

Philippines

Part 1: Situation update in the country

The Philippines continues to be one of Asia's strongest-performing economies, with a GDP growth rate of 6.1 per cent during the third quarter of 2018 – placing the country third after Vietnam's 6.9 per cent and China's 6.5 per cent for the same period. Inflation, at 6.7 per cent, continues to be a challenge; the Government's inflation target of 2-to-4 per cent for 2018 was adjusted to 4.8-to-5.2 to account for rising global prices. The annual poverty indicators survey from 2017 found that 3.6 million children and youth aged six-to-24 years were not in school, 18 per cent of whom cited the high cost of education and financial problems as reasons for not attending.

In health and nutrition, the latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority show that the country's total health expenditures at current prices grew by 8.0 per cent in 2017, totalling US\$13.4 billion, up from US\$12.5 billion in 2016. It contributed 4.5 per cent to the GDP. However, widespread fears over claims of fatal side-effects from the first commercially available dengue vaccine (given to 800,000 children during a mass vaccination in 2016–2017) have spilled over from last year and affected uptake of other standard vaccines. As a result, the health industry has yet to fully recover from a setback in immunization coverage arising from parents' safety concerns.

According to the 2017 Philippine National Demographic and Health Survey, only 70 per cent of children age 12–24 months received all basic vaccinations in 2017, down from 77 per cent in 2013, while the percentage of children with no vaccinations increased, from 4 per cent in 2013 to 9 per cent in 2017. Approximately 80 per cent of children received one dose of measles vaccination, but only 47 per cent of children age 24–35 months received the second dose.. There is a significant disparity in immunization coverage across the country. Only 18 per cent of 1.6 million children in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) have received all their basic vaccinations, compared to up to 87 per cent in other areas according to 2017 data.

The Philippines has very high levels of stunting (33 per cent) and underweight (21.5 per cent) among children under five years old (2015). These figures have actually increased in recent years – marking a worrying reversal of overall downward trends in past decades. Childhood stunting is much higher in the ARMM (45 per cent) and falls far short of the regional average for East Asia and the Pacific (11 per cent).

Childhood wasting is estimated to affect around 7 per cent of children under five years in the Philippines (8.2 per cent in the Autonomous Region), falling short of national and international targets of 5 per cent. The risk of wasting increases during humanitarian emergencies is of particular concern in the Philippines, which is vulnerable to natural disasters. At the same time, the proportion of overweight children under the age of five has been slowly increasing over the

past decades, rising from 1.1 per cent in 1989 to 3.9 per cent in 2015. In response, the National Nutrition Council launched the Philippine plan of action for nutrition 2017-2022 to address nutrition challenges among children under five.

In 2018 the Philippines' basic education sector posted significant progress in the implementation of the Department of Education's K to 12 programme. The completion of the first cycle of kindergarten to elementary showed an expansion of learning opportunities in kindergarten. Participation rates rose from 77.7 per cent in 2013 to 83.70 per cent in 2017, and there was a consistently high participation rate in Grades 1 to 6 (94.19 per cent as of academic year 2017–2018). Furthermore, enrolment rates in junior high school increased from 67.89 per cent in 2013 to 75.99 per cent in 2017, and 2018 witnessed a remarkable increase in school leavers returning to school – from 158,131 learners in 2015 to 251,436 learners– although challenges persist among learners in difficult situations, such as areas where there is armed conflict, and during emergencies. Girls continue to outperform boys for all education indicators.

According to the Department of Education (DoE) some 260,000 children in the ARMM are not in elementary school. Children who drop out of school or have never attended have little opportunity to complete their basic education due to a lack of access to alternative learning systems, which has only 7 per cent coverage in the region.

The World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF joint monitoring programme for water supply, sanitation and hygiene produced data indicating that 91 per cent of the Philippines' estimated population of 100.7 million has access to at least basic water services. However, initial Government estimates put the proportion that have access to 'safely managed' water services (that is located on premises, available when needed and free from contamination) at only 33 per cent. Moreover, access is highly inequitable: basic access in regions varies from 62 to 100 per cent, and only 80 per cent of the poorest households have access to basic water services, compared to around 99 per cent of the wealthiest. At just 70 per cent, the ARMM has the fewest improved water sources, as well as the fewest improved toilet facilities, at 35.4 per cent.

Access to safely managed sanitation and basic sanitation services needs to significantly accelerate if the Philippines is to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets, particularly clean water and sanitation for all. Only 75 per cent of the population has basic sanitation services; coverage in regions ranges between 22 to 86 per cent. Approximately 6 million Filipinos, mostly from the poorest households, still practice open defecation (OD). It is estimated that only 15 per cent of households have access to safely managed sanitation services.

The current high visibility of issues related to violence against children, in both local and global campaigns, and its identification as a priority issue, present an opportunity for child protection globally and in the Philippines in particular. However, due to the country's dynamic political context, key government agencies, including the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Health (DoH), and DoE were reorganized and government officials with whom UNICEF had extensive discussions and laid the groundwork for championing programmes for implementing the Philippine Plan of Action to end violence against children were removed from office. On account of the challenging and fluid political environment and the shrinking space for human rights – compounded with controversial issues tied to the war on drugs – policy and public advocacy on ending violence against children has become even more complicated.

The issue nonetheless gathered traction this year as two high-profile cases of abuse perpetrated by the police on children while in custody made headlines, particularly because they occurred as part of the Government's war on drugs – its most controversial campaign, which is often criticized as a war on the poor. In a recent study the Ateneo School of Government found 26 child deaths in the war on drugs from May 2016 to September 2017. The Philippine National Police reported 26,905 'child surrenderees' as of April 2018—2,279 of whom were aged 15 years or younger. Additionally, the local research organization Centre for Women's Resources reported having documented 33 cases of violence against women since the presidential election in 2016. Of the 33 victims, 13 were 17 years old or younger; 16 were rape cases and seven were acts of lasciviousness.

Amid calls for greater protection of children, proposals to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility (currently 15) were filed in both houses of Congress; nine years was the youngest age proposed. UNICEF and other child rights defenders strongly opposing this measure, emphasizing the need to better implement the existing Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act.

Perhaps the most critical development of 2018 was the signing of the Bangsamoro Organic Law on 27 July 2018, which paves the way for the creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. This is the culmination of decades-long negotiations between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Government of the Philippines and represents a further step towards long-lasting peace in central Mindanao.

Upon ratification in 2019, the current autonomous region will immediately be replaced by a politically and financially autonomous region and a parliamentary-democratic form of government with exclusive powers over critical areas including budgeting, administration of justice, revenue creation, disaster risk reduction and management, economic zones, human rights, local government units, public works and social services, to name a few.

The region is currently the poorest in the country, and poverty is increasing. This change will bring unique opportunities as well as risks for children. The transition to a new government is being led by the non-state armed group MILF – which cooperated closely with the United Nations and UNICEF in releasing over 1,800 children from their camps – and which has stated its commitment to improving the situation of the young generation, reforming the education system and addressing the large disparities between the situation of the population in this region and the rest of the country. The national Government has committed a US\$1 billion rehabilitation grant for the new government to reduce disparities, in addition to its annual block grant of 5 per cent of national revenues. Expectations for rapid change are high among the public, but weak government institutions and services in the region may not be able to deliver, leading to disappointments. UNICEF, together with other United Nations agencies and development partners, is adjusting its programming and operations to enable it to make the best contribution for children in the new autonomous region at this unique time in Philippine history.

Part 2: Major results including in humanitarian action and gender, against the results in the country programme documents

During the final year of the Country Programme 2012–2018, UNICEF celebrated 70 years of fruitful cooperation with the Government of the Philippines in defending the rights of every Filipino child. Originally set for 2012–2016, UNICEF Philippines requested a two-year

extension, through 2018, to align with the Philippine development plan and in anticipation of changes in country programme planning due to 2016 national elections.

UNICEF Philippines, together with governmental and other partners, attained major successes for children during the Seventh Country Programme.

In 2017, after almost a decade of working together on the Joint United Nations-MILF Action Plan facilitated by UNICEF, the non-government armed group Moro Islamic Liberation Front released 1,869 child soldiers (620 girls, 1,249 boys) who are now slowly rebuilding their lives. This also led to removal of the MILF from the Secretary-General's list of armed groups recruiting and using children in armed conflicts.

After years of work for the Philippines to eliminate pervasive but preventable maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT) that had killed thousands every year. Working closely with the Department of Health to eliminate the disease, the joint mission by UNICEF and WHO declared the country MNT-free in 2017.

The last 10 years saw an increasing rate of new HIV/AIDS cases involving adolescents in the Philippines: more than 8,000 new cases in 2018 alone. With technical support and funding from UNICEF, key policies such as the protocol on proxy consent and the joint administrative order on HIV testing of minors, were rolled out. In 2018, the president signed into law the Philippine HIV and AIDS Policy Act.

UNICEF supported the Government to conduct landmark studies on the situation of children in the Philippines. Among these are the first-ever studies to be conducted in the country: national baseline study on violence against children (NBS-VAC), national situation analysis of children with a disability and a climate landscape analysis for children. UNICEF also supported the study on the economic consequences of undernutrition in the Philippines; and the situation analysis of children in the Philippines, both nationally and in the ARMM. The national situation analysis was launched at an event with approximately 300 elected youth officials or Sangguniang Kabataan (youth councils) and 200 local government officials who gathered in Manila for the first time at the annual Governance Fair.

Through active advocacy and campaigning by UNICEF and the Child Rights Network, the Philippines passed child-friendly laws and developed policies aimed at protecting children. These include: the First 1,000 Days Law, the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act and the Philippine plan of action to end violence against children which was largely informed by the findings of the national baseline study.

UNICEF worked with national Governments and partners through several large-scale natural disasters and conflicts – notably, Super Typhoon Haiyan and a 7.2 earthquake in Bohol Province affecting millions in the Visayas in late 2013; the siege in Zamboanga in 2013 and the conflict in Marawi in 2017, affecting and internally displacing hundreds of thousands in Mindanao.

In the aftermath of Haiyan, UNICEF Philippines launched its first unconditional cash transfer programme to meet the urgent financial needs of 15,800 of the poorest families. UNICEF provided support to recovery efforts during these disasters, and several others that followed by improving infant and young children feeding; expanding immunization coverage; providing child-friendly spaces and psychosocial support to children and access to WASH facilities,

among other initiatives.

UNICEF made every effort to work on gender equality and highlight the importance of using sex-disaggregated data, promoting gender-sensitive policies, generating evidence on how policies affect girls and boys differently and ensuring that services are adapted to address the different needs of girls and boys.

Gender programming was emphasized in UNICEF's work in 2018. For example, enabling access for LGBTI adolescents to HIV/AIDS services through the protocol on proxy consent and providing access to sex-segregated toilets and sanitary supplies in schools situated in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas, as well as safeguarding children against gender-based violence during emergency response.

Goal area 1: Every child survives and thrives

Improvements in health care in the Philippines were sluggish in 2018 amid uncertainty over immunization safety. This exacerbated existing gaps in human resource, regulation, supply chain management and quality of care that kept vital services out of reach for many children and adolescents. To address inequity, UNICEF Philippines worked closely with the DoH and partners in the private sector, businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) in policy development and evidence-generation to reach the most vulnerable of children – urban poor, disabled and indigenous.

In line with priorities set by the Government in the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 for 'promoting a long and healthy life', UNICEF Philippines pushed harder for the approval of critical national bills and provided technical support for the roll-out and modelling of policies and guidelines in health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS and WASH to improve coverage and quality of service. Among the highlights for health and nutrition were the passage of the national law on the First 1,000 Days, ratification of the Expanded Maternity Leave Bill in both Houses of Congress, the roll-out of the Philippine plan of action for nutrition in priority areas, roll-out of the adolescent health and development programme strategic directions 2018-2023 and signing of the Philippine HIV and AIDS Policy Act of 2018.

Strengthening routine immunization programme. With lingering negative public opinion on the safety of vaccines due to the controversial dengue vaccine issue that started in 2016, UNICEF intensified its support to Government to ensure that children are safe from preventable diseases. As the situation was unfolding, UNICEF and WHO provided support to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine and to 17 regional vaccine stores for the use of web-based vaccination supplies stock management – an online, real-time tool introduced by UNICEF Philippines. Before the tool became available, regional cold chain facilities experienced either overstocking or understocking, leading to problematic service. Cold chain managers and supply officers also received training on the use of the tool to improve supply chain management.

Moreover, UNICEF provided support and worked closely with DoH National Capital Region, Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the DSWD to reach unimmunized children in poor urban communities in two densely populated cities in the region. By the end of the project in June, the number of immunized children in the cities had increased from 7,242 to 22,758, and 300 health workers had been trained in basic immunization services. Results from the model project sites will guide implementation in other cities as the Government replicates and scales-up this successful model, with UNICEF support.

Ensuring equitable access to health services for vulnerable children. UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance to the DoH and PhilHealth to update the national child injury prevention policy and the issuance of two additional social health insurance packages for children with disabilities by PhilHealth: the hearing and vision packages. These complete the four packages for children with a disability, adding to the mobility and developmental packages issued in 2017.

The downstream modelling work on First 1,000 days integration provided the ideal programmatic platform for operationalizing a holistic approach to childhood disabilities. Lessons from working with local government units (LGUs) are informing the development of a national system, or referral pathway, on early childhood care and development (ECCD) and the enhancement of tools to make the system scalable. This addresses a programmatic gap around ECCD during the most critical period of child development.

Optimizing nutrition for infants, young children and mothers. At the national level UNICEF provided technical assistance in support of legislation to improve nutrition. UNICEF has been working with partners since 2014 to advocate about the importance of the First 1,000 Days, which contributed to the development and eventual approval of the First 1,000 Days Law (Republic Act 11148). The law ensures that services are available to infants and young children up to two years of age, adolescent females and pregnant and lactating women. UNICEF worked with the Government to develop the infant and young child feeding (IYCF) strategic plan 2019–2030, which was improved based on best practices, lessons learned and gaps from the 2011–2016 plan. This was followed by the repackaging of the harmonized training module for IYCF, for which UNICEF worked closely with the Nutrition Centre of the Philippines to produce updated materials on maternal and young child nutrition for service providers.

UNICEF’s 2018 nutrition agenda included advocating for young mothers to be given longer maternity leave— from the current 60 days to 105 days, as now provided in the Expanded Maternity Leave Act of 2018 which is awaiting the president’s signature. If approved, this will help to ensure that benefits outlined in the First 1,000 Days Law are provided.

Ensuring children’s health and nutrition during emergencies. The Philippines experiences an average of 20 typhoons and several other natural disasters every year. To ensure that children receive continuous health and nutrition services during emergencies, UNICEF supported the development of the ‘Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Health Planning Guide’, to facilitate a coordinated response and delivery of health services to affected children. In 2018, the DoH approved the guide and UNICEF turned over the final document to the National Health Emergency Management Bureau, after pilot-testing.

In mid-2018 two strong typhoons hit Northern Luzon, affecting hundreds of thousands. UNICEF advised the National Nutrition Council on nutrition in emergencies, cluster coordination and information management. In conjunction with the rest of the humanitarian country team, UNICEF deployed a team of experts to support the Government-led rapid disaster assessment and needs analysis. Working with Save the Children, UNICEF supported training and orientation sessions for over 120 frontline workers and local health staff on the rapid identification of acute malnutrition and proper IYCF and supported local government units to screen 2,449 children under five for acute malnutrition and to counselling to 230 pregnant and lactating women.

Gaining ground in HIV/AIDS services for children and adolescents. The Joint United Nations Team on AIDS supported implementation of the 6th AIDS medium-term plan 2017-2022. Before end of the year, the president signed the Philippine HIV and AIDS Policy Act of 2018, which allows minors aged 15–17 to get tested for HIV without parental consent. The new law is a victory for those who had limited access to public services for HIV/AIDS due to restrictions in the previous law requiring parental consent for those younger than 18.

Prior to the passage of the law, UNICEF and partners Save the Children, Community and Family Services International, Family Planning Organization of the Philippines and other CSOs and NGOs had been working to make HIV testing and support accessible for adolescents under 18 by providing technical assistance to local governments in developing and executing the proxy consent protocol and case management for adolescents living with HIV. This allowed adolescents, particularly LGBTI, to get proxy consent through a social worker or a medical professional and obtain proper care and services through a network of service providers in the project. The protocol was eventually endorsed and supported by the DoH, DSWD and Department of Justice.

To complement government efforts, in 2018 UNICEF supported the development of models, guidance and capacity in the accreditation of adolescent-friendly facilities. Improvements in the process were based on recommendations from the ‘gender responsive adolescent health assessment’, a study commissioned by UNICEF. Accreditation of the facilities was carried out by the DoH, supported by UNICEF and NGOs.

Furthermore, UNICEF provided platforms for adolescent participation to influence improvements in government plans and policies in school, health and social welfare systems. For example, several changes were included in the Department of Education's implementation of comprehensive sexuality education, with support from UNICEF. Changes included development of HIV tools and curricula for life skills education and building the capacity of frontline health and social welfare service providers.

More than 2,000 adolescents and young people gave recommendations on important issues concerning their welfare during three major events: the national young people's planning forum on HIV for the operationalization of AIDS medium-term plan 2017-2022; the international forum on youth public health, which showcased innovations and contributions by young people to create healthier communities; and the Filipino volunteers convention, a pioneer event that recognized volunteers' contribution to creating safe, healthy environments and empowering Filipino children.

Goal area 2: Every child learns

UNICEF sustained its support to the education sector to achieve quality and inclusive basic education through evidence-generation, such as: an ECCD longitudinal study, review of the multi-grade programme, development of equity-driven teacher hardship index and capacity-building of staff in learning assessment through benchmarking of indicators at the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics, in which the Philippines participated.

Although UNICEF continued to support efforts by local government units to increase access by three- and four-year-olds to pre-school education, no updated data to measure progress at the national level (from 42 per cent in 2013) are available. Standards for recognizing centre-based ECCD services – including competency standards for child development workers adopted by

the ECCD Council – were rolled out on a limited scale. UNICEF is supporting the formulation of a comprehensive ECCD situation analysis as the basis for: preparing the national ECCD strategic plan, mainstreaming ECCD in local government and system- strengthening in the provision of inclusive and quality early childhood education (ECE).

Increasing access to early learning. UNICEF and partners continued to promote and support evidence-based ECCD/ECE policies, plans and budgets and strengthened governance and management at national and sub-national levels. This work resulted in the formulation of the costed national ECCD strategic plan 2019–2030, which will be anchored on and supported by a comprehensive ECCD situation analysis currently in development. The analysis will provide vital information on the situation of children aged 0 to 4 years and their transition to Kindergarten and Grade 1 of primary education.

UNICEF support also led to enhancement of the system for disability prevention, early identification, referral and intervention in early childhood. The new system, which was introduced to 36 focus LGUs in 2017, went through a more in-depth review by child development specialists from academia and CSOs, and is being enhanced to ensure that the system adheres to age- and developmentally appropriate practices.

UNICEF also supported the pilot roll-out of a child information and location database in seven focus LGUs. The comprehensive household data on children’s status in and access to health, nutrition, education and protection were used as a reference for preparing *barangay* (village) and municipal annual investment plans for children for 2019.

In the ARMM, UNICEF conducted an evaluation of the Tahderiyyah (Islamic Kindergarten) programme for early learners in Mindanao after 10 years of implementation in 17 centres during the pilot phase. The work was later extended to 800 centres, following a DoE request to scale up the programme. The evaluation concluded that, overall, the programme is relevant to the context of needs and aspirations of the Bangsamoro Muslims in Mindanao.

Strengthening institutional mechanisms for policy development and programme delivery for equitable and inclusive basic education with gender equity: UNICEF supported DoE preparations for the South East Asia primary learning metric main survey through training on test administration, school sampling and data encoding and analysis. This was critical foundational work to advance the production quality data on students’ actual learning and subsequent improvement policies. Lack of data on learning in the Philippines was identified as a bottleneck to improving quality, equitable education.

In partnership with SEAMEO INNOTECH, UNICEF completed a review of the multi-grade programme and developed evidence-based recommendations to inform the development of the DoE’s omnibus multi-grade policy, which will benefit disadvantaged children in remote locations. UNICEF continued support to the ongoing ECCD longitudinal study, which found a high correlation between mother-tongue proficiency and early learning experiences and their effect on the child’s cognitive and social-emotional skills. The study findings informed the review of the K-12 system. Furthermore, UNICEF provided assistance in enhancing the skills of 500 inclusive education champions through advocacy and mentoring, to promote inclusion in every classroom and address barriers between the school and the community collaboratively.

When major disasters hit the Philippines in 2018, UNICEF provided 60 temporary learning spaces and 400 learning packages to affected schools and learners so that children would not

miss their lessons while relief and rebuilding efforts were underway.

Goal area 3: Every child is protected from violence and exploitation

Three issues dominated child rights debate in the Philippines in 2018: the minimum age of criminal responsibility, the statutory age of rape, and online sexual exploitation and abuse. The first was the subject of debate, as some lawmakers sought to lower the age of criminal responsibility from the current 15 years. UNICEF worked with the Child Rights Network – the largest alliance advocating for child rights legislation in the country – to increase the statutory age for rape from the current 12, the lowest in Southeast Asia, to at least 16. UNICEF stepped up advocacy efforts to put these issues front and centre on the legislative agenda.

As a strategy, UNICEF utilized the systems approach with a deep understanding of poly-victimization and the deprivations that cut across the protection, health, nutrition and education sectors. This approach was based on evidence from the NBS-VAC showing that eight of 10 children have been exposed to at least one form of violence, and that boys are as vulnerable as girls to violence, experienced primarily at home.

Making evidence work for justice and protection of children. To address violence against children, UNICEF used the INSPIRE framework to guide consultations with the Government's education, health, and social welfare departments. The consultations sought to support implementation of the Philippine plan of action to end violence against children, which was launched in 2018. They resulted in research trials on evidence-based parenting, and ongoing formulation of a framework for strengthening the social welfare system by the social welfare department.

For child online protection, UNICEF supported critical research through the Philippine Kids Online Survey, a national study on child online sexual exploitation, to minimize online/offline risks for children.

Further, in partnership with the Supreme Court's committee on family court and juvenile concerns and the juvenile justice and welfare committee, UNICEF supported the formulation of outcome-based enhancement training to upgrade the skills of judges and family court personnel in utilizing diversion and alternatives to detention.

UNICEF escalated public and legislative advocacy through a robust quad-media campaign that also carried an 'explainer' video calling for the age of sexual consent in the country to be increased from the current 12, highlighting scientific proof and actual data showing that increasing this age widens the scope of the law's to protect children from suffering the horrendous and oftentimes long-lasting effects of sexual violence. UNICEF and the Child Rights Network campaigned to preserve the minimum age of criminal responsibility at 15 years and increase age of statutory rape to at least 16, to secure higher and equal legal protection of girls and boys. Online petitions calling for congressional intervention on these issues have generated interest from the public, including lawmakers.

Strengthening social welfare services. Poised to focus on child welfare systems in the next country programme (2019-2023), UNICEF took part in a regional exercise to map the social service workforce. In partnership with a university-based NGO, the University of the Philippines-Sikhay Foundation, the mapping analysed the human resource capacity linked to the development of a national strategic framework to strengthen the workforce. The framework

will include strategies to enhance prevention and response mechanisms to end violence against children and implementation of the PPAEVAC. The result is aligned with regional mapping initiated by UNICEF's East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, with the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, to identify gaps and challenges in human resources in Asia Pacific.

Protecting children in humanitarian response. This year, UNICEF supported the National Child Protection Working Group (coordinator of child protection interventions in emergencies), and the Government's Monitoring, Reporting and Response System (which facilitates inter-agency coordination on children affected by armed conflict) by providing training in 17 regions for implementation of the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act. As a result, all 17 regions have formally resolved to organize a child protection working group.

Low-intensity engagements against armed groups, primarily in Mindanao, continue to affect children. While access for monitoring remains challenging, verification and response was completed for 80 per cent of the reported cases of grave child rights violations. Dialogues with parties to the conflict were sustained, including with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. At the national level, UNICEF supported efforts to enact the Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Bill, aimed at strengthening coordinated mechanisms to prevent grave violations, provide adequate resources to local and national agencies and hold perpetrators accountable for their violations. The Bill was approved by the legislature in October and awaits the president's signature.

Goal area 4: Every child lives in a safe and clean environment

Data collected in 2018 by the DoE through the new online monitoring system for WASH in Schools (WinS) highlight significant gaps: only 6 per cent of the 30,615 public schools that completed the baseline assessment were in compliance with the five crucial indicators: availability of drinking water, sex-segregated toilets, group hand washing facility, available sanitary pads and practice of daily group hand-washing.

Persistent challenges to universal access to clean water and sanitation are in part due to the highly fragmented water and sanitation sector in the country – characterized by poorly coordinated implementation of programmes and projects, insufficient investment in sanitation and unsystematic data generation that hinders effective planning and monitoring.

In 2018 the Government undertook several initiatives to align national plans with the SDG 6 target of clean water and sanitation for all. The Government held consultations to develop a new Philippines water supply and sanitation master plan, to be published in early 2019. The approach of modelling implementation at the local level and disseminating programming approaches and lessons both horizontally and vertically was successfully demonstrated in several programme areas during the last country programme. Specifically, the bottom-up development of the phased approach to sustainable sanitation (PhATSS) has created significant buy-in to the process, creating demand by local governments and a recognized need at the national level for supporting policy. Similarly, within the WinS programme, successful modelling in the early years of the current country programme generated demand and momentum for WinS at the policy level. During 2017–2018, UNICEF provided significant technical support to the DoE to institutionalize WinS. This has resulted in strong DoE leadership and investment in the WinS agenda and roll-out of the 'Three-Star Approach'.

Improving capacity for sustainable sanitation. UNICEF continued to work with partners to

demonstrate PhATSS. As a result, 142 communities (total population of over 145,000) were certified as zero open defecation (ZOD) in 2018, exceeding the target of 80 communities for the year. By the end of the country programme, UNICEF had supported more than 2,100 communities to eliminate the practice of open defecation.

To further accelerate progress, UNICEF has invested in building capacities for municipal and province-led replication of the programme. In 2018 five provincial and 13 municipal WASH Councils allocated budgets to WASH focused on ending open defecation as a first step toward sustainable sanitation.

In partnership with the DoH and Centre for Health Solutions and Innovations, a behaviour change campaign to reinforce ZOD messaging was demonstrated in five regions. Additional programming approaches to move communities up the sanitation ladder continued to be tested, resulting in 32 communities certified as having complete basic sanitation services in 2018. UNICEF coordinated with Water.org and its network of microfinance institutions to increase communities' access to financing for household water and sanitation, and provided technical assistance to selected municipalities for septic management planning.

The successful roll-out of WASH in municipalities and extensive consultations with stakeholders were major factors in the development of national policy guidelines adopting PhATSS as the implementation strategy for local governments to achieve sanitation targets. The guidelines are now ready for final endorsement by the DoH.

Strengthening WASH in Schools. WinS was likewise prominent this year as the DoE demonstrated strong ownership of the WinS agenda, with UNICEF playing a key role in supporting rollout of the three-star approach and the WinS online monitoring system. Data generated through the new system will be used by DoE to plan specific actions that can be taken from schools up to the national level. Based on the WinS pilot implementation in ARMM, regional authorities agreed to roll-out in 2019, bringing the region in line with the rest of the country.

To help address current gaps in guidance for the approach, UNICEF and the DoE worked together to develop tools and programming approaches promoting individual hand-washing with soap and strengthening MHM. The 2017 pilot of 'Hi-five for hygiene and sanitation' behaviour-change pointed to specific adjustments required to improve the tools and their delivery. The revised design was tested in a second pilot phase in 2018; the results (due early 2019) will guide the DoE's decision regarding a national roll-out. The development of #MeronAko (roughly translated "I have") communication and curriculum materials, designed to help both boys and girls have a better understanding of and confidence to discuss and manage issues around menstrual health and puberty, was completed in 2018. A joint UNICEF-DoE pilot of the materials will proceed in 2019.

WASH response in emergencies. In support of the DOH, as lead agency for the WASH cluster, UNICEF provided ongoing technical assistance for cluster coordination and information management in 2018. Outside of specific emergency responses, the DoH and UNICEF facilitated sector contingency planning and capacity building for WASH in emergencies and conducted a review of the WASH cluster strategic plan 2015-2018.

UNICEF Philippines maintained its readiness to respond to emergencies through pre-positioned contingency stocks, long-term agreements for critical supplies and services, and

emergency clauses in WASH partnership arrangements. In addition to the ongoing Marawi displacement response, UNICEF provided WASH interventions following three typhoons that hit the islands of Visayas and Mindanao and participated in coordinated assessments of response to several smaller emergencies. In 2018 UNICEF and partners provided: hygiene kits to 32,300 individuals (16,473 males, 15,827 females); safe access to water supply for 84,432 (43,060 males, 41,372 females) through distribution of water kits and rehabilitation of water supply systems; and access to appropriate sanitation facilities for 27,328 (13,937 males; 13,391 females).

Goal area 5: Every child has an equitable chance in life

UNICEF Philippines continued to highlight child poverty and equity issues affecting children through various pieces of analytical work, awareness-raising and capacity-building initiatives with the Government of the Philippines.

Responding to the rising level of inflation, UNICEF and the Ateneo Centre for Economic Research and Development conducted an analysis of the impact of food inflation and price movements on children's welfare, which highlighted the negative consequences of inflation on children's food consumption. The findings were presented to Congress to inform social budgeting and policies and advocate for responsive social safety nets.

The lack of comprehensive, up-to-date data on children is a serious hindrance to the implementation of development projects and poverty-alleviation interventions in the Philippines. To support the Government, UNICEF worked with the Philippine Statistics Authority to develop the first national child poverty database and statistical annex, launched in 2018. During the development phase, UNICEF provided training to agency personnel in appropriate statistical tools for processing child poverty statistics. The database provides the most updated official statistics on the situation of children. It highlights the impact of income poverty and disparities on children and captures other multi-dimensional information that serves as an important basis for evidence-based policies and programmes for children.

With a repository of vital statistics on children now in place, UNICEF worked with the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) to improve monitoring and reporting on the SDGs through setting national targets through 2030 and assisted with Government preparations for its 2019 voluntary national report on the SDGs.

Strengthening national capacity to legislate and budget for inclusive social policies and social protection measures. In partnership with World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, UNICEF provided technical assistance for the review of the Philippines social protection operational framework, highlighting universal, shock-responsive and transformative social protection. This joint initiative led to the production of an updated operational framework, aligned with national priorities articulated in the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 and other normative frameworks and principles. The framework is expected to gain approval and endorsement by NEDA's social development committee in 2019.

UNICEF supported assessments of major programmes, in line with the government priority of maintaining social protection services as a top 2019 priority. One such programme is the modified conditional cash transfer programme, launched in 2012 to provide conditional cash grants to persons with special needs (such as street dwellers, indigenous people, persons with

disabilities, senior citizens and those living in geographically isolated areas). The DSWD expanded the programme to include children up to the age of 18 (the previous age limit was 14). To support this effort UNICEF commissioned a review of the programme's business process and completed the design of a new management information system to strengthen the whole cash delivery mechanism – from registration of beneficiaries through payments. The system's automated inter-operability is expected to generate significant efficiency gains, and some 230,000 children are expected to immediately benefit from this work.

A robust social protection system is vital to the survival of children with disabilities. UNICEF, in partnership with the Development Academy of the Philippines, completed the first situation analysis of children with disabilities in the Philippines, which highlighted the limited data available and the challenges they face in accessing basic social services. The results will inform the design of a social protection intervention to ensure that children with disabilities are able to overcome barriers to access services.

Improving local government unit systems to protect vulnerable children. UNICEF continued to work with the DILG, Council for the Welfare of Children and CSOs to promote child-friendly local governance and strengthen local governments' capacity for planning and budgeting. UNICEF supported the DILG in pilot-testing and consultative workshops, which produced revised and updated indicators and tools for the Government-led 'child-friendly local governance audit' (CFLGA) system – a results-based assessment and annual mandatory audit to evaluate the performance of local governments in improving child outcomes. The new indicators will be used in the 2019 audit, with data and results to be made available in 2020.

While waiting to apply the new indicators for assessment, UNICEF, DILG and the Galing Pook Foundation finalized the 'adapt+innovate for children' programme – a capacity-building and mentoring programme for the top 10 LGUs that use CFLGA results to improve planning and budgeting.

UNICEF also worked with the DSWD and Tebtebba Foundation to develop life skills modules for indigenous children. UNICEF supported the training of 16 indigenous youth facilitators who will comprise the pioneering team for pilot testing the manuals with the first 240 indigenous children.

Improving government access to and ability to use child-centred data and evidence. Strengthening data for sustainable development is one of the key areas of collaboration identified in the strategic plans of the UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women as part of their joint efforts to assist governments to meet the SDGs. In the Philippines, UNICEF has started providing technical assistance to NEDA to assess the Government's capacity to evaluate whether its efforts to achieve the SDGs are making an impact. This was followed by an exercise to assist the Government to identify national targets to be achieved by 2030.

UNICEF Philippines worked to convene the executive and legislative branches of government around building national capacity for evaluation, establishing a positive relationship for future programming. UNICEF worked with the national Department of Budget and Management to operationalize the Government's results-based monitoring, evaluation and reporting policy. UNICEF also expanded partnerships with the Congressional policy and budget research departments, in an effort to build capacity within the legislative branch to evaluate policy and budget reforms and present them to Congress.

To inform and improve UNICEF's work around the world, UNICEF Philippines supported an evaluation of the coverage and quality of UNICEF's humanitarian response in complex humanitarian environments' and an 'assessment of field office presence' – both of which used the Philippines as a case study.

Results for children in Mindanao

Overall progress in Mindanao, particularly in the ARMM, had lagged behind the rest of the country due to ongoing conflicts, persistent poverty and poor governance, among other issues.

Coverage of community-based nutrition services doubled to 62 percent from 2016 and coverage of vaccination services reached 77 from 52 per cent. These achievements can be attributed to the introduction of innovative approaches to monitoring results for equity, combined with stronger visualization of data leading to increased accountability and commitment from local decision-makers.

UNICEF worked with the ARMM Government and LGUs to strengthen prioritization of children's issues and include health and nutrition in provincial and municipal investment plans. The ARMM regional nutrition plan of action was launched and UNICEF, together The WFP and other partners, supported the drafting of provincial nutrition plans of action for the five provinces in the ARMM and several municipalities.

Children's access to education services in eight priority municipalities of the five provinces showed only slight improvement in 2018. Children who drop out of school or never attended, have little opportunity to complete their basic education due to poor access to alternative learning systems. UNICEF contributed financial and technical support to expand education access through better use of local data to highlight barriers to education access, which were assessed by provincial and municipal, and barangay authorities themselves, leading to increased accountability and commitment from local decision-makers. Further, UNICEF supported preparations for a large-scale expansion of the Islamic kindergarten programme for four and five-year-olds in 2019, by expanding early learning linked to Madrassah religious schools and public schools. This was carried out in partnership with the regional DSWD and DILG and various Madrassah federations.

Despite progress, original planned targets for end-2018 were not met. Data revealed large disparities within and across provinces/municipalities, and that geographic and financial barriers are too high for poor families (the majority) to overcome without adjustment to the current mode of education system delivery and without addressing the underlying lack of household resources in a region with 63 per cent poverty – the highest in the country. In partnership with UNESCO's International Institute for Education Planning, UNICEF provided technical and financial support for development of the region's basic education sector plan for 2020-2035, which may begin to address some of the challenges.

Following implementation of the UN-MILF action plan in 2017, 1,869 children (620 girls, 1,249 boys) were disengaged, and a programme of support for them implemented. To date, none of the children disengaged – nor their siblings – have been found to have re-associated with any armed group. During the year, regular family needs assessments for these children were completed and children were referred to local health, education and protection service providers as necessary. All of these children under 18 years of age were found to be attending school.

ARMM has the poorest water and sanitation coverage. UNICEF provided technical assistance to strengthen WASH planning and integrate WASH issues into nutrition planning. In all five provinces of ARMM, provincial WASH plans were formulated linked to provincial plans of action for nutrition, which in turn guided municipal level WASH and nutrition plans. During 2018 four municipalities in Maguindanao Province were declared ODF. Combined with three municipalities declared ODF in 2017, this brought the total to seven (six in Maguindanao province), building a foundation for wider expansion in 2019. UNICEF worked with the regional sub-committee on water and sanitation to draft the ARMM WASH strategic plan for 2019-2022, which will be handed over to the new Bangsamoro transition committee in 2019.

Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints

The end-of-country programme cycle review with the National Economic Development Agency and implementing partners captured the learning on UNICEF's change strategies. Examples are outlined below.

Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children: Modelling the First 1,000 Days

Considerable progress took place in the development of policies to address undernutrition in the Philippines. The Philippine plan of action on nutrition provides a framework for multi-sectoral interventions with special focus on the first 1,000 days of life. However, high rates of stunting persist, and this positive policy environment needs to be implemented by local governments, with support from the DoH and key member agencies of the National Nutrition Council.

During the last two years of the country programme, UNICEF decided to develop new ways of creating evidence, by (1) bringing together all programmes and developing scalable models for national government planning and (2) adopting a mechanism for implementing an integrated programme for the First 1000 Days at the local level in 2016. UNICEF took an area-based approach by bringing together specialists from the different sectors (health, nutrition, education, child protection, and disaster risk reduction) to develop a coordinated and coherent approach. This integrated approach identified four local government units with which UNICEF should worked to develop integrated programming. Given the commonality of public financial management and governance and challenges across all sectors, the social policy team led the approach.

A workshop on lessons learned with partners in 2018 identified three initial results: 1) policy changes were adopted at the local level; 2) the First 1,000 Days programme was incorporated into local government planning, budgeting and existing services and structures and; 3) there were improvements in the quality of service delivery.

The workshop also identified some constraints: 1) limited availability and quality of data, especially at the sub-national level; 2) lack of clarity on leadership and specific roles of agencies to ensure programme integration; 3) some key coordination structures existed but were non-functioning; 4) geographically isolated areas were hard to service, especially if the local governments had limited financial and human resources.

For UNICEF Philippines, three key overall lessons from the collective learning stood out:

- 1) integration can happen at key stages of programming, but does not need to happen at every stage. Sectors need to plan, monitor and review together, but implementation can be separate.
- 2) Integration at the local government level is challenging because of demands coming from national level. There are too many guidelines, directives and standards issued by different national government agencies and inter-agency councils.
- 3) Prioritization is key, given the limited time and human and financial resources available to local government units.

The learning from this approach can be applied across sectors in their efforts to plan and budget at the local government level. Disaster risk reduction, climate change resilience and emergency response could benefit from more integration, as could adolescent programming. The process of prioritization should involve the key decision-makers (i.e., local chief executive) to ensure their buy-in and commitment to implement activities

A fourth lesson, related to the scalability of models, was identified in mid-2018, building on the country programme evaluation and partnership consultations for the design of the new country programme. UNICEF's partnership outreach focused mainly on local governments, the operational level that is accountable for delivering services. A key overall learning, also applicable to other models, was the importance of working with all levels of government to effect positive change for children nationwide. UNICEF should partner more strategically with different levels of government in the design of pilots and models, to ensure that those responsible for scale-up (typically at the provincial level of government) are involved. In addition, UNICEF and partners realized that leadership and governance are often contextualized as centralized (legislation, policy and planning, regulation). By working directly with the Department of Health, UNICEF's efforts to support the roll-out of key plans such as the Philippine plan of action for nutrition in priority areas and the adolescent health and development programme 2018-2023, helped to scale up and strengthen access to and use of services, as well as to inform policy.

Programming for at-scale results for children

In 2009 UNICEF Philippines supported the DoE to implement the essential health care programme (EHCP) in more than 3,000 schools. In 2012, UNICEF HQ and Germany's development assistance agency developed the WinS 'three star approach' based on this model– an incremental approach to improving WASH behaviour and conditions in schools using the EHCP model.

In 2018 UNICEF and the DoE continued the work on generating evidence, particularly in relation to behaviour-change. Two ongoing projects are underway:

- 1) The HiFive for HySan behaviour-change tools–action research that tests a behaviour-change approach using disgust, attractiveness and affiliation to motivate independent hand-washing behaviour.
2. #MeronAko ('I Have') Campaign, which is developing and testing a communication for development approach to develop materials and tools for delivering MHM lessons through classroom instruction and extra-curricular school activities.

Both projects are guided at all stages by DoE at the central, regional and division levels. The aim is for these tools to be adopted for nationwide use.

The WinS experience provided three key lessons:

1. Policy first. It was strategic that the policy was formulated and issued prior to the formulation of the 'three star approach' (and not the other way around or in parallel, like the initial attempt in 2013). The policy was the basis for a contextualized approach– not vice versa. The policy's standards provided the goals that the pathway was designed to reach. Respecting the pre-eminence of the policy made WinS politically tenable. Developing policy and standards were the DoE's mandate and commitment. The approach was UNICEF's and GIZ's tool. The Philippines WinS Three Star Approach was designed to abide by and serve government standards and goals, not the other way around.

2. "Piloting at scale." To determine how a mechanism or instrument such as the three star approach would work when scaled up nationwide, the piloting at some point has to subject it to the rigours of the system. This means that the pilot demonstrates how the mechanism works at different levels of the institution (regional, division or school). It should also test how different parts of the institution take up or respond to the application of the mechanism. This entails that the sample of target schools should be large enough to test how the system would work. Thus, with UNICEF support, the three star approach used in Haiyan/Yolanda recovery involved two regions – with around 7,000 schools total coverage – and mobilization of various concerned units, to contribute according to their respective mandate.

3. Bringing sub-national to national, in person. Development of the Philippines 'three star approach benefited greatly from the implementation experience in two regions post-Yolanda. Bringing that experience to national attention went beyond research to presenting the narratives to the DoE Central Office. In addition to supporting local activities by regional education departments, UNICEF allocated funds for representatives from these regions to travel to and from Manila for technical working group meetings to develop WinS implementing mechanisms. Those involved in sub-national implementation participated, in person, in national-level discussions, and their participation was characterized by valuable observations and insights. They were able to process their experience in ways that may not have been significant at the regional level, but were very relevant to the national scale-up.

Eventually, although UNICEF funding still remained, DoE regional offices decided to use their own funds to participate in the national discussions. The opportunity for them to participate had transformed into responsibility for contributing to a larger movement. The WinS movement benefited invaluablely from personal participation by regional DoE staff.

Moving forward, UNICEF plans focus on modelling to address remaining programming implementation gaps and strengthen the integration of WinS into national systems, including disaster risk reduction and emergency response, and leveraging investments at the sub-national level.

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