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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSC</td>
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Part 1: Overview

1.1 Executive Summary

The year, 2015, marked a challenging but extremely productive year for Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA). Entering the second year of the 2014-2017 Regional Office Management Plan (ROMP), programming intensified to accelerate progress towards achieving Six Headline Results for Children in South Asia. This was despite the earthquake of 25th April that hit Nepal, measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale, the largest earthquake in the country in over 80 years. This was followed by a major aftershock on the 12th May measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale. The earthquake response was declared a corporate Level 2 Emergency from April to August 2015, led by the Regional Director. The response became a rallying event between ROSA and the Nepal Country Office as well as galvanizing solidarity and collective action by UNICEF HQ divisions and other country offices in South Asia. Contributing to the seamless handling of international media requests and providing crucial communication materials to external audiences, ROSA helped position UNICEF as a credible and transparent organization in humanitarian action. As a result, ROSA was able to contribute to the successful resource mobilisation for UNICEF Nepal humanitarian response. In addition, one of the key implementation strategies was the delivery of cash grants, using an existing government led programme. The success of this intervention reinforced the need to remove the artificial divide between humanitarian and development programming, using existing mechanisms and criteria that ensured those who needed the most got the most. It also strengthened the case for a more holistic approach to social protection, not just in Nepal but in the region.

Despite the diversion of considerable ROSA staff time to support the Nepal Country Office, particularly in the first 2 months after the first earthquake, the ongoing support to all countries in South Asia was not thwarted. The release of the South Asia Headline Results Progress Reports in April 2015 strengthened advocacy and rallied support for the headline results. Results of advocacy efforts could be seen during the Mid Term Reviews of India and Pakistan Country Programmes, where priorities for the next two and half years were aligned to the headline results.

Building on the momentum from the Stop Stunting Conference in Delhi in 2014, a second global conference was held in 2015. The conference was entitled ‘First Foods: Improving the Quality of Foods and Feeding for Young Children’. The focus was on accelerating progress on complementary feeding for children under two globally, in South Asia and in India. The conference provided a platform for UNICEF to advocate for context specific strategies and committed partnerships. The conference came at a time when particular emphasis is being placed on India, home to 75 per cent of stunted children in the region. While stunting remains a major challenge, the country has made notable progress, with a 20 per cent decline in prevalence (2006-2014) being documented, translating into 14 million fewer stunted children.

In 2015, ROSA strengthened its advocacy around WASH through engagement with UNICEF’s Regional Goodwill Ambassador for sanitation and hygiene, cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar. Public interest messages were widely released through social media and the coverage of Tendulkar’s participation in

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a regional learning event in support of better WASH practices in school, galvanized extensive regional attention to this issue. In October, UNICEF and International Cricket Council (ICC) signed a five-year global partnership to advocate for children in countries where cricket is a popular sport. This coincides with the much-anticipated ICC World Twenty-20 in India. It is expected that nearly 600 million people will watch the games in India alone.

In March 2015, ROSA received an UNFCCC certificate, becoming the first office globally to be declared carbon neutral for 2013-2014 under its “Greening” initiative. For eight months of the year, solar power significantly reduces the amount, cleanliness and cost of energy the office uses. Solar energy makes up approximately 65 per cent of ROSA’s total energy consumption. During the aftermath of the earthquake that hit Nepal the office was able to ensure business continuity when much of Kathmandu was cut off from national electricity grids. More COs are following ROSA’s example with Bangladesh and Nepal implementing solar power in several offices.

In terms of shortfalls, the Nepal Earthquake compounded by protracted political crisis following the promulgation of the constitution in September, had impacted negatively across social sector development gains of recent years. This impacted on programme delivery, staff morale and increased operational costs. Finally, the overall security situation in Afghanistan continued to deteriorate in 2015, reflected by the high numbers of Afghanis fleeing conflict to find refuge in Europe. This trend is threatening the country’s political stabilization and socio-economic development, but also critically challenging global commitment to eradicate polio. However, the regional office in collaboration with Afghanistan and Pakistan offices are engaging with partners and adjusting national, cross border strategies to sustain focus on the polio eradication efforts.
1.2 Trends and Progress in the Region Affecting Children and Women

The population of South Asia is approximately 1.7 billion; estimates indicate that by 2050, the region will account for almost a quarter of the world’s population (2.2 billion people). There are over 600 million children and adolescents under the age of 18. Based on current projections, there will be more boys than girls in the foreseeable future, associated with gender-biased sex-selection. India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka have achieved middle income status, while Bhutan is soon expected to graduate. South Asia has experienced a long period of robust economic growth, and 2015 once again, saw good progress on the economic front. India’s economy grew faster than its Chinese counterpart, a trend which the International Monitory Fund (IMF) expects will continue in 2016.

However, socioeconomic progress has remained uneven and inequalities within and between countries in the region is growing. In the Maldives, the richest 10 per cent of households earn almost half of total income. Oxfam’s ‘Even It Up’ report highlights how the benefits of economic growth have increasingly been accrued to the rich in India. Credit Suisse revealed the richest 1 per cent of Indians own 53 per cent of the country’s wealth. India’s development indicators remain poor; ranking 130 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index. Across the region, average investments (as a percentage of GDP) are way below recommended thresholds (health between 3- 4 per cent and education around 4 per cent).

There was some significant political developments in 2015. December saw talks secretly held between India and Pakistan, raising optimism for a possible thawing in relations. In November a ‘state of emergency’ was briefly called in the Maldives. Geo-political tensions mounted over Nepal’s delineation of states following the promulgation of its new constitution in September. An ‘unofficial blockade’ followed, which stopped the transportation of goods from India to Nepal and dealt a double blow to Nepal following the earthquakes of April and May 2015. This impacted the delivery of essential supplies, by UNICEF, worth over US$2.1 million, which were stranded across the Indian border. UNICEF issued regular statements, raising concern on school closures and the impact on children’s health and survival. This included a statement by the UNICEF’ Executive Director, Anthony Lake, in November, warning of the looming humanitarian crisis for the children of Nepal.

During the aftermath of the earthquakes, both India and China provided much needed humanitarian support. China extended further support during the ‘unofficial blockade’, providing a ‘grant’ of 1,000 tonnes of fuel. The China-Pakistan economic corridor promises to bolster the Pakistani economy through investments worth around US$ 46 billion, over the next 15 years. The two new multi-lateral

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6 UNICEF Maldives CPD 2016- 2020 page 3/15
7 Human Development Report, UNDP 2015
9 Minister Planning, Development and Reform (Pakistan)
development banks: BRICS Bank and the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), have heralded in a new era in global development finance, led by China, with strong support from India for the region.

The Sri Lankan Government established a ‘Transitional Justice’ order; a South African-style truth and reconciliation commission, to look into atrocities during its long civil war. UNICEF will continue to advocate that any processes involving children (even if they are adults now), should treat them as children and be prioritized. The Nepal Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in November, included specific attention to discrimination faced by Dalits, especially women. Recommendations included a call for greater participation and representation of Dalits in politics and the right to education, land and humanitarian relief etc.

As the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) came to a conclusion and the era of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) dawns, an assessment of South Asia’s MDG performance showed mixed results. While the region achieved the 3 MDG goals of extreme poverty reduction, reduction in maternal mortality and use of improved water sources though not with equity in all countries, it lagged by a significant margin on all others. Despite meeting the extreme poverty goal, extreme poverty across the region remains pervasive. Of the estimated 1 billion extremely poor people globally, 60 per cent live in India and Bangladesh. The region also bears about 40 per cent of the global burden of child stunting.

In education, the primary school net enrolment rate in South Asia increased from 77 per cent in 2000 to 90 per cent in 2013. Gender disparities, against girls, are most pronounced in secondary and tertiary education. There is also evidence that boys’ education is increasingly at risk in countries like Bangladesh. South Asia remains home to the largest numbers of out-of-school children in the world (over 36 million). Moreover, only one third of children in South Asia who reach Grade 4 meet minimum learning standards. Many classrooms are still characterized by teacher-centred, rote-based learning, corporal punishment and discrimination.

MDG progress has been the weakest in infant mortality and sanitation-related targets. South Asia accounted for nearly a quarter (22 per cent) of maternal deaths worldwide. Only 50 per cent of deliveries were attended by skilled health personnel. Of the 5.9 million under five deaths worldwide, 1.9 million of the deaths occurred in South Asia; with 1.2 million children dying before reaching their fifth birthday in India alone. While the overall number of people without a toilet is falling, there are still 610 million people practicing open defecation in South Asia, mostly in India. South Asia achieved the MDG target for water supply, but not in terms of safe and sustainable water supplies, a critical area.

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10 The MDG Report, 2015
12 UIS Online Database accessed 25 Jan. 2016 (NB data is for South and West Asia which includes SAARC countries plus Iran).
13 ibid
14 Education For All Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO, 2014
15 Trends of MMR estimated by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, WB
16 State of World Children, UNICEF, 2015
17 Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed progress report 2015
18 Joint Monitoring Programme 2015
dimension in the SDG era. Results from MICS surveys over the past 2-3 years in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan (Sindh province) have shown that over 60 per cent of households drink unsafe water.

Gender issues in South Asia represent a complex challenge. Almost half of girls marry before their 18th birthday. The practice remains rooted in deeply entrenched gender norms and expectations about the value and role of girls. Some 64 per cent of the regions children are unregistered at birth. Approximately 33 per cent of South Asia’s population live in cities and this figure is projected to be 51 per cent by 2050. Hundreds of millions of urban dwellers across the region live in under-served slums. A combination of factors drives urbanization in South Asia. These include escaping abject poverty, employment prospects, conflict, frequent crop failures and prospects of better social services.

1.3 Humanitarian Assistance

Considered the major disaster of 2015 globally, the Nepal earthquake on the 25th April (7.8), followed by a major aftershock on the 12th May (7.3) killed more than 9,000 people and injured a further 22,400. The earthquakes caused destruction in 31 of Nepal’s 75 districts, 14 districts were classified as ‘severely affected’ and prioritised for humanitarian assistance. These districts have an estimated population of 2.8 million (of which 1.1 million are children). Financial losses as a result of the earthquakes are estimated to be $7.06 billion, equivalent to 36 per cent of Nepal’s 2014 GDP. UNICEF with support from partners, provided emergency response and support across the sectors of WASH, Nutrition, Health, Education and Child Protection worth approximately US$60,900,000.

The humanitarian crisis was further compounded by the political unrest in the country’s southern belt following the promulgation of the new Constitution of Nepal, as highlighted earlier. However, by late January 2016, the crisis showed signs of easing off with border crossings being progressively reopened.

On 26th October 2015, another powerful (7.5) earthquake impacted Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Afghanistan, 103,093 people required humanitarian assistance and 195,798 people were displaced in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakthunkhwa (KP) province and in its Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Conflict in Afghanistan complicated the humanitarian response. However in response to the avalanches, earthquake mud slides and the conflicts in Central, Northern and Southern regions, in early 2015, UNICEF-WASH was able to reach 300,000 people, overall, with safe drinking water, adequate household latrines and basic hygiene education. In Pakistan, while the Government did not request international assistance in response to the earthquake, UNICEF, through partners,

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19 South Asia Headline Results progress Report 2015
26 Based on the data by the National Disaster Management Authority of Pakistan, as of 16 November 2015.
provided a range of non-food items for children and their families, which included, hygiene kits, buckets and blankets etc.

In Pakistan, the protracted crisis in KP and FATA has affected 1,618,638 people, of which 809,219 are children. However in 2015 the focus shifted from humanitarian assistance to Internally Displaced People (IDPs) to assisting the increasing number of families returning to areas declared safe by the Government. By end of November 2015, over 192,000 families remained displaced while 109,000 families had returned to government-declared safe areas in FATA. UNICEF-Pakistan, through NGO partners, continues to provide assistance to IDPs and returnees. Despite this, Pakistan experienced a period of relative calm in 2015, with the Pakistani government statistics showing that major terrorist attacks declined by about 70 per cent in the first nine months of 2015.

The overall security situation in Afghanistan continued to deteriorate in 2015 threatening the country’s political stabilization and socio-economic development. Afghanistan is classified as a very high risk country by the inter-agency risk analysis platform ‘INFORM’. It ranked third on a list of 191 countries in 2015, when assessed against hazards and exposure, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity. Since the gradual departure of foreign troops in 2013 the insurgency has grown more emboldened and local powerbrokers have vied to consolidate their authority. Taliban forces captured Kunduz in September 2015, the first major urban area to fall under its control in 14 years, and held the city for three days before Afghan troops, aided by NATO-led air support, recaptured the city. A Médicine Sans Frontieres (MSF) clinic in Kunduz was bombed by US forces, killing 14 MSF staff and at least 24 patients. The increased conflict, criminal activity and general insecurity exacerbated the already low school enrolment in Western, Eastern and Southern regions where many schools were reported to be closed. According to OCHA’s 2016 Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) there are 8.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan – or about a quarter of the total population. In 2015 UNICEF was able to reach 1.69 million out of the targeted 2.62 million beneficiaries. The situation in Afghanistan has triggered mass migration; in 2015 Afghans where the second highest, after Syrians, to seek refuge in Europe.

India and Sindh province, in southern Pakistan, was affected by a killer heat wave just before the monsoon began, killing 3,650 people. The state of Tamil Nadu in south-eastern India was hit by devastating floods in December 2015, affecting an estimated 1 million children in 6 districts. UNICEF provided targeted support to ensure basic services by building on existing partnerships with State Government departments. In neighbouring Sri-Lanka, unusually heavy rains at the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015 created massive temporary displacements of 1.1 million people (roughly 20 per cent of the total population). UNICEF supported the overall Government response, playing a coordination role in ensuring timely and effective responses, particularly in the areas of WASH and child protection.

South Asia is characterized by high natural hazard risks and man-made conflicts, urban migration and persistent inequities in access to quality, pro-poor social services. This requires that national development policies and plans are better informed by a combination of risk and vulnerability analysis.

28 UNHCR KP/FATA Factsheet of 31 October 2015.
to mitigate the impact of these risks, on the weakest and most exposed segments of its young population. UNICEF is placing growing strategic focus and efforts on this, together with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Disaster Management Centre (SDMC). In 2015 ROSA strengthened its work with SDMC, which involved three capacity building workshops for government officials in India and Nepal. This effort culminated in the SAARC-ROSA ‘High Level Policy Dialogue on Children and Disaster Risk Reduction’, in Kathmandu in September. This led to the subsequent adoption by the eight SAARC Member States of the ‘South Asia Regional Policy Framework for Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction’. The Framework provides guidance to Member States on a coherent approach in anticipating and addressing disaster risk concerns. The Framework also led to the signing of a joint country-level work plan between the Pakistan National Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and UNICEF Pakistan to scale up child-centred disaster risk reduction.
1.4 Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Plan

During the first two years of implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, key lessons have emerged from South Asia. Some reinforce ongoing programmes while others challenge the usual way of doing business and provide an opportunity to reflect on areas where greater attention will be required for the remainder of the implementation period. Highlights of key observations, are detailed below.

Focus on key priorities for children:

The Six Headline Results for Children in South Asia continue to galvanize focus on key results for children, including the most deprived. The universality of the SDGs has resulted in a very broad agenda. With 27 of the 169 SDG targets directly related to children, the scope for potential programme expansion is huge, and could overwhelm resources at country levels. While this presents opportunities to move into new critical areas for children, it also presents risks. This requires UNICEF to systematically focus on key child deprivations, where UNICEF’s technical leadership, resources, partnerships and influence could make the biggest contribution for children.

Child deprivation profiling as a tool to drive country prioritisation of SDGs, humanitarian and resilience actions for children:

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) household survey programme conducted every 3 to 5 years since 1995 has made impressive contributions in the provision of reliable data. Building on this, in the years leading to 2015, it was clear that alternate approaches and strategies need to be adopted to support the monitoring of SDGs, given the interconnectedness of goals and to promote accountability by countries. This will require a shift from the traditional role played by National Statistical Offices (NSO) and other key partners. Existing data needs to be ‘mined’, analysed and profiles developed to graphically depict the situation of children; particularly who and where the most vulnerable are, as basis for engaging partners and policy actions.

Adopt a results-based approach to knowledge management to address child deprivations:

Strong evidence is necessary to support UNICEF in its quest to strengthen programmes and generate knowledge in support of policy advocacy actions. In South Asia, emphasis is being placed on ensuring evidence is utilized. For example, greater attention is being given to the design of impact evaluations that are integrated in, and accompany, innovative and pilot programmes with a view to generating rigorous evidence that can underpin learning and accountability. This reflects an understanding that strong evidence is necessary but not sufficient; utility of the evidence generated must be strengthened. The South Asia knowledge management approach, aims to guide countries in the prioritisation and development of knowledge products. It calls for early and strategic engagement of partners, as an integral component of the approach. Importantly, it emphasises utility, through the deliberate consideration of audiences and dissemination platforms, during the design phase. This helps strengthen the continuum between knowledge products and policy-action. It strengthens the ability to measure the contribution of knowledge management on results for children, while also contributing toward capacity building of staff and partners.
Fostering greater connection between C4D and Results for Children:

In South Asia, as in other regions, UNICEF has learned the criticality of a Communication for Development (C4D), which is ‘issue focused’ and integral to priority results, able to measure social change, with evidence of impact. Across the region there are social and cultural norms and practices that undermine the rights of populations, and that harm children (such as child marriage); C4D is key in achieving positive social change with equity, including in humanitarian situations.

Strengthen Cross Sectoral Programming:

The SDGs and Headline Results will require more attention to cross-sectoral approaches in all programming phases (planning, programme implementation, monitoring) given the interconnectedness of results and the possibilities to multiply results, using convergent approaches. For example, the Kanyashree Prakalpa\(^\text{32}\) conditional, cash transfer programme in West Bengal (India), aims at preventing early marriage through the promotion of girl’s education and empowerment. Moving from a sector specific focus, towards horizontal programming, will require a change in mindset. However, if implemented effectively, convergent approaches, not only yield greater results for children and adolescents, but also reduce transaction costs.

Greater visibility and attention to the second decade of life:

There are a staggering 329.5 million adolescents in South Asia – 20 per cent of the total population. In India, home to more adolescents than anywhere in the world, there are a total of 239 million adolescents (19 per cent of the population of India). The SDGs more explicitly recognizes the importance of focusing on the second decade of life. Increasing the visibility of adolescents and catering for their specific needs, is a core focus for South Asia in coming years. Already in 2015, gains have been made in providing clear programmatic focus to achieve adolescent related results in the seven Strategic Plan (SP) areas, also linked to the regional headline results i.e. adolescent girl nutrition (under the stop stunting headline result).

Climate Change:

Climate change and its implications for children, particularly in the context of resilience building, is an area requiring greater investment in coming years. South Asia is extremely vulnerable to natural hazards associated to climate change. From flooding in Bangladesh, rising sea levels in the Maldives to glacial melting in the Himalayas. While there are promising approaches in the region, there is room for UNICEF to consolidate gains, amass knowledge on potential interventions and ensure a more coherent and systematic approach that allows for learning between and within countries, so that good practices are adapted and taken to scale regionally and beyond.

Urbanization:

The most dramatic structural transformation South Asia is going through is urbanization. As noted earlier, approximately 33 per cent per cent of South Asia’ 1.7 billion people live in cities. Going forward, UNICEF South Asia will focus on building on and developing new, innovative approaches and

partnerships, in the area of urban programming. For example, building networks and advocating with municipal corporations who are largely responsible for delivery of basic social services in cities. The region will seek to deepen its engagement with ‘think tanks’ and the private sector corporations to explore opportunities that could contribute to urban programming i.e. innovative technologies, new resource streams (impact investment etc.) and facilitation of south-south cooperation.
Part 2: Analysis of programme strategies and results: Development Effectiveness

ROSA’s approach to development effectiveness in the region is characterized by a focused approach to programming, as articulated through the regional Six Headline Results for Children in South Asia. To meet the headline results, the Regional Office is working closely with high burden countries to develop context specific strategies. This, while ensuring that in the hardest to reach, low burden countries are not left out. Furthermore, 2015 saw greater attention being placed on cross sectoral approaches and high burden countries. The RO used a mix of strategies of generation and use of evidence, capacity development, and promotion of innovation, south-south and triangular cooperation, high level advocacy and partnering for results - in pursuit of context specific priorities across the following Strategic Plan outcome and outputs.

2.1 Health (Headline Result: Save Newborns)

In the drive to accelerate the reduction of newborn mortality, ROSA co-organised landmarked events with WHO SEARO which included the first regional technical advisory group on maternal, newborn and child health with a special focus on newborn care and a costing workshop for newborn action plans (attended by all countries except the Maldives). Follow-up on these events was maintained and the outcomes of extensive technical support to countries included: plans for chlorhexidine introduction in Pakistan, helping babies breathe regional workshop in Dhaka, assisting Nepal and Bhutan with work on their national newborn action plans and assisting the Maldives with work on a national child health strategy. However, the slow introduction of new indicators for newborn care in routine data systems and the inability to use administrative data systems to monitor levels of neonatal mortality in countries, presents a constraint to measuring progress towards the headline result. It will therefore be an area for attention in 2016.

2.2 Polio (Headline Result: Eradicate Polio)

Given the epidemiological opportunity plus strong global partnership to eradicate polio, the Regional Polio Coordinator spent more than six months in providing surge support to Pakistan and Afghanistan. In Peshawar, this contributed to the roll-out of Continuous Community-Protected Vaccinators, who delivered campaign coverage of 95 per cent in KP/FATA Province and more than 1,000 Health Camps targeting Pakistan’s most marginalized. In Kabul, ROSA oversaw UNICEF’s support to the establishment of the Emergency Operation Centre structure, development of district-specific communications plans, and convergence activities with EPI/WASH. ROSA supported the development of Pakistan and Afghanistan’s communications campaigns, the cross-border communications plan, and transition of India’s Social Mobilization Network to support other health priorities for the Government of India.

2.3 Routine Immunization

In 2015 ROSA maintained its strong partnership with WHO at the Regional Immunization Technical Advisory Group. With ROSA technical support, the inactivated polio vaccine was introduced to all countries in the region and capacity was strengthened through learning events for immunization supply chain staff. Intensive support was given for effective vaccine management assessments and
improvement plan development, and support to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan for temperature monitoring studies. Lessons learned during the preparation for IPV introduction in South Asia that were published by ROSA in the Lancet Global Health\textsuperscript{33}, contributed to the successful roll out of IPV in the region.

2.4 WASH (Headline Result: Stop Open Defecation)

In line with the regional focused approach, support to high burden countries was prioritized to reduce the number of open defecators in South Asia. The five countries with the largest burden of open defecation are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. ROSA’s consultative efforts with COs, to finalize the regional strategy for open defecation reduction, contributed to the India Country Office deciding to prioritize the reduction of open defecation for the remainder of its country programme.

The regional strategy to reduce open defecation promotes community approaches to total sanitation, tailored to local context and learning. This strategy has been adopted in all five high burden countries. In Pakistan, UNICEF is transitioning from implementation through NGOs to support provincial governments to implement sanitation programmes. While a focus on open defecation-free communities is emerging across the region, there are also notable constraints. For example in India, large government incentives for household toilet construction tends to lead to ‘counting toilets’ rather than focusing on behaviour change. In Nepal, the 2015 earthquakes slowed the social movement for reducing open defecation.

In 2015 ROSA strengthened its advocacy work around WASH through its engagement with UNICEF’s Regional Goodwill Ambassador for sanitation and hygiene, cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar. Public interest messages were widely released through social media and the coverage of Tendulkar’s participation in a regional learning event in support of better WASH practices in school, galvanized extensive regional attention to this issue. In October, UNICEF and ICC signed a five-year global partnership to advocate for children in countries where cricket is a popular sport. An initial focus will be to improve sanitation in India. The launch of the campaign coincides with the much-anticipated ICC World Twenty-20 in India.

2.5 Nutrition (Headline Result: Stop Stunting)

To achieve the headline result on the reduction of stunting, ROSA placed emphasis on providing technical support to high burden countries - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. These counties are home to 99 per cent of stunted children in South Asia. Through technical support from the Regional Office, UNICEF country programmes have aligned with the regional priority to prevent child stunting through evidence-based, direct nutrition interventions and inter-sectoral nutrition-sensitive programming. Particular emphasis-for-impact was placed on India, home to 75 per cent of stunted children in the region. In 2015, India documented a 20 per cent decline in the prevalence of stunting (2006-2014), which translates into 14 million fewer stunted children. UNICEF’s

\textsuperscript{33} http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214109X14703249
four-year partnership with the EU for maternal and child nutrition in Asia was concluded successfully, achieving the targeted reductions in child stunting both in Bangladesh and Nepal.

ROSA’s support to the Nepal emergency earthquake response provided an opportunity to test a significant innovation in emergency nutrition response in South Asia, ‘the Child Nutrition Week’, which delivered six nutrition services to over 400,000 children and women. This innovation was published in the November issue of the Lancet’s ‘Global Health’.

The effectiveness of UNICEF-supported programmes to provide community-based care for children with severe acute malnutrition (CMAM) in India and Pakistan was evaluated in 2015. The experience in both countries shows that national governments and their partners can strengthen the existing health systems with situation-specific adjustments to place CMAM at the centre of an integrated approach for children with severe acute malnutrition. ROSA also supported the analysis of national survey data in Bhutan and found that treatment programmes need to prioritize very young children (0-11 months), while programmes for the prevention of wasting need to prioritize improvements in complementary feeding for children aged 6-23 months. These evaluation and research findings have the potential to improve targeted nutritional responses in South Asia and other regions.

Building on the momentum from the Stop Stunting Conference in Delhi in 201434, which helped UNICEF strategically position the issue of stunting and the interface between child feeding, women’s nutrition and household sanitation, at a global and regional level, a second global conference was held in 2015. The conference was entitled ‘First Foods: Improving the Quality of Foods and Feeding for Young Children’. The focus was on accelerating progress on complementary feeding for children under two globally, in South Asia and in India. It convened 200 partners and contributed to position UNICEF as a knowledge leader and convener on Maternal and Child Nutrition in South Asia. The Regional Director delivered a key note speech, advocating the importance of renewed commitment, context specific strategies, and effective partnerships, between governments and development partners and the public and the private sectors, to improving access to affordable and high quality nutritious complementary foods.

2.6 Education (Headline Result: Educate all girls and boys)

ROSA high-level commitment and prioritization to ensure all children in school are learning, and has resulted in reductions in out-of-school children (OOSC)35. Support has been provided through high-level advocacy; evidence generation and documentation of effective interventions. In addition, OOSC monitoring systems have been strengthened, including for children at risk of dropping out; and technical support and partnerships developed around early child development (ECD), peacebuilding and gender equality in education. The Regional Education Network endorsed an ambitious South Asia Strategy to drive the achievement of the Headline Result. ROSA has co-convened Education SDG forums, engaging countries and development partners to not only prepare for the SDGs, but also to prioritize the unfinished agenda of getting all children to school. This has resulted in the SAARC

35 UIS Online Database (accessed 25 Jan. 2016)
Education 2030/SDG 4 Framework for Action, which ROSA is facilitating with UNESCO and the SAARC Secretariat.

The main bottlenecks to achieving the headline result are around the difficulties in reaching the most deprived and marginalized communities that require greater investment through targeted interventions. Disasters caused by natural hazards, political instability, rising extremism and civil strife in the region is making it increasingly difficult to deliver quality education to children. This has made promoting preparedness, resilience, social cohesion and peacebuilding through education by ROSA all the more critical.

ROSA in collaboration with HQ, supported the formative evaluation of the Let Us Learn (LuL) initiative, which covered Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Finalized in early 2015, evaluation findings have been used to influence programming in countries. Findings are applicable across countries and focus on the importance of community engagement and participation to ensure success of interventions. They also point to the need to plan strategically taking into account local context. The evaluation recommendations include a push for more consideration to effectiveness, scalability and sustainability of interventions and a clear assessment of partners’ capacity to deliver and scale-up the intervention(s).

2.7 Child Protection (Headline Result: End Child Marriage)

The Regional Office is working with COs to end the practice of child marriage which remains pervasive in South Asia. A regional strategic framework was developed and five countries in the region (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India Nepal and Pakistan) are actively programming in the area of child marriage. Led by ROSA, child marriage is recognized as an inter-sectoral area of work with all COs having some inter-sectoral forum to discuss progress and directions. A key constraint is how to monitor changes in child marriage rates and national policies at the regional level. To that end, ROSA has a dual approach, developing a statistical model for measuring change over short periods of time as well as providing support to SAIEVAC (South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children) to develop and institutionalise a monitoring system for the regional action plan on child marriage and related plans or interventions. In addition to child marriage, ROSA has supported COs to generate evidence and review legislation in other areas of violence. Bhutan is engaging in its third phase of its Violence Against Children study. India has been active in reviewing its child labour legislation. Afghanistan was supported in the review of its age assessment legislation and Sri Lanka with its draft police interviewing curriculum.

Technical support was provided to all countries to continue to promote the development of the systems and norms approach to preventing and responding to child protection risks. Notable progress over the past year includes the mapping of the child protection system in Afghanistan, and the restructuring of the Sri Lanka programme to have a systems’ focus. The Maldives continued to develop its island protection mechanisms and Bangladesh to strengthen an interlinking system from the village through to the national level. To change attitudes towards preventing violence against children, the Maldives and Sri Lanka initiated information campaigns.

Recognizing that the risks children face will not be reduced working alone, ROSA is a member of the governing board of SAIEVAC, a SAARC Apex Body, and the chair of South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG). With the SACG, the focus this year has been on
developing clear accountabilities and institutional arrangements as well as enhancing the resource sharing role of the SACG by supporting a mutual capacity building of its members.

2.8 HIV and AIDS

The main strategy for achieving results for adolescents (the age group at greatest risk), in relation to HIV and AIDS in the region is through integration in the health and/or child protection section, adolescent section, or communication for development. However mainstreaming HIV remained a challenge for COs in 2015 largely due to competing programme priorities. This necessitated strong spearheading from ROSA, through partnerships with other regional UN agencies and contributions to several regional initiatives, to bring desired change in the area of HIV and AIDS. In collaboration with SAARC and regional UN agencies, a joint facilitation of the Health Ministers meeting held in 2015, contributed to ensuring that HIV remained a key priority. ROSA’s high level advocacy as co-chair to the 10th Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission meeting in Beijing influenced the government of India to modify their implementation action plan to aim for increased PMTCT coverage from 38 per cent (2015) to 80 per cent in 2016 using domestic resources.

Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bangladesh have all piloted innovative approaches to increase the reach and coverage of HIV related services for marginalized and high-risk populations, and women and children who live far from specialized services. ROSA convened a regional partnership meeting to advocate for the scale-up of adolescents HIV prevention and provision of services, supported by recent data and operational research. India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are working towards scale up in 2016.

2.9 Social Inclusion

ROSA provided assistance to all COs in sharpening analysis on social inclusion issues with special attention to decentralization and public finance - recognizing the need to build staff capacity in these areas. Priority support was provided to cash transfer programmes, most notably, in Nepal where the emergency cash transfer programme is one of the first in South Asia and one of the largest in UNICEF – reaching 400,000 vulnerable individuals\textsuperscript{37}. The US$15 million social assistance programme provided immediate relief to those affected by the earthquakes (particularly Dalit children under five years of age, widows and single women over 60 years of age, people with disabilities, senior citizens over 70 years of age etc.). It also offered an opportunity to strengthen and progressively scale-up the Child Grant (a regular government social transfer programme), while reinforcing the building blocks of an integrated social protection system. It helped develop a model for social transfers that works in both regular development and emergency contexts. Support was also provided to the design of the cash transfer programme in Afghanistan.

With support from ROSA, the Bhutan CO was able to forge an institutional relationship with Jindal School of Governance and Social Policy towards a Social Policy course for civil servants and elected representatives. The two-week course, will be delivered by Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) with technical assistance from the Jindal School of Government and Public Policy (JSGP), Sonipat, India and UNICEF Bhutan. It will commence with the first set of 20 officials in January 2016.

\textsuperscript{36} UNAIDS, WHO, UNFPA, UNESCO, UN women, and UNDP
\textsuperscript{37} UNICEF 2015, \textit{Road to Recovery Cash transfers as an emergency response and a catalyst to enhance the social protection system in Nepal}
promote evidence and result-based policy making and implementation. In the Maldives, ROSA also facilitated the first steps towards undertaking a costing study for child-friendly budgets with HQ support.

Despite progress in 2015, the area of social inclusion remains constrained in the region due, in part, to the resources and staffing structures of COs, whereby social inclusion is often combined with planning, monitoring and evaluation functions, thus minimizing the available time staff have to focus on each of these areas.

### 2.10 Humanitarian Assistance

The designation of the Nepal Earthquake emergency as ‘L2’ regional response by UNICEF led to an organization-wide mobilization managed under the Regional Director’s leadership for 4 months (April – August). ROSA provided coordination, and extensive technical support and surge support to the Nepal CO across all programme sectors and programmes, including resource mobilization, humanitarian planning, reporting and evaluation. ROSA also mobilized additional support from COs across the region, one example included the coordination of additional ICT support. This resulted in the immediate availability of communication services, power supply to offices and emergency sites and availability of ICT equipment to meet the demands of staff deployed to support the emergency. ROSA supported NCO in the overall coordination, conduct of an ‘After Action Review’ one month into the response which enabled some critical decisions to be made with regard to strengthening field implementation. This was followed up the documentation and sharing of lessons learned from the humanitarian response, based on direct interviews with a wide range of (primarily) surge staff within 3 months from the onset of the emergency.

Technical support in emergency preparedness and response were provided by ROSA to UNICEF COs in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Significant time by ROSA was also invested in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) through leveraging of strategic partners. RO support capacity in the field would be enhanced by an organization-wide guidance on DRR, especially in this era of the SDGs. This was been recognized by UNICEF HQ and the Reference Group on Risk-Informed Programming (RIP) has just been resuscitated with ROSA participation.

### 2.11 Adolescents, Gender and Communication for Development (C4D)

Critical cross-cutting advances were made in 2015 through the development of a regional strategic framework for programming with and for adolescents. The framework provides clear programmatic focus to achieve adolescent-related results in the seven strategic plan (SP) areas and also linked to the regional headline results. Within the framework is a specific focus on ending child marriage, reducing school drop-out and increasing enrolment in secondary education, reducing pregnancy and anaemia in adolescent girls. The framework focuses on the realization of the rights of all adolescents, girls and boys, with an emphasis on the most vulnerable.

ROSA’s technical leadership to the IKEA Foundation-funded programme in several countries, launched in early 2015, has been an opportunity to implement and learn from cross-sectoral interventions in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. ROSA provided intensive coordination and technical support to establish rigorous evaluation. Three impact evaluations have been designed in partnership with the University of Mannheim and Johns Hopkins University.
The ROSA headline result ‘to end child marriage’ has contributed to translating the UNICEF Gender Action Plan (GAP)\(^{38}\) agenda into concrete interventions (through the Global Child Marriage programme for Bangladesh, India and Nepal and through the IKEA Foundation (IKEAF) funded programme for Afghanistan, India and Pakistan). Furthermore, the IKEAF four-year initiative contributes to increasing adolescent education and reducing adolescent pregnancy, results that are closely linked with the GAP priorities.

Moving from vertical to horizontal approaches to programming remains a challenge. As identified in the regional formative evaluation on adolescent programmes, programmes often lack integration with other areas of work, they are inadequately monitored and evaluated, and the learning from these experiences is insufficiently shared across the region. Identifying connections and leveraging resources across sectors, both at the regional and country level, is not progressing at the pace that is required, in part due to human resource challenges. However the arrival of the C4D Regional Advisor in the last quarter of 2015 has laid the foundation and increased expectations to support the delivery of integrated social and behaviour change interventions across the first and second decades of life. Critical to this success is the need to ensure cross cutting functions that are reflected across all the programme results (including headline results).

Part 3: Analysis of programme strategies and results: Global and Regional Programme

3.1 Influencing global/regional discourse and policy

The earthquake response was declared a corporate Level 2 Emergency from April to August 2015 led by the Regional Director. The response became a rallying event between ROSA and the Nepal Country Office as well as galvanizing solidarity and collective action by UNICEF HQ divisions and other country offices in South Asia. Contributing to the seamless handling of international media requests and providing crucial communication materials to external audiences, ROSA helped position UNICEF as a credible and transparent organization in humanitarian action. As a result ROSA was able to directly contribute to the high levels of emergency funding through UNICEF National Committees to UNICEF Nepal.

The Six Headline Results for Children in South Asia continued to resonate and underpin advocacy and engagement across a wide range of partners and platforms in 2015. Partners have expressed an appreciation for the focused approach emerging from the headline results including around strategic evidence and knowledge generation. Resource mobilization around the headline results is an area of the will be further explored in coming years.

A key lesson that has emerged from the first two years of implementing the headline results is the need for a deeper focus at subnational level, particularly given the inequalities within countries. The outcomes from the mid-term review of both India and Pakistan country programmes reinforced this. Following the midterm reviews, both countries aligned their priorities to the headline results, with a view to focusing on high burden states and provinces, while also digging deeper to reach the most marginalised. This includes through the development of context specific strategies and policies to accelerate results. Given the demographics of South Asia, accelerated progress not only positively impacts results for children at a national level – but also a global level.

To facilitate this subnational equity driven approach, in 2015 ROSA widened dialogue among Heads of UNICEF Field Office across South Asia by convening a regional meeting. Among other things discussed was the development of equity profiles and the prioritization and integration of the Sustainable Development Goals, in the context of decentralised planning and resource mobilisation. This decentralized approach will continue to be a key pillar in UNICEF’s policy agenda, especially as resources for the SDGs will increasingly need to come from domestic resources. In addition, ROSA will continue to invest in strengthening results-based management in the region, building on investments made in 2015 that included a range of country specific and regional training offerings to remote support to countries.

Engagement of corporate networks, with clear, focused results is another area where the Regional Office can play a catalytic role given the corporate landscape in South Asia. UNICEF will deepen partnership engagement beyond fundraising, to the promotion of ethical corporate codes of conduct and child rights business principals. Discussions with the Bangladesh CO for example, have focused on the garment and tea industries harnessing UNICEF’s local knowledge, brand and technical expertise to help draw attention to child right violations. In 2016, ROSA will further explore the opportunities
and risks associated to this type of corporate engagement, in collaboration with country offices and headquarters.

Within the public policy discourse, attention is being directed to a more holistic and integrated approach to social protection systems. Learning from the experience of The Road to Recovery; Cash transfers as an emergency response and a catalyst to enhance the social protection system in Nepal implemented as part of the Nepal Earthquake Emergency Response will be paramount to this. The cash transfer programme is implemented jointly by the Government through the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) and is one of the largest global cash transfer to be supported by UNICEF as part of an emergency response globally. This experience was shared at the Regional Management Team meeting in November and with the UN system in Nepal for wider adoption in South Asia, as a potential model for social transfers that work in both development and emergency contexts.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, ROSA used the momentum to highlight the unfinished business of the MDG era while also grasping the opportunity to steer partners towards new critical areas for children as identified in the agenda. In education, the unfinished business of getting all children to school remains a key issue in South Asia, to make sure this also remains a priority for governments in the region, the SAARC Education 2030/SDG 4 Framework for Action was formed which ROSA is facilitating with UNESCO and the SAARC Secretariat. The focus on early learning within the SDGs was a spring board for ROSA to strengthen advocacy drawing on latest evidence from neuroscience around this issue through the co-organisation of an Asia-Pacific Ministerial Meeting on ECD. The recognition that ending violence is imperative to achieving sustainable development came at an opportune moment for ROSA to make the connections with the SDG violence against children agenda through its work with the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) particularly during the development of the SAIEVAC monitoring framework.
3.2 Evaluation and Research and Data

**EVALUATION**

**Title:** IATT on YKP - joint evaluation of HIV-related capacity development initiatives on young key populations in Asia and the Pacific in the period 2010 – 2014  
**Year:** 2015  
**Authors:** UNICEF ROSA  
**Type of report:** Evaluation  
**Sequence Number:** 2015/001  
**Themes:** AIDS, Young Key Populations, Health, Capacity Development Initiatives

**STUDY REPORTS**

**Title:** Inactivated Polio Vaccine introduction in South Asia - one year on  
**Year:** Accepted for publication in Lancet Global Health in 2015  
**Authors:** Andreas Hasman, Gaurav Garg and Douglas James Noble  
**Sequence Number:** 2015/002  
**Type of report:** Invited commentary (study report)  
**Themes:** Inactivated Polio Vaccine introductions

**Title:** Delivering essential nutrition services for children after the Nepal earthquake  
**Year:** 2015  
**Authors:** VM Aguayo, A Sharma A, GR Subedi  
**Sequence Number:** 2015/003  
**Type of report:** Study report  
**Themes:** Delivering essential nutrition

**Title:** Mid upper-arm circumference is an effective tool to identify infants and young children with severe acute malnutrition in India  
**Year:** 2015  
**Authors:** VM Aguayo, S Aneja, N Badgaiyan, K Singh  
**Sequence Number:** 2015/004  
**Type of report:** Study report  
**Themes:** Identification tool acute malnutrition

**Title:** Towards universal salt iodization in India. Achievements, challenges and future actions  
**Year:** 2015  
**Authors:** JH Rah, AM Anas, A Chakrabarty, R Sankar, CS Pandav, VM Aguayo  
**Sequence Number:** 2015/005  
**Type of report:** Study report  
**Themes:** Universal salt iodization

**Title:** Determinants of child stunting in the Royal Kingdom of Bhutan. An in-depth analysis of nationally representative data  
**Year:** 2015  
**Authors:** VM Aguayo, N Badgaiyan, K Paintal  
**Sequence Number:** 2015/006  
**Type of report:** Study report  
**Themes:** Child stunting in Bhutan
Title: How do the new WHO discharge criteria for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition affect the performance of therapeutic feeding programmes? New evidence from India
Year: 2015
Authors: VM Aguayo, N Badgaiyan, K Singh
Sequence Number: 2015/007
Type of report: Study report
Themes: Discharge criteria acute malnutrition

Title: Household sanitation and personal hygiene practices are associated with child stunting in rural India. A cross-sectional analysis of surveys
Year: 2015
Authors: JH Rah, AA Cronin, B Badgaiyan, VM Aguayo, S Coates, S Ahmed
Sequence Number: 2015/008
Type of report: Study report
Themes: Child stunting rural India

Title: Age-appropriate infant and young child feeding practices are associated with child nutrition in India. Insights from nationally representative data
Year: 2015
Authors: P Menon, A Bamezai, A Subandoro, MA Ayoya, VM Aguayo
Sequence Number: 2015/009
Type of report: Study report
Themes: Young child feeding practices

Title: India's vitamin A supplementation programme is reaching the most vulnerable districts but not all vulnerable children. New evidence from the seven states with the highest burden of mortality among under-5s
Year: 2015
Authors: VM Aguayo, S Bhattacharjee, L Bhawani, N Badgaiyan
Sequence Number: 2015/010
Type of report: Study report
Themes: India's vitamin A supplementation programme

Title: What are countries in South Asia doing to meet the learning needs of out-of-school children? Paper submitted and presented at UKFIET 13th International Conference on Education and Development, Sept. 2015, UK.
Year: 2015
Sequence Number: 2015/011
Type of Report: study/paper
Themes: out-of-school children, girls' education, learning outcomes

Title: Equity Snapshot - Reaching South Asia's most disadvantaged children
Year: 2015
Authors: UNICEF ROSA
Sequence Number: 2015/012
Type of report: Study report
Themes: Equity
LITERATURE REVIEWS

Title: Effective Interventions Aimed at Reaching Out-of-School Children: A Literature Review
Year: 2015
Sequence number: 2015/013
Type of report: Literature review
Themes: out-of-school children, early childhood development (ECD), non-formal education, inclusive education

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Title: 2015 South Asia Data Pocketbook
Year: 2015
Authors: UNICEF ROSA
Sequence Number: 2015/014
Type of report: Data booklet
Quantities: 1000 printed copies and e-version
Estimated Cost: USD 890
Themes: Data on key socio-economic indicators
Link: http://www.unicef.org/rosa/2015_South_Asia_Pocketbook_FINAL_Version(1).pdf

Title: Educate All Girls and Boys in South Asia fact sheet/ advocacy brochure
Year: 2015
Authors: Leotes Helin, Urmila Sarkar, Frank Van Capelle
Sequence Number: 2015/015
Type of report: Fact sheet/ advocacy brochure
Quantities: 1000 printed copies and e-version
Estimated Cost: USD 8,000
Themes: out-of-school children, learning outcomes,

Title: New Delhi Agreement for enhancing SAARC collaboration for Education 2030 Outcome Document
Year: 2015
Authors: Participants to the South Asia Sub-regional Conference on EFA Unfinished Agenda and SDG 4, Oct 2015
Sequence Number: 2015/016
Type of report: E-version of the outcome document
Themes: out-of-school children, learning outcomes, SDGs
Links: http://www.unicef.org/rosa/Delhi_Agreement_15_October_2015_FINAL.pdf
3.3 Implementation Strategies

While recognizing the contribution to data generation through investments in the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in the region, a critical challenge (as identified in the 2014 Regional Analysis Report) is data gaps and the ability to fully utilize existing data for improved programming and evidence based planning. To this end, in May 2015 ROSA signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with UNESCAP entitled ‘Strengthening Evidence for Equity through Social Statistics and Information on Child Rights in South Asia’. The objective of the partnership is to engage statistical authorities to promote accountability for routine child deprivation profiling and equity analysis. The partnership provided opportunity for engagement with statistical authorities to examine different data sources related to child deprivations during a working session in June 2015. Since then, through regular technical support from ROSA, all countries in the region have embarked on the production of context specific child deprivation profiles, albeit at different rates of progress. The headline results themes have largely been driving the development of profiles from issues of stunting, open defecation, out of school children to child marriage etc. The approach aligns to the Monitoring of Results Equity System (MoRES) through the promotion of ongoing situation analysis and monitoring whether inequalities are widening or narrowing, despite progress at national levels. The demand from COs for support to this initiative intensified in the last quarter of the year, notably from field or zone offices in large countries.

Following the establishment of a Regional Evaluation Strategy in 2013, 2015 saw a further increase in evaluation-related activities across the region with some 25 planned evaluations at the country level and two regional evaluations conducted by ROSA. This is a reflection of the increased confidence and increased value assigned to conducting evaluations. A series of advocacy activities on impact evaluation were conducted in 2015. Supported by ROSA, work on three evaluations of humanitarian action (EHA) were taken forward, against the background of a regional training workshop on EHA in Sri Lanka in August, with support by the Evaluation Office in Headquarters.

Despite the increase in the numbers and scope of evaluations, progress in the region is challenged in the area of spending, capacity and use. The required allocation of 1 per cent programme expenditure to evaluation is not currently happening. Secondly, in most country offices, the capacity to manage evaluations has reached a limit given that the number of evaluations conducted has significantly increased since 2013. To address this problem, ROSA is encouraging country offices to consider contracting evaluation managers to support the conduct of necessary evaluations. Lastly, with regard to the use of evaluations, beyond tracking management response actions, there are no effective indicators to ascertain the use of evaluation for advocacy purposes or as explicit inputs into programming thus signalling the need for the RO to strengthen guidance, support and standards to further increase the usefulness of evaluation as an implementation strategy.

The endorsement of the ‘Towards a Knowledge Management Strategy’ by all COs in 2014, has progressed to a systematic and deliberate approach to knowledge management. The aim of which is to strengthen the continuum between knowledge generation and policy-action around specific issues. This conceptual knowledge management approach will help to guide countries in the prioritisation and development of knowledge products. Several sectors have strengthened their KM approach. For example in education, ROSA has initiated the establishment of knowledge sharing platforms (Teamsites, Yammer), promoted UNICEF work in social media, and created an experts database. A
knowledge Management strategy has also been designed to capture the knowledge gained from the results achieved in the three countries involved in the IKEAF-funded initiative in view to advocate for strengthened policies and scalable adolescent programmes in South-Asia.

The first South Asia Headline Results Progress Reports was produced in April 2015 and has contributed to strengthening advocacy and galvanising support for the headline results. The Progress Report is an online product which is being updated on an annual basis, promoting accountability and transparency around the headline results. The progress reports provide an overview of global and regional trends and latest evidence that have important implications for programmes to meet targets. With the technical knowhow acquired during the production of the Progress Reports, ROSA was able to support COs in producing similar publications in Pakistan and Bhutan.

Strategic partnerships with key influencers have also helped to raise the profile of children around key headline themes. On the 21st of October, UNICEF’s Executive Director announced the exciting ‘Cricket for Development’ partnership. This partnership was brokered in July, between the International Cricket Council (ICC) and ROSA, with the support of India Country Office. It is a strategic partnership given prominence of cricket in the region and its ability to drive social change. Using the appeal and reach of cricket, UNICEF will initially use this partnership to support the headline result of reducing open defecation. Still on open defecation, a second example strategic partnerships with a focused result is the engagement of UNICEF’s Regional Goodwill Ambassador, Sachin Tendulkar, who is helping bring awareness and drawing on his extensive networks and followers to help change attitudes and behaviours.

ROSA’s strategic, coherent and deliberate approach to partnerships is integral to all the Headline Results strategies. Using a range of social media and digital platforms, UNICEF’s reach was extended in 2015. In addition, the regional office made use of network meetings, trainings and other opportunities to promote this strategy to country offices. One example of this was a global Twitter chat, organized in partnership with HQ (UNICEF Education) and Harvard graduates with participation from COs, education practitioners and experts. Such online conversations are an approach to solidify UNICEF ROSA’s position as the thought-leader for and with children’s rights and wellbeing in the region. These are some examples of ROSA’s holistic approach to partnerships; that relate not merely to securing funds, but a broader view, that encompasses resources (both financial and technical), networks and platforms, and their willingness to share accountability and risk.

**South to South**

South to South cooperation in the region has been particularly visible in the area of maternal and newborn health. Following from government exchange visits supported through ROSA in 2014 a broad framework for collaboration was established between the Ministry of Public Health, Afghan Pediatric Association National Neonatology Forum of India and UNICEF to strengthen newborn care in Afghanistan. Through this framework, Afghanistan and India share knowledge, skills, expertise, and resources to meet their development goals for reducing neonatal mortality. In 2015 ROSA brought together UNICEF health staff across the region to visit India’s National Cold Chain Resource Center (NCCRC) in order to observe technical innovations in cold chain and Sick Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) strengthening. The centre has already initiated training for health personnel from across South Asia and offers potential for further opportunities for South-South Collaboration.
3.4 Normative Principles

Human Rights Approach to Programming

The *Six Headline Results for Children in South Asia* represent a focused regional approach to help realise the rights of children to health, education, nutrition and a hygienic environment (through the elimination of open defecation). While ending child marriage is not a specific right, it is a violation that negatively impacts their rights to be protected, educated and to live a healthy productive life.

Sustained advocacy around the headline results and support to the development of Country Programme Documents and Programme Mid Term Reviews are opportunities ROSA uses to ensure that all country programmes are underpinned by the human rights-based approach to programming principles. To this end, technical support and guidance from ROSA resulted in the Maldives Country Programme Document 2016-2020, as well as the Maldives UNDAF 2016-2020 meeting all quality benchmarks with a sharpened equity focus and results structure aligned to the Global UNICEF Strategic Plan and UNDG SOPs respectively. Support from ROSA to the Pakistan and India Mid-Term Reviews, resulted in strategic prioritization of programmes aligned to South Headline Results which also entailed a deeper equity focus in both countries.

Although the Nepal Mid-Term Review did not take place as planned due to the earthquake emergency response, ROSA supported the CO to align the response with the Core Commitments for Children while also responding to the regular country programming needs in the most deprived districts of the country. A human rights based approach was particularly evident within the cash transfer programme through which close to 400,000 vulnerable people including persons with disabilities, older persons, widows, single women above 60 and Dalit children under 5 in 19 severely affected districts received an emergency top-up as part of their regular social assistance grants.

Significant investment was made in 2015 in strengthening the results culture in South Asia. Knowledge and skills of 28 participants on results-based management (RBM) planning logic, budgeting and reporting were enhanced through a regional workshop with HQ participation. Lessons learned and good practices contributed to the development of the RBM e-learning course, to be rolled out globally in 2016. A regional RBM strategy was developed by the regional office and will guide the roll out of RBM to all COs in 2016 to help consolidate gains in strengthening the application of RBM.

With respect to advancing gender equality, the Global Gender Action Plan (GAP) and the regional strategic framework for adolescent programmes share common results in the field of adolescent protection, education and health. South Asia fully aligns with the global core commitments for adolescents that underlines the criticality of ensuring safe spaces for adolescents to be civically and socially engaged. The overall goal of the four-year IKEAF-funded initiative is to improve the lives of adolescents’ in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan by increasing the autonomy that adolescent boys and girls have over decisions affecting their lives. Adolescents are engaged as partners and change agents for themselves and their communities.

Gender Equality

ROSA convened the UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) South Asia Regional Meeting in April 2015 with the aim of reinvigorating partnerships at CO level, addressing challenges in girls’ education and gender equality and mapping high impact initiatives and partnerships for learning exchange at country level. Focus areas include the development of a Girls’ Education Strategy for Afghanistan and the mapping of Alternative Learning Pathways.

Environmental Sustainability

In 2015 ROSA developed a ‘greening score card’, consisting of a number of measurement indicators in programmes and in operations. It is expected that the use and monitoring of the score card will encourage COs to more robustly apply the normative principles for environmental sustainability within their programmes. As an outcome of introducing the score card, CO Representatives have requested a dedicated session at next regional management team on strengthening UNICEFS approach to carbon footprint reduction and sustainable programming. ROSA is engaging with HQs to step up UNICEF’s work to mitigate climate change and support countries in 2016 to learn, adapt and develop sustainable programming approaches. Attention will be paid to countries developing new country programmes in 2016 such as Bangladesh. Ongoing UNICEF work in Bangladesh include a managed aquifer-recharge system that captures water during the monsoon season, purifies it and stores it underground. Nearly 20,000 children now have access to climate and disaster-resilient sources of water. Also Bangladesh office is supporting 40,000 households with fuel-efficient cook stoves.
Part 4: Management

4.1 Management and Operations

The Regional Office for South Asia has managed its operations in the framework of the objectives of the Regional Office Management Plan (ROMP) 2014-2017, focusing on enhancing business process simplification, increasing the efficiency of operations through the development of in-house business support centres. This supported the global transitioning of offices to the Global Shared Services Center (GSSC), implementing the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) Strategy, enhancing quality Human Resources (HR) service delivery and sustaining the quality of life on the office premises in a carbon neutral environment.

ROSA successfully received the certificate from UNFCCC in March 2015 and became carbon neutral for 2013-2014 under its “Greening” initiative. One major aspect of the project has been solar power. For eight months of the year, solar power significantly reduces the amount, cleanliness and cost of energy the office uses. Solar energy makes up approximately 65 per cent of ROSA’s total energy consumption. During the aftermath of the earthquake that hit Nepal the office was able to ensure business continuity when much of Kathmandu was cut off from national electricity grids. More COs are following ROSA’s example with Bangladesh and Nepal implementing solar power in several offices.

A key management priority of 2015 was to complete the South Asia preparations for the organisational shift to a Global Service Support Centre (GSSC) in Budapest. These preparations advanced well, in part due to the ongoing strengthening of the established Business Support Centres (BSC) in South Asia. As a result of these BSCs, the RO and all COs reported significant efficiency gains. These range from faster financial processing time and reduced transaction errors due to the enhanced expertise built up by the BSC team, to clearer process accountabilities and increased quality time for core business and programme implementation.

To ensure the smooth transfer to the GSSC, the RO conducted preparatory exercises to assess and support the level of readiness of the existing BSCs and identified local focal points who will be coordinating with Budapest. A GSSC led meeting for local focal points and Chief of Operations held in Delhi in November completed the preparation process. Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal and ROSA transitioned smoothly to GSSC at the end of the year. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan will be transitioning on January 18th, 2016. South Asia also contributed to the pilot phase of the GSSC by surging seventeen staff from across the region to support the management and processor team in Budapest.

While it is too early to assess the impact of the GSSC on RO and CO performance, the four offices that transitioned in 2015 have so far not reported disruptions in their payments and their clients have not been affected by the shift from in-house processing to GSSC. However there are still unresolved problems with the system and processes that local focal points are having to deal with that need to be overcome in 2016. Furthermore the expected handover in 2016 between existing the skilled processors and newly recruited GSSC staff is considered as a potential risk to be monitored carefully by ROSA.
In 2015, ROSA conducted sixteen Public Budget Reviews (PBR) across the COs (five for Afghanistan, three for Pakistan, two each for India and Nepal and one each for Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives and Sri Lanka). PBRs were conducted through mail poll which contributed to timely and effectively serving the needs of offices.

ROSA reached a formal agreement with the HQ Supply Division (SD) on the delegation of regional authorities and responsibilities for oversight, technical assistance and quality assurance of procurement, supply, logistics and warehouse management. This was done through a memorandum of understanding that explains clearly how SD would measure and report on the fulfilment of the delegated regional authorities and responsibilities and achievement of results to the Regional Office. SD has provided a risk assessment and identified areas for headquarters oversight, technical support and quality assurance of key issues related to procurement, supply, logistics and warehouse management functions in the region. The assessment was presented at the Chief of Operations meeting where countries were acquainted with mitigations measures and compliance actions.

An example of a regional quality assurance mechanism that worked well in 2015 was the enhancement of a key operational performance indicators (KPIs) report whereby COs were asked to submit updates on a quarterly basis. This approach has incited offices to quickly address pending issues identified by low performing KPIs.

Attention to learning and staff development was provided through the ROSA 2015 Learning Plan reflecting functional group and individual needs. Some key learning initiatives included Managing Performance/People for Results, Programme Policy and Procedure (PPP), Results-Based Management (RBM), Communication for Development, Social Norms, Global Leadership Development Courses (including in Education) and Gender and Diversity, Influencing Skills. In addition, staff were provided opportunities across the region for stretch assignments, including through surge support to emergency responses. Training on Talent Management System, e-recruitment and on-boarding were carried out for HR staff in the region. Staff well-being also continued to be a priority, especially following the huge Earthquake that affected staff in Nepal country office and the Regional Office. Staff concerns arising from the 2014 Global Staff Survey (GSS) e.g. global initiatives such as the implementation of Global Shared Service Center (GSSC) were addressed through working closely with the Country and Regional Staff Associations. Some of the strategies included continuing to monitor GSSC action plan implementation with COs and discussions during the April and November Regional Management Team Meetings. Other initiatives and good practices included promotion of flexible work arrangements and stress counselling especially in emergency duty stations.

Finally, to monitor overall Country Offices satisfaction with the support received by ROSA which is a critical ROMP indicator of performance, ROSA conducted its annual Country Office Satisfaction Survey in December. Overall levels of satisfaction on the relevance, timeliness, quality, and appropriateness of ROSA support were consistently above 97 per cent across all operational and programme areas.