000 per cent compared to 2016.

Offline engagement with policy makers continued to be a key advocacy tool, especially in a middle-income country context where UNICEF seeks to influence policy and effect legislative changes to advance the rights of children. However, the combined demands of the MCP start-up phased and unprecedented emergency situation across several Eastern Caribbean countries, resulted in a marked decrease (55 per cent) in face-to-face advocacy through conferences, workshops, launches and meetings.

The two devastating category five hurricanes that impacted five of the 12 MCP countries demonstrated the importance of keeping traditional media, especially radio, as a key plank in the advocacy strategy. With electrical power, cell phones and Internet knocked out in impacted countries (sometimes for a prolonged period), the Office was able to place post-disaster child protection messages on radio stations, which were back on air quickly.

Continued partnership with the Caribbean Broadcasting Union and the Association of Caribbean Media Workers ensured continued access to the media and exposure to practitioners on ethical coverage of children’s issues. Towards the end of the year a partnership with an active adolescent advocacy non-governmental organization (NGO), Create Future Good, also laid the groundwork for deeper digital engagement with this critical sector in 2018.

In view of the limited capacity of government partners and general lack of priority given to children’s issues, new partnerships will be forged with NGOs and youth organizations, while
new platforms (such as U-Report) will be rolled out to provide avenues for adolescents and youth to amplify their voice on the issues that confront them.

**OUTCOME 2** By 2021, all boys, girls and adolescents, especially the most disadvantaged among them, have improved their education and developmental outcomes and access equitable and inclusive learning environments across the life cycle, including in emergencies.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September, tested education sector capacity when they devastated the island states of Anguilla, Barbuda, Dominica and the BVI and TCI, putting approximately 39,000 children at risk. More than 19,000 (of the total 25,000) children and adolescents, of school-age, and approximately 1,092 of preschool age in the affected countries benefited from UNICEF support to resume early childhood and education services after the hurricanes’ impact. UNICEF provided pedagogical and recreational materials for ECD and primary education, as well as tents used by national authorities to resume lessons, including in temporary learning spaces. In addition, 16,205 children were targeted for psychosocial support and 14,040 (86 per cent of this target) had been reached by mid-December.

Due to the level of impact in the Commonwealth of Dominica and at the request of national partners, the office included in the emergency response programme an initiative to provide water and sanitation support in schools. Thanks to UNICEF and other partners, WASH support was provided at about half of all primary schools, allowing more than 8,000 children and adolescents to regain access to WASH services.

Several school buildings were destroyed in affected countries, leaving preschool and other children unable to access ECD or education services for at least a month. This underscored the importance of implementing school safety policies and DRR programming. These catastrophic events overwhelmed school infrastructures, exposing vulnerabilities such as poor construction, and lack of national or school-based emergency plans. These events overwhelmed not only affected countries, but the entire Eastern Caribbean, which mobilized to support affected populations.

A key lesson learned was that the school plants need to be upgraded, following strict safety standards, to be more resistant to hazards. In addition emergency preparedness and response plans to support a timely return to education must be more clearly articulated at national and at school level. It is important to note that nine of 12 countries signed the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration on School Safety in the Caribbean. The declaration has a road map for mainstreaming disaster risk management at the policy and school level. UNICEF ECA is working with CDEMA and two priority countries to develop specific actions plans to include disaster risk management at all education centres, including ECD settings.

Within both regular and emergency ECD programming, advocacy and capacity building continued to be valuable strategies to confront barriers to accessing quality early education, inclusive environments and equity for children in vulnerable situations. Approximately 900 parents, caregivers and stakeholders in the region have benefited from initiatives that could reach more than 7,000 pre-school-aged children. Through intersectoral collaboration among the education, health and social development sectors, ECD stakeholders were better equipped to support holistic development, including psychosocial needs, using communication, play and early stimulation strategies with young children through a curriculum stressing active participation as a means to develop the skills and knowledge required for successful transition.
to formal education. Systematic monitoring of standards remains a challenge due to limited human resources.

In addition, commitments to ensuring that children of primary school age and adolescents at secondary schools are benefitting from equitable and inclusive services in protective environments is being addressed from several angles. The effective schools framework, school safety and discipline policies have been made available to support the framing of responses to some of the barriers to relevant and inclusive education. Using data from the out-of-school study conducted by UNICEF and the University of West Indies, national plans were developed to address both academic and non-academic barriers, including the role of gender in successful educational outcomes and educational completion. Formal introduction of the effective schools framework represents another entry point for consolidating and strengthening rights-based, child-centred programming, with an emphasis on building capacity at secondary schools for more adolescent-centric policies and practices. UNICEF ECA is encouraging countries to address concerns about violence in schools by implementing school-wide positive behaviour interventions and support programming with a strong focus on the holistic development of children and adolescents. This work was made possible through partnerships with the MoE, the OECS Commission and UWI.

**OUTPUT 1** Strengthened national frameworks, policies, plans and standards to increase access to high-quality, equitable, inclusive, and holistic early ECD, learning and care environments for girls and boys (0-8 years) and their families by 2021, including in emergencies

**Analytical statement of progress**
Approximately 900 parents, caregivers, early childhood practitioners, teachers, health care workers and other stakeholders benefited from UNICEF-supported capacity building and training initiatives that have the capacity to reach more than 7,000 children under five years.

As a result of collaboration between the education, health and social development sectors in Antigua and Anguilla, Barbuda, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the BVI, these stakeholders are better equipped to support early education and holistic development through the use of appropriate communication, play and early stimulation strategies with young children and to utilize child-centred curriculum frameworks to improve development outcomes. In addition, 65 practitioners in the BVI were trained on new strategies for promoting positive behaviour in ECD settings. By standardizing monitoring instruments in the OECS countries, ensuring alignment with regional and national standards, practitioners will be able to identify strengths and weaknesses in the services being provided for the under-five population and thus to design tailored programmes and strategies to address their needs.

With UNICEF technical support and advocacy undertaken at both regional and national levels, eight countries with approved policies and 11 countries with approved standards/regulations are focusing on implementation, to ensure that they reduce the loss of developmental potential by providing equitable, developmentally appropriate and educational opportunities for young children. UNICEF also supported the Child Development and Guidance Centre in St. Lucia and the Special Education Department in Grenada to strengthen the skills of 85 national counterparts in St. Lucia, Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines in early identification and intervention for children with developmental delays. This experience will serve as reference in the other countries and territories covered by UNICEF ECA.
Collaboration with the OECS Commission resulted in the development of a curriculum framework, which aligns with the CARICOM Learning Outcomes for ECD in the Caribbean. In 2017 the framework, designed to support developmentally appropriate practice in ECD settings, was introduced to approximately 180 stakeholders in the BVI and St. Lucia. UNICEF’s partnership with the OECS Commission also led to the development of an OECS integrated operational framework meant to provide practical guidance to early childhood service providers, strengthening the provision and coordination of early childhood stimulation/education services in the region.

Some key challenges remain in the area of ensuring a safe and enabling environment for young children. Assistance will be given to the review and updating of policies and to implementation of policy commitments. Focus will also on systematic assessments of the quality of services and programmes, to facilitate addressing persistent weaknesses. Attention will be given to tracking developmental progress of children under five, and a sharp focus on DRR and ECD in emergencies.

**OUTPUT 2** Enhanced capacity of national and subnational entities in education planning, the collection and use of data, system monitoring and budgeting to provide equitable, inclusive and relevant education for all children and adolescents by 2021

**Analytical statement of progress**

More than 19,000 school-age children and adolescents, of a total 25,000, received UNICEF support for resuming learning activities after the hurricanes' impact in five countries (Information updated at mid-December 2017). School-in-a-box, recreational kits and tents to be used as temporary learning spaces were distributed in affected countries, to support national authorities to resume classes.

Nine of 12 countries signed the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration on School Safety in the Caribbean, in September and October after five countries were devastated by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Despite all plans and commitment, the education system came to a halt for about one month in these countries. UNICEF ECA provided direct support to all the affected countries in education-in-emergency planning and supported national authorities and partners to resume schooling in each country by co-leading education working groups. At the sub-regional level UNICEF partnered with regional organizations, such as CDEMA, and at the national level with national authorities and national and international organizations, as AADRA, IsraAID, Team Rubicon.

Despite the hurricanes' impact, 10 countries reviewed their education plans in November, at a meeting in Saint Lucia, to better understand progress, challenges and lessons learned. It was agreed that a more comprehensive review of national and regional education sector plans is needed. It was also decided that building resilience must be a real component of all education sector plans. The review was complemented by a regional workshop to review national indicators in light of SDG 4 commitments and indicators. While all the countries and territories monitor SDG4, extra efforts are required to guarantee equitable access, retention and quality of education for all children and adolescents in the region and to report in accordance with international standards.

Information management and evidence-based decision-making are still a challenge for ECA countries. The 2016 *Eastern Caribbean Education Digest* was finalized, with technical support from UNICEF and the OECS, and was used as a key tool for guiding national authorities to
develop their own information-collection tools. Some of the countries covered by UNICEF ECA adopted the education management information system, while others adopted other platforms that also address their needs. The OECS Commission continues to be a key partner.

Education-in-emergencies is a must after the 2017 hurricane season’s impact in the region. UNICEF ECA began to engage with the OECS and CDEMA to develop a regional mechanism and provide guidance and technical support to countries to implement the resilient school strategy. The office is also considering providing hands-on support during 2018 at both national and school levels for developing and implementing school-based disaster risk management plans, involving teachers, students, parents and the broader community.

OUTPUT 3 Strengthened organizational capacity of key stakeholders to design and deliver equitable, inclusive and relevant education services, transitioning strategies and protective learning environments, including in emergencies, for all children and adolescents within rights-based educational frameworks and principles by 2021

Analytical statement of progress
Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and the BVI and TCI were severely impacted by large and strong Category 5 Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Thirty-three schools were destroyed and school systems impacted, leaving students without education services for extended periods. This exposed school’s vulnerabilities – quality of construction and lack of DRR planning – and underscored the importance of school safety policies and DRR programming, forcing governments to recommit to updating policies and practices in this regard. Some 16,205 children were targeted for psychosocial support; 86 per cent of the target had been reached by late 2017.

In partnership with the UWI School of Education, Cave Hill, UNICEF ECA supported seven Eastern Caribbean countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos) to engage national stakeholders around the out-of-school children’s study to further examine barriers to universal enrolment and successful school completion. National plans of action to address both academic and non-academic barriers in the short, medium and long term were developed. The plans, which are being finalized, have a strong focus on addressing the gender dimension of education completion since boys are almost twice as likely to repeat and drop out as are girls.

Integral to this process was strengthened UNICEF advocacy for better use of education data to improve learning outcomes. While all countries have systems in place to facilitate regular measurement of learning outcomes, this information is rarely used in a systematic way to address identified weak areas in students learning; this was identified as one of the major contributing factors to the large numbers of overage students. With the formal introduction of the effective schools framework in Turks and Caicos and BVI, all ECA programme countries are now participating and taking action to mainstream the effective school principles into their education systems. As primary schools consolidate and deepen rights-based, child-centred programming, greater emphasis is being placed on building capacity in secondary schools for more adolescent-centric policies and school practices.

Many countries have sought to address violence in schools within the wider context of school safety policies and discipline policies. St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, St. Lucia and Tobago also focused on developing schools’ capacity to implement school-wide positive behaviour support programming, with a strong focus on building life skills. Grenada and St.
Lucia are also collecting information on multi-faceted school- and community-based adolescent programmes to support adolescents in their academic and holistic development. This information will help these countries to better define a range of sectoral and cross-sectoral programmatic and policy approaches to address equity and equality gaps, and thus to better support adolescents’ learning, protection and overall development needs. UNICEF will continue, through technical support and political advocacy, to roll out the strategy and consolidate it in all ECA countries and territories.

OUTPUT 4 To support schools to maintain water and sanitation standards in emergency-affected countries.

Analytical statement of progress
The population with restored service following the hurricanes ranges from 70 per cent in the BVI to 90 per cent in the TCI. With the support of UNICEF and national partners, more than 37,000 persons in the affected population have access to safe water.

UNICEF is highly engaged in this sector in Dominica, with a number of ongoing actions: a waste-water treatment plant is being repaired through a standby arrangement facilitated by UNICEF; an agreement was signed with the state water provider on water rehabilitation systems that will provide permanent water services to 8,000 people; and an agreement was signed with the Ministry of Health for the implementation of a national hygiene promotion effort through mass media. With more schools reopening, over 19,000 children are now benefitting from access to functional handwashing facilities in schools, up from 16,000 at the last reporting period.

OUTCOME 3 By 2021, national legislation is implemented to prevent, mitigate and address violence and other childhood abuses and the justice, education, public health, security and other sectors observe children's rights to this protection.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017 UNICEF continued to address all forms of child abuse and the management of challenging behaviour by children and adolescents, including school-based peer on peer, physical violence and bullying. For example, available data indicate that 24 per cent of ECA secondary school children experience bullying at school and about 70 per cent experience physical violence or psychological abuse as a means of discipline at home. To address these issues, the safety and justice for children programme continued to provide key technical support to strengthen national child protection systems and stimulate positive behaviour change.

Key results to date are that eight of 12 countries now have national child abuse reporting and management protocols; and two countries have justice systems that comply with the minimum standards laid down in the Beijing Rules of Justice, with another four very close to meeting these standards. The knowledge and skills of approximately 3,000 duty-bearers and 80,000 rights-holders’ on keeping children safe from violence and health-related concerns was enhanced, through participatory processes that included adolescents as agents of change. Some 347,200 persons in three countries were sensitized on child abuse through traditional media, and approximately 242,300 persons via a social media child abuse campaign. A study on migrant children and their access to basic social services highlighted and promoted dialogue on the rights of migrant children in UK Overseas Territories. A total of 13,042 children impacted by humanitarian situations were reached with psychosocial support. UNICEF’s prior investment
in developing facilitators to provide psychosocial support for children and the willingness of unaffected countries to provide such expertise, indicated that psychosocial support for children could be widely institutionalized into emergency response planning.

Regular programming was tempered by the significant impact of the hurricanes in five countries as emergency programming took priority. This experience served to highlight gaps in the new protocols for safeguarding children. For one, the protocols do not address the cross-border movement of children in times of disaster. It is also concerning that the impetus for change comes largely from external partners, such as UNICEF and the OECS Commission, and other development partners. Further, the emergency exposed glaring gaps in child protection administrative data systems, which were unable to produce reports on demand in relation to child protection issues.

In all ECA countries UNICEF provided financial and technical support to the ministries responsible for education and child protection. It also played a convening role between ministries of education and child protection departments to promote joint work to implement stronger child protection programmes. UNICEF continued to work collaboratively with national governments, the OECS Commission, the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, the West Indies Cricket Board, and CDEMA. Two new partners for regular programming were the Dominica Football Association and the Barbados Red Cross. The hurricane emergency led to stronger partnerships with national departments responsible for health (mental health department in Dominica, and Ministry of Health in BVI); ADRA on WASH and prevention of mosquito-borne diseases (in BVI), IsraAID on psychosocial support (in Dominica), and FLOW Telecommunication (all emergency-affected countries) on a text messaging campaign to ensure affected populations had access to life-saving messages.

The programme will continue in 2018 with slight adjustments in hurricane-affected countries, and include the development of protocols for cross-border movement of children, based on lessons learned. Efforts to advance child protection data systems with the OECS Commission’s social development unit will be pursued in a bid to gain traction on enhancing the quality of production of national child protection digests.

An updated indicator status cannot be provided until further MICS are completed.

**OUTPUT 1** By 2021, there will be increased country capacity to promote and ensure justice and systems that enable the prevention and treatment of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect

**Analytical statement of progress**
Countries are making progress in establishing national protocols and standards to cover both children in need of care and protection and those in conflict with the law. By 2017 eight of 12 countries had national management protocols for responding and handling child abuse. While only two countries have justice systems that comply with the minimum standards laid down in the Beijing Rules of Justice, another four are very close to meeting these standards. This progress was achieved with UNICEF’s support for: high-level advocacy urging ministers responsible for child protection to take action and finalize draft protocols; technical assistance to support the drafting, consultation and finalization of protocols; capacity enhancement processes with multi-sectoral stakeholders for applying the protocols in educational, health, social services and law enforcement settings; and printing and distribution of the protocols to reinforce their availability and use. UNICEF also ensured facilitators’ readiness to provide psychosocial support for children in emergency response planning.
Some bottlenecks emerged. The significant impacts of the 2017 hurricane season on five of 12 programme countries showed that the child abuse reporting and management protocols require greater institutionalization across all sectors to effectively respond to child protection issues. Shelter management showed immediate weaknesses in relation to preventing and responding to the risks of child abuse, and national facilitators of psychosocial support for children were themselves too traumatized, or displaced, to render immediate support to children. In addition, the experience showed that apart from logistical preparation, national social services must also promote resiliency among clients and providers alike.

Protocol development was spearheaded by ministries responsible for child protection, in collaboration with ministries of education, health and security. UNICEF’s emergency response was carried out with these entities, alongside the OECS Commission and the Government of Saint Lucia, which provided external facilitators from unaffected countries to deliver psychosocial support to children, and with IsraAID for the response in Dominica.

Project cooperation agreements with the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, UWI Open Campus and OECS Commission will standardize and institutionalize capacity enhancement programming on key child protection issues and protocols, taking the foregoing lessons into account. UNICEF will also work with the OECS Commission and national governments to develop linkages and protocols with border control entities on the movement of children in and outside of humanitarian settings.

Baselines were established in 2017 through an independent appraisal process in collaboration with the OECS Commission, and will be monitored annually for updates.

OUTPUT 2 Strengthened political commitment and accountability to legislate and budget for strengthening interventions that prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect

Analytical statement of progress
Despite consistently slow legislative processes for enacting OECS model family law bills a number of countries enacted new legislation; some bills are at an advanced stage of the approval process, and others are under serious consideration for incorporating key CRC articles into national legislation. In the independent countries, persistent advocacy by the OECS and UNICEF continued to drive reform. In the UK OTs, the child safeguarding remit of the UK Government has been the main impetus for change. Progress was achieved through high-level advocacy for bills drafted with assistance from UNICEF or other development partners. UNICEF’s evidence-generation on the state of national child protection systems presented both the positives and the gaps in state provision. Legal reform processes are continually widening in response to emerging challenges.

UNICEF also finalized studies highlighting challenges for migrant children, children who have been institutionalized and adolescents who should benefit from diversion programming, which served to draw attention to these issues during the active hurricane season of 2017. More work is required on cross-border protocols for children in humanitarian situations. This work will be undertaken with the CARICOM Secretariat and the wider-UN system, so that its results can serve the wider Caribbean region.
The emergency situation highlighted the glaring gaps in child protection administrative data systems, which were unable to produce reports on demand, in relation to child protection issues. Efforts to address these deficiencies with the Statistical Unit of the OECS Commission did not materialize. Therefore in 2018, UNICEF ECA will engage with the social development unit of the OECS Commission to gain traction on enhancing the production of national child protection digests, based on lessons learned.

The baseline was established in 2017 through an independent assessment in collaboration with the OECS Commission and will be monitored by annual updates.

OUTPUT 3 capacity for positive practices

Analytical statement of progress

All forms of child abuse continued to be addressed, including peer-on-peer physical school violence and bullying. Changing the attitudes of educators and the public about the use of corporal punishment remained a challenge. The region also continued to be vulnerable to natural and man-made hazards, putting children at risk for water- and mosquito-borne illnesses.

Interventions supported or implemented by UNICEF ECA sought to: increase duty-bearers’ and rights-holders’ knowledge and skills of how to keep children safe from violence and health-related concerns. Processes were participatory and included adolescents as agents of change.

Key results to date include:

- The knowledge and skills of approximately 80,000 school students across five countries (Trinidad, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica and Barbados) were enhanced on prevention and reporting of sexual abuse and bullying, including cyber bullying.
- 26,500 children in the five emergency countries have improved knowledge about how to protect themselves from violence and health-related concerns.
- Approximately 3,000 professionals across five countries have improved knowledge and skills to identify, prevent and respond to child sexual abuse in their various settings. This includes: all educators in Anguilla, BVI and TCI, who have enhanced capacity to implement positive disciplinary practices; 200 teachers in Antigua with improved knowledge and skills to prevent and report sexual abuse; approximately 50 per cent of ECD supervisors in St. Lucia with enhanced knowledge and skills to teach young children about sexual abuse and bullying in a culturally and age appropriate manner.
- In three countries, approximately 347,200 people were sensitized on child abuse through traditional media and approximately 242,300 persons via a social media child abuse campaign.
- Children and adolescents gained opportunities for sensitizing their peers on child protection issues and DRR.

The main bottleneck was that progress towards results was hampered in the five countries that were impacted by the hurricanes, since emergency programming took priority.

In all countries, UNICEF provided financial and technical support to ministries responsible for education and child protection. In addition, UNICEF played a convening role between the ministries of education and child protection departments, especially in of Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia and Barbados, as these stakeholders work jointly to implement programmes to better
UNICEF continued to work collaboratively with national governments, the OECS Commission, the West Indies Cricket Board and CDEMA. Two new partners for regular programming in 2017 were the Dominica Football Association and the Barbados Red Cross. The emergency caused by the hurricanes provided opportunities to pursue additional partnerships, with: departments responsible for health; Dominica’s mental health department; ADRA on WASH and prevention of mosquito-borne diseases in the BVI) and with FLOW Telecommunication on a text messaging campaign to ensure that affected populations had access to life-saving messages.

The programme will continue as planned in 2018, with slight adjustments of activities (but not programmatic focus) in hurricane-affected countries.

**OUTPUT 4** Child Protection in Emergencies will ensure safe and non-discriminatory assistance, prevention, mitigation and response to physical violence and abuse, including gender-based violence, exploitation of children and adolescents, and provide psychosocial support in safe places.

**Analytical statement of progress**
As of 13 December, some 13,042 (76.3 per cent) of children in the five affected countries (Anguilla, Barbuda, BVI, Dominica and TCI) have benefitted from psychosocial support and a total of 12,869 (62.2 per cent) of children and adolescents have accessed safe community spaces, as a result of programming by UNICEF and partners. Previous and ongoing training of facilitators in the RTH psychosocial support programme enabled standby capacity to support countries in delivery of this service. The OECS Commission provided outstanding partnership by facilitating operationalization of this standby arrangement between countries.

UNICEF also took the opportunity of the presence of IsraAID, an NGO committed to providing life-saving disaster relief and long-term support on the island of Dominica. Their teams of post-trauma experts and community mobilizers were among the first on the front lines of nearly every major humanitarian response, and in partnership with UNICEF, have provided efficient support to meet the changing needs of that population of children and their families, as they strive to move from crisis to reconstruction/rehabilitation. In addition to IsraAID, the OECS Commission, local ministries of health, social development, education and national NGOs were instrumental in ensuring that affected populations of children were reached with psychosocial support.

Equally, UNICEF’s prior investment in developing the capacity of facilitators to provide psychosocial support for children, and the willingness of unaffected countries to provide such expertise, showed readiness in the sub-region for institutionalizing psychosocial support for children in emergency response planning. Among next steps will be fine-tuning a psychosocial support programme that is appropriate for adolescents.

**OUTCOME 4** By 2021, national systems and policies are effectively addressing multiple deprivations affecting the most vulnerable boys and girls across the lifecycle, and building their resilience, through adequately funded social investments and rights-based quality social policies on the basis of adequately disaggregated data on children.
Analytical statement of progress
In line with the SDG1 commitment to halve poverty, UNICEF worked in partnership with the OECS Commission and national statistical offices to accomplish the first milestone: establishing child poverty baselines for 11 of the 12 ECA countries and territories. The poverty analysis initiative revealed that potentially more than 188,000 (33 per cent) of region’s children live in poverty and that child poverty is consistently higher than adult and national poverty rates across all islands. The evidence generated in 2017 provides an opportunity to position child poverty at the top of national development priorities and serves as an invaluable source for advocacy and further technical support to strengthening social protection policies and systems.

Effective measures were put in place during 2017 to build governments’ capacity to systematically monitor the situation of child rights, through monetary child poverty analysis, technical assistance on survey tools for SDG monitoring and poverty assessments and advocacy with countries on incorporating child-focused data collection. UNICEF provided technical assistance through consultancies and in-country expertise, data tools for calculating child poverty and capacity-building in data collection and analysis. The OECS Commission was a key partner providing regional convening, coordination and implementation support. Enabling environments for establishing an integrated social protection policy in several OECS countries will contribute towards improving the lives of about 400,000 children. Public finance reform is also strategy being utilized to strengthen the enabling environment.

UNICEF will build on the good practices and continue in 2018 its support on mainstreaming of child poverty (monetary and multidimensional) in survey analysis and employ a mix of strategies for strengthening demand, capacity building and preparations for filling data gaps on child-related SDGs. New data dissemination and engagement will be promoted through social media.

OUTPUT 1 Strengthened national and subnational human and institutional capacities to develop and deliver inclusive and equitable social protection systems to strengthen the resilience of and protect boys and girls from all forms of poverty and social exclusion.

Analytical statement of progress
The British Virgin Islands drafted a national plan of action for children and Trinidad and Tobago, a national child policy to help inform national development planning and budgeting for 7,367 and 300,000 children respectively. Antigua and Barbuda, working closely with UNICEF ECA, has reviewed its social protection legislation and is developing an inclusive national social protection policy to allow for increased coverage and provide quality services, including social and cash transfers, for about 6,562 poor and vulnerable children and families.

As part of the UNICEF/UNDP joint programme on multidimensional poverty, Trinidad and Tobago conducted 14 regional consultations to capture community-based inputs, including the voices of children, to inform the development of a national poverty reduction strategy that would impact over 300,000 children. UNICEF advocacy on child poverty in Trinidad and Tobago continues, working closely with NGO partners active in communities.

The monetary child poverty analysis by UNICEF and the OECS Commission – with members from eight countries and three overseas territories–will not only provide data for SDG reporting, but also data and information needed to strengthen the delivery of social protection programmes for nearly 400,000 children vulnerable to poverty. The analysis was focused on monetary poverty, but provides an opportunity to influence the development and methodology of the survey tool to be used in country poverty assessments in 2018.
Dominica implemented a joint emergency cash transfer targeting 6,000 children after Hurricane Maria in September, with support from UNICEF and WFP.

OUTPUT 2 Improved national and sub-national capacities to systematically collect, analyze and use disaggregated data and other forms of information to monitor, inform policy decisions, and report on the situation of children and child poverty in all of its dimension, using an equity-based approach.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017 UNICEF and the OECS Commission produced the report on child poverty in the ECA, providing for the first time disaggregated poverty data on children. The initiative was key to understanding child poverty levels in 11 of the 12 ECA states. It revealed that 33 per cent of the region’s children are poor and that child poverty is consistently higher than adult and national poverty rates. The findings from the analysis not only contributed to SDG1 monitoring but also facilitated engagement in evidence-informed discussions about strengthening social protection systems. The analysis was undertaken in partnership with the OECS Commission, CDB and CSOs. The OECS Commission coordinated implementation and UNICEF provided technical contributions throughout the process. A highlight of this initiative was a technical assistance mission in Anguilla, where the country’s social protection programmes were presented and assessed against child poverty results to better pinpoint areas in need of further review and stress vulnerability. The Anguillian government committed to include the analysis in their regular statistical activities. The OECS Commission, CDB and statistical offices were convinced to integrate child poverty in the next round of country poverty assessment reports.

UNICEF supported capacity development for the implementation of child rights and SDG-monitoring tools, such as the MICS and child poverty assessments. The CSO in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, OECS Commission and CDB were equipped with knowledge for designing and implementing a MICS and development of the survey plan is ongoing, despite the country’s heavy survey schedule in 2017-2018. Efforts are continuing in the sub-region to promote the mainstreaming of MICS in the sustainable data plan of statistical activities and to strengthen demand at the national level.

After consistent follow-up with the Ministry of Social Development and CSO in Trinidad and Tobago, in 2017 national authorities officially endorsed the release of the MICS4 report. This will provide both valuable baselines for monitoring SDGs and an opportunity to re-establish capacity to continue the survey programme in Trinidad and Tobago.

In collaboration with CSOs from all ECA islands, UNICEF compiled data on key population groups based on the 2011-2012 round of population census. This revealed not only the number of children in each country and territory, but also provided key information for emergency preparedness and humanitarian response planning.

Following the impact of hurricanes Irma and Maria, UNICEF ECA, with technical support from UNICEF LACRO, provided regular updates on humanitarian performance monitoring. Key indicator data on WASH, child protection, education, C4D and cash transfer in emergencies was disseminated weekly and played a critical role in monitoring the humanitarian response plan, as well as for generating situation reports, donor reports and advocacy material.

Going forward, UNICEF will build on these good practices and support the mainstreaming of
child poverty analysis (monetary and multidimensional) in reporting; continue the mix of strategies for strengthening demand, building capacity and preparing to fill data gaps on child-related SDGs; and promote innovative data dissemination.

**OUTPUT 3** Enhanced national systems that govern the volume, efficiency and impact of invested resources towards building resilience of the most vulnerable boys, girls and adolescents.

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF ECA supported budget analyses for investments in children in the BVI and Montserrat to generate evidence allowing ministries of finance and sectoral ministries to make better-informed decisions related to strategic planning and budgeting for women and children. Dissemination workshops took place to incorporate key findings and recommendations of the analyses into 2018 budget preparations and sector-specific strategic plans that will have impact on about 10,000 children. UNICEF convened and mobilized ministries of finance and sectoral ministries to prepare budget and plans against the results identified, to improve the well-being of children in the two overseas territories.

As a result of the emergency response to hurricanes Irma and Maria, it was important to capture the vulnerability profiles of affected households, particularly those with children. UNICEF advocated and provided technical support/data collection for vulnerability needs assessment in Antigua, Barbuda, the BVI and Dominica, and for systematic management of the information collected. These vulnerability profiles will improve the design and equity focus of social and cash transfer programmes to increase coverage for vulnerable women and children.

Results-based management capacity to plan is continuing and not yet well translated into sectoral plans with policy makers and identifying results to achieve for children proves to be a challenge. Limited availability and access to data is also a factor affecting planning and budgeting and ensuring that measureable indicators are selected to capture progress for women and children. Work on this output was suspended due to the emergency response and recovery.

Efforts related to efficient and effective management of national resources began in St. Kitts and Nevis, specifically to evaluate the social and cash transfer programme that supports the most vulnerable population. The evaluation intends to support Government efforts to scale up from a pilot programme and reach about 5,690 poor and vulnerable children and families, as part of efforts to promote resilience.

**Document centre**

**Evaluation and research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sequence Number</th>
<th>Type of Report</th>
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<tr>
<td>Situation Analysis of Children in Saint Lucia</td>
<td>2017/008</td>
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### Situation Analysis of Children in Antigua & Barbuda
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- **Type:** 2017/003
- **Name:** SitAn

### Assessment of the Child Justice Systems in the OECS
- **Title:** Assessment of the Child Justice Systems in the OECS
- **Type:** 2017/002
- **Name:** Review

### Study on Children in Situations of Migration and Statelessness in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories
- **Title:** Study on Children in Situations of Migration and Statelessness in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories
- **Type:** 2017/001
- **Name:** Study

### Other publications

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Development Data Snapshot: TCI</td>
<td>AWP/RWP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Development Data Snapshot - Montserrat</td>
<td>AWP/RWP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Development Data Snapshot - BVI</td>
<td>AWP/RWP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Development Data Snapshot - Anguilla</td>
<td>AWP/RWP</td>
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<td>Budget Analysis Investment in Children in St Lucia</td>
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<td>Fiscal Space Social Protection in St Lucia</td>
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<td>All in School – Global Initiative on Out of School Youth in the Eastern Caribbean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Brief: Designing effective diversion programmes - Initiatives from the Eastern Caribbean area</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Montserrat National Child Protection and Safeguarding Protocol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study of Children in Situations of Migration and Statelessness in the Caribbean Overseas Territories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study of Former Wards of Children Homes in Grenada</td>
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<tr>
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### Programme documents

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