Executive Summary

At the beginning of the UNICEF-Nicaragua Programme Cooperation there was a challenge in resource mobilization, with a US$2.1 million funding gap. This meant the Office needed to focus on prioritizing strategies to reach the most marginalized communities and regions. In late 2013, the Office underwent a strategic reflection process in which the team updated the situation analysis and developed the result matrices for the UNICEF's new strategic plan 2014-2017.

As a contribution to A Promise Renewed, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) in breastfeeding, child nutrition and immunization programmes. UNICEF’s advocacy promoting exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) resulted in the commitment of the MoH to re-certify 80 per cent of health units as baby-friendly hospitals by 2015.

At the local level, the Joint programme on Food and Nutrition Security was concluded after three and a half years of implementation in 42 rural indigenous communities, which resulted in the reduction of stunting (from 23 per cent to 4 per cent), increased EBF (from 42 per cent to 68 per cent) and improved immunization coverage (from 35 per cent to 80 per cent).

The Office’s first prototyping of an innovation to increase birth registration was implemented and an emerging alliance with private sector was launched for the “Sociopreneur” initiative. UNICEF’s support enabled the Government in the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) to develop a regional policy for children through Human-centred design.

The UNICEF Nicaragua website was officially launched in July 2013 as a one-stop knowledge sharing portal. UNICEF Nicaragua currently ranks first in social networks among all the organizations working in child rights in Nicaragua.

With funding from global and regional levels, the Office invested in strengthening the knowledge of partners and staff on child rights through participation in international conferences and training on Sport for Development, judicial protection of children, birth registration, and injury surveillance systems. The Office also embarked on the new modalities of partnerships with local and international universities through internships and generating research.

Shortfalls:
UNICEF is leading the Education and Birth registration components of the United Nations joint programme for human security in Alto Wangki, a difficult to reach and insecure area. Maintaining UNICEF’s technical investment in that programme has been challenging, as there is no programme budget specifically allocated to UNICEF for human resources.

Mobilizing resources in Nicaragua is increasingly challenging. In 2013, the Office submitted 24 donor proposals, and 9 were funded, contributing US$1.5 million of other resources (OR) (65 per cent of the annual OR ceiling). The Office will continue exploring strategic partnership and emerging donors to ensure the technical assistance in targeted areas, including monitoring of child rights and national capacity development in planning, policy making and monitoring.

As the Office prepares for incorporation into the regional operation hub in 2014, it has been a challenge to plan and initiate a change management process. Special focus was placed on the re-distribution of operations and administrative functions and on staff wellbeing and capacity development. That process will be concluded in 2014, with support from a temporary Operations Manager.

Country Situation as Affecting Children & Women

Socio economic context:
Between 2011 and 2012, Nicaragua’s economy grew by 5.2 per cent, reaching an annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of USD$1,731. The national budget for social services was 9.5 per cent of GDP,
of which 72 percent was allocated to health and education. The state’s health budget decreased from 3.9 per cent to 3.1 per cent of GDP, [2] and the education budget decreased from 5 per cent to just over 3 per cent.

Child poverty:
Some 38 per cent of children ages 0-4 and 41 per cent of children ages 5-17 are poor, [3] with geographic disparity (in rural areas: 5 out of 10 children are poor, in urban: 3 out of 10). The proportion of deprived children is the highest in Jinotega and two Atlantic autonomous regions. The most common deprivations associated with poverty in children 0-4 years of age are malnutrition, lack of access to health services, and housing conditions. For children and adolescents ages 5-17, key factors of deprivation were lack of access to information, inadequate housing conditions and lack of access to education.

Health:
Infant mortality declined from 29 per 1,000 live births in 2006-2007 to 17 per 1,000 in 2011-2012.[4] Chronic malnutrition dropped from 21.7 per cent in 2006-2007 to 17.3 per cent in 2011-2012. Much of that reduction occurred in rural areas (7.1 per cent reduction in rural areas; 1.3 per cent in urban). The highest rates of chronic malnutrition were in the North of the country and the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN). [4]

Mother to child transmission of HIV decreased from 38.5 per cent in 2006 to 3.3 per cent in 2012.[5] Among new HIV cases reported in 2012, 6.3 per cent were adolescents (10-19 years old). HIV epidemiological trends show a decline in new infections among children under 14 years old, but a progressive increase in new infections among those between 15-19 years old.[6]

In Nicaragua, 23.3 per cent of adolescents under 18 are already mothers or are pregnant, the highest rate in the region.[7] Seventy-seven per cent of all pregnant women attended antenatal care (ANC) during the first trimester and 88 per cent attended four or more ANC visits (for adolescents, 71.2 per cent and 73.2 per cent attended, respectively).[4] Pregnant women are least likely to attend four or more ANC in RAAN (70.0 per cent) and RAAS (73.4 per cent).

Water and sanitation:
Nearly 90 per cent of the population have access to improved sanitation facilities (urban areas: 97.1 per cent; rural: 79.8 per cent); and 83.8 per cent had access to improved drinking water (urban areas: 97.1 per cent; rural: 65.0 per cent). [4] In the Caribbean regions, 63 per cent of schools have functional sanitation facilities, and 43 per cent have functional water infrastructure. Only 28 per cent of schools in dispersed rural communities had access to water, compared to 57 per cent in rural areas and 68 per cent in urban areas.[8]

Education:
In 2012, 9 out of 10 school-age children were enrolled in primary school (adjusted net enrolment: 92.4 per cent) with gender equality. However, 15 per cent of children 3-5 years old and 17 per cent of secondary school-age children are out of school, a total of 127,000 children across all levels. Additionally, 23 per cent of children are at moderate risk [9] and 35 per cent at severe risk of exclusion from school (total of 729,000 children).[10] Fifty-four per cent of students in first grade were over-aged. The school desertion rate [11] in primary school was 9.9 per cent (8.3 per cent among girls), with higher rates in RAAN and RAAS.[12] Forty-nine per cent of primary school students successfully completed sixth grade.

Birth registration:
Birth registration among children under six increased from 81 per cent in 2009[13] to 86.7 per cent in 2011-2012 [4], although the under-registration rate is substantially higher in the RAAN (36.5 per cent) and the RAAS (22.3 per cent). Families do not register children because they do not perceive it as urgent and lack their own identification card. The mother’s low education level, younger age and rural residence are also associated with under-registration.

Violence:
In 2011-2012, 22.5 per cent of married or in-union women experienced physical or sexual violence (the highest rate was in Managua, at 11.2 per cent).[4] The level of acceptance of corporal punishment for children increased from 13.7 per cent to 16.9 per cent between 2006-2012.[4] A total of 32,061 cases of
domestic violence were reported in 2012; [14] 3.6 per cent of victims were children under 13 and more than half (54.9 per cent) of female rape survivors were under 14. Forty-five human trafficking cases, including 3 girls, a boy, and 18 female adolescents, were reported in 2012.[14] In 2013, 48 cases of human trafficking were reported, of which 28 were adolescent girls (13-17 years old), including seven cross-country cases.[14, preliminary data].

[3] Based on the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) applied to the 2011-2012 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data. MODA is a multidimensional child poverty analysis method based on 8 dimensions of deprivations. “Poor” are defined as children with two or more of the deprivations.
[9] Moderate risk for exclusion: a child has one year of delay in education; severe risk: two or more years’ delay.
[11] School desertion includes school abandonment, school dropout, or students who do not pass to the following academic semester. (Vélez, 2004).

Country Programme Analytical Overview

2013 was the first year of the new programme cycle. The Office focused on UNICEF’s value added and relevancy, prioritizing areas of work and including innovative strategies. The Office’s work focused on the most marginalized indigenous or afro-descendent communities on the Caribbean Coast and in hard-to-reach areas in the northern part of the country.

Building on the causality and bottleneck analyses conducted in 2012, the Office updated the analysis of country contexts and situation of children (Situation Analysis) with the data from the latest surveys.[1] The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) section also helped develop a Theory of Change for each programme component as a tool to visualize the results chain based on the causality analysis. During a regional multi-country meeting addressing prevention of armed violence, staff from the Child Protection, Communication and M&E sections collaborated to construct a theory of change incorporating Communication for development within the violence prevention programme.

Given the Office’s financial situation, pursuit of effectiveness and efficiency was an essential part of the
The exercise of migrating the results matrix according to UNICEF’s new Strategic Plan 2014-2017 was an excellent opportunity for the Office to update the analysis of the country context and SitAn and reflect findings in the Office’s result framework. The exercise also helped the Office to determine the horizontal linkage across the five determinant areas of different sectors, and combine them where possible and appropriate. In November 2013, the Office organized a strategic reflection workshop, inviting the Regional deputy director to reflect on the prioritised strategies of the Country Programme Document (CPD) until the mid-term review in 2015. The updated analysis of the country and regional contexts and the draft result matrices were presented and assessed in participatory manner. Those matrices were finalized and are ready for migration into VISION in January 2014.

[1] The 2011-2012 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and a sub-regional study on out of school children, among others.

Humanitarian Assistance
Natural disasters are becoming more frequent in the two autonomous regions on the Caribbean Coast (RAAN and RAAS) due to climate change and deforestation. This included an infestation of rats and mosquitoes. The latter caused an epidemic of Dengue fever, with increased incidence and mortality rates during the last quarter of 2013. The epidemic is under control and decreasing according to the latest communication from Ministry of Health.[1]

Since November 2013, Nicaragua has been under a yellow alert for Cholera epidemic, due to recent outbreaks in Mexico. The cholera outbreak did not happen in Nicaragua but the alert was a “wake-up call” for Nicaragua to further improve environmentally sustainable water and sanitation infrastructures and hygiene promotion and education in schools and communities.
[1] Personal communication with the Director of Epidemiology, Ministry of Health, January 8th, 2014.

Effective Advocacy

Fully met benchmarks

2013 began with a visit to Nicaragua by Jyrki Linankivi, a musician who is the Finnish UNICEF Ambassador, with the Finland National Committee for UNICEF. The visit aimed to put Nicaragua back on the map on the public advocacy agenda for protection of children and adolescents against all types of violence. Immediately after the visit, Jyrki took on the all Europe tour, during which he talked about the situation of violence against children, and continued his efforts in advocacy.

The Finnish Government funded one UN Volunteer and one Junior Professional Officer, both Finnish nationals, to work with UNICEF Nicaragua. Although the Finnish Embassy’s mission to Nicaragua came to the end in December 2013, the human resources funded by the Finnish Government will continue to make a valuable contribution through UNICEF’s work.

As a key strategy to support A Promise Renewed, UNICEF launched a large communication campaign during the month of August (the international month of breastfeeding) to promote exclusive breastfeeding. The Office developed 14 TV programs including a video spot featuring the personal experience of Xiomara
Blandino, Miss Nicaragua 2007, and the mother of a two year old child. The video and other materials were disseminated through social networks, and within a month obtained 169,362 views on Twitter, 1,802 views on Youtube and 13,554 impressions on Facebook.

UNICEF’s technical support and advocacy efforts resulted in the creation of a joint programme on breastfeeding in workplace with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Better Work project and Soy Nica, a local NGO. The pilot project consisted of building a room for breastfeeding and dispensing breast milk in a large apparel factory with 3,000 workers. The programme mobilized US$35,000 to date. UNICEF is supporting evidence based research on the pilot project for possible replication of the model in other factories.

Since 2011, the Office has had strong strategic partnerships with media companies [1] to position the issues of children’s and adolescents’ rights within Nicaraguan society. A rapid cost-benefit assessment indicated that the Office saved US$282,000 between 2011-2013 (US$100,000 annually) by disseminating key messages and communication materials at discounted rates or free of charge, instead of buying airtime. Through a partnership with the Alhambra Cinemas for the campaign #ENDViolence, video clips by Liam Neeson were shown free of charge, and were viewed by more than 50,000 people between September and December. Nuevo Diario, one of the two major newspapers in Nicaragua, featured a field visit of UNICEF Representative with focus on UNICEF’s work with adolescents in Bilwi, RAAN.

It is challenging to quantify the full impact of external communications efforts. But thanks to partnerships, communications efforts are definitely reaching the general population with key messages on children’s rights, with a minimum financial investment.

[1] Local television canals, radio stations, print media, musicians and actors.

**Capacity Development**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

The Director of the Nicaraguan Institute of Sports (IND) participated in a workshop in Brazil on the monitoring and evaluation framework of Sports for development, in the context of the Vamos a Jugar initiative. The Director learned that sports had the potential to facilitate the learning of core values among children and adolescents, while improving their health and bringing communities together, beyond cultural or ethnic divisions.[1] The ongoing collaboration between UNICEF and IND through integrating sports in the armed violence prevention programme will be formalized in 2014.

UNICEF supported the participation of the President of the Court of Appeals in the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) [2] in the XV International Course of Jurisdictional Protection of Children’s Rights in the Dominican Republic in September 2013. The conference objective was for the 71 judicial operators from 14 countries to learn the interpretation and applications of the international standards of human rights in their judicial work. Since the training, the Magistrate has been working in better coordination with the penal judge for adolescents in RAAN, putting a strong emphasis on the preventive actions in communities.

During the Regional Parliamentary Workshop on Universal Birth Registration in Peru in June 2013, Nicaragua was represented by the President of the Commission of Population, Development, and Municipalities at the National Assembly. The President of the Commission strengthened his knowledge on the State’s responsibility to guarantee birth registration, and exchanged experiences in incorporating the equity perspective[3] The Commission is leading the ongoing process of approving the new law on birth registration.

Three participants from Nicaragua (UNICEF, a local NGO and the police office in Bluefields) attended a global training on the Injury Surveillance Systems organized by UNICEF and the US Center for Disease Control in Dubai. The course was the first of its kind to build capacity of the UNICEF staff and partners to adapt the injury surveillance approach into the Child Protection Programme. Following the training, Nicaraguan participants met with the authorities of the National Police and obtained a strong buy-in for this
tool. The system will be piloted early 2014 as one of the UNICEF’s key strategies to improve prevention of and responses to violence against children.

A total of 60 journalists from local media, universities, NGOs and government institutions participated in workshops on media coverage in emergencies organized in Managua, Bluefields and Bilwi by UNICEF’s Communication team. Among the topics discussed were early childhood development and protection of children in emergencies and natural disasters. In response to popular demand, UNICEF, working in partnership with universities, will develop an online course for journalists on child rights.

[1] Extracted by a trip report by Mr. Gustavo Xavier Arguello Roa, the Director of IND.

[2] Dr. Chan, the magistrate from RAAN was selected for the course because of the high crime and homicide rate and the juvenile delinquency in the region.

[3] Extracted from the trip report of Mr. Juan Ramón Jiménez, the participant.

**Communication for Development**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

**The Joint Food and Nutritional Security and Children Programme** (PC-ISAN), implemented in 47 indigenous Miskito and Mayagna communities, [1] was concluded after three and a half years of implementation. Communication for Development (C4D) strategies contributed to attaining the programme’s specific results on child nutrition, breastfeeding and nutrition and care of pregnant women in those communities.[2]

UNICEF supported community leaders, nursing mothers and pregnant women with designing and implementing a communication strategy targeting 2,000 Mayangnas and Miskito families. The partners collectively identified the prioritized problems and the targeted behaviours in health and nutrition based on the feasibility of attaining social change through communication. Fifty children and adolescent girls and boys strengthened their knowledge on the convention for rights of children and nutrition and food security, complemented by technical training on C4D.

UNICEF and partners trained 110 community leaders on the food security law and its implications for their work in promoting nutrition and community health. Sixty local journalists and communicators were trained on C4D and established a local alliance to work together to promote behavioural changes to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

**Birth registration:**

An innovative C4D strategy for birth registration was prototyped with the support of the UNICEF Child Protection and Communication sections. A week-long event “*Yo existo (I Exist)*” was implemented in the municipality of Puerto Cabezas, with the objective of increasing the birth registration rate. The communication strategies helped market this event through radio and TV spots, and through cell phones. More than 100 girls and boys obtained their birth certificate during the event, four times more than the average number. The communication section also developed a pictorial fact sheet on the process of birth registration which helped the Registry Office and UNICEF staff inform the population about the required processes and documents.

**External Communication:**

*The UNICEF Nicaragua website* was officially launched on July 1st, 2013. During the six months following the launch, the website recoded an average of 1,770 visits per month; 72 per cent of traffic came from Nicaragua. Every month, the number of visits from outside the country has increased, and 32 per cent of visitors returned to the site. About half of the visitors reached to the site through an internet search, while 13 per cent reached it directly typing the URL address in their browser.
UNICEF Nicaragua began using social media two years ago. That effort was strengthened significantly in 2013 through strategic planning of dissemination linked to programmatic priorities. In 2013, 70 thematic campaigns were launched on social media (70 per cent were produced locally by UNICEF Nicaragua).

In November the Office surpassed its target goal of reaching 7,000 people by social media by the end of 2013. Among all UN agencies, NGOs and institutions working in child rights in Nicaragua, UNICEF Nicaragua ranks first in the number of followers on social media (Facebook, Youtube and Twitter).

[1] In the municipalities of Siuna, Bonanza, Rosita and Prinzapolka


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**Strategic Partnerships**

*Fully met benchmarks*

**The Sociopreneurship Initiative:**
The Office secured its first private sector alliance through The “Sociopreneur,” which taps into the local and global collaborators to solve problems affecting children, combining corporate social responsibility with entrepreneurship. In July of 2013 **UNICEF Nicaragua signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Mukul Beach Gold & Spa**, the first luxury boutique hotel in Central America, to launch this initiative. The Mukul Hotel is located in the municipality of Tola, which has a population of 23,000, 42 per cent of whom are children. More than 75 per cent of the population lives in rural areas. UNICEF Nicaragua recently facilitated the process of a mapping of the social fabric conducted by the local population, which revealed business opportunities in the value chain [1] of the tourism sector. In 2014, UNICEF will pioneer branding and marketing techniques for greater visibility and advocate for other private sector actors to adopt the initiative.

**Partnership with universities for generating data on children:**
The UNICEF Nicaragua Office formalized an alliance with academic and research institutions to strengthen the equity approach through generating data on children’s rights to be used for policy making and programming. In 2013 the Office signed an umbrella Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with two universities on the Caribbean Coast: the Bluefields Indian Caribbean University (BICU) and the Nicaragua Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region University (URACAAN). The pilot alliance aims to tap into the technical capacity of academic institutions through joint research and the work of student interns. Under this alliance, UNICEF initiated a dialogue with BICU in Bluefields on strengthening the capacity of the Regional Observatory on Child Rights, a longitudinal data collection system with a focus on getting data on indigenous and afro descendant communities. The idea of developing an Observatory was initiated a few years ago with UNICEF’s support. In 2013, the idea was officially approved by the local government. In 2014, the university will improve the system with the objective of monitoring trends in children’s outcomes, evaluating of effectiveness of regional public policies in reducing disparities, and promoting dialogue among relevant stakeholders.

In 2014, UNICEF will intensify its work with academic institutions by expanding it to other universities in Nicaragua. A discussion is ongoing for potential participation of Nicaragua in the HQ-led global innovation grand challenge initiative connecting universities all over the world and organizing series of knowledge transfer sessions on topics such as entrepreneurship for capacity development of students, future leaders of Nicaragua.
[1] Value-chain analysis looks at every step a business goes through, from raw materials to the eventual end-user. The goal is to deliver maximum value for the least possible total cost.

Knowledge Management

 Mostly met benchmarks

The Office led several major analyses to update the Situation Analysis on children and women. Using data from the 2011/12 Demographic and Health Survey, the Office conducted the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis [1] to better understand patterns and causes of child and adolescent poverty.

In collaboration with two student interns (a remote intern from the USA and a local intern), the Office analyzed data from the inventory on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in schools on the Caribbean Coast. The results were presented on different occasions including a poster presented at an international conference, a presentation to the local government and a speech at the International Toilet Day event.

The situation analysis on sexual and commercial exploitation and violence was being finalized at the year end, in collaboration with the National Police. The Office worked with a designer to develop a user-friendly fact sheet to visualize the data from the analysis.

The Office undertook and documented two social innovations – Design thinking for children and the sociopreneurship initiative – which were posted on UNICEF’s Innovation site. The Office’s first Innovation Laboratory implemented with partners was presented through a short video documentary during the UNICEF’s global innovation meeting in Kosovo. A draft toolkit is now available for further replication of the Innovation Laboratory approach in other Offices.

Through the Office’s inter-sectoral collaboration, the first prototyping of an innovation in birth registration was developed to test one of the winning ideas from the crowd sourcing (launched on the Innocentive portal in 2012). The experience was documented through a case study, a presentation and personal essay, and triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data.

A large United Nations joint programme on food security targeting indigenous and rural communities on the Caribbean Coast funded by the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) came to an end this year. UNICEF and partners documented lessons learned and good practices, which was published and presented by UNICEF staff at the MDG-F regional conference. A video documentary on the programme was produced through the inter-agency Communication group.

The Office focused on diversifying the knowledge products to document programmatic experiences and lessons learned. Staff documented an initiative or experience (1, 2) through “personal essays “that were featured at least five times on the top page of the ICON (UNICEF’s internal communication site), and shared with external partners through the UNICEF Nicaragua website and social media.

Repackaging knowledge products in a user-friendly manner was an essential part of the Office’s advocacy efforts. The Communication section took the lead in developing packaged communication materials for an external audience, including a brochure and a short video. The Office also incorporated marketing and branding strategies in developing knowledge products for the Sociopreneurship Initiative.


Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation

 Fully met benchmarks
The Universal Periodic Review 2013

Led by the Human Rights Council/UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)[1] is the only universal mechanism for reviewing the human rights records of all UN member states. Nicaragua’s performance in human rights was examined during the first cycle of the UPR in 2010, which analysed Nicaragua’s application of the international human rights standards in legislative and administrative measures, public policies, and programmes. The current UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2013-2017 and its Action Plan incorporate the recommendations from the UPR 2010.

In 2013, Nicaragua joined the second cycle of UPR, which took place between May and September. The UN system led that process through internal consultations with UN staff and thematic experts, and by providing technical assistance to the state, civil society organizations and the Office of Human Rights Ombudsperson to produce reports.

UNICEF, as part of the UN interagency ad hoc group for UPR, coordinated the internal consultation process with sector staff and other UN thematic groups (e.g. gender, adolescents, etc.) to comprehensively examine Nicaragua’s compliance to the rights of children and adolescents. UNICEF made valuable inputs in the areas of maternal and child health, education, early childhood development, disability, public policy and HIV and AIDS.

This exercise allowed UNICEF and other UN agencies to update the situation analysis in different thematic areas related to child rights and to examine the progress and gaps in the work of human rights. The UN report was peer-reviewed by the focal points of human rights from all the agencies, expert consultants and the UN country team.

The civil society organizations and the Ombudsperson’s Office also delivered their reports to the OHCHR in September, and the state will deliver its report in January 2014. The Human Rights Council’s working group’s 19th session will examine Nicaragua in April or May 2014.

The Integrated model for food safety in RAAN:

When developing the United Nations joint programme on food security in 45 indigenous communities in RAAN[2], UNICEF noticed that the process had been organized at the institutional level, with a vertical top to bottom approach, despite a holistic intersectoral approach in the programme. UNICEF advocated for the integration of a bottom up approach based on human rights principles, and led the planning process with stakeholders and communities, adding the Communication for Development (C4D) component. The C4D strategies created a remarkable social change. Families and communities were empowered to be active protagonists for promoting community health, dealing with their own and their families’ nutritional status. This new "Integrated model for nutrition" has been used by the Parliament in RAAN as the basis for developing a regional food security policy.

[1] Managed by the human rights council which was established by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in March 2006


Gender Equality

Mostly met benchmarks

Gender for improved nutrition:

UNICEF and other agencies, together with authorities from the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN), implemented a joint food security programme in indigenous communities. During the initial planning process, men had considered breastfeeding and child nutrition to be women’s issues and were not interested in participating. After three and a half years of implementation of communication strategies, there are palpable changes. During the final evaluation, women reported that male partners started helping them with housework, which has allowed them to provide better care for their children. [1]
The programme also mobilized 62 per cent of women in these communities to take up agricultural work to increase food productivity, which was traditionally considered as a male role. Women received tools and seeds, and training on nutrition and leadership. These competencies have facilitated women’s motivation and self-confidence to take a better control over their families’ nutrition.

The gender-sensitive strategies contributed to a decrease of malnutrition rates in children under 5 from 23 per cent to 4 per cent; and an increase of exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months from 42 per cent to 68 per cent.

**Law 779 on gender-based violence:**
In 2013, Law 779 was amended by the Supreme Court, in coordination with the UN General Assembly. The reform led to the acceptance of mediation for crimes of lesser sanction, which was beyond the remit of UN agencies. The crimes against children and adolescents were not included in this decision on mediation. As a result of UNICEF’s previous advocacy efforts with the National Assembly, members understood that crimes involving children and adolescents should be categorized and treated in a distinct way. The newly approved law 779 affirms that sexual offenses and violence against children and adolescents are grave violations of rights and should require high level of penalty. This presents an opportunity for UNICEF’s work in violence prevention, especially with adolescent girls.

**Equal participation for opportunities:**
As a part of the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme, 14 adolescent girls and 20 boys living at risk of social exclusion attended a six-week course on masonry and plumbing and social skills in Bilwi, RAAN. The course provided the opportunity for adolescent girls and boys to truly understand the equal participation for creating opportunities for poverty reduction.

“I thought that this kind of construction work can be done only by men...but not only men but also women can do this. Actually, I am doing it, without any difference...” - A female, 18 years old.

“...some women may not have the capacity to do the physical work but they have the intelligence to manage the work...” -- A male, 18 years old.

UNICEF and partners are currently providing further support to the 34 graduates so that they can find opportunities to put their skills to work in practice.


**Environmental Sustainability**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

Through UNICEF’s support to environmental sustainability in schools and communities, the following good practices were identified:

a) Building environmentally sustainable and eco-friendly water and sanitation facilities in schools, with a design that reduces the potential impacts of climate change and natural disaster (rainwater harvesting system, ventilated improved pit latrine, flush toilet / pour flush toilet)

b) Promoting use of recycled plastic soda bottles in the construction of masonry booths medical units, curb stone wells, and base storage tanks, as an ecologically friendly alternative material to cement. This practice mobilized parents, students, teachers and community members to clean up their communities by collecting plastic bottles. It also contributed to their ownership of latrines and water tanks in schools. This experience also stimulated the creativity of the children and the population in communities when they witnessed how the plastic waste could be used creatively and in beneficial ways.

**South-South and Triangular Cooperation**

During the Sixth Meeting of the Lazos Sur-Sur [1] in May 2012, member countries committed to strengthening HIV prevention among adolescents and youth through the inter-ministerial collaboration...
between the Ministries of Education and Health. Following the meeting, as a part of horizontal cooperation between member countries, the UNICEF Brazil Office launched a call for proposals on this theme to member countries. The UNICEF Nicaragua Office submitted a proposal and received USD$10,000 to implement a project titled: "Coordinating actions of student leaders and Education and Health Ministries for HIV prevention in four schools in the Caribbean Coast."

Through that project, UNICEF built, for the first time in Nicaragua, a formalized collaboration mechanism between the Ministries of Education and Health to better coordinate and facilitate HIV prevention actions for students and adolescents out of school. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two Ministries and a work plan with a focus on HIV prevention in schools was jointly developed.

With technical and financial support from UNICEF, the Ministry of Education organized training on peer education on HIV prevention with 400 student leaders (56 per cent males, 44 per cent females) in four schools on the Caribbean Coast. According to the pre-training test, 79.4 per cent of student leaders in RAAS and 64 per cent in RAAN had knowledge on HIV prevention. The training was expected to strengthen their knowledge and competencies on peer counselling methods using recreation-based techniques such as dance, painting, music and youth fairs. (Post-training test results are pending.)

Teachers in those schools also strengthened their skills and competencies on utilization of recreation- and culture-based education methods in HIV prevention. This knowledge builds on local pedagogical expertise and scientific knowledge provided by nurses responsible for the HIV program in each region. UNICEF reproduced and disseminated "Quick Reference Guide for HIV and STIs" manuals to teachers and students to support their counselling sessions.

The 400 trained students will organize informal or formal peer-to-peer education sessions starting in 2014, through which they will train at least two adolescents from their schools or neighbourhoods. The expectation is that at least 800 adolescents in these two regions will be trained by February 2014.

[1] Created in 2004, "Lasos Sur (LSS)" is a horizontal technical cooperation network for HIV consisted of Nicaragua, Bolivia, Paraguay, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Timor Este, Sao Tomé and Principle
**Narrative Analysis by Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results**

**Nicaragua - 3120**

**PC 1 - Early child development**

- **On-track**

**PCR 3120/AO/05/801** 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.

**Progress:**

As a strategic contribution to *A Promise Renewed*, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) in breastfeeding, child nutrition and immunization. UNICEF’s advocacy for promoting exclusive breastfeeding has resulted in the commitment of the MoH to recertify 80 per cent of health units as baby-friendly hospitals by 2015. The key indicators for early breastfeeding are now being monitored by the President’s bureau.

As part of the Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunization (GAVI), UNICEF supported the MoH with importing vaccines for the National Programme for Immunization. Pentavalent vaccination coverage has achieved 75 per cent among children in the seven prioritized local systems for integral attention in health (SILAIS).

As an outcome of the United Nation’s Joint Programme on Infant Food Safety and nutrition that was implemented in 42 rural indigenous communities in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) from 2010 to 2013, the prevalence of stunting in children under 5 decreased from 23 per cent in November 2010 to 4 per cent in June 2013; the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding until six months increased from 42 per cent to 68 per cent; and immunization coverage for children under 5 increased from 35 per cent to 80 per cent. [1]

UNICEF supported seven prioritized SILAIS with increased coverage of HIV counselling and testing and improved the quality of HIV treatment for pregnant women and their babies. The mother to infant transmission rate was 3.5 per cent in 2012.

Through a strategic alliance with the central registry office and the local indigenous government, UNICEF supported the birth registration of 5,130 children and adolescents from 14 indigenous communities in Alto Wangki, an area of extremely difficult access.

In Bilwi, RAAN, UNICEF’s advocacy prototyping a new strategy in birth registration successfully mobilized a strong commitment and buy-in from the authorities and actors for coordinated joint-efforts towards universal birth registration.

To support the implementation of the national early childhood policy, UNICEF trained community educators and contributed to the increase in the preschool enrolment rate among 1,010 children between 3-5 years old. At the national level, the coverage of pre-school education is currently 60 per cent, an increase of 5.5 per cent compared to 2010 (Ministry of Education).

[1] Data are from the baseline survey and the final report (June 2013 by Granja C. et al).

- **On-track**

**IR 3120/AO/05/801/001** By 2017, pregnant women and newborns in 24 municipalities with lower wellbeing indices will have access to quality prenatal and neonatal care.

**Progress:**

Through the United Nations Joint Programme on infant food security and nutrition, community health leaders and families have learned about nutrition and health issues through the life cycle approach (pregnancy, births and infants/children). Health facilities were equipped with medical supplies to provide quality maternal and infant care.

As a result, 70 per cent of pregnant women are now attending antenatal care visits; of those women, 90 per cent (25,095) are receiving antenatal care based on the national quality standards; [1] and 88 per cent of women gave birth assisted by a qualified professional. Seventy per cent of newborn babies received neonatal care according to the MoH’s clinical protocols.

UNICEF supported four of the seven prioritized SILAIS to enhance their competency in monitoring to identify the most marginalized populations and attain equitable results in child survival. The trained personnel analysed the situation and identified bottlenecks that impede quality of and access to health services, such as: lack of human resources; high turnover of health personnel; and limited capacity to analyse the health situation and implement evidence-based planning.

UNICEF’s strategy for improved maternal and child health focused in 2013 on capacity development of 30 statisticians and health personnel in monitoring of health performance, statistical analysis and utilization of data in planning. The training also included the use of International Disease Classifications (ICD-10). The national health authorities observed during their monitoring visits that trained health personnel are now evaluating their compliance with the standard care by reviewing medical charts.

In 2014, UNICEF will conduct an in-depth analysis of causes for neonatal and maternal deaths with MoH, to feed into the national action
progress:

IR 3120/AO/05/801/002 By 2017, children (girls and boys) under 5 years of age will receive health promotion, and prevention and timely care for chronic malnutrition, taking into account their cultural patterns and customs.

Progress: UNICEF, with Ministry of Health (MoH), worked to increase the national capacity in nutrition monitoring of children under 5 years old. Community health leaders acquired skills and are equipped to improve the coverage and quality of the health and nutrition programme (PROCOSAN).[1]

In seven prioritized SILAIS, 54,618 children under 12 months (96 per cent) and 124,507 children ages 1-4 (57 per cent) attended the community-based growth monitoring program, with 90 per cent compliance rate with the international quality standards.[2] Seventy per cent of babies were breastfed within the first hour of birth; and 64 per cent of infant’s ages 6-24 months received adequate complementary feeding.[3]

Through the United Nations Joint Programme on infant food security and nutrition, 75 per cent of parents are attending the Growth and Monitoring Surveillance program with their children, compared to 44 per cent at the base line[4]

With UNICEF’s advocacy and technical support to the MoH, three out of seven hospitals in the prioritised SILAIS were evaluated and two[5] were recertified as a Baby Friendly Hospital. UNICEF and the MoH conducted a bottleneck analysis on exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding, which will be incorporated in the planning in 2014.

UNICEF organized a large communication campaign “Give breastmilk, give the best of you” throughout the month of August (see Advocacy section).

In 2014, UNICEF, with the Pan-American Health Organisation and the World Food Programme, will support the integration of the life-cycle approach in the national nutrition strategy.

IR 3120/AO/05/801/003 By 2017, pregnant women and girls and boys will have the universal access to the HIV prevention and care to reduce the mother to child transmission of HIV.

Progress:

In the prioritised SILAIS, the coverage of HIV testing during the first trimester increased from 36.7 per cent in 2012 to 53 per cent in 2013. This figure falls slightly short of the national coverage of 61 per cent (MoH, 2013), due to the hard-to-reach locations. Among 95 HIV positive women identified, 90 per cent received HIV treatment according to national clinical protocols.

Of 95 children born to the identified HIV positive women, 96 per cent received HIV prophylaxis treatment immediately after birth and 72 per cent were tested for HIV during the first month of birth (MoH, 2013). Only 34 per cent of them received their second HIV test.

With support from UNICEF and the MoH, 60 per cent of 150 health personnel from the seven SILAIS developed their knowledge and skills on the national protocol on HIV Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT). Forty laboratory technicians and 54 health personnel in two SILAIS (Jinotepe and Matagalpa) with the lowest HIV testing coverage strengthened their skills on HIV community-based counselling and testing services.

UNICEF trained 88 health personnel in seven SILAIS and jointly conducted a bottleneck analysis to improve PMTCT services, as a means to monitor the implementation of the National plan for elimination of HIV. The quality of the data was enhanced through improved data collection instruments, as well as the triangulation of data from different sources, including the MoH’s Center of Diagnosis and Reference and the Statistic Office, and the Office for Epidemiological Surveillance.

One hundred per cent of funding for antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) in Nicaragua comes from the Global Fund. UNICEF and PAHO are supporting the MoH in incorporating ARV supply forecasting in the health logistics system.

IR 3120/AO/05/801/004 By 2017, access and permanent attendance to quality preschool education are expanded among children 3-5 years old.

Progress: UNICEF strengthened technical capacities of 50 teachers and 100 community educators of pre-schools on planning, managing preschool curriculum and materials, and other topics related to early childhood development (ECD). They learned how to
prepare didactic materials to improve the education of pre-school children in 14 indigenous Mayangna and Miskita communities in the Alto Wangki Bocay Region.

In 2014, UNICEF will strengthen the technical capacity of teachers for community-based ECD centres, and SMS messages will be piloted to provide real time counselling and reference services to parents, connecting them with the existing community support systems.

There was no significant progress in increasing the limited resources for preschool education. However, toward the end of 2013, the Office submitted a proposal on ECD, prepared by Education and Health sections and seeking funding from UNICEF’s global thematic funds through the Regional Office.

UNICEF also provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Education in the prioritized municipalities in implementing the preschool programme funded by the Global Partnership for Education for the amount of US$16.7 million. UNICEF also is coordinating with UNESCO Paris Links Program for production and adaption of preschool materials in mayangna language in communities of Bonanza and Alto Wangki.

Constrained

IR 3120/A0/05/801/005 By 2017, municipal civil registry offices have strengthened their capacities for systematic registry and mobile registry services for rural population.

Progress: UNICEF led the birth registration component of the United Nations Joint Human Security Programme, which was implemented in 14 rural indigenous communities in Alto Wangki. In coordination with the Central Civil Registry Office and the local government, UNICEF supported the organization of mobile registration units to reach these hard-to-reach communities. In the rural municipalities of San José de Bocay, Wiwilí, Waspam and Bilwi, staff from the registry offices strengthened their technical skills in birth registration and obtained basic equipment to register more children. In Jinotega, the integration of the Civil Registry Office into the health system contributed to the efficiency in capturing birth statistics at community level.

UNICEF technically supported the documentation of the process of development of the new law on birth registration and presented the findings to the National Assembly, the highest authority to approve the law. The new law was reviewed with the objective of facilitating better birth registration services and increasing the demand.

UNICEF teamed up with the municipal government in Bilwi to implement a prototyping of an innovation in birth registration in Bilwi, with the aim of increasing families’ demand for birth registration. The prototyping tested a package of improved services in birth registration, including photography. The number of children registered during the 5-day event (102) quadrupled compared to the weekly average. Following the prototyping, UNICEF is now facilitating a joint planning process for birth registration with the municipal government, Plan International, line ministries and religious leaders in the region.

[1] Other services in the package include: providing more spacious waiting rooms/registration venues with air conditioning and extra seats; increased human resources to attend clients; same-day issue of the birth certificate on site; and providing information on the process of birth registration (and counselling by the registry office or UNICEF if necessary).

PC 2 - Quality inclusive education

On-track

PCR 3120/A0/05/802 By 2017, girls, boys and adolescents of rural and ethnic communities with lower poverty index have access to quality basic education with focus on life skills, taking into consideration their socio-cultural contexts.

Progress: UNICEF, along with five United Nations agencies, the indigenous Government and the Ministry of Education (MINED), implemented a programme for Human security in Alto Wangki, an area with extremely difficult access. UNICEF supported the improved quality of primary and secondary education through the capacity development of school teachers on bilingual and intercultural education.

UNICEF Nicaragua joined the alliance with Central America Coordination for Education and Culture- Central America Integral System (CECC-SICA) through the regional programme "Everyone can learn" for improved primary school completion. Authorities and teachers from the two autonomous regions on the Caribbean Coast developed the new skills on pedagogy and analysis of barriers to school completion.

UNICEF, with support from UNILEVER, worked with 26 schools in three municipalities (6 in Mosonte, 14 in Bilwi and 6 in Bluefields) in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Access to sanitation in the schools increased from 48.3 per cent to 69 per cent in the town of Mosonte, from 55 per cent to 61.4 per cent in Bilwi, and from 38 per cent to 41.6 per cent in Bluefields; and 3,209 (55 per cent) students have improved their knowledge and practices in WASH.

A total of 34 most marginalized adolescent girls and boys in RAAN developed skills in carpentry and competencies such as inter-personal communication.

UNICEF supported the regional governments in RAAN and RAAS in analysing the data from an inventory on WASH conducted with 524 out of 1,229 schools on the Caribbean Coast. For the first time in Nicaragua, disaggregated data on WASH in schools became available at the municipality level. The education authorities in RAAS are now requesting that UNICEF support a follow up study to better understand the underlying causes of the disparities found in the study.
After significant delays in procurement, UNICEF provided 521 android tablets to MINED with the aim of developing a real time monitoring system. The challenge is not to lose the momentum created by UNICEF’s advocacy to strengthen the monitoring system, while tapping into the alliance with World Bank and other partners to support MINED in this area.

[1] Indicators were: cleaning and use of sanitation facilities, management of trash and residual water in schools, treatment of water, hand washing and personal hygiene
[2] Qualitative survey conducted by implementing partners through focus group discussions with teachers, students and directors and key informants (leaders and authorities).

Constrained

IR 3120/AO/05/802/001 By 2017, girls, boys and adolescents in greater exclusion, mainly indigenous and afro descendent populations, will be enrolled in schools in a timely manner.

Progress: UNICEF worked with the territorial government in Alto Wangki in 14 rural indigenous communities [1] in which 77 per cent of teachers are not formally trained. A total of 138 teachers in those communities obtained skills to integrate intercultural and bilingual education, and key cross-cutting themes [2] in the curriculum.

UNICEF trained 74 teachers [3] in Managua on disaster risk reduction and climate change. Those trained teachers are integrating Emergency into the curriculum, and training student brigades on emergency preparation. Each of the schools developed a School Safety Plan and is implementing emergency simulations.

UNICEF also supported a training of 10 trainers (three males and seven females) in Education in Emergencies in Managua and Panama, in collaboration with European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and Disaster Preparedness-ECHO (DIPECHO) [4]. With MINED, partners replicated the training with 60 authorities and teachers from indigenous and afro descendent communities on the Caribbean Coast that are highly vulnerable to natural disasters.

With support from UNICEF and MINED, 142 professors from eight teacher colleges reinforced their skills in teaching the primary education curriculum, which for the first time incorporates key cross-cutting themes [5]. They taught the new curriculum to 2,043 education students, and of those, 650 graduated at the end of 2013. The newly trained professors are also transferring their skills to 3,306 empirical teachers who are pursuing teaching diplomas through intensive courses.

UNICEF is advocating with MINED for inclusion of primary teachers from Alto Wangki in the teaching diploma course, which is currently only available in Managua. UNICEF is also talking to the Institute of Technology about organizing vocational training courses with out-of-school adolescents to develop their skills and expand opportunities.

[2] Environmental health, sexuality, gender, citizenship, etc.
[4] Disaster preparedness ECHO program, a partnership between UNICEF and Plan International

Constrained

IR 3120/AO/05/802/002 By 2017, girls, boys and adolescents in greater exclusion in prioritized municipalities will complete primary education and successfully transition to the secondary education.

Progress: Through the sub-regional program “Everyone can learn,” five education experts from RAAN and RAAS participated in trimestral training sessions on teaching methodologies in language and mathematics in El Salvador. The UNICEF Education Officer was among the participants and together with other participants, subsequently trained total 68 directors and teachers from primary schools in the Caribbean Coastal regions.

During the training session in RAAN, UNICEF integrated a module on the monitoring of results for equity system (MoRES) in collaboration with an Argentinian non-government organisation (NGO), a centre for excellence for MoRES. Local directors and teachers learned how to analyse barriers impeding completion of primary education. They will finalize this analysis in 2014 and incorporate findings into their strategies to support completion of school. AEPT also proposed a set of indicators for monitoring progress of implementation at the local level.

Under the United Nations Joint Programme for Human Security in Alto Wangki, UNICEF and MINED implemented a training session on life skills education with 73 secondary school teachers from Mayangna and Miskito communities. More than 76 per cent of those teachers had not received any formal training. The secondary-level teachers requested that UNICEF advocate with MINED to create a sub-campus in their region or a long-distance option for the diploma course in Education Science. UNICEF will continue its advocacy effort with MINED at the national level toward that goal.

In the same 14 Mayangna and Miskito communities, 226 young leaders from secondary schools developed knowledge and competencies on life skills and are now implementing peer-to-peer counselling sessions through existing youth networks. In 2014, UNICEF, in collaboration with other UN agencies, plans to organize Innovation Laboratories for the young leaders to develop innovative solutions to challenges in their communities. Selected innovation proposals will be funded with seed funds for prototyping.
IR 3120/A0/05/802/003  By 2017, the education sector of 24 prioritized municipalities has the capacity to implement initiatives aiming at increasing sustainable access to water and sanitation in primary and secondary school with special emphasis in adaptation to climate change.

**Progress:** A total of 6,189 children (51 percent-girls) now have improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in 26 schools in three municipalities. Newly built or rehabilitated sanitation facilities meet the national standard (gender-segregated, with maximum ratio of 30 students per toilet), and are environmentally sustainable, considering the effects of climate change. In communities in which disabled children are living, UNICEF supported the construction of accessible latrines and hand washing stations (14 out of 26 schools).

In those schools, 78 parents and 130 students were trained on the operation and maintenance of WASH infrastructure; 20 of the 26 schools have subsequently developed a maintenance plan.

UNICEF provided tools and capacity development on adaptation to climate change to 308 teachers and 22 technicians from the Ministry of Education in two regions on the Caribbean Coast. Those teachers are now integrating climate change in the classrooms, by jointly conducting climate change risk analysis and facilitating the implementation of risk mitigation measures led by student brigades.

Through a vocational training course[1] organized by UNICEF and NGO WaterAid, 34 adolescents (20 males and 14 females) living in social exclusion[2] in Puerto Cabezas/RAAN have developed skills in masonry and plumbing, entrepreneurship, communication and psychosocial support. The adolescents expressed positive changes regarding motivation in their life and a desire to continue their study or learn other skills. The training also helped adolescents improve dialogue with their families and better understand gender equality (See Gender Section).[3]

[1] The training lasted for 42 days (8 hours per day) and included both theory and practice.

[2] Defined as adolescents who are living in extreme poverty, are outside of formal education, are dealing with adolescent pregnancy, have a lack of parental support, and are exposed to risk behaviours such as drug use or domestic violence.


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**PC 3 - Protection and participation environments for development**

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PCR 3120/A0/05/803  By 2017, girls, boys and adolescents will obtain access to the quality comprehensive protection system coordinated by the state’s institutions, and to the strengthened prevention of different forms of violence and responses to violence victims with human rights based approach.

**Progress:** In 2013, UNICEF worked with partners to strengthen the mechanism for prevention and response to commercial sexual exploitation and armed violence at the national level and in 6 targeted municipalities[1] of high incidence of crimes and violence. The key strategy used was improving the inter-institutional coordination mechanism between the key actors involved in the child protection system, to facilitate the comprehensive attention and responses to the children and adolescents affected by trafficking and violence.

UNICEF worked closely with the National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking as the main coordination mechanism for the prevention, detection and response to sexual exploitation and trafficking. Progress was made in updating the National Strategic Plan for the fight against child and adolescent trafficking (2014-2018) and its indicators for monitoring. Based on the updated national plan, UNICEF supported the development of the Departmental Plans of Bilwi and Somoto for prevention of, and response to child and adolescent trafficking, through which the department coalition members prioritised interventions and redefined responsibilities and monitoring mechanisms.

Through UNICEF’s training on monitoring, partners in the municipalities of Bilwi and Somoto built their capacity on setting up a real time monitoring system of the institutional responses to commercial and sexual exploitation.

Through those strategies and interventions, UNICEF contributed to the following outcome level results:

- 977 male adolescents involved in gang groups and other delinquencies were identified and went through the pacification process with support from the National police and UNICEF. They handed over arms to authorities and made commitments to families and communities to abandon violent attitudes.
- The national police identified and prosecuted 28 cases of trafficking and commercial and sexual exploitation involving female adolescents in coordination with Public Ministry and Judicial Branch. Of those, 15 ended up with guilty verdicts, and approximately 15 victims were rescued through this process.

One of the barriers for creating institutional memory is the high turn-over of staff, which undermines the sustainable improvement of staff capacities to some extent and highlights the need for continuous training. Lack of better information flow between organizations and institutions negatively affects the quality of data on exploitation and violence. In 2014 UNICEF plans to continue its support for updating the analysis of the situation of child exploitation and trafficking, strengthening the community-based monitoring systems, and introducing new tools for data collection, such as the Injury surveillance system.

[1] Bilwi, Bluefields, Somoto, Ocotal, Matagalpa and Jinotega
Constrained

**IR 3120/AO/05/803/001** By 2017, girls/boys and adolescent victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking will receive comprehensive and quality attention with human right based approach from the state's institutions of critical path.

**Progress:** UNICEF initiated the process of Monitoring of Result for Equity System (MoRES) in prevention of commercial and sexual exploitation and human trafficking in Bilwi and Somoto, two high risk municipalities due to their geographic locations. A total of 319 officials from the National Police (PN) and Ministry of the Family, Adolescents and Children (MIFAN), school counsellors and Ministry of Governance acquired the knowledge and competencies on MoRES as a means to provide more efficient evidence-based prevention, detection and response to exploitation and trafficking. UNICEF worked with those partners to jointly analyse barriers and bottlenecks to preventing these problems, which were later incorporated in the partners' preventive actions and responses.

In both municipalities, 483 teachers, students, taxi drivers, community leaders, and non-governmental organization workers strengthened their knowledge on the prevention of trafficking and exploitation of children and adolescents. Theatre and drama techniques were integrated as a tool for 55 adolescents and youth to express the problems of exploitation and trafficking, and transmit messages to prevent those problems. During the theatre workshop, they also strengthened their self-esteem, self-evaluation and self-confidence in terms of protecting themselves from trafficking, domestic violence, sexual abuse.

Sixty member organizations of the National Anti-Trafficking Coalition and 40 members from the two departmental roundtables strengthened the inter-institutional mechanism with the aim of improving the coordination among the institutions to provide a better response to solve the complex cases of exploitation and trafficking.

The PN's Commissions for Women and Children mapped and visited night spots (bar and restaurants) exposed to drugs, trafficking and exploitation, which has led to identification and transfer of adolescents to safe places or shelters. Based on the mapping and monitoring visits, they developed intervention plans for each of the six high risk municipalities (Bilwi, Bluefields, Somoto, Ocotal, Matagalpa and Jinotega).

Constrained

**IR 3120/AO/05/803/002** By 2017, girls, boys and adolescents in the situations of physical psychological violence will receive comprehensive responses to restitute their vulnerable rights.

**Progress:** UNICEF’s work in prevention and response to armed violence [1] involved the National Police (PN), Public Ministry (MP), Juvenile Penal Courts, Ministry of Family (MIFAN) and Ministry of Education and six targeted municipalities: Bilwi, Bluefields, Somoto, Ocotal, Matagalpa and Jinotega.

**UNICEF Strengthened the protective environment to prevent armed violence.** The Judicial Branch organized 27 meetings with 850 justice operators, judicial facilitators, members of the media and 79 adolescents to promote the illegality and consequences of carrying arms. They also agreed on the roles and responsibilities to prevent it. In the training sessions organized by MIFAN and UNICEF in the communities, 300 solidarity promoters strengthened their knowledge on prevention of armed violence and creating protective environments for adolescents and their families.

Through the six community intervention plans developed by the PN's Juvenile Affairs Directorate, 977 adolescents (all males)[2] who were involved in armed violence were identified and participated in a workshop on peaceful conflict resolution, self-esteem and the Law on arms and the human rights.

The coordination between MIFAN and the Nicaraguan Sports Institute (IND) was the key for organizing large scale sport and recreation activities in safe environments. Through sports and recreational activities 1,638 youth developed skills for resilience and vocational skills.

By monitoring the individual electronic files of 238 adolescent offenders who have used firearms, the MP and PN coordinated judicial responses to those cases, respecting adolescent rights. The computer equipment and office materials provided by UNICEF contributed to the improved performance of the staff working in those institutions.

[1] caused by industrial or artisanal firearms
[2] Of 977 adolescents, 86 per cent had belonged to juvenile gangs and 14 per cent had been punished with non-custodial measures

On-track

**PCR 3120/AO/05/804** By 2017, adolescents who are most vulnerable to social exclusion, especially women gain spaces, opportunities and capacity to participate in their development.

**Progress:** UNICEF supported the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) to integrate a Human Centred Design approach to policy making. This approach allowed policy-makers to put themselves in the place of children and adolescents and imagine the best scenario for them based on the current situation and local context. Based on the data collected through the community consultations and co-creation process, the Government drafted a Policy that will be presented to the Regional Parliament in January 2014 for approval. The draft policy consists of five focus areas and more than 33 innovative interventions contributing to the fulfilment of child rights, reflected through archetypes representative of people of the region.

A new **Sociopreneur Initiative** with the private sector provided tools to local youth and created spaces through which they identified 27 social business opportunities for promoting child rights. This innovative initiative replaces the traditional top-down model of social corporate responsibility with interventions co-created through collaborative solutions with the local population.
Following the approval of a new tax law in December 2012, in a tri-donor, sector-wide approach, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Swiss International Cooperative Agency, UNICEF, and the Ministry of Finance conducted three tax expenditure studies. The study results contributed to the approval of new tax regulations, instrumental in closing loopholes. The studies also reviewed regressive tax incentives and identified tax evasion, which has led to an increase in tax revenues by 11 per cent from January to September compared to the same period in 2012, reaching 9.4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product. This additional fiscal space contributed to increases of 16 per cent in social spending and 19 per cent in poverty spending.

UNICEF, together with the member organizations of the Global Movement for Children (MMI), implemented a series of consultations with adolescent girls and boys on the post-2015 agenda. Adolescents presented recommendations for the new development goals for 2030 to UNICEF, together with the member organizations of the Global Movement for Children (MMI), implemented a series of consultations with adolescent girls and boys on the post-2015 agenda. Adolescents presented recommendations for the new development goals for 2030 to

**Progress:** The local and national post-2015 consultation with adolescent girls and boys: UNICEF, together with eight NGOs under the coalition of the "Global Movement for Children,"[1] organized 48 municipal consultations and a national forum with 250 girls and boys between the ages of 12 and 18 on the post-2015 agenda. UNICEF was in charge of organizing one of the consultation sessions in Bluefields with 30 adolescents (18 females and 12 males) and also contributed to the national consultation with 48 adolescents, providing methodology and funding for the participation of two adolescents (one girl and one boy) from Bluefields.

**Increased awareness on HIV prevention in two autonomous regions on the Caribbean Coast:** UNICEF supported the capacity development of 400 student leaders (51 per cent females, 49 per cent males) between 12-18 years old on HIV prevention, as well as on the methodology to conduct peer counselling. The student leaders went on to lead peer-to-peer education sessions with at least 800 additional adolescents, including those who are out of school.

UNICEF's technical contributions to the capacity development included: incorporation of recreation-based participative methods (e.g. role play, singing, drawing and dancing), providing the Quick guide for counselling on HIV and STIs[2] as a tool, and the development of monitoring tools for peer-to-peer counselling. Funds from the UNICEF Brazil Office supported this initiative through horizontal cooperation (see Section on South-to-south cooperation).

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Health (MoH) to collect 4,000 HIV surveillance in 84 epidemiological sentinel sites in 17 SILAIS (health zones) to build the database on HIV. UNICEF’s advocacy with MoH made it possible for the first time to include indicators in the survey related to adolescent HIV prevalence and teenage pregnancy and alcohol consumption. Adolescent girls and boys supported this survey by sensitizing their peers on the importance of the survey and encouraging them to go to the local health centres to receive HIV counselling and testing.

[1] Movimiento Mundial por la Infancia (MMI) involves 8 NGOs and UNICEF working on child and adolescent rights.

[2] Sexually transmitted infections

**On-track**

**IR 3120/AO/05/804/002 By 2017, adolescents in greater exclusion in 24 targeted municipalities will have institutionalized and established spaces, mechanisms and capacities for their effective participation in enjoying their full rights.**

**Progress:** With UNICEF’s support, a multi-sectoral group of 26 staff from the regional Government and Council learned the application of ethnography, journalism, service trials and systems, leading to the development of the Regional Policy for Children in the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN). The group, together with UNICEF, conducted 64 individual interviews, 132 direct and 143 indirect observations, and 32 focus groups through which 285 people, including 85 community leaders, were consulted on the problems, priorities and solutions. A total of 32 girls and boys also participated in the process by taking pictures of things that they liked or did not like in their communities.

Following the consultations, targeted interventions or solutions to the problems were identified through a co-creation process with six NGOs and 100 communal, territorial, municipal and regional governments, which provided inputs into the draft Regional policy for children. The draft policy incorporates low-cost and context-specific interventions to solve problems of the children and families.

UNICEF supported the population in the municipality of Tola with a mapping of the social fabric and problem analysis as the first phase of the Socionpreneur Initiative. The exercise consisted of 244 qualitative interviews with the local population in 22 communities (52 per cent men and 48 per cent women), of whom 30 per cent were youth. UNICEF identified 32 local social entrepreneurs and, with them, mapped the local business opportunities for solving problems related to child rights, also seeking the intersection between child rights and tourism.

With UNICEF's advocacy, the Ministry of Finance conducted three tax expenditures studies. The results contributed to the approval of tax regulations which were instrumental in identifying and closing loopholes in the practices of taxpayers. UNICEF funded the participation of a Government staff member in a multi-dimensional poverty course, who then played a key role in developing the Medium Term Expenditure Framework 2014-17.
PC 6 - Cross-Sectoral costs

On-track

PCR 3120/A0/05/800 Effective and efficient programme management and Operations support

Progress: As of the end of December 2013, the financial implementation rate reached 99.6 per cent of US$4.11 million (Regular Resources (RR): 99.7 per cent; Other Resources (OR): 99.6 per cent; and Institutional budget 98.7 per cent). About 65 per cent of the annual OR ceiling was reached, with a funding gap of US$2 million (see Donor Relations section). A total of five grants expired this year, all of which were spent down to more than 95 per cent by the deadline.

In August, the International Operations Manager post became vacant due to the relocation of the previous manager. To cover this vacant position, the Office appointed a GS-6 Budget Assistant as the interim Chief of Operations. This transition required an adjustment to the existing Table of Authorities to share tasks among the Operations team. This was also a good exercise for the Office to begin learning how to manage the transition into the regional hub next year.

As a result of a strategic shift in the programme, there has been a significant decrease in the volume and amount spent for supply procurement this year. Between 2012 and 2013, the number of purchase orders (POs) raised by the office decreased by 20 per cent (from 157 to 126). The supply component budget decreased by 41 per cent compared to 2012 (from US$824,000 to US$484,000).

More staff are using the VISION Results Assessment Modules (RAM) and Dashboard to monitor their performance against milestones and the targets of the country programme.

As one of the new initiatives, the CMT created two non-statutory, ad hoc task forces to handle the transition into the regional operation hub and better plan and implement spot checks as the key action mandated by the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT).

The Office updated the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) through a participatory workshop and integrated the modifications in the Country Programme Management Plan (CPMP) 2013-2017 (see the section on Strategic risk management).

The work in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in 2013 focused on providing remote technical support using TeamViewer, [1] to UNICEF Nicaragua staff, including those based in the new sub-office in Bilwi.

The priority and challenge in Human Resources (HR) was to provide tailored administrative and psycho-social support to staff members in posts that were/will be abolished due to the gradual downsizing of the Operation section. The Office organized a workshop on the work environment, which was facilitated by a PhD-level psychologist recommended by the Regional Office.

The HR section assisted Management with the preparation of a new office structure proposal, which was submitted to the Programme budget review (PBR) this year.

The Office embarked on the simplification of selected administrative processes such as the introduction of the Long Term Agreement (LTA) system for transportation and supply storage services. The LTA allows the Office to keep an open contract without cost, which can be activated upon the identification of needs for specific services.

[1] TeamViewer is software for remote IT support.

On-track

IR 3120/A0/05/800/001 This IR will cover governance structures and systems that are necessary to adequately manage risks and achieve programme results. These governance structures and systems will be described in detail in the Annual Management Plan, Activities and associated costs corresponding to the Biennial Support Budget functions at country level covered under Functions 2, 4, 8 and 11, including the salaries and related non-staff costs of Representative, Deputy Representative, Chief of Operations, Information/Communications staff, Information Technology, business continuity and risk management, will be included under this result.

The UNICEF Nicaragua website was officially launched on July 1st, 2013. During the six months following the launch, the website recorded an average 1,770 visits per month; 72 per cent of traffic came from Nicaragua. Every month, the number of visits from the outside of the country has increased, and 32 per cent of visitors returned to the site. About a half of the visitors reached the site through an internet search, while 13 per cent reached it by directly typing the URL address in their browser.

For two years, UNICEF Nicaragua has kept an active presence on social media. This was strengthened significantly in 2013 through strategic planning of information dissemination linked to program priorities and the external communication plan. In 2013, 70 thematic campaigns were launched on social media; 70 per cent were produced locally by UNICEF Nicaragua and the rest used the communication materials developed by LACRO and Headquarters.

The Office targeted reaching 7,000 people by social media by the end of 2013, and had surpassed that goal by November. UNICEF Nicaragua ranks at the first place in the number of followers on social media (Facebook, Youtube and Twitter) among all UN agencies, NGOs and institutions working in child rights in Nicaragua.
On-track

**IR 3120/A0/05/800/002** This IR will cover management of financial and other assets of the organization, including activities and costs associated with office administration, corresponding to the Biennial Support Budget functions at country level covered under Functions 10 and 12, including the salaries and related non-staff costs of Administration and Finance, rent, office furniture and equipment, office security, maintenance and vehicles.

**Progress:** As of the end of December 2013, the financial implementation rate reached 99.6 per cent of US$4.11 million. A total of five grants expired this year, all of which were spent down to more than 95 per cent by the deadline.

Direct Cash Transfers (DCTs) outstanding for more than nine months currently represent 33.1 per cent of the Office's total expenditure. All of these cases were due to the technical problems in VISION, for which the Office filed service calls with LACRO and Headquarters to follow up on possible solutions. Resolution of the service calls has been delayed.

DCTs outstanding between six and nine months account for 9 per cent of the total Office expenditure as of mid-2013, and decreased to 6.7 per cent by the end of the year. The improvement is partly due strengthened monitoring of DCTs through systematic weekly monitoring during coordination meetings, in addition to the monthly Country Management Team (CMT) meetings.

In August, the International Operations Manager post became vacant due to the relocation of the previous manager. To cover this vacant position, the Office appointed a GS-6 Budget Assistant as the interim Chief of Operations. This transition required an adjustment to the existing Table of Authorities to share tasks among the Operations team. That was also a good exercise as the Office learns how to manage the transition into the regional hub next year.

The Office’s performance related to bank reconciliations has been excellent, with timely submission of monthly financial reports to Headquarters and processing of financial transactions compliant with norms and deadlines.

With respect to the implementation of HACT, a group of programme assistants teamed up with two operations staff to plan and implement spot check visits to all partners. The group had three meetings in 2013 at which colleagues reviewed the results from spot-checks, shared lessons learned, and identified common mistakes in partners’ financial management. The Office obtained a wealth of information through those spot-checks that will be integrated in the Office’s capacity development plan with partners in 2014, using the manual of operations which the Office finalized and printed in 2013.

As a result of a strategic shift in the programme, there has been a significant decrease in the volume and amount spent for supply procurement this year. Between 2012 and 2013, the number of purchase orders (POs) raised by the Office decreased by 20 per cent (from 157 to 126). The supply component budget decreased by 41 per cent compared to 2012 (from US$824,000 to US$484,000).

Along with the reduction in supply procurement, the Office closed its warehouse in 2013. This has ensured direct delivery from the suppliers to the implementing partners without incurring additional commitments of time and management in the warehouse.

Despite significantly decreasing the volume of supply procurement, local partners continued to request UNICEF assistance in supply procurement. In 2013, UNICEF assisted partners with nine local procurement services totalling US$28,640.

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[1] UNICEF’s global e-financial management system

[2] Travel, supplies, PCA (programme cooperation agreement), Donor reports, DCT, contracts/consultancies and cash flow forecast

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On-track

**IR 3120/A0/05/800/003** This IR will cover Human Resource management, including staff development and learning, staff well-being and staff-related security costs. Activities and associated costs corresponding to Biennial Support Budget functions 13 and 16 will be covered here.

**Progress:** The priority and challenge in Human Resources (HR) was to provide tailored administrative and psycho-social support to staff members in posts that were/will be abolished due to the gradual downsizing of the Operation section. The Office organized a workshop on the work environment that was facilitated by a PhD-level psychologist recommended by the Regional Office. The workshop focused on self-assessment, coping mechanisms and various techniques for stress relief and management. The staff highly appreciated this workshop and the psychologist is now working closely with LACRO to support the region with the HR transition.

The HR section assisted Management with the preparation of a new Office structure proposal, which was submitted to the Programme budget review (PBR) this year. The proposals were prepared in anticipation of the Office’s joining the regional operation hub, as well as to ensure efficiency of the Office’s core programme functions, incurring minimal operations costs.

Coordinated by the focal point for UN Cares, The Office continued implementation of the 10 minimum standards on HIV in the workplace. The Office updated the database of specialist doctors in HIV care and treatment, planned and purchased male condoms placed in bathrooms and provided staff counselling on HIV prevention and welfare, with special attention to confidentiality.

The staff capacity development plan focused on Safety and Security, Monitoring and Evaluation, and HIV in the Workplace. Out of the 30 capacity development activities approved by the Office’s training committee, 70 per cent were completed and 13 per cent are ongoing. Staff working in M&E and communication transferred their knowledge by organizing a series of internal training sessions with staff on those topics.

Two national officers (M&E and ECD) were selected to undertake a three-month staff exchange in LACRO. That was a great opportunity.
for them to strengthen their knowledge of regional perspectives. Following the assignment, one of the national officers was selected for and took up an international post in ECD in LACRO in December 2013.

With respect to the performance assessment system (PAS), 71 per cent of staff completed planning for 2013 prior to the April 15 deadline, and 98 percent completed it by May 2013. All staff completed the mid-year performance review by August 2013.

In 2013, the Office undertook three recruitment processes. Recruitment of the Child Protection officer was not completed until five months after the initial advertisement due to problems in the selection process. Recruitment of a P3 Temporary Operations Manager will be completed in early 2014. The Office launched recruitment for the General Service (GS) HR assistant, although the process was temporarily suspended per instructions from HQ. The Office hired a retired HR officer to fill the gap, but will resume the recruitment process in early 2014.

Progress: External Communication
The UNICEF Nicaragua website was officially launched on July 1st, 2013. During the six months following the launch, the website recorded an average 1,770 visits per month; 72 per cent of traffic came from Nicaragua. Every month, the number of visits from the outside of the country has increased, and 32 per cent of visitors returned to the site. About a half of the visitors reached the site through an internet search, while 13 per cent reached it by directly typing the URL address in their browser.

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The Office targeted reaching 7,000 people by social media by the end of 2013, and had surpassed that goal by November. UNICEF Nicaragua ranks at the first place in the number of followers on social media (Facebook, Youtube and Twitter) among all UN agencies, NGOs and institutions working in child rights in Nicaragua.
Effective Governance Structure

The Office has 14 management mechanisms (committees and task forces) that include representation by staff across all categories. Those structures address different areas of governance of the Office as mandated by UNICEF’s regulations, norms and standards regarding establishing definition of roles and responsibilities in the Office, and planning and carrying out a work plan based on the Annual Management Plan (AMP). Through those mechanisms, programmatic and management performance indicators are reviewed on a monthly basis.

The Country Management Team (CMT) remains the central statutory committee for decision making to facilitate and monitor the strategic management and implementation of the AMP. A set of programme management performance indicators is monitored by the CMT in each monthly meeting. Action items established in the previous meeting are monitored in the following meeting.

More staff are using the VISION Results Assessment Modules (RAM) and Dashboard to monitor their performance against milestones and the targets of the country programme compared to 2012. All sectors completed the mid-year analytical statements and data for indicators for each intermediate result in the VISION RAM by the deadline.

The CMT created two non-statutory, ad hoc task forces to handle the transition into the regional operation hub and better plan and implement spot checks as the key action mandated by the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT). The new task force on migration to the regional hub arose from the urgent need to redistribute functions of the first two eliminated positions and cover the vacant operations manager position. That task force also is preparing the Office for a change management process given its upcoming integration into the regional operation hub in 2014. The task force for spot checks was formed with the objective of monitoring the efficiency of planning and implementation of spot checks. Programme assistants and operation staff worked together to plan, implement and share experiences and lessons learned throughout the year.

The Office updated the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) through a participatory workshop and integrated the modifications in the Country Programme Management Plan (CPMP) 2013-2017 (see Strategic risk management section). The UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) organized a workshop for all UNICEF staff in Managua in which the security risk mapping was conducted and mitigating actions were identified. The Bilwi sub-office also completed the security risk assessment, accompanied by an action plan. The security risk assessment for Bluefields, where UNICEF will establish a new office in 2014, is ongoing.

UNICEF actively participated in the United Nations Emergency Team (UNETE), which is under the United Nations Country Management Team. Each programme sector developed an emergency preparedness and early warning plan based on the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs). Adaptation to climate change and disaster risk reaction were integrated in the programmatic work of education, water, sanitation and hygiene and protection as the cross cutting theme.

The Office was not selected for an audit in 2013.

Strategic Risk Management

Given the pressing need to update the country context analysis in a shifting aid environment, the Office organized a two-day workshop to update the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) strategy and the country programme management plan (CPMP). Following that workshop, staff members were divided into multi-sectoral groups to develop action plans for each ERM area, with clear responsibilities and deadlines assigned to each task.

Using the outcomes of the internal strategic reflection workshop held in November 2013, the multi-sectoral groups further reviewed and updated the ERM. The latest action plan was approved by the Country Management Team (CMT) in December 2013. For 2014, an annual work plan to implement those ERM action plans will be developed and selected indicators will be integrated into the CPMP, to be followed up by the CMT.
In coordination with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), the Office hosted training sessions on emergency simulation and risk management for staff members and their families. Such training was particularly relevant to the two United Nations volunteer staff working in the sub-office in Bilwi, who arrived in Nicaragua this year, because that office is located in the area of the country most vulnerable to natural disaster and insecurity.

The Office updated the business continuity plan (BCP), which was validated by the CMT. The BCP group carried out two simulations of the plan in 2013. Those exercises allowed the security focal point to analyse strengths and weaknesses in implementation of the BCP and improve the plan.

In coordination with UNDSS, UNICEF colleagues participated in two inter-agency radio checks in 2013. UNICEF’s response rate for the first exercise was 72 per cent, but it increased to 94 per cent in the second round, following an internal refresher training and radio use practice, facilitated by the security focal point and the operations manager.

**Evaluation**

The Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) was approved by the Country Management Team (CMT) at the beginning of the year and monitored twice a year by the CMT. Because of the limited financial resources, the country decided to focus on the studies that support the equity agenda. Specifically, the Office updated the Situation Analysis using the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis [1] with the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2011/12 data to better understand the patterns of exclusion and the determinants of child poverty. The Office also conducted a baseline survey for its new country programme 2013-2017 through collaboration with the Community Information and Epidemiological Technologies (CIET), an international centre for excellence in community intervention surveys and studies.

The Office continued its efforts in strengthening the internal capacity of UNICEF and main partners on implementation of the Monitoring results for equity system (MoRES). [2] In October, the Office hosted two external consultants contracted by the Evaluation Office in UNICEF New York who developed recommendations and a country-specific case study as a part of the global evaluation on MoRES.

The M&E section trained UNICEF staff in health, education and protection sectors and provided technical support to adapt MoRES to each programme and to facilitate implementation of key components of MoRES with national counterparts. The M&E section also conducted specific trainings on Result-based management, data collection and analysis methodologies.

The M&E section, together with Health and Child Protection sections, trained staff from Ministry of Health and National Police on the results based monitoring and MoRES. UNICEF also supported the analysis of the existing M&E systems of the National Police as a part of the MoRES rollout. The Ministry of Health is now implementing results-based monitoring and planning processes both at national and local levels, using the scorecards to track progress of the interventions linked to A Promise Renewed.

The Country Office finalized the document on the roles and responsibilities of the Monitoring and Evaluation section, in order to ensure an adequate level of independence in that function. This clarified the roles and responsibilities of different positions such as Representative, Deputy Representative, M&E staff and Programme staff regarding the M&E function.

The M&E specialist developed the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for research describing the procedures for the planning, implementation, and dissemination of research, studies, and surveys. The document sets out the mechanisms and instruments of quality assurance, as well as the responsibilities of the staff, M&E staff and CMT in the process. The document was shared with the Office of Research in Innocenti and incorporated in to their guidelines for the quality assurance of research, which was being finalized.

[2] A monitoring approach which intends to accelerate progress in reaching the most deprived children in
support to UNICEF’s Equity agenda, the corporate priority.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

In 2013, the work in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) focused on providing remote technical support using TeamViewer, [1] to UNICEF Nicaragua staff, including those based in the new sub-office in Bilwi. In February 2013, UNICEF moved the Bilwi sub-office, previously housed in the United Nations office, to a new location. To provide optimal internet connection for that office, located on the Caribbean Coast, the ICT section supported the installation of optical fibre internet with a bandwidth of 4 megabites per second.

The ICT section also provided other requisite IT equipment (e.g., a power generator) and a network to guarantee permanent access to VISION and the Lotus Notes email system. Implementation of a remote support system reduced time and costs incurred through travel of the IT officer to Bilwi, and facilitated timely support for staff. Integration of Bilwi office staff in weekly meetings in Managua was made possible using Skype, contributing to improved communication and coordination between Managua and Bilwi offices.

As a part of the United Nations inter-agency telecommunication group, the ICT section also supported an improved radio communication system. This was accomplished through an agreement with other United Nations agencies for installing and sharing common repeaters and radio frequencies, approved by the United Nations Security Management Team in July 2013. Following that agreement, the ICT section programmed the new frequencies in all handheld radio sets and radio bases in the Office and in vehicles. The new modality of United Nations inter-agency collaboration in telecommunication will result in better coverage and access to communication in case of emergency or natural disasters.

According to instructions from Headquarters, the Office piloted the VEEN application[2] for a virtual backup server system to minimize the cost and time for individual backup, which used to take 4-6 hours of ICT officer time every day. Another pilot project was the installation of SYNCTOYS [3] in selected users’ computers to facilitate automatic weekly backups of the “My Documents” folder, which will be saved in the Office’s external hard drive via Local Area Network (LAN).

In connection with the plan to establish a new office premises in Bluefields in 2014, the ICT officer made a visit to assess the existing ICT infrastructure and the security situation of the potential office location. Based on the results of this initial assessment, the Office is currently updating the Security Risk Assessment and mitigation plans for Bluefields.

[1] TeamViewer is software for remote IT support.
[2] VEEN is software for ensuring backups in a virtual server environment.
[3] SYNCTOYS is a Microsoft tool to synchronize files or folders (used to make personal backups).

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

The office-wide resource mobilization task force continued to take an active leadership role in the Office’s advocacy and fundraising efforts. The task force held a total of eight meetings and systematically reported to the CMT monthly meeting about its activities.

The Office submitted 24 new proposals to internal and external donors in 2013 and of those, nine proposals were funded. Together with the three proposals submitted in 2012 which were funded in 2013, the Office mobilized approximately US$1.5 million of other resources (OR). This corresponds to 65 per cent of the OR annual ceiling of the country programme, representing a funding gap of US$2.1 million.

In 2013, five grants expired and spent down more than 95 per cent of their funding prior to the grant expiry date. No extensions were requested of donors. The Office submitted four out of five donor reports due in 2013 prior to the deadline, a significant improvement over 2012 performance.

The large Dutch grant (US$28 million for 2008-2013) expired mid-year, and the Office implemented a
rigorous reporting process facilitated by an external consultant. Two narrative reports were submitted to the Dutch Government/embassy for which the Office received positive feedback suggesting a publication of the reports. The process provided the Office with valuables lessons learned and a checklist for quality assurance of donor reports.

Although Nicaragua is not a certified Toolkits country, the Office maintained close contact with certain national committees throughout the year. In January 2013, the Office hosted a visit of Jyrki69, a Finnish musician and UNICEF’s good will ambassador for prevention of violence and abuse against children (see Advocacy section). The Office also confirmed a visit of the US Good Will Ambassador to Nicaragua at the end of January 2014 on the theme of child trafficking.

UNICEF signed the Memorandum for Understanding for a unique alliance with Mukul Beach Golf & Spa, the country’s first luxury boutique hotel, located in the municipality of Tola. The new initiative, known as “Sociopreneur,” has acquired excellent visibility thanks to effective branding and marketing strategies (see Strategic Partnership Section). The Office will continue its effort to mobilize additional resources, including knowledge and new ideas. It will also continue efforts to foster stewardship by connecting people all over the world through crowdsourcing.

In support to the Office’s resource mobilization efforts, the task force organized a virtual knowledge sharing session with UNICEF Colombia office via Skype and learned from them about resource mobilization, including alliances with private sector and individual donors.

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) recently created a sub-committee for resource mobilization to consolidate agency-specific efforts to optimize fundraising capacity for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. UNICEF is represented on that committee and will strengthen its linkage with the internal resource mobilization task force in 2014. The UNCT also facilitated signature of the UN Coherence Funds, a new modality for inter-agency resource mobilization.

### Management of Financial and Other Assets

As of the end of December 2013, the financial implementation rate reached 99.6 per cent of US$4.11 million (99.7 per cent for the Regular Resources (RR): 99.6 per cent for Other Resources (OR); and 98.7 per cent for the Institutional budget). About 65 per cent of the annual OR ceiling was reached, with a funding gap of US$2 million (see Donor Relations section). A total of five grants expired this year, all of which were spent down to more than 95 per cent by the deadline.

The Country Management Team continues to be the central mechanism for monitoring the Office’s key performance indicators. Single sourcing of contractors was reduced to zero across all institutional and individual contracts.

Direct cash transfers (DCTs) outstanding for more than nine months represented 33.1 per cent of the Office’s total expenditure. All of those cases were due to the technical problems in VISION [1] for which the Office filed service calls with LACRO and Headquarters to follow up on possible solutions. The VISION subject matter expert from LACRO visited the Office as part of technical support. The operation section organized a mini-capacity development session with programme assistants to learn from errors in VISION. Despite those efforts, resolution of the service calls was delayed.

DCTs outstanding between six and nine months accounted for nine per cent of the total Office expenditure as of mid-2013, and decreased to 6.7 per cent by the end of the year. That figure represents substantial progress compared to performance at the end of 2012 (43 per cent DCTs outstanding between 6 and 9 months). The total Office expenditure was dramatically reduced from US$3.41 million in 2012 to US$1.26 million in 2013. The improvement in DCTs is partly due to systematic weekly monitoring during coordination meetings and at the monthly Country Management Team (CMT) meetings.

In August, the International Operations Manager post became vacant due to the relocation of the previous manager. To cover this vacant position, the Office appointed a GS-6 Budget Assistant as the interim Chief of Operations. This transition required an adjustment to the existing Table of Authorities to share tasks among

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[1] UNICEF's VISION system is a software tool used for tracking and managing financial transactions.
the Operations team. The gap in human resources capacity in Operations required the Office to be more efficient, for example, avoiding multiple amendments to Travel Authorizations. It was also a good exercise as the Office earned how to manage the transition into the regional hub next year.

The Office’s performance relating to bank reconciliations has been excellent, with timely submission of monthly financial reports to Headquarters and processing of financial transactions compliant with norms and deadlines. Based on internal analysis, use of updated standard operating procedures (SOPs) and excel-based tracking sheets for monitoring of different procedures [2] have allowed the Office to increase efficiency of financial management.

With respect to the implementation of the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT), a group of programme assistants teamed up with two operations staff to plan and implement spot check visits to all partners. The group had three meetings in 2013 in which colleagues reviewed the results from spot-checks, shared lessons learned, and identified common mistakes in partners’ financial management. Given the downsizing of the operation in 2014, the programme assistants were often accompanied by operations colleagues to conduct spot checks for capacity development in the field.

The overall implementation rate of spot checks was 24 per cent (10 of 27 planned), with 6 of 28 partners being visited at least once, up to three times per partner in cases where there were problems. The implementation rate was low because of ambitious planning and lack of updating of the plan, when, for example a programme officer’s post became vacant. The Office obtained a wealth of information through those spot-checks, which will be integrated in the Office’s capacity development plan with partners in 2014, using the manual of operations which the Office finalized and printed in 2013.

[1] UNICEF’s global e-financial management system
[2] Travel, supplies, PCA (programme cooperation agreement), Donor reports, DCT, contracts/consultancies and cash flow forecast.

### Supply Management

As a result of a strategic shift in the programme, there has been a significant decrease in the volume and amount spent for supply procurement. Between 2012 and 2013, the number of purchase orders (POs) raised by the Office decreased by 20 per cent (from 157 to 126). The supply component budget decreased by 41 per cent compared to 2012 (from US$824,000 to US$484,000).

To reduce the administrative burden given the limited human resources, the Office delegated small-scale purchases (less than US$5,000) to local partners. That change resulted in a rather time-consuming process for supply procurements by partners, either due to the lengthy process required by their institutions or lack of capacity in procurement.

The Office closed its warehouse in 2013. This ensured direct delivery from the suppliers to the implementing partners without incurring additional commitments of time and management in the warehouse.

Despite significantly decreasing the volume of supply procurement, local partners continued to request UNICEF assistance in supply procurement. In 2013 UNICEF assisted partners with nine local procurement services totalling US$28,640. In one example, the Ministry of Health requested the World Health Organization in Nicaragua to purchase oral rehydration salt (ORS) for a cholera outbreak. Due to lack of capacity, WHO requested that UNICEF Nicaragua contact the UNICEF supply division in Copenhagen to obtain a quote. Building local capacity in supply procurement requires UNICEF’s support. This may pose a particular challenge for 2014, as the Office will join the operation hub in Panama and all supply supports will rely on remote services.

The Office prepared and carried out the emergency preparedness plan that was uploaded to the Intranet. The plan included prepositioning of supplies in Education, Health/Nutrition, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, prepared by each sector based on the detailed analysis of different scenarios and potentially affected areas. The plan is in line with international standards for emergencies and UNICEF’s recommended supply list. It also included a list of pre-identified suppliers to facilitate timely purchases in case of an emergency.
In 2014, the Office will further reduce its supply component, given its impending absorption into the regional hub. Due to the country’s vulnerability to natural disasters and potential effects of climate change, emergency supply planning continues to be one of the essential components of early warning and preparation, and disaster risk reduction.

The Office learned a lesson in 2013 regarding the importance of quality assurance in supply procurement. Due to a lack of adequate internal coordination to ensure quality control, a large order of flipcharts on nutrition was found to be below acceptable quality only after being air-lifted to the sub-office for distribution. That required a renegotiation with the supplier and a complete reprint. The lesson will inform the local procurement process in the coming year.

### Human Resources

The priority and challenge in Human Resources (HR) was to provide tailored administrative and psycho-social support to staff members in posts that were/will be abolished due to the gradual downsizing of the Operation section. The Office organized a workshop on the work environment, which was facilitated by a PhD-level psychologist recommended by the Regional Office. The workshop focused on self-assessment, coping mechanisms and various techniques for stress relief and management. The staff highly appreciated this workshop and the psychologist is now working closely with LACRO to support the region with the HR transition.

The HR section assisted Management with the preparation of a new Office structure proposal, which was submitted twice to the Programme budget review (PBR) this year. The proposals were prepared in anticipation of the Office’s joining the regional operation hub, as well as to ensure efficiency of the Office’s core programme functions, incurring minimal operations costs.

Coordinated by the focal point for UN Cares, the Office continued implementation of the ten minimum standards on HIV in workplace. The Office updated the database of specialist doctors in HIV care and treatment, purchased male condoms placed in bathrooms and provided staff counselling on HIV prevention and welfare, with special attention to confidentiality.

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In 2013, the Office undertook three recruitment processes. Recruitment of the Child Protection Officer was not completed until five months after the initial advertisement due to problems in the selection process. Recruitment of a P3 Temporary Operations Manager will be completed in early 2014. The Office launched the recruitment for the General Service (GS) HR assistant, although the process was temporarily suspended per instructions from HQ. The Office hired a retired HR officer to fill the gap, but will resume the recruitment process in early 2014.
Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

The Office embarked on the simplification of selected administrative processes, including the introduction of the Long Term Agreement (LTA) system for transportation and supply storage services. The LTA allows the Office to keep an open contract without cost, which can be activated upon the identification of needs for specific services. This system is especially helpful in case of emergency situations. Potential vendors have been identified and the Office will finalize the selection process for signature of the LTA in 2014.

Other savings measures implemented in the Office under the leadership of the Operations section include:

*Energy savings:* light bulbs in the Office were changed from 40 watts to 18 watts to save the energy based on the recommendation made by the National Engineering University in Nicaragua following a small assessment on energy saving in the workplace.

*Paper-based meeting management:* Colleagues were encouraged to send the agenda and other documents electronically prior to the meeting and present them on an LCD projector in the conference room during the meeting, to save unnecessary copying and distribution of papers.

*Cost savings in the cafeteria/gardening and reception services:* UNICEF and UNDP hired a general services company and have been sharing the costs. UNICEF identified possible savings through combining these common service functions and reduced the number of employees hired by the company. This has saved almost US$9,000 per year in UNICEF operational costs, without interfering with the quality of services.

The programme staff implemented the following cost-saving measures:

*Joint monthly field trip planning:* Programme staff shared the Terms of Reference (TOR) of their field trips with other colleagues and identified opportunities to integrate cross-sectoral actions in the TOR where possible. This contributed to travel cost savings, and had other benefits, including increased efficiency, strengthened inter-sectoral collaboration, and development of technical capacity of staff in areas outside their job description.

*Systematic use of the Office’s conference rooms* for programme-related workshops and meetings saved on costs that would be incurred renting outside venues. A meeting requiring more than half a day was split into two meetings to save on meal costs. This required advance planning for reserving the conference room and development of a clear agenda to keep the meeting concise and focused.

As the first step in building national officer capacity in report writing skills in English, the Office organized a “Writeshop” to facilitate collaborative exercises for writing up the Country Office Annual Report (COAR). The workshop included a half-day capacity development session on writing and reporting skills. All staff were asked to submit both Spanish and English versions of the reports to the Deputy Representative. Instead of using translation services, the Office hired a remote copyeditor under a small contract for final copyediting of the COAR. This saved 40-50 per cent of the translation cost for the COAR that the Office used to spend every year (US$1,200-$1,500 each year), and hopefully will create a win-win situation for cost saving and developing capacity in the future.

Changes in AMP & CPMP

Due to the Office’s anticipated incorporation into the regional hub for shared and remote operation services in 2014, the Office will develop a change management plan to manage this rather complex transition process. Pending the recruitment of an international temporary operations manager, the Office will develop a detailed plan to ensure the step-by-step transition in two primary areas. The first area is the transition of operations and administrative functions. The second area is staff morale and wellbeing for employees functioning in posts that will be abolished, and for those that remain in the Office to continue the work.

Specific actions related to the transition process include: delegation and sharing of tasks at country and
The Office updated the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and its action plan in 2013. The Office will update the Country Programme Management Plan (CPMP) in early 2014 based on changes and updates to the ERM.

The Joint Consultation Committee (JCC), which is comprised of the management, the president of the Local Staff Association, and Human Resources, is active and will continue to support the implementation of the change management process. Indicators related to this transition process will be integrated in the AMP 2014 for close monitoring by the Country Management Team (CMT) during the monthly meetings.

The other priority for the 2014 AMP is ensuring results-based management in the process of the migration of results matrices according to UNICEF’s new Strategic Plan 2014-2017. Starting in the third trimester of 2013, the Office has been preparing for migration into the new results matrix, which replaces current intermediate and programme component results with outputs and outcomes.

The exercise of migration into the new result matrix consisted of: updating the Situation Analysis, an analysis of determinants and causes for exclusion in programme areas; updating the analysis of the country context (political, social, economic, environmental and international cooperation); and reflection on UNICEF Nicaragua’s added value based on an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and the competency of other in-country partners.

As part of that process, in November 2013 the Office organized an internal strategic reflection exercise, inviting the Deputy Regional Director. At year end, the team is finalizing the results matrices to be integrated in the e-based performance monitoring system and VISION starting in January 2014.

### Summary Notes and Acronyms

AMP  
Annual Management Plan  
ANC  
Antenatal Care  
ARVs  
Antiretroviral Drugs  
BCP  
Business Continuity Plan  
CCC  
Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies  
CECC-SICA  
CECC: Central America Educational and Cultural Coordination;  
SICA: Central America Integrated System  
CIET  
Community Information and Epidemiological Technologies  
CMT  
Country Management Team  
CNDR  
National Diagnostic and Reference Centre  
CO  
Country Office  
COAR  
Country Office Annual Report  
CONISIDA  
National Commission for HIV  
COSUDE
Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund
MIFAN
Ministry of Family, Adolescents and Children
MINED
Ministry of Education
MMI
Global Movement for Children
MODA
Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis
MoH
Ministry of Health
MoRES
Monitoring of Results for Equity System
MTEF
Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NGO
Non-government Organization
OHCHR
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
ONE
Nicaraguan Ministry of Health, the National Statistic Office
OR
Other Resources (coming from donors)
PAHO
Pan-American Health Organization
PARMO
Division of Public sector Alliance and Resource Mobilization
PAS
Performance Appraisal System
PC ISAN
Joint Programme on Infant Food Safety
PCA
Project Cooperation Agreement
PFP
Private fundraising partnership
PMTCT
Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PN
National Police
RAAN
Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region
RAAS
Southern Atlantic Autonomous Region
RAM
Results Assessment Modules in VISION, UNICEF’s e-system
RR
Regular Resources
SILAIS
Local System for Integral Attention in Health
SME
Subject Matter Expert
SOP
Standard Operating Procedures
SWAp
Sector-Wide Approach
TOR
Terms of Reference
UNCT
United Nations Country Team
UNDAF
United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP
United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS
United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNETE
United Nations Emergency Team
UPR
Universal Periodic Review
USF
US Funds
WASH
Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP
World Food Programme

**Document Centre**

**Evaluation**

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<td>1 A Survey of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Schools in the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua: Findings, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations for Future Studies</td>
<td>2013/001</td>
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### Other Publications

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### Lessons Learned

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