Executive summary
As Rwanda continued to progress towards its development goals, the UNICEF Rwanda programme remained well aligned with government priorities and continues to make a significant contribution to national development.

Despite success, Rwanda still faces challenges in the areas of child survival and development. In particular, chronic under-nutrition (stunting), early childhood development (ECD), neonatal mortality, the quality of education and violence prevention required continued attention. The Government of Rwanda’s commitment in these areas remained strong, which underscores the need for UNICEF’s technical and intellectual leadership.

In 2017, there was focus on developing the next UNICEF five-year Country Programme Document (CPD) to commence July 2018. In addition, the next United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP) was prepared, with UNICEF participation and input to reflect priority areas of children and women.

Early childhood development continued to be a priority in 2017. As a result of UNICEF-supported programmes, the number of children and families participating in ECD programmes increased from 6,339 individual parents and caregivers and 6,047 children to 10,000 parents and 18,000 children across 16 districts. Data from the 2017 end line survey and ECD project administrative reports showed that these children reached by UNICEF-supported projects represent seven per cent of all children enrolled in ECD programmes nationally.

In social protection, as a result of UNICEF technical assistance child-sensitive social policy options were included in key policy documents and guidelines. These included expanded, child-sensitive public works programmes, nutrition-sensitive interventions and child care. Training was delivered to 500 government officials responsible for social protection at all levels. Child-sensitive options were fully integrated into the National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024, the Government of Rwanda’s seven-year development agenda.

Social protection and other social sectors face a decline in financial resources from official development assistance and national budgets. The Government budget allocated to social sectors declined from 30.3 per cent in 2014/15 to an estimated 26.5 per cent in 2017/18, with the largest reductions in education and in health.

Significant progress remained to be made in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), as just five per cent of Rwandans have a handwashing facility with soap and water, coupled with widespread unhygienic household latrines. Without moving everyone to basic sanitation and hygiene services, Rwanda will continue to struggle with high rates of stunting. Poor sanitation and hygiene will also continue to have negative impacts on the overall health and dignity of children, especially girls.

As part of UN Delivering as One, UNICEF Rwanda continued its full participation in relevant UN
Development Result Groups (DRGs), as well as the implementation of joint programmes. UNICEF is active in two DRGs (human development and humanitarian emergencies) and supports seven of 20 joint programmes: nutrition; health; HIV; social protection; violence prevention; WASH and a joint UN programme with Imbuto Foundation.

In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda adopted an industry approach to connect with the private sector. A partnership agreement was signed with the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB), the government body for all tea, coffee and horticulture businesses in Rwanda. Enforcement of the Children’s Rights and Business Principles (CRBP) were included in the agreement. Focal persons from 16 tea companies and 20 cooperatives were oriented on the Principles, along with 70 employees from various private sector companies.

**Humanitarian assistance**

Emergency preparedness and response is the two-pronged approach to UNICEF’s humanitarian work in Rwanda. Emergency response in 2017 focused on support to Burundian refugees and the response to natural disasters.

Since April 2015, more than 80,000 Burundian refugees arrived in Rwanda. Under the coordination of the Ministry for Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), UNICEF Rwanda continued to ensure access to social services for Burundian women and children in essential sectors.

In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda contributed in the following sectors:

**Nutrition:** UNICEF worked with partners to ensure identification and case management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in children under five. In 2017, 247 children were admitted to therapeutic feeding programmes in Mahama Refugee Camp. Nutrition surveillance and timely treatment resulted in 94 per cent of children diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition being cured.

**Health:** UNICEF continued to provide vaccines and consumables throughout 2017, resulting in over 95 per cent immunization coverage with zero outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. Major diseases are under control, including malaria.

**WASH:** In 2017, WASH facilities in all refugee camps were available as per SPHERE standards. Provision of water and improved sanitation in refugee camps was handed over to the Government and UNHCR.

**Communication for development** (C4D): Health promotion was undertaken to encourage seven key family practices: hygiene promotion, safe motherhood, newborn health care, nutrition messages on exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding, immunization, malaria and HIV prevention. Using ‘talking books’, door-to-door campaigns and small group meetings, UNICEF reached more than 26,000 refugees.

**Education:** In partnership with UNHCR, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UNICEF ensured access to quality education for more than 20,000 Burundian children, successfully integrating refugee children into the local education system. Given this integration, all support to the school resulted in benefits for both host community and refugee children in terms of accessing quality education. With support from the Government of Japan, UNICEF also provided information technology equipment to improve overall school management.
**Early childhood development (ECD):** UNICEF, in partnership with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), provided training of caregivers, procured play and learning materials and constructed ECD centres and playgrounds, benefiting over 5,900 young children.

**Child protection:** UNICEF in partnership with Save the Children provided services to more than 26,000 children and their families for prevention of and response to violence, family separation, exploitation and abuse. A total of 1,316 unaccompanied and separated children were provided with case management services.

**Humanitarian assistance:** In October 2017, UNICEF responded to numerous natural disasters, including landslides and flooding, which occurred throughout the rainy season. This humanitarian situation affected more than 4,500 households and resulted in over 50 deaths. UNICEF through MIDIMAR helped ensure access to safe drinking water and provided education supplies and basic household items for health and hygiene.

UNICEF Rwanda continued to ensure emergency readiness through the Early Warning; Early Action platform, which was updated in February 2017. With the support of the UNICEF Eastern and Southern African Regional Office (ESARO), Emergency Management Team members and other key staff participated in an emergency preparedness and response workshop to build capacity in these areas. As a result, the emergency preparedness platform inputs were drafted and submitted to ESARO for review by the end of 2017.

Given the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), UNICEF Rwanda participated in joint contingency planning for the potential influx of refugees and Rwandan returnees. The contingency plan for DRC for 2018 anticipates 80,000 additional refugees and will require US$ 1.8 million for UNICEF to respond.

The Regional Refugee and Response Plan (RRRP) for Burundian refugees was updated for 2018. This plan outlines an interagency multisectoral response reflecting the current situation and planning for the continued influx of additional refugees. It builds upon the 2017 Plan and on current efforts to support Burundian refugees. The RRRP anticipates an additional influx of 17,500 Burundian refugees.

While UNICEF Rwanda received more than US$ 2 million for emergency response in 2017, there was still a funding gap of more than US$ 1 million.

UNICEF maintained standby partnerships in WASH, education, ECD and child protection and maintained contingency supplies for early response.

### Equity in practice

UNICEF’s global equity re-focus guided the UNICEF Rwanda 2013-2018 Country Programme. Rwanda is often considered a success story in terms of equity re-focus, with its early recognition of inequities between its poorest and richest, rural and urban populations, women and men and special vulnerabilities of key populations like children with disabilities and children as heads of households.

The accelerated effort to deliver social services for the poorest and most vulnerable children and their families narrowed the gap between the wealthiest and poorest in the last decade. Nonetheless, significant disparities in access to and use of social services remain. Only 11 per cent of students from the lowest quintile attend secondary school compared to 40 per cent in the
richest quintile. Some 94 per cent of households in the richest quintile improved sanitation, compared to 74 per cent in the poorest quintile. Under-five mortality among children from the poorest quintiles is twice as high as in the richest quintile and 44 per cent of children still live under the national consumption poverty line.

In 2017, UNICEF supported the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) to undertake a Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA). The results highlighted that in addition to consumption poverty, 39 per cent of children are multi-dimensionally poor and experience multiple overlapping deprivations of at least three basic needs, compounding the effects of poverty. Younger children aged 0-5 are more subject to basic deprivations (55.3 per cent compared to 32 per cent of children aged 5-17 years). The analysis indicated key deprivation overlaps in health, nutrition, WASH, housing and education for children aged 5-17. This confirmed the need for further integration of the UNICEF programme interventions in social protection, ECD, nutrition and WASH, a model that has been tested since 2015 and links nutrition and ECD with social protection and other essential services, focusing on the most deprived.

In 2017, UNICEF provided strategic support to the Government to progressively introduce a range of social protection schemes that are more child- and nutrition-sensitive and are aimed at households not yet reached with social protection, including households with young children and with disabilities. This initiative, combining social protection with ECD and nutrition, was taken on by the Government and is slowly being taken to full national scale.

Early childhood development is an emerging area in Rwanda and large inequities are apparent. Only two per cent of the poorest children access ECD services compared to 40 per cent of the richest. Reaching these populations with ECD services was the main focus of the Country Programme and included a thorough analysis of equity-related bottlenecks in relation to ECD supply and demand. The ECD programme aimed to reduce financial barriers to ECD attendance to provide free ECD services to all. The results of this equity re-focus are evident, with a higher proportion of the poorest children in UNICEF intervention sites accessing ECD in 2017 compared to areas not yet reached by the programme (37 per cent compared to 14 per cent).

All UNICEF Rwanda programmes prioritize equity, whether through exploring gender-related issues pertaining to primary and secondary school attendance and learning (highlighted in a recent UNICEF study on dropouts and repetition), analysing financial barriers to improved water and sanitation, prioritising nutrition interventions to reach those most deprived or exploring the public budget from an equity perspective (such as social sector allocations to the poorest districts).

The equity re-focus will be enhanced in the upcoming Country Programme. While the Country Programme will have nationwide reach, support for strengthening systems to deliver an integrated package of quality interventions---including nutrition, ECD, WASH and social protection---will focus on 14 districts with the highest burden of poverty and the highest prevalence of stunting. A key component of the Country Programme will be supporting the Government to reduce multidimensional child poverty and reduce inequities, including increasing access to integrated and well-resourced social protection mechanisms for the poorest children in Rwanda, in line with the National Social Protection Strategy.
Emerging areas of importance

Focus on the second decade. According to the 2012 census, 2.7 million or 40 per cent of all children in Rwanda are adolescent who represent an expanding age group. To maximize the benefits of this demographic dividend, a number of challenges need to be addressed, particularly in adolescent health, education and protection, as well as with inequities arising from poverty status, the rural-urban divide and gender.

During the mid-term review process in 2016, UNICEF Rwanda identified adolescence as one of its emerging office priorities. As part of the development of its new Country Programme (2018-2022), UNICEF strategized its programming around adolescence.

In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda organised a consultation with adolescents to seek their opinions on issues they are facing today and the underlying causes and to prioritize actions to address these issues. With support from the civil society organizations Imbuto Foundation and Right to Play the consultation was attended by 22 adolescents.

Some of the issues identified by young people as crucial topics for Rwandan adolescents, confirming key findings of the situation analysis, were:

- Child protection: Violence (both sexual and physical); early pregnancy; child labour and exploitation;
- Health: HIV/AIDS (low knowledge; low uptake of HIV testing; low condom use among sexually active adolescents); limited access to adolescent-friendly health services; gender inequalities in access to health services;
- Education: poor quality of education; high drop outs and low motivation; gender inequalities in education;
- Participation: low access to information; limited opportunities to participate in decision-making.

The consultation validated the relevance of programming with and for adolescents. Many factors point to the need for specific and concerted action, including the persistence of poverty, issues related to health, education and protection and the need to support adolescents in voicing their views, concerns and rights.

A Strategy Note for Adolescents, drafted after the consultation and discussed with ESARO and Headquarters’ adolescent teams, defined how to mainstream adolescent programming across programme priorities (health, including HIV, education, child protection and participation) in the new Country Programme. As a result of these consultations, UNICEF Rwanda is better positioned to address adolescents’ opportunities and rights through integrated, multi-sectoral programming.

In 2017, the CO also prioritized refugee children and ECD.

Summary Notes and Acronyms
ADRA – Adventist Development and Relief Agency
C4D – communication for development
CHW – community health worker
CMT – country management team
CPW – Classic Public Works
CRBP – Children’s Rights and Business Principles
DFID – British Department for International Development
UNICEF Rwanda applied the socio-ecological model to build capacity in individuals and communities, while strengthening frontline workers and fostering supportive social norms.

The capacities of social service providers were built through teacher trainings in assessment and pedagogy; trainings of ECD caregivers and centre coordinators; in-service training of professional social workers, psychologists and child protection volunteers; health workers to improve the quality of maternal, child and newborn care; infant male circumcision and data usage at facilities; trainings for community health workers on case management, infant and young child feeding and growth monitoring; and trainings on the new design of social protection programmes.

As part of education reform and introduction of the competency-based curriculum with UNICEF support, the school-based mentorship programme was established in all schools. Early results show 80 per cent demonstrated improved knowledge of the competency-based curriculum and 40 per cent demonstrated improved teaching practices.

The community-based child protection system, Inshuti z’Umuryango, was operationalized at the
village level through refresher trainings for 3,537 child protection volunteers. This new workforce reached 11,642 children with protection and psychosocial services.

The social protection system was re-designed to include child-sensitive measures and integrated nutrition and child care, followed by training of 500 government officials. The new programme allowed family with children to access poverty reduction measures without leaving their children at home. Programme coverage also increased by 37 per cent to benefit 984,500 households.

For capacity building individuals and communities: mass media, community theatre, mobile vans and trained religious leaders disseminated key messages. These strategies reached over one million people, generating understanding of the consequences of chronic malnutrition and how families play a key role in ECD. A workshop was organised to train media, NGOs and artists on inclusive communication for children with disabilities.

**Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy**

In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda continued to promote national and sub-national policies and programmes based on sound data and research, with a particular focus on equity, sustainability and integration of interventions.

Key research partnerships were strengthened, including with the NISR, Partners in Health and the University of Rwanda. Domestication of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was supported through partnership with NISR to implement the multiple overlapping deprivations and develop a child-focused multidimensional poverty measure. Collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and NISR resulted in the development of a national Multidimensional Poverty Index to feed into SDG poverty targets. Baseline estimates for SDG targets in education and WASH were supported in collaboration with other United Nations agencies to inform the national SDG monitoring. An evaluation of the integrated ECD programme was completed in 2017 and informed the next phase of the programme.

A situation analysis was completed and informed the upcoming UNICEF Rwanda Country Programme. UNICEF-supported studies completed in 2017 (to be published in early 2018) to inform government programming included the Violence against Children and Youth Study and the Drop-Out Study. The end-line study on accelerating stunting reduction among under-two children was implemented with the University of Rwanda and contributed to the national stunting-reduction programme design.

The national budget brief and sector briefs on education, health and social protection were developed as well as the fiscal space analysis of these sectors and supported the advocacy for increased budget allocations.

UNICEF supported improvements of the Demographic and Health Survey and the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey to increase the availability of information on social protection and ECD. These and other research, facilitated the drafting of new social sector strategies and policies in line with the National Strategy for Transformation.

**Partnerships**

In partnership with SORWATHE Tea Company, more than 100 parents and community caregivers were trained on early child care. As a result, two mobile crèches benefitted 50 children with stimulation and nutrition support. SORWATHE also reported strong results in both
increased income for the families and appreciation by the workers for safe child care and enhanced parenting skills.

To build on the partnership with the tea industry, UNICEF Rwanda signed an agreement with the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB), of which the Children’s Rights and Business Principles (CRBP) are a key component. Focal persons from 16 tea companies and 20 cooperatives, as well as employees of private companies, were trained on the Principles. The training increased awareness on children’s rights and the steps to fulfill these rights in their businesses. Government partners included implementation of the Children’s Rights and Business Principles in their annual performance contracts.

Rwanda Broadcasting Agency, the national broadcaster, is dubbing the award-winning Ubongo Kids programme in English and Kiswahili into Kinyarwanda, the first time a children's television programme was aired in the local language. In addition, 24 children's songs were produced to encourage healthy behaviours among children. Monthly assessment reports reflect positive behaviour change on child care and parenting as a result of these initiatives.

Continued partnership with Airtel Rwanda led to a joint competition, “Pitch Night”, for young entrepreneurs to share their business ideas that would improve the lives of their peers. The winning team was awarded US$ 5,000 and follow up entrepreneurship training.

UNICEF held monthly coordination meetings on stunting reduction with partners. These meetings provided a forum for engagement in Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) and other global platforms and ensured strong collaboration among the many actors in the nutrition sector under UNICEF’s leadership.

**External communication and public advocacy**

In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda continued working with the Rwandan Media High Council and the University of Rwanda to ensure capacity building of media practitioners. A training module on ethical reporting was developed and validated and about 70 practicing journalists were trained on this module. This module was being integrated into the curricula of leading institutions to orient graduating journalists on children’s issues and advocate for their rights. Two new partnerships with key media houses were signed – The New Times Publications Limited and IGIHE Limited – for increased visibility on children’s issues.

Child participation remained high with the celebration of the 12th National Children’s Summit in Parliament. The Summit had high level representation from the Government, development partners and representatives of over 500 children from 30 districts. Participants discussed children’s issues and solutions for fulfilling the rights of all children.


2017 saw a significant increase in UNICEF Rwanda’s web and social media audiences, providing opportunities for outreach, information sharing and engagement with stakeholders. The website had a 14 per cent increase in new visitor sessions and a 29 per cent increase in returning visitor sessions. Facebook followers increased from 110,000 to 116,000, Twitter followers from 3,500 to 9,400 and the new Instagram account, started in May 2017, gained 1,100 followers. All social media platforms saw a marked increase in engagement, indicating an
increasing interest in UNICEF’s programmes.

UNICEF, as the chair of the One UN Communication Group comprised of all UN agencies, provided lead strategic guidance in improving the visibility of UN work and children’s issues in Rwanda.

**South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation**

In November 2017, UNICEF Rwanda supported a delegation from Djibouti, consisting of six government officials and one UNICEF officer, to learn from Rwanda’s ECD programme. The delegation met with government officials from Ministry of Family and Gender Promotion (MIGEPROF), the UNICEF Rwanda ECD programme and ECD experts from Imbuto Foundation to learn about ECD in the Rwandan context, including the Government’s commitment to the programme.

In addition, the team visited the ECD “Centre of Excellence” in Ngoma District to view the successful implementation of an integrated programme which was fully handed over to the district local authorities. The delegation also visited Kanyinya Child Friendly School to learn from a pre-primary school which is fully integrated into the 12-year basic education programme.

Key highlights and lessons included:
1. The Rwanda ECD programme has strong support from the Government in partnering with local communities.
2. Parents and communities are dedicated and committed to lead implementation of the programme.
3. Parents are equipped with good parenting skills and value the provision of integrated services for holistic child development.
4. The implementation of a pre-primary curriculum, in government schools, provides a continuum of services within ECD to ensure successful school readiness and opportunities for further learning.

The Government of Djibouti highlighted the need for an ECD baseline study in their country to generate data for tracking progress and expressed intentions to incorporate community mobilisation and sensitisation in ECD programmes in Djibouti.

Going forward, UNICEF Rwanda will continue to provide technical guidance for similar initiatives with other countries and will support the Government of Djibouti to apply lessons learnt from Rwanda’s successful model.

**Identification and promotion of innovation**

A key innovation was the RapidSMS system for tracking maternal and newborn health, which was fully integrated into government systems in all 30 districts. The system was evaluated in 2016 and UNICEF supported development of additional features based on the evaluation feedback.

In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda supported the launch of several innovative projects that will be evaluated in 2018.

Several initiatives in education, child protection and health promoted the usage of real-time data to improve efficiencies in government systems. Timely submission and analysis of data resulted in improved governance, informed policy decisions and enhanced programming. Particularly for child protection, the development of a real-time case management system helped bridge
humanitarian and development systems to ensure that support for refugees is integrated into national systems.

The education section partnered with the Supply Division to pilot the use of pre-primary furniture with a transportable design procured from local markets. This innovation is expected to be a scalable model, incorporating design features for children and building local capacity.

To promote good health behaviour in Mahama Camp for Burundian refugees, UNICEF supported a multi-media campaign that included “Talking Books”. These audio devices are pre-programmed with health messages in the local language. In total, 360 community health workers were trained on their use. User statistics showed the device reached 52,000 refugees (93 per cent) through door-to-door visits. The device was recognised as a credible source of information by refugees. According to pre- and post-surveys from the six-month campaign, handwashing after latrine use increased from 63 per cent to 70 per cent and knowledge of HIV prevention through condom use increased from 71 per cent to 88 per cent.

Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages
UNICEF Rwanda took an integrated approach to child development. Lessons learned on integrated programming were best exemplified by the stunting reduction programme.

The high prevalence of stunting in Rwanda (38 per cent) hampers human capital development and is a serious concern for the Government. To support this priority, UNICEF conducted a comprehensive situation analysis that revealed multiple underlying causes. In the first phase of the stunting reduction initiative, UNICEF focused on nutrition-specific interventions (e.g. WASH, ECD, social protection) that were modelled in couple of districts. The initiative had positive results: the rate of stunting reduced by 2.7 per cent. An evaluation of the programme was commissioned and lessons learned led to the launch of the second phase in 2017.

The programme was scaled up from four to 14 districts most affected by stunting and poverty. The programme was expanded from nutrition-specific interventions – such as growth monitoring, micronutrient supplementation and capacity building of nutrition experts – to a holistic approach that delivered a combination of nutrition-sensitive interventions. These included provision of ECD services, construction of water supply systems and improved sanitation and hygiene promotion. Cross-sectoral programme interventions included leveraging partnerships, strengthening coordination mechanisms and establishing linkages among social sectors, social mobilisation and engagement of the private sector.

The majority of proposed interventions focused on the first 1,000 days of a child’s life, as evidence shows that this is the critical window of opportunity to reduce stunting and improve child development.

The programme was being implemented in partnership with the Government; partners such as Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, USAID and World Bank; international and national civil society organizations; faith-based organizations; media and academia. The new baseline study was underway to allow annual real-time monitoring of intervention results. Findings will inform programme adjustments.

Service delivery
In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda’s support included technical assistance, funding for services through partners and procurement of products. Planning, monitoring and reporting systems helped identify, track and address barriers and bottlenecks impeding children’s access to quality
services. Harmonized approach to cash transfers (HAJT) assurance and related accountability structures also contributed to effective reach of services.

This approach resulted in 1.5 million children under-five reached with Vitamin A supplementation and deworming; over three million people receiving messages on sanitation and hygiene through bulk SMS; 231,840 adolescent boys and girls educated on HIV and sexual- and gender-based violence; 141 children placed from institutional care into family-based care; and 18,000 children reached with ECD services representing seven per cent of total national enrolment in ECD programmes.

To ensure sustainability, UNICEF’s support resulted in inclusion of nutrition commodities in the national supply chain and integration of nutrition parameters in national information management platforms. Similarly, the RapidSMS system for tracking maternal and child health, initially supported by UNICEF in 10 districts, is now sustained by the Government in all 30 districts. To enable evidence-informed scale up of services, a UNICEF-supported national ECD mapping exercise identified gaps and formed the basis to inform scale up of ECD services.

UNICEF’s financial and technical assistance for delivering services contributed to increasing core capacities of partners to respond to the Burundian refugee situation. This resulted in 90 per cent of children accessing quality education within the national education system, with more than 19,000 students and 300 teachers and education stakeholders provided with materials; 251 severely malnourished children under-five treated; 21,704 children vaccinated against measles and rubella, 9,424 children against polio and 11,91 children and 1,587 pregnant women vaccinated against tetanus; 56,000 Burundian refugees (52 per cent were women) benefitting from WASH services; and children accessed ECD services at a newly-constructed centre.

**Human rights-based approach to cooperation**

UNICEF worked with the Government to implement a human rights-based approach to strengthening accountability to all conventions and treaties it is signatory to. UNICEF advocated for active engagement in all rights committee visits, treaty reporting and ensured that all activities implemented with the Government are human rights-based.


UNICEF strengthened the child protection system to uphold the rights of children. In total, 68 social workers and psychologists and 29,764 child-protection volunteers were deployed in 30 districts to respond to child protection issues. In 2017, 60 social workers and psychologists were absorbed into the government payroll, showing the commitment to children’s rights and protection.
UNICEF worked with International Office of Migration (IOM) and UN Women to fulfil the rights of children and address child trafficking through research on the situation of trafficking in Rwanda and through awareness-raising on the risks faced by women and children. UNICEF worked with the Government to provide a policy framework and standards for children with disabilities. UNICEF supported finalization of the Violence Against Children and Youth Study and the development of a reader-friendly summary.

During Legal Aid Week, UNICEF supported dissemination of 2,000 copies of the Justice for Children Guide and 10,000 leaflets to juvenile justice implementers.

**Gender equality**

UNICEF Rwanda with the support of the UNICEF Regional Office implemented the recommendations of the 2016 Gender Review, which included the recruitment of a gender specialist. A gender committee was established, with representation from programme priority areas and chaired by the Deputy Representative to provide oversight and guidance to gender programming and gender mainstreaming within the office.

Gender was mainstreamed into programmes as indicated in the Strategy Notes and Country Programme Document. To strengthen planning and to align the global Gender Action Plan (2018 – 2021) to the Rwandan context, a gender stakeholder’s workshop was held with participants from Government, civil society, academia, international and national NGOs. As a result, a set of gender action plan priorities was endorsed and agreed upon. The process and priority actions were documented in a comprehensive UNICEF Gender Action Plan consultation report, which was disseminated among partners. This exercise and the report helped guide the development of UNICEF Rwanda’s new Country Programme Document (CPD) 2018-2023.

Subsequently, a partners’ e-forum was created with more than 40 members, with the objective to share information regarding implementation of gender action plan priorities as well as related gender-equality initiatives.

In development of the new CPD, strategy notes were developed in all programme areas and each reflects gender dimensions, ensuring that gender will be effectively mainstreamed across all programmes.

Within programmes, UNICEF Rwanda continued to mainstream gender. Particular efforts ensured that girls have the opportunity to transition into secondary education with the development of a National Communications’ Strategy on Gender in Education to tackle social norm barriers as well as the piloting of a remedial programme to address girls’ underachievement in learning outcomes.

UNICEF Rwanda contributed to national programmes geared towards promoting gender equality including the Family Campaign where the International Day of the Girl was also celebrated and Gender Accountability Day, both of which UNICEF contributed in promoting gender-responsive adolescent health.

UNICEF Rwanda spent approximately US$ 650,000 on gender-specific initiatives throughout the course of 2017.
**Environmental sustainability**

In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda supported several initiatives to promote environmental sustainability and build resilience to climate change.

With RBA, UNICEF supported one episode of children’s radio programming on “appreciating our environment”. Using US$ 4,000 from UNICEF, 250,000 people were reached with messages on sensitising children to be more aware and protective of their environment and to foster a love for nature.

An innovative example of thinking differently about environmental resources resulted in six houses being built from 120 tons of excavated earth from ECD centre construction in Mahama Camp for Burundian refugees.

UNICEF Rwanda partnered with Airtel Rwanda to host “Pitch Night”, a competition allowing young Rwandan entrepreneurs to pitch business and project ideas. Competitors submitted business ideas on education, health or environmental sustainability, to design a business that would improve the lives of their peers and other youth. A team from Kepler University in Kigali won with “My Green Home,” a recycling plan for Rwanda that would transform plastic and biodegradable waste into construction materials and fertiliser. The team was awarded US$ 5,000 to launch their business, as well as follow up entrepreneurship training with UNICEF’s partner, Inkomoko Business Development.

UNICEF continued the integration of environmental sustainability measures in the design and construction of 11 schools and ECD centres, including citing away from hazard prone areas, using natural light and cross ventilation, sourcing wood from mature forests, collecting rain water, planting trees to reduce the effects of wind on infrastructure, building retaining walls and energy-efficient stoves and protecting groundwater with dischargeable toilets. While the dedicated ‘environmental’ expenditure was US$16,700, the majority of expenditure came from the regular construction budget.

UNICEF successfully advocated to strengthen the mainstreaming of climate/environmental considerations within the Government’s six-year Water and Sanitation Sector Strategic Plan.

Following recommendations from the Environmental Footprint Analysis, UNICEF Rwanda secured funding for US$ 3,134 to install a solar water heater. The office reduced consumption of electricity (LED and sensor lights), paper (setting computers/ printers default to double-sided printing/copying) and water (improving maintenance).

**Effective leadership**

In 2017, the country management team (CMT) continued monitoring programme and operations key performance indicators (KPIs) based on global and regional indicators and those identified internally as a result of the mid-term review, peer reviews, internal audit and risk assessment conducted in 2016. The final audit report for UNICEF Rwanda was received in June 2017 and the office developed an action plan to address major findings and recommendations. The country management team reviewed the progress of action plan implementation on a regular basis and by 1 December 2017 the office had implemented and reported to Office of Internal Audit and Investigations on 90 per cent of audit recommendations. UNICEF Rwanda incorporated risks and strategies to address all audit recommendations in section-specific annual work plans.
The comprehensive risk self-assessment completed in 2016 was updated in 2017 as the office continued implementation of the identified actions. In addition, the high risks were embedded in the Annual Management Plan and section-specific annual work plans to continue addressing and mitigating risks. The next risk self-assessment exercise is planned for early 2018 as part of the Country Programme Management Plan.

UNICEF Rwanda reviewed and updated its business continuity plan in July 2017 and undertook an off-site simulation exercise to test the plan and develop additional recommendations. The business continuity plan report was duly shared with the UNICEF ESARO security advisor for information and review.

The office statutory committees’ standard operating procedures, developed in 2016, were updated in 2017 following staff movements and new recruitments. An all-staff meeting was organised to clarify the terms of reference for each committee, including the joint coordination committee, staff development committee, central review bodies and “Caring for Us”, the office committee on staff well-being.

**Financial resources management**

The UNICEF Rwanda country management team focused on programmatic and operational performance monitoring in management, budget control and financial procedures, bank reconciliations, direct cash transfers and HACT, recruitment and staff survey action plan implementation. Programme implementation and operations key performance indicators were tracked during weekly management meetings. UNICEF Rwanda monitored liquidation of direct cash transfers with a focus on those over six months old.

Bank and cash accounts were reconciled and uploaded into Vision within deadlines. The office met monthly bank optimization KPIs and all monthly financial closure activities were completed on time. UNICEF Rwanda updated its table of authority and conducted training for all staff on internal controls and segregation of duties. The CO continued to see efficiency gains in terms of reduced time and improved quality of transactions.

Enhanced staffing in human resources (recruitment of a P3 human resources manager and an human resources officer) and human resources reforms had a positive impact on Human Resources processes, including improvement in recruitment KPIs and effective performance management.

The final audit report for UNICEF Rwanda was received in June 2017 and the office developed an action plan to address major findings and recommendations. The office had implemented all but one of the identified actions by the end of the year, and the final recommendation is expected to be closed in early 2018.

As of 31 December 2017, Regular Resource (RR) funds were utilized at 99 per cent (commitment and spent) and were spent at 91 per cent. Emergency grants were utilized at 99 per cent (commitment and spent) and were spent at 91 per cent, and grants expiring on 31 December 2017 were utilized at 98 per cent with 89 per cent for actual. The implementation rate for support budget also reached at 99 per cent for utilization and 83 per cent for actual.

**Fundraising and donor relations**

The Rwandan economy was projected to grow by 5.2 per cent in 2018. Although the national budget increased by 26.6 per cent since 2013/14, social sector budget allocations declined from 30.3 per cent in 2014/15 to 26.5 per cent of the total budget in 2017/18. Official development
assistance declined to 17 per cent of the total budget in 2017/18.

In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda sustained partnerships with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, USAID and the British Department for International Development (DFID). In addition, UNICEF Rwanda renewed a multi-year partnership with IKEA Foundation for US$ 4.0 million. Fundraising efforts for underfunded areas (e.g. health) resulted in partnerships with UNICEF Ireland, UNICEF Czech Republic and the US Fund for UNICEF totalling US$ 318,000 and multi-year funding from UNICEF Japan amounting to US$ 2.75 million.

Donor visits from UNICEF Ireland and UNICEF Czech Republic resulted in increased funding in 2017. A delegation from the Government of Japan in Rwanda expressed strong appreciation for progress in interventions funded by Government of Japan in Mahama Camp for Burundian refugees.

For emergency support, UNICEF Rwanda secured US$ 2.35 million from Government of Japan, the Republic of Korea, USAID, the Government of Sweden and the US Fund for UNICEF.

The total funds available from all sources amounted to US$25 million, with no funding gaps, and was consistent with the needs of the CO. Total utilization of Other Resources (OR) funds in 2017 was US$ 14 million.

One UN was successful in negotiating a second phase of funding from the Swiss Development Cooperation for nutrition. UNICEF Rwanda will receive US$ 350,000 until end of 2018.

All 26 donor reports were submitted on time. The office management committee closely monitored the status of fund utilisation for all grants to ensure effective and timely use of funds.

### Evaluation and research

Guided by an in-house research committee and the country management team, several evaluations were completed in 2017.

In health, following the evaluation of RapidSMS in 2016, the programme was upgraded to enable sending direct messages to mothers and pregnant women. Financial sustainability of the community health programme (another evaluation completed in 2016) was addressed through alternative financing, including performance-based financing mechanisms.

Headquarters commissioned an evaluation of stunting reduction programmes that concluded that UNICEF Rwanda’s multisectoral approach to stunting reduction was relevant, coherent and effective and that the key drivers of success were a strong situation analysis used to design the programme, focus on system capacity building and a social and behaviour change campaign. As per the evaluation recommendations, the coordination of stunting reduction was reorganised and formalised. The recommendations to scale-up nutrition-sensitive interventions and integrate refugee children into the national stunting reduction programme were also incorporated into the new country programme design.

Evaluation of the UNDAP 2013-2018 revealed that United Nations’ interventions in Rwanda were aligned to Government priorities but have gaps, including a lack of integration between humanitarian and development programmes and limitations in reaching the most vulnerable groups. Recommendations were used to develop the UNDAP II, which was endorsed by the Government in December 2017.
The summative evaluation of the Tubarerere mu Muryango (TMM) programme was initiated in 2017, with data collection and analysis completed. Preliminary findings indicate high programme sustainability and effectiveness. The reintegration into families of children with disabilities was identified as one of the main challenges. Additional recommendations will be discussed in early 2018, when the management response to the evaluation will be finalised.

UNICEF supported the establishment of Rwanda’s first Monitoring and Evaluation Society. The society drafted an annual work plan for endorsement in early 2018.

**Efficiency gains and cost savings**

In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda continued to capitalise efficiency gains and cost savings from the One UN Business Operations Strategy. Since the Strategy began in 2013, a total savings of US$ 7.2 million was reported in the following areas:

**Supply:** One UN procurement initiated and put in place new long-term agreements (LTAs) in transport, hotels and stationery. Through existing agreements, UNICEF saved US$ 37,183 as of November 2017. By utilizing the 22 One UN LTAs for hotels, 2018 will yield an approximate savings of US $200,000.

**ICT:** The main cost-saving implementation from the One UN ICT working group was the common LTA for internet service provision. This LTA was signed in late 2015. The implementation of this LTA resulted in a savings of US$ 75,532 in 2017 for UNICEF Rwanda (out of US$ 718,292 for all United Nations agencies). This increased efficiency given that the office doubled its internet bandwidth from 10MB to 23MB.

**Finance:** In addition to monthly income from the current account, UNICEF Rwanda maintained improvements on its FOREX exchange since 2012. These improvements were assisted by the Division of Financial and Administrative Management by procuring US dollars through international banks in the global market when rates with local banks were unfavourable. As of 30 November 2017, the gain was more than US$ 193,000.

**Supply management**

In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda invested 16 per cent of its funds in the procurement of goods and services. In 2017, the total value of procurement services and programme and operational supplies was US$ 16,544,041.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procurement services (US$)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAVI</td>
<td>9,692,458.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoH</td>
<td>1,184,204.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/Total</td>
<td>10,876,662.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUPPLY INPUT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme supplies</td>
<td>2,520,018.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational supplies</td>
<td>430,912.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>2,242,898.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/Total</td>
<td>5,193,829.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International freight</td>
<td>473,549.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>16,544,040.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goods and services procured to support programme implementation totalled over US$ 5.19 million. Of this amount, US$ 2.52 million were programme goods, mainly nutrition supplies.

Local procurement totalled more than US$ 3.23 million. No procurement was done on behalf of other COs.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Local procurement (US$)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Programme supplies</td>
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<td>Operational supplies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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</tbody>
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A supply plan worth US$ 4.65 million was developed in 2017, with 94 per cent of the goods supply and 81 per cent of services implemented by the end of November. UNICEF also supported the Government of Rwanda in the procurement of vaccines, syringes and cold chain equipment worth US$ 10.87 million.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) in planning for the national nutrition supply chain and in December 2017 participated in a common UNICEF-MoH nutrition supply chain assessment exercise. The culminating report will determine areas of supply chain strengthening.

UNICEF supported the Government by providing emergency response supplies including mosquito nets, tents, tarpaulins and water tanks worth US$ 45,009.

UNICEF Rwanda continues to chair the UN supply team, supporting UN agencies in supply management, thereby reducing transactional costs. UNICEF Rwanda saved US$ 18,546 in 2017.

For warehousing and distribution, UNICEF Rwanda has an agreement with WFP for 450 cubic metres of warehouse space. The value of programme supplies controlled in the warehouse as of 8 December 2017 was US$ 173,965, all prepositioned supplies for emergencies. The value of programme supplies issued from local warehouses as of 8 December was US$ 61,157.

Security for staff and premises
Overall, the security situation in Rwanda remained stable. Except for a few incidents of theft and car accidents outside of the office, there were no serious security incidents reported by UNICEF Rwanda. In 2017, the CO continued implementation of MOSS recommendations in close collaboration with the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the Regional Security Advisor. The security assessment of the UNICEF premises was updated by UNDSS with recommendations for improvement. The action plan to address recommendations of the assessment was developed by the office and a budget request was submitted to ESARO for allocation of funds. In 2017, UNICEF ESARO approved allocation of US$ 54,528 to UNICEF Rwanda, which was fully utilised for procurement of an x-ray scanner, shutter resistant film, a walk-through metal detector and fingerprint door access. This investment had a positive impact on the safety, security and morale of the staff.

The warden system was re-instated; all wardens received training and an emergency drill was
organised in November 2017. A GPS system installed in all UNICEF vehicles ensured the security and safety of staff and that the movements of vehicles could be tracked on a regular basis. In addition, in September 2017 the CO organized a two-day defensive driving training for all drivers.

To support local staff in improving their residential security and enhancing security awareness through basic security practices, the office shared the latest UNDSS memo with guidance to contact UNDSS and conduct a security risk assessment of their residences.

The office conducted its business continuity plan simulation in July 2017 as part of the annual management plan and addressed the recommendations made as a result of the simulation.

### Human resources

In December 2016, UNICEF Rwanda’s Programme Budget Review submission was approved, which identified the required staffing mix profiles for the CO. By 30 November 2017, 15 recruitment cases were completed in an average of 81 days. A vacancy rate of 1.34 per cent was recorded against the KPI target of 10 per cent, resulting in all sections being fully resourced. The office gender distribution is 48 per cent female and 52 per cent male. This year, 23 consultants were recruited.

The training plan implementation rate was 82 per cent. A total of 59 learning activities were planned for 2017; and 19 individual activities, 21 group activities and eight mandatory trainings were implemented, for a total of 48 activities.

By 28 February 2017, 80 per cent of staff had finalized their 2016 Performance Evaluation Reports. In May 2017, staff participated in performance management training. Three human resources clinics were held on performance planning, progress review and evaluation stages. Performance management was a standing agenda item in management meetings and in country management team meetings.

The 2017 Global Staff Survey Action Plan was developed through a participatory process. Actions taken included a training on ethics; three human resources clinics on human resource reforms; and a presentation on career development. Positive feedback was received from staff on expected roles in the human resources reform process.

Caring for Us provided in-house support to promote the HIV/AIDS minimum standards, ensuring that 80 per cent were implemented. The UN policy on HIV/AIDS is part of orientation for new staff members. A training on emergency preparedness and response was conducted.

The limited medical facilities and services available in Rwanda continued to present challenges. The office supported six medical evacuations costing US$ 27,700 in 2017. Rwanda also lacks regional area of care. The inconsistency between inadequate medical care and Rwanda’s ranking as a Category A duty station remains a concern.

### Effective use of information and communication technology

In 2017, UNICEF Rwanda strived to improve effectiveness and efficiency by promoting increased utilisation of corporate cloud-based tools, namely Office 365, Skype for Business and OneDrive. The ICT unit organised several training sessions on the tools and conducted follow-up trainings with individual sections and staff members to ensure understanding and effective utilisation of the tools. In addition, the acquisition of Polycom CX5100 and headsets for all staff contributed to increasing the utilisation of Skype for Business.
In the area of partnership with programme and implementing partners, the ICT unit also provided technical support to several programme projects and to implementing partners, including preparation of terms of reference, technical evaluations, user trainings and implementation of ICT initiatives. Most of these initiatives used open-source mobile applications on Android tablets.

Projects initiated this year included:
- In child protection, a management-information system using a combination of tablets and a web application;
- In education, monitoring school-based mentorship programmes using the tablet-based MAGPI system;
- In C4D, supporting development of the pre-programmed audio devices called “Talking Books”;
- In monitoring and evaluation, supporting end-user monitoring of supplies using KoboToolbox on tablets; and
- In WASH, supporting development of a real-time monitoring feedback loop using censors to track behaviour.

The use of social media and the UNICEF Rwanda website was a more effective communication tool than traditional media. For example, advertising vacancies and tenders posted on social media received better response than printed in newspapers.

To maintain a low ICT footprint and reduce operation costs, the office acquired multi-function printers in lieu of outsourcing. Furthermore, the following measures were reinforced: limited printing, with priority to black and white; the use of laptops versus desktops; and the use of GPS tracking systems to monitor vehicles movements.

**Programme components from RAM**

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**

**OUTCOME 1** Young children, adolescents and women use improved and equitable high-impact Health, HIV, Nutrition and WASH services

**Analytical statement of progress**
Efforts made by the Government of Rwanda and various development partners, including UNICEF, resulted in increased use of nutrition, health, WASH and HIV services by young children, adolescents and women.

**Situation analysis:** Based on the Rwanda Demographic Health Survey, although under-five mortality reduced from 151 in 1990 to 50 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014/2015, the current figure is high compared to global figures. Newborn mortality has seen only modest reduction. In 2015, the stunting rate in children under five was 38 per cent, which reduced from 44 per cent five years ago. Anaemia in children remains high at 37 per cent.

In 2016, 62 per cent had access to improved sanitation facilities and only five per cent of households had a place for washing hands with soap and water. The prevalence of HIV among the age group of 15-49 years in Rwanda remained high and static at three per cent. Only 55 per cent of females aged 15-19 years ever tested and received results for HIV compared to 82 per
cent of females aged 15-49 years.

**UNICEF response:** The Government of Rwanda is committed to reducing mortality, stunting and HIV transmission rates. UNICEF’s support played a pivotal role in achieving these important goals. UNICEF’s support included strengthening the enabling environment, enhancing service delivery and capacity building for improving the quality of services using integrated approaches wherever possible.

Examples of integrated approaches supported in 2017 were an integrated nutrition, immunization and health campaign (resulting in 1.5 million children reached with Vitamin A supplementation and 100 per cent coverage for measles and rubella vaccination); combined nutrition and health training for community health workers; incorporating cholera management and HIV testing into guidelines for management of acute malnutrition; and integrated nutrition, health and HIV reporting (RapidSMS) and patient management systems.

Achievements during 2017 included:

**Nutrition:** UNICEF support increased the percentage of children 6-59 months receiving treatment for SAM to 67 percent in 2017; 432,620 children aged 6-23 months were reached with micronutrient powders; and over 1.5 million children younger than five were reached with vitamin A supplementation and deworming. This, in addition to support for improving dietary diversification, other nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions, coordination and evidence generation will contribute towards the national priority of reducing stunting. In 2018, UNICEF will continue this support and work to strengthen the new coordination mechanism established by the Government for nutrition.

**Health:** Measles-rubella supplementary activities reached 100 per cent of children aged 9-59 months. UNICEF support for new guidelines and tools for post-natal care and RapidSMS system for tracking maternal and child health will contribute towards increasing access for four antenatal care visits and postnatal check-up for newborns. UNICEF initiated a new clinical mentorship programme aiming to reduce neonatal mortality by improving the quality of neonatal care at the facility level, targeting 18 hospitals and 73 health centres, which will continue in 2018.

**WASH:** UNICEF continued to support efforts of the Government for enhancing access to WASH services, resulting in more than three million people receiving sanitation and hygiene messages through bulk SMS; over 38,896 people provided access to improved water supply; and 32,450 people gaining access to improved sanitation. These efforts contributed to increasing the proportion of the population using an improved drinking water source from 71 per cent in 2012 to 78 per cent and the proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility from 59 per cent to 62 per cent. In spite of the increase in sanitation coverage, progress is not likely to be adequate to achieve the 2018 target of 70 per cent. In the coming years, UNICEF will support the Government to develop and implement a comprehensive monitoring system and find innovative approaches to increase access.

**HIV:** UNICEF continued to build capacity to improve the quality of HIV services for pregnant women, children and adolescents. As a result, 231,840 boys and girls were educated on HIV and gender-based violence; over 29,400 boys and girls were tested for HIV; and over 11,383 boys were circumcised. With a focus on improving quality, UNICEF will support the implementation of the operational plan for eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV 2016-2020 and other policies and plans that focus on increasing access to prevention and treatment.
Challenges: Key sector challenges included limited financial resources; shortage of skilled staff to provide key health services; weak district level multi-sectoral coordination and the insufficient availability of medical equipment and supplies. Addressing these main bottlenecks will remain at the centre of UNICEF support in the years to come.

Key partners and donors: These achievements were made possible through generous support from Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Government of Netherland, Swedish Development Cooperation, IKEA Foundation and GAVI and through collaboration with a range of government and civil society organization partners.

OUTPUT 1 National and district capacity is built to coordinate, implement and monitor pro-nutrition evidence-based interventions

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF support included:

Policy, coordination and monitoring and evaluation (M&E): A multi-sectoral coordination platform for planning, implementing and tracking progress on stunting was established in 18 districts with technical and financial support from UNICEF. In 2017, the focus was on provision of technical and financial assistance to the National Food and Nutrition Coordination Secretariat. The national guidelines on management of acute malnutrition were updated to incorporate the latest evidence. Trainings of service providers are planned for 2018.

Nutrition-specific interventions: The home fortification programme using micronutrient powders was scaled up to all 30 districts to reduce anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies, achieving 79 per cent coverage by October 2017 and reaching 432,620 out of 548,644 children between 6-23 months. UNICEF support included procurement of supplies, capacity building for service providers, inclusion of all nutrition commodities in the national supply chain and integration into different information management platforms. A supply end user monitoring exercise was carried out to support this process and the findings will inform UNICEF support to further strengthen government systems in 2018.

UNICEF supported monthly growth monitoring and promotion sessions and cooking demonstrations, and trained caregivers on good nutrition practices and how to prepare a balanced diet. To improve the nutritional status of children aged 6-59 months, Vitamin A capsules and deworming tablets were provided to approximately 99 per cent of the target population, reaching more than 1.5 million children in all 30 districts. To address the acute shortage of nutrition commodities for treatment of SAM, UNICEF procured and distributed ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) as well as therapeutic milk to cover the needs of all children with severe acute malnutrition in the entire country.

UNICEF supported screening of stunting at health facilities through distribution of height/length

for young children and adolescents.

Emergency response: UNICEF Rwanda, in collaboration with UNHCR and other partners, supported the provision of timely and effective emergency health (immunization, health promotion), nutrition (management of SAM; maternal, infant and young child nutrition; and micronutrient supplementation) and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene promotion) services to over 56,000 Burundian refugees.
boards and training of 864 health service providers. UNICEF ensured availability of stunting data through MoH information systems by linking stunting surveillance and the newly launched supplementary feeding programme targeting children from the poorest categories. UNICEF will continue to strengthen community-based nutrition interventions and improve referral systems from health facilities to community-based nutrition programmes to improve the nutrition status of children identified as stunted or with acute malnutrition.

**Nutrition-sensitive interventions:** Establishment of kitchen gardens, community saving-lending groups and distribution of small livestock to the most vulnerable households were supported to improve households’ resilience and access to nutritious food. Future review of these interventions will inform further scale up through government systems.

**Nutrition in emergency:** In 2017, UNICEF supported treatment of 251 Burundi refugee children (119 boys and 132 girls) identified with severe acute malnutrition. Among them, 218 (108 boys and 110 girls) were discharged as cured. UNICEF also facilitated trainings on maternal, infant and young child nutrition and micronutrient powder for community health workers and health staff providing health and nutrition services to the Burundian refugees. With UNICEF support, nutrition services for all refugee populations, including distribution of micronutrient powders, Vitamin A and deworming tablets, were fully integrated into government systems, thereby increasing sustainability.

**OUTPUT 2** Young children, adolescents and women have equitable access to health services.

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF support included:

**Strengthening policies:** As a member of the core group working on the new Health Sector Strategic Plan, UNICEF technical expertise contributed to issues related to women and children being prioritised in the new Health Sector Strategic Plan 4 (2018 – 2024); the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Policy; and Maternal Newborn and Child Health Strategic Plan 2018-2024.

**Evidence generation:** UNICEF provided ongoing support to MoH to develop and introduce an electronic patient management system at health facilities for maternal, newborn and child health. The concept was agreed upon and the platform will be initiated in early 2018. This will enable availability of real-time data from health facilities and contribute to improving the quality of care for maternal, newborn and child health.

**Capacity building:** Skills of 1,701 new community health workers (CHWs) were built on integrated community case management of diarrhoea, pneumonia and malaria in seven districts (cumulatively resulting in 28,904 community health workers trained). To improve maternal, newborn and child healthcare in health facilities, capacities of 86 health providers were built on essential newborn care and intensive neonatal care; 60 on emergency obstetric and newborn care, 380 on new postnatal care guidelines and 91 on integrated management of newborn and childhood illnesses.

In partnership with professional networks, UNICEF initiated a new clinical mentorship programme to reduce neonatal mortality by improving the quality of neonatal care at the facility level, targeting 18 hospitals and 73 health centres. This clinical mentorship programme started in three hospitals to improve the quality of care in the coming years. Essential newborn
equipment for 92 facilities were procured and will be distributed in early 2018. These efforts contributed to increasing access as indicated by over 300,000 newborns tracked by RapidSMS during 2017.

**Implementation of critical health interventions and improving demand:** To sustain high immunisation coverage and quality, UNICEF supported procurement and installation of additional cold chain equipment; national immunisation coverage survey and measles second dose post introduction evaluation; and cold chain equipment inventory that resulted in funding from GAVI for about US$ 2.5 million.

The coverage for third dose pentavalent vaccines was high at 103 per cent. Measles-Rubella supplementary activities were supported and conducted at the national level reaching 102 per cent of children between nine months and five years. UNICEF supported creation and broadcasting of messages on key health family practices through radio programmes, with the objective of promoting healthy behaviour and increasing demand for services.

**Health in emergency:** To ensure that core commitments for children in emergencies were met, UNICEF provided immunization supplies for all Burundian refugee children. In 2017, 13,196 children and 1,953 pregnant women were vaccinated against tetanus. UNICEF supported an immunization campaign in Mahama Camp in October that resulted in 97 per cent (21,704) of children between nine months and 15 years being reached with measles and rubella vaccines and 100 per cent (9,424) of 0-5-year-old children with polio vaccines.

**OUTPUT 3** Communities, schools and health centers increased and equitable access to safe water and improved sanitation and hygiene services.

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF’s support to WASH services in 2017 included:

**Improved access to WASH:** In 2017, 38,896 people (295,000 since 2012), including an estimated 52 per cent of women and girls, gained access to improved water supplies while 32,450 people (191,450 since 2012) gained access to improved sanitation. An estimated 88,000 people (738,000 since 2012), including 45,760 women and girls, were reached with messages on safe hygiene practices through interpersonal communication. More than three million people also received messages on the importance of handwashing with soap through bulk-SMS sent out on Global Handwashing Day.

**Strengthening of enabling environment:** The National Policies and Strategies for Water Supply and Sanitation were finalised, approved by the Cabinet and subsequently printed and launched by the Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA). Support was provided for the development of the National Action Plan for enhancing the sustainability of rural water supply services in partnership with Japan International Cooperation Agency and the development of a comprehensive sector management information system is in process. UNICEF’s support strengthened the capacity of MoH to respond to hygiene promotion needs by providing financial support for two staff dedicated to programme management nationwide. UNICEF, with Government counterparts, jointly developed two papers: Formulation of water and sanitation policies and strategies and Experience of rural WASH programming in Rwanda. The papers were accepted and presented at the 40th Water, Engineering and Development Centre Conference. UNICEF supported the Government to align the 2018-2024 Sector Strategic Plan to the SDGs.
Capacity development and sector advocacy: To strengthen national capacity for sustained hygiene and sanitation promotion, UNICEF trained 23 district staff, 624 community hygiene club members, 104 latrine builders and 208 community members on tippy tap construction. UNICEF contributed the review of the community-based environment health promotion programme review workshop to strengthen the national approach to sanitation and hygiene promotion.

UNICEF supported: 1) A Water and Sanitation Division manager in MININFRA to represent Rwanda in the Sanitation and Water for All meeting held in Washington DC in April 2017; 2) two staff in MoH to strengthen implementation of the community-based environment health promotion programme; 3) the Rural Water Supply Global evaluation 4) the Sustainability Check 2016 for Government of the Netherlands-funded projects; and 5) Global Handwashing Day, World Water Day and World Toilet Day advocacy events.

WASH in emergencies: Contributing to bridging the humanitarian-development nexus, UNICEF supported the Government to rehabilitate 22 community water supply systems that were damaged due to landslides in 2016, in partnership with World Vision.

In response to the Burundi refugee influx, critical WASH services were supported in partnership with UNHCR, Oxfam and the Global Humanitarian and Development Foundation benefitting over 56,000 refugees, 52 per cent of whom were women.

OUTPUT 4 Young children, adolescents and women have improved access to HIV/AIDS treatment, care, prevention and protection services.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF support included:

PMTCT and paediatric HIV treatment: UNICEF technical support resulted in finalization and dissemination of the 2016-2020 operational plan for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission. HIV treatment guidelines and protocols were updated to incorporate new strategies for HIV testing with immediate initiation on antiretroviral therapy (ART), including HIV self-testing, and the development of "Job-AIDS" for enhanced counselling in Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) settings.

A community-based peer support model was implemented in 32 health facilities to improve follow-up, adherence and psychosocial support for retention of PMTCT clients in care. Lessons learnt were used to improve psychosocial support for people living with HIV. The capacity to effectively monitor the quality of PMTCT services in 32 health facilities in Kigali was strengthened through integration of indicators into existing monitoring tools, training and onsite mentorship of health providers. Lessons learnt from these facilities were used to develop standard operating procedures for strengthening the monitoring system for the PMTCT programme.

Efforts to improve ART coverage for children were supported through implementation of innovative strategies to reach out to children most vulnerable to HIV infection, such as children of HIV-positive female sex workers. To date, 1,211 children were tested, 46 (20 girls and 26 boys) were known to be HIV positive and on treatment and 10 (six girls and four boys) were newly diagnosed and linked to care.
As a result, the rate of MTCT of HIV declined to 1.56 per cent. Low retention of MTCT mothers and low coverage of ART among children of 55 per cent are still some challenges.

**Adolescent HIV prevention services:** Following the assessment of the first and second phase of the ‘ALL IN’ initiative, an operational plan for adolescent HIV and sexual and reproductive health programming was developed. To support implementation of the operational plan, UNICEF partnered with NGOs and communities to improve access and demand for utilisation of HIV and sexual- and gender-based violence services for adolescents in 41 sectors in three districts.

Training on comprehensive information on HIV and prevention of sexual- and gender-based violence was provided to 1,737 community- and school-based peer educators. Health providers in 21 health facilities were trained and acquired skills to perform surgical male circumcision. As a result, 231,840 adolescent boys and girls received information on HIV and sexual- and gender-based violence; 29,401 girls and boys were tested for HIV and received results and over 11,383 boys from poor households were circumcised. In addition, 12 radio shows were broadcasted and approximately 1,440 were engaged in discussions on HIV and sexual- and gender-based violence prevention.

Support was provided to model-implementation of early infant male circumcision services in six health facilities and WHO health providers training manuals on the same were adapted to support scale-up of early infant male circumcision services.

Prevention of HIV among adolescents and access to HIV treatment services for children and adolescents continues to be a challenge and will remain a priority for UNICEF programme in the future.

**OUTCOME 2** Improved and equitable participation in and completion of quality, inclusive education.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Rwanda achieved success in education pertaining to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), achieving universal access to primary education with a net enrolment rate of 97.7 per cent (boys: 97.3 per cent; girls: 98 per cent). The gains at the primary level must be matched with improvements in quality throughout the system. Results from the Learning Achievement in Rwandan Schools indicate that there are significant issues in numeracy and literacy for most students.

Equitable access to basic education for vulnerable children is an issue; only 70 per cent of children with disabilities are enrolled in primary schools. Moreover, data indicates significant dropout and repetition rates, resulting in a significant proportion of out-of-school children, especially at the upper primary and secondary levels. According to MINEDUC data for 2015, there are still more than 175,000 dropouts annually in primary schools alone. The Dropout and Repetition Study preliminary findings indicate that gender and location remain equity issues, while quality of education contributes.

Access to pre-primary education was steadily increasing over the past few years, but it also remains an issue, with only a 23.7 per cent gross enrolment rate.

Rwanda’s education system boasts the highest participation rates in East Africa as well as
gender parity in net and gross enrolment at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. In fact, girls’ enrolment surpasses boys’ enrolment at all levels. Despite these achievements, gender disparities exist, namely in learning outcomes for girls and negative social norms that impact both boys and girls, which were informed by a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Study on Gender in Education.

UNICEF response / Key achievements: Rwanda’s national education programme aligns closely with UNICEF’s Education Sector Strategic Plan. As co-chair of the Education Sector Working Group (with DFID), Development Partners’ Working Group, the Basic Education Sector Working Group and co-chair of the Curriculum, Materials and Assessment and Early Childhood Education Technical Working Groups, UNICEF continued to play a critical role in sector coordination in 2017.

UNICEF supports the Government in four strategic areas:

1. Increasing access to basic education, especially for vulnerable children

   The UNICEF education programme addresses access issues for the most marginalized children in Rwanda, including refugee children, children affected by humanitarian situations, out-of-school children, children at risk of dropping out and children with disabilities. As a result of UNICEF support, approximately 90 per cent of refugee children are integrated into the national system and more than 10,500 children with disabilities were included into the school system. Due to continued advocacy, equity issues were integrated into Ministry of Education priorities and the new Education Sector Strategic Plan. UNICEF worked to increase the evidence base, which resulted in the study on Disability in Education and Drop-Out and Repetition Study, of which preliminary results show that there remain gender and geographical equity issues.

2. Improving the quality of education

   Given the need to improve the quality of education, UNICEF continued financial and technical support to MINEDUC to support curriculum reform, moving from knowledge-based to competency-based. Ongoing monitoring of the training shifted the cascade model to a school-level training model for increased support and effectiveness. UNICEF also provided technical and financial support to the second and third LARS Assessment (2014 and 2016), resulting in more awareness of learning gaps within the system.

3. Increasing access to pre-primary education

   Access to pre-primary increased from 13 per cent (2013) to 20 per cent (2016) due to a reduction of supply-related bottlenecks due to UNICEF support to the design, modelling and construction of facilities and training of approximately 90 per cent of pre-primary teachers. However, one significant bottleneck remained (insufficient allocation of budget, only two per cent) that hampered overall achievement. UNICEF provided technical support to advocate for increased budget allocations.

4. Addressing gender barriers in education

   As per the 2016 mid-term review, a new output was created to address gender disparities in education. To address negative social norms, a National Communications Strategy on Gender was developed to tackle bottlenecks. Addressing gender disparities in learning achievement, UNICEF is supporting the modelling of remedial support to strengthen learning.

Challenges

While there is a breadth of quantitative data available in Rwanda to measure progress in the education system, there is little qualitative information available to monitor progress made
against programmes and interventions. UNICEF engaged with MINEDUC and the Rwanda Education Board to improve monitoring of the education sector.

In 2015, UNICEF implemented innovative tablet-based real-time monitoring in pre-primary education. In 2016, this work was scaled up with UNICEF’s technical and financial support. All sector education officers and inspectors were equipped with the capacity to undertake real-time tablet-based monitoring of various aspects of the education system. In 2017, further training was undertaken and support to strengthen the situation.

Key partners and donors: These achievements were made possible through collaboration with partners including: ADRA, DFID, International Education Exchange, Handicap International, Plan International and VSO. UNICEF received donor support from USAID, DFID and IKEA, as well as UNICEF national committees in Belgium, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

OUTPUT 1 Children especially those vulnerable have expanded access to basic education.

Analytical statement of progress
To support learning in humanitarian contexts, in 2017 UNICEF Rwanda procured teaching and learning materials for Burundian refugee students and teachers with provision of more than 19,000 student kits and 300 teaching kits. UNICEF with the support of the Government of Japan procured and delivered information and technology supplies to support the school’s overall management; teachers’ lesson planning and record keeping. And, addressing issues of dropout and absenteeism amongst Burundian refugees, UNICEF worked with a local NGO, with USAID funding, to deliver capacity development of more than 350 teachers and reaching more than 35,000 refugees with messages on the importance of education. As a result, approximately 90 per cent of refugee children were integrated into the national education system.

One of the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2013/14-2017/18 priorities is to increase equitable access to education for students with special educational needs. However, only approximately 70 per cent of children with disabilities are enrolled in school.

Since 2015, UNICEF, Handicap International and other partners were supporting the Ministry of Education and Rwanda Education Board to advance inclusive education as a cross-cutting issue in the national competency-based curriculum, with the particular objective to increase access to quality education for children with disabilities. In 2016 with UNICEF support an inclusive education teachers’ guide and accompanying training programme were developed and validated. The guide provided the basis for the UNICEF-supported training of more than 41 Rwanda Education Board staff, 500 education officers and more than 2,500 teachers, resulting in an increased understanding of how inclusive education is implemented at the school level.

In 2017, UNICEF in partnership with Handicap International, continued support to the Rwanda Education Board to integrate inclusive education into the pre-service programme at the University of Rwanda-College of Education. Moreover, UNICEF, REB and Handicap International modelled inclusive pedagogical practices in 18 inclusive model schools.

Transition rates between primary and secondary school also dropped from an estimated 86 per cent in 2011 to 74.5 per cent in 2017; repetition rates are quite high, with 85 per cent of children having repeated at least once by Primary Level 6. It is against this backdrop and to ensure the availability of current and relevant information on the situation of barriers to basic education in
Rwanda, that UNICEF is supporting MINEDUC and the NCCon an assessment of dropout and repetition. The main objective of this assignment is to support MINEDUC and other stakeholders in the education sector to generate new insights on the causes of grade repetition and drop-outs and to propose evidence-based policy options to increase retention rates and completion rates over time. This information will inform future programming to mitigate drop-outs and repetition. Preliminary findings indicate gender disparities in the education trajectory, rural/urban issues in education attainment and key barriers to remaining in school being informal costs, quality of education and health concerns.

OUTPUT 2 Quality and relevance of education improved

Analytical statement of progress

Despite gains in access to education in Rwanda, the quality of education remains an issue. The Learning Achievement in Rwanda Schools test results from 2014 and available as of 2016 noted considerable concern in the literacy and numeracy levels of students. The primary level 2 literacy test, focusing on comprehension and vocabulary, had an average test score of 45 per cent and the numeracy test had an average test score of 33 per cent. Similar results were realized in the results at primary level 5.

To improve the quality and relevance of education, UNICEF continued to support the implementation of Rwanda’s new competency-based curriculum for the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. This work was realised through trainings and development of support materials. By the end of 2017, 26,991 teachers received direct technical support from UNICEF to improve their pedagogy and capacity to deliver against the competency based curriculum, with over 75,000 teachers, receiving indirect support from UNICEF, from pre-primary through to secondary level.

To complement this work and to ensure sustained competency for improved learning, UNICEF implemented programmes to support teacher capacity at the school-level. At the policy level, as a result of UNICEF’s modelling and advocacy, the Ministry of Education revised the School-Based Mentoring Policy to adopt the UNICEF programme, resulting in a sustainable approach to nation-wide scaling-up. UNICEF supported the implementation of this policy resulting in the development of policy documentation and training support materials for school mentors in English language and pedagogy. UNICEF supported school-level modelling in an effort to ensure a sustained approach to government scale-up.

To provide support for overall teacher training and development, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education on the development of the Teacher Management Information System, a national teacher database that will help enhance the management of the teaching workforce, tracking teacher development among other functions, to ensure teachers have the right skills to deliver effective learning for children. With teacher training in progress to implement the new curriculum, the Teacher Management Information System will support Rwanda Education Board in the collection and management of teacher data, subsequently informing MINEDUC plans for teacher development and deployment.

In 2017, UNICEF continued to support MINEDUC’s efforts to promote reading in schools, aiming to improve literacy and learning. This initiative is realised through the multi-partner ‘Rwanda Reads’ initiative which brings together all partners to coordinate interventions in support of literacy, to complement MINEDUC efforts in dealing with the low literacy and numeracy rates as revealed by LARS results. Throughout 2017, UNICEF provided technical
support to the initiative, having supported the Rwanda Reads General Assembly that brought all partners together in coordination of their initiatives.

**OUTPUT 3** Critical bottlenecks are addressed to ensure gender equity at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels of education.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Rwanda’s Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2013-2018 expands access to three years of early learning for three-to-six year olds, with the national goal to increase access to 30 per cent of children by 2017 - 2018. However, enrolment rates in pre-primary education remain a challenge, with only a 23.7 per cent gross enrolment rate for 2016.

In 2014, UNICEF led a sector-wide bottleneck analysis, which was updated in 2016. The main bottlenecks identified were a lack of pre-primary facilities available for children; limited government budget availability for the education sector; and quality of learning environments, including qualified pre-primary educators. Within the past year, there was improvement in the policy framework with government commitment to scale-up access to quality pre-primary education.

To address these bottlenecks, UNICEF modelled pre-primary and early learning programmes to inform future scale-up of these initiatives to help contribute towards national development targets. UNICEF constructed model pre-primary facilities consisting of three classrooms, WASH facilities, handwashing stations and fences. The facilities include age-appropriate furniture, play-based learning materials and outdoor equipment. Seven centres were constructed and 16 more were under development. The model was being reviewed by MINEDUC as part of a comprehensive plan to scale-up pre-school access nationwide.

To support the government efforts to allocate more funds to the sector, a costing study was conducted in partnership with MINEDUC to determine the costs of pre-primary education. The study provided a range of costed options to MINEDUC and facilitated continued expansion of investment in pre-primary services, especially in the most vulnerable districts. By the end of 2016, a draft roadmap on how to scale-up pre-primary education was finalised based on the costing study.

Addressing issues of quality, UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance for the development of the play-based, competency-based pre-primary curriculum. UNICEF supported rollout of the curriculum through the training of 2,203 pre-primary educators and the curriculum was implemented as of January 2016. In addition, UNICEF worked with partners to develop quality pre-primary readers to stimulate children emergent literacy at that early stage. In total, 114 readers were developed and approved for pre-primary use in Rwandan schools. The associated teachers’ guide and development of learning assessment standards were also completed.

In partnership with Voluntary Service Overseas and the University of Rwanda-College of Education, pre-service training for pre-school teachers were strengthened in all 16 teacher training colleges. In addition, quality teaching and learning materials were developed in support of ECD pre-service curriculum. To ensure local government ownership, 416 sector education officers were trained on how to monitor pre-primary programme and support its embryonic stage.
towards a fully-fledged functional programme which delivers quality education for school readiness.

**OUTPUT 4** Critical bottlenecks are addressed to ensure gender equity at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels of education.

**Analytical statement of progress**

This output addresses the disparities between girls and boys in access to quality education. The disparities were highlighted in the 2015 and 2016 EMIS reports on achievement, access and transition in various levels of education for boys and girls. National examination results at the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels indicated that boys consistently perform better than girls in national examinations during 2008-2014. Conversely, boys are more likely to repeat and more likely to drop out of primary school.

During 2017, UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education and Plan International Rwanda to undertake a qualitative KAP study on gender and education. Data was collected from 30 school communities through focus group discussions, key stakeholder interviews and a desk review of existing research on gender and education. The study was validated and submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval.

The study findings indicated attitudinal support to girls’ learning, but highlights a number of gender-related barriers that hinder girls’ educational attainment, including housework, lower educational aspirations, limited confidence to pursue Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics and limited support from parents. The issues for boys related to peer pressure that results in drug abuse, and social norms that put pressure on boys to earn money to prove their male status which led to high drop-out in pursuit of employment.

Building on the findings of the KAP study, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to develop its first ever National Communication Strategy on Gender and Education that frames a national communications initiative, which aims to tackle negative gender norms impeding girls and boys education. UNICEF and its implementing partners are supporting Ministry of Education to roll out the communications initiative to address the gender related barriers highlighted by the KAP study. Based on the communication strategy, communication messages were developed with Urunana (a local organization running a popular soap opera on radio and live theatre) and these messages will be aired on radio with the beginning of 2018.

In 2017, the education programme laid the foundation for a remedial programme which aims to improve learning achievements and school retention for marginalized boys and girls in upper primary school. The programme will include after school learning clubs to boost the literacy and numeracy skills and empowerment of girls and boys; mobilized funds (US$ 600,000); and partnerships with Imbuto Foundation, the International Education Exchange and Girl Effect Rwanda to inform a remedial curriculum, which was piloted with an innovative ICT platform to support the club curriculum.

**OUTCOME 3** Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable are protected from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect within an evidence informed child protection system

**Analytical statement of progress**

The Government of Rwanda made progress in child protection over the past five years. Major
achievements included the passing of Law Number 54/2011 on the Rights and Protection of the Child, the development of the Justice for Children Policy, the Child Care Reform and the establishment of the National Commission for Children (NCC), responsible for operationalizing child protection. Social norms and practices form an integral part of the child protection system. The *Tubarerere mu Muryango* programme or “let’s raise children in families” in Kinyarwanda and the *Inshuti z’Umuryango* (Friends of the Family) build on social values that encourage Rwandans to take responsibility for vulnerable children and provide support to solve problems within communities. The adoption of these home-grown practices and culturally-owned solutions translated to greater sustainability of the child protection system and concrete results.

In total, 2,933 out of 3,323 children were reintegrated from orphanages to family-based care since 2012. In 2017, 141 children were placed from institutional care into family-based care and 367 families were assessed for suitability to receive children in their households.

This success was made possible by the deployment of the social workforce comprised of 68 social workers and psychologists and 29,674 child protection volunteers. In 2017, the Government of Rwanda agreed to absorb the costs of 60 social workers and psychologists, demonstrating a commitment to the social workforce and a vision for sustainability. The remaining eight will be supported by UNICEF to integrate into the government system.

Remaining challenges include the need to increase efforts to reintegrate children who are difficult to place, such as those with disabilities and adolescents. In addition, the social workforce moved from predominantly focusing on the de-institutionalization process to addressing general child protection concerns. This not only increased their workload, but also requires expanded knowledge on how to deal with a wider range of child protection issues.

In 2017, in partnership with the MoH and CDC, UNICEF supported the finalization of the quantitative technical report on the Violence against Children and Youth Survey, assessing the national prevalence of violence against children aged 13 to 24. The report was validated by the Government of Rwanda. According to the survey, 42 per cent of boys and 26 per cent of girls aged 13-17 were victims of physical violence, while 12 per cent of girls and five per cent of boys aged 13-17 reported exposure to sexual violence. UNICEF also supported the development of a reader-friendly summary of the Violence against Children and Youth Survey report and analysed qualitative data on violence against children with disabilities. The validation of this report was a challenge given the sensitive nature of the data and the time needed to incorporate comments, including those from the CDC. Another challenge is transferring leadership of the report to another government agency responsible for the development of the national action plan. Unless the Violence against Children and Youth Survey can be repeated, it cannot be used as a baseline which is a challenge to monitoring the prevalence of violence.

Together with partners, UNICEF continues to support the Isange One Stop Centres, which provided assistance to 5,531 child victims of violence, 4,775 of whom were victims of sexual violence and 755 of physical violence. There are 44 One Stop Centres. While this was a success, there were challenges remaining around ensuring adequate follow-up to victims of violence once they leave the centre. More efforts were needed to ensure children are prevented from experiencing violence.

UNICEF supported the NISR to complete the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Strategic Plan 2017-2022, which focused on the modernisation of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system, including for birth registration. This led to increased birth registration from 56 per cent in 2015 to 67 per cent in 2017. A number of challenges remained, including
implementing the strategic plan, which requires multiple government agencies working together. Another challenge is that the general population does not understand the need for birth registration and demand was low.

Current progress and achievements in protecting children’s rights are accomplished through collaboration with multiple partners, including MIGEPROF, NCC, MINJUST, MoH/RBC, MINALOC, NISR, One UN agencies and NGOs such as Plan International, Hope and Homes for Children, Save the Children and Global Communities. UNICEF received financial support from donors such as USAID Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, the UK Department for International Development, IKEA Foundation, the Government of Korea, the Government of Japan, SIDA and Zonta International.

OUTPUT 1 Legal framework and coordination of the child protection system strengthened at national and sub-national levels.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF provided support to the legal and policy reform in child protection, including the adoption and enforcement of the Justice for Children Policy, the Legal Aid Policy and the law on organisation, jurisdiction, competence and functioning of mediation committees.

UNICEF was instrumental in supporting the Justice for Children (J4C) Policy. UNICEF helped develop a J4C guide and leaflets to simplify the information and enable more widespread understanding. This year, 2,000 copies of the J4C guide and 10,000 leaflets were disseminated to juvenile justice implementers during legal aid week in March. The J4C policy was being implemented, leading to greater awareness on rights for children in conflict with the law. For example, a positive trend happened in ongoing penal code revision, such as the depenalization of sexual intercourse between minors unless the use of force/violence is evidenced. Many frontline workers and judiciaries, however, still do not understand the implications of harsh punitive measures on children and how to make decisions that are in the best interest of the child.

In March 2017, UNICEF and Rwanda Correctional Services conducted a rapid assessment of infants incarcerated with their mothers, to define collaboration between UNICEF and MINJUST/RCS. The assessment found 260 infants under the age of three years detained with their mothers in prisons across the country. This situation was not ideal for young children, or for mothers in prisons. Recommendations included improving ECD facilities for the infants, linking mothers with the NCC for eventual reintegration of children and prevention of detention for mothers with infants.

UNICEF co-chairs the child protection sub-group committee, an overall coordination forum comprised of key child protection stakeholders. This committee met twice in 2017 (September and November), with one agenda item to coordinate all activities pertaining to the Inshuti z’Umuryango/Izu.

In April 2017, UNICEF contracted the International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation to support the development of a national policy for persons with disabilities and standards of care for children with disabilities. This work is being led by The Ministry for Local Government and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities. By the end of 2017, a validated situation analysis was finalised and a draft policy and standards were developed. Findings confirm low participation and inclusion, low coverage of programmes and services and exclusion of persons
with disabilities from existing national and community-based schemes. The policy will be finalised in 2018. In November 2017, UNICEF supported the Government of Rwanda to organise an advocacy event with children with disabilities to commemorate International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The event attracted over 150 participants, including the Minister of State for Local Government and successfully raised public awareness on the rights of children with disability.

**OUTPUT 2** Child protection services available to the most disadvantaged children.

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF supported the NISR and partners to develop a Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Strategic Plan 2017-2022, which focused on the modernization of the system, including birth registration. The strategy was validated by the Government and implementation is increasing between health facilities and sector level administration. Rates of birth registration increased from 56 per cent in 2015 to 67 per cent in 2017.

With other UN agencies, UNICEF provided support to One Stop Centres. There were 44 One Stop Centres currently operational across the country. In 2017, the centres provided free assistance to 5,531 child victims of violence: 4,775 victims of sexual violence and 755 victims of physical violence.

UNICEF supported the National Commission for Human Rights to carry out a nationwide campaign against sexual violence, targeting groups known to be perpetrators, based on an assessment conducted in 2016. In 2017, the campaign reached 2,760 parents and teachers, 2,789 motorcyclists and taxi drivers and 2,400 small business owners in two provinces. The campaign was ongoing.

Under the Tubarerere mu Muryango (TMM) programme, 2,933 children were reintegrated from orphanages into family-based care in 2017. In total, 141 children were placed from institutional care into family-based care and 367 families were assessed for suitability to receive children. UNICEF and NCC ensured the reintegration process aligned to the UN Alternative Care guidelines. The TMM programme was being evaluated.

UNICEF provided child protection services to over 26,000 refugee children and their families in Mahama Camp. During 2017, UNICEF supported the upgrading of three child-friendly spaces and one youth-friendly space in collaboration with Plan International and Save the Children, benefiting over 25,000 children and youth. In total, 1,316 unaccompanied and separated children benefited from home visits. In 2017, 122 boys and 120 girls were reunified with their families and 149 boys and 98 girls were placed in foster care.

In 2017, UNICEF initiated a real-time monitoring project in Mahama Camp to replace the paper-based system with an online system for faster and more accurate case management. Also, 215 tablets were procured and a consultant was contracted to establish this system. The software for the application was developed and will be rolled out in early 2018.

UNICEF and UNHCR embarked on a new initiative to bridge the humanitarian-development divide. A meeting was held in June with key government and civil society partners to develop a draft roadmap that will focus on inclusion of refugee children into national systems. UNICEF will transition from a predominantly camp-based approach to supporting refugee children within the national child protection system.
OUTPUT 3 Skilled professional and para-professional social workers are operational in 30 districts.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF continues to support the National Commission for Children (NCC) on strengthening Rwanda’s child protection system through a qualified professional and para-professional workforce as part of the child care reform process. UNICEF, in partnership with Tulane University and NCC, completed the development of the national child protection training package for the Inshuti z’Umuryango and rolled out the pre-service training to all 29,674 Inshuti z’Umuryango in all 30 districts.

Throughout 2017, UNICEF and NCC partnered with Save the Children to support operationalization of the Inshuti z’Umuryango by providing supervision and direct support in collaboration with professional social workers and psychologists. The first phase, which ended in 2017, focused on nine districts in Rwanda and the second phase ending in 2018 is focusing on an additional two districts. In the first phase, 3,537 Inshuti z’Umuryango received refresher trainings and were equipped with basic job aid materials. As a result of the training, the Inshuti z’Umuryango conducted 22,228 home visits to families to prevent and respond to child protection risks and 11,642 children were provided with child protection and psychosocial services. A baseline survey was conducted in 2017 and progress will be monitored in the coming years.

UNICEF and Tulane University developed a curriculum for the professional social workforce. In 2017, all 68 social workers and psychologists received in-service training in child protection case management to strengthen the quality of service provision. As result of the trainings, the professional social workforce conducted family-tracing activities for 143 families and identified 273 foster families. In addition, they provided psychosocial support for 362 children through group and individual counselling. Social workforce professionals also held four quarterly coordination meetings with officers in charge of gender and with NCC and UNICEF, which supported the finalisation of the national training curriculum.

Additional training was carried out for local leaders in all 30 districts on roles and responsibilities regarding the professional and volunteer child protection workforce.

In September 2017, a month-long clinical supervision workshop for professional social workers and psychologists was jointly organized by NCC, UNICEF and the University of Rwanda in four provinces of Rwanda. The aim was to discuss work-related challenges, prevent staff burn-out and build emotional resilience. Participants appreciated having a supportive and safe environment to discuss their work and renewed their commitment to working for children and families in need of professional child protection support.

UNICEF worked closely with NCC to develop and implement a national TMM campaign to call on parents, children, communities, caregivers and local authorities to promote a safe family environment for all children. Activities included messages through art, music, dance and drama in 10 districts. Ten community mobilisation events were held during the campaign and an average of 50,000 people were directly reached.
OUTPUT 4 Child protection interventions are informed by evidence to address negative practices and related social norms

Analytical statement of progress
Rwanda’s Integrated Child Rights Policy calls for increased evidence in child protection to inform policy and programme development. To close the knowledge gap and produce reliable data on child protection, UNICEF supported the MoH (MoH), MIGEPROF, the National Commission for Children (NCC), the National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), Kigali City Council (KCC), the NISR and the National Identity Agency (NIDA) to build an evidence base for the child protection system in four major thematic areas. From the beginning of the Country Programme, seven out of 10 research studies addressing child protection were conducted. In 2017, the following were finalised:

- In partnership with the Ministry of Local Government, the NCPD, NCC, UNICEF and the International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation conducted a situation analysis of accessibility to services by adults and children with disabilities. The situation analysis was conducted to inform national policy on disability inclusion and to put in place standards that improve service delivery to children with disabilities in families, communities and in care. Findings confirmed low participation and inclusion, low coverage of programmes and services and exclusion of persons with disabilities from existing national and community-based schemes.
- A summative evaluation of Phase I of the TMM programme was being finalised. Programme relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact were reviewed. Initial findings illustrate that the programme met standards and showed positive impact on the well-being of reintegrated children from institutional care into family-based care. Lessons learned and recommendations will be used to guide UNICEF, the Government and partners to enrich Phase II of the programme.
- In 2017, in partnership with MoH and the Centres for Disease Control, UNICEF finalised the quantitative technical report for a comprehensive Violence against Children and Youth Survey, the nation’s first assessment of the national prevalence of violence against children aged 13 to 24. According to the survey, 42 per cent of boys and 26 per cent of girls aged 13-17 were victims of physical violence, while 12 per cent of girls and 5 per cent of boys aged 13-17 reported exposure to sexual violence. The report was validated by the Government. UNICEF also contracted an institution to develop a reader-friendly version of the Violence against Children and Youth report for the launch, analyse the qualitative data and to develop the first national plan of action on violence against children and youth.

Based on the results of the assessments, detailed advocacy campaign strategies and plans will be developed and executed in 2018, particularly to address social norms and practices regarding violence against children and birth registration.

OUTCOME 4 Vulnerable families with children have reduced exposure to livelihood risk, inequalities and poverty.

Analytical statement of progress
Situation analysis: Though Rwanda made exemplary progress in reducing poverty, poverty rate remained high at 39.1 percent, with extreme poverty at 16.3 percent. The Rwanda Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy identified social protection as a key poverty reduction strategy. According to the 2016/17 Social Protection Joint Sector Review,
Rwanda made progress towards its 2018 social protection coverage target (1,096,000 individuals) and is on track, with coverage of core social protection programmes increasing from 497,000 in 2012 to 870,689 (138,213 female-headed and 89,264 male-headed) as of November 2017. The number of households benefitting from the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme increased from six per cent in 2014 to 9.6 per cent (20 per cent of all women-headed and 5.3 per cent of all male-headed households). This is above the target, due to an increase in coverage by public works and full coverage of direct support. The most recent update of population categorisation by socio-economic status (Ubudehe) in 2016 indicated that more than 446,000 households were categorised as Ubudehe 1 and are eligible for Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme. The programme reached 50 per cent of eligible households (227,477 households as of November 2017).

Rwanda’s investment in the social sector increased since the beginning of the decade. Recent budget expenditure analysis of the published MINECOFIN budget data, however, indicated a drop in budgets allocated to social sectors. Social protection remained the only sector with a slight budget increase (from 3.3 percent in 2012/13 to 4.5 percent in 2017/18 for all programmes). The budget share in the health sector was 12.3 percent in 2012/13, which was closest to the national and regional target of 15 percent. The government allocations for health in 2017/18, however, declined to 9.2 percent. In the education sector, the budget share was at 16.2 percent in 2012/13 and dropped to an estimated 11.5 percent in 2017/18.

**UNICEF roles and contributions:** To support the Government of Rwanda in reaching its targets to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce general poverty below 20 per cent by 2020, UNICEF focused on building the country’s capacity to implement child-sensitive social protection measures. Steps made towards integration of social protection with health, nutrition and ECD addressed multiple dimensions of child poverty (recently completed MODA sets multi-dimensional child poverty at 39 per cent and identifies key deprivation overlaps among health, nutrition, education, WASH and housing).

Evidence to support poverty alleviation was made available through research and modelling of policy options, as well as building of the M&E capacity of the social protection system. Given the importance of adequate financing for the development of social services and poverty alleviation programmes, UNICEF focused on analysis and advocacy for increased investment in child services. Building on this approach, UNICEF made the following contributions in 2017:

- The pilot of two child-sensitive social protection options (expanded public works and mobile crèches linked to nutrition-specific measures) was completed and evaluated. The pilot included over 300 households in two districts. The qualitative component of the evaluation indicated positive impacts on the nutritional outcomes of young children (compounded with quantitative evidence on a slight increased investment in consumption from 68.5 per cent to 70 per cent). Households diversified their economic activity and the number of households able to save increased from 10 per cent to 91 per cent in interventions sites, including a 30 per cent increase in acquisition of livestock and a 10 per cent increase in land acquisition during the same period. The overall well-being of households was improved through increased access to health insurance 60 per cent to 92 per cent.
- The expanded public works programmes were included in the Government’s Graduation from Extreme Poverty Package rolled out in 30 pilot sectors, with the aim to expand and roll-out nationally in 2018/19. UNICEF provided additional support to the Government to increase coverage of expanded public works programmes to 2,000 households in 14 districts.
• As a result of technical inputs to the Social Protection Sector Policy and Strategy, the Strategy is inclusive of child-sensitive options and links with complementary services, such as social care and child protection.
• UNICEF continued its support to the MIS strengthening. MIS was being used by over 3,000 government officials at all levels and is the government source for targeting of core and complementary social protection programmes.
• UNICEF emphasized strategic operational research and supported domestication of the SDGs through collaboration with the NISR. UNICEF and NISR completed the MODA and linked it with the multi-dimensional poverty analysis of the general population. The end line evaluation of the integrated ECD programme was completed, as well as the Violence against Children and Youth Survey.
• Budget briefs on health, education and social protection were completed, as well as the fiscal space analysis of these sectors.

Opportunities: Links among the social protection, ECD and nutrition sectors were further strengthened through the new draft social protection policy and strategy and the new VUP programme design.

Challenges: With the emergence of the new Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme design, the sector capacities may be constrained. This will require additional and strategic technical assistance to fill in capacity gaps.

Partnerships: UNICEF partners with the Government to develop child-sensitive social protection measures, influence the design of the new social protection loan by the World Bank, linking social protection, nutrition and ECD.

OUTPUT 1 Capacity of national/ decentralized institutions to deliver targeted equitable and holistic child-sensitive social protection services strengthened.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, child-sensitive social protection options were consolidated into the Government systems and the capacity to develop, implement and finance integrated social protection was strengthened through a new costed strategy. The development of additional monitoring and evaluation tools consolidated capacity to produce administrative social protection data.

However, there is still no systematic approach to impact evaluation. Bottlenecks identified in the areas of supply (coverage), enabling environment (links among core social protection and basic services, inadequate fiscal space, monitoring and coordination) and quality (low capacity of the personnel) were addressed as follows:

• Two selected child-sensitive social protection measures (mobile crèches and expanded public works linked with nutrition-specific interventions) were piloted in two districts. The Government scaled up the child-sensitive expanded public works (ePW) model in 80 sectors covering all 30 districts and intends to achieve national coverage in the next two years. The end line evaluation of the ePW pilot indicated positive impacts on the nutritional outcomes of young children and an increased capacity of households to diversify income. The pilot also impacted the overall well-being of the households, including improved access to health insurance (by 20 per cent), land (by 13.7 per cent
for ePW compared with 4.4 per cent for cPW) and savings (by 61 per cent).

- Geographic and social barriers to accessing these resources were removed for households with children. Through its inclusion in the government-designed graduation from extreme poverty package, the ePW approach increased the access of the poorest households with children to agriculture, nutrition, child care and financial services. By the end of 2017, UNICEF provided direct support to the Government to include 2,000 households with children into ePW in 14 districts. Support to ePW was linked to further modelling integration with nutrition-sensitive interventions and ECD.
- Technical assistance and inputs were provided to the drafting of the new Social Protection Policy and Strategy for 2018-2024, envisaging a more comprehensive approach to delivery of social protection and expansion of categorical direct cash transfers and establishing stronger linkages with social care services.
- The new Vision 2020 Umurenge programme document and implementation guidelines were developed with inputs from UNICEF, with a focus on the integration of services, including child- and nutrition-sensitive interventions. The new programme document dissemination included training of over 500 government officials with UNICEF support. The approaches to develop the case management and referral system for social protection services and the community sensitisation manual were designed in collaboration with the Government and the design is underway.
- With support from UNICEF, the Ubudehe MIS was upgraded and the 2016 Ubudehe categorisation updates were uploaded. This MIS serves as the main tool to enable monitoring, coordination and targeting of social protection programmes. The MIS is used by over 3,000 government officials and supports health insurance and national identification systems.

In collaboration with partners, UNICEF supported the Government of Rwanda to develop and roll out the household profiling tool for needs assessment and improved planning of service delivery.

OUTPUT 2 Evidence and research, particularly on child-poverty and disparities, inform national and sub-national policy formulation and implementation.

Analytical statement of progress
Out of eight flagship studies completed since 2013, three were implemented in 2017 to further ECD programme design, consolidate knowledge on children in support of the new Country Programme Document and create a baseline on multi-dimensional poverty. Available data facilitated development of the WASH policies and the revised Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme Document. A number of flagship evaluations (health and nutrition) and research filled knowledge gaps to inform policy and programme design and were implemented through partnership with NISR, academia and specialised research NGOs. In 2017, the focus was on filling in identified gaps in ECD, child protection and nutrition. Some gaps remain in relation to social norms and behaviours linked to ECD and nutrition, as well as child protection (children with disabilities, in particular). These and emerging areas such as demographic growth, will be prioritised in 2018 and in the upcoming Country Programme. In 2017, UNICEF made the following achievements:

- Supported NISR with the SDG domestication process. A baseline analysis for SDG 1 (no poverty) was supported through the MODA and the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index
(MPI) studies (currently in draft form). These will provide multi-dimensional poverty baselines against which SDG targets will be set. National child multi-dimensional poverty is at 39 per cent (55.3 per cent of children under five and 32 per cent of children aged 5-17 years suffer from at least three simultaneous deprivations), whereas 33 per cent of the general population lives in multi-dimensional poverty according to MPI. Support to MODA and MPI included training for NISR staff on both measures to enable NISR to conduct this analysis leading up to the SDGs reporting. The baseline estimates for SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2 (WASH) were developed and approved by the Government. Support was provided for the implementation of the EICV5 as the central source of data on poverty, socio-economic development and social protection in Rwanda.

- A rigorous ECD end-line evaluation was completed in May 2017 and informed Phase II of the IKEA-funded programme and guaranteed programme continuation.
- Methodology for a baseline evaluation of the integrated nutrition and ECD programme funded by the Government of the Netherlands was developed for launch in January 2018.
- The Situation Analysis of the Status of Children in Rwanda was completed in 2017 and underwent a technical review by all relevant ministries. SitAn technical and summary reports were finalised for publication in early 2018.
- Analysis of the Child Sensitive Social Protection pilot evaluation was finalised in 2017 and the results were shared within the Social Protection Sector to further feed into social protection policies and programming.
- Quality assurance and technical support was provided to ongoing and upcoming UNICEF research, including the finalisation of the Violence against Children Study (technical report available), the Drop-out and Repetition Study, a radio programme evaluation and pre-primary education evaluation.
- Research partnerships were strengthened, including with NISR, Partners in Health and the University of Rwanda.

OUTPUT 3 Child sensitive, budget and monitoring system is in place and operationalized.

Analytical statement of progress
After gradual increase in budget allocation until 2013/14, budget allocation for social sectors started to decline. Social protection is the only sector that remained stable and slightly increased, from 3.3 per cent of the total government budget in 2012/13 to 4.5 per cent in 2017/18. Until 2016/17, the Government was able to compensate for the drop in official development assistance, but in 2017/18, fiscal constraints faced by the Government forced allocations downward, with allocations for education at 11.5 per cent and health at 9.2 per cent according to 2017/18 budget law. The drop in official development assistance was offset by borrowing, and the country continued to struggle with a budget deficit.

In 2017, UNICEF continued developing analysis and advocacy tools, including budget briefs and an analysis of Government expenditure in the social sectors. This work built on budget research and analysis implemented in previous years, including the Public Expenditure Review of the child protection sector, the costing of child-sensitive social protection options and pre-primary education to inform policy and programme design. District budgets were monitored for inclusion of budget allocations in ECD and nutrition, with a few districts including these budget lines in their annual budgets. The development and dissemination of budget monitoring tools will be completed in 2018.

Building on the two baseline studies on Public Financing for Children conducted in previous
years, in 2017 UNICEF developed four budget briefs for health, education, social protection and a national budget brief to be used for advocacy and information dissemination. In addition, the fiscal space analysis of the health, education and social protection sectors was completed by the end of 2017 and will be used for advocacy purposes in 2018.

A Political Economy Analysis of the Rwanda budget cycle was drafted and a study of the national budget, regarding its child-sensitivity and linked capacity gaps, was commissioned in December 2017. The study will provide a better understanding of the areas within which the national budget guidelines can be made more responsive to child outcomes and will assess gaps in capacities to develop needs-based budgets for children. A capacity gap analysis will serve as a baseline for development of a capacity development package for national and decentralised institutions in 2018, in addition to completion of the monitoring tool that is expected to further strengthen capacities to plan and monitor budgets for children.

UNICEF continued to advocate and leverage partnerships with stakeholders in public finance management for children and the governance and decentralisation sector. In addition, UNICEF continued to partner with Save the Children to strengthen advocacy on public investments for children.

OUTCOME 5 Young children and families, especially the most deprived, are utilizing quality ECD services.

Analytical statement of progress

The 2017, UNICEF supported a national ECD mapping survey, which revealed that there are 3,971 ECD centres across the country reaching 246,590 (126,175 girls; 120,415 boys) children 0-6 years of age. Data from the Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey 2014/15 showed that only 62 per cent of young children (three to six years) were developmentally on track in terms of literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional and learning domains. A 2017 impact evaluation study in 10 UNICEF-supported districts showed that 35.5 per cent of children attended an ECD programme, reaching a total of 13,274 children three to six years compared to six per cent in 2014. The results showed that 55.8 per cent children had fathers engaged in daily care, while 19.6 per cent of caregivers were engaged in activities with children to promote learning or school readiness. Despite achievements made in the past years, mainly due to the approval and implementation of the revised national ECD policy, many young children were still not accessing services and are at risk of not reaching their full potential.

Threats to ECD were greatest among children living in the rural and poorest households where children were less likely to be sent to ECD centres and received support for early learning at home. In view of this, UNICEF endorsed a comprehensive set of interventions. The approach was based on evidence that the following preconditions were required to maximise children’s developmental potential: (1) effective and responsive care of the young child by the family and community; (2) utilization of quality ECD and other basic social services for young children and (3) implementation of child-sensitive policies. As of the end of December 2017, the following milestones were achieved:

- UNICEF supported the Government to disseminate and implement the 2016 National ECD Policy and Strategic Plan at decentralised levels through capacity development of local stakeholders on planning, implementation and monitoring and through advocacy with district authorities to include ECD in their plans and budgets. To overcome the existing data gap, an ECD module was included in the Demographic and Health Survey
(2014-15) published in 2016, providing data on six key ECD indicators for the first time. The report provided baseline data for tracking child development in the country and reporting progress against SDGs.

UNICEF also supported the Government to conduct a national mapping of ECD services. The study revealed that there are 3,971 ECD centres across the country reaching 246,590 children. UNICEF conducted a comprehensive study, following a cohort of children and families at UNICEF intervention sites and assessing the impact of the integrated package of interventions (ECD, nutrition, WASH, social and child protection) on the life of young children and their families. To support effective policy implementation, UNICEF supported MIGEPROF with two technical assistants: an ECD officer to provide technical assistance to the ministry for 24 months (November 2015-2017) and monitoring and evaluation specialist to support the ministry in developing an ECD M&E framework.

In scaling-up ECD services, UNICEF established 17 ECD model centres in 15 out of 30 districts. An additional ECD centre was established in Mahama Camp for Burundian refugees, serving an additional 370 children aged three to six years. Almost 6,000 children under six years benefited from ECD services in Mahama Camp. Construction of a second centre was underway to be completed by the first quarter of 2018.

- In total, the programme reached the following direct beneficiaries: (1) more than 18,000 young children through centre-based, home-based and home visitation services; (2) around 6,600 parents through parenting education and home visits; (3) about 180,000 community members through comprehensive behaviour change communication campaigns; (4) about 400,000 children benefited from micronutrient supplementation nationally representing 80 per cent of under-two years coverage in 2017 alone. Ten districts took over the management and funding of ECD centres as part of the sustainability framework agreed between UNICEF, Imbuto Foundation and the Government. As part of quality improvement, UNICEF continued to support the Government to implement the National ECD Minimum Operational Standards, which provide benchmarks for all ECD service providers.

**Challenges:** Public financing of the programme remained relatively low against the costed implementation plan valued at USD 1.4 million for coordination activities under MIGEPROF. However, continued advocacy led to government allocation of USD 47,000 per district, mainly for ECD infrastructure in the 2017/18 financial year, compared to 2016/17 when there was no budgetary allocation for MIGEPROF to support the programme.

**Opportunities:** The advocacy gains made this year have provided a platform for increased funding. In addition, the creation of the National ECD Coordination Structure at MIGEPROF opened an avenue for increased public financing for the programme. It is anticipated that more resources will be allocated to the Ministry to finance its operations and programme delivery.

**Key Partners & Donors:** To achieve ECD results, UNICEF worked closely with MIGEPROF, district authorities and other UN organisations. UNICEF’s primary implementing partners are Imbuto Foundation for ECD service delivery, ADRA for construction and Umuhuza for advocacy and capacity development. In 2016/17, the ECD programme was funded by IKEA Foundation,
OUTPUT 1 Families are aware of quality ECD services and provide responsive care to young children (0-6 years), in targeted districts.

Analytical statement of progress
One of the main bottlenecks identified towards the achievement of holistic child development was the lack of knowledge, skills and appropriate practices among parents and primary caregivers to deliver effective and responsive care. The parents also lacked knowledge of appropriate child health, nutrition and hygiene.

UNICEF’s key strategies were to build the capacities of parents and promote social behaviour change communication for families and communities. UNICEF made education, parenting support and behaviour change communication key pillars of its ECD flagship programme. This was demonstrated through home-based ECD groups and ECD centres where parents and other primary caregivers meet to acquire parenting skills. Key achievements were as follows:

- In 2015, an ‘Essential Package of Early Child Development and Family Services’ was developed. This package, which was implemented in 13 districts, promoted parenting care practices and improved child-caregiver interaction. By December 2017, 6,625 individual parents and primary caregivers were reached with parenting education sessions, with a target of 10,000 families to be reached by 2018. This created a social norm to engage fathers to participate in child care, stimulation and learning. This was unlike the traditional norm where child care is mainly done by women.
- UNICEF participated in the review process of the national caregivers’ guide developed in 2009 by the Government of Rwanda. The technical review provided an opportunity to integrate nutrition, child health, protection, hygiene and sanitation into a predominantly early stimulation- and care-focused guide. The guide was used by partners in Rwanda who implement ECD programmes.
- Between 2016 and 2017, 402,850 people were reached with comprehensive behaviour change communication activities on the importance of ECD, exceeding the target of 100,000 families. This was implemented through direct outreach to families via faith-based organisations (118,000), a specially designed radio programme called “Itetero” (250,000) and local community theatre called “Urunana” (34,850).
- An ECD end line survey completed in 2017 provided updated data on behaviour change indicators as a result of community mobilisation, advocacy and awareness-raising activities undertaken so far. The survey indicated that in ECD sites, 19.6 per cent of caregivers engaged in three activities with the child to promote learning or school readiness (baseline: 12.2 per cent), 7.1 per cent of households had three or more children’s books in the home (baseline: 1.6 per cent) and 50.9 per cent had playthings at home (baseline: 19.5 per cent).
- To raise awareness on the ECD policy, several communication materials were produced: an ECD booklet, Itetero, a documentary, TV and radio spots and panel discussions. It is crucial that the wide population of Rwanda understands the importance of early childhood development. Through the use of the media, MIGEPROF received many requests for more information on how to initiate ECD services in the community.

The new ECD Advocacy and Communication Strategy was pending validation and approval. The strategy will enhance behaviour change at the family level towards responsive child care and parenting practices.
OUTPUT 2 Increased availability of quality ECD services to children (under six years) and their families in targeted districts.

Analytical statement of progress
A 2014 ECD bottleneck analysis revealed that the limited availability of infrastructure and early learning materials, as well as a lack of integrated service provision, were major barriers towards the achievement of ECD outcomes. This remained a challenge affecting delivery of quality services, especially since children learn through play.

Key strategies for increasing the availability of ECD services included creating spaces for children through construction, capacity development for caregivers, the provision of a range of integrated services and the supply of play and learning materials. The model centres served as centres of excellence towards the provision of quality and integrated ECD services in respective districts. Going forward, the programme will support creation and utilisation of locally-made play materials in both centres and homes.

To model integrated community-based ECD services, 17 ECD centres were built through partnership agreements with ADRA (construction) and Imbuto Foundation (service provision). UNICEF revised its plans in 2016, aiming to complete 16 centres by 2018. Of the 17 centres built, 10 districts have taken over the management and funding of the centres as part of the broader sustainability framework agreed between UNICEF, Imbuto Foundation and the Government. UNICEF and Imbuto continue to play significant technical advisory and quality assurance roles in the handed over centres.

As of the end of December 2017, a total of 137 ECD caregivers, centre managers and home visitors were trained, improving delivery of ECD services. The initial target was 80 caregivers as planned for in 2014. The revised target for 2018 is 400 and is expected to be reached though the current scale-up of low-cost ECD centres.

All operational centres are providing integrated services, which include services in health, nutrition, early learning, child and social protection, parenting education, basic WASH and kitchen gardening as a component of nutrition. ECD Minimum Operational Standards were disseminated by the close of 2017, so centres can be assessed against the standards, thereby providing data on the number of centres that operate in compliance with minimum standards.

Additional 2,797 children participated in centre-based early learning activities in 2017, representing a 66 per cent increase for a cumulative 4,237 children. Services continue to expand through the establishment of home-based ECD groups, where a cumulative 9,037 children (5,791 in 2017, representing a 64 per cent increase) were reached. Similarly, a total of 4,939 children (3,578 in 2017, representing a 72 per cent increase) benefited from home visitation.

Advocacy for the development of Early Learning and Development Standards with the Government began. With newly approved funding for this activity under the EKN grant, UNICEF will commence the process of developing Early Learning and Development Standards in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

ECD centre architecture was accessible to children with physical disabilities and caregivers trained on the inclusion of children with physical and cognitive disabilities. Further capacity
building and support was planned for 2018 with a civil society organization partnership specialized in inclusion services for children.

OUTPUT 3 Improved ECD policy environment and coordination mechanisms that support optimal development of children.

Analytical statement of progress
Realisation of sectoral coordination for holistic child development remains a gap. In addition, development of the national M&E framework has not been completed.

UNICEF’s key strategies to address the gaps included advocacy and provision of technical and financial support to MIGEPROF to improve the policy environment and coordination mechanisms. UNICEF supported establishment of a national technical working group chaired by MIGEPROF to review the progress in implementation of the ECD policy, provide input for the ECD M&E framework development and national mapping of ECD services. As a result of joint advocacy efforts, a National ECD Programme Coordination entity was established by the Government to oversee implementation of ECD Policy and Strategy. Internally, a programme sectoral coordination structure, co-chaired by the ECD and Nutrition sections, enhanced programme integration for improved child development outcomes. In 2017, UNICEF provided financial and technical support for the dissemination and implementation of the 2016 National ECD Policy and its Strategic Plan to accelerate scale-up of ECD services, promote integration and foster coordination among various sectors. Specific results were as follows:

Multisectoral ECD coordination mechanisms were established at national and district levels. As secretariat, UNICEF provided technical support to the national ECD technical working group. The group provided a platform to coordinate and provide direction to the implementation of the national policy. As part of strengthening coordination, the Government established a national ECD programme coordination structure under MIGEPROF to oversee implementation of the policy and utilise ECD as a platform for reducing stunting.

With UNICEF’s financial support and technical guidance, National ECD Minimum Operational Standards for improved ECD service delivery were developed, validated and disseminated through user-friendly posters. The standards set benchmarks for all ECD service providers for creating stimulating, caring and protective environments in which children thrive and develop to their potential. The standards acknowledge different settings and programmes, including centre-based and home-based ECD services.

The handover of 10 of 16 operational ECD centres to district authorities denoted progressive inclusion of ECD services into district plans and budgets. With 2017/2018 government budget allocation of funds to districts for ECD services, focus was on capacitating districts to effectively plan and utilise the allocated resources prudently.

As part of strengthening data and information management, UNICEF supported the national ECD mapping and the consultancy services to develop and M&E system for MIGEPROF.

UNICEF engaged in a number of strategic partnerships, including with MIGEPROF and other key line ministries. In addition to traditional ECD partners (IMBUTO Foundation and ADRA), UNICEF identified new strategic partners with strong ECD experience to speed the scale-up of ECD services using different approaches. These include RICH, AVSI, CRS, ADEPE and Chance for Childhood and the Anglican Church.
Through the Rwanda Education NGO Coordination Platform, UNICEF also worked closely with a range of NGOs who work in ECD.

OUTCOME 6 Well-coordinated and result-based planning, M&E, Communication, Advocacy and Partnership are in place to enhance the Rwanda Country Programme effectiveness and efficiency.

Analytical statement of progress
2017 began with intensive planning for Rwanda’s National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024 and the UNDAP 2018-2023. UNICEF was engaged with the One UN planning process, beginning with the UNDAP programming principles workshop. Evaluation of the UNDAP 2013-2018 concluded that UN interventions in Rwanda were well-aligned to government priorities. The findings of the evaluation and the Common Country Assessment validated in September informed the new UNDAP 2018-2023.

Preparation of the new UNICEF CPD 2018-2023 progressed in alignment with the new UNDAP. The UNICEF Regional Office supported training on RBM and strategic moment of reflection, identifying priority areas for the new CPD. Strategy notes were subsequently developed based on the comprehensive situation analysis. The UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and regional priorities continued to inform equity-based development of the new CPD, to be validated by the Executive Board in June 2018.

PME continued to support NISR’s efforts in data dissemination, promotion of data use and statistical literacy-building, resulting in the following achievements:
NISR is a powerful partner in promoting child participation in the country’s development process using statistics. Since 2015, the “Reading Data with Children” event was conducted by NISR to help youth understand development using statistics.

- An “Open Office” initiative was launched to promote further awareness of social indicators among secondary students.
- In January 2017, the NISR Director General attended the UN data forum. Central Statistics Offices from Senegal, Zambia and Ghana approached NISR for possible replication of the Reading Data with Children event. In June, the Ministry of Labour and Public Service selected NISR’s Reading Data / Infographics Competition events for exhibition at the AU Public Service Innovation Competition.
- Data and school DevInfo modules were included in school curriculums and in the official curriculum of the Regional Statistics Training Centre, to be operational in 2018.
- The rapid assessment conducted after School DevInfo training at universities showed 80 per cent of lecturers introduced the DevInfo database to their students and 83 per cent have spoken about the SDGs in their classes.

One lesson learned is that successful child rights advocacy is attainable with limited resources if the child rights agenda is well fitted to the mandates of partner organisations and government institutions.

Multisectoral monitoring efforts of nutrition activities were mainstreamed into District Plans for Elimination of Malnutrition in 22 districts through systematic DevInfo/RBM capacity building. The other eight districts were supported by USAID. As of December, 18 districts are regularly tracking data using district DevInfo databases.
Challenges include a funding shortage resulting in innovative data dissemination not being evaluated; district capacity-building efforts in planning and monitoring hampered by high turnover among trained district statisticians; weak coordination in producing high quality data; and an absence of systematic data collection at the district level.

C4D activities were reinforced with innovation and strategic positioning. C4D priorities are being implemented across Rwanda as the Itetero children’s radio programme reaches all districts through national and community radio outlets.

The focus of C4D efforts to reduce child stunting moved from the awareness phase to the action phase, with mass sensitisation and community mobilisation in the targeted districts. The evaluation report confirmed that the 1,000 Days nutrition campaign was effective in providing enhanced support for children, caregivers and communities for improved nutrition and care practices. The campaign was successful at generating broad fundamental understanding of the consequences of chronic malnutrition and building knowledge of how families and communities can prevent stunting. However, more efforts are necessary to emphasise the role of fathers in child care and supporting mothers.

Notable achievements were made in high-level policy support and development. With UNICEF leadership, the National ECD Communication and Advocacy Strategy was developed and submitted to the Government. UNICEF supported the development of the National Nutrition and WASH Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategies, also submitted to the Government. C4D inputs were incorporated into the development of the Health Sector Strategic Plan IV.

A range of communication materials and activities were developed and produced to support the multisectoral effort to implement an integrated ECD programme. The Communication, Advocacy and Partnership section contributed to promotion of ECD by reaching 1.2 million people through community theatre, religious networks and radio.

Strategic communication included partnership and advocacy efforts with media houses and academia to ensure ethical reporting by journalists and incorporating the Child Rights Media Module into curricula for students of journalism. Child participation was ensured by making existing children’s forums operational with different stakeholders and through celebration of the 12th National Children’s Summit with representation from all 30 districts to discuss and find solutions to children’s issues. Increased visibility through social media platforms was seen in 2017.

Engagement with the private sector increased from partnership with one tea company in 2016 to partnering with the National Agricultural Export Development Board covering all tea, coffee and horticulture businesses in Rwanda.

Donor commitment continued and in 2017, three new donors contributed to under-funded areas. All programme sectors are fully funded until the end of the Country Programme in June 2018. In addition, for supporting interventions for more than 88,500 Burundian refugees, UNICEF mobilised US$ 2.52 million donor funds and supported all major programme areas.

OUTPUT 1 Policy makers, media, donors and civil society organisations engaged to promote children’s and women rights
**Analytical statement of progress**

Partnership with Media High Council and University of Rwanda continued to ensure capacity building of media practitioners. A training module on ethical reporting was developed and validated and 70 practicing journalists were trained. This module is being integrated into journalism curricula.

Partnership with The New Times Publications and IGIHE increased visibility of children’s issues. UNICEF Rwanda led celebrations of global advocacy events with extensive media coverage.

In partnership with SORWATHE Tea Company, more than 100 parents and community caregivers were trained on child care in tea plantation areas. Increased demand led to the establishment of two crèches benefitting 50 children receiving stimulation and nutrition support.

Airtel Rwanda and UNICEF organised a competition titled “Pitch Night”, attracting 100 youth to pitch business ideas in health, education and environment. The best five were selected to present their projects to an audience of government officials, private sector, development partners and youth. The winner received US$ 5,000 and additional entrepreneurship training.

An industry approach adopted to reach out to the private sector, which includes emphasis of the CRBP, leveraging resources and investment in children’s services. A partnership agreement was signed with the National Agricultural Export Development Board. Focal points from 16 tea companies, 20 cooperatives and and 70 private companies were oriented on the CRBP. MIGEPROF and NAEB included implementation of the CRBP in their annual performance contracts.

Children’s forums were operational through close cooperation with children’s committees, district and sectors officials and parents. Members of these forums were trained to engage with the Government on planning and decision-making.

In 2017, child participation was high with the 12th National Children’s Summit celebrated in the Parliament with 500 children representing all 30 districts. Participants discussed children’s issues and solutions for fulfilling the rights of all children.

UNICEF, as the chair of the One UN Communication Group comprised of all UN agencies, provided lead strategic guidance in improving the visibility of UN work and children’s issues in Rwanda.

2017 saw a significant increase in UNICEF Rwanda’s website -14 per cent and a 29 per cent in new and returning visitor sessions, respectively. Facebook followers increased to 116,000, Twitter followers to 9,400 and the new Instagram account gained 1,100 followers. These increases indicated interest in UNICEF’s brand and programmes. Stories, photos and videos were used for effective documentation and were promoted on UNICEF’s website and social media.

Donors renewed contributions. Fundraising resulted in funding from UNICEF Committees from Ireland, Czech Republic and the US Fund for US$ 318,000 and multi-year funding from UNICEF Japan for US$ 2.75 million. Three successful donor visits resulted in additional funds and the Government of Japan in Rwanda expressed strong appreciation for progress in their funded interventions in Mahama Refugee Camp. Donor contribution of US$ 194,000 for emergency was mobilised for CAP and PME and is well reflected in all visibility material.
OUTPUT 2 Behaviour and social change of the target communities on key priorities increased through Communication for Development.

Analytical statement of progress
The focus of C4D efforts to reduce child stunting moved from the awareness phase to the action phase, with mass sensitisation and community mobilisation in the target districts. Assessment confirmed a high recall of the First 1,000 Days campaign with estimated 7.9 million people reached through social mobilisation with religious leaders, community theatre and media coverage.

The percentage of older children exposed to violent discipline was 91.4 per cent in the control site and 84.7 per cent in the intervention site where ECD centre operated for over a year. However, proportion of parents who think physical punishment is necessary is 20 per cent less in the intervention site than in the control site; violent disciplining practice was five per cent less prevalent in the intervention site than in the control site. This indicates a significant change in the attitude. Continued effort will be necessary to bring about social and behaviour change.

The children’s radio programme *Itetero* produced and aired 100 episodes since October 2015, gaining increased listenership on national radio, which has almost universal reach. The weekly programme established an operational methodology which includes regular audience feedback. *Itetero* brings quality information and stimulation to young children and their families, with key messages on ECD, health, nutrition, hygiene and protection.

In 2017, further capacity building with Rwanda Broadcasting Agency resulted in dubbing high quality animations made in Africa into Kinyarwanda (*Ubongo kids* WISE award 2017) and the first children’s animations made in Rwanda. Inclusion of children with disabilities was strengthened in the production process, leading to short TV programmes produced with children with disabilities. These will be aired on national television in early 2018.

A KAP study was conducted to understand the gender disparity in education and the first sermon guides on ECD were developed in Kinyarwanda for Christian and Muslim leaders.

UNICEF played an instrumental role in strategic planning of the upcoming communication activities:

- In ECD, UNICEF C4D and MIGEPROF developed a communication and advocacy plan that supported the overall ECD policy.
- UNICEF played an influential role as the co-chair of the Health Promotion Technical Working Group to design the next stunting agenda by ensuring comprehensive coverage of the National Nutrition and WASH SBCC Strategy.

Humanitarian support to 56,000 Burundian refugees was provided, with local partners and grassroots workers, through social and behaviour change communication campaigns and interventions in education and health promotion areas. Informal assessments have shown encouraging improvements in reducing absenteeism and behavioural practices in all refugees. In addition:

- 360 community health workers were trained on key health messages and on the use of
the innovative “Talking Books”;  
- About 50,000 people were reached through door-to-door campaigns with key messages;  
- A back-to-school campaign was conducted to reduce absenteeism.

OUTPUT 3 UNICEF, Government and partners have capacity to conduct results based & human rights based planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Analytical statement of progress
At the beginning of the Country Programme, Planning Monitoring (PME) and Evaluation and NISR conducted a bottleneck analysis and identified that government officials seldom use social indicators falling outside of the Imihigo, district statisticians have challenges in data use and analysis and the Rwanda DevInfo database is not well used (online database received more access from abroad). To address these, PME supported NISR in statistical literacy capacity building, DevInfo database dissemination and district planning and monitoring capacity building.

Third annual Reading Data with Children event was held in December 2017. Discussion focused on child labour using the 2017 Labour Force Survey. Gender Specialist facilitated discussions on gender using statistics. NISR, REB and UNICEF partnership led to the publication of the “Teacher’s Guide for Reading Data with Children” and a data communication tool for children. The teachers’ guide was distributed in all districts and 84 secondary school teachers were trained on the use of the guide and statistics clubs were established in four schools. To communicate children’s rights discussions by using statistics, five data-driven human interest stories were published on the UNICEF Rwanda website and social media channels.

The School DevInfo initiative informed 57 university lecturers on the use of social indicators. However, the initiative focused more on the SDGs and big data. UNICEF will therefore phase out support for DevInfo globally. The 2017 Labour Force Survey therefore was uploaded to DevInfo Rwanda.

NISR acknowledged UNICEF support in promoting a user-focused approach to data by reaching out to unconventional data audiences and requested UNICEF develop a data dissemination strategy to complement the National Strategy of the Development of Statistics. The draft strategy will be incorporated in the NSDS III, to be developed with support from the UK Statistics Office in early 2018.

With the nutrition section, PME strengthened capacity for data tracking, analysis and dissemination at the district level. As a result, 34 district officials learned to use DevInfo for planning and monitoring nutrition interventions and 130 district officials from 22 DPEM committees improved RBM skills and fine-tuned district plans.

UNICEF continued supporting the Rwanda Monitoring and Evaluation Society in 2017. This year, the Society’s constitutions were established, executive committee members were elected and the annual work plan was drafted for endorsement by the General Assembly, scheduled for early 2018.

In 2017, 29 PRC submissions were supported, financial and performance indicators were updated, audit recommendations were supported and monitoring of third party end-user supply in Mahama Refugee Camp was completed. The HACT Assurance Plan was updated and implemented. As a result, 24 financial spot checks, four audits and six micro-assessments were
completed. With ESARO support and with the Finance Section, PME organised a HACT training in collaboration with the HACT Oversight Committee and third party service provider. In total, 114 partners were trained and 90 per cent of trainees increased their HACT capacity. To support drafting of the CPD, PME coordinated two technical missions from ESARO: HACT partnership risk management and an affordability analysis, resulting in significant skills enhancement for PME staff.

OUTPUT 4 Strengthened disaster preparedness and humanitarian response framework in Rwanda.

Analytical statement of progress
Rwanda is located in the Great Lakes region, an area prone to natural disasters and civil conflict in neighbouring countries. Over the last decade, the frequency, intensity and severity of natural hazards and disasters increased.

The Rwandan Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR) is the overall coordinator of emergency preparedness and response in the country and with UNHCR is a co-coordinator for the refugee crisis. UNICEF is the UN co-coordinator for emergency response in WASH, child protection, ECD, education, health (with WHO and UNFPA) and nutrition (with WFP). Humanitarian action in Rwanda is grounded in the provision of basic services to affected populations using existing systems, whenever possible and providing direct service delivery in refugee camps.

UNICEF Rwanda executed a diversity of investments in preparedness in 2017:

- Critical stand-by Programme Cooperation Agreements and LTAs developed;
- Contingency stock replenished;
- Planning and response for interagency, Government and NGO staff continues.

Strong coordination mechanisms employed in refugee response ensured well-planned division and harmonization of tasks, which was strengthened through joint situation assessments, planning, monitoring and reporting. As a result, key basic social services reached the Burundian refugee and host community populations.

UNICEF continued to provide support to refugees within Rwanda. The main results achieved in 2017:

- UNICEF distributed 460 cartons of RUTF for the treatment of SAM in Mahama Camp and reception centres. Approximately, 247 children (147 girls) were identified with SAM and enrolled for treatment.
- 13,196 children were reached with routine vaccines; 1,953 pregnant women were provided with tetanus toxoid vaccines.
- More than 20,000 Burundian children (47 per cent girls) enrolled for improved access to education, with significant inputs to improve the quality of education and reduce dropout rates.
- Close to 6,000 children are accessing early childhood development services, with a new centre and play park under construction, to benefit an additional 370 children.
- WASH interventions contributed to a reduction in latrine and shower ratio in Mahama Refugee Camp: 18 refugees share one drop-hole latrine and 18 people share one
UNICEF Rwanda continues to prepare to meet emerging needs in the humanitarian context.

OUTCOME 7 Programme Management and Operations: Identity, direction and well-being of UNICEF programme and UNICEF staff maintained and promoted.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, the office focused on four management and operations priorities identified during the 2016 mid-term review: effectiveness and efficiency; fundraising; emergency preparedness and response; and staff wellbeing.

UNICEF Rwanda continued to improve efficiencies and savings because of the transition to GSSC in 2016, with more staff focused on programme implementation activities rather than transactional work and the overall reduced time for payment processing. The enhanced capacity in finance to oversee quality assurance of financial transactions, HACT assurance activities and internal controls resulted in the improved timeliness and quality of financial transactions and increased accountability. On average, cash transfer payment processing took less than five days as per the standard operation procedures and local service agreement with GGSC and the number of the rejected transactions by GSSC were kept at a minimum.

Active engagement in implementation of the One UN Business Operations Strategy with other UN agencies ensured a focus on cost-efficient and effective administrative services in administrative procurement, ICT and finance. The total accumulative savings reported on Business Operations Strategy implementation was US$ 316,497. However, the Business Operations Strategy human resources working group faced challenges related to differences in Human Resources policies and procedures applied by different UN agencies, which negatively affected achievement of set targets. For instance, UN joint recruitment could not go beyond developing a joint roster of consultants, due to differences in contract types between UN agencies.

UNICEF Rwanda continued to monitor KPIs in management, programme and operations monthly, which had a positive impact on the achievement of most KPIs and enabled the office to address bottlenecks in an efficient and timely manner.

In 2017, the office continued efforts to increase staff competencies in programmatic and operational areas with 88 per cent implementation of the Office Training and Development Plan endorsed by CMT. Results-Based Management, Emergency Preparedness and Ethics trainings were organised by the RCO/programme with support from the Regional Office and Ethics Office.

• UNICEF partnered with Save the Children to provide child protection services to 26,703 children in Mahama Camp, including 13,619 boys and 13,084 girls.
• In July, UNICEF supported the UN interagency Joint Assessment Mission in six refugee camps. Findings are informing the humanitarian response for the next two years.

For all main humanitarian risks constraints include funding gaps, capacity constraints at the national and sub-national levels, delays in procurement of critical supplies due to under-developed local markets and the country being landlocked. The funding gap was partially addressed through grants received from SIDA, KOICA and Government of Japan.
UNICEF Rwanda ensured an evidenced-based, transparent, participatory and consultative CPD development process in 2017, in partnership with the Staff Association, with the objective to build trust and confidence of staff, improved morale and motivation to support the new Country Programme. UNICEF Rwanda staff participated in the strategic moment of reflection, programme coordination meetings and all staff retreat organised in the second part of 2017 as part of the new Country Programme development process.

A review of the 2017 Rwanda Global Staff Survey report indicated that UNICEF Rwanda scored well when compared with 2011 and 2014 Global Staff Surveys and the organisation. For example, significant improvements were observed in support to staff capacity development, better work-life balance, increased exposure to new learnings including stretch assignments and support offered to those who have health issues. This was an encouraging development, as it confirms both management and staff’s commitment to implement action plans from previous surveys through a participatory approach, as well as sustaining actions for an improved working environment. The office developed an action plan to address the dimensions with the lowest response, discussed with staff at the all-staff retreat and shared the plan with all staff for information and reference.

OUTPUT 1 Governance and Systems.

Analytical statement of progress
The Operations Section led in critical areas and global initiatives, such as Enterprise Risk Management; Business Continuity Management; UN coherence and development of the Business Operations Strategy; staff welfare and security; “Greening and EFA initiative” - targeting carbon neutral emission by 2020.

The office updated the Risk Control Self-assessment Library developed in 2016, as the office completed implementation of the identified actions. This resulted in many of the risk mitigation strategies and actions being embedded in section work plans and in the Annual Management Plan. As of December 100 per cent of in-house governance committees and taskforces, such as the HACT Oversight Taskforce, were functional, with well-defined roles and responsibilities and terms of reference.

Upon receipt of the final 2016 internal audit report in June 2017, the office developed a detailed audit action plan and CMT closely reviewed and tracked the progress of its implementation. This resulted in almost 90 per cent of audit recommendations closed by OIAI as of 20 December 2017. The audit enabled the office to focus and address the findings related to HACT, fundraising, capacity building of implementing partners, procurement and human resources. As a result, under the leadership of PME and support from Finance, the CO conducted training of around 100 government and non-government partners. The Operations Section contributed to processing and finalisation of Programme Cooperation Agreements, ensuring a value for money and risk management approach.

The operations section implemented more than seven actions identified in the internal audit plan and addressed the findings in procurement and human resources. In procurement, the standard operating procedures was revised to include a risk management aspect in contract review processes, training of staff on the updated SOP for procurement of supplies and services and contract management issues which were addressed through revision of work processes. In human resources, the capacity of the human resources unit was enhanced by recruitment of a human resources manager and human resources officer. The systems for recruitment were
aligned with human resources policies and procedures. A staff skills analysis was initiated in November to address the related audit recommendation.

The office internal control mechanism, including the contract review committee, table of authority and segregation of duties was maintained to support decision-making and ensure accountabilities. The Table of Authority was updated and authorised by the Representative and one training on roles and responsibilities and segregation of duties was provided to all staff.

The office’s business continuity plan was updated and a simulation was conducted in July 2017, which confirmed the functioning of the business continuity systems and arrangements in Rwanda. In addition, the office continued investing in security and safety of the UNICEF office, which ensured it was MOSS compliant.

The UNICEF Rwanda Greening the Blue Committee continued working to reduce carbon emission through installation of LED lights, planting trees on office premises, ensuring double-sided printing, installation of solar heating panels and automatic sensor switches.

OUTPUT 2 Management & Stewardship of Financial Res

Analytical statement of progress
The operations section worked towards improved efficiency and effectiveness in activities related to budget monitoring, payment processing, transport, travel management and ICT. The finance unit analysed HACT transactions between January to July 2017 to ensure quality and compliance with UNICEF HACT policy and procedures. Improvement was noted in Programme Cooperation Agreement processing time, as well as the time taken for disbursement of cash to implementing partners after signing a Programme Cooperation Agreement and actual payment.

Regular reports on the status of transactions submitted to GSSC were shared with all staff for information. As a result of the quality check and assurance by the Finance team, the numbers of rejected and returned submissions by GSSC were kept to minimum. DFAM account closure period activities were followed up and completed in a timely manner. The 2016 accounts payables and receivables were cleared in a timely manner as part of 2016 year-end closure activities. Throughout the reporting period, financial implementation status is diligently monitored weekly and as a result, as of mid-December, full utilization (99.5 per cent) of the cross sectoral and institutional budget (100 per cent) was achieved. The receivables for 2017 (especially VAT entries) were kept up-to-date. Efforts to maintain an optimal cash balance resulted in positive bank optimization practices, with the regional KPI maintained at 17 per cent versus 19 per cent in 2016.

Following a supply planning exercise, services and goods worth US$ 5.08 million were procured in 2017. The 2016 internal audit supply-related recommendations were closed. A One UN common market survey was initiated, related market survey results will provide an assessment of local vendor capacity for recurring programme procurements. Twenty-three CRC cases were reviewed for services and supplies totaling US$2.16 million. UNICEF continued to lead the One UN Procurement Working Group, resulting in savings of US$ 1,004,199 across all agencies for the reported BOS period of June 2013 to December 2017. A UNICEF-MoH Nutrition products end user monitoring exercise done in 2017 will identify areas of supply chain strengthening.

The Administration Unit provided transport and travel services to the office, with timely processing of travel authorisations and allowances. It also provided daily transport to staff for in-
town and field travel, based on approved travel plans. In 2017, 561 local and 108 international TAs were processed. The physical count of assets was concluded in September as per DFAM schedule. Three Property Survey Board meetings were organized in 2017 that led to the disposal of ICT equipment and vehicles.

ICT continued efforts in improving Internet connectivity and quality of services. ICT invested in upgrading ICT hardware and software, which improved data security and efficiency. More than 50 per cent of laptops were replaced and new multifunction printers were installed with PIN codes for controlled access. About 75 per cent of computers were migrated to Windows 10 following the global rollout. New satellite phones with docking stations were installed at management’s residences as part of BCP. The ICT Section also provided technical support to programme sections for several projects, including preparation of terms of references, technical evaluations, user training and implementation.

OUTPUT 3 Management of Human Capacity

Analytical statement of progress

Following the approved 2016 PBR, the CO developed and implemented a recruitment plan resulting in 100 per cent of new posts being filled. The vacancy rate was maintained at 1.3 per cent. Weekly management meetings were used to update on PBR implementation and contributed significantly to the finalization of the recruitment plan. 100 per cent of (71) PBR actions points were completed by August, resulting in optimum staffing levels. In addition to the 76 established posts, the CO recruited 17 consultants and four temporary appointment (one international professional and three NO) staff.

The office gender parity slightly improved to 48 per cent female and 52 per cent male by December. International professional geographical diversity improved, with 37 per cent of staff from donor countries and 63 per cent from programme countries. Efforts were implemented to ensure progress towards staff diversity and gender parity.

The office implemented a comprehensive training plan which supported both individual and group trainings; 25 staff members had individual training requests financially supported for implementation; 88 per cent of planned group trainings and 76 per cent of individual training activities were implemented. Key group training activities included Performance Management and results-based management workshops, which were successfully conducted and equipped staff with requisite skills to effectively deliver results. Human Resources conducted eight training sessions for all staff on Human Resources reforms, performance management and staff development.

Finance conducted four training sessions on payment processing, one training on the Table of Authority and six on HACT and e-ZHACT in collaboration with PME. Supply held eight sessions on basic supply processes and contract risk and management with programme sections. The ICT Section organised a training for all staff on One Drive for Business, the Team Site and remote access. All trainings aimed to enhance knowledge and competency of staff in these areas.

One hundred per cent of staff finalised their 2017 Performance Planning in Achieve, apart from one new staff who joined in November. Three Human Resources clinics were conducted to support staff members develop their 2017 PER plans, performance progress review and performance evaluation. The training focused on Achieve and sharing trends and observations.
for continuous improvement. Staff and supervisors were encouraged to provide honest and constructive feedback during quarterly performance review discussions.

Ninety per cent of the 2014 GSSA Plan was implemented under the overall coordination of Staff Association and implementation was monitored by the Country Management Team. The 2017 GSSA plan was developed with a focus on sustaining good practices ushered in by the 2014 plan and prioritising the five global priorities as part of the new action plan. Four Joint Consultative Committee meetings were held with action plans formulated, monitored and minutes shared with all staff. Resolutions to improve the working environment and staff morale were implemented.

Seven staff members utilised flexible working arrangements. The office also actively participated in One UN Human Resources Working Group to leverage on harmonised Human Resources practices for the benefit of staff. UNICEF Rwanda continued to implement the 10 HIV minimum standards through activate participation in One UN Cares committee meetings and workshops and sharing relevant information with staff.

### Evaluation and research

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### Other publications

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<td>A Roadmap for Scaling-Up Early Childhood Education in Rwanda</td>
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## Lessons learned

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## Programme documents

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