

Romania

Part 1: Situation update in the country

Romania is an upper-middle income country and European Union member, with one of the highest economic growth rates in the European Union. In 2017, the economy grew by almost seven per cent, and World Bank estimates show that growth is forecasted to continue for 2018. The annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth for 2017 was 6.9 per cent. The main government priority has been economic development and growth; and yet despite progress on human development indicators over the previous two decades, challenges remain as growth is not ‘trickling down’ to all of Romania’s regions or populations, exacerbating inequity. The budgets for social sectors have increased slightly, but were not strategic investments and Romania is still among the European Union countries with the lowest investments in education, health and social protection.

The population in Romania is 19.52 million people. The natality rate is decreasing: there were 6.6 million children in 1990 and 3.7 million children as of 1 January 2018. Children make up 18 per cent of the total population which is expected to further decrease by 2025. The population declared as ‘Roma ethnic’ is 3 per cent as per the last census, but studies estimate it at 10 per cent.

The Human Capital Index measures the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18. With a score of 0.60 (0.63 for girls and 0.58 for boys) for the Index, (on a scale from 0 to 1), Romania ranks 67th out of 157 countries. Between 2012 and 2017, the Index value for Romania fell from 0.63 to 0.60. Romania has the lowest score in the European Union and lower than predicted considering its income level.

This means that a child born in Romania today will be 60 per cent as productive as an adult than if he or she enjoyed complete education and full health. A child who starts school at the age of four in Romania can expect to complete 12.2 years of pre-primary, primary and secondary school by age 18. However, when years of schooling are adjusted for quality of learning, this is only equivalent to 8.8 years, which results into a learning gap of 3.4 years. Students in Romania score 452 when 625 is advanced attainment and 300 represents minimum attainment. Ninety-nine out of 100 children born in Romania survive to age five years. Across Romania, 87 percent of 15 year olds will survive until age 60. This statistic is a proxy for the range of fatal and non-fatal health outcomes that a child born today would experience as an

adult under current conditions.

During the last 20 years, Romania registered positive changes with regards to the situation of children: the infant mortality rate dropped from over 27 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to less than 7 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017; the number of children in institutional care dropped from over 100,000 in the early 1990s to 18,197 children in 2017. The overall risk of poverty and social exclusion decreased from 47 per cent in 2007 to 35.7 per cent in 2017. The European Union pre-accession period was a major engine for reform, offering a vehicle for advancing social and administrative progress.

Although data show improvement in the latest figures, child poverty is still a major concern, Romania being among the two poorest European Union countries. In spite of the decrease of severe material deprivation rate, one in five children is affected by severe material deprivation. The rate is higher for children compared to the general population (21.5 per cent compared to 19.7 per cent) and is three times higher compared to the European Union rate (6.9 per cent). Two in five children are at risk-of-poverty and social exclusion. Despite a decrease in the rate for children (from 49.2 per cent in 2016 to 41.7 per cent at the end of 2017), the rate is much higher for children compared to the general population (35.7 per cent for 2017) and it is almost double compared to the European Union rate (22.5 per cent). In total, 71 per cent of the poor live in rural communities; the risk for Roma of being poor is ten times higher than for the general population, 75 per cent of families with three children are at risk of poverty.

Despite falling rates in the past ten years, 54,472 children were still separated from their families as of 30 June 2018: 18,317 children in foster care, 18,437 in guardianship and 17,718 in residential care institutions. Many of these children (33 per cent) continue to live in institutions. Among the main causes of separation are poverty, abuse and disability.

Another key issue is that of children who are left behind by migrant parents seeking employment abroad. The reports of the National Authority for Child Rights Protection and Adoption show that 94,991 children were left behind by migrant parents as of 30 June 2018, out of which 3,730 are in the special protection system (residential care). A total of 32 per cent of children whose parents work abroad are deprived of both parents or of a single parent. The estimated numbers are around 300,000 to 350,000 as not all parents declare when they leave the country to find work elsewhere. The education system records show that the number of children affected is 1.5 times higher than the child protection system.

Despite improvement in education, disparities remain. The most vulnerable children in Romania in terms of access and participation to education, retention and progress to higher levels of education are children from poor families, Roma children, children living in rural areas and children with disabilities.

The gross enrolment rate in preschool education increased between 2001 and 2016, from 66 per cent to 88 per cent. Enrolment rates of Roma children in preschool education is lower than the national average by 47 percentage points.

An estimated 400,000 children aged six to 18 years are out of school, and the rate of completion of compulsory education is decreasing. Roma children are six times more likely than other children not to complete secondary education. According to PISA tests, about 40 per cent of adolescents remain functionally illiterate and innumerate. Gender disparities favour girls at all levels of education: gross enrolment for all levels of education (primary to tertiary) for children and youth ages six to 23 years old is 78 per cent female and 75 per cent male (with preschool level included, children and youth aged three to 23 years, the gross enrolment is 80 per cent female and 77 per cent male). Results in international assessments, such as PISA 2015, fared better among girls.

With an early school leaving rate of 18.1 per cent in 2017, Romania is far from meeting the European Union 2020 target of 11.3 per cent. The rural-urban divide is chronic and makes early school leaving more prominent in rural areas. Overall, almost half of Romanian children have inadequate education, even those who attend 10 years in a classroom. The European Union estimated that 77 per cent of young Roma aged 18 to 24 are leave school early. The causes are poverty, social exclusion and discrimination, including school segregation. More than 26 per cent of Roma students learn in segregated classes (i.e. classes with all or almost all Roma students). Priority should be given to interventions enhancing quality and inclusiveness of compulsory education as this promised the best results for children. The financing should cover prevention, intervention and compensatory measures.

Romania made progress regarding access to early education (80 per cent of children are currently enrolled in early childhood education facilities). However, the country still faces an equity gap: children with disabilities, Roma children, children from poor families and children from rural areas are least likely to access and participate in quality education. No preschool facilities are available in rural areas.

Infant, under five and maternal mortalities are the highest in the European Union: respectively 7.1 per cent (over 50 per cent neonatal), 8.8 per cent, and 9.02/100,000 in 2017. Infant mortality rate is 1.5 higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Despite the decreasing trend for decades, Romania still accounts for an infant mortality rate more than double Member States of the European Union (EU28).

Vaccination coverages are dropping to worrying levels: under 90 per cent for polio and under 75 per cent for others. A measles outbreak killed 22 persons in 2018 alone.

Tolerance for violence against children and gender-based violence is widespread. Vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected such as Roma children, children with disabilities, children living in rural areas and children from poor families.

A measles outbreak since February 2016 is among the warning signs of lack of strategic investment in health. The sector overly focuses on the most expensive specialized tertiary segment while funds flowing into primary health care are insufficient. Access to basic services

is a challenge, particularly for vulnerable children and families. Health promotion efforts are severely inadequate.

The latest available government data from the National Institute of Public Health 2018 show that national coverage rates for one dose of measles, mumps and rubella vaccine at the age of 12 months in July 2018 were 80.6 per cent in both urban and rural areas – well below herd immunity. A total of 15,600 cases of measles were recorded since the start of the outbreak in February 2016, with 59 deaths recorded by end of 2018. Most cases were of children one to four years old (5,411); 80 per cent of cases were under 14 years of age. Of the total, 14,680 were unvaccinated, 583 vaccinated with one dose, 207 vaccinated with two doses. This indicates that over the years, cohorts of children have gone unvaccinated who are now teenagers and adults exposed to the disease and can pass it to infants under nine months.

Although the outbreak slowed in late 2018 (no deaths between July and December), the risk that the outbreak will pick up again remains, unless immunization levels rise across the country. Before and during the measles outbreak, Romania faced repeated vaccine stock outs. With the seriousness of the situation in previous years, for the systematizing and accelerating the response to the outbreak and the strengthening of the National Vaccination Programme is required.

There are many causes for the current situation in Romania, including weak capacity of the central authorities to engage in evidence-based programming; poor financial allocations for priority areas and increased share of budget for infrastructure development (as opposed to capacity building and investment to human capital); broken or poorly organized chain of technical supervision from national level to service delivery (e.g. in the case of family physicians and community nurses). The decentralized administration – implemented unevenly throughout the sectors, and the country – leaves access gaps for children, and increases inequities especially for most vulnerable groups and vulnerable areas. For example, the territorial distribution of the approximately 12,000 family doctors in Romania is highly uneven. The disparity between urban and rural areas stands at 56 versus 49 family doctors per 10,000 population in urban and rural respectively. Thus, on average, a family doctor takes care of 1,499 in urban areas and 2,024 inhabitants in rural areas. There are disparities for remote localities given that family doctors are often concentrated near urban areas, leaving remote rural communities uncovered.

In terms of territorial disparities, Ministry of Health data confirms that the infant mortality rate is 60 per cent higher in rural areas compared to urban areas. Inequities exist with the area of residence and health service coverage, leading to lower primary care coverage in rural areas throughout the country. In addition to the documented disadvantages for the rural areas, a World Bank report highlighted inequities within urban areas such as small disadvantaged and marginalized areas. They are: 1) disproportionately disadvantaged areas of low-quality blocks of flats or in former workers' colonies; 2) impoverished areas of houses and/or shelters; 3) modernized social housing; and 4) social housing in historical city centre. All of the areas are usually isolated, with precarious living conditions and lack of access to adequate infrastructure.

A study on children in the special protection system showed that while 60 per cent of the institutionalized children are coming from rural area, a total of 14 per cent are children from families living in disadvantaged urban areas.

A 2018 study on Roma children's needs in the context of setting the strategic intervention priorities for Roma social inclusion, by 'Impreuna' Community Development Agency, supported with UNICEF Romania funding, examined the difference between Roma children social status and non-Roma as concerns housing, infrastructure, education, health and employment, and made a comparison between the situation in 2018 and 2012.

The preliminary findings revealed that the average number of children per household is 1.42 for Roma and 0.46 for non-Roma. Salaries are the main source of income for 74 per cent of non-Roma, while for Roma is 38 per cent. Only 68 per cent of Roma have a regular income. Child allowance is the second source of income for 35 per cent of Roma and 14 per cent of non-Roma. Although the number of children in a Roma family is three times higher compared to non-Roma, 61 per cent of Roma live in one to two room houses/apartments compared to 43 per cent of non-Roma. A total of 89 per cent of the Roma sampled assumed their ethnicity, while 7 per cent declared themselves to be Romanians and were identified as Roma by hetero-identification. Only 3 per cent of Roma children under three years are enrolled in crèche or kindergarten compared to 22 per cent of non-Roma children.

For the three to six year olds, 39 per cent of Roma children are enrolled in crèche/kindergarten compared to 86 per cent of non-Roma. For the age group over six years old, 82 per cent of Roma children are enrolled in school compared to 99 per cent of non-Roma. Among the causes for dropping out from school are poverty, lack of money or the fact the child had to work. Six per cent of Roma children have never been enrolled in school. There is a consistent difference between Roma and non-Roma children in terms of reading and writing competencies for those six to 18 years: 65 per cent very well and well for Roma, compared to 93 per cent for non-Roma for reading; 67 per cent very well and well for Roma compared to 95 per cent for non-Roma for writing. Also information, communication and technology competencies varied: 53 per cent very well and well for Roma compared to 90 per cent for non-Roma.

There is a slight increase in registration with a general practitioner for both Roma and non-Roma since 2012: 80 per cent on non-Roma children go for an annual health check-up; 54 per cent of Roma children. Teenage pregnancies are more frequent in case of Roma (33 per cent compared to 3 per cent for the age group 14-17). Data shows that challenges exist for the most vulnerable groups in society, which include children living with disabilities, children and families belonging to the Roma minority and rural children.

Part 2: Major Results including in humanitarian action and gender, against the results in the Country Programme Documents

The Government of Romania - UNICEF Country Programme 2018 – 2022 contributes to the development in Romania and beyond its borders of quality, universal, community-based, child- and family-centred services, and facilitates the transformation of social norms to overcome discrimination and violence against children, thus supporting the progressive realization of child rights and reducing equity gaps affecting children and their families. The 2018 Romania Country Office Annual Report, the first for the new country programme, is organized along the three core outcome areas of the country programme.

Outcome 1 - Sharing experience and resources to promote child rights beyond borders: Romania increasingly contributes, through knowledge and funding, to regional and global efforts to advance child rights and children-related Sustainable Development Goals with its experience, expertise and resources.

The focus is to leverage UNICEF's global reach to support Romania's position as an emerging centre of expertise, knowledge and funding for children and youth. UNICEF Romania started implementing an ambitious plan in the first year of the country programme which identified and documented areas of expertise and best practices of exchange with and support to other countries. UNICEF initiated a partnership with recently established Romanian Agency for International Development (RoAid), operational in 2018 as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. UNICEF Romania supported the Agency in developing institutional capacity, including through three month secondment of a UNICEF staff member.

UNICEF engagement with RoAid identified opportunities and needs for investing in child rights issues in the Republic of Moldova, such as exchanges in parenting, and support through the involvement of UNICEF Moldova office in relevant areas such as early childhood development and mother and child care. A joint campaign is planned to mobilize funds from private sector and private individuals in Romania for child right priorities in the Republic of Moldova, funds that are planned to be matched by contributions from RoAid to increase the support for children in Moldova.

UNICEF and RoAID developed a joint workplan which will be reflected in the 2019 budget, to prioritize official development assistance (ODA) allocation for child rights and strengthen Romania's role in promoting child rights globally. The plan includes support for the institutional development of RoAID, joint identification and promotion of practices from Romania that could be included in the horizontal exchange offer, joint funding mechanism that could allow countries that want to benefit from Romanian knowledge to access funding from RoAID to cover the costs of technical assistance provided by Romanian experts.

Among practices identified in Romania are the promotion of UNICEF-led models such as the minimum package of integrated, community-based services for children and families; the quality inclusive-education initiative; and relevant areas such parenting, deinstitutionalization, promotion of safe behavior among adolescents and role models to improve education expectations for children from vulnerable groups. The first year of the country programme was used to prepare a data base of possible areas for horizontal cooperation, linked with available

resources and expertise.

UNICEF Romania's flagship programme on a minimum package of services had interested country delegations visiting in 2018 and was the main case study at the International Conference on Social Work co-organized between the UNICEF Romania and the UNICEF Regional Office, the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice and the National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and Adoption. The conference resulted in a Regional Call to Action to professionalize the social workforce.

During 2018, UNICEF Romania invested time and effort on the upcoming Romanian Presidency of the European Union Council in 2019, to promote good practices and child rights' initiatives in Romania and at European Union-level, focusing on child participation, child poverty and exclusion, vaccination and child health, and Roma inclusion. UNICEF advocacy on child participation resulted in the Government of Romania adopting the right to participation as a priority for the European Union presidency. UNICEF supported several consultations with children and scheduled an official political event, 'virtual children's summit', which will bring together high-level European Union officials and children in May 2019 in Bucharest, and an expert-level preparatory meeting in Brussels in February.

A call for four official junior European Union ambassadors was launched. They will represent children at high-level events. UNICEF successfully advocated for and collaborated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to develop a children's page on Romania's European Union presidency website, the first such in the European Union.

In the context of European Union neighborhood, the Romanian experience in prioritizing child issues during European Union accession was documented and made available for other interested countries in Western Balkans.

As Romania is a fast-growing middle-income country, UNICEF Romania is increasingly fundraising from the Romanian public for global and national programmes. Private sector fundraising well exceeded the 2018 target, and UNICEF Romania raised nearly US\$1.3 million in Romania. UNICEF established progressively ambitious targets; to reach them a market analysis was conducted with technical assistance from the Swedish UNICEF National Committee and UNICEF headquarters. Following these analyses, UNICEF Romania implemented new initiatives including a direct marketing campaign and a stewardship programme, to further scale up in 2019.

For the best chance for vulnerable children and adolescents from Romania and beyond to develop and thrive, UNICEF Romania fostered the engagement of the private sector to provide sustainable and unrestricted funding for the implementation of the country programme, to contribute to regional thematic funds to support programmatic work in the region, and to increase the contribution allocated to international UNICEF-supported programmes and initiatives.

Outcome 2 - Social inclusion of children of vulnerable groups is supported by quality, equitable and coordinated health, education and child protection systems, and protective social norms are embraced by policy makers, service providers and parents.

Outcome two focuses on solutions for social inclusion of the most vulnerable children, through modelling integrated services such as a continuation of the Bacau County integrated services project, and new and innovative approaches and policies at community, county and national levels.

UNICEF Romania flagship programme aimed to address multiple vulnerabilities through the establishment of a minimum package of services, came to completion in 2018. The external evaluation of this integrated community services programme is progressing as planned. During 2018, materials were developed to document and support advocacy for the package, including a brochure, a short documentary, a 360-degree virtual reality film and exhibit. All these materials are important inputs to the sustainability and scale-up of the model.

Discussions are ongoing with the National Authority of Child Protection and Adoption to create a resource page on their website as a support portal. An analysis of implications of recent fiscal reforms on the replication of the minimum package of services model was delayed, expected by February 2019. This analysis will be critical to updating the package's costing figures that are critical to advocate for scaling up.

In terms of sustainability and scaling up the model, positive developments took place. A survey among the 45 municipalities involved in the programme showed 29 municipalities have budgeted (fully or partially) to continue the work, independently from UNICEF, showing some good results in terms of sustainability. In addition, the lessons learned and tools, as well as the AURORA innovative case management software, are being used for a new Ministry of Labour Programme replicating integrated community services. AURORA is independently being adapted for de-institutionalization programming in Romania. Romania and UNICEF used the minimum package of services as a positive case study for several countries, including a key exhibit during the UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office conference on social work held in Bucharest in November 2018.

The Minimum Package of Services programme addressed multiple vulnerabilities faced by children, ranging from school drop-out, early school leaving, child abandonment, violence against children and multiple health issues such as vaccination and teenage pregnancy. The programme was complemented through national level programmes in areas of education, child protection and health. Below are some key achievements in 2018.

Goal area 1: Every child survives and thrives

As progress on health indicators slowed down in recent years, UNICEF Romania promoted child survival and development and access to quality health care, especially for the most vulnerable children. UNICEF strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Health to conduct

regular analyses of infant mortality and maternal mortality indicators, which led to identifying of main causes of death to be addressed by public health programmes. UNICEF Romania undertook an analysis of determinants of maternal mortality and a study on maternal and infant mortalities; the emerging evidence point at major issues putting at risk women who were pregnant, women delivering, women in post-partum and infants' lives. Going forward, prevention measures will be identified and work to guide the development of a consolidated operational plan for mother and child health and will be the basis for revising provisions of the national health insurance, improving quality of care, developing community health services and health information and education programmes.

A national immunization crisis is on the top of the agenda. UNICEF Romania initiated with the Ministry of Health and World Health Organization (WHO), a catch-up campaign that generated results in communities where for many years no child had been immunized. In response to an ongoing measles outbreak, emergency catch-up vaccination campaigns were co-organized by Ministry of Health, UNICEF and WHO in four identified low coverage districts. At least 750 children were vaccinated, including in vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities with large Roma populations, increasing coverages from below 10 per cent to over 95 per cent of children in targeted communities. The vaccination was accompanied by a door-to-door communication campaign using a UNICEF-developed communication material presenting the benefits of vaccination and addressing mistrust, which is now being used by all 42 district health directorates.

UNICEF Romania underlined the importance of immunization in the vaccination coordination group hosted by the Ministry of Health and via targeted advocacy with Parliament, which helped bring additional attention. Jointly with WHO, a governmental order on vaccination centres to accelerate and streamline catch-up vaccine work and broaden the medical personnel allowed to vaccinate beyond family doctors as part of the National Vaccine Programme was drafted.

Multiple field trips and briefings increased knowledge and awareness of the importance and benefits of immunization of more than 90 journalists, health professionals and parliamentarians. To increase demand for vaccination, based on the Immunization Coverage and Vaccine Hesitancy Review conducted by the UNICEF Regional Office, and a WHO study on the causes of the lack of vaccination in Romania, UNICEF Romania launched a national awareness raising and information campaign for parents.

To support the collection of quality data and digitalization for immunization, which promises to provide a clear planning horizon both for Ministry of Health and district health directorates, UNICEF is improving the National Electronic Registry for Vaccination. This includes developing its capacity to send an SMS to parents informing them when their child is due for vaccination. To catalyze a public-private alliance of actors working in Romania, committed to improve and transform access to healthcare through tele-medicine and other digital technologies, UNICEF organized a round table on the use of technology in health. The round table is part of an ongoing consultative process to identify policy measures that can create an enabling

environment for the use at scale, in a sustainable way, of technology in health.

Goal area 2: Every child learns

In line with the global UNICEF education strategy 'Every child learns', the UNICEF Romania country office continued to successfully promote access to quality inclusive education, especially for the most vulnerable children, in support of the Ministry of Education and other partners in the field of education.

A step forward, advocacy on financing for the education sector by a variety of education actors, including UNICEF, led to the Government's commitment to increase the education budget by 15 per cent annually, to reach 6 per cent of GDP by 2022. Adequate financing of ante-preschool education was secured via a new legislative framework approved in Parliament. The commitment of members of parliament was expressed at the UNICEF co-organized international conference on early education, which brought together the business and education sectors. At the conference, Members of Parliament expressed commitment to gradually expand compulsory education to include preschool education, while the business sector expressed strong interest to investing in early education.

UNICEF supported a call for proposals for three programmes in education, resulting in a total of €134,000,000 funds allotted for education in Romania with a focus on improving quality and inclusion. UNICEF Romania continued to partner with "Educated Romania," spearheaded by the Romanian Presidential Administration. Based on a series of national consultations to formulate a 2030 vision on education, a final report focused on quality, equity and inclusion.

The 'quality inclusive education' model was implemented in 51 schools in Bacau County benefitting approximately 23,000 students, of which 15 per cent are at high risk of drop-out. By improving the pedagogical skills of 776 teachers, managers, counsellors and parenting skills of 10,270 parents, children received better education and stronger support at home. The quality inclusive education model influenced teachers' trainings as their tools and methodology are now used by the Ministry of Education to train 55,000 teachers. As a result, 67 per cent of children at risk of drop-out improved their school participation and 53 per cent of children improved their school performance as demonstrated by the independent mid-term review.

With UNICEF technical assistance, 10 schools involved in the quality inclusive education model attracted additional funding (€170,000). UNICEF advocacy and partnerships with county authorities extended the school counselors and mediators network for a four year period, in a difficult overall budgetary environment (the Government is freezing 4,000 positions in the pre-university education system). To improve teacher training at national level, UNICEF Romania developed a partnership with five universities country-wide, to be implemented in 2019.

A new three year collaboration of UNICEF with the National Agency for Community Programmes in Education and Professional Training leveraged €300,000 European Union funds to refine and scale up the role models' component on non-cognitive skills in two counties.

Technical assistance was provided to the Ministry of Education on school desegregation and contributed to the development of monitoring indicators, a vision document of the National Commission for School Desegregation, the regulation of the functioning of the commission, and a national monitoring methodology.

Following the UNICEF–OECD education report, key policy recommendations on assessment and evaluation were included in the European Commission Education and Training Monitor for 2018. UNICEF Romania contributed to finalizing the national action plan on assessment, contributing to curricular changes and assessment of competencies in 2018 and beyond.

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

UNICEF collaboration with national, subnational and local partners increased access of more than 5,200 children and their families with multiple vulnerabilities to cross sectoral, community based services (minimum package of services), which created the framework for early identification, complex response and monitoring of cases of violence, abuse and neglect. Integrated teams of professionals were instrumental in designing local intervention models which optimized teamwork on case management, with emphasis on prevention of social exclusion and family separation.

Aurora, an innovative software developed with UNICEF support, continues to be used by community professionals. As a result, real-time monitoring data on a large variety of indicators tracking vulnerability is available to decision-makers and strengthens cross-sectoral case management. A summative evaluation of the integrated Bacau model is underway. Its findings will provide decision-makers with information about, and suggest key priorities on, preventive and easy to access special protection services that need to be addressed in the reviewed National Strategy on Child Rights 2019-2020.

Given UNICEF's continuous effort and technical assistance provided to line ministries, Aurora and the integrated social services model are progressively scaled-up at national level in two projects implemented by the National Authority for the Protection of Child Rights and Adoption in partnership with the Ministry of Communication and by the Ministries of Labour and Social Justice, Health and Education, contributing to an increased number of counties that provide services preventing unnecessary separations of children.

As a result of UNICEF's technical assistance, NAPRCA and the World Bank leveraging an initial €3 million European Union funding, a de-institutionalization master plan for 2017-2020 was developed and approved. This plan will leverage an additional tranche of €50 million from European Union funds to close 50 institutions, and provide family-based solutions for nearly 2,000 children currently living in institutions. An additional €120 million European Union and Norway funds will develop preventive, community-based services, designed using evidence generated through UNICEF Romania modeling experience and needs assessment performed with Aurora.

Considering government priorities on the professionalization and capacity building for social workforce, the co-organized regional conference, UNICEF Romania and the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice launched a call for action, endorsed by over 180 participants from 25 countries to create unified regional standards of training, accreditation, certification and practice in social services at regional, national and local levels. UNICEF in partnership with the National College of Social Workers is analyzing the legal framework to design new training instruments and inform policy leading to increased number of providers and quality of social assistance services.

NAPRCA amended normative framework and updated the minimum quality standards for protection services with UNICEF assistance. As a result, new standards for residential services, family-type services and other services with a role in prevention of separation of children from their families (i.e. day care centres) are used by professionals in the child care system. As a result of UNICEF technical assistance, NAPRCA finalized the country self-assessment and the national roadmap in line with its commitments as a 'pathfinding country' under the global partnership to end violence against children.

Outcome 3 - Governance and Partnerships for children: National policies affecting children and adolescents from vulnerable groups are evidence-based, equitable and adequately financed, as well as developed, implemented, monitored and evaluated in a participatory and transparent manner.

UNICEF Romania's focus is on building a national legal, policy and budgetary framework, through strategic partnerships, campaigns and strengthening the national capacity to implement proven solutions for the most disadvantaged children and adolescents.

UNICEF continued to monitor the situation of children in Romania focusing on key indicators for health, education, child protection and poverty and distilled key insights into factsheets for targeted advocacy. UNICEF support to the working group initiated by the presidential administration around data on children left behind by migrant workers led to the harmonization of data and procedures. A joint review of draft guidance with the National Institute of Statistics and the national authority on the protection of the child rights and adoptions led to an improved quality and availability of data, such as on child-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators and children's access to justice, as well as data on violence against children.

As part of the 'TransMonEE' initiative, UNICEF Romania led the development of the 2017 Country Analytical Report and disaggregated data template sheets on child-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators. UNICEF helped elaborate guidance on data collection on violence against children through surveys peer-reviewed jointly with the National Institute of Statistics and the national authority on the protection of child rights and adoption. As a result, the main stakeholders around children's access to justice harmonized their databases, agreeing to report on common indicators using internationally standardized definitions. Thus,

the data collected by the National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Administration and Interior (General Inspectorate of Romanian Police), Public Ministry Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and the National Union of the Bars in Romania are now streamlined.

UNICEF-supported trainings on ethics in evidence generation for staff from the National Institute of Statistics and the Institute of Educational Sciences. As a result, institutions strengthened the capacity to generate data observing ethical principles in evidence generation and acting as ethical review boards. The trained staff organized follow-up activities in their institutions to disseminate the knowledge acquired.

Actions taken related to data are in line with the Concluding Observations on the fifth Romanian periodic report on Convention on the Rights of the Child which recommended improvement of the data collection systems to cover all the areas of the conventions and disaggregation of data by age, sex, disability, geographic location, ethnic origin, socioeconomic background and migratory status to facilitate analysis of the situation of all children, particularly those in situations of vulnerability, including Roma children.

A national independent child rights monitoring mechanism was established as part of the Ombudsman Institution, as a follow-up of the Concluding Observations. With UNICEF support, in collaboration with Ombudsman Institution, the National Authority on the Protection of Child Rights and Adoption, and Save the Children/Romania, the Law on the Organization and Functioning of the Ombudsman Institution was amended and introduced a Deputy Ombudsman for children. The Ombudsman office now has a genuine capacity to protect and promote child rights via its independent Child Ombudsman in line with Paris Principles.

With regards to gender, at the national level, Romania made changes to strengthen its legal framework for translating the Istanbul Convention into national legislation. As a result, the emergency protection order was issued in 2018, allowing the offender to be taken out of the home, based on a risk assessment made by the police. In the same time, the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men opened the first centre providing integrated services to victims of sexual violence in Bucharest, showing the commitment of national institutions to increase the supply of quality services for the prevention and intervention in cases of sexual violence.

UNICEF's work in Romania strengthens the involvement of children in policy and decision making at both UNICEF programme level as well as at national level. A two-day office wide training was facilitated by an organization Children of Scotland which resulted in an internal and external action plan for strengthening child participation. As part of the internal plan, child participation is in the next modeling programme developed in consultation with donor partners, Botnar Foundation and Norway EEA Grants. One concrete step is the rolling out of U-Report: the prep-work is completed, including the setup of a child-led steering group and the development of a communication plan for an official launch.

UNICEF Romania advocacy on child participation resulted in the Government of Romania

adopting child rights and participation as a priority for the European Union Presidency. During the second half of 2018, UNICEF Romania supported several consultations with children, including a landmark event: the first citizens' consultation in the European Union was set up exclusively for children to share their views on the future of Europe. Also UNICEF consulted with child-focused community service organizations and scheduled an official political event the 'virtual children's summit', to gather high-level European Union officials and children in Bucharest in May 2019.

Also in preparation for the European Union Presidency, a call for four official Romanian junior ambassadors to European Union (ages 10-17 years) was launched. They will represent children in various high-level events, including the Sibiu European Union Heads of State meeting on 9 May. UNICEF Romania supported the development of a children's page on the Romania's European Union Presidency website.

UNICEF advocacy also focused on Parliament. UNICEF Romania prepared for the establishment of a children's committee in Parliament and also for several legislative changes, such as the national law on Immunization, the parenting strategy (and possibly law) and to promote a ban on institutionalization of young children. This was done through a number of round tables with parliamentary committees and apart from the one on Immunization, resulted in progress including agreement on banning institutionalization of children under the age of seven years (up from three years).

As an important cross-sectoral office output, the migration from the Early Warning Early Action System to the Emergency Preparedness Platform was completed. Although Romania is a low risk environment, UNICEF initiated new preparedness efforts with the Ministry of Interior (general inspectorate for immigration, border police) to increase the office's capacity to respond to emergency situations, including a high influx of refugee and migrant children and families.

UNICEF supported a UNHCR participatory assessment on protection and assistance programming and decision-making, which involved interviews with refugees living in and out of reception centers. As a result, recommendations were formulated to adapt support programmes more to the needs of refugee and migrant children seeking support in Romania.

During 2018, UNICEF monitored the situation of children in Romania focusing on key indicators for health, education, child protection and poverty. UNICEF support to the working group initiated by the presidential Administration around data on children left behind by migrant workers led to the harmonization of data and procedures. A joint review of draft guidance with the National Institute of Statistics and the National Authority for the Protection of Child Rights and Adoption led to an improved quality and availability of data, such as on child-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators and children's access to justice, as well as data on violence against children.

In 2018, over 210 high-profile individuals such as national ambassadors and online influencers, supported and amplified UNICEF Romania advocacy messages. On World Children's Day

international sport champions, Romanian designers, TV and radio anchors, UNICEF National Ambassadors and influencers responded offline and online to a UNICEF challenge to create opportunities for children to takeover and express their views, with more than 16 million potential impressions across traditional and online media. A series of video materials illustrate UNICEF upstream work and are widely used by public and non-governmental partners.

Materials included a Virtual Reality 360° series of five movies showcasing the UNICEF-led minimum package of community-based services model. The videos were a communication tool used for the first time at the regional conference organized in Romania on Social Work and Social Service Workforce matters.

Media outreach work by UNICEF generated over 5 per cent of the national children-related news. Field trips, initiatives and events generated 7,568 media reports (68 per cent increase compared to 2017) reaching more than 436 million potential impressions (three times higher than in 2017). In terms of social media, the 'UNICEF in Romania' Facebook page reached more than 200,000 fans and the online presence extended with an Instagram account with 1,200 followers. Overall, the number of people reached via social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) is 10,500,000.

UNICEF continued to increase its value for money, seeking efficiency, minimizing costs and improving its overall business processes. This is relevant for UNICEF Romania operations but also applies to the management of United Nations House in Bucharest and supporting the wider United Nations system in Romania.

Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints

Scaling up the minimum package of services model

Over the past four years, UNICEF in partnership with the National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and Adoption, Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, county and local authorities, (supported by Norway Grants and Botnar Foundation) designed and implemented a model for the delivery of integrated services at community level. Implemented in 38 rural and urban municipalities of Bacau County, it covered a total of 45 communities. This 'minimum package of services' model provided basic integrated health, social protection and educational services at community level.

These services proved to prevent, at a fraction of the cost, many of the issues that generally affect these families: separating children from their parents, lack of minimum welfare payments, violence, early pregnancy and risky behavior, illness, and school non-enrollment. As part of the model, an innovative technology platform was developed and tested, AURORA, which not only allowed for a complete diagnosis of vulnerabilities among children and their families, but also functioned as a tool for integrated case management, monitoring and support planning and policy development. The model created a renewed focus on community level services and their

importance for child well-being.

Work is ongoing with mayors and line ministries to ensure sustainability of the investments made and the documentation and experiences of the model, including the mechanisms, protocols, tools, training manuals, are being packaged and made available to the Government of Romania for replication and scale up. Lessons and materials are already being used in a new project replicating in most vulnerable local authorities, leveraging over 20 million Euro from European Union funding.

The progressive scale up of the model is reflected in several national policy documents, including the national strategy on the protection and promotion of child rights and national strategy on social inclusion and poverty reduction. But access to extra-budgetary resources which could support multi-disciplinary teams and integrated services is not clear, and bureaucratic barriers often hinder the process.

During the implementation of the model, several lessons learned were documented at local and county level concerning: 1) local specificity and variability; 2) lack of qualified human resources and high turnover; 3) low capacity of community professionals (technical and management); 4) secondary legislation (protocols and guidelines) with a great variety of interpretation and application; 5) limited resources (no standard costs) and 6) administrative authority of the mayoralty.

At county level, the project documented the following: 1) limited capacity of county coordinators with regards to technical supervision and project management, i.e. focus on quantitative output performance indicators; 2) secondary legislation – protocols and guidelines – with a great variety of interpretation and application and 3) limited resources (no standard costs).

Additional structural barriers were noted such as: 1) sectoral approach: legislation, institutional framework and funding mechanisms; 2) project approach, 3) weak human resource policies and 4) unconducive social norms and traditional practices at all levels.

Consistent with the strategy to reverse the focus from the most expensive and complicated services to prevention and early intervention the new model will further develop and test the integrated community services center, including specialized services such as ambulatory care, day-care centres, and other community services. The model community services center could serve one or multiple communities, with a clear territorial coverage based on the needs assessment realized in the first stage of modelling. UNICEF Romania will explore the possibility of complementing the physical community services center with onsite services, with a virtual one to provide mobile services, tele-services, and online services.

Another key lesson learned from the MPS model is that for it to be replicable and sustainable, local governance is key. While a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach to the needs of vulnerable children and their families is essential, municipal planning, management and monitoring needs to connect national priorities with action on the ground, taking account of

differentiated needs of vulnerable children within and across rural, peri-urban and urban areas. AURORA with its basic services platform sets the basis for case management, data collection and monitoring, but other e-tools are needed to help make data available for mapping vulnerabilities and planning e.g. around health and social services within and across municipalities.

Further, as part of accountable governance, children and adolescents need to fully be partners and social change agents who help to solve problems in their communities. Taking into consideration their voices and opinions, particularly those of the most vulnerable ones, ensures participation of children in social life and decision making of the municipality, in the living environment and child safety of the municipality, but also their participation vis-à-vis healthcare, education and local development.

Parenting education to reduce school absenteeism

Over the past four years, UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Holt's Association designed and implemented a parenting education component, as part of the quality inclusive education package implemented in 51 school units in Bacau County. The experience accumulated in quality inclusive education implementation and the evidence generated through the external and internal evaluations of the model revealed the benefits of parenting programmes. The average school absences of the children whose parents attended parenting education sessions decreased from 16.2 absences per child to 6.2 absences per child, whereas the partnership between school and parents strengthened, the school culture becoming more family-friendly.

Three important lessons emerged from the implementation of parenting programmes. Firstly, the education sector has the most robust and sustainable coverage and can act as a vehicle for the delivery of parenting programmes at national level. In rural areas, many communities lack a full-time social worker as well as health services offering full coverage and therefore cannot offer parenting education programmes with sufficient coverage. At the same time, in every community exists at least one school unit where parents can be provided with parenting education.

Secondly, as exemplified by the ongoing measles outbreak since February 2016, there is a need to use cross-sectoral efforts to reach the most vulnerable parents. Building on the integrated cross-sector teams as part of the community-based services model implemented in Bacau - while the education sector served as the main entry point - messages on parenting reached the most vulnerable when reinforced through the social and child protection and health sectors.

Lastly, UNICEF Romania demonstrated pathways to raise the percentage of voluntarily trained fathers to 25 per cent. In UNICEF's previous National Parenting Education Programme in Preschool Education, fathers and grandfathers made up only two to five per cent of the total participants. UNICEF's strategies to foster paternal involvement revolved around training and

involving school principals as parent educators. Ultimately, the delivery of parenting education by the school principal increased the perceived social value and utility of parenting in the community, and thus successfully encouraged the participation of fathers.

Immunization is not a given

A measles outbreak since February 2016 has affected thousands of people in Romania. Until the end of 2018, 15,600 people contracted the disease according to the National Institute of Public Health in Romania and 59 people have died, the large majority(55) were children. This is a clear indicator that over the years many cohorts of children went unvaccinated, now representing a large pool of teenagers and adults exposed to the disease and who can pass it to infants under nine months old. Although the outbreak abated in late 2018, the risk that the outbreak picks up again remains until immunization levels are increased and reach the WHO-recommended herd immunity of at least 95 per cent across the country to provide adequate protection.

UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization and the National Institute of Public Health to respond to the outbreak and strengthen the routine vaccination system. This included raising awareness with parents and the general public that vaccines are safe, cost-effective and save lives and creating a national electronic vaccine registry to improve immunization planning and visibility.

Key lessons learned included the fact that parents need information on where children are vaccinated, especially in communities without general practitioners. Access to community-based health services is key to access health care, but also in view of health promotion.

Secondly, UNICEF and WHO joined forces to support a Ministry of Health immunization catch-up campaign that targeted districts with the lowest coverage rates to vaccinate children. A door-to-door communication campaign was instrumental, going hand in hand with a team of doctors, nurses and local general practitioners to successfully immunize 95 per cent of the children in these communities.

Third, to improve coverage rates at national level, the Romanian National 2014-2020 Health Strategy needs a modern, efficient and effective immunization programme using a health-system strengthening approach. For this end, UNICEF Romania is collaborating with the Ministry of Health and National Institute of Public Health, WHO and other partners to develop a costed national implementation plan for immunization, to reach herd immunity for all vaccine-preventable diseases included in the National Programme.

Finally, the immunization crisis in Romania is another reminder that UNICEF's successful model of integrated, community-based services, with integrated health teams, for children and families in Bacau county can be referred to as a good practice and should be scaled-up nationwide.

United Nations country team and operations management team

The United Nations Development Programme does not have an office in Romania, nor is there a Resident Coordinator in place. UNICEF Romania chairs the United Nations country team and leads in interacting with the Government on behalf of United Nations agencies in Romania. The UNICEF Representative is invited by the Government of Romania to represent the United Nations at high-level meetings and visits. The UNICEF Romania operations manager chairs the United Nations operations management team and leads on various United Nations initiatives on behalf of the United Nations, such as cost of living and salary surveys and business operations strategy.

UNICEF Romania occupies a government-provided rent-free premises shared with United Nations agencies and the Council of Europe, and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Romania for the management of the United Nations House.

The country office continued its leadership in managing operations as lead United Nations agency in Romania and administrator of United Nations common premises and services, which is unique for UNICEF globally. The UNICEF Romania country office contributed to regional and global initiatives such as the test and pilot of new applications (Vision Hana, Service Now, Budget Formulation Tool); hosting regional inter-government events such as the Conference on Strengthening the Social Work and Social Service Workforce in Europe & Central Asia. Members of the Operations team supported the move of Innocenti Office of Research to new premises and training of administrative staff in the UNICEF Brussels Office.

Private sector fundraising

A fundraising market analysis was carried out in 2018 to support the strategic decisions and investments in local fundraising. A main finding was the limitations of the market potential both for private individuals and companies: the potential number of pledge donors is estimated at 385,000; 6.5 per cent of this estimated potential are already active pledge donors in the UNICEF house file. The potential number of companies that can donate a minimum of US\$ 100,000 to UNICEF, applying the 20 per cent fiscal regulation (a facility in the Romanian legislation enabling companies to redirect maximum 20 per cent of their profit tax to a non-profit organization) is estimated at 206.

Another constraint is related to the labour force. The fundraising market analysis showed that according to a United Nations report 3.4 million Romanians (17 per cent of the population) had left the country between 2007 and 2017, making Romania the country with the second largest emigration rate after Syria. This has a direct impact on recruiting and retaining fundraisers on the team, and thus on funds raised from face-to-face fundraising (which in 2018 generated 59 per cent from the total income from private individuals).

This points to the need to change the approach of both private individuals and corporates. For private individuals, UNICEF Romania will increasingly create partnerships to recruit; launch a

stewardship programme to further engage current pledge donors; and consider a two-step fundraising to help change donor behavior from one-off donations to pledge.

For corporate, while the strategy “fewer, bigger, better” of the previous country programme proved to be successful, it limited potential on Romania’s market. The more organizations supported, the better coverage they have, which translates into very small grants (2,000-5,000 EUR). UNICEF tested a new approach of corporate direct marketing with limited results so far, but an optimization of the database and of the outreach letter are to be considered for future.

Despite these challenges UNICEF exceeded its ambitious targets by 20 per cent in 2018.

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