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Update on the context and situation of children

The economic context in Equatorial Guinea during 2019 remained challenging as there were no significant changes in the oil market pricing. However, according to AfDB (2018) the share of oil revenue in the economy dropped from 90% of GDP in 2013 to 71% in 2017 while the country's GDP dropped by almost 57% during the same period. According to IMF's latest economic data, the recession in Equatorial Guinea perdured in 2019 with a projected real GDP negative growth of -4.6 %. However, the country maintained its upper middle-income status with a GDP per capita estimated at USD 8,930.

Considering this macro-economic setting, the Equatoguinean authorities and IMF reached a staff-level agreement in 2019 on a three-year arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) valued at USD 288 million. The EFF programme aims at strengthening macroeconomic and financial stability, fostering economic diversification and improving governance, with the goal of promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth. At the same time, the programme aims at increasing the fiscal space to improve social protection, including mitigating the effects of macroeconomic adjustment on low-income groups, and promote human capital development. Furthermore, the country was not affected by any humanitarian situation in 2019 and established some preparedness measures in line with the regional Ebola epidemic risks established by WHO.

According to UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) Report published in 2019, the country's HDI stagnated at 0.588 with a ranking of 144 (141 in 2018) out of 189 countries. Due to rapid economic growth from 2000 to 2010, the country evolved fast in the first decade with the index varying from 0.520 to 0.580. Hence, Equatorial Guinea's HDI of 0.588 in 2018 was below the average of 0.634 for countries in the medium human development group and above the average of 0.541 for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In the health sector, the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) declined from 179.3 to 85.3 per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2018 which shows insufficient progress compared with other Sub-Saharan African countries. The U5MR is higher for boys (91.3) than for girls (78.8). The main causes of child mortality remain malaria, more strikingly in the continental region with a prevalence of 55% (compared to 10.9% in the insular region), acute respiratory infections and acute diarrhea.

The prevalence of under-five stunting is 26.2% which is slightly above the developing countries' average of 25% while the upper-middle income countries average is 6.3%. On the other hand, the rate of overweight in children under-five is increasing at 9.7%. The rate of exclusive breastfeeding is estimated at 7.4% while in other upper-middle income countries it is 23.9%.

The most recent estimates from UNAIDS (2019) show that HIV prevalence has increased from 6.2% to 7.1% (men 5.9% and women 8.8%), which is the highest in West and Central African (WCA) region. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS among adolescents and young people aged 15 to 24 is 3% (5% in females and 1% in males). Data from World Bank (2017) estimated the adolescents (15-19) fertility rate at 156/1000, while it is 103/1000 in Sub-Saharan Africa and 31/1000 in other upper middle-income countries. The ART pediatric coverage is still low with only 14% of children under treatment with 50% of women benefitted from PMTCT services in 2018.

There has been a stagnation in preschool enrollment from 2015-2018 with approximately 50,000 children enrolled. However, the gender balance is encouraging (boys 49.1% and girls 50.9%). In primary, the enrollment continued to increase from 103,000 in 2015/2016 to 114,000 in 2017/2018 (boys 50.8% and girls 49.2%). The education system is inefficient with high repetition of 18.4% in the first grade of primary (boys 19.7% and girls 17%) while the national average of primary repetition is 13%. The out of school children (OOSC) study commissioned by UNICEF in 2019, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, revealed that 52% of school-aged children at all levels are not in school while the Sub-Saharan Africa average is 20%. In total, 177,254 children are excluded, representing 36,659 in preschool, 87,223 in primary and 53,372 in secondary. In primary, the difference between OOSC boys and girls is only 3% in the continental region. Meanwhile, OOSC boys' rate is 10% higher than of girls' in the insular region. Some of the main causes include financial constraints, high repetition, over- and underaged students, inequities in access and high drop-out rates, especially in secondary education (19.7%) with insignificant differences between boys and girls.

Equatorial Guinea still faces challenges in gender equality in terms of decision-making positions with only 13% of females represented in Government ministerial posts and 22% in parliament. Through UNICEF and other UN agencies advocacy, the country has improved its child-rights and gender equality legislation framework with the following drafted legislation aligned with CRC and CEDAW that are pending for approval: i) gender-based violence; ii) code of persons and family and; iii) penal code for minors. Moreover, the Government is planning to draft a new legislation to address harassment and violence in schools in 2020.

Public spending in key social sectors remains very low as per Public Finance for Children (PF4C) study published in 2019

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(3% for education and 3% for Health). However, through UNICEF advocacy the Government has increased by 27% its 2020 planned budget for the social sector.

The Government dedicated the first half of 2019 to the preparation of the new National Sustainable Development Plan which is aligned with the 2030 and 2063 Agendas, with technical support from UNICEF and other UN agencies. The four strategic axes of the new plan focus on: i) poverty eradication; ii) social inclusion and sustainable peace; iii) economic diversification and iv) environmental sustainability. The new national plan aims to reorient the country's development nexus and prioritise its social transformation with a more equitable lens of leaving no one behind. As part of this process, the Government reviewed and finalized its SDG prioritization exercise which resulted in 92% 'localization' of the 169 targets for regular monitoring and reporting.

Major contributions and drivers of results

The key contribution of the UNICEF's new Country Programme 2019-2023 entailed providing technical assistance in the drafting of the new National Sustainable Development Plan Horizonte 2035. This contribution was an opportunity for UNICEF and UN partners to streamline the 2030 and 2063 Agendas and advocate for a stronger child-rights and social equity agenda.

Equity and Child Protection Programme

The outcome of this programme component aims at improving the social well-being of the most vulnerable boys and girls through the development of equitable social and child protection systems and policies. The programme is aligned with Government and UNDAF 2019-2023 strategic priorities in Governance/Social Inclusion, Goal Areas 3 and 5 of UNICEF Strategic Plan (Every child is protected from violence and exploitation, and Every child has an equitable chance in life) and regional Key Results for Children (KRC) focusing on Birth Registration.

Programming excellence for at-scale results for children

The CO provided technical contributions in designing the new **National Sustainable Development Plan 2035**, through participating in 12 high-level meetings, reviewing of 40 presentations, and delivering of technical presentations on the SDG baseline assessment, social protection modalities and child nutrition. The advocacy of UNICEF was essential in enabling a wide participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSO), private sector, international cooperation and voices from the field, as well as ensuring that child development issues were incorporated (social protection, social spending, data generation and evidence, children with disabilities, youth inclusion and climate change).

UNICEF supported the Government in the SDG prioritization exercise resulting in 92% of 169 targets localized and around 50% of targets of the key social goals considered urgent for acceleration. Moreover, the Government launched the new Household Expenditure Survey (HES) with support from World Bank to define its new poverty profile and generate data for SDG monitoring. As per PF4C study, public spending in health and education remains low at 3% respectively. As a result of the study and UNICEF advocacy, the Government has increased the planned budget for the social sector in the amount of 27% for 2020.

Winning support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public

The Government and the National Committee on Child-Rights with support from UNICEF organized the **Celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the CRC**, which counted with participation of high-level authorities (First Lady, Vice-Prime Minister in charge of Human Rights and Social Sector Ministers) and over 1,200 persons (children, young people, women's groups, CSO, private sector and donor community). The event was an opportunity to place children in the centre of the national agenda by conveying key advocacy messages on violence against children, inclusiveness of education and the need to accelerate approvals of child-rights legislation.

Several high-level meetings were held with the Prime Minister, the First Lady, the Minister of Social Affairs for the approval of the legislation and establishment of a social protection system. The high-level advocacy was complemented with capacity building of 165 national and local government staff on social protection system organised in collaboration with Ministry of Social Affairs. The CO in collaboration with the Government, UN agencies and CSO partners organized several advocacy events: International Women's Day, International Day of Violence against Women and Day of the African Child (focusing on children with disabilities). In collaboration with NGO Bocamandja, approximately 440 children from 22 schools participated in a theatre festival on child-rights. Moreover, a mapping of 35 NGO partners working on child-rights was concluded, and network established.

UNICEF appointed its first National Goodwill Ambassador (Nelida Karr, Singer) to support the Generation Unlimited

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Initiative (GenU) in collaboration with various local NGOs (ACIGE, Bocamandja, Africa Huna, Birealat, Mosart). During 2019, various youth projects related to empowerment and skills development of adolescents and young people were supported through the Audiovisual School (Eyi Moan Ndong) for young aspiring journalists and the expansion of the Music School (Mosart) for children and youth, benefitting a total of 198 students.

Gender-responsive programming

The CO supported the development of the National Multisectoral Gender Policy 2030, including a gender situation analysis which will be used to improve the finalization of the gender programmatic review in 2020 with Regional Office (RO) support. Furthermore, advocacy and technical assistance was provided for the approvals of several legislation (Social Protection, Gender Based Violence, Customary Marriage, Code of Persons and Family and Child Adoption).

As part of the regional KRC focusing on Birth Registration, the modernization of the birth registration system (SIREC) was further strengthened with EU's financial support; 10,406 children were digitally registered, and 82,758 persons' birth registrations were transferred digitally from paper-based data. UNICEF facilitated discussions between Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Ministry of Health (MoH) to sign an MOU in 2020 regarding the effective operationalization of CRVS. UNICEF supported the participation of MoJ authorities in the Fifth CRVS Conference in Africa. Technical and financial support was also provided to develop the new Civil Registry law.

Using the power of evidence to drive change for children

A Results-Based Management (RBM) workshop was organised by UNICEF in collaboration Ministry of Finance, Economy and Planning and INEGE (National Statistics Office), in which 35 Government officials were benefitted. The CO provided technical assistance to INEGE, aiming to strengthen statistic capacity and share best practices in Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) and to approve the national legislation of statistics and standard indicators.

In line with KRC focused on Evidence Generation and Knowledge Management, the CO with support from the RO completed the Data Landscape Study in collaborations with Nigeria and Ghana COs. The study provided an overview of the existing data challenges and constraints in the social sector and will be used as an important advocacy tool to create a data/evidence culture.

Child Survival, Development and Learning Programme

This programme component prioritizes the continental region and focuses on health and education system strengthening, and modelling of an integrated approach in target underserved districts. The programme is aligned with Government and UNDAF 2019-2023 strategic priority in Human Capital/Poverty Eradication, Goal Areas 1, 2 with elements from Goal Area 4 of UNICEF Strategic Plan (Every child survives and thrives; Every child learns and Every child lives in a safe and clean environment) and regional KRC focusing on Immunisation and Learning Outcomes.

Child Health & Nutrition

The UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA) provided technical assistance to MoH in the update of the National Health Policy and development of the National Health Sector Plan 2020-2030, which highlighted the need to strengthen the following areas: human resources, sector budget and the Health Information System (HIS), partnerships and collaboration with private sector, and operationalization of health districts.

UNICEF's advocacy efforts contributed to the expansion of malaria prevention and treatment services to the continental region (where 72% of the population resides) and the island of Annobón. With support from the RO the national list of essential medicines was updated and approved.

To leverage resources in the region, UNICEF participated in the 11th meeting of the African Task Force on Food and Nutrition Development (ATFFND) hosted by African Union in Malabo, to advocate for more investment in child nutrition. UNICEF facilitated the participation of three parliamentarians in the Nutrition High-Level meeting held in Abidjan to improve exclusive breastfeeding practices and prevent stunting in WCA region.

The MoH agreed to organize and co-fund a high-level forum on Child Health focusing on immunization plus in line with the strategies to reduce child mortality included in the National Health Sector Plan 2020-2030.

Through UNICEF and WHO advocacy, the Government financed the CMYP 2019-2023 with an allocation of USD 1,745,429 for 2019. The plan targets the immunization of 170,228 children and 41,054 pregnant women. The CO supported the MoH with procurement of all vaccines (USD 351,000) and the introduction of new technologies (VAR mobile App and ViVa platform).

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Immunisation Plus

As per regional KRC immunisation, the coverage of DPT3 increased from 47% (2018) to 61% (2019). A successful Polio SIA with 97.3% coverage was implemented benefitting 157,688 children. According to the Independent Monitoring only 2% of children were unvaccinated. Equatorial Guinea was certified as free of polio by the African Regional Certification Commission for Poliomyelitis Eradication in 2019.

In line with KRC immunisation and KRC prevention of stunting, UNICEF and WHO provided support to MoH in running an integrated Polio SIA (vitamin A, deworming, and polio vaccination). The coverage of the integrated campaign was estimated below 80%; nonetheless, 94,088 children were supplemented with vitamin A and 82,349 were dewormed. During routine vaccination, 14,428 children under five were supplemented with vitamin A nationwide and during antenatal care 3,022 pregnant women were supplemented with iron and folic acid in the priority districts of Akurenam, Mbini, Riaba and Annobón.

A new maintenance plan for tetanus elimination was developed and finalized. Furthermore, several training were carried out in communication, behavioral changes towards vaccination and in the humanization of healthcare which involved 1,259 community counselors and 223 mobilizers. The CO supported the replacement of TT to Td vaccines nationwide which included the training of 78 health workers.

In immunisation, UNICEF worked closely with six NGOs (Rotary, FUDEN, FRS, ASAMA, SOS and Red Cross). A high-level joint supervision of routine vaccination with MoH, WHO and UNICEF was conducted in districts with low performance to improve coverage. During the second semester, 18 volunteers of the Red Cross were included in the social mobilization activities during the SIAs. Meanwhile, 51 health workers were trained on EVM, in collaboration with the NGO partner, FUDEN.

HIV/AIDS

A situation analysis and Plan on Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis B was developed and finalized with UNICEF's support. Equatorial Guinea adopted the dual test for HIV/Syphilis which is included in the Government's annual supply plan 2020. Through UNICEF and WHO's advocacy, the country adopted the Test and Treat Strategy which increased the number of patients under treatment by 30%.

UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS and UNDP are members of the multi-sectoral technical group on HIV and TB, led by MoH, where all HIV interventions were coordinated. Technical support was provided by the group to develop the country's Global Aids Monitoring report. WHO with support from UNICEF assisted the Government in the assessment of HIV/TB programme performance.

To launch the implementation of the dual test process, UNICEF contributed with over 6,250 Bioline dual tests for HIV/Syphilis, 1,000 Colloidal Gold and 1,000 Uni-Gold HIV tests. Additionally, to improve data availability and quality, all HIV and TB management programme tools were revised. 42 health workers from 6 out of 7 health provinces benefitted from capacity strengthening on diagnostic and treatment of HIV and TB pediatric including co-infection TB/HIV. As part of the CO support, as MoH introduced the early infant diagnosis of HIV, UNICEF procured reagents for 500 exposed children.

Education

The PF4C study published by UNICEF indicated that the expenditures in Education was only 3%. Nevertheless, the Education for All Report (2015) estimated that the average expenditure of WCA was at 18%. The CO advocated for higher and more efficient public spending for education and data generation to address bottlenecks for system strengthening. High-level advocacy was conducted with the new Minister of Education with support from RO to discuss UNICEF's gradual shift from service delivery to upstream work, focusing on learning outcomes, inequity and children with disabilities.

In line with KRC focusing on learning outcomes, an agreement was reached to develop national exams to evaluate learning outcomes at primary level. Government published the annual statistics for 2017-2018 while the 2018-2019 publication is pending validation. In preschool, only 11% have reported to have post-secondary education while in primary, 33% of teachers reported to have post-secondary education. To this end, the Government has provided in-service training to strengthen teacher capacity. In 2019, 1,347 preschool and primary teachers completed their in-service training and received diplomas which increased the number of qualified teachers with support from FHI360, Kosmos Energy and Trident Energy.

In coordination with the RO, UNICEF finalized the country's first study on OOSC (KRC 3) based on the National Census 2015 and education statistics. The study estimated that 177,254 school-aged children are excluded from schools. The

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study will serve as an important tool for advocacy to reduce the number of OOSC.

A capacity-building workshop was held for 55 school management staff in the priority district of Akurenam. Moreover, Teaching and Learning Materials (106 school-in-a-bag kits for primary and 73 Early Childhood Education in-a-carton-kits for preschool) were procured. Teacher training on utilizing and distributions of materials are planned for 2020 when a total of 4,500 students will be benefitted.

Partnership discussions and project field visits with PROFUTURO, a Spanish foundation established by Telefonica and Caixa, took place to expand the use technology and promote smart schools in vulnerable districts to strengthen learning outcomes.

Child Friendly Districts

According to the latest MODA study (2014), the district of Akurenam is the most vulnerable province (Centro Sur) with high level of child deprivation in health (75.2%)., UNICEF launched its first Child-Friendly District initiative in Akurenam in collaboration with Ministry of Local Administration, district authorities and NGO ASAMA. Due to the complexity of integrated structure of implementation and limited financial resources, the CO will accelerate the implementation in 2020 to another planned district (Mbini).

UNICEF delivered essential medicines in four target districts (Akurenam, Riaba, Mbini and Annobón) which treated 8,300 children for acute respiratory infections and malaria while 6,923 children were dewormed and received vitamin A. Additionally, CO collaborated with NGO Manos Felices during the Handwashing World Day to promote handwashing among 50 schoolchildren with disabilities.

Several training related to health and education were implemented: i) 30 social workers trained to identify and manage social issues; ii) 25 health workers with improved capacity in the delivery of integrated of social services; iii) 32 community health workers trained on promotion of essential health practices; iv) 81 district and community leaders trained on general monitoring of health information and data to identify and escalate risks/problems and; v) 30 teachers and parents trained in C4D and explore joint approaches to address learning outcomes, inclusiveness and violence in schools.

Programme Effectiveness and Coordination

The CO was engaged in the "Delivering as One" and participated in Common UN committees. The OMT was chaired by UNICEF which aimed to achieve common UN results by providing a significant support in common procurements and the Salary Survey process. UNICEF also chaired the Communication WG and was active in others (HIV/AIDS, PME, Human Rights and Gender). Moreover, UNICEF led the HACT and BOS process and initiated discussions with other UN agencies (UNDP and UNFPA) to create a Youth WG as per GenU initiative.

The fund utilization rate was 95% and the CO had less than 1% of unutilized expired funds. In line with HACT plan the indicator value for financial assurance was only at 50% due to limited collaboration from Government partners in conducting the spot checks required. Moreover, the CO implemented 82% of the planned programmatic visits. A HACT training including a presentation of new online HACT tools (UN Partner Portal and eTools) was organized for 30 NGOs while a HACT Financial Management training was organized for 13 Implementing Partners (CSOs and Government). As per RO/HQ recommendation, the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) protocol letter was submitted to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which coordinates UNICEF/UN programmes in Equatorial Guinea. Furthermore, a detailed briefing on PSEA was conducted for all implementing partners during the Financial Management training and CO Annual Review.

The CO completed 96% of its preparedness for emergency on the ERM platform. All staff have completed their compulsory courses online in this regard. An MOU was signed with Red Cross on emergency preparedness/response as part of the platform requirement.

Operations Effectiveness

Annual Management Plan was timely finalized and rated satisfactorily by Regional Office (81% scoring), risks library was approved, and mitigation strategies were established. The CO's audit was finalized by the Office of Internal Audit and Investigation (OIAI) in direct collaboration with CO and RO. Based on the audit work performed, OIAI concluded at the end of the audit that, subject to implementation of the agreed nine actions and 22 recommendations, the country office's governance, risk management and internal controls were generally established and functioning during the period under audit.

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The local salary scale had not been updated since 2002. The new salary scale became effective in November 2019 with an increase of 125% for national officers and 115% for the GS with a retroactive effect from March 2017. The salary increases at the end of 2019 created a funding shortfall for staff salaries. Hence, a restructuring will be required by the CO in 2020 with support from RO.

Regarding ICT, the CO increased its internet bandwidth from 4mb/s to 12 mb/s without any price increase and more stable connectivity. Geolocation systems in UNICEF vehicles were installed in the continental region due to the high risk for theft. Moreover, the CO installed a universal Wi-Fi. All files were in the process of immigration to the new ECM platform to replace the shared drive. Windows servers were updated from the 2008 version to the 2012 version (Hyper-V).

The recruitment processes of all four funded positions approved by the Programme Budget Review in 2018 were completed. However, due to budget constraints some positions remained vacant, particularly the positions related to social policy. The CO established a strategy to improve local professional capacities by signing MOUs with the National University (UNGE) and Universidad Autonoma de Madrid (UAM) to provide internship opportunities to eligible undergraduates in their final year. In total, three interns were recruited to support communication and child protection programmes. In line with the Gender Parity Strategy agreed with the RO, the CO made significant progress in improving its gender balance among national officers which increased from 0% to 40%.

Staff members completed 81 courses in AGORA platform and actively participated in the staff retreat, Ethics and PSEA awareness programme. The CO released its first staff member for a stretch assignment (Costa Rica CO). Additionally, the ICT Officer participated in a staff exchange with the RO. The CO implemented flexible working arrangements to increase efficiency and promote work-life balance and was ranked in the top in WCARO implementing this policy.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

The national reorientation exercise for the drafting of the New Development Plan was a good opportunity for UNICEF to establish itself as a trusted partner of Government institutions. It was also an entry point to promote more inclusive approaches with development partners with an increased focus on the leaving no one behind SDG principle. Additionally, during the National Conference and Plan development processes, held only every decade, the Government recognized the urgency to generate data and evidence for improved results-based planning.

The approach to consolidate the UNDAF results group and align it with the four main axes of the revised National Development Plan 2035 (poverty eradication/human capital, social inclusion/governance, economic diversification and environment sustainability) was an important decision to strengthen the coordination among UN agencies and Government.

The advocacy made throughout the year based on the PF4C study focusing on the need to increase social spending, resulted in an increase of 27% in the planned national budget for the social sector in 2020. However, Government approvals of Laws, Policies and Plans remain limited, despite UNICEF's high-level advocacy efforts as exemplified by 30th Anniversary of the CRC celebrations. To this end, the CO will review its technical capacity and strategy to improve and engage more effectively on upstream work.

The integration of the Child-Friendly District initiative contributed to the strengthening of the CO's programme coordination and the local Government's capacity in convening actors and key stakeholders on child-rights issues. The country has made substantial efforts in improving infrastructure and human resources in line with its district urbanization strategy. However, the implementation of an integrated social service initiative at the district level still faces challenges due to the lack of local decision-making capacity which is mainly related to the limited application of the local development legislation.

The CO launched its first official website and social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube) in accordance with the Global Communication and Advocacy Strategy. The visibility of the CO improved substantially as demonstrated by the progressive increase of followers during the year in Twitter (600), Facebook (560), Instagram (1400), which included the publications of 18 videos in YouTube.

The last vaccination campaign applying an integrated strategy with polio vaccination, vitamin A supplementation and deworming, yielded unsatisfactory results. This highlighted the structural weaknesses of the social mobilization/communication, supervision and field level coordination and logistics capacity in line with the identified routine vaccination services bottlenecks. To partially address some of these structural bottlenecks, UNICEF introduced the use of new technologies to manage stock of vaccines and vaccine arrival reports (ViVa platform/VAR Mobile app).

In HIV/AIDS, the need to implement visits post-training of health workers is the most effective way to ensure that best

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practices on adhering to national guidelines and protocol on HIV prevention, care and treatment. The plan to implement the HMIS shows the need to strengthen the administrative data and capacity at national level to manage the data analysis as well as reducing the verticalization of sectoral health programme.

As an innovation, the CO finalized and published an evaluation on HIV/AIDS Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT)/Option B+. It was the CO's first completed evaluation which served as an important tool to inform programming. A poster of the PMTCT evaluation was also presented as a best practice in the Global Evaluation meeting held at HQ.

In Education the shift from service delivery to upstream work will continue, in line with the Country Programme overarching strategy. During the remaining period of the Country Programme, the Education Section will prioritize generation of data and evidence and policy and advocacy work through conducting studies, related to education quality, violence in school, classroom practices and teaching methodology.

The experience acquired by UNICEF in the full implementation of the HACT as per HQ's guidance has been fundamental in improving the coordination among UN-agencies and strengthening the capacity building in governance and financial management of partners.

The implementation of the newly approved local salary scale will require a coherent adjustment of the staffing structure to be in line with the initial approved budget for the country programme 2019-2023. Stronger inter-agency collaborations are needed to ensure regular implementation of salary surveys to avoid serious budget management constraints, particularly related to RR and OR as they are approved on a five-year basis.

The CO recognises the need to diversify and innovate its resource mobilisation portfolio, which relies mainly on funding from UNICEF Thematic resources, Government through the UNDAF, the EU, and UNICEF Italian National Committee. As a result, CO initiated a process of engagement with the public and private sectors and CSOs aimed at tapping into CSRs of the oil and gas industry, which will be better tailored and accelerated in 2020. Furthermore, and to diversify the capacity development strategy CO signed MoUs with National Red Cross to strengthen the emergency preparedness and with SOS/Children's Villages to promote child-rights as per international standards stipulated in the CRC. UNICEF also signed MoUs with two universities (UNGE and UAM) to provide internship opportunities for national students. To strengthen national coverage of routine immunization and leverage funds to the Government, UNICEF partnered with local Rotary Club, FUDEN and FRS (Spanish NGOs) to strengthen immunization activities. With support from UNICEF and aligned with the GenU Initiative, the Association of Diplomatic Wives organized a gala to collect funds for the Audiovisual School to support aspiring young journalists completing their training at the school.

The challenging funding constraints linked to reduced capacity to mobilise OR (less than 50% mobilized in 2019) compounded with the significant increase of national staff salary (120% average), highlighted the importance of better risk programme analysis during the preparation phase of country programme. Consequently, UNICEF will review its strategic positioning in the country and progressively shift its focus to upstream work to advocate for higher social spending, improved generation of data and evidence, provision of technical support on capacity building and system strengthening, through enhanced shared value partnerships.