UNICEF Annual Report 2016

Romania

Executive Summary

With a new Government and two elections in 2016, maintaining children on the public and political agenda was imperative in Romania. The Government Programme identified vulnerable children as one of its priorities. The sustained economic growth finally translated into a reduction of the number of children at risk of poverty and exclusion to 46 per cent, but it remains the highest percentage in the European Union (EU).

A key achievement was the revision of the normative framework, with United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) technical support and advocacy, often with civil society. Parliament revised the law on adoption to accelerate the process, and adopted a forward-looking law on the marketing of breast milk substitutes.

The Ministries of Social Protection, Health and Education approved a cross-sectoral order to promote coordinated, community-based services for vulnerable populations, especially children and their families. The Ministry of Education adopted ministerial orders to accelerate school desegregation and improve the quality of education. These three orders incorporate a number of good practices tested at the local level and advocated for by UNICEF Romania. With UNICEF technical support, the evaluation of children with disability was aligned with international standards.

Legislative changes supported by UNICEF advocacy and expertise led to concrete results for children. Since the law banning the institutionalization of children under three years of age was revised in 2014, the number of institutionalised children decreased by 28 per cent. Since 2006, the number of children with special education needs in mainstream schools increased from two per cent to 63 per cent.

Two innovative models supported by UNICEF and Norway Grants showed extremely promising results. The minimum package of services, which brings together the health, education and child protection systems to support vulnerable children and their families, improved the life of 17,500 children. All children at risk of separation covered by the initiative still live with their families and receive community services; 93 per cent of children without identity documents received birth certificates; and 97 per cent of children not registered in the health insurance system are now covered and access health care. The Quality Inclusive Education Initiative reached 20,000 children. Involved schools reduced absenteeism, and some managed to eliminate dropout within a year. UNICEF used this evidence to improve policies and budget allocations for children, especially vulnerable ones.

The partnership with Norway was strengthened as the Embassy joined UNICEF Romania’s efforts to advocate for the social inclusion of vulnerable children and the models’ scale-up. Norway Grants allocated funding in its next budget cycle to continue to support UNICEF’s work in Romania.

The success of these models was also anchored in a solid partnership with the authorities of the counties where they were tested. In addition to committing their time and resources, the authorities supported the national scale-up and shared good practices with others in
UNICEF’s strategy to advocate and provide technical support to help the Government leverage EU funding for children proved effective. UNICEF influenced the allocation of some US$61 million for children, particularly for childcare system reform. An important proposal to scale up the minimum package of services was developed but its approval was postponed to 2017.

Combating violence against children was another priority. Partnership, advocacy and the provision of expertise to the Government and Parliament contributed to Romania ratifying the Convention on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Romania became one of the two European ‘pathfinder countries’ in the Global Partnership to end Violence against Children, committing to support reforms in the country and beyond. A joint UNICEF-Ministry of Education campaign raised awareness of verbal violence against children in schools. Its evaluation shows that 86 per cent of child viewers learned what to do when exposed to violence at school.

Together with the World Bank, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the National Authority for Child Rights to conduct an in-depth assessment of the childcare system in Romania. Based on this evidence, the National Authority mobilised US$ 3.2 million from EU funding to develop a De-Institutionalization Master Plan with technical support from UNICEF and the World Bank. The situation of thousands of institutionalized children, their families and communities is analysed to close 137 institutions and provide family-based solutions for 7,000 institutionalized children. The National Authority will leverage another US$53 million from EU funds to implement this reform by the end of 2020 with continuous support from UNICEF.

While budgets for social sectors increased, Romania remains one of the EU countries with the lowest investments in education, health and social protection. Budget growth focused on salaries, and not necessarily on strategic system reforms. Despite UNICEF advocacy and evidence, expenditures in the three sectors remain inequitable, with vulnerable children benefiting the least from public investment.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

While there was no humanitarian crisis in Romania in 2016, in the context of the migrant and refugee crisis in Europe, as the United Nations (UN) Country Team coordinator, UNICEF Romania brought together several UN Agencies (United Nations Refugee Agency [UNHCR], the World Health Organization [WHO], World Bank, International Organization for Migration [IOM]) to initiate a joint discussion with relevant national authorities. The purpose was to better understand and support the preparedness efforts of the Government of Romania, and to jointly promote the rights of migrants and refugees, including children, in line with international conventions. While the number of illegal entries remained very low, Romania, as an EU member state, agreed to receive a small number migrants and refugees from Greece and Italy.

In close coordination with WHO and IOM, UNICEF Romania supplied technical and financial support to the evaluation of the preparedness of the health system to provide care to a potential influx of migrants and refugees. UNICEF Romania organized a meeting of relevant national stakeholders to disseminate the findings of the evaluation and to formulate recommendations for action.
UNICEF continued to monitor the situation very closely, in close consultation with UNHCR and IOM, the Government of Romania and relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

**Emerging Areas of Importance**

The UNICEF Romania Country Programme 2012-2017 included integrated early childhood development and adolescents as key programmatic and advocacy priorities. In 2016, UNICEF, in close coordination with WHO, IOM, UNHCR and the World Bank, continued to support the preparedness efforts of national authorities and NGOs in the event of the country facing a massive influx of refugees and migrants, and to advocate for the rights of children in migration or refugee situations (see section on Humanitarian Response).

**The second decade of life.** Over two million adolescents, half of them girls, live in Romania. They face higher risks of poverty and social exclusion than any other age group. Some of them engage in risky behaviours such as substance abuse or unprotected sex (10 per cent of pregnant women are teenagers).

Together with national authorities and three municipalities, UNICEF piloted Resource Centres for Adolescents. These Centres provide information and activities to adolescents, including vulnerable ones. Over 20,000 adolescents participated in activities to help them develop their knowledge and competencies to prevent substance abuse, promote education, support positive relationship with families and communities, etc. Vulnerable adolescents who went to the Centres were also referred to various specialised services provided by Child Protection Departments, while child protection staff working with vulnerable families with adolescents referred them to the Centres. At the request of parents, the Centres started offering parenting classes. This was complemented by the use of social and online media to share information on topics selected by experts and adolescents themselves. The formative evaluation of the model will be finalized in 2017. The three cities involved are progressively taking over the Centres to ensure their sustainability.

At the national level, UNICEF provided expertise and partnered with NGOs to support the development of cooperation methodologies between services in the health, education, social protection, as well as systems to help adolescents fight drug abuse and adolescents living in the streets. The National Antidrug Agency and the National Authority for Child Rights jointly developed the roles and responsibilities of their respective professionals in the identification, counselling and treatment of adolescents using drugs. A referral mechanism among local services, including those provided by NGOs, was developed and piloted to identify street children and adolescents and refer them to friendly services adapted to their needs. These methodologies will be approved in 2017.

UNICEF signed a new partnership with the National Students Council. The first joint activity was to collect the opinions of 7,000 children and adolescents on key issues affecting their lives, using social media, the internet and face-to-face interactions. UNICEF Romania is taking their opinions into account when developing the new 2018-2022 Country Programme Document.

Together with the Ministries of Health and Education, the National Students Council, and adolescents themselves, UNICEF conducted a communications campaign to decrease risky behaviours in adolescents. Three video spots were broadcast over 1,200 times on TV, resulting in 66 million potential impressions. The spots were viewed over 360,000 times on the UNICEF Romania YouTube channel, and one million times on the UNICEF Romania Facebook page. An evaluation of the campaign showed that 20 per cent of respondents spontaneously recalled the campaign. Of those, over 60 per cent correctly identified the
message of the campaign, and between 88 per cent and 95 per cent agreed with key messages (even occasional drinking is harmful, drinking can cause neurological problems, drinking can increase the risk of other substance abuse).

**Early childhood development (ECD).** Coordination of services for young children remains a challenge in Romania, and social changes are still required to provide a protective and stimulating environment at home. Access to crèches/day care is very limited (6.5 per cent at the national level, concentrated in urban areas), and other services at the community level are also insufficient. UNICEF and its partners tested a model of coordinated social, health and education services to increase the capacity of community nurses and social workers to identify, prevent and address issues related to access for services for young children and violence against children. The objectives are to increase the access of these children to health, education and child protection services, and to improve the knowledge and practices of parents. Following community workers' interventions, 93 per cent of children identified without identity document received birth certificates. Some 97 per cent of children not registered in the health insurance system are now covered and access health care. All children identified at risk of separation are still living with their families with support from community services. The quality of services was also considerably strengthened through dedicated and trained social workers, community nurses, school counsellors, health and school mediators.

### Summary Notes and Acronyms

- **CMT** Country Management Team
- **DCT** Direct Cash Transfer
- **EU** European Union
- **GSSC** Global Shared Services Centre
- **HACT** Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers
- **ICT** Information Communication Technology
- **IOM** International Organization for Migration
- **KPI** Key Performance Indicator
- **NGO** Non-governmental Organization
- **OECD** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- **UN** United Nations
- **UNHCR** United Nations Refugee Agency
- **UNICEF** United Nations Children’s Fund
- **WHO** World Health Organization

### Capacity Development

Capacity development is an intrinsic part of UNICEF’s work with central and sub-national authorities in Romania. In 2016, UNICEF Romania focused particularly on strengthening the ability of ministries and other stakeholders to work across sectors.

Together with the World Bank, UNICEF provided expertise to the National Authority for Child Rights to undertake a complex study on the status of the childcare system. This is being followed by a large-scale project on the de-institutionalisation of children in Romania. Both for the study and the project, new methodologies and tools were developed and applied together with the National Authority, building its capacity to develop evidence-based reforms.

With the Ministry of Education, the first triangular partnership with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (supported financially and technically by UNICEF) provided an unprecedented opportunity to further develop the Ministry’s evaluation.
system and improve education outcomes.

Engagement with the Ministry of Health focused on building the Ministry’s capacity to develop the first cross-sectoral national health education plan, analyse the causes of infant and maternal mortality and strengthen its mother and child health programme.

UNICEF provided technical support to develop the capacity of the National Institute of Statistics, line ministries and the Ombudsman Institution to harmonise data collection and connect databases, as well as to collect disaggregated data and monitor the situation of vulnerable children.

At the sub-national level, as part of its models on cross-sectoral services, UNICEF and its partners tested pre- and in-service training packages for social workers, community nurses, school staff and county authorities. These training packages use the latest research on child and adolescents’ development, multiple deprivation, strength-based approach etc., and include gender and cultural sensitisation. The packages are included in evaluations. UNICEF is advocating for their inclusion in university curricula and national training mechanisms.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

Complex studies and innovative modelling provided evidence that, combined with advocacy and technical support, allowed UNICEF to successfully influence national policies and resource allocation.

Together with the World Bank, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the National Authority to conduct an in-depth assessment of the childcare system in Romania. Based on this evidence, the National Authority mobilised US$3.2 million from EU funding to develop a De-Institutionalization Master Plan, also with technical support from UNICEF and the World Bank. The National Authority will leverage another US$53 million from EU funds to implement this reform by the end of 2020.

UNICEF used the results of its model on the minimum package of services for children and their families together with the study on the costing of these services to advocate and provide technical support for their progressive scale-up. As a result, the Ministry of Social Protection developed a proposal using good practices tested by the model to mobilise a significant amount of EU funding. The Ministries of Social Protection, Health and Education also adopted a cross-ministerial order to translate these good practices into secondary legislation.

Evidence generated by the model on quality, inclusive education, combined with UNICEF’s advocacy and technical support, were used by the Ministry of Education to develop its orders on school desegregation and improving the quality of education. Previous studies on out-of-school children and the impact of the per capita funding formula on disadvantaged schools was used to make the funding of schools more equitable.

Good practices from the model of Resource Centres for Adolescents were incorporated by the Ministry of Youth in the revision of legislation on the Youth Centres that exist throughout the country.

**Partnerships**

As described throughout the report, UNICEF’s primary partnership lies with the Government, particularly the Ministries of Social Protection (especially the National Authority for Child Rights), Education, Health and European Funds.
Continuous engagement with Parliamentarians and ministries contributed to the adoption of the law on the code of marketing for promoting breast milk substitutes, the revision of the law on adoption, and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Romania became one of the two European pathfinder countries in the Global Partnership to end Violence against Children, committing to action in the country and beyond its borders.

Partnerships with the county and local authorities of Bacau County, where UNICEF piloted several packages of innovative services for vulnerable children, have been key to the initiatives’ success. In addition to committing their time and own resources, these authorities supported the scale up of the services and shared good practices both with other authorities in Romania and beyond its borders.

The Embassy of Norway was also a strong partner of UNICEF in promoting these models of services with the national authorities, joining UNICEF in advocacy efforts with high-level decision makers such as the President of Romania and various ministers. The models are funded by Norway Grants and UNICEF.

UNICEF Romania continued to work with EU institutions to highlight the situation of vulnerable children in Romania. For the first time, the EU country specific recommendations addressed to Romania pointed out the need for cross-sectoral, preventive services at the local level to support social inclusion and poverty reduction of children, a measure promoted by UNICEF and its partners.

A new partnership with the National Students Council opened opportunities to engage with three million children and adolescents in Romania (see section on External Communication).

**External Communication and Public Advocacy**

With a new Government in place and two elections during the year, it was essential to maintain the rights of children, especially vulnerable ones, high on the public agenda. UNICEF strengthened its partnerships with the media and influencers to support its advocacy with high-level decision makers. As media coverage of children’s issues and UNICEF work continued to increase, both in quantity and quality, UNICEF Romania was in a better position to influence key decisions.

UNICEF generated five per cent of all news related to children, and the quality of reporting on children’s issues improved significantly. The percentage of print, radio and TV news respecting child rights increased from 34 per cent (2010) to 98 per cent (2016).

UNICEF Romania emphasized its engagement with online and social media. The UNICEF Facebook page in Romania has over 156,000 followers, with an engagement score of three per cent. Partnership with National Ambassadors contributed to the increasing visibility for UNICEF work. Through field visits and social media, the Office Facebook page reached an audience of 3.4 million in a few days. Campaigns addressing violence in school, prevention of risky behaviours among adolescents, and the SMS pledge reached approximately 185 million potential impressions.

UNICEF signed a new partnership with the National Students Council. This created space for about 7,000 adolescents to have their voices heard at the national level at a time when Romania was preparing for general elections. UNICEF Romania is taking account their opinions into account when developing the new 2018-2022 Country Programme Document.
The 70th anniversary of UNICEF and 25 years of UNICEF’s presence in Romania celebrated partnerships and progress for children, while highlighting unfinished reforms.

As communication and advocacy are intrinsically linked to policy dialogue, partnerships and capacity building, these strategies significantly contributed to all the results described in the report.

**South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

The 2013-2017 Country Programme initiated UNICEF’s work on horizontal cooperation in Romania. In the past 25 years, the country has developed good practices in child protection, health and education, which are potentially of interest to middle-income countries going through a similar transition.

In 2016, UNICEF Romania supported horizontal cooperation between the Governments of Romania, Ukraine and Peru on, respectively, the development and delivery of coordinated social services at local level, and the de-institutionalization process. The exchange with Ukraine was led by county authorities that partner with UNICEF in testing community-based, cross-sectoral services. An innovative initiative promoting the education of children belonging to the Roma ethnic minority, piloted by UNICEF and the NGO Impreuna, is being replicated in seven Eastern European countries with EU funding.

For the first time in the region, UNICEF signed a partnership with the OECD to measure the strengths and weaknesses of assessment and evaluation mechanisms of Romanian schools, engage with stakeholders, and provide concrete policy recommendations. This study was conducted with the Romanian Ministry of Education. The results and lessons learned will be shared at the regional level to encourage other countries to use this tool and partner with the OECD.

Romania established a new Official Development Assistance (ODA) Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with an annual budget of over US$ 137 million. One of its priorities is to support reforms in childcare systems in other countries using the expertise and lessons learned in Romania. Preliminary discussions on the next Country Programme show a strong interest in strengthening horizontal cooperation and linking it to ODA on issues related to children (such as child protection, health and education). It will constitute an important pillar of the new partnership agreement between UNICEF and Romania.

**Identification Promotion of Innovation**

UNICEF focuses on two strategies to promote innovations in Romania: conceptualizing, implementing and evaluating models at the sub-national level, to test new services and tools in real-life conditions, and translating the latest international research into concrete initiatives.

UNICEF Romania continued to model cross-sectoral, community-based services to ensure that all children, especially vulnerable ones, go to a quality and inclusive school, and access primary healthcare services and preventive child protection care. These models are implemented in 45 communities, identified through a randomized sampling methodology. A baseline and a control group were established at the outset. The model is independently evaluated to generate credible evidence used to advocate for new policies and budget allocation at the national level. As part of these models, UNICEF developed a new online, tablet-based instrument that fulfills two functions: social workers and community nurses use a programme to support cross-sectoral case management, and the data is compiled at the
commune and county level to allow for real-time monitoring by professionals and decision makers.

The Government developed a proposal that replicates large components of the model to mobilise EU funding and replicate it in several counties in 2017. A cross-ministerial order adopted in 2016 provides the normative framework for scale-up at the national level.

UNICEF Romania also initiated a new partnership with the second largest university in the country to infuse pre-service curricula for psychologists and school counsellors with the latest research on adolescent brain development, especially the development of non-cognitive skills (e.g. resilience, optimism, curiosity, perseverance etc.). UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education (the Institute for Educational Sciences) to include non-cognitive skills as part of the compulsory curriculum for primary and secondary education. While all children need non-cognitive skills, enhancing their development through education offers a better chance for disadvantaged children to fulfil their potential.

**Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages**

Vulnerable children and their families (particularly from rural areas, Roma families, poor communities and children with disabilities) face complex, often inter-related problems that undermine the realization of their rights. In-depth determinant analyses have shown that bottlenecks across the health, education and child protection sectors present many similarities.

In the past three years, UNICEF Romania has explicitly and intensively focused on integrated programming, advocacy and communication, particularly around the development and provision of a cross-sectoral, community-based package of services, and combating violence against children.

The first challenge was to break barriers within the Office and establish internal coordination mechanisms and ownership. Secondly, to develop an integrated approach and vision across sectors at the national and sub-national levels, it was necessary to connect these initiatives with sectoral objectives and EU policies. The development of several national strategies (especially the Strategies on Child Rights and on Social Inclusion), and the budgets attached to them, provided the opportunity to introduce the cross-sector approach in the national policy framework.

A strong partnership with the Ministry of Social Protection, and particularly the National Authority for Child Rights, proved essential. UNICEF has been contributing to the development and functioning of the National Child Rights Council, a coordination structure that brings together all relevant ministries, academia and NGOs (including children). At the sub-national level, UNICEF Romania has been supporting the translation of the National Strategy on Social Inclusion into a county-level strategy, with a coordination mechanism.

As Romania ratified the Convention on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and as UNICEF and its partners continued to implement campaigns to change the high level of tolerance towards violence, UNICEF Romania contributed to aligning and convening various decision makers from the Government and the Parliament, as well as civil society, around this important issue.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

A human rights-based approach continued to underpin the Romania-UNICEF Country Programme, from knowledge generation and technical assistance to advocacy and
partnerships. As much as possible, data used is disaggregated by sex, geographic origin, age, (dis)ability and ethnicity to expose disparities, which are hidden behind average figures. In 2016, UNICEF and the National Institute of Statistics, in close consultation with line ministries, completed a study that identified the gaps in the collection and disaggregation of data used to monitor child rights. This study will form the basis for strengthening the capacity of the Government and independent monitoring mechanisms to monitor child rights, with a special focus on vulnerable children.

UNICEF’s technical assistance and advocacy also focused on the implementation of national strategies on child rights, education, social inclusion, health, disabilities and Roma inclusion (that frame the allocation of EU and national funding until 2020). These strategies are in line with the international human rights conventions ratified by Romania. Key targets for children are monitored through the monitoring and evaluation plan of the Child Rights Strategy developed with UNICEF support. The process, coordinated by the National Council for Child Rights, brings together representatives of the relevant ministries, civil society and UNICEF.

As part of the preparatory process for the submission of Romania’s report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF Romania supported a consultation of the Committee with children and adolescents, including adolescents with disabilities, from ethnic minorities and living in institutions. The latest concluding observations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) were considered in the preparation of the Strategy Note for the 2018-2022 Country Programme (Romania has not yet reported on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

UNICEF further developed the capacity of the Deputy Ombudsman for Child Rights to identify and report on child rights violations by supporting a complex study on the rights of children in institutions, in close consultation with the National Authority for Child Rights and civil society.

**Gender Equality**

All the models of innovative, cross-sectoral services supported by UNICEF incorporate a gender analysis and responsiveness component. The gender dimension was actively mainstreamed in the model testing cross-sectoral community-based services. The capacity of local professionals to recognise and address multiple discriminations, including gender discrimination, was increased. Methodologies and support tools used by local professionals were reviewed and are gender responsive. Gender-based violence is addressed at the local level through specific activities in communities where violence was identified as a key rights violation. The model developed the network of community nurses who, through outreach, facilitate the access of children and pregnant women to information and health care.

The model is also testing a parenting education intervention, while promoting a co-parenting philosophy aiming at strengthening fathers’ engagement in childcare. To support the education of children at risk of dropout, the pilot project on education supported by UNICEF is promoting successful role models, including women and men who challenge the traditional gender role division.

The adolescent model also integrated the gender dimension by training the staff working in Resource Centres for Adolescents on gender issues and by developing gender-responsive tools and protocols. Information and communication sessions with adolescent boys and girls were adjusted and delivered taken into consideration the gender perspective. A consultation process with adolescents included 74 per cent girls and 16 per cent boys, reflecting the need to further adjust the intervention to attract more boys in these activities.
As part of its preparatory process for the 2018-2022 Country Programme Document, UNICEF has been developing an extensive situation analysis that includes a strong gender perspective.

**Environmental Sustainability**

UNICEF Romania follows the national guidelines and strategies to incorporate an environmental sustainability component into the way its programmes are planned and delivered. These strategies and principles are in line with EU recommendations and are reflected in the policy development process rules, as well as in the horizontal principles in planning and programming the national and EU budgets. UNICEF Romania continued to monitor and to report on its environmental footprint, and took steps to reduce it by installing LED lighting in the common spaces and offices, procuring energy-efficient office equipment, and recycling paper, toners and old equipment. As the UN House administrator, UNICEF was in a position to promote successfully some of these measures with other UN agencies for the UN House.

**Effective Leadership**

UNICEF Romania’s governance system (including Statutory Committees) continued to function well, ensuring the appropriate sharing of information, wide internal consultations and transparency, as well as informed and timely decisions.

The country management team (CMT) met once a month to review key information and key performance indicators (KPIs) and advise the Representative on strategic decisions. All indicators are on track.

Eight all-staff meetings were organized to share information and discuss results of local staff morale surveys. The local joint consultative committee, consisting of senior management and the local staff association, met four times and addressed issues identified in these surveys, focusing on improving feedback and respect in the workplace as well as work-life balance. As a result, over 80 per cent of staff used flexible working arrangements, and 90 per cent of staff reported providing and receiving feedback. The survey showed visible improvements on all staff morale indicators since 2014.

An exercise was conducted with all staff to identify specific risks to the achievement of programme results and management objectives. To address the risk of frequent changes in government structures, UNICEF Romania continued to strengthen its collaboration with local authorities and Parliament. As programme and advocacy work in Romania is increasingly cross-sectoral, internal collaboration and integrated approaches continued to be strengthened to increase the capacity of the team to work together with partners.

The 2016-17 Rolling Management Plan was developed with staff, and described key programme and management priorities, staff responsibilities and accountabilities. The mid-year and annual reviews were used as strategic moments of reflection, to assess progress towards objectives and adjust implementation accordingly.

Workflows for purchasing of goods and services were revised to increase efficiency and effectiveness. The Business Continuity Plan, Early Warning and Early Action and the UN Security Plan for Romania were updated to reflect changes in staff and circumstances.
Financial Resources Management

KPIs and the global scorecard were monitored monthly by the CMT, including budget implementation rates, harmonised approach to cash transfers (HACT) and outstanding direct cash transfers (DCTs). The expenditure rates of regular resources and other resources reached 100 per cent at the end of 2016. Grants expiring in 2016 were fully utilised within their validity date. All transactions were processed in a timely and efficient manner, and monthly and year-end reports were finalised on time.

UNICEF Romania is fully implementing the new Partnership Cooperation Agreement and HACT policies. In 2016, one micro-assessment was completed for a new implementing partner. UNICEF Romania conducted seven spot checks and 53 programmatic visits, and provided training for partners’ staff on how to manage and report on UNICEF funds. The HACT assurance plan was therefore completed. In terms of risk management, activities under DCTs were monitored and partners were supported, both from a programmatic and financial perspective, to ensure timely and quality implementation and reporting. DCTs made up 48 per cent of the programmable amount of the country programme. By the end of the year, all DCTs were liquidated in less than nine months.

UNICEF Romania successfully transitioned several of its transactions and processed to the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) in April 2016, and finalised the implementation of the electronic payment system through the Bank Communication Management module in SAP.

Fundraising and Donor Relations

UNICEF continued to successfully raise funding for its programmes in Romania and beyond. Following the 2015 midterm review, UNICEF Romania increased its fundraising ceiling from US$12.5 to 16.5 million. By the end of 2016, all the funding had been raised, meaning that the current country programme is fully funded until its end in 2017.

Most of the funding was raised internationally, mostly from European Economic Area/Norway Grants, the Velux Foundation, and the UNICEF National Committees in France, Switzerland and the UK. It is worth highlighting the relationship with Norway, which goes beyond fundraising. UNICEF and the Norwegian Embassy worked closely during the year to advocate for the scaling-up of the model of integrated social services for children and their families at the local level.

Local fundraising focused on building sustainable income through long-term corporate partnerships and individual pledges. The gross income raised from local private sector fundraising in 2016 for local causes reached US$0.72 million, a 30 per cent increase compared to 2015. Some US$ 0.45 million was raised from private individuals, a 65 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2015. The percentage of the local fund-raising coming from pledge donations increased to 56 per cent.

UNICEF initiated long-term corporate partnerships with Dedeman and PharmNet Plus, while Carrefour remained an important partner for customer fund-raising campaigns. Efforts towards identifying partners for corporate pathway to pledge were ongoing.

Over 11,400 monthly private individual donors were recruited following the ongoing face-to-face campaign along with a three-month SMS pledge fund-raising campaign carried out in June-September, in partnership with Romania TV, the second news channel in the country. All donor reports were sent on time, and feedback from donors shows that the quality was
satisfactory. Reports are systematically finalized by the Representative or the Knowledge and Policy Coordinator to ensure quality.

### Evaluation and Research

One of the core roles of UNICEF in Romania, an upper-middle-income country, is to generate relevant and complex knowledge on children by testing innovations in local models. Ensuring that these models are independently evaluated and that high-quality evaluations are shared with partners are key to influencing the development of policies.

UNICEF Romania fully observes the UNICEF Evaluation Policy and the updated United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation. As in previous years, UNICEF Romania used regional and global feedback mechanisms, and received positive feedback on its submissions of terms of reference for evaluations and inception reports.

The 2016 research and evaluation plan included the summative evaluation of two modelling projects implemented in 2011-2015: the ‘School Attendance Initiative’ (which targeted multiple causes of dropout in the education system through interventions at different levels), and ‘First Priority: No More Invisible Children’ (modelling of a minimum package of services focused on prevention of separation of children from their families). The purpose of these final evaluations was to measure the impact, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and replicability of the model. The evaluations were expected to be completed at the beginning of 2017. They will provide evidence to UNICEF and counterparts to develop policy options for reforms in the education, health and child protection systems.

The formative evaluation of the ‘Opportunities for Adolescents’ modelling project testing integrated services for adolescents in urban areas was also initiated. It was expected to be finalized by mid-2017 and to shape the remaining implementation period for this model.

All evaluations are led internally by the child rights systems monitoring specialist. They highlight not only good practices but also lessons learned. Past experience and feedback from counterparts and partners show that the results are considered to be objective, reliable and useful.

### Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

UNICEF Romania continued to explore opportunities to reduce costs in 2016. Long-term agreements for travel and office supplies services were signed (and are being used by other UN Agencies), and contracts for mobile telephony were re-negotiated, generating gains in terms of financial resources and quality of services.

UNICEF continued to efficiently administer the UN House, handling contracts and payments with all utilities and communication suppliers, and calculating costs and shares for each colocating Agency. UNICEF re-negotiated the common agreements for telecommunication and security services, resulting in better services for all the Agencies located in the UN House. The UNICEF Office in Romania was the first one in the world to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the UN with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the use of the UN House. As a result of negotiations between UNICEF and the Government, the UN House building was fully refurbished in 2016 with no cost to UN Agencies.

The corporate procurement card was introduced and has proven to reduce time spent on transactions by staff in the Office and GSSC. The new automated banking system was used for all transactions and decreased the time spent on payments and bank reconciliation. The
Table of Authority was revised to reflect the transfer of some processes to GSSC and to streamline and increase transaction efficiency, while respecting appropriate segregation of tasks.

In line with the greening exercise led by Headquarters, UNICEF Romania analysed data and initiated measures to reduce its environmental footprint, such as collecting used paper and publications, and recycling toners and obsolete equipment. UNICEF took the lead as UN House administrator to convince other Agencies to replace regular fluorescent lights on the hallways with LED lights to reduce energy consumption.

Supply Management

In line with the core roles of UNICEF in Romania, supplies continued to constitute a very small portion of expenditures. The procurement of goods and services is centralised in the operations section, ensuring a better accuracy of data and time efficiency. Most procurement of programme and office supplies and services continued to be undertaken locally, including printed materials, furniture, IT and communication equipment, as well as programme supplies for activities. Eight contracts over US$50,000 were successfully reviewed by the Contracts Review Committee during the year.

Out of a total of US$866,483 spent on goods and services, only US$52,571 were for programme supplies (mostly kits for community nurses, and tablets for real-time monitoring and case management for the UNICEF-supported pilot project on integrated social services). UNICEF programme staff monitored the distribution and use of supplies by end-users through regular field visits. UNICEF Romania does not have a warehouse and does not keep inventories in stock.

UNICEF continued its progressive increase in the use of long-term agreements to decrease the cost of services. Long-term agreements were signed in 2016 for travel and office supplies.

Security for Staff and Premises

UNICEF is part of the UN Security Management Team and fully implements its decisions both for staff and premises. The UN Security Plan and the Residential Security Measures for Romania were updated and approved by the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). The Minimum Operating Security Standards were also reviewed.

Security and safety risks are very low in Romania. Following the visit and recommendations of the Regional Security Adviser, additional VHF radios were purchased for all members of the business continuity plan (BCP) core team. The subscription for the satellite phone was updated. The BCP was updated in October 2016 to reflect changes, mainly regarding the transition of some processes and responsibilities to GSSC and the LIGHT Office initiative. All users have remote access to organisational IT applications and systems. A presentation of the roles and responsibilities of the BCP core team was organized for all staff. Different components of the BCP and security plan were tested during 2016 (phone tree, VHF communication, satellite phone, remote working, fire drill, evacuation drill).

All UNICEF staff in Romania undertook a two-day emergency preparedness training activity delivered by the UNICEF Regional Emergency Specialist, and are thus better prepared to react in case of an emergency.

Human Resources

The current staffing and structure were assessed as effective and efficient during the 2015 midterm review. Only one post became vacant during the year and recruitment was
completed on time. All performance appraisals were completed within deadlines.

The learning and development committee (LDC) terms of reference and composition were revised to focus more strategically on corporate skills and knowledge development. The committee identified the following corporate priorities based on a capacity gap analysis: public financing for children, programme planning process, results-based management, emergency preparedness, HACT, and giving and receiving feedback. All activities in the corporate learning plan were completed. As part of the ‘8 Opportunities to Streamline Office Management Initiative’, it was decided that the country management committee would fulfill the functions of the learning and development committee.

Since 2014, UNICEF Romania has been conducting local staff morale surveys to measure progress following the Global Staff Morale Survey and to identify new issues. The results of the local surveys were discussed by the local joint consultative committee, country management team and with all staff. The main issues (job satisfaction/motivation, work-life balance, and personal empowerment) were addressed through a series of initiatives, including a staff retreat, promotion of flexible working arrangements and coaching sessions. An analysis of the results since 2014 shows significant progress in the following areas: internal communication, staff well-being, and learning and development opportunities.

The visit of the Global Staff Association Chairperson presented a unique opportunity to share with her the remaining challenges: workload, career development and capacity to use stretch assignment opportunities, issues typically affecting many middle-size offices. This visit also allowed an opportunity for the identification of good practices that will be shared with UNICEF Headquarters and other Country Offices: annual staff morale surveys, coaching for all staff, innovative flexible working arrangements and mentoring programmes.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

The information communication technology (ICT) function supported the mandate of UNICEF in Romania by providing appropriate ICT solutions and expertise on time. Systems availability targets were met, and disaster recovery and business continuity requirements were followed. Outdated hardware was upgraded or replaced on time, and functional equipment being disposed of was donated to implementing partners, as per the Property Survey Board recommendation. Used supplies and defective hardware were recycled or disposed of in a secure, environment-friendly and safe manner.

UNICEF Romania experienced an exceptional system failure in August 2016 generated by a hardware and software issue that resulted in significant data loss. The two servers from the cluster lost visibility with the storage system, and virtual machines on the storage system were damaged. Support was sought from the Regional Office, Headquarters and local companies specializing in recovery of data, but with no success. However, the most important files on were reconstituted and experience was shared with Headquarters and the Regional Office.

The main ICT results completed in 2016 were the following:
- The transition to LIGHT Office was completed successfully and on time for all network user laptops, desktop computers and printers. The LIGHT Office firewall and related shared devices were relocated in the UN House IT room.
- Hardware and software were upgraded and optimized for local users. Obsolete hardware was renewed in line with corporate standards. Windows 8.1 was optimized for new laptop models. However, it should be highlighted that staff using Surface Pro are facing regular problems due to compatibility issues with the current software standards required by UNICEF.
- The internet speed was increased by negotiating better services with the internet service provider.

**Programme Components from RAM**

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**

**OUTCOME 1  Effective and efficient programme management and operations support to programme delivery**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Governance systems continued to function well, ensuring the appropriate sharing of information, wide consultations within the office and transparency, as well as informed and timely decisions. All Statutory Committees operated smoothly and in a timely manner. The structure of the Statutory Committees and the Table of Authorities were reviewed and updated to reflect changes resulting from the transfer of some human resources processes to GSSC.

Follow-up to the Global Staff Morale Survey was a priority for management and the Local Staff Association, who jointly identified, implemented and monitored several initiatives. The Rolling Management Plan for 2016-2017 was developed in consultation with staff and describes key programme and management priorities, staff responsibilities and accountability. KPIs from the global scorecard were monitored during the monthly CMT meetings, and were on track. A risk assessment exercise was conducted with all staff to identify specific risks to the achievement of programme and management objectives.

UNICEF occupies Government-provided, rent-free premises shared with other UN Agencies and continued to efficiently administer the UN House. The Office was the first one in the world to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of several UN Agencies with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the use of the UN House. Following fruitful negotiations with the Government, the building of the UN House was fully refurbished in 2016 at no cost to UN Agencies.

UNICEF Romania explored further opportunities to increase efficiency and savings. Long-term agreements for travel services and office supplies were signed, and contracts for telecommunication and security services were re-negotiated, generating gains in terms of financial resources and quality of services. The corporate procurement card was introduced and the new automated banking system was used for all transactions, reducing the time spent on payments and bank reconciliation by staff in the Office and GSSC.

In line with the greening exercise led by Headquarters, UNICEF Romania analysed the data collected annually and initiated measures to reduce its environmental footprint. UNICEF took the lead as the UN House administrator to convince other collocating agencies to install LED lights to reduce energy consumption, recycle toners and collect used paper.

UNICEF Romania is fully implementing the new Partnership Cooperation Agreement and HACT policies. The implementation of the HACT plan is monitored as part of programme management mechanisms, CMT meetings and the Annual Management Review. One hundred per cent of HACT assurance activities were completed. There were no DCTs over nine months at the end of the year.

UNICEF Romania supported the piloting phase of the GSSC by releasing its Admin/Supply Assistant for a three-month mission. The Office actively contributed to the regional mentoring programme and supported the induction and mentoring of several operations staff in
OUTPUT 1 Effective and efficient governance structures and systems to adequately manage risks and achieve programme results

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The CMT met once a month to review strategic information and indicators and advise the Representative on key decisions. All staff were given the opportunity to provide inputs into the CMT meeting agendas. Eight meetings with all staff were organized to share and discuss local, regional and global updates. The Local Joint Consultative Committee met four times, focusing on addressing issues identified in the staff morale survey and staff retreat. Internal communication improved through weekly section meetings.

The structure of the Statutory Committees and the Table of Authorities were updated to reflect changes in staff. The office workflows for the procurement of goods and services, the recruitment of individual consultants, and travel were reviewed to increase efficiency and effectiveness. The terms of reference for the office Learning and Development Committee were revised and approved by the CMT. An emergency preparedness and response training activity was organized for all staff with support from the Regional Office. The update of the Business Continuity Plan was discussed with all staff and approved in February. The UN Security Plan for Romania was also updated and approved by the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS). The Early Warning and Early Action was updated in May.

UNICEF Romania implemented the Headquarters initiative on the simplification of committees. As a result, the Learning and Development Committee and the Greening Committee were merged with the CMT to ensure better efficiency and effectiveness.

UNICEF Romania continued to improve its ICT system. Adjustments were made to meet the systems availability targets and follow disaster recovery and business continuity requirements. Procurement of laptops and installation of VPN Cisco AnyConnect now makes it possible for all staff to work remotely. Windows 8.1 was installed on all newly purchased laptops, and the ISP network speed was upgraded and tested to support the implementation of the global LIGHT Office initiative.

OUTPUT 2 Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources and of other assets of the organization

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Romania successfully transferred its financial transactions to the GSSC in March and is actively engaged in improving the remaining local processes. UNICEF Romania effectively piloted the electronic payment system through the Bank Communication Management module in SAP, in close collaboration with Headquarters and GSSC. All payments, except salaries, are now made directly from SAP.

Long-term agreements were signed for travel, printing and catering. UNICEF Romania conducted six Contract Review Committee meetings and completed the selection and contracting of 67 consultants and contractors on time, and in a transparent and documented manner. The contracts for mobile telephony and internet services were re-negotiated, which resulted in savings and better services.

UNICEF Romania is fully implementing the new Partnership Cooperation Agreement and HACT policies. The implementation of the HACT assurance plan is monitored by the CMT. Activities under DCTs were closely monitored and partners were supported, both from a
programmatic and financial perspective, to ensure timely and quality implementation and reporting.

UNICEF Romania occupies Government-provided rent-free premises shared with other UN agencies and the Council of Europe. UNICEF administers the premises and services and chairs the UN House Management Team consisting of representatives from all Agencies located there. Following the closure of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office and the sharing of premises with the Council of Europe, UNICEF negotiated a new Memorandum of Understanding for the use of the UN House on behalf of four UN Agencies with the Government. This Memorandum, the first of its kind in the world, was signed at the end of the year.

At the end of 2016, all KPIs were on track: there was no DCT over nine months; the budget expenditure rate was at 100 per cent; all donor reports were sent on time; 100 per cent of the HACT assurance plan was completed; and all recruitments were finalized on time. Recommendations from the 2013 audits continued to be implemented and were monitored by the CMT throughout the year.

OUTPUT 3 Effective and efficient management of human capacity, including staff development and learning

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
As in previous years and on the basis of the UNICEF Global Staff Morale Survey, UNICEF Romania conducted local surveys to assess progress and identify potential emerging issues. The survey results were discussed during meetings of the Local Joint Consultative Committee, the CMT (which includes a representative of the Local Staff Association) and with all staff. The main issues identified were job satisfaction and motivation, work-life balance and personal empowerment.

To address these issues, UNICEF Romania took a series of actions, including a staff retreat that addressed issues such as improving feedback, and increasing recognition and motivation. UNICEF continued to promote flexible working arrangements, such as compressed hours and teleworking, which are used by over 80 per cent of staff members. All performance evaluation reports for 2015 were completed within the deadline. The planning of all the 2016 Performance Evaluation Reports was completed in the new online system on time. There was one separation and one recruitment of staff completed in a timely manner, with no vacancy over two months.

The Learning and Training Committee identified several initiatives based on a capacity gap analysis. The corporate learning and development plan focused on improving the capacity of staff members in public financial management, programme planning, HACT, as well as giving and receiving feedback. One hundred per cent of the corporate learning and development plan was completed in 2016, and feedback from staff shows a high level of satisfaction with the quality of activities.

UNICEF Romania contributed to the piloting phase of the GSSC in Budapest by releasing its Admin/Supply Assistant (i.e. 22 per cent of its Operations Section) for a three-month mission to support the initial implementation phase. The Operations Officer in Romania provided remote coaching to the newly recruited Operations Manager in Moldova, and the Admin/Supply Assistant trained the IT/Supply Assistant from UNICEF Bulgaria in advanced procurement of goods and services.
OUTCOME 2 Reduce disparities, increase equity and promote the social inclusion of vulnerable boys and girls

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The Government, UNICEF and partners consolidated progress towards child social inclusion and inequity reduction. Models of innovative and cross-sectoral services tested at the local level proved able to make a significant difference in the life of vulnerable children and their families. Combining experience from models with cutting-edge science, strategic partnerships, and high-level advocacy with the new Government and Parliament, UNICEF contributed to influencing national policies and budget allocations.

The Minimum Package of Services implemented in 45 communities reached over 45,000 children, including 17,500 vulnerable ones, and provided them with health, education, and social and child protection services. Following community workers' interventions, 93 per cent of children identified without identity document received birth certificates. Some 97 per cent of children not registered in the health insurance system are now covered and access health care. All children identified at risk of separation are still living with their families and receive community services. The quality of services was considerably strengthened through dedicated and trained social workers, community nurses, school counsellors, and health and school mediators.

The Quality Inclusive Education Initiative was tested in 45 schools in the same communities, reaching over 20,000 children, 15 per cent of whom were at risk of absenteeism/drop-out. As a result, schools reduced absenteeism, and some managed to eliminate dropout after only one year of implementation. By increasing the capacity of teachers, school management and parents through training and parental education, children received better quality and more inclusive education, as well as a stronger support at home.

Through advocacy and provision of technical support, UNICEF contributed to the development and adoption of two ministerial orders to ban school segregation and to endorse a detailed action plan to implement school desegregation and improve quality of education.

Together with national authorities and three municipalities, UNICEF has been piloting Resource Centres for Adolescents. These Centres provide information to adolescents, including vulnerable ones, and helps them develop their competencies to lead a healthy life. Over 20,000 adolescents participated in activities on various topics (e.g. education, career opportunities, substance abuse etc.). Over 165,000 people (including adolescents) received information online on important issues. The three cities involved are progressively taking over the Centres to ensure their sustainability. Together with NGOs, UNICEF provided technical support to national authorities for the development of two cross-sectoral methodologies to help adolescents fight drug addictions and adolescents living in the streets.

UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the National Authority for Children, in partnership with the World Bank, to mobilise EU funding to close nearly 140 institutions and reintegrate a third of institutionalised children in a family environment by 2020. The revision of the law on adoption has accelerated the adoption process while safeguarding the best interests of children. The number of children under three in institutions decreased by 28 per cent since the law prohibiting their institutionalisation was adopted in 2014.

With UNICEF advocacy and expertise, Romania ratified the Istanbul Convention on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and became a key partner in the Global Partnership to end Violence against Children.
OUTPUT 1 Key stakeholders support and enhance knowledge, attitudes, practices and services to promote holistic and equitable development in the early years

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Outcome closed during the 2015 midterm review.

OUTPUT 2 Authorities at the national and sub-national levels, communities and caregivers provide services and an environment conducive to the access of disadvantaged children, especially Roma, to quality, inclusive education

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In line with the regional priority on the right to education and the Sustainable Development Goal on education, UNICEF promoted access to quality inclusive education for vulnerable children through implementation of a model at local and county levels, studies, technical support to Government, partnerships and advocacy.

The Quality Inclusive Education model covers 45 school units (with preschool, primary and lower secondary levels) in close collaboration with local, county and central authorities. It tests a complex package of child-centred interventions for vulnerable students and their families to address school dropout and school absenteeism, and to enhance the quality of teaching.

In schools, the model improved the capacity of management and teachers to support each child according to her/his needs, by providing teaching methods and tools in line with international good practices. At the family level, the involvement of parents in their children’s education is encouraged, and parents received free-of-charge parenting classes. In communities, the mayoralty and other partners were mobilized to support education through activities and budget allocations. The model puts a special emphasis on the inclusion of all students regardless of gender, ethnicity, (dis)ability and socioeconomic status through activities and sensitisation of children, teachers and parents. A component related to the inclusion of vulnerable students was replicated in seven Eastern European countries through an EU Grant to the partner NGO Impreuna.

Together with civil society, UNICEF contributed to the adoption of a national Action Plan on School Desegregation and Increasing Education Quality, and a ministerial order to ban school segregation, through advocacy and expertise. This order expands the prohibition of segregation on the basis of ethnicity to any form of segregation based on disability, special educational requirements, socio-economic status of families, residence, and school performance. UNICEF Romania will provide technical and financial support for the implementation of these orders, using evidence generated by UNICEF studies and model.

For the first time in the region, UNICEF partnered with the OECD and provided financial and technical support to the Ministry of Education to review the Romanian assessment and evaluation system. The study is part of joint efforts of the Ministry and UNICEF to promote better learning outcomes for students and to further develop the capacity of the Ministry to improve its evaluation system.

Using the results of a 2015 study on the inclusion of children with special education needs, UNICEF advocated successfully for their inclusion in the desegregation action plan, and the revision of normative documents, including the Law on Education. This should result in the allocation of additional resources to support the inclusion of children with special education needs in mainstream education. Over the past decade, UNICEF has contributed to increase the percentage of children with special education needs in mainstream education from two per cent to 63 per cent.
A joint UNICEF-Ministry of Education campaign raised awareness of verbal violence against children in schools. Its evaluation shows that 86 per cent of children who saw the campaign declared they learned what to do when exposed to violence at school.

**OUTPUT 3** Basic and specialized services are increasingly available to adolescent boys and girls, especially vulnerable ones, who are empowered to practice safer behaviours

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
In line with the regional priority on adolescents, UNICEF and its partners (Ministry of Youth, local authorities, civil society and adolescents) continued to test innovative Resource Centres for Adolescents. These Centres facilitate the access of adolescents, including vulnerable ones, to quality services in three cities. They propose activities to help adolescents develop their knowledge and competencies to prevent substance abuse, promote education, support positive relationships with families and communities, etc. At the request of parents, the Centres started offering parenting classes. This is complemented using social and online media to share information on topics selected by experts and adolescents. Vulnerable adolescents who come to the Centres are also referred to various specialised services provided by Child Protection Departments, while child protection staff who work with vulnerable families with adolescents refer them to the Centres. The formative evaluation of the model will be finalized in 2017.

The Ministry of Youth adjusted the standards of youth centres based on good practices developed by the Resource Centres such as: the outreach approach (with professionals engaging with adolescents in places where they gather, like parks and schools); and the engagement of adolescents in decision-making processes.

UNICEF provided expertise and partnered with NGOs to support the development of methodologies of cooperation between services in the health, education, social protection and interior systems to help adolescents fight drug abuse and adolescents living on the streets. With UNICEF support, the National Antidrug Agency and the National Authority for Child Rights jointly developed the roles and responsibilities of their respective professionals in the identification, information, counselling and treatment of adolescents using drugs. A new referral mechanism among local services, including those provided by NGOs, was developed and piloted to identify street children and adolescents and to refer them to services adapted to their needs. These methodologies will be approved in 2017.

Together with the Ministries of Health and Education, the National Students Council, and adolescents themselves, UNICEF conducted a communication campaign to decrease risky behaviours in adolescents. Three video spots were broadcast over 1,200 times on TV, resulting in 66 million potential impressions. The spots were viewed over 360,000 times on the UNICEF Romania YouTube channel, and one million times on the UNICEF Romania Facebook page. An evaluation of the campaign showed that 20 per cent of the respondents spontaneously recalled the campaign. Of those, over 60 per cent correctly identified the message of the campaign and between 88 per cent and 95 per cent agree with key messages (even occasional drinking is harmful, drinking can cause neurological problems, drinking can increase the risk of other substance abuse).

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Youth for the development of the youth law approved by the Government in December 2016. This law facilitates the participation of adolescents, including vulnerable ones, in the development of local and national policies affecting their lives. Local authorities are requested to allocate a specific budget for activities addressing adolescents and youth, and a fourth of this budget should specifically be allocated to vulnerable adolescents and youth.
OUTPUT 4 National integrated social protection system and other stakeholders provide effective quality continuum of services, and support protective norms and behaviours for children and families with special focus on protection from and prevention of any form of violence, especially child separation

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In line with a regional priority on a child's right to a family environment and the Sustainable Development Goal target on ending violence against children, UNICEF provided expertise and generated evidence through innovative model and studies to support the National Authority for Child Rights in reforming the childcare system.

Together with the World Bank, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the National Authority to conduct an in-depth assessment of the childcare system in Romania. A key recommendation was to shift reform from improving protection services for children deprived of parental care to developing preventive, community-based services. Based on this evidence, the National Authority mobilised US$ 3.2 million from EU funding to develop a De-Institutionalization Master Plan, also with technical support from UNICEF and the World Bank. Under this plan, the situation of thousands of children in institutions, their families and communities was analysed to develop a proposal of how Romania could close 137 institutions and provide family-based solutions for nearly 7,000 children in institutions. The National Authority will leverage another US$ 53 million from EU funds to implement this reform by the end of 2020.

UNICEF worked with the Ministries of Social Protection, Health and Education to develop cross-sectoral, community-based services to support children and families facing multiple vulnerabilities. The Minimum Package of Services, tested in one county, increased the capacity of 45 communities to identify, address and monitor cases of children at risk of social exclusion, violence, school dropout, separation from their families, lack of access to healthcare, etc. The model relies on each commune having at least one social worker, one community nurse and one school counsellor, sometimes with a health and a school mediator, working together to find solutions with families and the rest of the community. These professionals use an innovative tablet-based programme, which provides a case management tool and real-time monitoring data to professionals and decision makers.

Technical support to the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, and advocacy with the Chamber of Deputies contributed to the ratification of the Istanbul Convention on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence by Romania. The Convention entered into force in the country in September. UNICEF continued to work with the Government and Parliament to translate it into national legislation and budget allocations. Romania also became a pathfinder country in the Global Partnership to end Violence against Children, committing to take action in the country and beyond its borders.

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the National Authority for Child Rights to revise the Law on Adoption. The new law accelerates the adoption process, while maintaining required safeguards. It also aims to increase the adoption of older children, children with disabilities and ethnic minority children.

The Government approved a new legislative package on evaluation and referral mechanisms for children with disabilities developed by the Ministries of Social Protection, Health and Education, with UNICEF technical support. Transposing the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health for children, the package standardises practices and increases access of families with children with disabilities to services in the three sectors.
OUTCOME 3 Public authorities, in partnership with civil society, international organizations and the private sector, will exercise good governance to reduce child deprivation and advance the rights of girls and boys, both nationally and sub-nationally.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
With a new Government in place and two elections during the year, it was essential to maintain the rights of children, especially vulnerable ones, high on the public agenda. This was achieved through a combination of dialogue with high-level decision makers, strategic partnerships, quality studies, intensive advocacy and quality policy advice.

The Minimum Package of Services for children and their families tested by UNICEF and its partners became part of the key priorities of the new Government. Based on the costing and the initial results of the model (see outcome 1 and output 1.3), the Ministry of Social Protection developed a cross-sectoral proposal to mobilise significant EU funding to replicate it in several counties as part of a larger social inclusion initiative. The Ministries of Social Protection, Education and Health adopted a cross-ministerial order translating the key principles of the Minimum Package into national policies.

Continuous engagement with Parliamentarians ensured that UNICEF and child rights reforms benefited from bipartisan and long-term support. The Parliament ratified the Istanbul Convention on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and adopted a forward-looking law on breast milk substitutes.

Partnerships with the media and National Ambassadors helped UNICEF generate nearly five per cent of children-related news. The quality of reporting on children’s issues improved significantly, with the percentage of print, radio and TV news respecting children’s rights increasing from 34 per cent (2010) to 98 per cent (2016).

A new partnership with the National Students Council, representing three million students, supports children’s and adolescents’ participation in school and contributes to raising awareness on issues affecting adolescents’ well-being. Adolescents identified as their top three priorities the right of all children to inclusive, quality education, the right to access friendly health services, and the right be protected from all forms of violence.

Through technical support, UNICEF contributed to the strengthening of the child rights monitoring system in Romania. Significant progress was recorded in harmonizing and connecting information and data collection systems across several ministries and the National Institute of Statistics to better identify and analyse education data, and monitor the situation of children left behind by parents who migrated abroad.

In the context of the migrant and refugee crisis in Europe, as the UN Country Team coordinator, UNICEF brought UN Agencies together to initiate a joint discussion with the relevant national authorities. The purpose was to support the preparedness efforts of the Government, and to jointly promote the rights of migrants and refugees, including children. Together with WHO and IOM, UNICEF Romania is supporting the Ministry of Health to strengthen the preparedness of the health system.

Continuing its efforts to share good practices developed by Romania, UNICEF facilitated horizontal cooperation between the Government of Romania and the Governments of Ukraine and Peru, focusing on childcare reforms and the development of community-based services for vulnerable children and their families.
OUTPUT 1 Central and decentralized authorities and key stakeholders increasingly monitor child rights through an integrated monitoring mechanism to support evidence-based policies for the well-being of disadvantaged children

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF’s dialogue with the Presidency, Chancellery, line Ministries and Parliamentarians generated support for the Minimum Package of Services for vulnerable children and their families, funded by European Economic Area/Norway Grants and UNICEF. A draft project, developed by the Ministry of Social Protection with technical support from UNICEF, is expected to mobilise substantial EU funding to scale up all the model components in five to six counties as part of a larger social inclusion proposal.

Using UNICEF’s experience in testing the Minimum Package, the Ministers of Social Protection, Health and Education approved a joint order establishing the integrated delivery of services at the local level by their respective sectors under the coordination of mayoralties. This order incorporates all the innovations and good practices promoted by UNICEF, including: the allocation of a social worker, a community nurse and a school counsellor in every commune of the country; cross-sectoral case management at the local level; and supervision at the county level. These initiatives set the stage for a nationwide scale-up with national resources.

Following recommendations from the UNICEF Out-of-School Monitoring Framework study, and with UNICEF Romania technical support, the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Statistics harmonized and connected data from the Integrated Information System in Education with the national statistical databases. This will result in more accurate education data at the national level.

As part of the Inter-Institutional Working Group established by the Presidential Administration to address the situation of children left behind by migrating parents, UNICEF provided technical assistance to harmonise data generated by the social assistance and education systems. This will help assess the real extent of the phenomenon, and mobilise resources to provide them with adequate support.

UNICEF continued to strengthen the capacity of the Deputy Ombudsman for Child Rights to report on child rights violations, particularly through the development of a special report on the rights of the children in institutions, to be launched in Parliament in 2017. UNICEF Romania supported the reporting process to the Committee on the Rights of the Child by preparing a written submission, facilitating the Committee’s consultation with adolescents, and providing funds for the Government and NGO alternative reports.

Together with WHO and IOM, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to review and better prepare the health system to ensure access of migrants and refugees to health services. Recommendations for action were presented to the key ministries in a high-level meeting.

UNICEF facilitated and participated in the exchange of experience between the authorities of Romania, Ukraine and Peru. The sharing of good practices focused on the deinstitutionalisation of children, especially prevention of separation of children from their families and of new entrances into the public care system, as well as the development of community-based services tested by UNICEF. UNICEF Romania also engaged with the newly established Romanian Aid Agency to promote the exchange of Romanian good practices and the use of Official Development Assistance in the areas of child rights, with a special focus on child protection, education and primary health care.
OUTPUT 2 By 2017, public authorities, civil society, private sector, media and general public are engaged in sustainable long-term partnerships to advocate and mobilize resources for vulnerable children in and outside of Romania

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF strengthened its partnerships with the media and influencers to support its advocacy with high-level decision makers. As media coverage of children’s issues and UNICEF work continued to increase, both in terms of quantity and quality, UNICEF Romania was in a better position to influence public decisions. UNICEF Romania has been increasingly emphasizing its engagement with online and social media, including those of National Ambassadors who can mobilise a very large audience.

The UNICEF Facebook page in Romania has over 156,000 followers, with an engagement score of three per cent. The integrated campaigns addressing violence against children at school, prevention of risky behaviours among adolescents and the fund-raising campaign for SMS pledges reached approximately 185 million potential impressions.

Partnership with National Ambassadors contributed to increasing visibility for UNICEF’s work. Through two field visits and the use of social media, the Facebook page of UNICEF in Romania reached an audience of 3.4 million in a few days.

UNICEF continued working with universities of journalism and communication to infuse the curriculum of future communication professionals with child rights principles. In 2016, several universities incorporated these principles in their classes. The remarkable improvement in the quality of reporting is also due to the regular press briefings, field trips and interactions with journalists from print, radio, online and TV media. The challenge is now to increase engagement with and influence online media.

Continuous dialogue with Parliamentarians ensured that UNICEF and child rights reforms benefited from bipartisan and long-term support. In addition to the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and the revised law on adoption (mentioned under Output 1.3), the Parliament approved the law on the code of marketing for promoting breast milk substitutes, which set standards beyond EU requirements, and for which UNICEF Romania advocated and provided technical assistance for the past four years.

UNICEF signed a new partnership with the National Students Council. The first joint activity was to collect the opinions of children and adolescents on key issues affecting their lives, using social media and the internet, and face-to-face interactions. This created space for about 7,000 adolescents to have their voices heard at the national level at a time when Romania was preparing for general elections. UNICEF Romania is taking their opinions into account when developing the new 2018-2022 Country Programme Document.

The 70th anniversary of UNICEF and 25 years of UNICEF presence in Romania celebrated partnerships and progress for children, while highlighting unfinished reforms.

Local fund-raising mobilised US$ 0.72 million, with 56 per cent coming from monthly donations. UNICEF initiated long-term corporate partnerships with the Romanian companies Dedeman and PharmNet Plus, while Carrefour remained an important partner for customer fund-raising campaigns. Over 11,400 monthly private individual donors were recruited following the ongoing face-to-face campaign along with a three-month SMS pledge fund-raising campaign carried out in partnership with Romania TV, the second news channel in the country.
By 2017, public authorities, civil society, private sector, media and general public are engaged in sustainable long-term partnerships to advocate and mobilize resources for vulnerable children in and outside of Romania.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Please see the output statement on Partnerships for Advocacy and Resources.

Support fund-raising activities funded by PFP solely

Analytical Statement of Progress:
More than 4,400 direct debit contracts were signed by the end of December with a total gross income of US$ 62,000. In October-December, the UNICEF National Ambassadors and one high-profile supporter joined the UNICEF team of fundraisers.

Communication materials were produced (videos, photos, online banners, stories) and are going to be used in online environments, with two objectives: promote the street fundraiser job; and strengthen people’s trust in face-to-face donations. These objectives respond to two of the main challenges that the face-to-face programme is facing: growing the team of street fundraisers and overcoming people’s scepticism in providing their personal data to fundraisers and signing a bank contract in the street.

Monitoring and evaluation

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Vulnerable children and their families (particularly from rural areas, Roma families, poor communities and children with disabilities) face complex, often inter-related problems that undermine the realization of their rights. In-depth determinant analyses have shown that bottlenecks across the health, education and child protection sectors present many similarities. In the past two years, UNICEF Romania has explicitly and intensively focused on integrated programming, advocacy and communication, particularly around the development and provision of a cross-sectoral, community-based package of services, and combating violence against children.

The first challenge was to break barriers within the Office and establish internal coordination mechanisms and ownership. Secondly, developing an integrated approach and vision across sectors at the national and sub-national level required that these initiatives be connected with sectoral objectives and EU policies. The development of several National Strategies (especially the Strategies on Child Rights and on Social inclusion), and the budgets attached to them, provided the opportunity to introduce cross-sectorality in the national policy framework. A strong partnership with the Ministry of Social Protection, and particularly the National Authority for Child Rights, proved to be essential. UNICEF contributed to the development and functioning of the National Child Rights Council, a coordination structure that brings together all relevant ministries, academia and NGOs (including children).

At the sub-national level, UNICEF Romania supported the translation of the National Strategy on Social Inclusion into a county-level strategy, with a coordination mechanism.

As Romania ratified the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and as UNICEF and its partners continued to implement campaigns to change the high level of tolerance towards violence, UNICEF Romania contributed to aligning and convening various decision makers from the Government and Parliament, as well as civil society.
OUTPUT 1 The Country Programme uses a cross-sectoral, human rights and result-based, gender-sensitive approach and risk management to evidence-based planning, monitoring and evaluation and fund-raising

Analytical Statement of Progress:
A human rights-based approach continued to underpin the Romania-UNICEF Country Programme – from knowledge generation and technical assistance to advocacy and partnerships. All the models of innovative, cross-sectoral services supported by UNICEF incorporated a gender analysis and responsiveness component. As much as possible, data used is disaggregated by sex, geographic origin, age, (dis)ability and ethnicity in order to expose disparities, which are hidden behind average figures. In 2016, UNICEF and the National Institute of Statistics, in close consultation with line ministries, completed a study that identified the gaps in the collection and disaggregation of data used to monitor child rights in Romania.

Complex studies and innovative modelling provided new evidence that UNICEF used to successfully influence national policies and resource allocation. In 2016, UNICEF Romania’s studies focused on the situation of children in the childcare system; non-cognitive skills development of adolescents; a review of the assessment and evaluation data collection systems in education, child protection and of the National Statistical Institute; and costing the provision of a minimum package of cross-sectoral services.

One of the core roles of UNICEF in Romania, an upper middle income country, is to generate relevant and complex knowledge on children by testing innovations in local models. Ensuring that these models are independently evaluated and that high-quality evaluations are shared with partners are key to influencing the development of policies.

UNICEF Romania fully observes UNICEF Evaluation Policy and the updated United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, and used regional and global feedback mechanisms. As in previous years, UNICEF Romania received positive feedback on its submissions of terms of reference for evaluations and inception reports.

OUTCOME 5 Development Effectiveness

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Programme effectiveness is mainstreamed throughout all the outcomes.

OUTPUT 1 Programme Coordination

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Programme coordination is mainstreamed throughout the other outcomes.

OUTPUT 2 Advocacy / Communication

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Advocacy and Communication are covered under outcome 2-Governance and Partnership, particularly output 2.2.
Evaluation and research

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sequence Number</th>
<th>Type of Report</th>
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<tr>
<td>Non-cognitive skills development in adolescents in Romania</td>
<td>2016/001</td>
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<td>Children in Public Care: Romania 2014</td>
<td>2016/002</td>
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<td>Financial impact analysis for scaling up a model of community based services at national level</td>
<td>2016/003</td>
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<td>In-Depth Assessment of the Social, Health, and Education Status of Children and Their Families in Target Areas of the Bacau County</td>
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<td>Data Collection Systems Study</td>
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Other publications

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<tr>
<td>14. Video with Andreea Marin, National Ambassador for UNICEF in Romania, for promoting the job of UNICEF Messenger</td>
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<td>13. Thank you video with Andreea Marin, National Ambassador for UNICEF in Romania</td>
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<td>12. Video spot with Andreea Marin, National Ambassador for UNICEF in Romania, within the add-on-bill campaign for school participation carried out in partnership with Carrefour</td>
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<td>11. Fundraising and Awareness campaign “1 SMS, 1 hope”</td>
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<td>10. Awareness Public Service Announcement on violence against children in schools - on radio - You’re a hero when you stop verbal violence at school! (teacher’s verbal abuse against student)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Awareness Public Service Announcement on violence against children in schools - on radio - You’re a hero when you stop violence at school! (bullying)</td>
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<td>8. Awareness Public Service Announcement on violence against children in schools - You’re a hero when you stop violence at school! (bullying)</td>
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<td>7. Awareness Public Service Announcement on violence against children in schools</td>
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<td>6. Online video spots within “Even Once is Too Much” campaign</td>
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<td>5. Three video spots for the “Even Once is Too Much” campaign</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Romanian President Klaus Iohannis visits ‘Gheorghe Nechita’ Middle School in Motoseni, Bacau county (video)</td>
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<td>3. UNICEF Anniversary - 25 years in Romania, 70 years worldwide (video)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Quality Inclusive Education brochure</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Minimum Package of Social Services brochure</td>
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Lessons learned

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<tr>
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<td>Programme documents</td>
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<td>CPD Results Matrix</td>
<td>Annex I: CPAP RESULTS AND RESOURCES FRAMEWORK—ROMANIA</td>
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