

Country Office Annual Report 2019

Republic of Kyrgyzstan



Update on the context and situation of children

The year 2019 has been a period of mixed results and developments for the Kyrgyz Republic, with certain encouraging signs as well as some drawbacks. It was marked by a degree of political volatility and security incidents culminating, in the first week of August, with the forceful arrest of the former President, his closest associates and two members of parliament. This did not, however, trigger major civil unrest as had been feared at one stage.

At the same time civil society activists, as well as independent media, have become increasingly vocal in their demands for accountability, calling for an increase in transparency, and a strengthened fight against corruption.

According to the World Bank (2017), Kyrgyzstan continues to enjoy positive economic growth, reaching a per capita gross national income of US\$1,130, positioning the country in the low-middle income range. Remittances make up more than a third of gross domestic product. Despite this progress, 25.6 per cent of the population lives below the national poverty line. Moreover, according to the World Bank, there are strong seasonal fluctuations in poverty, indicating a high degree of vulnerability for most of Kyrgyzstan's population. For the first time, in 2019 the country conducted a multidimensional poverty analysis with UNICEF support, capturing five crucial aspects of wellbeing: education, health, monetary poverty, food security and living conditions. The analysis concluded that, overall, 50.3 per cent of the population is multidimensionally deprived. In this context, a large proportion of children remain vulnerable. Monetary child poverty is estimated at 28 per cent, indicating that children are disproportionately affected by poverty (National Statistics Committee).

According to the latest National Statistical Committee data, 740,500 citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic are registered as migrants abroad, with most living in Russia (640,000 people), Kazakhstan and Turkey. However, the overall number of migrants could be significantly higher, reaching up to 1.2 million citizens, or 18 per cent of the country's population. This negatively affects children, especially those 107,000 children left behind by both parents for the purpose of migration.

Kyrgyzstan continues to face challenges related to the environment and climate change. In the winter, air pollution in the capital city, Bishkek, is particularly high, far exceeding World Health Organization air guidelines for particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), and very often reaching hazardous levels that pose serious hazards to the population, and to children in particular. However, ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change by the Parliament in October 2019 was a significant step at policy level.

Relations with neighbouring countries in the Fergana Valley confirmed the notable improvements already registered in 2018. While security incidents over un-demarcated border areas with Tajikistan did occur repeatedly, state authorities have been able to address the disputes in an expeditious manner by immediately opening direct, constructive and effective channels of communication between high-level officials. However, throughout Kyrgyzstan the living conditions and access to rights of members of minority ethnic groups still require improvement.

In May, after a long period of advocacy from civil society and United Nations agencies, the Kyrgyz Republic officially ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The focus now shifts towards implementation, in line with the principle of progressive realization. The Concept Note on Inclusive Education and the supporting Implementation Plan adopted in July set clear milestones for improving access to mainstream education for children with disabilities. Finally, in July, Kyrgyzstan became the first state to end statelessness after the Government, civil society and United Nations agencies conducted a nationwide campaign that identified and resolved the status of 13,700 people without a nationality, including 2,000 children.

With the release of the 2018 MICS survey data in May, it is possible to better assess progress in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals and the realization of child rights. Steady progress continues to be observed regarding reduction in child mortality, which now stands at 20 per 1,000 live births (MICS 2018), though levels are higher in rural areas and for the poorest quintile. Neonatal mortality accounts for more than half of deaths among children under five. More efforts will be needed to address these newborns deaths and further reduce child mortality.

Remarkable advances in the coverage of early childhood education should be noted: the figure was 39 per cent in 2018, compared to 23 per cent in 2014. MICS data also indicates near-universal access to primary and lower secondary education. Such progress is especially notable given the constrained economic situation and political instability over the past two decades. However, the quality of education remains a concern, with poor learning outcomes for students.

Other areas will require renewed attention to achieve progress. These include: maternal mortality (29 deaths per 100,000 live births), chronic malnutrition (12 per cent of children are stunted); violence against children (74 per cent of children experience violent discipline), school dropouts after lower secondary education level (13 per cent do not complete upper

Country Office Annual Report 2019

Republic of Kyrgyzstan



secondary education – boys: 12 per cent; girls: 15 per cent); child marriage (13 per cent of women aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18); institutionalization of children (more than 12,000 remain in residential institutions) and lack of quality social services. The most vulnerable groups are children with disabilities, children left behind by migrant parents, children from the poorest households and girls. The country also experienced considerable measles outbreaks with a total of 2,569 cases reported in 2019. Strengthening immunization programmes is therefore important.

The Government has been giving new impetus to the digitalization process, taking concrete steps to initiate e-registry and online application systems, whether for birth grants, enrolment in schools or for keeping health records. In addition, efforts are being made to integrate various databases into one single platform, avoiding parallel systems and improving access to information across ministerial departments.

In the area of governance, a long-awaited reform to the Electoral Code has introduced an obligatory 30 per cent gender quota at local council level, mirroring the framework in place for the national parliament.

Major contributions and drivers of results

UNICEF's work in 2019 has primarily focused on providing technical assistance to the Government of Kyrgyzstan to accelerate the achievement of the results defined in the second chapter of the National Development Strategy, on social development, health care, education and unlocking the potential of youth.

UNICEF continued to engage closely with the Government and other partners to shape national policies and programmes, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and UNICEF strategic priorities at the global and regional level.

UNICEF released the results of the 2018 Kyrgyzstan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), a national household survey that provides data for 33 SDG indicators related to 11 goals and more than 20 targets. The MICS report was officially launched by the National Statistical Committee (NSC) and UNICEF in May 2019 and has been disseminated in Kyrgyz, Russian and English languages. It has been used as a key source feeding into the national SDG monitoring system, supporting advocacy and informing relevant policies.

As a part of its human rights obligations, the Government has submitted its State Party Reports to the CRC Committee (combined 5th and 6th report) and to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Kyrgyzstan also ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Celebrations around the 30th anniversary of the CRC led to renewed commitment from the Government to effective realization of children's rights and resulted in making children a national priority in 2020, which was declared by the President the Year of Regional Development, Digitalization and Child Support.

This section summarizes the achievements of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan in various sectors and cross-cutting areas against the Country Programme, its 2019 targets and its Annual Management Plan (AMP). The achievements are grouped around UNICEF Strategic Plan Goal Areas and enablers.

Goal Area 1: Every child survives and thrives

Outcome 2 of the Country Programme targets enhancing equitable access of disadvantaged children to appropriate services to enable their survival and development. Work in this area has focused on generation and use of additional evidence, policy advice, service delivery to model new and innovative initiatives, and advancing the capacity of service providers.

Analysis of the Progress and Determinants of Neonatal Mortality in Kyrgyzstan identified the leading causes of deaths and gaps in service provision and provided recommendations for acceleration of efforts. This analysis confirmed that UNICEF's work on neonatal health has made a clear contribution, as the greatest reduction in neonatal mortality was in the geographical areas targeted by UNICEF programme in previous years.

Newborn health remained a priority for the health programme in 2019. At least 10,000 newborns and children were reached with life-saving interventions thanks to the increased capacity of 125 healthcare providers and resuscitation equipment provided to 23 healthcare facilities. Another investment – in water supply, sanitation and heating system of 11 healthcare facilities in southern Kyrgyzstan – is expected to service about 25,600 deliveries per year.

In addition, delivery of quality maternal and child health services was enhanced in 24 of 68 district hospitals through the implementation of improvement plans and through monitoring and supervision of frontline health providers.

Country Office Annual Report 2019

Republic of Kyrgyzstan



UNICEF supported the piloting of postnatal home visiting services for newborns at two family medicine centres in accordance with updated guidelines that include identification of children at risk of developmental delay, abuse and neglect, and referral to transdisciplinary services. This work and successful advocacy has resulted in the inclusion of a home visiting indicator into the criteria for bonus payments to family doctors from the Mandatory Health Insurance Fund.

Alongside provision of life-saving interventions and outreach work, UNICEF has supported the development of two Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), that are intended to prevent neonatal mortality in primary health care. These procedures have been incorporated into the curricula of pre- and in-service training institutes.

With funding from GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and UNICEF's technical assistance, thousands of children will access safer vaccines thanks to the instalment of 632 specialized refrigerators at vaccination points throughout the country. Eight per cent of under-vaccinated children in targeted areas were also immunized thanks to UNICEF's communication for development efforts. More than 36 per cent of targeted parents were reached through social mobilization and community engagement activities, including traditional and social media. The capacity of 600 health workers and healthcare authorities to better communicate on immunization was developed.

This year UNICEF also completed the analysis of the status and implementation of telemedicine in Kyrgyzstan and provided technical support for the development of a regulatory framework on telemedicine at primary health care level.

The Ministry of Health adopted the Food Security and Nutrition Programme for 2019-2023 (FSNP), which was developed with the support of UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). This comprehensive multi-sectoral strategy sets ambitious targets to reduce the number of children under five who are stunted by 30 per cent and anaemia in women of reproductive age and in children aged 6-59 months by 40 per cent. In addition, UNICEF helped the Ministry of Health to update a set of guidelines to improve maternal and child nutritional status and to develop a nutrition information management system. Support was provided for the promotion of good infant and young child feeding practices and the rolling out new guidelines on the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.

Goal Area 2: Every child learns

Investing in early years and improving primary and secondary learning outcomes were also prioritized within Outcome 2 of the Country Programme.

UNICEF continued to chair the Education Partners' group and facilitated the involvement of all partners in the development of the new Education Sector Strategy 2021-2040, which is yet to be validated

Along with other partners, UNICEF contributed to the inclusive education policy, which was adopted in July by the Ministry of Education, representing a major step forward for the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

With a view to jump-start its implementation, about 15,000 children started the new school year in 50 pilot schools, which are becoming more inclusive and responsive to the special education needs of children with disabilities and linguistic minorities.

With UNICEF support, for the first time, 19,126 children (96.3 per cent of expected children) were enrolled in Grade 1 in Bishkek through an online school registration system. This enables equitable access without "informal payments", avoiding the risk of exclusion of children from internal migrant families.

Since 2018, the Government has been working to provide high-quality internet connections to more than 600 schools, based on UNICEF's internet connectivity mapping. By September 2019, more than 90 per cent of all schools were connected.

In addition, UNICEF supported optimization of the education management information system by piloting Open EMIS modules in 50 schools. The system now has records for more than 3,000 educational organizations.

About 6,000 pre-school age children, including children with disabilities, benefited from a newly developed draft curriculum and learning materials at early childhood development facilities. In these facilities, 110 staff increased their capacity, with UNICEF support. In 2019, national Pre-school education and child care (6 months-7 years) Standards were updated, in line with social cohesion, gender and early intervention approaches.

UNICEF worked with the Government to model Child Development Centres (CDCs) within existing municipal libraries. Currently, these CDCs are being piloted in 50 libraries across the country, covering more than 1,000 children aged 3-7. By leveraging pre-existing infrastructure and professionals, the CDCs are intended to be a cost-effective mechanism to extend

Country Office Annual Report 2019

Republic of Kyrgyzstan



government services as an alternative early learning opportunity for young children, and an effective way to promote positive parenting.

Kyrgyzstan is one of the four countries selected for implementing the global Better Early Learning and Development at Scale Initiative (BELDS). In the BELDS framework, UNICEF developed technical officials' capacity to mainstream early childhood education into education sector plans and budgets, and to improve financing and institutionalization of quality early childhood education.

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

Outcome 3 of the UNICEF country programme focuses on strengthening child protection. As MICS revealed an increase in the prevalence of violence against children from 57 per cent in 2014 to 74 per cent in 2018, work around ending violence against boys and girls was also identified as an office priority within the AMP.

Ten thousand people signed a petition launched by UNICEF to end violence against children, putting this question on the public agenda. UNICEF developed a positive parenting package, with a focus on non-violent approaches, and a nationwide public campaign was conducted under the auspices of the President to raise public awareness about the harmful effects of violence.

UNICEF has worked throughout the year to improve the legislative framework through a major reform of the Child Code. Envisaged amendments include the prohibition of corporal punishment and of institutionalization (creating a threshold of 12 children per residential institution) and the formalization of kinship arrangements for children whose parents are migrating abroad.

In 2019, an additional 950 social workers were placed by the Government at the local level to identify, report and support vulnerable children. UNICEF provided technical assistance for the drafting of an action plan to guide and enable the Government to strengthen the social service workforce, in line with UNICEF's regional Call to Action for 'Strengthening the Social Work and Social Service Workforce in Europe and Central Asia'.

UNICEF assistance was also requested to prepare a plan of action for the return and reintegration of Kyrgyzstani children residing in former so-called Islamic State territories. The plan is built on the principles of non-discrimination, non-institutionalization, no deradicalization interventions and no prosecution.

Special attention has been given also to the 107,000 children left behind by both parents for the purpose of migration. 13 per cent of girls and 11 per cent of boys have at least one parent, who lives abroad (MICS, 2018). UNICEF is advocating to introduce an obligation for migrating parents to formalize kinship arrangements for their children with a view to ensuring that every child will have a legal guardian.

A digitalized case management system – intended to assist families in difficult life situations, and which is expected to provide a platform easily accessible to all actors involved in child protection – has been created and tested.

Child-friendly free legal aid has been institutionalized by the Ministry of Justice. In total, 680 legal aid professionals have gained the knowledge and skills needed to engender effective change in how children in contact with the law are dealt with.

The new State Programme on Justice for Children 2020-2030 was developed with UNICEF's technical assistance and is expected to further improve justice system in the country.

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

In 2019, UNICEF mobilized volunteers to support emergency drills in 109 schools: this led to 64,400, (38,640 girls) school children practicing safety skills. A national communication campaign in support of school safety also boosted public awareness on the importance of regular disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities and child participation in schools. In addition, air pollution training was conducted for UNICEF volunteers to enhance their understanding of the health impact of air pollution and to initiate new activities in relation to climate change adaptation in schools.

UNICEF strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) to sustain application of age and gender-sensitive Disaster Risk Analysis (DRA) methodology in 102 municipalities and expand it to an additional 73 municipalities in 2019. These local authorities will review their local development plan and budget to make them risk-informed and child-sensitive in relation to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

In September UNICEF, in partnership with the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) organized a study tour to Japan on

Country Office Annual Report 2019

Republic of Kyrgyzstan



school-based disaster risk reduction (SBDRR) for a Government delegation. As a result, MoES and MES agreed to develop a roadmap to strengthen cooperation between government bodies on scaling up DRR in schools and communities: this is expected to be produced in the first quarter of 2020.

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

In 2019, for the first time ever, the NSC started to assess multidimensional poverty tailored to the country context, after being trained in this new methodology. A participatory process, facilitated by UNICEF, resulted in defining which indicators and thresholds would be relevant for this analysis. The findings will serve to shed light on non-monetary dimensions of poverty and on regional disparities. The NSC will be able to use this method to track progress towards SDG1 target on an annual basis. The child-specific multidimensional poverty methodology is nearly completed.

UNICEF technical support in the area of cash assistance consisted in analyzing the current child grant scheme and in generating new evidence regarding new options for child benefits that would cover all children aged 0-18 months, except those in the 20 per cent wealthiest households.

Policy advocacy continued to use evidence on child poverty and key findings from the social protection public expenditure review.

A public finance review on social protection for 2019/2020 recorded discrepancies between the mid-term forecast for sectoral public expenditure and annual budgets. The absence of a current sectoral strategy with priorities, targets and indicators is likely to have affected this sector funding.

Gender-responsive programming

In 2019, UNICEF initiated a three-year programme on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in partnership with Clé de Peau Beauté, the luxury Japanese skincare and make-up brand. The programme is targeting 15-18 year-old girls and aims at engaging 15,000-30,000 girls from poor areas and disadvantaged groups so that they can make informed career choices and acquire the skills required to break the cycle of poverty in their families and communities.

In cooperation with other UN agencies, UNICEF developed a methodology to conduct anti-discrimination and gender-sensitive examination of education materials, which was endorsed by the MoES. This means that all new education materials, from textbooks to supplemental learning materials, will have to be examined at their drafting stage, and all discriminatory expressions will be removed.

A Communication for Development (C4D) Roadmap to prevent child marriage was developed with UNICEF technical support, based on strong evidence and behaviour change theories. This Roadmap will be an integral part of the National Plan of Action to End Child Marriage in Kyrgyzstan, expected to be endorsed in 2020.

As a result of successful collaborative work among five UN agencies, a joint programme was developed under the EU funded Spotlight Initiative on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, in which UNICEF leads the prevention pillar.

Adolescent and youth programming

Adolescent and youth programming has mostly focused on the implementation of the Youth- and Child-Friendly Local Governance (YCFLG) initiative, which increased its reach by doubling the number of municipalities in 2019. Currently, 42 urban and rural municipalities are part of it, representing more than 38 per cent of the total population of Kyrgyzstan (2,472,556 people). A nationwide contest was launched among 18 urban municipalities by a Government Decree. In 2020, the title of best Child- and Youth-Friendly City will be awarded, based on the performance of the cities against 26 quantitative and qualitative indicators, which look into the cities' efforts to encourage children's and youth participation and social engagement, to protect them from violence and to facilitate their access to social services.

Through the YCFLG, UNICEF helped nine cities to develop budgeted operational plans for 2020, which address youth and child issues. At the same time, nine rural municipalities have also adopted socio-economic development programmes, taking into account children's and youth concerns and suggested actions. Over 8,600 young people (more than 60 per cent girls) participated in a series of participatory needs assessments, which looked into matters that affect them.

Disability programming

As the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was ratified in May, UNICEF has been working closely with the Government to support the implementation of an immediate action plan, development of which was among the

Country Office Annual Report 2019

Republic of Kyrgyzstan



AMP priorities.

With support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UNICEF assisted MoES to develop an Inclusive Education National Policy for 2019-2023 and introduced an inclusive model in 10 schools and 10 pre-school facilities

UNICEF continued testing new approaches to early identification and intervention of disability. To date, 25 national members of transdisciplinary teams have been trained on developing individual family support plans. This intervention is currently implemented in 10 kindergartens and 10 pre-primary classes during the 2019/20 academic year; it is expected to reach 1,033 children.

Research was commissioned by UNICEF on attitudes towards children with disabilities and their families. It is intended to collect valid statistical and in-depth qualitative data that will inform the development of a communication strategy.

Enablers and Annual Management Priorities

In addition to programme priorities, UNICEF Kyrgyzstan's 2019 AMP prioritizes all four enablers agreed by UNICEF globally to increase its ability to achieve results for children. Examples of this include:

1. *Responsive, transparent and accountable internal governance.* To improve internal accountability, UNICEF Kyrgyzstan enhanced programme and operations cooperation and used result-based management. . Relevant SOPs were revisited to ensure efficiency and accountability. The Country Management Team met regularly to monitor progress against office priorities and efficient budget utilization.
2. *Results-oriented, efficient and effective management:* key performance indicators were frequently monitored. 55 per cent increase in the budget in comparison to 2018 has not affected due diligence as resources were managed in compliance with UNICEF procedures with 100 per cent utilization. Effective implementation of the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) was ensured, reaching 115 per cent of Programmatic Visits and 92 per cent of Spot checks.
3. *Staff capacity to drive change for children.* A staff retreat was conducted to foster teamwork and discuss staff well-being as well as performance management. The findings of the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority (ITF) were discussed, involving all staff, and key actions were recommended to make the Office a better workplace. 80 per cent implementation of the Office Training Plan, including completion of online courses for supervisors, was achieved. Five staff and 35 consultants were recruited to ensure adequate support in the implementation of workplans. Flexible Working Arrangement was promoted and resulted in ten staff members using flexi hours, one staff using compressed working time and 28 staff using teleworking.
4. *Versatile, safe and secure knowledge and information systems.* UNICEF Kyrgyzstan has been able to strengthen its position as a leading and credible voice for children, with 1,425 media mentions, 67,414 followers in social media and more than 155,230 views of its website. Communication products and advocacy campaigns served to raise children issues in the public agenda, including through 16 partnerships. 300 UNICEF volunteers have played a significant role in enhancing the outreach of the programmes in 2019.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Innovation

Through the Youth and Child-Friendly Local Governance (YCFLG) initiative (globally known as Child-Friendly Cities), and in close collaboration with municipal authorities, UNICEF has succeeded at bringing issues raised by children and young people into local planning processes, and this has resulted in concrete actions. The initiative began in Kyrgyzstan with 700 children and young people in 10 pilot rural municipalities in 2016, and now covers 42 urban and rural municipalities, reaching 11,000 adolescents and young people (around 60 per cent girls).

The expansion was enabled by solid buy-in from central Government, strong leadership from local governments, constant advocacy efforts and understanding of how youth inclusion is beneficial for long-term social cohesion.

While the YCFLG pilot model provided children and youth with opportunities to bring their issues to the attention of local governments and for them to be addressed through budgeted plans, the UPSHIFT social innovation tool is building the capacity of children and young people to become direct actors in the changes they want to see in their towns. At intensive

Country Office Annual Report 2019

Republic of Kyrgyzstan



workshops, 2,340 young people (67 per cent female) learn how to creatively turn issues into solutions and prototype them with communities and decision-makers. The best solutions, which can be converted into concrete projects, receive funding from UNICEF, local governments and private institutions for implementation. In the process, young people acquire creativity, innovation, analytical thinking, resilience and adaptability skills.

In 2019, the Government used the YCFLG initiative to implement a contest in the 18 cities included in the Presidential Regional Development Concept. The award will go to the best Child- and Youth-Friendly City, based on the municipality's performance against a set of indicators, including children and youth participation, protection from violence, and access to education and health. This contest reveals the clear recognition by the Government of the value of the YCFLG, but beyond this one-off competition, the Government and UNICEF need to discuss the YCFLG initiative's sustainability. YCFLG requires not only commitments but also clear deliverables from municipalities to improve services for children and young people and emphasize their participation in planning and delivering these services.

UNICEF is directing advocacy efforts and technical support to drive the institutionalization of youth- and child-friendly planning and budgeting locally. The long-term strategic objective of the YCFLG is to ensure mandatory collection of age and sex-disaggregated data on children's and young people's needs and demands, and that they are addressed through local development.

In Kyrgyzstan, local self-governments receive a significant proportion of their budgets from the central level. Thus, it is important that funding for these local governments can be earmarked to support more action in favour of children at the local level. Analyzing budgetary allocations and roles and responsibilities at the central and local levels of governance could be useful in this regard.

The transformative value of the process lies in supporting more participatory processes for decision making and offering adolescents and young people opportunities to be heard before they can express their opinions through the electoral system. In turn, participation and active citizenship among youth will help reduce the gap between politicians and civil society, thus leading to a more cohesive and peaceful state.

Lessons Learned

In 2019, Kyrgyzstan was selected as one of the case study countries for the Global Gender Action Plan (GAP) Evaluation. This review process has been useful for internal reflections on progress in both gender programming and institutionalization of gender mainstreaming during the first two years of the country programme. It was recognized that the Gender Programme Review in 2016 was a critical moment for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan to better consider the need to improve its gender programming, and this resulted in the establishment of the post of Gender Programme Officer in the new country programme (2018-2022).

Key observations from the GAP review are that the work in 2018 was dedicated to establishing internal systems for reviewing key programme documents, including terms of reference, work plans, partnership documents and communication products, to ensure that gender is integrated across all interventions. The Country Office Gender Strategy was developed and endorsed to contextualize the Global Gender Action Plan within the Country Programme Document (CPD) and identify key gender inequality issues and strategic entry points for programming. Accountabilities for advancing gender programming were included in the performance plans of Outcome Leads. The CPD also focused on ensuring cross-sectoral work to improve gender integration. These efforts resulted in greater sensitization of Country Office personnel and partners on the gender mainstreaming approach.

Building on these improved review systems and greater awareness and buy-in from staff, UNICEF Kyrgyzstan achieved important integrated results for gender in 2019, specifically in education. The Ministry of Education and Science institutionalized an internal mechanism to review all new draft teaching and learning materials for gender-neutral, gender-positive and anti-discrimination principles. The new Education Sector Strategy has also integrated gender equality considerations. UNICEF also supported the development of a new national plan to end child marriage as a follow up to the previous 2017-2018 plan. The document is expected to be endorsed in 2020, providing a framework for the health, education, social protection, youth, law enforcement and judicial sectors to address child marriage with a multi-sectoral response. Resource mobilization for gender-targeted initiatives has resulted in new funding for advancing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education for girls and addressing violence against women and girls. UNICEF is recognized as one of the key partners for advancing gender equality, among both development partners and national stakeholders.

Some gender initiatives currently remain at the discretion of motivated programme staff. To further enhance this focus on gender, systematic gender integration, monitoring and reporting on gender results will require revision of the country programme at the output level to better articulate integrated results within sectors, and specific results targeting adolescent girls. Gender results, indicators and clear targets will need to be formulated to adequately capture and report on

Country Office Annual Report 2019

Republic of Kyrgyzstan



the work being undertaken by the Country Office, accountabilities will need to be clarified, and resources will need to be secured that are dedicated for transformative gender results.