

Ecuador

Executive Summary

The year 2015 was the first year of the new cooperation programme with the Government for 2015-2018. An agreement was reached on the UN development assistance framework (UNDAF) products and deliverables for which the UN in Ecuador is accountable. The decrease in oil prices and appreciation of the US dollar (national currency of Ecuador) pose significant challenges to the national economy. The 2016 budget has decreased by some 18 per cent compared to 2015. Maintaining and increasing achievements in the social area will be a challenge going forward. Furthermore, there was a sharp increase in natural disaster threats last year, with the new eruptive cycle of the Cotopaxi volcano and the early warning of a strong “El Niño”. Given the current economic and emergency outlook, which was not foreseen at the time of the design of the current cooperation programme, there may be a need to review the amounts planned.

Four main areas of achievement should be noted: 1) Ecuador increased the minimum legal age for marriage to 18 years for both boys and girls (versus 12 years for girls and 14 for boys before). Along with a similar initiative in Mexico, this led to the adoption of the same minimum legal age in Guatemala. 2) The local action initiative “Including All” that promotes inclusion in education via the tracing of out-of-school children is now incorporated into the Ministry of Education’s (ME) national strategy for rollout across five of the nine planning zones, with support from UNICEF and local NGOs, working with other government institutions. This work was recognised as a “best practice” on rights-based programming by UNICEF Headquarters (HQ). 3) For the first time the outcome document of the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa included commitments related to dedicated financing for children and adolescents. Ecuador played a significant part in this through the Third International Seminar on Investment in Children, held in May in Quito, promoted and supported by UNICEF, and the side event at the Addis conference hosted by the Government of Ecuador. 4) Evidence shared on Ecuador’s experience with the “traffic light” labelling mechanism for processed foods to reduce obesity, led to the promotion of similar strategies in other countries in 2015 (Bolivia, Mexico and Uruguay).

In relation to shortfalls and challenges: 1) It will be of paramount importance to ensure that the proposed new legislation and new rights protection system maintain the specialised provisions and dedicated mechanisms for children’s and adolescents rights, to ensure their “absolute priority” as per the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified by Ecuador in 1990. 2) Reinforcing capacity at the local level is key to the implementation of the national development plan, particularly in more vulnerable regions along the northern border and parts of the coast, Andes and Amazon regions, where low capacity and high turnover of duty-bearers leads to significant equity gaps in comparison to national averages across most sectors. 3) Whereas significant progress has been made in disaster risk reduction since the introduction of the national disaster management agency in 2008, further work is required to reinforce emergency preparedness and response capacity, as evidenced during the Cotopaxi volcano eruption and preparations for the approaching El Niño.

In the area of partnerships, a strategic alliance with the National Assembly allowed UNICEF Ecuador to effectively advocate for an increase in the legal age to marry and promote oversight of the national budget for the social sector and for children and adolescents. In relation to the private sector, strategic alliances with private corporations allowed UNICEF to mobilise resources from both individuals and corporations.

Finally: 1) UNICEF Ecuador strengthened its work at the local level, particularly along the northern border, to strengthen downstream work aimed at: improving monitoring and situation analysis, developing effective models to feed into the Office's upstream advocacy work on national public policy and C4D work with communities. 2) Greater emphasis has been placed on bottleneck analysis – extended to chronic nutrition, violence, education, social protection and birth registration – at the local and national levels to improve programme effectiveness. 3) UNICEF Ecuador has extended the scope of its C4D strategy from breast-feeding to include chronic malnutrition, sanitation, violence, emergencies and epidemic outbreaks. 4) Furthermore, due to the wide range of natural disaster risks in Ecuador, the Country Office devoted technical and financial resources to support capacity development at the local and national levels for emergency preparation and prevention, working with the ministries of Disaster Management, Education, Social Protection, Education, Health and Water and Sanitation.

Humanitarian Assistance

UNICEF Ecuador continued mainstreaming the integration of the child/adolescent resilience and the rights-based approach into national emergency and disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies, with support from the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO) and the non government organization, RET, focusing on protection; education; nutrition; health; and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) through the implementation and dissemination of the manual “Actions for child and youth resilience: Guidelines for governments”.

In addition to high activity levels of the Tungurahua and Reventador volcanoes, on August 14 the Cotopaxi volcano entered a new eruptive cycle. This volcano has a history of devastating eruptions roughly every 130 years (the last in 1877) during which large-scale, violent pyroclastic floods, lava and ashes cause massive havoc. These pyroclastic floods could now affect some 150,000 persons directly in the lava path and expose up to 800,000 inhabitants to volcanic gas and ashes in at least three provinces. The Geophysics Institute (IGEPN), which measures continued volcanic activities, predicts that a level-3 or level-4 eruption could occur in the coming months or years.

The national government declared a state of emergency and asked the ministries' heads of sectors to prepare for a large eruption, mainly instructing the Ministry of Security Coordination (MICS) as well as the Ministries of Risk Management (SGR), Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES), Water and Sanitation (SENAGUA), Education (ME) and Health (MSP) and others to develop their own contingency plans and coordinate with the international humanitarian organisations in the preparation of a response to a possible disaster. UNICEF provides direct technical assistance at the national and decentralised levels and coordinates with all these ministries and partners, through the corresponding clusters, with a lead role in inter-cluster WASH, nutrition and education.

Faced with this imminent threat, UNICEF played a key role in reactivating the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and provided funds for early response (first 72 hours) with supplies of ECD kits, hygiene kits, aquatabs, tarpaulins, Vitamin A and protection kits for psychosocial support. UNICEF is part of a consortium of four humanitarian organisations that provided the

ME with 46,616 volcanic kits for school children (18,860 kits provided by UNICEF) and completed the outfitting of its humanitarian situation room with video walls. UNICEF, as part of the HCT, supported the MICS through supervision of one national simulation and two municipal simulations in Machachi and Latacunga.

Based on its measurements of the temperature in the Pacific Ocean, the International El Niño Research Centre alerted the countries in South America to an eventual El Niño emergency during the first quarter of 2016. The most recent SGR contingency plan included 426,064 people affected by floods and massive landslides mainly in the coastal provinces. The SENAGUA and SGR contingency plan estimated a total of 1,438,146 affected persons in 14 provinces.

UNICEF trained municipal technical teams to strengthen organisation and coordination with the provincial government of Esmeraldas. UNICEF prepared two scenarios to plan the response: one in Esmeraldas, to support 19 shelters with 3,922 persons and 981 families, and another at the national level, with the HCT, in 381 shelters with 62,563 persons and 31,282 children to be provided with ECD kits, hygiene kits, water tabs, tarpaulins, vitamin A, mosquito nets, and psychosocial support kits.

The process implemented with the SGR in designing the C4D strategy for the Cotopaxi Volcano emergency helped to highlight the importance of executing specific communication processes for people to care for their own health and that of others, particularly children, adolescents and pregnant women.

The MSP was advised and accompanied in the design, dissemination and internal training for preparation of a communication and social mobilisation plan to prevent an emergency around the chikungunya virus; and in the design and internal promotion of the preparation and response plan for the El Niño phenomenon. Despite these efforts, at least 33,495 cases of chikungunya (and 41,998 dengue cases) were registered so far (a 500 per cent increase of vector-related diseases in Ecuador compared with 2014), as national prevention activities were of insufficient scale and too late for effective containment. Nevertheless, being a part of these processes made it possible to create conditions for the protection of the rights of children and adolescents through the highlighting of specific actions to be taken to protect the lives and physical, psychological and emotional integrity of children, adolescents and pregnant women. It is important to continue strengthening the implementation of better-articulated and more effective strategies focussing on communities. In addition, internal coordination between the MSP's directorates of epidemiological surveillance, communication, information and image; health promotion; risk management and prevention and control strategies was consolidated.

Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan

UNICEF Ecuador continued to fulfil the core business of UNICEF by monitoring the situation and fulfilment of children's rights and generating evidence to contribute to the formulation of public policy. Moreover, a substantive part of UNICEF-supported actions aims at influencing (sub-) national policies and programmes. Where needed, this work is complemented with the implementation of model projects at the sub-national level, particularly in selected areas where the most disadvantaged populations are living. Further emphasis on the combination of 'upstream' policy work together with sub-national level modelling, also in the context of middle-income countries, allows for a continuous learning and obtaining evidence from local experiences that could be used to design and strengthen national policies and programmes. In 2015, UNICEF Ecuador launched a study on child labour with Ecuador's National Institute of

Statistics and Census (INEC), reviewing the past 10 years and proposing geographic priority areas. In addition, together with the National Council on Intergenerational Equality (CNII), Social Observatory of Ecuador (OSE), Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision and Care, UNICEF Ecuador promoted the 'Survey of Children and Adolescents 2015', with particular attention to the issue of violence against children and adolescents. The final report is expected in the first quarter of 2016. Furthermore, in order to monitor the implementation of recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF provided guidelines to the main governmental institutions currently responsible for the preparation of the official report (March 2016) and to civil society organisations, for the next reporting cycle on implementation of the CRC.

Increasingly, the programmatic role of UNICEF is evolving and addressing emerging issues that affect the rights of girls, boys and adolescents. Ecuador Country Office work on the following emerging issues is not fully mentioned in the Strategic Plan: a) Emerging health agenda - health systems strengthening, non-communicable diseases, obesity, adolescent health; b) integrated early childhood development (ECD); c) inclusive education with specific attention to rural and indigenous people (for primary and secondary education); and d) prevention of adolescent pregnancy and linking such efforts with addressing (sexual) violence against girls. It is suggested that these areas should be better reflected in the Strategic Plan, through specific results and indicators. Moreover, it is suggested to review programme information database coding so that such emerging programme issues are adequately reflected. This will also allow for better reporting on results and funding spent.

Several programmes have identified, as part of the analysis of barriers and bottlenecks, the need to address social norms, and therefore include a component of behavioural change communication (C4D). This is currently not a specific strategy in the Strategic Plan. Nevertheless C4D strategy is a central component of the UNICEF Ecuador programme response in emergencies, malnutrition, sanitation, violence and chikungunya, among others. It is suggested that reconsideration be given to re-introducing C4D as one of UNICEF's corporate strategies. This will also allow for better reflection and reporting on the type of work ongoing using C4D approaches.

UNICEF Ecuador supports South-South cooperation (SSC) through the exchange of best practices from Ecuador (such as work on legal age for marriage, information management systems, labelling of food and drinks, budgeting for children etc.) and from other countries in the region (Peru's approach to reducing chronic malnutrition, M&E from Colombia, social protection from Costa Rica amongst many others). Based on the 2030 Agenda and the evolving changes in the aid environment it is expected that the application of this strategy will only continue to increase. However, so far it has been difficult to demonstrate UNICEF's value-added to obtaining specific results for children through SSC. Therefore, it is recommended to continue to provide global tools for measuring the results of SSC, including as part of the MTR. Linked to SSC is also the need to strengthen UNICEF's knowledge-management function. Although efforts are made at country office level, it is also recommended to increase global efforts to strengthen knowledge management. This could also include increased emphasis on supporting evaluation of (sub-) national policies and programmes rather than focusing on UNICEF programmes only. With limited resources available, a shift in attention to the type of evaluations expected is suggested.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

BCP - Business continuity plan
C4D - Communication for development
CCC - Core Commitments for Children
CIIFEN - International El Niño Research Centre
CMT - Country management team
CNII - National Council on Intergenerational Equality
CPAP - Country Programme action plan
CPD - Rights Protection Centre
CPMP - Country Programme management plan
CRB - Central Review Body
CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO - Civil society organisations
DECE - Department of Student Counselling
DFAM - Division of Financial and Administrative Management (UNICEF)
DRR - Disaster risk reduction
ECD - Early childhood development
ECLAC - United Nations UNICEF Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ENSANUT - National health and nutrition survey
EPR - Emergency preparedness and response
ERM - Enterprise risk management
EWEA - Early warning early action
FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization (United Nations)
FUNDIC - Foundation for the Child and Community (NGO)
GAD - Decentralised autonomous government
GBV - Gender-based violence
GSSC - Global Shared Service Centre
HACT - Harmonised approach to cash transfers
HCT - Humanitarian country team (UN)
HRBA - Human rights-based approach
ICT - Information and communication technology
INEC National Institute of Statistics and Census
JCC - Joint consultative committee
LAC - Latin America and the Caribbean
LACRO - Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office (UNICEF)
LPSB - Local property survey board
MCDS - Ministry of Social Development Coordination
MDG - Millennium Development Goal
ME - Ministry of Education
MF - Ministry of Finance
MI - Ministry of the Interior
MIC - Middle-income country
MICS - Ministry of Security Coordination
MIES - Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion
MJDHC - Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Religion
MoU - Memorandum of understanding
MRL - Ministry of Labour Relations
MRM - Monitoring and reporting mechanism
MSP - Ministry of Public Health
NYHQ - New York Headquarters (UNICEF)

OHCHR - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN)
 OR - Other resources
 OSE - Social Observatory of Ecuador
 PAHO - Pan American Health Organization
 PBR – Programme budget review
 PCA - Programme cooperation agreement
 PCARC - Programme cooperation agreement review committee
 PFP - Private fundraising and partnerships (UNICEF)
 PNBV - Plan Nacional de Desarrollo para el Buen Vivir (National Development Plan for Good Living)
 PSFR - Private-sector fundraising
 PUCE - Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador
 RBM - Results-based management
 RC -Resident Coordinator
 RET - Protecting Through Education
 RO -Regional Office
 RR - Regular resources
 RRD - Reduction of risks and disasters
 SENAGUA - Secretary of Water
 SENPLADES - National Secretariat for Planning and Development
 SETECI - Technical Secretariat for International Cooperation
 SGR - Secretary of Risk Management
 SLA - Service-level agreement
 SSC - South-South cooperation
 TA - Temporary appointment
 UASB - Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar
 UNASUR - Union of South America Nations
 UNAIDS - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
 UNDAF - United Nations Development Assistance Framework
 UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
 UNDSS - United Nations Department of Safety and Security
 UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund
 UNHCR -United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
 UNICEF -United Nations Children’s Fund
 UNWOMEN - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment
 VAC - Violence against Children
 WFP - World Food Program
 WHO - World Health Organization

Capacity Development

UNICEF Ecuador continued its efforts to build policy development capacity with key line ministries and national structures, and also fostered positive social norms and behaviours.

Capacity development focused on justice operators and police, regarding issues related to application of the best interest of the child in decision-making and protecting children from online abuse. A significant effort was also made with the ME to build the capacity of multidisciplinary student counselling teams (DECEs) to promote inclusion, diversity, culture of peace and prevention of violence, teenage pregnancy and drug abuse. The ME’s capacity was strengthened at all levels in the management of inclusion strategies. Health professionals from the MSP were trained in the prevention of maternal and neonatal mortality and breastfeeding

counselling was giving to community educators from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Through the ‘Third International Seminar on Investment in Children’ 260 participants from governments, civil society and academia in 23 countries in the region strengthened their capacities to monitor investment in children and to improve the quality of those investments. Contributions from this seminar also enriched the Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development.

The capacity of local actors from northern border areas was built in the areas of violence prevention, educational inclusion, and health and nutrition promotion. In a joint effort with other UN agencies, UNICEF fully implemented two joint programs (on human security and food security), with a strong emphasis on strengthening institutional capacity of local actors and services.

UNICEF Ecuador enhanced public servants’ knowledge and skills for producing accurate and rights-based information to promote positive changes, through a communication for development course implemented in collaboration with the Simon Bolivar University (UASB), which was later incorporated by the University into its course offerings.

In addition, UNICEF Ecuador also launched a national campaign to prevent violence against children (VAC) with a strong message that violence should not be tolerated for any reason.

Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy

UNICEF Ecuador paid special attention to the generation of evidence. During 2015, a study on child labour, reviewing the past 10 years and proposing territorial prioritisation was produced in collaboration with INEC. In addition, together with CNII, OSE, Save, Plan International, World Vision and Care, UNICEF Ecuador promoted the ‘Survey of Children and Adolescents 2015’, with particular focus on VAC (the report on this survey is expected in the first quarter 2016).

Furthermore, a baseline survey on bullying and violence among peers in schools was created, in partnership with World Vision, to support the ME. The survey covered over 5,000 students in some 100 schools. This is the first time that Ecuador has conducted an investigation of this scope on the theme.

All these evidence generation initiatives to inform dialogue used an equity approach. UNICEF Ecuador continued to support the search to find children and adolescents excluded from the right to an education. The reasons behind exclusion were registered and provided to the guarantor institutions that should act to restore this right.

One landscape analysis and one bottleneck analysis were jointly conducted with the Pan-American Health Organization//World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) to support the Ministry of Social Development Coordination (MCDS) and MSP to reduce undernutrition and maternal and neonatal mortality, respectively. Evidence generation was also produced to reinforce innovative strategies to tackle the overweight and obesity epidemic, such as the “Traffic Light Labelling System” and “sugared drinks tax”. Furthermore, the second edition of the national health and nutrition survey was published with INEC, MSP and MCDS, providing data on the sexual and reproductive health of women of childbearing age and the health of new-borns.

Partnerships

In a joint effort with PAHO, UNICEF Ecuador renewed a cooperation agreement with the National Assembly to support the preparation and monitoring of legislative measures related to promoting children's rights and ensuring harmonisation with human rights principles and international instruments.

In the context of the global 'A Promise Renewed' initiative, UNICEF Ecuador strengthened its partnerships with key national and decentralised government structures (MCDS, MSP, MIES, ME, municipalities) and with local communities, to contribute to the reduction of chronic malnutrition through the Sustainable Development Goal Fund-supported programme on food security and nutrition, implemented in Imbabura, jointly with PAHO/WHO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP). A bilateral four-year plan was developed and a biannual action plan signed between the ME and UNICEF to foster educational inclusion.

UNICEF continued supporting corporate engagement in the national network for a child labour free Ecuador, as an important private-public partnership for applying UNICEF's children's rights and business principles. In addition, a new public-private partnership was consolidated through UNICEF's coordination of the national working group for online protection of children. The three major communication companies – Telefónica, Claro and CNT (national public communication corporation) – were members of this group, in the context of the GSMA partnership.

UNICEF Ecuador established a partnership with Sesame Workshop, and an agreement with RTV Ecuador (Ecuadorian public TV) to develop a special series to promote healthy habits and pro-social skills in the children of Ecuador during early childhood.

UASB was another key partner for UNICEF Ecuador. Through this alliance a communication for development course was launched and later institutionalised at the University.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

Two fundamental themes for children were positioned on the country's public and media agenda: investment in children and VAC.

In the case of investment in children, a high-level regional event was organised in conjunction with Ecuadorian Government authorities, which enjoyed participation by more than 260 people, including delegations from 23 states. In parallel, a bilateral agenda was organised for UNICEF's deputy executive director with the highest authorities of the Ecuadorian Government and regional organisations. As a result of these activities, the experiences of Ecuador and the region in the area of investment were shared in a parallel event to the Third Conference of the UN on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Subsequently, in November a cycle of public discussion of the general state budget state for 2016 was organised in Ecuador, where the authorities presented information on the resources destined for children and received recommendations. Furthermore, citizens requested that a concrete budget for the prevention of violence against children be included.

In October the #AhoraQueLoVes (Now You See It) campaign was launched with the purpose of changing attitudes and behaviour patterns that normalise/ tolerate/accept violence against children. The campaign plan is aligned with the new cycle of cooperation (2015-2018). By late 2015 numerous public figures, communication media, cinemas and interested citizens had

joined. The campaign reached 7,927,222 people through news in the press, radio and TV; almost 33,000 followers on Facebook; and 25,000 people through movie theatres every weekend.

An alliance between UNICEF Ecuador, Sesame Workshop and RTV Ecuador was established to develop a special series to promote healthy habits and prosocial skills among Ecuadorian children.

Web pages in Spanish and English were renewed.

The CRC was disseminated to 19,000 families at national level through the distribution of a national newspaper.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

A technical exchange between the National Planning Department in Colombia and Ecuador's National Secretariat for Planning and Development (SENPLADES) was established, with support from both UNICEF country offices, in order to acquire in-depth knowledge of the monitoring and evaluation system used in Colombia. This exchange was crucial to attempting for the first time in Ecuador to implement an annual evaluation plan, including a management model.

UNICEF supported the Union of South America Nations (UNASUR) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the organisation of a regional seminar on human rights, with an expert conference on children's rights, which provided a few concrete proposals for UNASUR to address children's rights and principles when providing policy guidelines to participating state members. This participation set the stage for initial discussions of broader strategic cooperation between UNICEF and UNASUR, which will require support from the UNICEF Regional Office (LACRO).

With support from UNICEF country offices in Panama and Ecuador, the two countries increased their exchanges of experiences with social inclusion policies, which began in 2014 and continued in 2015. The MCDS provided assessment for the design of the social agenda for Panama. As a result of these initiatives, the two governments are in the process of establishing a SSC agreement with a focus on social policies.

Ecuador and Mexico shared lessons learned from the process of raising the minimum age for marriage at an international seminar held in Guatemala, which led to a change in Guatemalan legislation, increasing the legal age for marriage from 14 to 18. In addition, UNICEF Ecuador received a request from the Ecuadorian Government for an exchange with Peru to improve the health unit's birth registration system. The Country Office was coordinating with the Ministry of Health and the National Civil Registration office in Ecuador.

Support for cooperation with Peru contributed to the recently announced bi-national plan, focused on health and nutrition programmes in the Amazon region on the common border.

Identification and Promotion of Innovation

During 2015, thanks to the systematic work of the Country Office with respect to its three major themes in the area of education – inclusion, age-for-grade-lag and good treatment – there has been progress on two initiatives.

1. A new definition of educational inclusion developed jointly by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, emphasising inclusion of all as an element of duty-bearers' guarantee of the right to education.

2. Design and implementation of a training programme for student counsellors that integrates cross-cutting themes defined by the Ministry of Education: inclusion, diversity, prevention of violence, culture of peace, gender and intergenerational relations, sexuality and prevention of pregnancy with a human rights-based approach, using personal development tools.

Note: Details on these innovations can be found in the relevant sections below.

Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages

UNICEF Ecuador identified six key office-wide priorities for the new programme cycle – protection and prevention of VAC and adolescent development, inclusive and quality education in rural and indigenous areas, maternal and neonatal health and chronic malnutrition, social inclusion and emergencies – whose delivery requires a multi-sectoral approach.

The education initiative “Including All” which is being implemented by ME with the support and guidance of UNICEF Ecuador at the local level (northern border) in order to guarantee the right to education has a strong inter-sectoral approach. Children and adolescents were identified as excluded and enrolled in and attended school. This was made possible through the strong commitment, leadership, and accurate data gathered by the education system, their success in revising and strengthening their own mandate as duty-bearers, and their effectiveness in calling for the participation of other duty-bearers, such as the integral child-protection system, health and local governments.

UNICEF Ecuador also advanced integration and cross-sectoral linkages at the national level, providing strategic support to parliamentarians for social investment in children, and also to CNII, the inter-sectoral government body mandated to monitor child and youth policies and make decisions on child well-being issues and protection. UNICEF technical assistance focused on ensuring a more integrated approach in discussing strategic priorities for children. A recent example was the CNII's decision establishing 'intergenerational rights and protection councils' at the local level as one of the foundations for a comprehensive child protection system, which is already under discussion at the legislative level.

Service Delivery

In order to reflect Ecuador's middle-income status and increasing governmental capacity, in recent years UNICEF Ecuador has shifted progressively from direct service provision to upstream policy work and efforts to remove barriers and bottlenecks at the local level. In this context, UNICEF Ecuador maintained a strategic service-delivery role, working in regions at the bottom of the equity ladder along the northern border, by contributing to the establishment of quality standards and good practices from small-scale to high-impact interventions to reach the most disadvantaged children through their replication and institutionalisation in policy, budgetary and legislative frameworks.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

Developing an advocacy process with the parliamentary group on children and adolescents in the National Assembly as a partner, UNICEF Ecuador contributed to the reform of the Civil Code, which raised the minimum age of marriage from 12 years (girls) and 14 years (boys) to

18 years (for both sexes), in accordance with specific CRC recommendations. Twenty-three LAC countries shared their experiences and best practices for monitoring investment in children at the Third LAC regional seminar on investment in children and adolescents, organised jointly by UNICEF, MCDS, the MF, National Parliament and CNII. The results of the seminar were then shared by the MCDS Minister, the Government of Peru and UNICEF at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, through the organisation of a side event. As a result, Ecuador and the LAC region contributed to the inclusion of paragraph 7 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, on the critical importance of investing in children.

The Country Office provided information on the new CRC reporting guidelines (2015) to the main governmental institutions currently responsible for preparation of the official report, and arranged a meeting between MIES and the president of the CRC Committee. UNICEF Ecuador also supported civil society organisations by providing guidelines for the next reporting cycle of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Together with UN Women, OHCHR and the Resident Coordinator's Office, UNICEF Ecuador supported preparation of the work-plan on Afro-Ecuadorian national and local organisations in Ecuador's 'National Chapter of the International Decade for People of African Descent', and also supported the second phase of implementation of the Afro-descent adolescent girls rights-based school "Mi abuelita me decía" ("My grandma used to tell me"), which will apply participatory violence prevention referral mechanisms on the northern border.

In the framework of the Agenda for Indigenous Children's Rights, supported by UNICEF Ecuador since 2005, the Panzaleo, Puruha and Kayambi peoples (Kichwa indigenous people from Cotopaxi, Chimborazo and Pichincha) developed participatory, community-based monitoring mechanisms to reduce inequities related to bilingual intercultural education and malnutrition.

Gender Mainstreaming and Equality

UNICEF Ecuador contributed to the reform of the Civil Code, which raised the minimum age of marriage from 12 years (girls) and 14 years (boys) to 18 years, in accordance with a specific CRC Committee recommendation.

In partnership with UNHCR, UNFPA and UN Women, UNICEF supported the MSP to disseminate the GBV technical guidelines for healthcare, which are in the process of being implemented in health units and services nationwide.

By helping to build the Parliament's capacities for analysis and monitoring of investments in children, women with a gender approach, UNICEF Ecuador advocated, together with the parliamentary groups on women's and children's rights, for increased and better financing for key priorities and equity gaps. As a result, the Commission on the Economic and Tributary Regime adopted major recommendations to increase funding to address gender violence and for child protection, as well as to strengthen the registry/monitoring of all investments related to gender equity and the rights of women and children.

Specifically, UNICEF is contributing to the strengthening of institutional capacities for promoting gender equality and eradicating all forms of discrimination in the health system, with special attention to sexual violence against children and adolescents and pregnancy related to sexual violence and sexual abuse.

In the framework of its local strategy at the northern border, UNICEF Ecuador collaborated with the Judiciary Council in designing GBV pathways in Esmeraldas, utilising the HRBA. Under the leadership of the MJ, UNICEF Ecuador supported the implementation of the national plan against GBV with capacity-building actions for local actors, awareness-raising activities for 300 adolescents and workshops for journalists and media.

UNICEF Ecuador designed a macro-curriculum on gender relations and sexuality for the ME's teacher training programme. The design incorporates HRBA and the curriculum is being used for student counsellor and university teacher training. This action is part of the ME's efforts to strengthen capacities within the education system to promote gender equality and prevent teenage pregnancy.

The educational inclusion strategy implemented with the ME includes action-research data on school dropout due to teenage pregnancy, early marriage, sexual violence and other causes – all disaggregated by sex, age, marital status, ethnicity and other categories.

Environmental Sustainability

Infant, Family and Community Education initiatives for the Eperara and Chachi indigenous peoples include water resource protection. The initiatives are based on participatory construction by community members and education officers. Research-action in the northern border area includes strengthening of the application of these initiatives and collection of data on community views. Research-action is part of the reactivation of UNICEF's support to intercultural bilingual education, which addresses environmental sustainability from various perspectives and supports compliance with International Labour Organization Covenant 169 on the right to education, based on the world view of indigenous peoples.

Effective Leadership

The CMT meets on a monthly basis to track compliance and implementation and identify opportunities to improve management performance in the areas of operations, private fundraising and partnerships (PFP) and programmes. Through a "traffic light report", the CMT closely monitors the level of progress of activities, pending actions by management and compliance with previous office agreements, including from the JCC, and regional and audit recommendations. This periodic monitoring enables the office to take timely corrective actions and promotes open communication and cross-sectorial collaboration. Additionally, all CMT members systematically review the Insight reports available on the manager's dashboard and the funds utilisation analysis cube, bringing relevant facts and/or warnings to CMT members' attention.

The two remaining open recommendations from the 2013 audit were closed. Corrective actions were jointly developed and undertaken by staff working in programmes and operations.

UNICEF Ecuador made significant efforts to strengthen its emergency preparedness and business continuity plan (BCP) in 2015. UNICEF Ecuador contracted a secondary mobile and internet service provider to ensure appropriate back-up connectivity in the field. Critical staff lists were revised and endorsed by the CMT, and all critical staff were provided with laptops to facilitate alternative work location measures. The BCP was reviewed, revised and tested in order to properly respond to changes in staff composition and in the country context, including the security situation in Quito. Subsequently, due to the emergency of the Cotopaxi volcano, the Office took some mitigating measures in security issues, such as briefings with UNDSS, emergency kits for all the staff, and maintaining some food and non-food items at the BCP

location and in the office.

UNICEF Ecuador also conducted two training sessions in September and October 2015 to further bolster emergency preparedness: one on emergency preparedness and response (EPR) and one on early warning/early action (EWEA). An emergency specialist was recruited on a temporary basis to support all sectors in mainstreaming emergency preparedness in programming and contingency planning.

Financial Resources Management

UNICEF Ecuador used the Regional Hub in 2015 and joined the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) in September, where payments, bank reconciliations and vendor management transactions were carried out in close coordination with the Office. Some parts of these processes were still shared with the LACRO Hub. Others, such as travel and petty cash, were managed by the office. All related training programmes and webinars were attended; the Office was aware that this is a major change in the organisation.

By December 2015, the Country Office had a 99.9 per cent implementation rate in its support budget. In 2015 some operating costs were shared with programme and PFP Units on a pro-rated basis.

The Country Office kept five bank accounts, three for the receipt of donations and one for both donations and disbursement; those bank accounts are reconciled monthly following organisational procedures; no concerns regarding the flow of funds arose during the year. Upon joining the GSSC a fifth account was opened at Citibank, under the coverage of the Citi Bank; the Office conducted a first test of the BCM system during October and November, with the aim of being fully compliant in the first quarter of 2016. The Country Office ensured 100 per cent of its payroll operations and timely payment to all of its partners and suppliers, in accordance with established procedures.

For follow-up on donations and their implementation, the CMT used InSight reports, mainly the manager's dashboard and the funds utilisation analysis cube. With these tools, the operations and programme areas set monthly deadlines for cleaning red flags, which were followed-up monthly by the CMT.

Further work is required to achieve full compliance with the harmonised approach to cash transactions (HACT) by the office and counterparts; this will be a priority for 2016.

Fund-raising and Donor Relations

During 2015 UNICEF Ecuador continued to make efforts to obtain unrestricted and predictable funds, mainly with the private sector. The results obtained in the resource mobilisation area were positive. Funds collected at the local level represented 76.5 per cent of the annual amount of the current Country Programme, which averages US\$4.297 million.

Ecuador's status as a middle-income country affected the level of financing provided to the Country Office by traditional donors and by the governments and committees of European countries. At the national level, several factors have resulted in the private sector's reduced contributions to international cooperation.

This led to a greater need for, and relevance of, mobilising local funds to ensure the sustainability of UNICEF's cooperation in Ecuador. Therefore, UNICEF Ecuador designed a

resource mobilisation strategy for the 2015-2018 period, whose main component was oriented to promoting actions for local-level fundraising, to a large degree oriented to recruiting and maintaining individual donors.

The local resource mobilisation initiatives had a positive result for the development of the individual donor channel, with a 32.4 per cent increase in the number of this kind of donors between 2014 (when there were 31,972) and 2015 (with 42,337). This, together with the resources raised locally through individual donors, the corporate sector and the concession of licenses, generated income of US\$3.29 million for the Country Office in 2015; or 102.7 per cent of the estimated fundraising income for the year.

With respect to donor relations, all reports have been submitted on time.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a key part of UNICEF Ecuador cooperation in the country. During 2015 it was possible to support capacity building and provide inputs for strengthening the institutionalisation of the evaluation function, initiating and supporting the evaluation of early childhood programmes, through:

- Promotion of a technical exchange (virtual and face-to-face) with the monitoring and evaluation unit of the National Planning Department, enabling it to seek more mature M&E management models, learn from experience and receive inputs for their work and evaluation plans. 2015 was the first year that Ecuador has had an annual evaluation plan.
- Because 2015 was the International Year of Evaluation, working with SENPLADES, IADB and the Catholic University of Ecuador (PUCE), UNICEF held an evaluation seminar on October 29. At this seminar the country's annual evaluation plan was presented publicly, along with some methodological guidelines of evaluations, the results of some of the evaluations undertaken and related themes.
- In its annual evaluations plan, UNICEF Ecuador planned to provide technical and financial assistance for the evaluation of two early childhood programmes: Children's Centres for Good Living and Growing with Our Children. These are programmes of national scope, implemented by the MIES. The MCDS, MIES, INEC, CNII, SENPLADES and UNICEF Ecuador formed the evaluation committee. Ecuador's investment in these programmes has been tens of millions of dollars, so their evaluation, to be presented in the first quarter of 2016, is valuable, especially in times of considerable budgetary restrictions.
- Of the 11 activities proposed in the Country Office integrated monitoring and evaluation plan, nine were implemented or underway in 2015.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

UNICEF Ecuador continued with the shared UN House modality for common premises/ common services, as per the memorandum of understanding (MoU) of 2000. It continued to bring the office substantial savings on service contracts provided to the UN agencies, with an average savings of at least ten 10 per cent compared to local market prices.

Following the 2015 MoU signed by all UN agencies resident in Ecuador, in October the Government signed an MoU with the UN to provide rent-free accommodations in a UN House building for all UN agencies, beginning in 2017. UN agencies are to make an annual contribution to support the ongoing operating costs of the UN House and, during the initial

years, to pay certain one-time investment costs that will provide more consistent savings.

Contracts for services rendered to UNICEF through the common services modality range from security and cleaning services to value-added tax reimbursement recovery and telecommunication services, such as satellite telephony. For decisions related to contract renewals, the operations management team made decisions virtually, providing team members sufficient time for deliberation and decision-making.

In 2015 the Office strengthened local field initiatives in three key zones of the country: Esmeraldas, Lago Agrio and Ibarra. For the first two, the Country Office signed an MoU with UNHCR for sharing premises and services in the field for low monthly amounts (approximately US\$100 in each office).

Supply Management

UNICEF Ecuador's supply management provided strong support for humanitarian assistance due to the Cotopaxi volcano emergency and the El Niño phenomenon, collaborating with governmental entities such as the SNG and the ME. A "Volcano Kit" was developed to be used by children and adults. This kit, intended to provide physical protection from volcano ash, consists of a cap and a balaclava buff. UNICEF Ecuador purchased 18,860 kits and donated them to the ME for delivery to the most affected students in schools near the volcano.

Due to the multiple natural risks affecting Ecuador, UNICEF Ecuador maintained a logistics agreement with the WFP for the use of its warehouse for pre-positioning stock. This is part of the supply plan in accordance with UNICEF's Core Commitments to Children (CCCs), to ensure a rapid response is possible in case of a sudden-onset emergency. In order to support the ME, UNICEF Ecuador stored 768 school-in-a-box kits in the warehouse, ready to be delivered upon request. The inventory was valued at US\$127,669.

UNICEF Ecuador also supported the ME to develop a "risk-monitoring room" that will help this entity to safeguard the safety of students. In addition, to support to the remodelling of the risk-monitoring room to make it more efficient, a video wall was also provided.

For 2016, efforts will be made to have essential supplies in stock to respond to applicable CCC activity implementation, and to create long-term agreements (LTAs) with local suppliers and establish partnership agreements for logistical support – for example with the Red Cross.

Security for Staff and Premises

UNICEF Ecuador benefits from the UN House arrangement of having the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) on the same premises, as that agency is in charge of building security measures.

In accordance with staff security measures within UN House, evacuation drills were performed regularly, simulating earthquakes or fire situations. These exercises contributed to staff training and preparation for any emergency situation affecting UN common premises. In 2015 about five evacuation drills, one security training and monthly radio checks were carried out by UNDSS. UNICEF staff were also trained in first aid, satellite phone and BGAN use and received mandatory security courses. UNICEF Ecuador also carried out two radio checks on its own account, to ensure coverage of all the staff members in their homes.

All of the above contributed to better preparation for emergency situations. Bearing in mind the constant threat of the Cotopaxi volcano, the Office took additional steps for staff security. As

mentioned elsewhere, the BCP site was operational and security elements, cell phones and VHF radios were distributed.

The Office had a warden system based on staff members' places of residence, including a call chain, and staff information on address, alternate phone numbers and emergency contacts. The system also included UNDSS information as well as regional contacts for security issues and emergencies.

The common premises were not yet earthquake-compliant. The emergency exit/stairs share a wall with the elevator shaft that makes the only evacuation route unsecure and an imminent danger in the case of any blockage due to earthquakes or fire. The senior management team agreed to wait for the planned move to the new UN House in the historic centre, or to other earthquake-compliant premises (able to withstand an earthquake of 9.2 on the Richter scale).

Human Resources

In 2015 the HR function was performed by the Panama Hub and the operations assistant, temporarily supported by an operations manager through June. In order to deliver the expected results for children, four new staff members and one United Nations Volunteer were recruited in 2015. Since 65 per cent of staff members were either new or had been with the Office for less than two years, emphasis was placed on team and capacity building. In accordance with its learning plan, UNICEF Ecuador undertook the following activities:

- a. Stress management workshop - Feb/15
- b. Team building exercise - Feb/15: Working with People and Communication
- c. Application of Extended DISC tool - June/15
- d. Visit of regional human resources chief- July/15: workshops on 'speak-up' culture, work/life balance and ethics and meetings focusing on career development and work climate
- e. Awareness campaign - 100 per cent finalisation of online ethics training.
- f. Emergency training - regional emergency adviser – September 2015

Regarding staff performance management, by mid-September the Country Office had achieved 100 per cent finalisation of personnel evaluation reviews (PERs) phases I and II. With a view to fostering a culture of respect and teamwork, during the mid-term review indicators regarding working with people, relating, networking, leading and supervising were added to all staff PERs.

Based on the experience of transitioning transaction management to the Panama Regional Hub and the GSSC, the increased complexity and risks associated with local presence, increased scope of programmes and scale of PFP operations, an ad-hoc programme budget review (PBR) was submitted by UNICEF Ecuador to strengthen the operations structure, which was approved by LACRO and sent to UNICEF HQ. This new structure will reflect the current dynamics of the unit and enhance the support given to other units and the consolidation of work with the GSSC.

UNICEF Ecuador's gender balance was: 62 per cent women and 38 per cent men.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

In the first quarter of 2015, all laptops, desktops and VHF radios were standardised for the entire UNICEF Ecuador staff, equipping everyone with high-performance tools for their work.

UNICEF emphasised during this year the use of everyday office tools, such as Office 365, Outlook, Lync, OneDrive, and Sharepoint. Personalised training was provided for UNICEF

Ecuador staff to consolidate their knowledge of the use of these tools. As a result, staff increased their use of this software for virtual meetings via Lync/Skype for Business, shared information on OneDrive and planned their work using the Outlook calendar – tasks that improved the entire Office’s efficiency and efficacy.

The Country Office was included in global information and communication technology (ICT) projects, such as the change from Lync to Skype for Business, change of the Windows 2008 operational system to Windows 2012 on the Parches WSUS local server, and updating of SAP from version 720 to 740. All of these migrations/updates were performed with no setbacks, total transparency for the users and within the timeframe stipulated by the Global Help Desk.

Constant monitoring of the Ecuador Office’s two symmetrical 5MB links to the Internet showed that transactions made in SAP were achieved with adequate response times and had operated at high speeds during the use of Voice Over IP, videoconferences, file transfer through FTP, download/upload of information to the Cloud and navigation on the Internet.

The Office initiated preparations to move to ‘ICT light’ by mid-2016.

Programme Components from Results Assessment Module

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 Children, adolescents and mothers, especially in the territories in situations of greatest vulnerability, enjoy greater opportunities and equality in the use of high-impact maternal and child health interventions and use of nutritional support and improved nutrition and care practices for children and adolescents.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF Ecuador provided strategic support for Ecuador’s commitment to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and malnutrition in children (undernutrition, with particular focus on stunting, overweight and obesity). With the new Country Programme the Country Office adopted national and sub-national strengthening strategies with a life-cycle based approach, recognising the importance of early childhood development and adolescence.

At the national level UNICEF Ecuador, in collaboration with PAHO/WHO, supported alignment of strategies from the key line ministries (MSP and MCDS), through evidence-based advocacy to attract attention and commitment to addressing the main priorities of children, adolescents and mothers. For instance, by supporting national efforts to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality through improved and equitable use of high-impact maternal, new-born and child health interventions, applying the “Ecuador sin muertes maternas” (Ecuador without maternal deaths) and “Primera Infancia” (early childhood) strategies. UNICEF also supported the use of a systematic approach to assessing where to invest and how to best invest to accelerate the “Acción Nutrición” (Nutrition Action) strategy in the fight against malnutrition. With respect to overweight and obesity, UNICEF Ecuador supported government efforts by assessing the impact of innovative strategies to tackle this epidemic, such as regulations on labelling of food package and sugar taxes.

At the sub-national level, UNICEF Ecuador participated in the joint food and nutrition security programme (PC-SAN Imbabura), which is implemented in the province of Imbabura in association with PAHO, WFP and FAO. Through this programme it was possible to strengthen inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination, with emphasis on simultaneous, convergent

actions to efficiently address the main nutritional problems and their determining factors. Furthermore it involved various important actors in the fight against malnutrition, such as the decentralized autonomous governments, representatives of peoples and nationalities, NGOs, communities, academia and others. At the same time, local-level initiatives contributed to generating evidence to influence national policies.

OUTPUT 1 The institutions have more evidence for reduction of maternal and child mortality, with rights and gender approaches.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Through PC-SAN Imbabura, UNICEF Ecuador supported individual and community capacity through community empowerment and the engagement of local communities. Territorially based local planning was promoted to identify actions to produce responses to identified problems in order to overcome malnutrition levels, beginning with the determining factors and responsibilities of the three levels of government (parish, canton and provincial) and public institutions. This process was led by the autonomous parish governments, with participation of representatives of public and private institutions and civil society actors. The main results were: a) communities reflected on the nutritional situation of children under five and the causes of their malnutrition; b) new opportunities to create child development services in the parishes of Chuga, Pimampiro (an urban parish) and Mariano Acosta; c) central Government support for the Angochagua Parish Board to install a safe water system and the creation of health service brigades in locations where health services are not available.

Also, from the base in the *PC-SAN Imbabura* UNICEF Ecuador worked for social engagement and behaviour change in communities through communication for development, by promoting cost-effective healthy practices for the reduction and prevention of malnutrition such as exclusive maternal breastfeeding, hand-washing, control of healthy child growth and other factors. Furthermore, the knowledge of 60 health providers and educators in the “Growing with Our Children” child development programme was reinforced in relation to practices of maternal breastfeeding and nutritional counselling.

PAHO/WHO and UNICEF Ecuador supported the MSP through evidence-based policymaking related to reinforcing innovative strategies to tackle the overweight and obesity epidemic, such as the system of ‘Traffic light labelling’ and a tax on sugared drinks. Findings in various parts of Ecuador (Coast, Sierra and Amazon) show that food labelling alerts consumers to the level of sugar, salt and fats, enabling them to make better-informed purchasing decisions for healthy eating. It is expected that in the near future new steps will be taken in relation to taxing sugared drinks in order to lower consumption of this product. The two agencies supported a study as an input for decision-making on the price elasticity of demand for sugared beverages as an indispensable step in predicting the reduction of consumption of these beverages when their prices are increased (due to new taxes). These results indicate that if the prices of these beverages increase, the Ecuadorian population will reduce its consumption of them.

During 2015-2016 UNICEF Ecuador, in partnership with Sesame Street Workshop, collaborated in the development of educational entertainment contents for families and children between the ages of three and six years, based on evidence to promote body awareness, physical activity, healthy diet, personal care, oral health and self-control in children and families in Latin America. This initiative is designed to inspire and support the youngest children and their families to choose healthy life habits and incorporate them into their everyday routines.

OUTPUT 2 The institutions have more evidence for reduction of maternal and child mortality, with rights and gender approaches.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

In partnership with PAHO/WHO, UNICEF Ecuador supported national efforts to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and under-nutrition in children, with special focus on the first 1,000 days of life (between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday), offering a unique window of opportunity to shape healthier and more prosperous futures. The country was supported in the strengthening of strategies for the reduction maternal and neonatal mortality, with emphasis on the MPS's initiative 'Ecuador without Maternal Deaths'. This was supported by international experts from both agencies with a bottleneck analysis and recommendations for a management information system, along with the building capacity of health personnel.

UNICEF Ecuador supported national capacity in the areas of neonatal resuscitation and reduction of maternal mortality through improving protocols and reducing delays in hospitalised delivery. As a result professionals in five provinces (Manabí, Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Pichincha, Napo and Orellana) can make improved and equitable use of high-impact maternal, new-born and child health interventions. Work also was done with the early childhood strategy for updating and validating integrated management of childhood illnesses, designed to reduce death, illness and disability and to promote improved growth and development among children under five years of age. The inclusion of zinc in the treatment of diarrhoea was one of the great achievements of this period.

UNICEF Ecuador and PAHO supported the MCDS with a landscape analysis for the implementation of the nutrition action strategy at the national and local level to provide concrete, short-range recommendations for accelerating the reduction of malnutrition. This landscape analysis had the participation of international experts from both agencies and social-sector ministries. Observation visits were made and focal groups created in four provinces (Santa Elena, Chimborazo, Imbabura and Pichincha). As a result of this analysis, a joint working agenda was proposed to translate scientific evidence into a coherent and multi-sectorial agenda to address the determinants of malnutrition in Ecuador. Furthermore, the coordination model of PC SAN Imbabura was analysed across ministries, civil society, decentralised autonomous governments and other stakeholders as a possible model for replication in other provinces.

Finally, UNICEF Ecuador supported the MPS with a systematic tool for decision-making in nutritional assessment and monitoring called the 'Integrated Food and Nutrition Surveillance System' by highlighting disparities in a disaggregated and decentralised manner, focusing on quality data and useful health and nutrition indicators.

Together with the Minister of Health and PAHO's Regional Director, UNICEF Ecuador supported vaccination week in the Americas, stressing the importance and impacts of vaccines on children's health, through various events for the general public and through the media.

OUTCOME 2 Children and adolescents - with special emphasis on those in the most vulnerable zones - enjoy greater opportunities for the exercise of their rights to education with quality, relevance and good treatment of students.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

In 2015 the ME decided to apply, broaden and institutionalise the inclusion strategy, developed in earlier years, at the national and local levels with the technical assistance of UNICEF. The Ministry also sought UNICEF's assistance for developing and implementing student counsellor

and teacher training in several cross-cutting areas. As a result, a bilateral agreement was developed and signed for the period 2015-2016, within the framework of the 2015-2018 country programme action plan (CPAP). The plan has two lines of action: 1) educational inclusion and 2) teacher and student counsellor capacity-building on cross-cutting themes and innovations. The HRBA is the backbone of both lines of action.

The educational inclusion strategy is oriented to the identification of bottlenecks and barriers to the fulfilment of the right to education and restitution of the right to education of children from the age of three to 29-year-old youths. The age range corresponds to the education modalities developed by and implemented by the ME. It includes regular preschool, ten years of basic and three years' upper secondary school education, with flexible modalities for out-of-school adolescents and youths.

In 2015 the joint strategy was applied mainly in Ecuador's northern border area, in four provinces. Flexible upper-secondary school education was implemented nationally.

Facing serious budget constraints, additional sustainability strategies for the implementation of educational inclusion were designed and implemented on the northern border in 2015. The main focus was on further strengthening the ME's capacity and increasing the number of trainers to apply the inclusion policies and practical tools for identifying excluded children and adolescents.

As a reaction to national budget reductions in 2015 and 2016, the ME reviewed its capacity to contract universities for in-service teacher training and reduced the initially foreseen number of university teachers from 120 to 40. By the end of 2015, new strategies to provide in-service training to teachers were developed as the education budget prognosis was further analysed. Forty university teachers from 15 national universities were trained by the ME and UNICEF NGO partner FUNDIC on gender sensitivity, good treatment, diversity, inclusion and sexuality. The process entailed exchanges of experiences with various good practices among UNICEF's partners, the ME and thematic experts. A specific, direct strategy was implemented in hard-to-reach areas in Afro-Ecuadorian communities on the northern border.

Teacher and student counsellor capacity building on cross-cutting themes and innovations was designed to strengthen the capacities of individual professionals and teams of professionals working in public education. The goal is to guarantee the right to education in learning environments that meet the cognitive, emotional and social needs of children, adolescents, teachers and other professionals involved in education. The focus is on preventing discrimination and teenage pregnancy; participation by students, teachers and the educational community; and creation of a good school climate with protection against rights violations. UNICEF Ecuador designed and began implementation of student counsellor capacity-building at the national level. Some 910 student counsellors received six days of training during a two-to-three month process. The student counsellors work in schools with more than 900 students or cover at least 450 students each.

New sustainability strategy development was initiated for all strategies, in coordination with the ME and with a shared understanding of the importance of strengthening the capacities of professionals in the educational system to provide adequate learning environments for children, adolescent and youths.

A study of violence among peers in school was completed, in coordination with the ME and with support from World Vision and UNICEF. The study provides detailed data and recommendations for protecting children and adolescents from violence in school environments,

and was being reviewed by the ME.

Capacity building of teachers and adolescents and distribution of resources for Afro-Ecuadorian ethno-education and peace culture began in the rural border area of northern Ecuador.

Research-action on the everyday life of rural indigenous children from three to 12 years of age, with a focus on education, was initiated jointly with a local university and indigenous people's organisations to strengthen community capacity to respond to problems such as distance from school, nutrition at home and in school, linguistic pertinence of education and pertinence of the educational content.

OUTPUT 1 Public institutions provide improved services related to comprehensive child development based on innovative management methodologies.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Public early childhood programme evaluation began in the last quarter of 2015, supporting SENPLADES and its annual evaluation plan for 2015. Results are expected to be released during the first quarter of 2016. UNICEF Ecuador provided direct technical assistance to the Ministry for the strategic reorientation of integrated institutional and non-institutional ECD programmes – CIBVs and “Growing with our Children”.

Healthy living and eating habits among indigenous families of the northern highlands were targeted through UNICEF Ecuador's C4D actions.

During 2015 an agreement was signed, designs were developed and production began for an Ecuadorian early childhood- and family-oriented Sesame Street educational TV series on healthy living habits. The programme is coordinated by UNICEF Ecuador's communication unit and health programme.

The recently renewed UNICEF-MCDS cooperation agreement includes a planned study of the quality of investment in early childhood, one of the emblematic country strategies, as well as the development of methodologies for costing and social service and policy results evaluation.

To improve ECD results in Ecuador, UNICEF hired additional specialised ECD technical support.

OUTPUT 2 The institutions, families and other actors have capacities, evidence and exchange of experiences for inclusion, retention, quality, gender sensitivity and good treatment in education.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

This line of action for educational Inclusion had four major components:

1. Application of the toolkit for educational inclusion, with regular updates. The toolkit consists of guidelines on and definitions of relevant concepts of educational inclusion; a duty-bearer scheme on the competencies of the major duty bearers; tracking tools for the identification of out-of-school children, adolescents and youths; data management tools, communication instructions and guidelines for inter-institutional coordination to guarantee the right to education.

2. Construction of indicators and a digital registry for information on out-of-school children, adolescents and youth.
3. Implementation of flexible education modalities
4. Development of a national educational inclusion investment project.

UNICEF Ecuador contributed to the ME's capacity to scale-up the educational inclusion strategy on the country's northern border and its process of institutionalisation at the national level. A zone director for the provinces covering the northern border was named and began to implement the educational inclusion project in May 2015. Some 398 educational professionals were trained in the application of the educational inclusion toolkit and more participated in its application. As a result, by December 2015 more than 3,000 new cases of exclusion and inclusion strategies were identified through a research-action exercise using the tracking tools developed. The digitalisation process designed to analyse exclusion factors and establish the responsibilities of each duty-bearer in relation to each child and adolescent identified was begun.

The flexible education modality for adolescents and youths from 15-to-24 years of age at the national level was implemented, including adolescents in conflict with the law and deprived of liberty. In 2015 over 30,000 persons subscribed to the modality developed by the NGO implementing partner Desarrollo y Autogestión. Just as a notable increase in coverage was noted, teacher layoffs due to budget reductions limited the number of adolescents and youths in flexible education, and the new areas of implementation were cancelled.

The ME and UNICEF Ecuador designed and agreed on approaches and strategies for addressing inclusion and diversity, violence prevention and promotion of a culture of peace, improved gender and intergenerational relations, sexuality and prevention of teenage pregnancy through:

1. National student participation programme focused on citizen education
2. National student counsellor training
3. Training of university teachers to become teacher trainers in the agreed-upon cross-cutting themes

Implementation of all components of this line of action was initiated. More than 20,000 students in upper-secondary school began the citizenship education programme at the national level. As a preventive measure, and in reaction to the prognosis of the El Niño phenomenon, the ME decided to cancel the national student participation programme on the Coast.

OUTCOME 3 Boys and girls and adolescents, especially those in situations of the greatest vulnerability, enjoy greater opportunities, social inclusion and quality in the exercise of their rights without gender discrimination through an improved policy environment and systems, guided by improved knowledge and data.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

In 2015, with the support and advocacy of UNICEF Ecuador, LACRO and NYHQ - Ecuador and the LAC Region contributed to the inclusion of 17 mentions of "children" in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and of paragraph 7, referring to the critical importance of investing in children "to achieve inclusive, equitable and sustainable development for present and future generations". Through the previous organisation of the third LAC regional seminar on investment in children and adolescents, Ecuador also contributed by strengthening of the capacities of 23 LAC

countries to monitor investment in children.

Participants from governments, civil society and academia of 23 LAC countries shared their experiences and best practices in monitoring investment in children at the third Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar on Investment in Children and Adolescents. The event – organised in Quito jointly by UNICEF, MCDS, the Ministry of Finance (MF), National Congress and CNII and inaugurated by UNICEF’s deputy executive director – produced both recommendations to improve the quality of investment in children in the region and related suggestions for participants in the planned Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in July.

Key CRC recommendations for Ecuador were included in the National Assembly reports on both the implementation of the national budget for the first half of 2015, and the analysis report for the approval of the 2016 national budget, following an advocacy process promoted by UNICEF.

In partnership with the legislative and executive powers, more than 300 people (including children, students, and civil society organisations) were able to see the 2016 national budget proposal, and contribute recommendations on investment in children, before the budget’s analysis and approval at a plenary session of the National Assembly.

In fact the National Assembly (economic and tributary legislative commission and parliamentary group on children and adolescents), the executive power (MCDS and MF) and UNICEF organised a panel and jointly shared key information on the national budget proposal for 2016, with a focus on investment in children, with more than 300 people, including children, students, and civil society organisations. Participants’ contributions to this event were included in the National Assembly analysis report for approval of the 2016 national budget.

Important SSC initiatives on issues related to social protection, multidimensional child poverty, and the social sector agenda were developed with UNASUR, Panama and Costa Rica, contributing to strengthening the capacities of key ministries such as the MCDS and MIES in the formulation and implementation of social policies.

With support from UNICEF’s Panama and Ecuador country offices, the two countries have increased their exchanges of experiences: the heads of MCDS’ departments of public policy planning and interconnected registry of social programmes provided an assessment of the design of a social agenda for Panama. As a result of these initiatives, the two governments are in the process of establishing a SSC agreement focused on social issues. The MCDS, with participation by the Minister and head of the information management department, also shared Ecuador’s experiences in the analysis and design of a policy to reduce multidimensional poverty, especially multidimensional child poverty, at the first meeting of the LAC Regional Conference on Social Development, organised by ECLAC and UNDP in Lima in November.

As the MCDS leads the coordination of the “Development with Inclusion” working group of UNASUR’s South American Council on Social Development, UNICEF is providing technical assistance to the MCDS and UNASUR to document best practices of UNASUR member states in multidimensional poverty reduction – with a focus on child poverty – and discrimination reduction policies, as well as affirmative and gender-based actions.

UNICEF contributed to strengthened capacities among national and local Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous peoples’ organisations in the areas of child rights monitoring and reduction of

inequalities and discrimination, in accordance with international frameworks and instruments such as the International Decade for People of African Descent and CRC general comment No. 11 on indigenous children and their rights under the convention. In the context of the Agenda for Indigenous Children's Rights, supported by UNICEF since 2005, the Panzaleo, Puruha and Kayambi peoples (Kichwa indigenous peoples from Cotopaxi, Chimborazo and Pichincha provinces) have developed participatory community monitoring mechanisms to reduce inequities related to bilingual intercultural education and malnutrition. As a result, several indigenous communities and local organisations of those three indigenous peoples are now better empowered to demand their children's rights.

OUTPUT 1 Ecuador has improved information, technical exchanges and evidence related to social protection and the reduction of poverty, especially multidimensional child poverty, with a gender perspective.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Investment in children-related results:

The results of the Quito seminar were shared in Addis by the MCDS Minister, the Government of Peru and the UNICEF deputy executive director through the organisation of a side event. As a result, Ecuador and the LAC Region contributed to the inclusion of several mentions of children in the outcome document, and particularly in paragraph 7 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, on the critical importance of investing in children.

The recently renewed UNICEF ECUADOR-MCDS cooperation agreement includes a planned study of the quality of investment in early childhood, one of the emblematic country strategies, as well as the development of methodologies for costing and social service and policy results evaluation.

In a joint effort with PAHO, UNICEF renewed a cooperation agreement with the Parliamentary Group on Children and Adolescents of the National Assembly, to support the preparation and monitoring of legislative measures related to promoting children's rights, ensuring harmonisation with human rights principles and international instruments and to support the Assembly's role in terms of analysis, approval and monitoring of the national budget, with a focus on investment in children.

As a result, through UNICEF's advocacy, the National Assembly report on implementation of the national budget for the first half of 2015 included several key recommendations to improve investment in child-related information, monitoring and evaluation, in accordance with the 2010 CRC observations on Ecuador. The report will be disseminated to several government institutions, including the MF and SENPLADES.

Social protection-related results:

In the framework of the technical assistance provided by UNICEF Ecuador to strengthen Ecuadorian social protection policies, the cooperation agreement with the MIES was renewed and amplified. An exchange of experiences was organised in Costa Rica, where a delegation of seven officials from the MIES and UNICEF was able to interact with all key Costa Rican social protection-related institutions, with the goal of improving Ecuador's social protection information systems and its implementation of cash transfer programmes.

Multidimensional child poverty-related results:

In the framework of the technical assistance provided by UNICEF to support Ecuador's

multidimensional poverty reduction policies, the cooperation agreement with the National Technical Secretariat for Poverty Eradication (SETEP/SENPLADES) has been renewed.

Rights monitoring and discrimination-related results:

Together with UN Women, OHCHR and the Resident Coordinator's Office, UNICEF has been supporting development of the work plan of national and local Afro-Ecuadorian organisations, grouped in Ecuador's National Chapter of the International Decade for People of African Descent. Those efforts contributed to active participation by numerous members of Afro-Ecuadorian organisations, including adolescents and youth, in the work plan development process.

OUTCOME 4 Adolescents and children benefit from changes of socio-cultural patterns, protective environments, and multi-sectoral policies that integrate a comprehensive approach to adolescent development, participation and protection from violence, including gender-based violence.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

With the new Country Programme, UNICEF Ecuador adopted national and local strategies, with a territorial focus on the northern border, to protect children from violence, exploitation and abuse. The strategies are complementary and are national initiatives, under signed work-plans with key line ministries and justice bodies, but also include specific territorial activities. At the same time, local-level initiatives contributed to the generation of evidence to influence national policies.

Within the territorial violence-prevention strategy for the northern border, UNICEF incorporated the strengthening of local protection systems (rights and protection councils) as its main components. However, it was a great challenge to work with a protection system in transition, that had already lost its specialised focus on child rights, even if it had not yet been legally replaced by a new system. Evidence of these difficulties – such as unclear roles of local protection actors, poor coordination with justice operators and lack of technical knowledge to integrate new approaches (for instance the inter-generational approach) – were documented and presented at the national level to provide inputs and arguments on the continuing need for specialisation.

A technical working group was formed to address VAC, comprising 36 technical professionals, 24 public institutions (including services), 12 NGOs, one university and three UN agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR). The group is responsible for: defining roles and strategic coordination mechanisms; qualitative research on violence perception; documentation of good practices at the local level; training in violence prevention and protection, structured in four modules (conceptual, violence in the home, violence in schools and in the community); strengthening two community services responsible for the care of child victims of violence; and communication for development activities. In terms of the local territorial strategy UNICEF Ecuador supported the Judicial Council by developing a pilot court model in Esmeraldas to build justice operators' capacity to apply principles and adequate measures for adolescents in conflict with the law.

In the general framework of protection systems UNICEF Ecuador provided the National Assembly with a holistic analysis and critique of the existing normative proposal to establish the new protection system, which was submitted by the Ombudsman's Office and is under review by the National Assembly. Invited by the parliamentary group for children's rights, UNICEF: i) engaged with the preparation of an alternative proposal to be debated in early 2016, in order to

ensure that the new protection system will maintain a degree of specialisation for the protection and care of children and adolescents; and ii) proposed a bill to fully and explicitly prohibit corporal punishment, which should be disseminated and analysed in 2016.

UNICEF Ecuador was also a key player in successful Civil Code reform, which increased the minimum age for marriage to 18, for boys and girls without exception, and worked with UN Women on a C4D dissemination strategy for the new law/regulation. Jointly with other UN agencies, UNICEF contributed to the analysis of the human mobility law project.

Knowledge production and awareness-raising were key roles played by UNICEF in the process of changing cultural patterns, beliefs and attitudes towards the tolerance, normalisation and justification of violence. During 2015, UNICEF Ecuador collaborated with other organisations on a new national survey on the situation of children, with particular focus on violence, and also concluded the national baseline on bullying in schools. Both studies were essential to launching the #AhoraQueLoVes Campaign, based on the EndViolence Initiative, which to date focused on violence in schools, but will also address issues such as corporal punishment, sexual abuse and suicide.

As a result of the interest and commitment generated by the 'National Seminar on Online Protection' held in April 2015 in partnership with GSMA, UNICEF Ecuador coordinated a national working group on this issue, comprised of law enforcement agents (including police, INTERPOL and public prosecutors); communication regulatory agents; and public and private ICT companies. The main goals of this group are to improve and implement investigation procedures, adopt protocols, create reporting mechanisms and generate knowledge and capacity on this issue. To build on these commitments the regional training programme on online protection, planned under the global 'We Protect' initiative, took place in late 2015 in Quito, with support and participation from LACRO.

Given that the official CRC Report will be presented by Ecuador at the beginning of next year, UNICEF is promoting debate and analysis of CRC implementation, as well as of mechanisms to monitor the implementation of CRC recommendations.

Due to major threats related to the Cotopaxi volcano eruption and risks of flooding on the Coast linked to the El Niño phenomenon, UNICEF Ecuador took several steps to support governmental preparedness, including child protection issues. Cooperation agreements were signed for the development of a national protocol to protect children facing risks of disaster and a pilot psychosocial support project, for which implementation is ongoing.

In addition UNICEF Ecuador played a key role in the creation of a coordination mechanism for psychosocial support with several organisations, structuring the path to a coordinated response in three phases: before, during and after emergencies (readiness, response and recovery).

Major advocacy issues for the following year will be the continuance of the National Code for Children, since there is a legislative proposal to adopt a general Life Cycle code; the prohibition of corporal punishment; and ratification of the third Optional Protocol to the CRC.

OUTPUT 1 Ecuador has strengthened channels and spaces for adolescent participation and has improved adolescent development policies, including friendly services with specific focus on violence prevention.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Multi-sectoral policies to promote adolescent development remain necessary to address specific vulnerabilities, such as the gap in educational and socioeconomic inclusion opportunities for adolescents; lack of access to adolescent-friendly health services; pregnancy; and violence (abuse, exploitation, discrimination). In this context UNICEF Ecuador's interventions in 2015 focused on the most disadvantaged groups of adolescents: girls, those living in the border areas of the country, those who are out of school, those of indigenous and Afro backgrounds and those who are on the move (migrants and/or displaced).

Addressing adolescent pregnancy is one of the six priorities of the Country Programme. UNICEF Ecuador's interventions focused on promoting awareness of the relationship between pregnancy and gender violence (abuse), in particular during the first stage of adolescence (10-14). UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA developed a course for health professionals that provided guidance on the application of the gender-based violence technical norm from the Ministry of Health, which includes specific protocols for sexual violence and abuse of children and adolescents. Another initiative involved promoting adolescent mothers' access to education. Aiming to target out-of-school adolescents, UNICEF continued supporting the implementation of flexible education models throughout the country for those who are severely over-age for their grade. Adolescent mothers represent 40 per cent of the more than 30,000 students in this programme. Promoting adolescent-friendly health services will be addressed in the coming year, as will the strong links between adolescent pregnancy and maternal and neonatal health.

In promoting adolescent participation, UNICEF Ecuador contributed actively to support for adolescent participation in institutionalised and non-institutionalised spaces, such as consultative councils and autonomous youth and adolescent networks. At the national level UNICEF is accompanying the National Equity Council in its efforts to strengthen the role of child and adolescent consultative councils and their policy monitoring agenda (there is one council per municipality). As part of its cooperation with the Ombudsman's the Country Office also supported a pilot initiative of a human rights participatory curriculum for adolescents, including development of the material and training for educators to implement the student participation programme in selected schools in a joint effort with the ME.

With regard to autonomous networks, UNICEF Ecuador focused on: i) strengthening the presence and organisational capacities of the national network of adolescents and young people living with HIV (Jóvenes Positivos), particularly in their efforts to organise groups at the sub-national level; ii) designing a second phase for the social and political participation school for Afro-Ecuadorian adolescents (*My grandmother used to tell me*) and implementing a violence-prevention strategy for children (*Participatory route for violence prevention*) in five provinces (Pichincha, Esmeraldas, Sucumbíos, Ibarra and Carchi).

At the local level and in the framework of the UN Trust Fund for Human Security joint programme, UNICEF Ecuador also supported the work of Nación de Paz (Nation of Peace) in conducting peer-to-peer education on building a culture of peace through urban arts and sport activities. Activities were carried out in several schools.

OUTPUT 2 Policymakers, justice actors, social organizations, communities and families are equipped with knowledge, capacities, systems and mechanisms to provide protective environments for children and adolescents, with a gender perspective.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

In Esmeraldas UNICEF Ecuador focused on developing a comprehensive intervention to prevent violence against children, which included capacity building, participation,

communication for development and knowledge production, with clear linkages between protection and adolescent development and the education component. A technical working group was formed to address violence against children, comprising 36 technical professionals, 24 public institutions (including services), 12 NGOs, one university and two other UN agencies (UNFPA and UNHCR).

Esmeraldas Province is highly affected by the spill-over from the violence in Colombia and faces specific issues related to the dynamics of a border area, such as: unaccompanied children crossing the border; human and drug trafficking; sexual exploitation; recruitment of children for different illicit activities and so forth. For this reason UNICEF Ecuador held a national debate in Esmeraldas with civil society organisations (CSOs) and experts, which generated a strong policy agenda at the local level. On this occasion UNICEF invited the Colombia Country Office to share the issues faced by children on the other side of the border; and subsequently the UNICEF Ecuador protection team made an exploratory visit to the Colombian side of the border (Mocoa). A proposal for collaboration between the two country offices on violence protection and prevention was finalised and will commence in 2016.

Access to justice: UNICEF and UNHCR developed national guidelines to define the best interest of the child in judicial decisions, in response to a request from the Judicial Council.

Adolescents in conflict with the law (AICWL): UNICEF provided technical advice to the Judicial Council with concrete recommendations for the application of anticipated termination and diversion measures, such as alternatives to custody. UNICEF also continued to strengthen the MJ's new model for the centres of custodial measures, through the development of a new methodology to promote the autonomy of AICWL. The Country Office is also documenting the education model for AICWL. Together with the Ombudsman's Office, UNICEF Ecuador is developing protocols established under the international torture prevention mechanism to monitor the situation of AICWL.

Alternative care and institutions: The Country Office supported MCDS in the development of a holistic attention model for young children (under age three) of incarcerated parents. The model included a multi-sectoral approach including areas such as health, nutrition, early childhood development, family integration and justice, and its preparation and implementation will be the responsibility of respective key line ministries. In an effort to promote deinstitutionalisation of children ages zero-to-three, UNICEF Ecuador and RELAF supported the validation and expansion of the pilot family care programme as an alternative. UNICEF continued to support the national civil registration office to challenges to close the existing gap in birth registration, and has focused its efforts in the northern border provinces of Esmeraldas and Sucumbíos.

UNICEF Ecuador launched a comprehensive analysis of the most recent data available on child labour, in partnership with INEC, and continued supporting the National Network for a Child Labour Free Ecuador as well as 12 municipalities with significant child labour indicators (including Quito) through a communication campaign and other support.

OUTCOME 5 Cross Sectoral

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Cross-sectorial strategies served as an important foundation for the beginning of the implementation of the Programme of Cooperation 2015-2018. The area of fundraising continues to show good results, making it possible to envision self-sustainability in the medium term. With respect to monitoring and evaluation, contributions were made to the generation of relevant

information, especially on issues of violence – in addition to promoting evaluation, given that 2015 is the International Year of Evaluation.

One of UNICEF's six core strategies in middle-income countries is to support the monitoring of the rights of children and adolescents. In this area, UNICEF Ecuador has favoured the generation of information and evidence of the fulfilment (or non-fulfilment) of child and adolescents rights – especially in the priority themes for the current cooperation cycle – using an equity approach.

With respect to the UNDAF, during 2015 the preparation of agendas for products around the five groups of results was concluded. UNICEF Ecuador acts as leader of Results Group 2: "Reduction of inequity gaps for cohesion, inclusion and quality of life", in which the themes of social services such as education, health, social protection and others are included. In addition, UNICEF participates as a co-responsible party for Results Groups 1: "State of Rights and participation" and 3: "Non-discrimination, gender equality and eradication of violence"; and as an observer in Results Group 4: "Environmental sustainability, resilience and risk management".

In terms of the strengthening of M&E capacities and favouring the exchange of knowledge (one of UNICEF's six roles in middle-income countries), the Country Office implemented:

- A technical exchange between the monitoring and evaluation unit of the Department of National Planning of Colombia and the monitoring and evaluation unit of SENPLADES. This exchange made it possible for the latter to see the experiences, learnings and challenges of a more mature monitoring and evaluation system, providing input for the establishment of the annual evaluations plans and a management model. This evaluation plan, the first in Ecuador, includes seven evaluations, including the evaluation of the early childhood programmes of Children's Centres for Good Living and Growing with Our Children. UNICEF provided technical and financial support for this evaluation, the results of which are expected in the first quarter of 2016.
- Considering that the United Nations designated 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation, SENPLADES, the Inter-American Development Bank, PUCE (Quito campus) and UNICEF Ecuador organised an evaluation seminar. At this seminar the Annual Evaluations Plan 2015 was introduced and some of the methodological guidelines and results of implemented evaluations were shown. The purpose of the seminar was to raise interest among government functionaries and society in general regarding the importance of evaluations for decision-making.
- Occasional and specific support for the review of M&E of the CNII.

The Country Office continued to make use of the dashboards provided by the Vision system in instances such as programmes and CMT meetings, with the aim of raising early alerts and taking timely action. In the process of merging with the GSSC, one of the programme assistants participated in an on-site training programme; this will provide the Country Office with experience for use of the GSSC without major difficulties.

Regarding the HACT, the office still faces the challenge of strengthening its knowledge and application of this approach, internally and externally. This will require support from LACRO.

OUTPUT 1 Public institutions, CSO and civil society in general, have tools that allow them to effectively monitor and evaluate the exercise of children and adolescent's rights.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

One of UNICEF's six core strategies in middle-income countries is to support the monitoring of the rights of children and adolescents. Specifically, the Office was able to achieve the following:

- Implementation of the survey of children and adolescents 2015. This was achieved jointly with Plan International, World Vision, CARE, and the Social Observatory of Ecuador, in support of the CNII. Given the special priority placed on themes of violence in the Programme of Cooperation 2015-2018, the area of violence was expanded in the survey. The survey report will be launched publicly in the first quarter 2016.
- Jointly with World Vision and in support of the Ministry of Education, the first baseline on bullying in schools was developed. This exercise, never before carried out in Ecuador, took a sample of over 5,000 students in more than 100 private and public schools. At year's-end, the document was being reviewed at the ME, and its publication is expected shortly.
- In the area of child labour, the Country Office, together with INEC, produced and published a document on child labour in Ecuador during the past 10 years. This document was based on national surveys taken by INEC between 2003 and 2013 and an in-depth analysis of INEC's first national child labour survey in 2012. In order to derive the lessons learned from implementation of the national child labour survey, UNICEF Ecuador, together with the Latin American School of Social Sciences' Ecuador Campus (one of the country's most prestigious graduate schools), assessed the survey using the same tools used by INEC to assess the statistical exercises of other institutions. The results of this evaluation will help to improve future surveys on this issue.

In terms of strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacities and promoting the exchange of knowledge (one of UNICEF's six roles in middle-income countries), the Country Office implemented:

- A technical exchange between the monitoring and evaluation unit of the Department of National Planning of Colombia and the monitoring and evaluation unit of SENPLADES. This exchange made it possible for the latter to see the experiences, learnings and challenges of a more mature monitoring and evaluation system, providing input for the establishment of the annual evaluations plans and a management model. This evaluation plan, the first in Ecuador, includes seven evaluations, including the evaluation of the early childhood programmes of Children's Centres for Good Living and Growing with Our Children. UNICEF provided technical and financial support for this evaluation, the results of which are expected in the first quarter of 2016.
- Considering that the United Nations designated 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation, SENPLADES, the Inter-American Development Bank, PUCE (Quito campus) and UNICEF Ecuador organised an evaluation seminar.

OUTPUT 2 Effective and efficient local fundraising from the private sector provides quality funding for the cooperation programme.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The area of fundraising continued to carry out activities to raise unrestricted funds, mainly from individual donors. This strategy was not only implemented with efforts by the individuals

fundraising channel, but also with support from the corporate sector fundraising channel, which in turn has been oriented to supporting the recruitment of individual donors through private businesses in a strategy called “Corporate Pathways to Pledge”.

All these initiatives, together with others, such as those describing the routes by which funds will be raised (telemarketing, face-to-face, digital) as well as numerical estimates of the expected future results, were incorporated into UNICEF Ecuador’s ‘private sector strategic fundraising plan 2015-2018’, prepared and approved this year.

In this context funds raised from the private sector continued to show growth during 2015, equivalent to 21 per cent more than the amount raised in 2014. Private sector income came mainly from individual donors, whose number rose from 31,972 in 2014 to 42,337 in 2015 – showing a 32.4 per cent growth in the number of active individual donors, mainly thanks to corporate partnerships with Diners’ Club, Banco Pichincha, Banco del Austro and Banco Rumiñahui, which have facilitated an approach to their customers for campaigns to capture individual donors.

In terms of fundraising, the amount raised in 2015 rose to US\$3.29 million, representing 102.7 per cent of the estimated fundraising target for the year. It should be mentioned that of the total amount raised, 92 per cent (US\$ 3.02 million) came from individual contributions, while the remaining 8 per cent (US\$ 0.27 million) was from contributions from the business sector, highlighting the increasing relevance of raising funds through individual donors.

OUTPUT 3 Cross Sectoral Support

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The Country Office received highly effective and efficient support from the team of programme assistants.

OUTCOME 6 Programme Support

Analytical Statement of Progress:

This outcome is instrumental to the support of essential activities related to Country Office management, including support and technical assistance for the Country Programme and its programmatic components in areas such as governance and systems, financial resources and stewardship as well as human capacity,

OUTPUT 1 Governance and Systems

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The governance bodies established to operate in the office through the annual management plan functioned based on the requests, and as per the terms of reference, for each one. Also, based on the service-level agreement with the Regional Shared Service Centre, the committees included in the agreement (contracts review committee, local property survey board and central review board) were established by LACRO and met according to the request of the office; submissions were processed on time, as agreed in the service-level agreement.

The agreed annual management plan activities were continuous during the year; compliance and implementation were monitored through a “traffic light report”. The CMT closely monitored

the level of progress of activities and pending actions of management and compliance with previous office agreements, including from the joint consultative committee and regional and audit recommendations.

OUTPUT 2 Financial Resources and Stewardship

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Joint efforts by the operations and programme areas to monitor of direct cash transfers (DCTs) throughout 2015 resulted in only US\$40,000.00 outstanding DCTs over six months. No DCTS were outstanding for more than nine months.

With the aim of continued strengthening HACT implementation, during 2015 a consulting firm was hired to perform micro-assessments, spot-checks and capacity-building of implementing partners regarding the use of HACT. However, the need to strengthen both internal and external use of this tool is ongoing.

Risk analysis was incorporated in the decision related to advances to implementing partners, leading to the implementation of mitigation strategies that are ongoing for current open agreements.

Monthly bank reconciliations were completed on time, according to the dates set by DFAM/Accounts section, and in the last quarter by the GSSC. Usually, bank reconciliations were completed by 15th of the following month.

OUTPUT 3 Human capacity

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Regarding performance management, UNICEF Ecuador had achieved by mid-September 100 per cent finalisation of the planning phase and mid-term review. With a view to fostering a culture of respect and teamwork, during the mid-term review indicators regarding working with people, relating and networking, and leading and supervising were added in the PERs of all staff. The data gathered from this exercise will be analysed, in order to prioritise activities and identify gaps.

Based on the experience as part of the Panama Hub, together with the implications of the growth foreseen for the PFP structure, the Country Office submitted an ad hoc PBR to strengthen the Operation structure, which was approved by the Regional Office and sent to NYHQ. This new structure will reflect the actual dynamics of the unit and enhance its support to other units, as well as consolidating the work with the GSSC. Gender balance in the office is 64 per cent female and 36 per cent male.

All staff members benefited from several trainings and workshops focused on team and capacity building. Regarding the recruitment of new personnel, five new staff members were brought on board this year. By year-end, the corporate officer selection process had been finalised.

Based on the above, the office is preparing an induction plan to prepare all staff, including newly hired personnel, on subjects related to programming, financial and administrative policies, SAP, ethics and other topics required to fulfil their functions. This plan will be implemented from January to March 2016.

OUTCOME 8 Development Effectiveness

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Although this Outcome was not originally planned for the Cooperation Programme 2015-2018, it was instrumental and very useful to support cross-sectoral activities, mainly emergencies, communications, C4D and administrative programme support.

OUTPUT 1 Programme Coordination**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Programme Coordination kept programme implementation on track, with positive enhanced management indicators at year-end, at the same time consolidating and reinforcing the new programme team and strategic priorities of the first year of the new cooperation cycle 2015-2018.

New areas of cooperation in Ecuador were also actively explored and other, relatively new areas, were implemented and consolidated in the education sector (multidisciplinary teams within education units); social inclusion (investing in children and monitoring of investment); C4D (creation of a formal C4D academic course); emergency preparedness and DRR (for cluster and inter-cluster coordination, emergency preparedness, training and capacity development of HCT members, national authorities and CSOs) recognising and reinforcing the positive perception of UNICEF's strategic role in a rapidly changing, and at times politically sensitive, national development context.

Programme Coordination was also instrumental in the transition to renewed strategic approaches and prioritisation at field level (northern border), as well as in the transition to the GSSC and reinforcement of a smooth and effective consolidation and integration of the almost totally renewed CO team. In fact in 2015 UNICEF Ecuador incorporated two new education and health/nutrition specialists into the new Country Office team structure (Programme, Communications, PFP and Operations).

Effective internal and inter-agency programme coordination and leadership were ensured by playing a lead role throughout the protracted planning and negotiation process of developing the UNDAF Results Groups agenda with Government and UN partners. The current work on UNDAF Results Groups, provide a good opportunity to continue exercising UNICEF programmatic coordination, management, leadership and political negotiation resources.

Programme Coordination helped to revise and finalise both the new CPAP 2015-2018, the audit response plan, annual management plan 2015, country programme management plan, PBR/integrated budget, as well as to draft the Country Office integrated resource mobilisation strategy, and to implement new HACT and CSO policy and procedures.

Programme Coordination efforts actively implied much closer coordination between the programme, communications, PFP, M&E and operations areas.

OUTPUT 2 Children and adolescent's rights, particularly of those in the most vulnerable situation, are in the political, social and media agenda during the cooperation programme

Analytical Statement of Progress:

One of the communications priorities in the new cooperation cycle and the global strategy for communication and advocacy is the involvement of millennials (persons aged 15 to 34 years) in UNICEF's work. To this end, UNICEF Ecuador's web pages were renewed (Spanish and

English) and participation in social networks through Facebook and Twitter were strengthened, with the number of Facebook followers increasing to 33,000 and Twitter followers to 17,700 (at the end of November 2015).

In turn, fundamental themes for children were placed on the country's public and media agenda, as in the case of investing in children and prevention of violence against children and adolescents. Overall, UNICEF gained press coverage valued at an estimated US\$1,621,003 in 2015, at no cost.

Regarding investing in children, efforts were made to position this on the public agenda through events and high-level meetings with authorities from the national government and regional organisations, resulting in the inclusion of children in the 2016 national budget and influence exerted at the Third UN Conference on Financing for Development.

With respect to violence prevention, in October the #NowThatYouSeeIt campaign was launched with the aim of changing attitudes and behaviour that normalise violence against children. The campaign was planned in alignment with the new cooperation cycle (2015-2018). By late 2015 public figures, as well as communication media, cinemas and interested citizens had joined the campaign. The campaign reached 7,927,222 people through news generated in the press, radio and TV (US\$432,356.96 in free press coverage). It also reached 25,000 people per week through the dissemination of the spot in cinemas. On social networks, the campaign had an increase in followers, with more than 7,000 new fans, for a total of 33,000 followers in Facebook.

Document Center

Evaluation and Research

Title	Sequence Number	Type of Report
TOMO II Encuesta Nacional de Salud y Nutrición: Salud Sexual y Reproductiva (VOLUME II, National Health and Nutrition Survey: Sexual and Reproductive Health)	2015/001	Survey
Child labour in Ecuador: toward a comprehensive understanding of the problem	2015/001	Study

Other Publication

Title
UNICEF EN ACCIÓN 10 - 2015

Lessons Learned

Document Type/Category	Title
Lesson Learned	Advocacy to increase the minimum legal age for marriage in Ecuador
Innovation	Human rights and personal development tools in building capacities of the student counsellors
Innovation	New definition of educational inclusion
Lesson Learned	Advocacy for improved and better investment in children

