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**FOR THE LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL OFFICE (LACRO)**

**2018**



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## List of acronyms

AAP	Accountability to affected populations
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANC	Antenatal care
AVPR	Armed Violence Prevention and Response
BAC	Banco America Central
C4D	Communication for Development
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CO(s)	Country Office(s) [UNICEF]
CPD(s)	Country Programme Document(s)
CPiE	Child protection in emergencies
CPMS	Child protection monitoring system
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRED	Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters
CRM	Regional Conference on Migration
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DOC	Division of Communication
DROPS	Deputy representatives and operations managers meeting
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECA	Eastern Caribbean Area
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECM	Enterprise Content Management
EDGE	Economic Dividends for Gender Equality
EMTCT	Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV
EPP	Emergency Preparedness Platform
EWEC	Every Women, Every Child
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FRG	Field Results Group [UNICEF]
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	gender-based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GenU	Generation Unlimited'
GRIN	Group for Integrated Nutrition Resilience
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HQ	Headquarters [UNICEF]
HR	Human Resources
HRBP	Huan Resource Business Partners
IADB	Interamerican Development Bank
IAW	International Alliance of Women

ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross
InfoRM	Index for Risk Informed Management
IOM	International Organisation on Migration
J4C	Justice for Children
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice surveys
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LACRO	UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
MCSF	Multi-Country Service Facility
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market organisation
MICS	Multi-indicator cluster surveys
MPS	Minimum Preparedness Standards
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organization(s)
OAS	Organisation of American States
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OPS	Operations
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PD/HATIS	Programme Division/Humanitarian Action & Transition section
PFP	Private fundraising and partnerships
PHE	Public Health Emergencies
PMTCT	Prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV
PSFR	Private Sector Fundraising
RBM	Results-Based Management
RMT	Regional Management Team
RO	Regional Office
ROMP	Regional Office Management Plan
RRR	Rapid Response Roster
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
T4D	Technology for Development
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNAM	National Autonomous University of Mexico
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG-LAC	United Nations Development Group – Latin America & the Caribbean
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAC	Violence Against Children

VMC	Venezuela Migration Crisis
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
ZIKV	Zika Virus

## A) Situation Update – regional trends that affect children and women

In 2018, the intensity and scope of social-, political- and economic crises reached a new peak, as illustrated by an unprecedented wave of migration. At the same time, the region continued to witness deepening of poverty and inequality, worsening violence and mounting breaches in terms of human rights obligations by State parties. This state of affairs is further exacerbated by the trend of more frequent natural disasters, very rapid urbanization and shrinking fiscal space. The conjunction of these factors has resulted in the need for a complex response that is solidly anchored in the normative framework of promotion and protection of human rights as well as the humanitarian-development nexus. This new predicament warrants the need to refresh UNICEF LAC Region's vision, strategies, structures, and regional positioning.

The region has undergone a transformation in migratory flows. For example, as of December 2018, around 3 million Venezuelans were living abroad, including 2.4 million in countries within the LAC region. Many recipient countries faced challenges to receive large numbers of migrants. UNICEF estimates that over 470,000 children need migration-related assistance in Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Panama. In this context, children and their families face challenges to regularize their migratory status, which affects their access to social protection, health, early childhood development, education, sustainable livelihoods and/or child protection services. The challenges with the provision of integrated services for migrants in the host countries is putting children at higher risk of discrimination, violence, xenophobia, exploitation and abuse in transit/destination countries.

By the end of 2018, the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants (RMRP) led by UNHCR and IOM was launched with partners from the UN system with partners that includes bilateral donors, IFIs and civil society. The Regional Platform established mirrored National Platforms for better co-ordination and quick response in resource allocation. RMRP is a framework for an inter-agency response based on common analysis by different UN agencies, development organizations and NGOs (around 100 partners represented) and is flexible enough to complement and accommodate diverse government responses. RMRP acts as well as a resource mobilization node, to help organize donors' support against specific products. UNICEF has positioned itself as a strong partner around the migration crisis.<sup>1</sup> UNICEF is fulfilling an important role implementing a campaign against xenophobia but also strengthening the work on communication with (host) communities, addressing gender-based violence and the provision of services to children on the move.

In Central America, migrants are moving in larger number towards destinations in the North. 'Caravans' of in total around 16,000 people, including children and pregnant women, mostly from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, fleeing from poverty and violence, attempted to cross the several borders on their way North. While the national- and local governments, with the support of the international community, are trying to respond to addressing the needs and rights of these migrant populations, it is critical to identify more effective strategies to address and tackle violence in the home communities and countries as this is one of the underlying causes for migrating, along with poverty and family reunification.

Natural disasters in continued to affect large populations throughout the region. At the same time, several countries were still recovering from the impact of major events in 2017 - such as the earthquakes in Mexico, floods in Peru, and hurricanes Irma and Maria, which left over 1.4 million people in need of

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<sup>1</sup> Multiplying effects also pushed from advocacy efforts from institutions such as UNICEF, with a HAC US\$28 million appeal for 2018 (that will increase to US\$69,5 million for 2019).

assistance across several Caribbean countries and territories and generated enormous economic losses in countries already grappling with economic challenges.<sup>2</sup>

While the number and severity of natural disasters in 2018 was less than 2017, the trend over time has been for an increasing number and intensity of natural disasters, and this trend is forecast to continue. Together with the halt in poverty reduction, chronic instability and increased migration flows, these combined factors will require not only a greater level of social service provision, but also more flexible and responsive systems. The trend towards chronic emergencies is unfortunately likely to increase – a “new normal”. Thus, the work on building shock-responsive social protection mechanisms within the national systems is an emerging and compelling priority for LAC countries.

After two consecutive years of economic contraction in 2015 and 2016, and growth of 1.2 percent in 2017, ECLAC estimates that in 2018 the LAC region would have grown at a rate of 1.5 percent. Economic activity was quite uneven across countries during the first two quarters of 2018: while Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru saw upturns in growth, Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Brazil recorded downturns. Indeed, according to the Interamerican Development Bank (IADB), it was estimated that by the end of 2018, Venezuelan GDP per capita would have fallen by more than 70 percent from its peak of US\$11,500 in 2011 to just US\$3,300. According to the International Monetary Fund, Argentina was expected to show a negative variation of -2.6 percent, while Brazil was expected to grow 1.4 percent: 2 percentage points less than the forecast in 2017.

Overall, in most countries in the region, economic growth is limited and will most likely continue to constrain future public investments in human capital. These trends across the region potentially increase inequalities that affect children and minorities. In the public domain, economic mismanagement and corruption continued to make headlines throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Despite the uncertainty created by these corruption cases, monetary authorities in most countries managed to provide a stable macro-economic context within which there was scope for government to implement policies favoring economic growth.

Several countries in the region had general elections during 2018. Brazil and Mexico, the largest economies in the region, saw significant political shifts. In Brazil, the presidential election was won by a candidate promising to liberalize and privatize the economy, reduce environmental safeguards, fight violence and corruption, and restore conservative social values. In Mexico, the former mayor of Mexico City won the presidential election, breaking a sequence of several conservative governments, and promising to implement anti-poverty policies and reduce inequality. In Peru, the centrist candidate elected president by mid-2016 was forced to resign in early 2018 due to a corruption case. Other countries that experienced changes in government administration in 2018 were Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile and Paraguay.

Despite achieving good progress in poverty reduction over the last 20 years, poverty is still one of the main factors affecting children’s and adolescent’s development in LAC. At country level, Chile, El Salvador and Dominican Republic were the countries that showed the largest improvements in poverty reduction between 2012 and 2017, mostly due to an increase in labor income among the poorest households. This notwithstanding, the good overall regional trend in poverty reduction saw a reversal in 2017 and 2018.

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<sup>2</sup> Economic losses due to hurricanes Irma and Maria amount to US\$ 161 billion, including the United States and the Caribbean. Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), “Natural disasters in 2017: Lower mortality, higher cost”, March 2018.

The region experienced a slight increase in extreme poverty in 2017, while total poverty remained relatively stable. Around 30.2 percent of the region's population (184 million, approximately) lived in poverty and one-third of these (62 million) lived in extreme poverty. According to ECLAC's 2018 Social Overlook this situation did not change significantly during 2018. The estimates suggest that the share of the population living in poverty in 2018 would be 29.6 percent – which is equivalent to 182 million people, 2 million less than in 2017 – while the incidence of extreme poverty would remain around 10.2 percent – 63 million people, 1 million more than in 2017. Unfortunately, this halt in progress in poverty reduction in 2017 & 2018 could continue in the coming years, given uncertainties pertaining to economic and political perspectives.

The combination of this reversal in poverty reduction, together with the migration crisis, chronic political and social instability, as well as the long-term trend of worsening natural disasters, calls for renewed efforts and redesigned strategies by UNICEF and other organizations. During 2018, UNICEF LAC and COs strengthened efforts working with governments to reduce poverty and inequality, strengthening social protection systems and public investment in quality health, nutrition, and education services to benefit children and their families, and contributing to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals.

There are two additional poverty related trends. Firstly, children and adolescents are today over-represented in poverty figures as compared to the situation in the early 1990s. Secondly, the profile of poverty is changing: urban poverty is increasing. Between 2016 and 2017, the incidence of extreme urban poverty increased from 7.3 to 7.8 percent, while for rural areas it increased from 20.4 to 20.6 percent. In 2012 these figures were 5.5 percent and 19.9 percent in urban and rural areas, respectively. The reasons for this trend vary widely within the region but certainly the rapid unplanned urbanization that is occurring in many countries is a big factor. This in-country migration trend from rural to urban areas has accelerated over the last few years.

Urban poverty affects children in specific ways – for instance, poor children may live in more polluted areas, access education services of lower quality, or live confined to small overcrowded homes with little opportunity for exploration or physical activity. In this sense, it is important that UNICEF continue its advocacy work to advocate for a redesign of social protection systems to address urban poverty effectively. Most social protection systems in the region were designed to fight rural poverty during the 70s and 80s, tackling poverty based from a social aid perspective, whereas the urban poverty phenomenon requires a multi-sectoral approach in which the articulation between different government institutions and government at different levels (including at the sub-national level) is indispensable. It also calls for new partnerships – for example with the municipalities as well as the private sector, which is bound to assume larger roles in the future.

The LAC region has one of the highest fertility rates among adolescents in the world, despite declining total fertility rates. According to UNFPA (2018), the fertility rate in the region varies between 1.8 and 2.5 births per woman. This data is from twelve Latin American countries, accounting for 85 per cent of the region's population. Fertility rates among adolescents aged 15–19 in these countries are higher than in countries in other regions with similar overall fertility rates. There is a demonstrated relationship between adolescent pregnancy and intergenerational transmission of poverty, as a young mother is more likely to drop out of school and, therefore, impair her capacity of generating income. In this context, UNICEF has continued its efforts to make this issue more visible in the LAC region, proposing intersectoral work to maximize the effects of interventions aiming to reduce early pregnancy.

Women in the LAC region are more likely to become victims of domestic violence than in any other region of the world except Africa. The evidence presented in UNODC (2018) shows that the LAC region has one of the highest rates of gender-based partner violence. In the Dominican Republic, 1.6/100,00 women are killed by their partner, followed by 1.0/100,000 in Ecuador and Uruguay, 0.9/100,000 in Jamaica, and 0.7/100,000 in Peru. In Finland, for instance, 0.4/100,000 women in Finland suffer the same fate. Several countries in the region have adopted legislation criminalizing femicide as a specific offence. However, there are no signs of a decrease in the number of gender-related femicides. Moreover, this problem is still relatively invisible due the lack of reliable information that would allow assessing its full extent - women are still afraid of reporting violent events, due to lack of trust in authorities and for cultural reasons.

Another compelling phenomenon relates to the children of women killed by their partner or other family members, resulting in children who are left vulnerable, traumatized and often without a guardian. In this context, UNICEF should continue its efforts to support the development of multi-sectoral interventions, addressing the problem at the household, community and institutional levels, as well as contributing with reliable data to highlight this phenomenon and designing evidence-based strategies to eradicate it.

There is substantial evidence linking domestic violence to broader violent contexts, as well the intergenerational transmission of violence. Therefore, it is important that UNICEF's work addresses the underlying and inter-related factors causing different kinds of violence, so as to advocate for appropriate strategies to eradicate violence against women and children.

The Caribbean sub-region has much in common with the rest of the LAC region and at the same time has distinct opportunities and challenges – with some small island states, specific environmental challenges, very high rates of homicide and a distinct profile of violence. Furthermore, the English- and Dutch speaking countries in the Caribbean have adopted a multi-country development framework with a common UNDAF. In order to relate meaningfully to these sub-regional alignments and frameworks, LAC RO appointed a Senior Coordinator for the Caribbean in 2018 and the priority in 2019 is to strengthen engagement and deepen a strategic vision for the Caribbean sub-region.

In this overall challenging context in LAC, two significant regional events regarding child rights took place this year. In November, the first regional dialogue in Latin America and the Caribbean “On the road to equality: 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child” was held in Santiago, Chile. This pioneering event was co-organized by UNICEF with ECLAC and counted with the participation of 500 representatives from Governments, academia, private sector, international organizations and civil society, including 100 adolescents who issued a declaration advocating for further progress on child rights. In September, UNICEF together with the Spanish Cooperation Agency organized an intergenerational dialogue in Guatemala that brought together fifty women leaders who addressed the lack of decision-making power of women, economic inequality and violence. It was the first time that such an inter-generational meeting took place in the region. (Note: Para 18 is also included in the section on results achieved with more detail).

At the global level with direct implications over regional interests, the G20 Summit of 2018 was hosted by Argentina, and in its declaration for the first time they endorsed the priority to invest in ECD (‘cognitive capital’)<sup>3</sup>. The relevance of investing in human capital from its early years and thus with a strong focus on

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<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 14 of the G20 Leaders' Declaration “*Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development*” states “*We launch the G20 Initiative for Early Childhood Development and stand ready to join all stakeholders in enhancing quality and sustainably financed early childhood programs that consider the multi-dimensional approach*”

health and education - to prepare people for a changing environment and society and new needed skills for the XXI century - is gathering a new momentum with discussions such as the one of G20 but also through initiatives such as Human Capital Project lead by the World Bank and where UNICEF is a strong partner. Such discussions at regional level among key stakeholders also happened at the region. Similarly, during the 2018 Ibero-American Summit of heads of State and government, UNICEF was invited as Observer and the Summit declaration stated President's compromise to promote and protect children rights as mandated by CRC and under the umbrella of the Agenda 2030.

The tight fiscal space and the rapidly changing situation makes it vital to establish and strengthen partnerships with new actors. The devaluation of currency in the region in relation the US dollar, particularly the Argentinian peso, had a significant impact on the income generated from the private sector. In addition, the economic downturn has affected private sector partnerships contributions in some countries. There is increased interest and willingness of the private sector. UNICEF is pro-actively engaging the private sector as a full-fledged partner in terms of co-creation of innovative and child-friendly solutions and in the promotion of Shared Value Partnerships – the ability to add business and social value. Regional multi-country partnerships are having impact in the region and in 2018 had several achievements such as the partnerships with Avianca, Millicom and Kimberley-Clark. It is notable that many of the partnerships with potential in the region are based or have their headquarters outside of the region. Thus, while UNICEF continues the focus on regional partnerships, it must also extend our reach outside of the region to maximize global partnerships. This will mean that the organization will need to ensure that organizational policies are in place for the region to maximize the benefit of these global partners and look at how we can innovate or broaden the scope of our programmatic impact to make UNICEF more attractive to possible shared value partnerships with private partners.

### **Humanitarian Assistance**

LAC experienced multiple political-, economic- and social crises and challenges in 2018. Together with the impact of natural disasters, the region faced unprecedented needs of migrant populations that challenged governments, societies and aid organizations as it required a response on a big scale with the dimension of added complexity. In addition to responding to the rights and needs of migrants, UNICEF Country Offices and partners responded to 30 emergency situations affecting children in 20 countries. Nearly 5 million people, including approximately 1.5 million children, were affected by different crisis situations.<sup>4</sup> The prolonged economic- social- and political crisis in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has led to the outflow of more than 3 million Venezuelans. The total number of Venezuelans living in other countries in the region is likely to be higher, as most data sources do not include migrant Venezuelans who have not managed to regularize their status in recipient countries. Neighboring and transit countries such as Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, are bearing the heaviest burden - including not only Venezuelan children on the move but also boys and girls from the most vulnerable host communities of these countries themselves. Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru have reported increased dengue and measles rates—due in part to the migration dynamics.<sup>5</sup>

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*of ECD, as means of building human capital to break the cycle of intergenerational and structural poverty, and of reducing inequalities, specially where young children are most vulnerable”.*

<sup>4</sup> Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters Database, ‘EM-DAT: The International Disaster Database’, CRED, 5 December 2018, [www.emdat.be](http://www.emdat.be), accessed 23 January 2019.

<sup>5</sup> As of 21 November 2018, following a period of low dengue transmission in the region of the Americas, an increase in cases has been reported in some countries (Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization, ‘Epidemiological Alert: Dengue’, PAHO and WHO, 21 November 2018). As of 9 November 2018,

Meanwhile, as the situation in Venezuela has led to major pressure on the delivery of basic public services, the Venezuela Country Programme was scaled-up to respond to the changing context. As a result of the scaling-up plan, additional financial resources were mobilized and allocated while additional human resources were deployed in Venezuela, including in three offices at the sub-national level.

The situation in Northern Central America further deteriorated in late 2018, when over 16,000 migrants from Honduras and El Salvador (so-called Caravans) departed from different locations with the hope of reaching Mexico and the United States of America, fleeing violence in their countries, as well as poverty.

In Colombia, renewed violence by armed groups, internal displacement and criminal activity have tempered optimism around the peace process, leaving over 145,000 internally displaced persons, of which a substance number of children, at end 2018.<sup>6</sup>

In Guatemala, more than 1.7 million people were affected by the Fuego Volcano eruption; flooding affected over 200,000 people in Central America, about 150,000 people in Trinidad and Tobago, and over 80,000 people in Bolivia. Around 8,000 households were affected by earthquakes in Haiti and El Salvador; and a *cold wave* (weather phenomenon) in several departments in Peru affected more than 700,000 people and their livelihoods.

The dominant trend over recent years has been for more natural disasters with greater severity and recurrence (climate change contributing to this). This could be, for example, noticed in the drought cycles affecting El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras where about 281,000 hectares of staple crops have been lost and at least 1.2 million people are considered to be food insecure as a consequence of extreme weather.<sup>7</sup>

Haiti continues to face multiple ongoing crises, including cholera outbreaks, food insecurity and malnutrition, as well as the Haitian-Dominican migration situation. Although the response to cholera in Haiti achieved good results in 2018, with a 70 per cent decrease in suspected cases since 2017,<sup>8</sup> the risk of a possible upsurge remains, as evidenced by localized outbreaks reported in 2018. This situation is further exacerbated by risks of political unrest in the country.

Chronic situations of political unrest and instability in several countries, increased violence in an already extremely violent region, migration on an unprecedented scale as well as needs arising from rapid urbanization have created a changing and volatile situation. In this context UNICEF has continued to support systemic - and institution strengthening - to improve resilience and to be more flexible for rapid adaptation to changes in the environment.

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10,342 confirmed measles cases had been reported in the Americas, compared with 895 cases in the same period in 2017 (PAHO and WHO measles and rubella surveillance data, 15 November 2018).

<sup>6</sup> OCHA, Colombia Humanitarian Needs Overview 2019, November 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Various sources, including OCHA LAC Monthly Situation Snapshots, UNICEF SitReps, WFP Emergency Food Security Assessments (EFSAs).

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Health, 'Report of the National Surveillance Network - Cholera: 46th epidemiological week 2018, 11-17 November 2018', 2018; and Ministry of Health, 'Report of the National Surveillance Network - Cholera: 46th epidemiological week 2017', 2017.

UNICEF also continued to explore working in social protection in emergencies. On May 3, 2018, UNICEF and World Food Program Regional Offices in Latin America and the Caribbean signed a collaboration agreement to support governments in the region to be better prepared and equipped to use cash transfer programmes to assist their population during emergencies. The core areas of intended collaboration with the WFP are the undertaking of cash feasibility assessments, the co-financing cash transfer programmes, the development and/or strengthening programme operational tools, programme implementation and capacity strengthening activities and programme monitoring and evaluation. For UNICEF, this work is complementary to its focus on the strengthening of child sensitive social protection systems. Collaboration with WFP is also promoting development of joint initiatives in the region, such as the workshop on Humanitarian Cash Transfers through National Social Protection Systems that took place in Quito, Ecuador in October 2018.

## B) Key Results achieved against the ROMP

The year 2018 was the first year of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021 and the LAC Regional Office Management Plan (ROMP), which has the same duration, is fully aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan and with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Due to the rapidly changing context in the region, it became immediately evident that integrating humanitarian and development aspects, and the continuum between these approaches, into each of the components of the ROMP is critical. For this purpose, all sections in the regional office adjusted their 2018 work plan accordingly and this contributed to a coordinated response to many situations. Some trade-offs and re-prioritization was necessary – so while additional migration-related interventions were designed, and additional results delivered, work in some ROMP areas could not progress as planned during 2018. Finally, while the ROMP remains valid, the scale of the humanitarian crises means that additional resources, both financial and human, will be required for 2019 – 2021.

In fact, recent economic, social and political developments in the region have created a rapidly changing situation that warrants the need to refresh the visions and plans to ensure that UNICEF in LAC's programmes are sharply on target, delivered through 'game changers' strategies and adequately resourced to realize children's rights and needs in the region.

Sustained discussions between HQ and RO leadership in the last few months led to the decision to organize a 'LAC strategic consultation' (with a group of selected colleagues from HQ, LACRO, ECARO and UNICEF country offices) to reach a common and broader vision for the roles of UNICEF. The aim is to set strategic and operational directions as to ensure that UNICEF in the LAC Region is best fit for the purpose of responding in a timely, effective and efficient manner to rising challenges impeding the realization of child rights.

This section will describe some of the progress towards the results of the ROMP which was registered over the course of 2018.

## Goal Area 1: Every Child Thrives and Survives

In 2018, LACRO survive and thrive program contributed to the "learning agenda" in health, including prevention of obesity and overweight, adolescent mental health and child road safety, while supporting neonatal health, the reduction of health inequities in health, and countries affected by the migration crisis.

The year has been an opportunity to consolidate the UNICEF's flagship contributions regarding the regional nutrition agenda and fulfilling ambitions which have required multiple years of systematic and consistent efforts, including high-profile events, strategic collaborations and leadership in prevention of child overweight and emergency preparedness and response. As part of this work, it was developed a GRIN-LAC nutritional sectoral web-page, a nutrition risk guidance, several webinars and coordination mechanisms that have been put in place. In addition, a guidance note on Nutrition in Emergency was developed and support was provided to countries affected by the migration crisis.

During the year, there were several efforts in evidence-generation in new areas of work in health and nutrition. A study on the use of social media and adolescent mental health, conducted in two countries in 2017/2018, completed the qualitative analysis in 2018 and the quantitative part will be ready in early 2019. The publication of this study will be available in Q1 2019. Multi-sectoral approaches used by UNICEF country offices to prevent adolescent pregnancy were compiled and investment cases were developed in collaboration with PFP in the areas of adolescent pregnancy prevention, child road safety and nutrition. Furthermore, a conceptual framework on Child Road Safety was developed in 2018 that will guide COs in this new area of work. And, as part of these efforts, UNICEF participated for the first time in the FISEVI conference, presenting results from three pilot projects on child road safety. A study on in-store marketing practices was completed and countries continue to use results to influence policies on NCDs. Finally, a review of innovative strategies and successful community health system models to reach the most disadvantaged children and pregnant women was implemented.

Efforts in updating the EMTCT progress report remained on track and UNICEF, in collaboration with PAHO, which chairs the regional validation committee. Several studies were initiated at regional level. For example, a study on PMTCT integration within the wider ANC and pediatric care is still ongoing and will be finalized during the first quarter of 2019. Also, a case study of Cuba success on EMTCT is finalized for the establishment of a center of excellence based on Cuba EMTCT experience and knowledge. This solid achievement will be used as a learning model for South to South -, Horizontal- or Tri-angular Cooperation.

There have been several opportunities to position child rights and the right to health in regional conversations. The active participation in the EWEC LAC platform resulted in joint activities with IDB to compile evidence on multisectoral and health specific interventions to improve neonatal health in the region and in the development and launch of a Guide for implementing the EWEC Strategy in LACR. UNICEF chaired the Neonatal Alliance in 2019 and provided direct support for the organization of the regional partners meeting in Colombia focusing on newborn health. Also, the Regional task force for the reduction of maternal mortality, of which UNICEF is a member, launched an Overview of the situation of maternal morbidity and mortality in LAC.

The ongoing Zika response plan continued to record satisfactory levels of implementation both at regional and country levels. Evidence was generated in this area through several studies: documentation of interventions on Zika in four countries, a study on social protection for children affected by zika, a guide on applying gender in the Zika response and a multi-country evaluation of the Zika response were finished. A two-year advocacy and communications strategy to support Zika and public health emergency

responses was prepared including continuity of “1000diasdeamor” campaign and continuous 'always on' prevention messages around Zika and other public health emergencies. Gradually, responding to Zika and other public health emergencies is mainstreamed within the various sectors of UNICEF work in the region. This includes a comprehensive approach to mainstreaming efforts to care and support for children with disabilities to be incorporated in early childhood development programmes.

Due to the rapidly changing context in the region, including the need for scaling-up the Venezuela country programme and responding to the migrant crisis affecting several countries in the region, additional efforts were required to provide technical assistance to country offices. Throughout the year, LACRO closely monitored the evolving situation and sent experts to reinforce country office capacity. This included dedicated support (in collaboration with UNICEF Headquarters) in Venezuela for increasing measles vaccination coverage. In addition, the country office benefitted from direct technical assistance in nutrition. To address the impact of the migrant crisis in several countries in the region, the situation in health and nutrition is also closely monitored and efforts with the health sector, particularly at sub-national level, is being reinforced to allow for an engagement health systems and capacity strengthening to serve the populations at a reasonable scale.

## Goal Area 2: Every Child Learns

As part of the implementation of the ROMP, the following key results were achieved during 2018. The Road Map for the implementation and monitoring of the Education 2030 Agenda in LAC was approved during the Ministerial Meeting in Cochabamba. As part of the Regional Steering Committee for the SDG4, UNICEF LACRO played a central role in the design of the Road Map.

LACRO supported the design and piloting of the UNESCO’s Fourth Regional Comparative Study (ERCE 2019) to assess learning outcomes in 19 countries in LAC. Efforts are ongoing to generate evidence on the expansion of innovative solutions on quality early learning services, transition from preschool to primary and innovative solutions for scale up early learning and preschool services in LAC. More evidence is being generated on innovative solutions for scaling-up early learning and preschool services in LAC and on transition from preschool to primary and innovative solutions. A MICS-based Regional ECD Report was completed and disseminated along communication and public advocacy materials have been developed and disseminated to reach parents, policymakers and businesses in several countries within the region. UNICEF was actively involved in the G20 preparation and outcome on the critical importance of investing in ECD.

In the area of Knowledge Management, the education team completed a series of guidance notes and tools for equity in education, specifically focusing on children with disabilities, intercultural bilingual education, girl's education and education in migration contexts. Additionally, LACRO supported the alignment of the Central America sub-regional agenda with SDG4. Finally, LACRO continued supporting COs in strengthening national education systems to improve access, progression and completion for pre-primary, primary, and secondary education. At least 12 countries are implementing and/or have designed new initiatives towards these goals. These include, inter alia, out of school children reports (e.g. Guyana and Suriname), inclusion of skills development for secondary school aged children in the national curriculum (Costa Rica), education strategies to include out-of-school-children and migrant children into formal education (Ecuador).

LACRO and COs contributed to the development of the Nurturing Care Framework, and it is being broadly implemented in the region to trigger political commitment to address the needs of young children aged 0 to 3 and their families. LACRO contributed to the adoption and implementation of the Care for Child Development approach, which focuses on strengthening parenting interventions across ECD existing services in seven countries in the region. This integrated approach includes prevention of violence against children, supporting families with children affected by Zika, and children with disabilities or developmental delays. This was achieved working closely with the Health and Child protection sections in the regional office.

LACRO delivered training on prevention of violence in early childhood and the issue of the report on violence in early years in LAC. Internally, LACRO provided technical assistance and oversight to 24 COs, including all those preparing their CPDs and facing crises and/or humanitarian situations. The Regional ECD and Education Network meeting was organized and delivered, with the participation of international experts and colleagues from HQ, RO and COs. In addition, a regional strategy on education for adolescents and skills development is being developed to be completed in 2019 with the participation of HQ and COs.

The migrant crisis was a priority for all sections during 2018 as explained above. The education team developed and implemented the Regional Education response for the Crisis Migration and supported the development and implementation of the Education Response Strategies in 8 recipient countries. To be able to deliver the migration response and deliver on other key ROMP results, it was needed to make available some resources to be dedicated to the migration response.

LACRO continued supporting capacity development at regional and country level on Disaster Risk Reduction and Education in Emergencies, specifically ECA, Peru, Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua. Technical support was provided on preparedness and response during emergency situations to ensure the right to ECD and Education services in Cuba, ECA, Mexico, Guatemala and Haiti. UNICEF continues to co-lead the Regional EiE Group and, as member of the Global Alliance for DRR and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRESS), promoting the commitment of Education Ministries (MoEs) in the region to the world-wide Initiative for School Safety. So far 12 countries in the Caribbean and 9 in the Latin America have joined this initiative.

### Goal Area 3: Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation

Despite a challenging year due to the changing context in the region and the many demands on the child protection team to address several crises, several results could be registered on reducing Violence Against Children (VAC) – going beyond the original planned ROMP results, including: a) Completion of the Armed Violence Prevention and Response (AVPR) initiative in 9 countries and technical assistance to Brazil on AVPR; b) Development of a specific module on violence prevention and detection, used in trainings on ECD in Nicaragua, Peru, Paraguay, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador; c) Work on data analysis to provide an overall picture of the violence experienced by children in LAC; and d) the development of a 4-year regional communication campaign focused on VAC.

A working document on mental health and psychosocial support for children in emergencies was completed – jointly with Education and Emergencies sections. The regional office provided technical guidance to the 24 offices for the inclusion of preparedness and response actions in the EPPs. In conjunction with Nutrition, WASH, Emergencies and Gender, a tool was created to diagnose the situation of children facing drought in the countries of northern Central America. Jointly with Emergencies, a

protocol on integral protection of children in emergencies is being developed with Belize and the Eastern Caribbean (the Caribbean disaster management agency - CDEMA).

Thanks to UNICEF support the children's sub-group of the Regional Conference on Migration (CRM) is active and the voices of children were heard during CRM meetings and deliberations. Workshops were held on return, reception and reintegration of children. Work is under way on a full set of development of indicators to monitor international and regional migrant children's human rights standards.

Extensive direct technical assistance was provided to all country offices. This include, among others: a) technical leadership on the Joint Initiative to End Chronic Violence in the North of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras), contributing decisively in putting this initiative in the SG-EC agenda and in developing a violence composite index for the 3 countries; b) Modelling and best practices for VAC – a regional workshop was carried out with 20 country offices, in collaboration with HQ and Drexel University to clarify methodology for developing a C4D VAC Roadmap. Roadmaps were prepared by Cuba, Venezuela, Suriname and Guyana.

There was some progress during 2018 on both justice for children and alternative care, but achievements were constrained due to competing priorities. A UNICEF position paper on Juvenile Justice is being developed to counteract frequent attempts in the region to lower the age of criminal responsibility and establish tougher penalties for adolescents. Together with Hope and Homes, UNICEF is developing a guide on de-institutionalization based on regional examples. The guide is going to be tested in 3 countries and then will be widely distributed. In June, the section held the first Child Protection Network Meeting in 7 years, with a strong representation from all 24 COs, HQs and LACRO colleagues. This meeting constituted a milestone for the sector and was followed by a one-day meeting on AVPR.

The migration crisis was prioritized as explained above and achievements with children overshot initial plans. . New set-aside funds were secured for the 4 countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico) and there was a large expansion of this area of work in response to the Migrant Crisis that primarily affected countries in South America. This scaled-up work on the migrant crisis resulted in several other countries in the region implementing models to protect children on the move. In addition, the Venezuela country office received technical support for the development of the scale-up plan for service provision and the development of accelerated actions. Training was conducted in CPMS for actors in Caracas and Zulia, resulting in a child protection action plan and '*Mesas Técnicas*' (technical coordination mechanisms).

Furthermore, to address the impact of the migrant crisis, technical support for the development of guidelines on CPIE and migration was provided to the 7 impacted country offices (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana & Suriname and Panama). The goal was to develop response plans, promote exchange of experiences and assist with tools. Thirteen (13) countries – the 7 countries plus Paraguay, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Venezuela and Chile - developed such action plans for 2019 to improve their interventions, following a workshop on CPMS and migration.

#### Goal Area 4: Every Child Lives in a Clean and Safe Environment

During 2018, Girls, boys and adolescents in LAC benefit from systems that protect them from natural disasters, man-made emergencies and climate change impact by several intervention and strategies. COs and national counterparts developed new skills required to support the 2030 Agenda in areas of WASH and Climate Change, also, they have received support to generate country and multi-country evidence.

During 2018, UNICEF Country Offices and partners responded to 30 emergency situations affecting children in 20 countries. UNICEF interventions ranged from immediate support in the aftermath of natural disasters or lifesaving assistance and protection services for children on the move; to longer-term support and resilient approach, technical assistance as well as support to recovery and rehabilitation efforts. The Regional Office mobilized 670 days of technical mission support for emergency response through its rapid response roster and surge support, including 39 staff mobilized from Latin America and the Caribbean countries and four staff mobilized from outside of the region.

LACRO provided humanitarian programme support to country offices in the region. Regarding the migrant crisis, a Regional Migration Team was established in LACRO to provide remote and in-country support to UNICEF teams in transit/receiving countries. *Under the leadership of the Regional Director, the Regional Migrant Support Team functions under a special strategic coordination structure comprised by a Senior Crisis Coordinator and the Regional Chiefs/Advisors (Emergency, Child Protection, Social Policy, PM&E and Communications). At the technical level, the Support Team is composed of current LACRO personnel and additional staff. Including staff from each programme area (Health, Nutrition, Education/ECD, Child Protection, WASH, Social Policy, C4D) and support areas (i.e. Operations, PFP, Partnerships), with current LACRO technical staff dedicating around 75% of work time to support COs response to the Migrant situation.* In addition to ongoing coordination, technical assistance and quality assurance of country office plans, LACRO has put in place key multi-country strategies, which will be further implemented in 2019: 1) monitoring and information analysis mechanism; 2) regional guidance and tools to facilitate integration into local services, focusing on holistic protection; 3) mechanisms fostering accountability to affected populations, such as U-Report on the Move; 4) programme training to enhance capacities for a sustained integration process; and 5) promotion of gender equality, nondiscrimination and empowerment. Accordingly, UNICEF contributed to the regional inter-agency platform led by UNHCR and IOM, providing leadership / co-leadership and participation in the key areas: a campaign against xenophobia, integral support services spaces, communication with communities, prevention and management of gender-based violence and information management.

In the case of the migration situation in Northern Central America and Mexico - so far largely approached as a protection issue, with the sudden increased migration flows reported in late 2018, LACRO has adopted a complementary approach adapting emergencies mechanisms. With LACRO's and HQ support, emergency funds were rapidly allocated to the affected COs and technical experts were deployed on surge to support the response. In addition, at the regional level, UNICEF maintains close communication with other agencies and partners also responding to the crisis, and innovative inter-agency information management initiatives have been launched.

In 2018, LACRO invested significant efforts in supporting emergency preparedness. With LACRO's support, all 25 country offices rolled out the Emergency Preparedness Platform (EPP), which included updating their risk analysis, ensuring compliance with minimum preparedness standards (MPS) and developing preparedness and contingency plans. In order to address the COs' main weaknesses in meeting their MPS and to ensure that each Country Office as well as the Regional Office are ready to face the growing humanitarian needs, LACRO facilitated a number of initiatives including: a regional lessons learned exercise conducted on UNICEF's 2017 hurricane response, with key findings for improving the RO's response capacity; the Internal Rapid Response Roster has been updated to serve as the internal mechanism of response; training/simulation exercises on emergency response and preparedness, among others.

As a result of the introduction of the INFORM risk assessment tool, governments in Central America can now tailor their humanitarian response based on sound risk analysis. This was proved during the eruption of Vulcan Fuego in Guatemala, where vulnerable areas were targeted based on INFORM results, which enabled an appropriate response. In addition, the risk index allows local governments to design long term multi-sectorial strategies, thereby linking humanitarian and development efforts. Moreover, INFORM results are the key criteria to rank the risk status of all COs on the Emergency Preparedness Platform. The RO directly supported training and rollout of GRIP through joint RBM-GRIP workshops, and RIP SitAn in all five of the new CPD countries. Additional priority Country Offices (CO) are advancing with imbedding risk informed programming. A climate change strategy document highlighting opportunities to integrate and strengthen climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts into UNICEF's key sectors is currently being finalized and will be shared during the first quarter of 2019. The strategy includes an overview of targeted partnerships, relevant policies and platforms as well as climate finance options for the LAC region.

The capacity of countries and regional partners to advance C4D and AAP in Humanitarian Action in the region was strengthened during 2018 and key strategic activities were identified. In close coordination with HQ, LACRO conducted a Regional learning workshop in partnership with OCHA and the IFRC with over 70 key practitioners from Colombia, Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Peru and Haiti. C4D and AAP experiences, lessons learned, methodologies and tools from governments, civil society institutions, UN agencies, IFRC and others were discussed during the event.

Technical Assistance was provided to the three countries implementing sanitation strategies to end open defecation including several missions to Haiti to support the challenging ASWA II programme that has strong sustainability and quality monitoring components (including mobile-to-web monitoring). To have a better impact at national sector level and considering the limited human resources in WASH at CO level, RO systematically supports COs to elaborate the theory of change at national scale of the sub-sectors of their interests which then needs to be discussed and validated at sector level to be implemented. Ending open defecation programmes were strengthened in some specific countries in LAC, such as in Bolivia, Guatemala and Haiti. RO regained strategic position and built up alliance towards regional approach for national monitoring system alignment with SDGs. Technical Assistance, quality assurance and capacity building have been provided to the numerous countries affected by the migrant crisis and to Venezuela country programme scale-up plan. A multi-country capacity mapping has been initiated jointly with the Global WASH Cluster in three priority countries (Peru, Honduras and Bolivia) to establish a regional capacity building strategy related to humanitarian responses, emergency-development continuum, WASH climate resilience and accountability to affected populations.

#### Goal Area 5: Every Child has an Equitable Chance in Life

**Social inclusion:** During 2018, extensive support to country offices was provided in the area of social inclusion. In total, 11 different countries (Dominica, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador, Chile, St. Lucia, Dominican Republic, Argentina and Belize). Follow up was done of the situation in the Caribbean after the 2017 hurricanes Maria and Irma through the provision of technical advice on strengthening social protection systems, on adapting them to shocks -either natural or man-made-, as well as on measuring public investment in children or make it more efficient. Moreover, LACRO also participated in national, regional and global events, both with counterparts and within UNICEF. A workshop was organized, in close collaboration with WFP, on the Delivery of Humanitarian Cash Transfers through National Social Protection Systems, together with UNICEF headquarters and with the participation of 9 country offices of the region. Likewise, LACRO supported the organization of a Workshop on Shock-Responsive Social

Protection Systems in the Caribbean, in collaboration with ECA CO and the OECS, with the participation of 9 countries and territories of the English-speaking Caribbean.

Virtual and online assistance has been provided to child poverty studies in Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and Brazil. Special support on Public Finance for Children (PF4C) was provided to Argentina for the organization of a Regional Seminar on Public Investment in Early Childhood in Buenos Aires and LACRO is co-organizing the next International Seminar on Public Investment in Children and Adolescents in the Dominican Republic in early 2019. LACRO, in collaboration with the Dominican Republic country office, elaborated a policy note on the adaptation of the national cash transfer programme to children with disabilities. Intersectoral work has been done within other sections of the RO: the elaboration of the study CRC@30 years, with participation of all LACRO areas. Moreover, a study on costing of ECD interventions and public investment in early childhood was commissioned, concluding with a seminar in Buenos Aires with LACRO participation.

The migrant crisis also required substantive involvement of the social inclusion section into the response, also as many of the challenges for migrants are related to social inclusion and social protection. A concept note was written on the social protection response to migration flows. Technical support was provided to the social policy teams of Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil and Panama for the preparation of their country workplans for 2018 and 2019. A cooperation agreement was concluded with IPC-IG (UNDP) to develop the analysis of social protection programmes for migrant children and adolescents in Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. Finally, a technical note was prepared on shock-responsive social protection and costing studies of WASH interventions.

**Adolescents:** Three country offices (Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala) received technical guidance and support in preparation for their country programme, for the development of strategies and for the analysis of adolescent engagement and participation. For this purpose, a theory of change template was developed to support countries integrating a holistic approach to adolescent development and participation. In terms of evidence-based advocacy, the UPSHIFT approach was introduced in the region and development of a funding proposal for Santander bank, for Brazil, Mexico and Nicaragua.

LACRO also provided extensive support to country offices in the identification and submission of solutions to the Gen U Partnership, with Argentina being selected for catalytic funds. A document on the role of private sector in supporting programs for the second decade of life was developed.

One of the main achievements in this area was the start of an Alliance with America Solidaria and CEPAL through the CONCAUSA initiative. Ninety adolescents participated in the Regional dialogue in Chile for the 30 years of CRC, a micro site in UNICEF LAC website developed and a declaration, prepared by them, delivered at the Regional dialogue.

**Gender equality:** In terms of engagement and advocate efforts to include the gender and child rights in the region, LACRO has influenced the regional consultation prior to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to include key measures for girls (in areas such as birth registration, child marriage and early unions, sexual violence and secondary education/STEM). UNICEF has convened and led the implementation of the regional, interagency programme on child marriage and early unions. Regional participation in the Girls Not Brides annual meeting resulted in specific commitments to the Region. An intergenerational dialogue on girls' rights was organized to promote UNICEF as a convene gender partner to improve girls' (and boys') lives. After the dialogue de intergenerational network was formed with the participation of governmental and non-governmental feminist leaders in the region. LACRO has also

actively engaged in the design and development of the regional and country programmes within the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, within which the focus for Latin America is femicide.

LACRO also increased its focus on the GAP institutional benchmarks to equip UNICEF LAC offices with the skills and resources necessary to deliver gender results at country level. This includes the completion of a gender capacity needs assessment that has informed the development of a virtual gender and child rights course to be rolled out in 2019 with FLACSO. LACRO led the Global Gender and Global Staff Survey working group to facilitate UNICEF's EDGE certification, an internationally accredited benchmarking system around gender equality in the work place.

With respect to the Private Sector, LACRO has developed a business case on gender equality and girls' empowerment and participated in discussions with private sector partners around their roles to uphold the normative principle of gender equality. Also, a regional mapping was conducted around the Goal 5 results around Gender Socialization (GS), or intentional interventions to transform harmful gender norms that affect the rights of girls, boys and adolescents.

LACRO has also furthered gender equality principles in the Regional Platform to address the Migrant Crisis through the gender-based violence (GBV) working group. LACRO continues to participate in the monitoring of the Regional Gender Agenda (grounded in CEDAW), through regular meetings of the Presiding Officers. In the growing collaboration with e IAW/OAS, and continued engagement within the UNDG LAC Gender Inter-Agency Group, LACRO has contributed to guidance for country offices around the 'anti-gender' movement in the Region.

**Communication for Development (C4D):** During 2018, LACRO made efforts to strengthen C4D capacity in the LAC region, showing a shift from ad hoc C4D actions towards a more strategic approach with a stronger focus on measurable changes in behaviors and social norms that affect children. Through country missions and remote technical assistance, 4 COs have pioneered in drafting cross-cutting C4D strategies; other COs have been supported to develop strategies for priority issues such as the migration crisis (5 priority country offices); Early Childhood Development (5 country offices) and Violence Against Children (7 country offices). A regional training was conducted on C4D for preparation of concrete C4D plans for addressing Violence Against Children while 7 priority country offices participated in a workshop on C4D in emergencies and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) which was organized in collaboration with headquarters. These new strategies ensure that country programmes are more aligned with UNICEF C4D performance indicators in alignment and coordination with governments and are more evidence based. Furthermore, actionable recommendations were developed through the regional workshop on accountability to affected populations, to provide a clearer vision for C4D approaches in emergencies.

A regional C4D study was carried out with the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) to analyze the status of implementing C4D strategies in the LAC region. The study revealed common social norms and behavioral determinants and helped to identify regional challenge and gaps that can be addressed through region-wide approaches. A mapping of Universities with C4D capacities was carried out in the region, and a partnership has been established with the Communications Initiative to strengthen a regional C4D community of practice for UNICEF's key partners.

#### Outcome: Programme Effectiveness

**Management for results:** During 2018, the Regional Office has supported two Country Offices (Ecuador and Nicaragua) that presented their CPD to the Executive Board. For this purpose, these country offices were accompanied in the preparation of all required documentation, including Programme Strategy Notes

(PSNs) and country programme documents (CPD) and ensuring a clear articulation of the UNICEF contribution to the Agenda for Sustainable Development in each of these countries. In addition, the process of advising and supporting another eight Country Offices (COs) that will present their CPD in 2019 and 2020 was initiated. Increasingly, efforts are being consolidated in better aligning results with resources and identifying the right strategies for delivering results at scale for children within a changing and challenging programming context.

Throughout 2018, support was provided in the preparation of the scaling-up plan of the Venezuela country programme, with clear results, targets and resource requirements. This encompassed an all-office effort in very close coordination with, above all, the country office and with several headquarters divisions.

Special attention was provided in advising these offices in potential implications of UN-Reform for country programming, including in relation to the function of the new generation of UNDAFs. For this purpose, close communication was maintained with PPD and FRG in Headquarters. As part of its role the *Programme Support Group* of UNSDG-LAC, LACRO has commented and given feedback to several drafts of Common Country Assessments and UNDAFs as well as on the processes required for producing these inter-agency UN documents.

LACRO fully implemented its accountabilities in oversight, technical assistance and quality assurance of all programming milestones (planning, implementation, HACT, IP-management, programme monitoring, reporting). For example, LACRO has worked closely with country offices in the preparation of country programme management plans and subsequent submissions to the Programme Budget Review and increasingly uses these processes for better aligning results with resources.

LACRO also provided technical assistance and support to assure that country offices to strengthen management for results (M4R) throughout the programme cycle. For this purpose, a meeting for deputy representatives as organized with special focus on M4R. The meeting included a one-day segment where also operations managers participated. Customized face-to-face Results Based Management workshops were organized for four country offices (Peru, Venezuela, Brazil, and Belize). As an innovation that started in 2017, Risk Informed Programming (RIP) was included into content of the training, in close coordination with Emergency section. This year has also been a starting point to develop, in collaboration with HQ and other regional offices, an assessment of the impact of RBM training in the LAC region.

Technical assistance and oversight to the process of annual reporting of the country offices was also reinforced through the application of a tool to assure the compliance with the guidelines. As well, an ex-post feedback is scheduled to improve the focus on results in this type of reports.

Regarding the procedures and policies for programme implementation LACRO has followed up the status of HACT assurance plan with the 24 country offices in the region, as well has oversight the full compliance of the procedure within the 24 COs in the regions, which is nearly achieved. LACRO continues reinforcing this function and included additional staff capacity for addressing HACT, using financial resources that were provided by headquarters.

**Monitoring:** LACRO continues working closely with other UN agencies and ECLAC to coordinate efforts to support national statistical systems. RO continued fostering intraregional collaboration on children-related statistics among National Statistical Offices through the Working Group on Children and Adolescents from the Statistical Conference of the Americas (convened by ECLAC), in which LACRO

exercises the Technical Secretariat. In 2018, based on an analyzes of the data availability and statistical capabilities, LACRO focused in promoting data collection, using comparable and harmonize methodologies, by strengthening the use of national surveys and administrative data. Support was provided through several webinars to share good practices in the data dissemination, as well as in the follow-up of activities related to collecting priority child indicators such as multidimensional poverty, child development and violence against children.

In coordination and collaboration with UNICEF Headquarters, extensive technical assistance, mostly through highly specialized consultants, was provided to country offices in collecting harmonized and comparable data on children and adolescents. MICS survey results were generated in two countries and the final publication will be finalized in 2019. Furthermore, 12 countries will implement the MICS round 6 between 2019-20 and 4 national surveys were supported with the inclusion of standardized child-related indicators. Specifically, the MICS ECD module has been included in these national surveys, upon request of governments.

Seven country offices were supported in the preparation of situation analysis documents, ensuring adequate focus on equity (and hence a clear link to the Sustainable Development Goals), use the latest disaggregated data and identify main bottlenecks and barriers for the fulfilment of child rights. Extensive support was also provided to ensure that plans for the response to migrant crisis were accompanied by a solid Performance Monitoring system.

**Evaluation:** In 2018, significant support has been provided to country offices in planning, implementation and delivery of evaluations managed by country offices. For this purpose, the regional office has received additional financial resources from headquarters. LACRO has provided country office-specific feedback to all country offices Plans for Research Impact Monitoring and Evaluation (PRIME). Follow up on Costed Evaluation Plans and evaluations in PRIME are continuously monitored by LACRO, which maintains fluid communication with country offices to support the implementation of planned evaluations under the LACRO personalized quality assurance system. At the end of 2018, a new institutional contract was signed with a Mexican company (EASE) to provide quality assurance service to country offices for evaluations (review of draft terms of reference, inception reports and evaluation reports). While this outsourced system is in place, the RO continues communicating with country offices and LACRO teams to ensure coherence in feedback, but also to further increase dissemination and use of evaluation findings and recommendations within the region, beyond management responses.

The regional, multi-country Evaluation to the UNICEF Response to Zika was successfully delivered in 2018. With this evaluation, the region has assessed a public health emergency that explores the humanitarian-development nexus through mainstreaming the initial emergency response into regular programming. The evaluation draws important lessons for regional and country office UNICEF multi-sectoral "emergency" work in middle and high- income countries, with strong government capacity. Findings are being used to inform public health work, communication for development strategy, and ECD & children with disability agenda in the region. A new multi-country evaluation on Violence Against Children started at the end of 2018 (to be delivered in 2019), the evaluation is managed in coordination with Child Protection and Gender sections. The evaluation will assess the results (with a gender focus) of violence interventions in six countries in the LAC region.

The Evaluation Framework for assessing impact in middle and high-income countries was delivered and socialized within UNICEF. This work has positioned the region in incorporating innovative theory-based approaches to evaluation, which also contributes to increase the technical expertise of the organization

in complementary evaluation methods and approaches, and more comprehensive monitoring of programme results.

Since November 2018, UNICEF LAC is part of the Regional Evaluation Platform together with DEval (German Institute for Development Evaluation), a main actor in the evaluation agenda in the LAC region. This partnership is key to increase capacity of national governments in an integrated approach and advance the agenda of evaluation of child-related matters.

**Communication:** UNICEF LACRO continued this year to ensure that children rights are well-positioned at the regional level, through the effective use of integrated advocacy, communication, and public engagement initiatives, particularly by enhancing regional office and country offices capacities and fostering regional strategic partnerships and alliances in the communications and media sector, such as the appointment of a Regional Goodwill Ambassador and establishing a regional network of journalists. UNICEF LAC RO continued to communicate through evidence, rights-based and inclusive language with more empathy and compelling storytelling, leveraging digital and online platforms, communities and channels; and including KPIs indicators and processes in each strategy to improve efficiency and impact to achieve positive change and better results for children.

UNICEF internal capacity in the Communication Section has been increased significantly and has in overall shown a more strategic approach with a stronger focus on establishing measurable impact of communication initiatives and campaigns, as well as timely and effective response to emergencies and crisis situations, digital communication growth and production of high-end multimedia and multiplatform products.

The 2018 LAC Regional Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy was guided by the Cause Framework, working across communications, advocacy, public engagement and fundraising, through campaigns and digital activations of key priority areas such as: Child Migration, Early Childhood Development (ECD), End Violence Against Children (EVAC), Survive and Thrive, Gender Equality, Engagement with Youth and Adolescents, and supporting high-impact High-level Events for regional advocacy and social mobilization, amongst others.

UNICEF LACRO, in coordination with Division of Communication (DOC), led a multimedia multi-country mission with the production of a Child Alert on Central America and México. Also, as part of 2017 “My Rights to a Dream” cultural initiative, a joint art exhibition with the Permanent Mission of El Salvador to the UN and UNHCR, entitled “Borderless Dreams” was displayed during a week at the United Nations Headquarters, with the presence of senior diplomats representing the Member States of the UNICEF’s Executive Board.

LACRO also developed and implemented a Communication Strategy for the migration flows in the region in support to country offices and in close collaboration with PFP and DOC. Technical guidance, key messages and indicators for measuring reach and results were developed and disseminated by LACRO. In addition, the RO Communication Team actively engaged in the IOM/UNHCR-led Regional Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, co-leading the Communication Campaign.

The regional office contributed to #earlymomentmatter and Father’s Day activation supporting country offices and amplifying the dissemination of communication materials. On Ending Violence Against Children, LACRO launched a regional corporal punishment digital activation and supported the “Safe Learning” report launch, including the kick-start of an EVAC 4-year Communication Strategy in LAC, which

will be launched in 2019. On Survive and Thrive, UNICEF continues to lead the Working Group on Communication and Advocacy of Every Woman Every Child (EWEC-LAC) initiative in LAC.

***Influencing regional discourse and policy:*** During 2018 LACRO made significant progress positioning the rights of children and adolescents within the regional policy agenda. Since its approval in 1989, the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC) has been ratified by all the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, demonstrating the region's deep commitment to the fundamental values of childhood. Setting the stage of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC, the [first regional dialogue "On the road to equality: 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child"](#) was held in Santiago de Chile, in November. During the meeting, high level government authorities, international officials and young people from Latin America and the Caribbean reaffirmed their commitment to guaranteeing, protecting and promoting the rights of boys, girls and adolescents; and examined progress and pending issues regarding Latin American and Caribbean childhood. The gathering, organized by UNICEF LACRO and ECLAC, constitutes a landmark and a significant achievement: It is the first meeting of what will become a permanent advocacy and technical conference on children and adolescents' rights, and an effective regional advocacy instrument to call for coordinated action and for the design and implementation of universal and inclusive social policies, so that all boys and girls who are born with the same inalienable rights are able to exercise them, regardless of the conditions of their birth. The concept document for the meeting, [Latin America and the Caribbean 30 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), produced jointly with ECLAC, examined progress and pending challenges regarding the main indicators for a selection of ten rights contained in the Convention, and was showcased during inauguration. The Regional Office, in coordination country offices and partners, advocated for this initiative with numerous side events, including a cultural event and the presentation of a Youth Declaration by 90 young people from all over the region. In addition, to mark the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 29 artists, and illustrators from Latin America and the Caribbean came together to produce a brand-new illustrated edition, which was launched globally and driven by a digital activation.

Old and new partnerships, including with (sub-) regional inter-governmental organizations, to strengthen UNICEF presence and standing in regional policy dialogue have gained momentum. ECLAC is a traditional and invaluable partner for knowledge generation in social protection, child poverty and education. However, also partnerships contribute to positioning child rights in the regional political agendas. For example, during the 2018 Ibero-American Summit, UNICEF was given the title of observer by unanimity by the heads of State to promote and protect children rights as mandated by CRC and under the umbrella of the Agenda 2030.

LACRO initiated several other institutional partnerships in 2018. This included the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Food Programme to expand collaboration in shock responsive social protection in the region. UNICEF works to strengthen the capacity of existing social protection systems to adapt and scale up in times of crisis as a cost efficient and effective way to deliver humanitarian assistance, by reducing the time and resources required to respond to the needs of children and their families in times of emergencies. This partnership with the WFP has already contributed to our existing efforts to strengthen social protection systems in the region and has seen concrete results in countries such as the Eastern Caribbean (with initial experiences in Dominica), Dominican Republic and Peru. Moreover, partnerships with the private sector were also expanded. By the end of 2018, LACRO had signed partnerships with the 'Banco America Central – BAC', Avianca and Kimberly-Clark, among others, with a strong emphasis on obtaining funding for Early Childhood Development Programmes.

UNICEF LACRO also partnered with the Inter-American Dialogue (The Dialogue) to further both institutions' work in the enhancement and financing of solid early childhood policies in the region. Through the objective of shaping a region-wide coalition to advance the agenda of expanding the reach and quality of policies and programs for early childhood, a multi-country meeting was held in Argentina to advance this agenda. While critical actions take place at national levels, a regional forum serves to reinforce national commitments and to facilitate the adoption of evidence-informed policies and programmes. Moreover, a partnership was established with IPC-IG (UNDP) for knowledge generation and advocacy in social protection and migration.

**UN-partnerships:** UNICEF LACRO maintained a wide range of partnerships with UN-entities in the LAC region. The relationship with the UN Regional Economic Commission (ECLAC) was further strengthened with UNICEF actively participating in several regional conferences, including the Forum of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development in LAC. The collaboration was even further expanded by jointly organizing the first regional dialogue 'On the road to equality: 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child'. UNICEF and ECLAC also closely worked together in the preparation of technical documents and studies. UNICEF and ECLAC also work very closely together in enhancing the availability of disaggregated child related statistics in all countries in the region.

UNICEF was an active member in the UNSDG-LAC, both at the regional directors' level and also at technical level through participation in inter-agency working groups and the UN Programme Support Group (for UNDAF support). Active conversations were initiated with UNDP, UNFPA and UNWomen on the implementation of the Common Chapter at regional and country levels, with special attention to addressing child marriage, and particularly important for LAC, early unions. The joint regional programme on this issue that involves a number of UN-agencies gained increased traction. Other important partnerships included, but were not limited to: a) the Joint Initiative of UNDG-LAC and co-chaired by UNICEF and UNDP, and in close collaboration with UNHCR and OCHA, aimed at addressing chronic violence in the Northern countries of Central America; b) the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with World Food Programme on collaboration in emergency cash transfer programmes; c) the continued collaboration with United Nations Volunteers; d) implementation of the Every Women, Every Child initiative with PAHO and several other agencies; and e) the implementation of MAPS missions (mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support for the sustainable development agenda) with ECLAC, UNDP and UNFPA, among others.

UNICEF LAC signed an Action Plan with UNV to facilitate greater coordination and to enable the offering of United Nations Volunteers (UNV's) as an integral and viable staffing option, especially as an alternative to short-term individual contracts. This is the culmination of a yearlong engagement at senior level in Panama City and Bonn, during which the number of UNVs in the LAC increased by 36%.

**Normative principles:** To advance the normative principle of gender equality, LACRO has continued to support country offices and increased the number of regional collaborations and inter-sectoral activities, aligned with the new GAP and Strategic Plan. This process continues to focus on the integration of gender as a normative principle in the work of UNICEF to bring areas together to co-produce results for children. The results of such collaborations can be seen in the advances observed in the areas of Child Protection, Education and Emergencies – as well as Human Resources and Private Finance Partnerships - in 2018.

LACRO also increased its focus on the GAP institutional benchmarks to equip UNICEF LAC offices with the skills and resources necessary to deliver gender results at country level. This includes the completion of a gender capacity needs assessment that has informed the development of a virtual gender and child

rights course to be rolled out in 2019. A similar process was undertaken within humanitarian action in order to strengthen UNICEF's gender response during emergencies/crises. LACRO led the Global Gender and Global Staff Survey working group to facilitate UNICEF's EDGE certification, an internationally accredited benchmarking system around gender equality in the work place. A regional mapping was conducted around the Goal 5 results around Gender Socialization (GS), or intentional interventions to transform harmful gender norms that affect the rights of girls, boys and adolescents.

Externally, LACRO has continued to engage with a range of partners to position the GAP as a roadmap for gender and child rights; to ensure that girls' rights are a non-negotiable component of the gender and human rights agenda in the region. For the second year in a row, LACRO has influenced the regional consultation prior to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to include key measures for girls (in areas such as birth registration, child marriage and early unions, sexual violence and secondary education/STEM). We continue to convene and lead the implementation of the regional, interagency programme on child marriage and early unions, breaking regional silence on the issue and leveraging evidence to garner national commitments. Regional participation in the Girls Not Brides annual meeting resulted in specific commitments to the Region. LACRO has also actively engaged in the design and development of the regional and country programmes within the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, within which the focus for Latin America is femicide; LACRO ensured a clear focus on girls' rates of femicide as well as the 'indirect' effects of femicide on boys, girls and adolescents. With respect to the Private Sector, LACRO has developed a business case on gender equality and girls' empowerment and participated in discussions with private sector partners around their roles to uphold the normative principle of gender equality.

2018 witnessed the first feminist, intergenerational dialogue on girls' rights, hosted by LACRO. The dialogue included feminists from the region across three generations to review advances, identify persistent bottlenecks and identify areas for collective action to fulfill the unfinished agenda on girls' rights. The participatory, intergenerational methodology was well received by all age groups and participating partners and included sessions around education, violence, health, leadership, policy change and rigid gender norms that continue to keep girls behind, despite impressive advances in the region at a normative level. A final session was held around communicating across generations to ensure inclusive and girl-led actions for girls' rights. The dialogue, and methodology, was designed to send a clear message: UNICEF is a gender partner, has and will continue to convene partners to improve girls' (and boys') lives. The event spurred great interest amongst feminist leaders (governmental and non-governmental) in the region, and bridged gaps with adolescent girls who often report feeling excluded from the regional women's movement.

LACRO has also furthered gender equality principles in the Regional Platform to address the Migration Crisis through the gender-based violence (GBV) working group. LACRO continues to participate in the monitoring of the Regional Gender Agenda (grounded in CEDAW), through regular meetings of the Presiding Officers. In the growing collaboration with e IAW/OAS, and continued engagement within the UNDG LAC Gender Inter-Agency Group, LACRO has contributed to guidance for country offices around the 'anti-gender' movement in the Region.

The promotion of child rights is at the forefront of the many activities that LACRO implements. Therefore, the regional office fulfilled a very active role through being a strong voice for children's rights in a large number of for a and conferences in the region, many of those organized by inter-governmental

organizations and including the previously described first regional dialogue: ‘ On the road to equality: 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child’. In addition, LACRO worked actively together in dialogue with human rights rapporteurs and with UNICEF country offices in the region in support to governments in submitting reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, other human rights institutions as well as the preparation of Voluntary National Reports on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Efforts in ensuring environmental sustainability included, among others, the promotion of climate landscape analysis by countries in the region and programming on disaster risk reduction, including mitigating the impact of climate change on children.

## Enablers

**Operations:** During 2018 there are few elements that have contributed to the implementation of the ROMP in the short and longer terms. This year has been devoted to finalizing rebuilding the operations function (Finance, HR, ICT, Admin, Procurement) in all country offices. New staff in the different functions are continuously been coached and trained to ensure overall flatter learning curves for new staff. To complement this effort, LACRO organized two regional meetings (DROPS and only OPS) to focus in aspects as new operations responsibilities related to the anti-fraud strategy and HACT. There has been an intensive promotion for the LACROPERATIONS practitioners’ community to interact and collaborate, some positive results are being observed.

In the LAC region in 2018 the supply management focused on a revamping of the function in the Regional Office and in the Region with the creation of a new position. This action was taken with the intention of mitigating contractual risks and increasing supply chain efficiencies throughout the different countries. As part of this exercise, a community of supply practitioners at country office level was identified and through different tools it was frequently nurtured. During the year, many of the activities at regional level also focused in emergency preparedness and the implementation of Minimum Preparedness Standard on Supply, having all the country offices gone through the preparations required by the EPP tool. In addition, the supply section in LACRO was also involved in the application of cash transfers in emergencies, although this was mostly under the leadership of the social inclusion team.

**Information and Communications Technology:** 2018 was marked by a big push in LACRO and the Region to prepare the grounds for moving all corporate data to the Cloud through the Enterprise Content Management (ECM) project. The LAC Region piloted and then started the implementation of the Digital Workplace, which substituted the offices’ Intranets and was coupled with the setup of Document Libraries that replace local shared folders. This was considered as a right step in the direction of facilitating collaborative work, preserving institutional memory and improving business continuity plans. Further, regular remote and in-country support was provided to Country Offices (COs) in ICT to help them strengthen performance and controls, and in the Technology for Development (T4D) function to assist COs in the provision of technical support to UNICEF Programmes through innovative use of technology (for example, by means of U-Report and RapidPro).”

**Human Resources (HR):** This year was very successful in terms of reforming and elevating the HR function in the LAC Region. As part of the global HR Reform process, LAC led the groundwork to pave the way for the implementation of the HR Business Partner model in the Region, which was implemented effective 1 January 2019. This involved a significant transition from our previously established Multi-Country Services Facility (MCSF). Consequently, HR practitioners in Country Offices were prepared to fully carry out

functions locally and to effectively run them autonomously, utilizing a standardized methodology to tackle everyday tasks. As part of this transition to the HRBP model, we recruited 25 HR Practitioners & 17 Ops Officers & Managers from 2017-2018. All of them underwent and are still receiving capacity development training and support.

In 2018, the LAC Region has continued provide support to the response to emergencies and crises and the LAC HR Team has closely supported the migrant crisis response. This resulted in an unexpected increase in workload of the HR Team – by 34% - in 2018, requiring 7,900 Hours of added HR Work from Planning to Recruitment to On-boarding in 2018. RO HR Team also supported this response by creating and maintaining an updated internal Rapid Response Roster (RRR) to enable deployments within 48 hours for humanitarian emergencies. The internal RRR was created with a total of 42 Staff Members with a total of 13 of deployments in 2018. In addition, the RO is making active use of Talent Groups; Staff on Rotation; Staff available for Lateral Reassignment, etc. – to enable quick hiring from vetted pools of internal and external experts.

For LAC, ensuring that our region builds a culture of respect and care that fosters inclusion, creativity and engagement is critical to achieving the ambitious goals set locally, regionally and globally. Under the strong leadership of the regional director, every effort was made to fully comply with addressing the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, both within the regional office and in all country offices. A zero-tolerance on these aspects was put in place while also mechanisms for reporting were established and promoted.

In addition, the “*Ethic Dialogue Facilitators*” programme was implemented in the 2017-18 period. Ethics Dialogues is a set of modules that cover aspects of ethics vis-à-vis UNICEF’s mandate and were developed in order to help staff members make ethically right choices. The aim is to support staff members in living and giving a voice to their values as part of the International Civil Service in a way that is regular, efficient, and accessible. In relation, 13 internal LAC colleagues were trained for this purpose and conducted several workshops around the region, paving the way for a more safe and healthy workplace environment. Similarly, workshops on Ethics and Stress Management were put in place consistently, striving towards fostering a positive work environment and the promotion of staff well-being. Zero Tolerance policy on harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority was, and continues to be, a non-negotiable duty for all of staff in the region.

***Private sector fundraising (PFP):*** LAC RO fulfils a significant role in supporting fundraising activities in the region through its PFP Regional Support Centre. Although the costs for PFP are covered through the PFP OMP, there will be a continued attention to further integration of PFP related functions into the work of the regional office and within the region, aiming to an integrated approach in programming, advocacy and fundraising, which is in line with the ambition of the organization to mobilize 100 million people globally for giving their voice, their time and/or financial contributions.

UNICEF LAC fundraising and engagement with the private sector generate income, influence policies, people movements, advocacy for children’s rights, and brand connection with 3 key audiences: individual, key influencer and business. LAC is a region strongly impacted by exchange rate differences, which has affected some corporate donations. Despite these challenges the region expects to deliver US\$88.4 million in resources (latest estimates). This is an enormous success considering that PFP markets are in line with their initial ambitious per the strategic plan objectives in local currency.

Unfortunately, the region is heavily affected by exchange rate losses and in 2018 there has been a total impact of US\$31.2 million loss in gross revenue in US dollar since December 2017. The majority of funds raised in LAC is invested in the region. In 2018, US\$67.7 million was invested in the region (CPDs and RTF) and US\$20.7 million was committed to global regular resources. In addition, in 2018, the region received US\$18.6 million in investment funds and for 2019 that figure will grow to US\$21.2 million.

In 2018 LAC there was significant success across the 3 target audiences. In Individuals, at the end of 2018, there will be a total of 915,000 individual donors mobilized to give to the UNICEF cause on a monthly basis. And over 1 million people across the region will have donated either in a once off or regular way throughout the year. UNICEF can count on 133 businesses who lend their support to our cause (75 through financial support and 58 have non-financial initiatives). More than 1,550 businesses have been engaged by UNICEF across LAC that have integrated a children's rights approach into their practices or policies (participation in online surveys, workgroups, trainings for employees or impact assessments). A total of 51 companies are advocating for UNICEF by delivering messages and providing online content (through their websites, blogs and online networks), as well as developing large campaigns in massive events (e.g. football matches). Seven large businesses contributed to developing and/or implementing initiatives providing core assets and by sharing their knowledge related to their sectors of expertise. In addition, PFP have generated 2 key regional partnerships (Avianca and Kimberley Clarke) collectively generating over US\$8 million and with potential accessing over 30 prospects over 3 years. Within Key Influencers there has been significant progress made to develop key partnerships strategy in the region and we expect to see this develop further throughout 2019.

**Internal management practices:** LACRO ensured that all mandatory committees (LACRO management team, programme team, CRC, JCC, PCARC, PSB, HRDC, among others) had their regular meetings. As a good practice, the Regional Office management team involves the regional director, the deputy regional director and all chiefs of sections. This allows for timely sharing of key information and consultative decision making. To respond to the migrant crisis that started to affect the region in 2018, a special 'task team' consisting of the regional emergency advisor, the regional child protection advisor and regional chief of planning was established to lead an all-office coordinated, efficient and effective response, under the leadership of the regional director. After some months, additional advisors (social policy, communication, among others) were added to this 'task team'. This mechanism allowed for a "compact" way of working at the different levels of the Organization, HQ/EO, LACRO and the involved country offices.

### C) Lessons learned and constraints

Over the course of 2018, UNICEF LACRO was challenged in responding to an increasing impact of the changing social-, economic- and political context in many countries in the region. The migrant crisis in South America, combined with responding to the impact of the economic crisis in Venezuela through a significant upscaling of the Venezuela country programme, addressing the aftermath of hurricanes in the Caribbean of 2017, and the impact of several natural disasters (including a volcanic eruption in Guatemala) required a shift in priorities for the regional office and increased the workload for all sections (programme, operations, human resources, communications, fundraising, planning, monitoring and evaluation). In some cases, additional staff (including surge staff from headquarters and country offices and temporary staff) were deployed to the regional office to support the response to these situations. Despite these challenges, the regional office registered solid progress towards the results of the ROMP.

The regional office continued promoting the application of cross-cutting strategies and inter-sectoral approaches as part of country programmes. For example, a cross-cutting area with greater attention in 2018 is disaster risk reduction and mitigating the impact of climate change among children, which is gradually being included in programming approaches with dedicated support by the regional office.

Communication for Development (C4D) also gained special consideration, particularly addressing negative social norms linked to violence against children. C4D was better incorporated in theories of change of country programme results, and increasingly C4D results in programme areas is being monitored. Additionally, the evaluation of the UNICEF Zika response drew some lessons learned regarding the response of health emergencies and its linkages with cross-cutting strategies (notably C4D, gender) and inter-sectoral work with a focused approach to a specific target population. UNICEF LAC programming is becoming increasingly inter-sectoral, an approach that requires increased coordination among the different sectors. A more recent application of this approach is the migrant crisis which is organized through an inter-sectoral task team at the regional level and responses to violence against children are also increasingly approached beyond child protection programme components.

During the year, several major efforts were made for positioning the rights of girls, boys and adolescents at the agenda of regional inter-governmental organizations. The “On the Road to Equality: 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child” Dialogue, Santiago, Chile (27 – 29 November 2018) promoted, built and facilitated successfully an opportunity to have a conversation at a regional level between diverse high level public representatives and social stakeholders -including representatives of the Member States, civil society, private sector, UN system in the region, academia and experts as well as adolescents- interested in searching for solutions in the path towards equality in compliance with the rights of children and adolescence in the LAC Region. The Dialogue format around child rights enabled participants, in particular member states, to openly discuss (in a non-binding way) around the advances and challenges to promote a child-focused social and economic agenda in their countries. This format allowed fully participation and engagement of the different participating bodies. Having the participation of adolescents in the fora, at same year where UNICEF was launching jointly with other agencies ‘Generation Unlimited’, and with the presence of the UNICEF Executive Director, provided a powerful mix to position the youth agenda in the region. It was particularly welcomed the petition of many of the member states to formalize this space as a bi-annual Regional Dialogue on Child Rights. It is recommended that in 2019, such commitments are formalized and validated. Collaboration between ECLAC and UNICEF to jointly organize such high-level dialogue resulted in organizational learning from both institutions in terms of working culture and managing expectations.

On gender, the regional Inter-Generational Dialogue on Gender, Guatemala 8-9 October set the basis to continue further engaging governmental and non-governmental actors towards the rights of the girls.

In terms of fundraising, the region is heavily affected by exchange rate losses and in 2018 there has been a total loss of 25% in gross revenue in US dollar since December 2017. Income from the region which is mainly made up of Individuals income has been largely unaffected by the various economic crisis. And fundraising performance in most countries is on track with their planned objectives in local currency. In the meantime, PSFR teams in the LAC region have massively partnered with corporate prospects through the ‘corporate pathway to pledge approach’ (mostly banks, Insurances, utility companies and ICT companies) to reach the customers of these companies, converting them into individual donors of UNICEF. This is a successful source of sustainable income from partnerships. Also, multi-country alliances were

built across the region. Such alliances are the most resource effective and scalable activities with corporate engagement and in 2018 agreements covering markets across the region with multi-million dollars resources of thematic funding dedicated to early childhood development programmes, without restrictions of use within the geographic scope of the partnership.

Based on the reflections on the implementation of the first year of implementation of the ROMP, and in consultation with headquarters, a LAC Strategic Consultation between the regional office, senior leaders from headquarters and the regional director for Europe and Central Asia and selected UNICEF representatives in countries in LAC will provide an opportunity to reflect on the work of UNICEF in a changing context in the region. The strategic consultation will be the start of a process for reviewing the ROMP results and structure, continuing the discussions with the RMT and this will eventually lead to a submission of the region, including the regional office, to the Programme Budget Review 2019. In addition, the results of the discussions in the annual review meeting and in the strategic consultation will be reflected in the updated workplans for LACRO in 2019.