

Nicaragua

Executive Summary

In 2015, UNICEF Nicaragua underwent internal reviews and change management processes characterized by implementation of a new CO structure; participation in UNICEF's Global Shared Service Centre; an internal audit; and preparation for closure of the zonal offices in Bilwi and Bluefields. Given the changing context of UNICEF Nicaragua, the Country Office (CO) constantly analysed and refined its strategies to support the Government's efforts in reaching the most marginalized children. UNICEF Nicaragua took up agile and evidence-based planning, built on emerging partnerships to leverage resources for children, and strengthened inter-sectoral linkage in programming.

Achievements

The first Innovation Laboratory in Central America was launched in the Bluefields, Indian and Caribbean University (BICU) and provided a unique opportunity to engage youths, tapping into innovative partnerships with national and international universities. Close to 300 youths, children and adolescents (50 per cent female) developed 21st century skills and facilitated local collaboration in identifying and promoting innovation.

UNICEF supported the Local System for Integral Attention in Health (SILAIS) in Bluefields piloting the "Toy Contigo" initiative in which 275 pregnant women and family members received SMS text messages on mobile phones about pregnancy danger signs, nutrition and breastfeeding. A monitoring system using SMS texts in 14 schools helped authorities in the Southern Caribbean Atlantic Autonomous Region (RACCS) make evidence-informed decisions for improved school environment and save monitoring costs.

With the Family Code adopted in April 2015, free birth registration was extended to children up to seven years old. Echoing this, UNICEF supported the Central Civil Registry with birth registration of 12,351 children and adolescents in remote, indigenous communities in Waspam, Rosita, Bilwi and El Tortuguero.

The CO jump-started the implementation of the UNICEF's Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy by locally adapting it and monitoring its key performance indicators. UNICEF Nicaragua obtained more than 31 per cent of media share related to child rights in social network, 20 per cent in printing media and 27 per cent in broadcast media (November 2015).

Shortfalls

UNICEF Nicaragua sought to develop a sustainable local mechanism to support over 100 adolescent communicators who were trained on prevention of sexual abuse in Somoto, Bluefields and Bilwi. The CO is currently in a dialogue with the newly-created Department for Prevention of Sexual Abuse at the Ministry of Family, Children and Adolescents (MIFAN) to consult on this.

Another challenge was creating requisites for scaling-up innovative interventions. The vocational training in masonry and plumbing for adolescents was successfully incorporated in

the National Institute of Technology (INATEC). However, it requires psychosocial support and training in entrepreneurship, especially for out-of-school adolescents and those at high social risks.

Key Partnerships

UNICEF Nicaragua and the European Union (EU) in Managua supported the UNICEF Regional Office in Latin and Central America with the first sub-regional training-of-trainers on the EU-UNICEF Child Rights Toolkits. The workshop was implemented through the global partnership (UNICEF, EU and the German Cooperation) with 35 UNICEF staff and partners from seven countries in Central America and the Caribbean, who will replicate the training.

The alliance between the Better Work/International Labour Organization, UNICEF and SoyNica supported a Korean apparel enterprise, HANSAE International, to set up breast milk extraction rooms and a breastfeeding counselling programme. The exclusive breastfeeding rate among female workers increased from 12 per cent in 2013 to 60 per cent in 2015 (Better Work report, 2015).

UNICEF and the OpenStreetMap/MapaNica developed an innovative initiative to map neighbourhood risks through the eyes of children and adolescents in Bluefields, (Southern Caribbean Atlantic Autonomous Region, RACCS). Children and adolescents were able to present their concerns to local authorities by using a map as a tool.

The Country Programme Focus in 2015

In 2015 UNICEF Nicaragua's strategic focussed in Early Childhood Development (ECD) shifted on two areas informed by the 2014 Mid-Term Review: communication for behavioural change in families; and technical capacity of the national and local inter-institutional teams responsible for the National ECD Programme. The CO supported Ministry of Family, Adolescents and Children (MIFAN) with mainstreaming positive masculinity or gender socialization within the National ECD programme as a new strategy for prevention of violence.

In education, UNICEF Nicaragua supported local and national governments to ensure the coherence of actions developed at different levels within the context of the curricula transformation and adoption of the new National Education Strategy by the Ministry of Education.

Humanitarian Assistance

Emergency response

In September, hundreds of families from eight indigenous communities of the Waspam Territory in the Northern Autonomous Region in the Caribbean Coast (RACCN) were forced to flee from their homes and displaced by conflicts over land among indigenous populations. Children were forced to leave their schools and suffered from psychological trauma. UNICEF Nicaragua supported the Secretary of Education in RACCN by training 100 teachers on psychosocial support. As of December 2015, the teachers who participated in the training assisted 2,197 children and adolescents who returned to Waspam, providing psychosocial counselling to return to normal life and school.

Capacity Development

Since 2014 two national UN Volunteers (UNVs) funded by UK Department for International Development (DFID) Sub-regional Programme supported the CO's emergency preparedness work with focus on the RACCS and RACCN. This year the UNVs trained 92 students (including

66 females) and 20 teachers (including 15 females) in both regions on “Risk Land”, an interactive board game that guides how to reduce the impacts of natural disasters. During a sub-regional knowledge-sharing workshop, organized by the Regional Office, the UNVs shared their work and experience in emergency preparedness and contributed to the joint planning process of the DFID programme, Phase II. The UNVs also contributed to the development of the United Nations Emergency Team (UNETE) strategic document and work plan in both regions and ensured the incorporation of the child rights-based approach.

Emergency Preparedness

As a part of the DFID programme, a project “Building roads ... for a safe childhood” was implemented by the municipal government in Bilwi, RACCN with support from UNICEF, with following results: (i) 100 children and adolescents (50 per cent girls) from five communities at high risk to disaster developed capacity in disaster risk reduction and were integrated in the local committees for preparedness and response to natural disasters; and (ii) a cultural diagnostic study was conducted to identify ancestral practices of indigenous misquito communities for preventing and mitigating disaster risks to complement the standard Disaster Risk Reduction methodologies. Findings from the study were incorporated in the training sessions with children and adolescents and presented during the International Day for Disaster Reduction.

As part of the UNETE’s work plan, the CO assisted simulation exercises organized by OCHA and UNDP both at national and regional levels to test mechanisms and tools for coordination, decision making and information management in emergency. The exercises helped the UNETE identify gaps and weaknesses, and strengthened the preparedness capacity within the UN system.

Disability in emergencies

In coordination with the Nicaraguan Federation of Associations of People with Disabilities and the Latin American Network of NGOs of people with disabilities and their families, UNICEF Nicaragua supported the organization of a sub-regional forum on Disability in Emergencies. Organizations of people with disabilities in Central America and the Caribbean participated and discussed how to incorporate the issues of disabilities in emergency situations, including conducting an inclusive risk management. The positioning document produced was presented at the third Consultative Forum on the Central American Comprehensive Risk Management Policy, held in El Salvador for further examination.

Lessons learned:

- Students of teaching colleges as well as education authorities should systematically be trained on risk management, ensuring that they apply their knowledge and skills in teaching as a part of the improved quality education.
- It is important to develop a strategy and mechanism to reassess the indigenous ancestral knowledge and practices related to risk management, in order to incorporate them in the strategies for increasing the communities’ resilience capacity.
- Capacity development of children and adolescents in disaster risk management should be incorporated as the standard practice in the existing national education curriculum, taking into consideration their ethnic identity and ancestral practices.

Challenges:

Collaboration and partnership with the national system for prevention, mitigation and attention to disasters (SINAPRED) should be strengthened and coordinated within the United Nations’ Security Management Team. This will facilitate the coordination of humanitarian activities

between the Government and the sectoral groups in emergency, as well as the better access to information on humanitarian activities undertaken by the state institutions.

Emergency standards that meet the needs of people with disabilities should be strengthened and institutionalized as a part of the national standards.

Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan

As a low middle-income country, UNICEF Nicaragua pursued strengthening the “UNICEF’s core business,” including monitoring the situation of children based on the Convention of the Rights of a Child (CRC) and the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The CO supported local governments in two autonomous regions in the Caribbean Coast in mainstreaming the child rights focus in policy and programmes. This work was complemented by piloting innovative interventions in ECD, education and youth engagements to develop a “model” in the most disadvantaged areas for further replication by the central government. Additional emphasis on the combination of ‘upstream’ policy work with sub-national level modelling would allow a continuous learning and generation of evidence from local experiences that could be used in strengthening national policies and programmes.

UNICEF’s role in Nicaragua shifted 2015 due to the changing environment. Certain emerging issues are not fully mentioned in the Strategic Plan, including: a) emerging health agenda - health systems strengthening, non-communicable diseases (in conjunction with early childhood development including breastfeeding promotion), obesity, adolescent health; b) integrated early childhood development; c) secondary education with Nicaragua being one of the countries in the region that would need a particular attention to ‘boys education’ given higher drop-out rates of boys than girls, as well as support required to the enhanced inter-cultural and bilingual education in the Caribbean coast; and d) prevention of adolescent pregnancy linked with sexual violence against girls. These areas should better be incorporated and visualized in the new Strategic Plan, through specific results and appropriate indicators to measure progress. Moreover, it is suggested to review the PIDB coding so that such emerging programme issues are adequately reflected. This will also allow for better reporting on results and funding spent.

At the Mid-Term Review (MTR) in late 2014, the need to strengthen the incorporation of the Communication for Development (C4D) strategies in the programme was identified in order to address barriers and bottlenecks linked to social norms and cultural practices. This year the CO made progress in piloting a C4D strategy to identify and tackle bottlenecks to maternal and neonatal health at household level, as a part of the MoH’s efforts to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality. The regional government in the Northern Autonomous Region requested UNICEF’s technical support in strengthening the capacity of civil servants in C4D, including participatory community-based diagnosis and monitoring. If successfully implemented, C4D is a powerful strategy to support the national or sub-national level efforts in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was suggested to reincorporating this strategy in the Strategic Plan as a UNICEF corporate strategies, which allow to visualize and report on-going work using C4D approaches.

Over the past few years, the CO supported the MoH to strengthen its interventions in HIV and AIDS through South-South Cooperation (SSC). The CO identified potential cooperation between the Southern Autonomous Regional Government in Nicaragua and the governments of Bolivia and Mexico in strengthening the decentralized level monitoring, to be pursued in 2016. With the 2030 Agenda and the evolving changes in the aid environment, the application of the SSC is expected to increase. However, so far UNICEF’s COs worked with national and local

governments in the identification of experiences that could increase the value added of SSC within the County Programme. As part of the MTR of the Strategic Plan, it is recommended to reflect on developing standard tools for better guiding the SSC programming, including indicators for measuring the contributions of SSC.

As in the case of many CPs in LAC, Nicaragua faced resource constraints and thus remained highly dependent on income from the Regional Thematic Fund, Global Thematic Funds and Global Set-Aside funding, in addition to the Regular Resource. As part of discussions of a resource allocation mechanism for the new UNICEF Strategic Plan, it is necessary to ensure that the current minimum levels of Regular Resources for a country like Nicaragua is maintained, while adjustments could be made to the criteria for allocation of global set-aside and thematic funds, by re-orienting such resources further to the 'donor-orphan' regions.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

BCP— Business Continuity Plan
BFHI— The Baby friendly hospital initiative
BICU— The Bluefields, Indian and Caribbean University
C4D— Communication for development
CEDAW— Convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women
CMT— Country Management Team
CO— Country Office
CP — Country Programme
CPD— Country Programme Document
CRC— The Convention of the Rights of the Child
CRC— The Contract Review Committee
DCT— Direct Cash Transfer
DFID— The United Kingdom Department for International Development
ECD— Early Childhood Development
ERM— Enterprise Risk Management
GSSC— The UNICEF Global Shared Services Centre
GTI — Indigenous Territorial Government
HACT— Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
ICT— Information and Communication Technology
IMEP— Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
INATEC— National Institute of Technology
JCC— Joint Consultation Committee
KMC— Kangaroo Mother Care
KPI— Key Performance Indicator
LACRO— UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office
MIFAN— Ministry of Family, Adolescents and Children
MINED— Ministry of Education
MoH — Ministry of Health
MMI— Global Movement for Children
MOSS— Minimum Operating Security Standards
MTR— The Mid-Term Review
NGOs— Non Government Organizations
OIAI— UNICEF's Office of Internal Audit and Investigations
OR— Other Resources
PROCOSAN -The National community based nutrition and health program
PBR— Programme and Budget Review

RAM— Results Assessment Modules
PAS— Performance Appraisal System
RACCN— Northern Caribbean Autonomous Region
RACCS— Southern Caribbean Atlantic Autonomous Region
RR— Regular Resources
SAP or VISION—UNICEF electronic financial management system
SDGs— The Sustainable Development Goals
SINAPRED national system for prevention, mitigation and attention to the disasters
SILAIS— Local System for Integral Attention in Health
UNCT— United Nations Country Team
UNAIDS— The Joint United Nations on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF— United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP— United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS— United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNFPA— United Nations Population's Funds
UNETE— United Nations Emergency Team
URACCAN- University of the Autonomous Region of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast
WASH— Water Sanitation and Hygiene

Capacity Development

UNICEF Nicaragua supported the training of 52 primary school teachers in the “teaching sciences based on experimentation” methodology in the RACCS. The training included follow up to the application of the methodology in the classrooms by the participants. The goal was to enhance students’ learning experience in science and other disciplines with experimentation and knowledge sharing. Upon the completion of the pilot project, UNICEF Nicaragua technically supported the Secretary of Education in validating the methodology. A local delegation of Ministry of Education was trained by an international expert from the “LA MAIN À LA PÂTE France” in Costa Rica with funds from the French Cooperation to ensure monitoring and replication of the training. UNICEF will continue its support to the local authorities to validate and incorporate new and alternative teaching methodologies within the Regional Bilingual and Intercultural Education System.

In 2014 UNICEF Nicaragua built a strategic alliance between the Supreme Court of Justice and the National Police within the regional armed violence prevention programme, funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). One bottleneck identified by the partners was the need to improve the capacity of police officers in applying the Children and Adolescents Code, to ensure that adolescents in conflict with law are referred directly to the specialized justice system. This year UNICEF Nicaragua supported the Supreme Court to elaborate a capacity development strategy for the police officers on the national legislation framework in juvenile penal justice. The Supreme Court organized a training of trainers with 119 police officers in Bilwi, Bluefields and Matagalpa. The strategy was replicated in other departments and will be scaled up in 2016. The Supreme Court will monitor the implementation of the Specialized Justice System for Adolescents by the trained police officers to measure the impact.

Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy

Since 2013 UNICEF Nicaragua contributed to local government effort in developing and implementing a regional policy for children and adolescents in Southern and Northern Autonomous Regions in the Caribbean Coast. The exercise built on “human-centred design thinking” and entailed a series of community consultations facilitated by the regional

governments to feed into the policy document.

In the RACCS, the policy was developed and approved by the end of 2014. This year, the regional government led the process of “prototyping” innovative interventions in different municipalities, a process in which civil servants quickly tested and adapted innovations that tackle child rights issues by learning with users in the fields. Results from prototyping were consolidated for developing an Operation Plan of the Regional policy in 2016.

The regional government and UNICEF Nicaragua brainstormed how updated and disaggregated data can demonstrate the results from the implementation of the Regional Policy. With UNICEF’s contribution to convening partners, an innovative alliance was built between the regional government, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP, as well as two local indigenous universities in the region that worked on the issue.

Through this partnership, the regional government hired a consultancy team who mapped existing information and knowledge management systems including indicators, institutions, frequency of data collection, level of desegregation and dissemination policy and linkage with the national data systems. The consultants conducted a series of interviews with civil servants to assess the infrastructure and their competencies in collecting, analysing and using data for programming and advocacy.

Based on the results, the regional government and partners will finalize strategies for 1) setting up a strengthened information and knowledge management system; and 2) developing capacity of civil servants in result-based management, to be implemented in 2016.

Partnerships

With technical support from the alliance Better Work/International Labour Organization, UNICEF Nicaragua, a NGO SoyNica, and a Korean apparel enterprise HANSAE International set up breast milk extraction rooms and implemented a counselling programme that include prevention of Chronic Non Transmissible Diseases and early childhood development. To date 50 female workers (80 per cent of nursing mothers) are pumping and storing breast milk, and 600 women were trained on the importance of breastfeeding. The exclusive breastfeeding rate among female workers in HANSAE International increased from 12 per cent in 2013 to 60 per cent in 2015 (Better work report, 2015).

With UNICEF’s technical support, HANSAE International shared the initiative on TV programmes, emphasizing the investment return including: decreased absence of female workers to accompany sick children, increased productivity, and increased female workers returning to work from the maternity leave, thus cost saving in training.

UNICEF and the European Union (EU) in Nicaragua supported UNICEF LACRO with the first sub-regional training of trainers on the EU-UNICEF Child Right Toolkits as a follow up to the national launching of the toolkits in 2014. The workshop was implemented through the global partnership between UNICEF, EU and GIZ with 35 practitioners from six countries in Central America and the Dominican Republic including: 20 government officials, bilateral agencies, seven UNICEF staff, five civil society organizations, journalists and three university students. UNICEF Brussels brought innovative tools and methodologies to the training and an expert from UNICEF NY presented child rights and the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to the contribution in planning and facilitation, UNICEF Nicaragua convened a partnership and leveraged resources with the EU and the six UNICEF COs that supported the travel costs.

Participants will implement the action plans from the training in support to the fulfilment of child rights.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

As an early adopter of the Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy, UNICEF Nicaragua initiated the strategy for the local context. The Communication team organized two internal sessions. Sexual violence against children was selected as the priority issue for the local advocacy and communication strategy. Colleagues analysed impacts and causes of sexual violence at different stages of life, and discussed opportunities and potential partners for advocacy.

Since June 2015 UNICEF Nicaragua monitored the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on child-related issues with “Voice, reach and engagement” in the print media. The CO hired a company to monitor the indicators for TV and radio. During November and December, the CO obtained: 26.72 per cent of the national media share for online and in print (against total references to child rights), 10.06 per cent in broadcast media and 24.82 per cent in social network (Comunica reports). During the same period, 2,693,945 people were reached by UNICEF-related stories in print, online and broadcast media (64 per cent were produced by UNICEF Nicaragua).

UNICEF Nicaragua continued to lead the online presence in social media among child rights based organizations in Nicaragua. During 2015, the CO reached 1,466,685 people on social media: 56 per cent on Facebook (59 per cent women and 41 per cent men); 40 per cent on Twitter (54 per cent men and 46 per cent women); and three per cent on YouTube and Google+. This year, 21,654 people visited the UNICEF Nicaragua website.

The CO explored new opportunities for social engagement with young people: 110 adolescents and young people (65 females, 45 males) including student interns and UN Volunteers (eight nationals and nine internationals) engaged in CP activities to support UNICEF’s mission.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

In March 2015 the National Police and the Ministry of Family, Adolescents and Children (MIFAN) hosted the First Regional Conference for the Prevention and Attention to Children at Social Risk, with participation from 106 government officials from Cuba, Chile, Panama, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Dominican Republic. The objective was to exchange knowledge and good practices for the prevention of violence. The UNICEF COs financially supported the participation of their partners.

Following the conference, MIFAN requested UNICEF’s support in organizing an International Conference on Gender Socialization during Early Childhood, to be held in February 2016.

Identification and Promotion of Innovation

April 2015 marked the launch of an Innovation Laboratory in Bluefields, Indian and Caribbean University (BICU) in the Southern Autonomous region in the Caribbean Coast. UNICEF Nicaragua facilitated a consultation process with local partners, and prevention of violence against children was identified as the strategic focus to be addressed by: 1) strengthening the capacity of young people in the 21st century skills and knowledge transfer and 2) identifying and testing innovative solutions to advocate for the regional government to scale-up.

Through the Innovation Laboratory activities, 162 university students (80 females) and 132 children and adolescents (80 females) developed skills related to innovation and facilitated collaboration with local authorities in innovation. The total activity cost was US\$ 7,000 including US\$ 1,500 as BICU's contribution. UNICEF supported BICU to build partnerships that contributed to a cost saving of the Lab's operation, and Villanova University (USA), a professor and students, travelled to Bluefields three times one their budget, and facilitated workshops in entrepreneurship.

The Innovation Laboratory piloted a social innovation camp in el Bluff, a rural community located a 15 minute boat ride from Bluefields. UNICEF contributed to the design and facilitation of the event, tapping into the tools developed by the Innovation Lab in Kosovo. Around 80 people (children, adolescents, youths, community leaders and local authorities) were engaged in the camp, supported by UNICEF staff, university students, interns and Peace Corp Volunteers. Students from primary and secondary schools and a local university analysed problems in the community based on participatory mapping and key informants interviews. Participants collaboratively developed innovative projects to tackle problems such as sexual exploitation, unemployment and alcohol/drug abuse among young people, dysfunctional families, and lack of hygiene habits. Some of the projects are being tested for replication.

Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages

In 2015, a mid-year review of the Country Programme (CP) was organized jointly with all the governmental partners (line ministries, National Police, Supreme Court and National Assembly) with support from the Government. Discussion groups were organized by programme components (ECD, Education, and Adolescent Participation and Protection). This contributed to a cross-sectoral review on the progress, challenges and recommendations for the second semester. During the plenary discussion, a diverse range of partners helped the audience come up with solutions to challenges that required inter-sectoral responses (i.e. prevention of and response to teenage pregnancy or violence against children). Partners identified opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration, such as school counselling on the theme of prevention of violence.

UNICEF Nicaragua held two bilateral meetings with the National Inter-institutional Commission in ECD where three line ministries (Ministry of Family, Adolescents and Children; Education; and Health) were represented. The meetings helped UNICEF Nicaragua to have a better understanding on the progress and challenges of the implementation of the national ECD programme, and ensured the strategic alignment of the UNICEF-supported interventions with the most critical needs.

Based on a request from the Inter-institutional Commission, UNICEF Nicaragua shared innovative strategies piloted this year, such as SMS text messages to provide nutrition counselling to pregnant women and their partners, and the incorporation of the Communication for Development (C4D) strategy for better maternal and neonatal health at family level supported by Community Health Workers (CHWs). The innovations may be pursued by the national EDC programme, facilitated by the members of the Commission.

Starting 2016, the Inter-institutional Commission, invited UNICEF to participate in monthly meetings to continue knowledge sharing and strengthen joint actions for ECD.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

UNICEF and the OpenStreetMap/MapaNica, a non-profit organization, developed an innovative initiative to map neighbourhood risks through eyes of children and adolescents in Bluefields, RACCS.

Normativity: The initiative integrates the Concluding Observations of the CRC Committee (Articles 12, 13 and 17) on the right of children to speak and be heard, and seek and share information. It also built on the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (2014, Nicaragua) on strengthened prevention of violence and increased participation among children, especially those from indigenous and rural origins.

Participation: 33 students between 9 to 16 years old (including 20 girls) from three primary and secondary schools mapped the risks and hazardous areas in their communities, together with 55 university students, 15 teachers and local authorities. To ensure homogeneity in participation, two working groups were formed (9-12 years old and 13-16 years old). Maps were analysed with the participants by comparing differences by age and sex.

Non-Discrimination: Participation of the right holders from a rural region of indigenous and afro-descendent origins was the core part of the initiative. Children and adolescents were able to freely and consciously express their opinions by visualizing their problems through a map, an open source technology.

Transparency: The initiative was presented to the municipal authorities to obtain buy-in. Following the presentation of the maps, the authorities discussed with children and adolescents about the risks and vulnerabilities identified by them, and brainstormed solutions.

Accountability: The initiative was replicated during the social innovation camp in el Bluff, a marginalized community. Sixty children and adolescents mapped local problems and developed innovative solutions to issues like sexual exploitation, drug and alcohol use, and poor sanitation. Local authorities, community leaders and youths participated and strengthened their commitment to children's rights. The innovative projects are currently being tested to generate local evidences.

Gender Mainstreaming and Equality

In 14 schools in Caribbean Coast, the regional governments and UNICEF Nicaragua facilitated a participatory diagnosis on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, including gender analysis to promote equal participation. The participation rate in cleaning tasks has become roughly equal for boys and girls, with boys typically participating in physical work and girls in cleaning classrooms (Partner's report, December 2015).

The CO supported the Southern Autonomous Regional Government with vocational training in masonry and plumbing for adolescents. Girls were encouraged to participate in the traditionally male dominated activities. In total, 57 adolescents graduated and of those, 25 per cent were women.

The duration of the two interventions was five years and the annual budget was US\$ 6,000 for the diagnostic and US\$ 61,227 for the vocational training. Both initiatives were supported by a WASH officer and a national UN Volunteer.

A total of 350 adolescents (females: 58 per cent) from Somoto, San Lucas and Bluefields developed life skills and resilience at workshops organized by Ministry of Health with UNICEF Nicaragua support. They live in a high-risk situations: gang groups, drugs, and out of school. The initiative promoted social inclusion and the prevention of violence, HIV, pregnancy and drugs. In Somoto, the number of adolescents involved in gangs dropped from 333 in 2013 to 149 in 2015 (National Police).

The budget was US\$ 8,000. Adolescent participation led the initiative with support from a health officer and one volunteer from the US Peace Corp (on an agreement signed with UNICEF).

The Protection Section organized a workshop with the Child Protection in Emergency Group with 13 representatives from eight humanitarian organizations. Gender in emergencies was analysed given the recent update of transversal themes in the Esfera Project. The group developed a plan for 2016 to build their capacity including the gender aspect. This workshop cost US\$600 and six staff were involved, including a colleague from other CO who was on a mission.

Environmental Sustainability

Total 242 members from educational communities (206 females, 36 males) in 14 schools of Caribbean Coast participated in diagnoses to identify environmental risks and vulnerabilities and knowledge's gaps among students, teachers and parents. This exercise was facilitated by local government with technical and financial support from UNICEF, as a part of the WASH in School initiative. Based on the results, teachers are now applying their knowledge on environment and climate change in classrooms and prepared an action plan to reduce the environmental impacts. In these schools, environmentally friendly potable water systems and sanitation facilities were installed using recycled materials (plastic bottles). "Ferro cement" tanks were constructed to harvest rainwater for cleaning for which UNICEF promoted the best use of resources and reducing the environmental impacts.

The Southern Autonomous regional government supported UNICEF organized training of 24 teachers and eight directors from 12 schools on how to integrate environment and climate change in the existing educational programme. Teachers developed innovative learning methods (e.g. observation, community mapping, learning from experience) to stimulate children's interest in climate change and generate collective knowledge and solutions. In 2016 the local authorities will evaluate this initiative for further replication in the region.

Under the initiative of the UNICEF's regional office, Nicaragua CO contributed to a development of an internal strategic paper on risk mitigation and responses to the potential effects of "El Niño". The document have been updated and will be submitted to potential donors to mobilize funds.

With UNICEF's technical and financial support, 25 staff from SILAIS/Ministry of Health developed their capacity in nutrition responses in emergency for children and pregnant women. The training included the use of appropriate tools for analysing food security and developing response plans in emergencies with involvement of local actors. Furthermore, 34 technicians from 10 municipalities in the Dry corridor were trained on the National guidance on management of nutrition programmes, including training of community leaders, conducting nutrition needs assessment in emergencies and formulating goals/targets. Draft response plans and results from the municipal diagnoses conducted during the training will be presented to Ministry of Health in early 2016.

Effective Leadership

The CO currently has 11 management mechanisms represented by staff across all categories and areas. Three management mechanisms are managed by LACRO including: Central Review Bodies (CRB), Contract Review Committee (CRC) and Property Survey Board (PSB), since 2014 when the CO was incorporated into the Panama hub. These structures address different areas of CO's governance as mandated by UNICEF's regulations and facilitate planning and implementation of the Annual Management Plan.

The Country Management Team (CMT) continues to be the central statutory committee for decision making to facilitate the strategic management and monitor the Annual Management Plan. The CMT sustained 12 meetings through which a set of programme management performance indicators were monitored for compliance.

The CMT created a new non-statutory, ad hoc task force to support the CO's transition into the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) as a pilot country. This task force reviewed 33 internal work processes taking into consideration the adequate segregation of roles and the revised CO structure.

The Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) was updated and presented to the CMT and its action plan was reviewed and updated early in 2015. The status of the implementation of risk mitigation measures were reviewed by the CMT at the end of the year and updated in the Risk and control library.

The Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI) conducted an audit of the Nicaragua CO to assess the governance, programme management and operations, covering the period from January 2014 to July 2015. An auditor visited the CO in Managua and the sub office in Bluefields in August. The OIAI concluded that the control processes in the CO are generally established and functioning well. The audit report was finalized in December 2015 and the CO prepared an action plan to be implemented in 2016.

Financial Resources Management

As of the end of December 2015, the CO's annual financial implementation rate reached at 98 per cent of total US\$3.05 million Regular Resources (RR): 100 per cent of US\$1.18M; Other Resources (OR): 98 per cent of US\$1.41M and Institutional Budget: 94 per cent of US\$0.46M). All of the nine grants expired this year were spent down to 99.8 per cent by the expiry date. The total OR raised for the current CP since 2013 reached US\$6,46 million, equivalent to 21 per cent of the total Other Resources (OR) ceiling for CP 2013-2017. Out of the OR funds, US\$800,000 was allocated for 2016.

The Direct Cash Transfers (DCTs) outstanding over nine months were US\$ 34,000 (5 per cent the total DCT outstanding balance in 2015: US\$ 647,000) with one NGO partner. There were no DCTs between six and nine months. Outstanding DCTs between 2012 and 2013, for which service calls were created due to technical problems in VISION, were resolved.

The CO conducted two workshops with 11 implementing partners (90 per cent of all partners) and UNICEF staff to strengthen knowledge on updated HACT policies. The overall implementation rate of spot checks was 100 per cent (out of 14 planned); and 14 IPs were assessed and followed up by UNICEF staff. A macro-assessment was conducted by the CO and the report was finalized in April. The CO was unable to conduct micro-assessments with the

governmental partners due to lack of response from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding requests by the Resident Coordinator since 2014.

Fund-raising and Donor Relations

In 2015, UNICEF Nicaragua resource mobilization Task Force focused on leveraging resources by: 1) maintaining contact with existing partners; 2) exploring new alliances with emerging partners; and 3) strengthening internal capacity in reporting results for children. The Task Force met on a trimester basis to monitor the progress of its work plan. Results obtained focused on new and emerging partnerships that leveraged resources for children including human resources, knowledge-sharing and innovation.

Over 70 per cent of funding gaps against the CP Other Resources (OR) ceiling, UNICEF Nicaragua is categorized as “donor orphan country” prioritized for thematic funds allocation (global and regional). The CO developed various funding proposals and strategic documents with proposed interventions and budgets.

In coordination with the Task Force, the CO hosted a visit of the US Funds for UNICEF donor group in February 2015, an opportunity to showcase UNICEF’s work in a middle income country.

Based on the audit’s recommendation, the Country Management Team (CMT) examined the relevancy of having a resource mobilization task force and discontinued it in late 2015. The CMT will continue to coordinate the CO’s effort in reducing the funding gap in consultation with LACRO, for the rest of the CPD period.

The CO used the programme coordination and CMT meetings to review the donor report deadlines and implementation rates of grants. All of the seven donor reports due this year were submitted on time, and reviewed by the Representative, Deputy Representative and the Communication Specialist for quality control.

Evaluation

The IMEP was developed by programme staff jointly with the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist based on the programmatic priority and funding availability. The CMT approved the IMEP and reviewed the implementation status twice a year.

Evaluation of a pilot of the Injury Surveillance System (linked to violence against children and adolescents) in Bluefields was postponed. Two studies and a survey were cancelled due to changes to the political context.

A new partnership strengthened the information and knowledge management system in the Southern Autonomous Region in the Caribbean Coast (RACCS). The partnership involved UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and two local universities under the leadership of the Regional Government, and implemented a consultancy to: 1) conduct a diagnostic study on civil servant capacity in analysis and data use; and 2) map existing information knowledge management systems. A draft capacity development strategy and a proposal on the information and knowledge management system were developed for implementation in 2016.

An evaluation of the UNICEF’s zonal offices in Bilwi and Bluefields was conducted to assess relevancy, efficiency, efficacy, sustainability and strategic contribution to the Country

Programme Document implementation. The Terms of Reference (TOR) was reviewed by the Regional Office for quality assurance. The methodology consisted of qualitative data collection from over 40 interviews, including with UNICEF staff and partners, combined with analysis of financial investment. Findings will support future planning exercise of UNICEF Nicaragua as well as other similar offices.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

In 2015, UNICEF Nicaragua took the following savings measures for better efficiency:

Paper-based meeting management: Colleagues were encouraged to send the agenda and other documents electronically prior to a meeting and present on a projector. The CO reduced the consumption of stationery by 34 per cent this year, equivalent to US\$ 5,000 of savings.

- Cost saving in gardening, reception and general services: UNICEF and UNDP used common general services in hiring the same company on a cost-sharing modality, creating US\$ 14,000 per year in UNICEF's operational costs.
- Internet Services: UNICEF and UNDP shared an internet service provider for annual savings of US\$ 6,500.
- Security Services: sharing services with UNDP led to annual savings of an estimated US\$ 30,900.
- Energy savings: The CO used 18 watts light bulbs to save energy as recommended by the National Engineering University. The green office campaign encouraged turning off lights and computers when they are not in use, and a single printing equipment with the energy saving function.
- Closing of zonal offices in Bilwi and Bluefields. Having zonal offices in Bilwi and Bluefields was reviewed by UNICEF Nicaragua in consultation with LACRO optimize efficiency and effectiveness in delivering the CPD results. A proposal to close the zonal offices was approved by the Regional Director, effective in the first quarter of 2016, with estimated savings of US\$ 111,000 from RR in 2016 which will be invested into programme activities across the Caribbean Coast in work plans with regional governments.

Security for Staff and Premises

The CO updated the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) during the last quarter of 2015 which was tested during an insecurity incident around a public demonstration.

UNICEF and other UN agencies assisted the national emergency simulation exercises led by the Government twice this year. During the simulation exercises, UNICEF Nicaragua colleagues participated in an inter-agency radio check, and the emergency contact chain was activated to check its accuracy. The security focal point and the CO management were able to identify security risks and test mitigation actions during the emergency scenarios.

In coordination with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), 15 UNICEF staff participated in training sessions in safety and security including security orientations for new staff, Safety and Security Approaches in Field Environment (SSAFE), and Women and Security Focal Point Training.

The CO made progress in compliance to the Minimum Operation Security Standards (MOSS) for the sub-office in Bluefields and Bilwi. According to the self-assessment, the MOSS

compliance for Bilwi is 82 per cent and Bluefields is 83 per cent, although both zonal offices will be closed in the first quarter of 2016. MOSS measures installed in these CO premises (such as cameras and smoke and motion sensors) will be reviewed by the Property Survey Board (PSB) to decide the course of actions in January, 2016. The MOSS compliance for the CO in Managua is at 94 per cent.

Human Resources

The CO supported 13 recruitments and 12 separations/transfers. The new structure approved in 2014 was put in place and five new positions were recruited. A temporary Operations Manager was hired to support the transition into GSSC and an audit process. The CO recruited stretch assignments to cover the M&E Specialist, a programme assistant and the Protection specialist.

The Regional Human Resources Advisor visited the CO to provide human resource support and capacity development in ethics. Another ethics training was organized in September, facilitated by the ethics focal point.

The focal point for UN Cares organized four workshops to strengthen staff skills in HIV prevention. Male condoms and Pepkits were purchased for all offices, and five staff were trained on Pepkit use. The Human Resource Officer systematically included a statement concerning stigma and discrimination in vacancy announcements.

Since the Representative's term ended in September, the Deputy Representative served as the Officer in Charge with support from a P4 Senior Adviser. The coordination functions were delegated to three National Officer on a rotational base.

To follow up the Global Staff Survey, an action plan was developed during a participatory exercise facilitated by the local Staff Association, monitored by the CMT.

The local training committee developed a training plan focusing on Ethics, SAP (UNICEF electronic financial management system), HACT, security and English. The CO received US\$ 3,500 from the Regional Learning Funds and organized a workplace climate workshop. Learning activities of 24 staff were partially funded by the CO and fully implemented.

Ninety-five per cent of staff completed their Performance Assessment System (PAS) 2014 End-Year Review by February 2015; 96 per cent completed the 2015 planning phase and 95 per cent completed the Mid-Year Review prior to the global deadline.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

Under the CO 365 Scheme, the new email services with increased capability and functionality were made available to all staff, including staff working in two zonal offices. Team Viewer was frequently used by the ICT assistant to provide remote support to staff, especially in zonal offices.

Lync or Skype for Business facilitated a better connection for periodic teleconferences with zonal and regional offices and participation in webinars. OneDrive for business was used by the staff as the main cloud-based ICT tool, not only for sharing documents and facilitating collaborative work, but also as a reliable backup system.

A Regional ICT officer was deployed to support a new ICT assistant (hired in August), and the CO had the opportunity to identify key issues and areas in ICT to be strengthened. As a result of the mission, the server site was reordered, capacity of the shared drives was increased and capacity of the Communications Programme was strengthened with the installation of a new video editor and a network drive for saving pictures and videos as a backup.

This year, the CO invested US\$ 50,000 for a critical enhancement and upgrade of the basic ICT equipment by replacing 19 laptops as well as network printers and teleconference equipment. The equipment was ordered in November 2015, procurement will delay due to the high volume of supplies received at the customs at the end of the year. Once the equipment will be delivered and set up in 2016, a better system performance is expected.

Programme Components from Results Assessment Module

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 By 2017, girls and boys aged 0-6 years in indigenous, afro-descendent and rural communities in 24 prioritized municipalities with greater disparities will have access to integral and appropriate services in health, nutrition, education and protection at family, community and institutional levels.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance to Ministry of Health (MoH) in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality in six out of seven prioritized Local System for Integrated Attention in Health (SILAIS). Specifically, UNICEF contributed to three key interventions: a) Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI), b) promotion of the appropriate umbilical cord care for prevention of sepsis and new-born anaemia, and c) the Kangaroo mother care (KMC) strategy.

In health units in Nueva Segovia, RACCS, Madriz, Bilwi and Las Minas where the BFHI was implemented, the proportion of babies receiving breastfeeding within the first hour of life increased from 65 per cent in 2014 to 95 per cent in 2015 and proportion of exclusive breastfeeding up to six months from 12 per cent (UNICEF Base Line study, 2013) to 37 per cent during the same period (MoH). The implementation of the KMC Strategy contributed to the reduction of neonatal mortality by reducing prematurity from 70 to 30 per cent in SILAIS Bilwi and from 90 to 10 per cent in SILAIS Madriz between 2014 and 2015. In these SILAIS, 100 per cent of new-borns received a proper cord care for prevention of sepsis and anaemia.

MoH with technical support from UNICEF trained health workers in analysis of bottlenecks to reducing the neonatal mortality in Bilwi, Las Minas and Madriz and identified the following: a) out-dated national standards in neonatal care, b) lack of skills and poor coordination within health service networks and c) lack of monitoring of the quality of neonatal care. Based on the analysis, they developed and implemented an action plan as a part of the MoH's "Continued Quality Improvement" programme. Each SILAIS is currently reporting on the progress of the implementation of the action plans bimonthly on a virtual platform of MoH.

With support from UNICEF, MoH updated the National Standards and Protocols on Neonatal Care and the Integrated Children Illness Management at hospitals, and trained 40 national trainers on these new protocols. MoH developed and implemented the National Guideline for KMC Strategy in Health Facilities. UNICEF technically supported the MoH in integrating a virtual learning sessions on the KMC strategy and quality assurance indicators in the MoH's online

“Blackboard Collaborate” platform. This contribution facilitated knowledge sharing among 30 health workers in SILAIS Bilwi, Minas and Madriz, and MoH will aim at scaling up this initiative to other SILAIS in 2016.

UNICEF contributed to the MoH's effort in implementation of the updated norms on the Community Nutrition and Health norms (PROCOSAN), by supporting the training sessions with 3,720 community health leaders. This allowed the improved referral services for children with malnutrition or obesity in 1,240 communities from Caribbean Coast and the Northern “dry corridor” a region with high risk of drought.

UNICEF supported six SILAIS with monitoring of indicators in Maternal and Infant Health, which contributed to the increased availability and timeliness of the data on key indicators. For example, the new data suggest the increased pentavalent immunization coverage from 84 per cent in 2014 to 96 per cent in 2015 in Nueva Segovia and from 95 per cent to 100 per cent in Madriz, except in Bilwi where the coverage remained at 66 per cent.

In prioritized SILAIS, community leaders learned about the strategy of Communication for Development (C4D), developing their ability to provide technical support to the families from 18 communities selected due to a high maternal and child mortality and morbidity. In these communities, UNICEF assisted SILAIS in elaborating charts for analysis of determinants to improve maternal and childhood health at family level and a guideline for the community leaders to provide technical support to families, as well as training of community leaders in C4D.

UNICEF and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) provided technical support to MoH in Prevention of Mother to child transmission of HIV and AIDS by updating the antiretroviral clinical guide. The process included validation of the clinical guide by experts, and its implementation and follow up to guarantee the quality of the Antiretroviral (ARV) services.

A total of 2,690 children between three and five years old (1,282 girls and 1,408 boys) in 14 rural indigenous communities in Alto Wangky Bocay attended preschool in 2015. Although the data on the coverage is not available, UNICEF contributed to this output by supporting the Indigenous Territorial Government (GTI) in organizing series of communication campaigns targeting parents. As a part of the Ministry of Education's effort to improve teaching capacities in early learning in Alto Wangky, UNICEF also supported the training of 100 preschool teachers from the same rural communities.

UNICEF supported the Commission on the population issues of the National Assembly with the elaboration of two administrative laws fundamental for the establishment of administrative procedures for the updated birth registration processes based on the new Family Code (April 2015).

Through the new Family Code, free birth registration was extended up to seven years of age. UNICEF supported the Central Civil Registry Office to strengthen the outreach services to 62 remote communities through mobile units. As a result, 12,351 children and adolescents mainly from indigenous communities in Waspam, Rosita, Bilwi and El Tortuguero were registered, exceeding the annual target of 9,500. During the outreach services, civil registry staff, civil servants and community leaders in four municipalities from the Caribbean Coast learned about the new birth registration procedures for further application to their work.

OUTPUT 1 Capacity development-families (2015-17) 0-5 years old have acquired skills to support comprehensive early childhood development of their children and utilization of relevant ECD services (health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, birth registration and pre-school education).

Analytical Statement of Progress:

With UNICEF technical support, 24,246 mothers and fathers in four SILAIS were trained in exclusive breastfeeding, adequate nutrition and parenthood. In addition, 1,478 families (1,278 women and 285 men) from 25 indigenous and afro descendants' communities in RACCS developed knowledge and skills in parenthood, early stimulation and nutrition counselling. To accompany those parents and families, 300 community leaders learned the utilization of the early stimulation toolkit developed by MoH. As a result, 100 per cent of children between zero and five years old in four SILAIS were vaccinated.

UNICEF technically supported MoH with training health workers in four SILAIS in the Standards of Childhood Development Surveillance which was implemented as a part of the National ECD programme in collaboration with Ministry of Family, Adolescents and Children (MIFAN). This support contributed to the identification of 112 children with disabilities who were referred to health facilities to receive an appropriate care.

UNICEF concluded a piloting of initiative "Toy Contigo" which was implemented in collaboration with SILAIS Bluefields. Using SMS messages, 275 pregnant women attending antenatal care and 162 accompanying family members (majority are partners) in Bluefields received 17,254 messages on early pregnancy risk signs, nutrition during pregnancy and breastfeeding tips in their mobile phones. These SMS messages were culturally and linguistically validated and the technological feasibility was tested through the piloting.

Staff from 16 out of 17 municipal civil registry offices, including those from 10 municipalities in the Caribbean Coast targeted for the Country Programme, have strengthened their capacities in planning and coordinating the implementation of the new birth registration procedures among the institutions (Central Civil Registry, Ministries of Health and Education).

UNICEF supported Ministry of Education in training of 25 community leaders from RACSS who developed knowledge and skills in new parenthood and family counselling in ECD and care. The Indigenous territorial government (GTI) with UNICEF's financial support elaborated and compiled 50 anecdotes (short traditional stories) for preschool aged children in local languages (Kriol and Ulwa).

Obstacles: Lack of awareness on the importance of early education by parents continues to be a bottleneck for preschool education. UNICEF implemented pre-enrolment communication campaigns in selected zones to overcome this. Delay in implementation of the work plan by MoH was caused by a pending Direct Cash Transfer (DCT) for more than nine months linked to the human resources changes and due to the national priority in responding to the epidemics.

OUTPUT 2 By 2017, inter-sectoral teams of the national ECD programme (Programa Amor) at municipal, regional and national levels have obtained legal framework and coordinated capacity in analysing the situation, planning, and monitoring results for ECD.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

MIFAN with support from UNICEF implemented the "Accompaniment to the Implementation of the National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Program" through which 52 technicians and

30 parents in SILAIS Nueva Segovia enhanced their skills in early childhood education and care. Although sex desegregated data was not available, MIFAN reported increased participation of fathers (and mothers) in ECD care after the training. For instance, in SILAIS Bilwi during the first semester 2015, 200 parents of children between zero and five years old were involved in ECD while in November, this increased to 700 parents attending total 1,009 children.

With UNICEF's technical and financial support, MoH recertified 100 per cent of health units in Nueva Segovia (69 health units) and 70 per cent in RACCS as a Baby Friendly Hospital, and conducted an internal evaluation of 30 per cent of health units from 15 municipalities in Madriz, Bilwi, Las Minas.

With UNICEF's technical assistance, local teams working for the National ECD programme learned how to identify barriers to guaranteeing the quality of care and implementing corrective actions to remove them. This analysis allowed SILAIS of Las Minas, Bilwi and Madriz to improve their indicators in ECD. For example, the coverage of the child development and monitoring increased from 67 per cent in 2014 to 75 per cent in 2015.

In six SILAIS targeted by the CP, 85 per cent of health personnel and 3,720 community health leaders from 1,240 communities developed competencies in nutrition standards and counselling. Following the training organized by MoH with UNICEF's support, the health personal and the community leaders completed a nutritional census with 239,173 children using the ANTHRO, a software developed by WHO to evaluate child development.

Coverage of HIV testing with pregnant women increased from 95 per cent in 2014 and 100 per cent in 2015 in SILAIS Bilwi and Madriz, while in Las Minas remained at 79 per cent. As a result of MoH's efforts in strengthening home visits and training of health workers supported by UNICEF, 100 per cent of HIV exposed children received treatment to prevent vertical transmission of HIV.

During the last trimester, UNICEF was invited to participate in the regular meetings of the National Inter-institutional Commission on ECD. These meetings allowed UNICEF to gather information on the on-going interventions within the national ECD programme "Program Love" and ensure the strategic alignment by incorporating the demands in a work plan in ECD for 2016.

OUTCOME 2 By 2017, girls, boys and adolescents in the condition of major disadvantage, mainly indigenous populations and afro descendants, have enrolled in and completed primary education in a timely manner.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF Nicaragua supported the national and local governments in developing actions for quality and inclusive education under the National Strategic Plan for Education 2010-2015. Specifically this year, UNICEF collaborated with three partners: two regional governments in the Caribbean Region and the Indigenous Territorial Government (GTI in Alto Wangki), targeting the rural and indigenous communities that lag most behind for universal access to quality education.

A number of initiatives implemented by the government's partners with UNICEF's technical and financial support involved children and adolescents of both sexes, as well as parents and community leaders in ensuring better school and community environments for a better learning.

These initiatives also built on active participation of children in addressing relevant subjects to their context such as HIV and AIDS, hygiene, music, adaptation to climate change among others in the classrooms, and equipping them with life skills.

In an effort to improve teaching capacities, UNICEF Nicaragua supported the Ministry of Education and the Secretaries of Education in two Autonomous Regions in the Caribbean Coast (RACCS and RACCN) to carry out teachers' training through different methodologies with the aim to make education of better quality and more attractive to students while keeping up with the new trends on the education in the XXI century. The intervention was implemented based on the analysis of bottlenecks to the quality education.

In order to improve access to schools, UNICEF Nicaragua contributed to the work of the Secretaries of Education and the water and sanitation authorities in two autonomous regions to prototype construction of water and sanitation facilities that are culturally and environmentally appropriate, and at low cost. School communities were involved, trained and equipped to contribute to the process of designing and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities. Gender segregated latrine facilities were built in 11 schools, keeping in mind particularly the needs of girls, providing access to better sanitation to 2,303 students (1,232 girls and 1,071 boys). With technical support from UNICEF, manuals on how and what to build in school environments using low-cost technological options were prepared by the regional government in RACCS.

Monitoring indicators in education management in rural areas by local authorities was extremely costly due to geographic access and logistic challenges. Introduction of a system to monitor the situation of education in real time by SMS messages based on the RapidPro platform was tested in 14 schools since 2014. This contributed to the authorities in the Southern Autonomous Region (RACCS) to get a better sense on what is happening and make evidence based decisions to improve the situation in schools, especially in very remote areas. The monitoring system was accompanied by training of authorities in Education in evidence based planning, evaluation and school management. UNICEF contributed to this initiative through technical expertise and follow up, as well as financial resources to acquire the required technology for the system to be in place.

Local counterparts identified positive outcomes in terms of strengthened institutional capacity in different areas (planning, monitoring and evaluation, leveraging of resources, negotiating skills, enhanced presence of education institutions at local level, and impact of the Education Programmes in the communities, among others) with the technical assistance and the implementation of tools and resources that UNICEF management strategies bring. There was a consensus among regional authorities that UNICEF contributed to their mandate and specific interventions within the existing Intercultural and bilingual education system in the Autonomous Regions that are embedded in the National Education Strategies.

Key challenges were identified jointly with the partners and actions were in progress. One of the most critical challenges is how to ensure sustainability of achievements from UNICEF-supported actions, such as children who return to school from a risky past. Another challenge is how to strengthen the participation of the national authorities in the decision making process that pertains to the Autonomous Regions. Communication between the regional and municipal authorities in education needs to be strengthened, and for this, UNICEF could contribute by ensuring that authorities at both levels are equally involved and informed on the programme interventions.

The Donors' Roundtable in Education Group met periodically to follow up on the development process of the new national education strategic plan, led by the MoE. UNICEF contributed to the upstream policy and advocacy work of the group by actively participating in the meetings and different national forums in education organized by members of the group.

The National Committee for the Celebration of Education International Week mobilized 45 civil society organizations (CSOs) and advocated for better education. One of the activities was a national campaign titled YO ME SUMO ("I add up myself to"), an opportunity for the public to speak about the kind of education they would like to receive. UNICEF contributed to the design on the campaign as well as participated in the national forum with an opening statement by the Country Representative.

OUTPUT 1 By 2017, girls, boys, adolescents and their families have acquired competencies for the management of inclusive quality education which includes access to water, sanitation and hygiene with focus on adaptation to climate change.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

In the effort to keep children and adolescents away from social risk behaviours such as vandalism, violence and drugs, UNICEF supported the Indigenous Territory Government (GTI) in Alto Wangki in creating opportunities for adolescents and youths in socialization, recreation and capacity development. The Municipal Federation of Sports in Ayapal-Bocay, with support from UNICEF, organized four sport leagues (baseball and football) in which a total of 287 adolescents and youth (49 per cent females) in 18 communities in Alto Wangky participated. UNICEF contributed financially to the creation of 24 musical groups, involving 72 youths (48 per cent females, 52 per cent males) who were equipped with musical instruments created in a workshop run by youth. Also, a training session on carpentry was organized where six youths acquired technical skills and contributed to the local school furniture needs by fabricating 240 chairs for four primary schools.

With UNICEF's support to the DRASH (Direction of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in the regional government) in RACCS, the Education Committees from 10 schools (six in Bluefields and four in Pearl Lagoon) comprising of 150 teachers, students, parents and technical advisors (102 women and 48 men) improved their knowledge and skills on school infrastructure maintenance, care and functioning. They were also provided with hygiene kits and a set of basic tools and repair parts, so that they can do their work. The committees now have their own schools action plan to maintain or improve the WASH infrastructure and the regional government is provided follow up to their implementation.

The regional governments with support from UNICEF facilitated the organization of Hygiene and Sanitation clubs (school brigades) with the participation of 100 children (49 girls and 51 boys) from 14 schools who learned to express their ideas, shared their knowledge on issues related to safe water and sanitation, climate change, interpersonal skills with other students, and contributed to finding solutions to the problems in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in schools.

In celebration of the World Hand Washing Day in Bluefields, a total of 5,058 students, parents, teachers and education authorities participated in different activities (school murals, city's fair) to help raise awareness on the importance of washing hands to prevent diseases. Schools continue with the hand washing activities along the year as a part of an action plan that was monitored by school brigades and municipal education authorities.

This output is "on track" from the perspective that UNICEF and its local partners have achieved the expected results contributing to the output level results. However, due to limited access to, or lack of availability of updated and official data especially at national level, assessment of specific indicators was not possible in most cases. In order to resolve this issue, UNICEF will consult with the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Technical Institutions from the start of the year 2016 in an effort to obtain the authorization to access to the available administrative data and use it for programme purpose such as monitoring the progress of the CP 2013-2017 and updating a Situation Analysis.

OUTPUT 2 By 2017, teachers in prioritized municipalities have increased their teaching capacity for quality primary education which is relevant to cultural contexts, with focus on cross-sectoral curriculum.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

In 2015 UNICEF-Nicaragua continuously supported the Education curriculum reform in the South Caribbean Autonomous Region (RACCS). A total of 159 teachers (133 women and 26 men) from 26 primary schools trained in the use of new textbooks and teacher guidelines for the 5th and 6th levels and teachers from four municipalities trained on Intercultural and bilingual education are applying the new knowledge and skills, through which 6,583 students (3357 boys and 3226 girls) are receiving education with better quality.

UNICEF financially and technically supported the Ministry of Education with the implementation of a diagnosis on the situation of children and education services, targeting 63 communities and 80 schools in Alto Wangky. Results are inputs for the preparation of the National education strategic plan 2016-2021.

With the aim of providing improved learning experience in Science to students, 52 primary education teachers from 13 schools in Bluefields and Pearl Lagoon gained knowledge in new methodologies. Findings from the evaluation of the pilot phase highlighted the need to continue the teacher training and to procure access to technology to teachers and students for more research. Schools were equipped with Science books. Through support from the French Government which was leveraged by UNICEF, an education technical staff received training internationally on the methodology to provide follow up to the initiative during the year 2016.

UNICEF Nicaragua also contributed to the Regional Government's efforts in training of 217 first and second grade teachers on the "Everyone Can Learn" teaching methodology for language and math in the North Caribbean Autonomous Region. Some 4,300 children (2,200 boys and 2,100 girls) benefit from the application of this methodology in the classrooms.

In 14 indigenous communities of Alto Wangky, UNICEF Nicaragua financially and technically contributed to the enhancing of pedagogic capacities of 326 teachers (100 preschool, 141 primary school and 85 secondary school teachers). In addition, Ministry of Education's specialists provided training to teachers on the use of new textbooks. 1,899 students from the first grade (1,030 girls and 869 boys) benefitted from these trainings.

With the support of technical advisors trained in 2014, a total of 442 teachers (349 women and 93 men) developed skills in hygiene education based on Life Skills, Climate Change and Environment, incorporating the themes in the curricula. Also, 30 students about to graduate from the Teaching School in RACCS developed skills on hygiene education.

The output is assessed as "on track" from the perspective that UNICEF and its local partners have achieved the expected results in the annual work plan. As the same case as other outputs, due to limited access to official data and the availability of updated data on education indicators especially at national level, it was not possible to assess the specific indicators and based the decision on the progress in indicators.

OUTPUT 3 By 2017, Ministry and secretary of Education in two regions in the Caribbean Coast have acquired capacities for curriculum development, decentralized planning, and real time monitoring of the management of Education for equity.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The Secretary of Education in RACCS with support from UNICEF helped the Regional Council with funding for a municipal diagnosis and organization of five validation workshops that led to the inclusion of the up-to-date information in the seven year Education Plan (2015-2021) of the Regional Government (approved in April 2015). This process helped to strengthen the capacity of evidence-based planning among regional authorities within the framework of the Bilingual and Intercultural Education System.

UNICEF Nicaragua also supported the teaching colleges in the north and south regional governments with improvement of the curriculum for training in-service teachers in Intercultural and bilingual education. UNICEF leveraged existing tools and methodologies such as the psychosocial training developed by FUNARTE (local NGO specialized in alternative teaching methodologies) and a module on prevention of violence in schools used by the Miles de Manos Program (run by the GIZ's Regional Office). Through this local partnership, these organizations contributed to the efforts of the teaching colleges in providing teachers with a more comprehensive training package.

With the support from the Innovation Unit at UNICEF Headquarters, a new platform (RapidPro) was installed to run the real time monitoring system in schools from the Caribbean Coast. RapidPro is a UNICEF software that can be used for this purpose. The system was validated with the participation of 120 people (61 students - 33 females and 28 males; 41 mothers; and 18 principals - 14 females and 4 males).

Students and teachers from 14 schools (2,803 students and 169 teachers) in the Caribbean Coast conducted a participatory diagnosis on the situation of Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) in their schools, developed an action plan and created school committees, with the aim of supporting the improved access to water and sanitation.

To help guide school principals in decision making on school investments, a catalogue on the technological alternatives for WASH infrastructure in schools is being produced based on UNICEF experience in supporting different schools with construction of low cost WASH infrastructure since 2013. The Ministry of Education at regional level as well as WASH of regional government in RACCS participated in the review of the catalogue which will be published in 2016. UNICEF's technical contribution was providing different technological options for WASH construction, which could be replicated by the rest of the country.

Despite the fact that plans have been finalized and results were achieved, one important constraint this past year was the lack of timely implementation by the SEAR-RACCN, which limited the possibility to start a new working plan for the year 2015. Limitations were mostly in

the area of financial execution. To help partners improve in this area, some financial and administration training will be undertaken.

OUTCOME 3 By 2017, children and adolescents in conditions of greater disadvantage in 24 priority municipalities have equitable access to prevention of, and response to violence in its various manifestations.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

A total of 1,157 adolescents and youths (with gender equality) in five prioritized municipalities in RACCN and RACCS Madriz strengthened their competencies in: violence prevention and emergency preparedness and innovation. As a key result, 87.5 per cent of 135 adolescents who were trained in prevention of sexual abuse identified at least one sign of sexual abuse and 100 per cent identified at least one institution to report a sexual abuse.

UNICEF supported the Government's efforts in prevention of and attention to violence through: a) development of a curriculum to adolescents in conflict with the law, with the aim of strengthening their capacities in alternative conflict resolution; b) implementation of a training of trainers with Adolescent Penal Courts on justice for adolescent in conflict of law in three departments (Matagalpa, Bluefields and Bilwi); and c) improved monitoring system of the Ministry of Family, Adolescents and Children (MIFAN) on child rights.

Training adolescents in conflict with the law was integrated in the capacity development plan of the Adolescent Penal Court to ensure sustainability. The training of trainers with the Adolescent Penal Courts will be replicated in 2016 through a partnership between the Judiciary and the National Police with support from UNICEF.

With financial and technical support from UNICEF, MIFAN began the process of modernization of its information management system through installation of a fibre-optic internet connecting their departmental offices with the Central office. The new system will enable MIFAN to automatically transmit and consolidate data from departmental delegations that are collecting data from 153 municipality offices using the standard indicators in child protection. In 2016 UNICEF will embark on the technical assistance to MIFAN in strengthening its capacity in identification of bottlenecks and evidence based planning.

Through UNICEF's technical support to the regional government, the National Technological Institute (INATEC) in Bluefields accredited vocational training course of Masonry and Plumbing for adolescents older than 15 years old. During the period between 2013 and 2015, 71 adolescents (including 20 females) from RACCS and RACCN graduated from the course and successfully created 15 micro companies, providing services in masonry to their communities. Total of 27 out of 154 adolescents and youths who were previously out of the education system were reinserted in schools after the training.

With financial support from the United Kingdom Department of International Development (DFID), UNICEF supported the municipal government in Bilwi in implementing an initiative through which 100 children and adolescents (including 50 girls and those out of schools) in RACCN developed knowledge and skills in risk management and emergency preparedness.

UNICEF supported the regional government in RACCS with the iterative implementation of the Regional Policy for Children and Adolescents, adopted in December 2014. Through the Human Centered Design approach, 44 local authorities collaboratively drew up plans to implement

prototypes of social innovations for children in five municipalities. The process contributed to strengthening the capacity of local officials in testing and quickly adapting innovative interventions based on continuous feedback from local communities.

In 2014, UNICEF and the Global Movement for Children (MMI)'s Nicaragua Chapter organized series of consultations with teenagers on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in different municipalities. This year UNICEF Nicaragua technically accompanied the MMI with the organization of workshops on SDGs with 220 teenagers (with gender equality) from six municipalities. They further disseminated the SDGs to their communities and peers through talking to local media and replicating the training in schools and neighbours.

During the workshops, the adolescents developed a country-specific proposal on the eight of the goals that they considered important. The proposal was submitted to the Foreign Minister who then shared with the UN Permanent Mission of Nicaragua prior to the General Assembly in September. UNICEF together with other members of MMI further helped 260 adolescents (50 per cent females) from the six municipalities prepare inputs for a special meeting at the National Assembly where they requested the support from the Deputies in advocating SDG with the State of Nicaragua.

The Bluefields, Indian and Caribbean University (BICU) in RACCS with technical and financial support from UNICEF Nicaragua launched the Innovation Laboratory in April. To date, over 160 students from two universities and 130 children and adolescents (over 50 per cent are female) developed skills in creative thinking and innovation. They were supporting the activities of the Innovation Laboratory as a facilitator to collaboratively develop innovation solutions to issues related to child rights. A partnership convened by UNICEF such as with the Villanova University (USA) and MapaNica (Managua) allowed the capacity development of these students with 21st century skills and knowledge transfer to children and adolescents with minimum investment under the cost sharing modality between UNICEF and BICU.

Challenges:

- 1) Creating a sustainability mechanism for the Adolescent Communicators in prevention of sexual abuse: UNICEF Nicaragua identified a possibility of linking their activities with MIFAN's Department on Prevention of Sexual abuse.
- 2) Scaling up the entrepreneurship strategy with adolescents: as they have to meet with the educational requirement of the INATEC, incorporation of psychosocial supports and additional entrepreneurship training was necessary, especially for those out of school or in the situation of social risks.
- 3) Anchoring the innovative strategies or projects developed by students from the Innovation Laboratory in BICU with local institutions is important to support the implementation of these projects.

OUTPUT 1 By 2017, children and adolescents, prioritizing the most disadvantaged, have the ability to protect themselves from violence, as well as to identify and report cases to the competent authorities.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF continued its support the “Prevention of sexual abuse through Information, Communications and Technologies” initiative. In four municipalities (Somoto, San Lucas, Bilwi, and Bluefields), 135 adolescent communicators (60 per cent female) developed communication strategies on prevention of sexual abuse, targeting their parents and caregivers which incorporate gender and positive masculinities. UNICEF supported a NGO CEDEHCA in training 150 adolescents on birth registration who promoted it in rural communities, reaching approximately 1,300 people in three municipalities (Bilwi, Rosita and Waspam). Their contribution was fundamental to the results of the birth registration campaign that exceeded the target by 211 per cent (11,625 children registered against 5,500 planned; Central Registry). In three priority municipalities (Matagalpa, Bluefields and Bilwi), 93 adolescents (including 13 females) in conflict with the law have enhanced their capacity in social interaction and leadership through the Pacific Conflict Resolution course organized by the Judiciary Branch with UNICEF’s support.

A total of 154 teenagers (51 female) who were out of school and/or at social risk from Bluefields and Pearl Lagoon graduated from the vocational training on Masonry, Plumbing and Entrepreneurship with focus on climate change and psychological attentions. To facilitate the micro enterprise management by adolescents, UNICEF supported the Regional Government in RACCS with development of a "Toolkits for learning by developing an entrepreneurship" which will widely be implemented by the INATEC in 2016.

The Innovation Laboratory in BICU with support from UNICEF, 162 (80 female) students from two universities in RACCS developed their skills in mapping, design thinking, entrepreneurship and human centred design through workshops and internships. During the “mobile” Innovation laboratories, 132 children and adolescents (including 80 females) participated and contributed to identifying innovative solutions to tackle issues like prevention of pregnancy and sexual abuse. The projects were presented by youths to municipal authorities in Bluefields who agreed to coordinate with different institutions to support the implementation.

Within the emergency preparedness initiative in RACCN, children and adolescents produced communication materials to promote the emergency preparedness from the child right perspective. A local university student conducted a cultural analysis to identify ancestral practices used in Miskito’s communities for mitigating risks to natural disasters. This was identified as good practice and was remotely presented at the conference on the International Day for Disaster Reduction. The next step is to further analyse, validate and select the practices that could be incorporated in Ministry of Education’s textbooks on emergency preparedness.

OUTPUT 2 By 2017, competent authorities (National Police, Public Attorney Office, Judicial Branch) have strengthened their capabilities for comprehensive rights-based response to victims of domestic violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking and to adolescents who are in conflict with the law.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF continued its support to the Government in strengthening the Specialized Juvenile Justice System through Armed Violence Prevention Programme in three departments of the country. The First National Seminar on "Specialized Criminal Justice" was organized by the Judiciary with a total of 91 judicial officers (64 women and 27 male). The seminar was attended by all the judges of the Criminal Chamber from eight districts and addressed how to remove the bottlenecks to the implementation of the Juvenile Justice System previously diagnosed by the

Justice operators in 2014. The Seminar created the first time in the country that the Judges of the Courts of Appeal met with the Juvenile Penal Judges to discuss the fulfilment of the rights of the adolescents in conflict with the law in all Court instances. The agreement was to monitor the progress in the processing of adolescent cases in the Court of Appeal six months following the Seminar. Data is still being collected by the Judiciary and not yet available as of this write up.

In three priority municipalities, 11.3 per cent (119) of the National Police Officers participated in the training and developed knowledge on the specialized justice system for adolescents and their roles in the community. The Judiciary with technical and financial supports from UNICEF designed, piloted and validated the training and elaborated a user-friendly pocket toolkit on the Book III of the Children and Adolescents Code on the legal requirements for the Penal Justice for Adolescents.

The Ministry of Children, Adolescent and Family (MIFAN), with technical support from UNICEF, is currently reviewing and adapting the internal normative guidelines, protocols and attention pathway according to the new Law on the Human Trafficking that came into force in February 2015. In 2016 these instruments will be finalized and used for training of MIFAN staff in order to provide better attention and protection to children and adolescent who are victims of human trafficking.

The Government is currently revising strategies for the prevention of, and attention to violence and redefining the role of main institutions such as MIFAN and the National Police. Depending on the new strategies defined by the Government, UNICEF will give priority to the development of capacities of civil servants from selected institutions that are on the “critical reference route” for violence cases.

OUTPUT 3 By 2017, national and regional authorities have developed capacities in updating policies based on evidences, formulation of budgets, and monitoring with the focus on result based management for restitution of the rights of the adolescents living in conditions of violence and major social.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

A new partnership was developed between the regional government of RACCS, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and two local universities to strengthen the institutional capacity in Result Based Management. With technical and financial support from UNICEF and other partners, a consultant team was hired by the Regional Government and conducted: 1) a diagnostic study on the capacity of local authorities in analysis and use of data, and 2) mapping of the existing information and knowledge management system. Findings were used for the development of roadmaps for the institutional capacity development plan, as well as the regional information management system to closely monitor the key indicators in child rights.

In the RACCN, UNICEF Nicaragua supported a creation of an inter-institutional committee consisted of 12 government officials who reviewed and finalized the Regional Intercultural Policy for children approved by the Regional Council in August 2015. They facilitated the participation of 49 children (including 28 girls) in Bilwi in the validation process of the Policy. The Regional government through technical assistance from UNICEF disseminated the Policy in three out of five priority municipalities in the region to date.

This year UNICEF Nicaragua started a dialogue with the Finance Ministry to develop a proposal on development of the measurement of public expenditure on children's rights to be

incorporated in the national financial management system. The ministry is now in agreement to start developing a classifier to measure the public investment towards child rights, together with line ministries in 2016.

UNICEF also participated in the sub group on investing for children under the Global Movement for Children (MMI) in Nicaragua. The group organized a high-level meeting between representatives of MMI and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to transmit key messages prior to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, at which the resolution on better investment for children was adopted. The group is in the process of developing an advocacy strategy to support the Government's effort in implementing this resolution.

Piloting of the Injury Surveillance System in Bluefields was delayed due to an unexpectedly lengthy negotiation process to identify the main partner. UNICEF's coordination with local authorities resulted in the agreement to have the Regional Health Secretariat as the lead institution, in collaboration with the Centre for Psychosocial Attention to Adolescents that works under the Ministry of Health.