UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
“Improving Knowledge Accelerating Results”

Regional Office Annual Report
2016
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<td>Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan</td>
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<td>Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health</td>
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<td>VDPV</td>
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Part 1: Overview

1.1 Executive Summary

The Regional Office for South Asia continued to work with Country Offices (COs) and a wide range of stakeholders, to meet the Six Headline Results: Save Newborns, Stop Stunting, Educate All Girls and Boys, End Child Marriage, Stop Open Defecation and Eradicate Polio (for more information go to: http://www.unicefrosa-progressreport.org/). In nutrition, the ‘Stop Stunting’ movement gained further momentum following the launch, in May, of the international publication of the Maternal and Child Nutrition journal, at an event in Delhi. Convened by UNICEF South Asia, the event engaged a wide range of partners, global experts and the media, to focus on recent analysis that identifies child feeding, women’s nutrition and household sanitation as priority areas for investment, to prevent child stunting and enhance cognitive capital. In WASH, programming for reducing open defecation has increased dramatically over the past three years. Preliminary assessments of UNICEF’s direct support for Community Approaches to Total Sanitation/ Community Led Total Sanitation (CATS/CLTS), triggering change at community level, indicate an almost 10 fold increase in the number of communities declared open defecation free in 2014.

While reducing and preventing Out-Of-School Children (OOSC) in South Asia remains a significant challenge, progress has been made in India, home to one of the largest numbers of OOSC. A 26 per cent reduction (2009 – 2014) and notable improvement in reading, especially at early grades in government schools. Remarkable improvements has also been made in the school environment, including girls’ access to usable toilets, which went from 33 per cent in 2010 to 62 per cent in 2016. Meanwhile in May, ROSA with UNICEF Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Education, organized the first ever high level South Asia Symposium on Sustainable Peace and Education, which highlighted how education can promote peace, social cohesion and resilience in a region where millions of OOSC live in conflict affected zones.[1]

In November, UNICEF South Asia, in partnership with the Nepal Ministry of Health and UNICEF Nepal, organised a regional health advocacy event titled “Reaching EVERYChild in South Asia”. The event not only helped to sustain the momentum, in efforts to reach under-immunised children and to reduce newborn deaths, but also to galvanize discussions on these two priority child health issues in South Asia. The event was attended by senior policymakers and government, development partners, civil society, academia and the media. Key health knowledge products were produced and launched during the event including: South Asia Health Atlas 2016. While the global target to eradicate polio in 2016 was not achieved, progress made is the closest ever. Game changing approaches of tracing and covering missed children to strengthened routine immunization, provide good reasons to be optimistic about eradicating polio in the near future.

Also in November, the third High Level Meeting, co-convened by UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) and East Asia Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), brought together governments from 29 Asian

[1] 7 million children (aged 5-14 years ) who are out of school live in conflict affected areas of countries in South Asia (EFA GMR 2015)
countries and a wide range of development partners. The theme of the meeting was “A BILLION BRAINS Smarter Children, Healthier Economies”. UNICEF ROSA and EAPRO led the development of the analytical pieces, based on reviews and evidence, analysed in collaboration with Chatham House and published by British Medical Journal (BMJ) Global Health, and presented at the meeting. The key advocacy message was centered on the need for increased investment in children’s ‘cognitive capital’ (a concept that represents knowledge as a scarce resource that can be traded with money, social influence, and political power), to generate sustainable economic growth.

The Headline Results represent the large human capital deficit and yearning social investment gap, necessary to unleash the potential of children and adolescents in South Asia, for sustainable and inclusive growth. The Headline Results remain a strong mobilising force and have contributed to a compelling advocacy agenda. Some of the biggest challenges have been the measurement of progress towards the targets and the loose association between UNICEF investment and national/sub-national progress. One of the factors is the unavailability of data at the lowest administrative level in some countries in the region. This limits understanding and analysis on child deprivations and persistent bottlenecks. While some countries have regular MICS, DHS and other National surveys, others do not have regular household surveys that enable a better understanding on the situation of children. This reaffirms the importance of moving beyond single data collection activities to systematically strengthen data systems, to provide close to real time information.

ROSA provided technical assistance and quality assurance for the development of four new Country Programmes (2018 – 2021) in the region namely: India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Ensuring priorities are determined based on sound evidence, including on the most marginalized children and alignment with the evolving new UNICEF Strategic Plan (SP) 2018-2021 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Increased focus on leveraging domestic resources, through greater attention to public finance management, was central to discussions. Results Based Management (RBM), skills were imparted to over 512 staff in South Asia, equipping staff to better engage in the development of their new Country Programmes, through a rights based ‘lens’.

1.2 Trends and Progress in the Region, as affecting children and women: Making a case for greater cognitive investment for sustainable inclusive development

South Asia is a study in contrasts – a human development school. It is home to mega cities and a growing middle class as well as extreme deprivation and inequalities. What often gets lost in the story of a rising South Asia, is that debilitating poverty is a reality for millions of people. According to Forbes¹, India has the fourth-highest number of billionaires in the world, yet the country ranked 130 in the 2015 Human Development Index (HDI)². The gains of economic growth and development has not been equitably distributed. Of the estimated 1 billion extremely poor people globally, 60 per cent live in India and Bangladesh³. The region also bears about 40 per cent of the global burden of child stunting⁴ and each

year more than a million\textsuperscript{5} newborns die mainly from preventable causes. Only 62 per cent of children in South Asia are registered at birth. Lack of identity is a key barrier for children to access basic social services such as health and education, and in times of conflict, lifesaving assistance. This exacerbates the risk of child marriage, trafficking and other forms of violence.

South Asia remains home to the largest numbers of out-of-school children in the world (over 36 million\textsuperscript{6}). Moreover, only one third of children in South Asia who reach Grade 4 meet minimum learning standards. Many classrooms are still characterized by teacher-centered, rote-based learning, corporal punishment and discrimination\textsuperscript{7}. Approximately 45 per cent \textsuperscript{8}of girls are married before the age of 18. Evidence suggests that these girls are at increased risk of violence and abuse. Child marriage is a key driver of early pregnancy, which increases the risks for both mothers and their newborns. Child marriage also negatively impacts development prospects of nations; many girls drop out of school with few skills and opportunities to find a job and become economically productive.

Pervasive norms and attitudes on the value of girls and women continue to have far reaching consequences for South Asia’s development. The 2016 International Labor Organization (ILO) ‘Women at Work Study’\textsuperscript{9}, found huge and growing disparities - especially for younger women, in formal employment. Women in South Asia are largely in the informal sector, and in both formal and informal the gender pay gaps are high with women being unpaid/poorly remunerated.

Deprivations and inequalities faced in childhood continue to cast a shadow in later years, hindering people from realizing their full potentials and setting back development in the region. No country can hope to make strides in achieving economic development without investing in their human capital. In the context of South Asia where children under 18 years make up about 36 per cent of the population (around 621 million\textsuperscript{10}), investment in the first 1000 golden days (pregnancy and up to a child’s second birthday) and during adolescence, offers two unique windows of opportunity to shape a healthier, and more prosperous future. These investments are vital for creating cognitive capital\textsuperscript{11} on which economic growth, inclusive social development and national prosperity can be built.

Low tax to GDP ratios (between 8 – 17 per cent\textsuperscript{12} across the region), combined with weak governance and inefficiencies, have meant that most governments in South Asia do not generate enough revenue to adequately finance public spending. As a result, South Asia spends only limited resources on health, education and social welfare.

State fragility is a major issue facing countries in the region, with almost all countries scoring high in the ‘Fragile States Index’\textsuperscript{13}. Several countries are plagued by conflict and or terrorism, while others have only recently emerged from civil conflicts and still in the process of healing and state-building. In this

\textsuperscript{5} UNICEF South Asia Headline Results Progress Reports, \url{http://www.unicefrosa-progressreport.org/}
\textsuperscript{6} ibid
\textsuperscript{7} Education For All Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO, 2014
\textsuperscript{8} UNICEF South Asia Headline Results Progress Reports, \url{http://www.unicefrosa-progressreport.org/}
\textsuperscript{9} Women at Work Study, ILO, 2016
\textsuperscript{10} The State of the world’s Children 2016, UNICEF, \url{https://www.unicef.org/sowc2016/}
\textsuperscript{11} Cognitive capital Cognitive Capital: A concept that represents knowledge as a scarce resource that can be traded with money, social influence, and political power. This concept is derived from Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of “cultural capital,” and it sheds light on accumulation and exchange processes regarding cognitive skills, knowledge, and information.
\textsuperscript{13} Fragile States Index, 2016, \url{http://fsi.fundforpeace.org/rankings-2016}
context, defence expenditure is a dominant feature of many national budgets\textsuperscript{14}, reducing budgetary space for children and adolescents further.

Urbanization is another trend that is shaping South Asia’s development trajectory. Nearly 130 million South Asians currently live in informal urban settlements and the total urban population is expected to rise to 250 million by 2030\textsuperscript{15}. Weak urban governance, poor provision of public services, lack of effective social protection systems and mounting urban poverty, pose significant development challenges. If left unaddressed, urban poverty has the potential to incubate social conflict and instabilities.

In 2016, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia made significant inroads in building a stronger case for increased investments in children and adolescents, if countries are to generate and sustain inclusive economic growth. Advocacy, based on high quality knowledge generation and dissemination, was one of the primary strategies used.

\subsection*{1.3 Humanitarian Assistance}

South Asia is highly prone to reoccurring natural hazards such as flooding, landslides, droughts and earthquakes. It suffers from protracted conflicts and related internal and cross-border population displacements. The 2017 INFORM\textsuperscript{16} classification, lists five out of eight countries in South Asia as ‘Very High Risk’ or ‘High Risk’, ranking Afghanistan and Pakistan 4th and 13th respectively.

Returnees to Afghanistan from Iran, Pakistan and Europe dominated the agenda this year. At the border with Iran, a receiving process service has been established to support safe reunification of unaccompanied minors. This is also informing the programme for those who are returning from Pakistan and Europe. Afghans make up the second largest refugee population (after Syrians), fleeing conflict to find refuge, and in search of a better life, in Europe. By the end of March 2017, it is expected that the influx of refugees being ‘obligated’ to return from Pakistan and Iran to Afghanistan, will affect an estimated 1.5 million people, 60 per cent of whom are children under 18. In both countries, clashes between government forces and armed non state groups are triggering internal displacement.

The armed conflict and rising insecurity in Afghanistan forced 245,000 new people to flee their homes in 2016, bringing the cumulative number of internally displaced people (IDP) to 1.1 million. Although more than 600,000 Afghan refugees returned from Pakistan and Iran by early December, most have not yet resettled into their respective communities due to insecurity. Afghanistan is also hosting 175,000 Pakistani refugees who fled insecurity related to military operations in Waziristan in 2014. The fighting is impacting the provision of basic services, with the closure or destruction of schools and health facilities. Natural disasters, particularly earthquakes, floods, landslides and drought, affect 235,000 people every year on average. Cumulatively, an estimated 1.9 million people are in dire need of protection and emergency health, education and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions.

\textsuperscript{14} Based on Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Data
\textsuperscript{15} Leveraging Urbanization in South Asia, 2016. World Bank.
\textsuperscript{16} INFORM is an inter-agency risk assessment tool into which UNICEF participates in order to prioritize emergency preparedness measures
Afghanistan is also facing a national nutrition crisis. The target for SAM treatment in 2016 was 171,770; of those 163,605 children (girls – 87,365, boys – 76,240) were treated. UNICEF is the sole provider of nutrition supplies for SAM treatment. As of 31 October 2016, UNICEF had received US$18.2 million against the US$27.8 million appeal (65 per cent funded). UNICEF had to utilise other sources to close the funding gap and provide critically needed humanitarian services, including to the large number of unanticipated returnees from Pakistan in transit centres and communities in the east and central provinces. UNICEF’s malnutrition response surpassed 2016 targets by the end of October, due to the unforeseen sudden influx of Afghan returnees from Pakistan, and the accelerated establishment of nutrition sentinel sites that were able to treat more children than planned. UNICEF supported 97 per cent of children targeted for psychosocial support. Although UNICEF’s education-in-emergencies interventions provided safe and protective learning spaces for displaced and at-risk children, insufficient funding, the closure of schools due to insecurity and negative traditional norms undermined the attainment of the education targets established for 2016.

In Nepal, children continue to suffer from the effects of the 2015 earthquakes and aftershocks, where school reconstruction remains constrained, due to funding and political challenges. Children living in earthquake affected areas are exposed to high risks of landslides. Drought is becoming an increasingly important hazard in the region, with at least 10 states\(^{17}\) in India, and almost half of Afghanistan, severely affected. In India the severe 2016 drought is estimated to have affected 330 million\(^{18}\) Indians, representing 80 per cent of the total number of people affected by disasters globally. In Pakistan, drought has led to a steady increase in the prevalence of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) among children under 5, particularly in Sindh province. In 2016, in northern and central Bangladesh, massive floods affected 3.7 million people, and in Sri Lanka, Tropical Cyclone Roanu affected 301,500 people.

Pakistan is currently facing multiple natural and human-induced disasters. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) are experiencing multiple and protracted large-scale humanitarian situations, internal displacement, returnees and refugees. In 2016, the humanitarian community in KP and FATA successfully facilitated the return of 86,323 families, though 105,769 families remain displaced. The Multi-Cluster Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees conducted in five FATA agencies and five KP districts found a lack of basic health services and nutrition. It also found that the majority of displaced persons and returnees rely on unsafe drinking water and lack access to improved sanitation facilities. The education has been badly affected by serious infrastructure damage. Protection needs are also significant, and displaced children and women are especially vulnerable. In the drought-affected province of Sindh, malnutrition and stunting are highly prevalent and will likely worsen if the nutrition response is not sustained.

In 2016 ROSA provided technical support to Afghanistan to embed a conflict analysis into its Mid Term Review (MTR) planned for September 2017. Given the escalating conflict in Afghanistan, this analysis will help assess the core issues of multiple conflicts. It will also help ‘map’ the actors involved, relationships, vested interests etc. This conflict analysis will inform adjustments in the programme thrust and strategies for the reminder of the Afghanistan CP 2015-2019. Given the preparation of new CPDs 2018-2022 for India, Nepal and Pakistan and socio-political tensions/conflicts in these countries, ROSA will provide technical support for the inclusion of context-specific conflict analyses.

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1.4 Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Several platforms were used in South Asia to engage and secure inputs to the evolving UNICEF global Strategic Plan (SP) 2018-2021. Forums included sectoral and cross sectoral network meetings, management team meetings (at country and regional levels) with dedicated sessions on the new SP and the annual country support survey. We gained insights within and across countries and from partners. The draft SP papers were reviewed for resonance with child deprivation issues and strategic intents of the four new Country Programmes (2018-2022) being developed for approval at the 2017 UNICEF Executive Board. Additionally, the continuing and changing ‘enabler’ roles of the Regional Office were interrogated in the context of South Asia. In addition to feedback provided to UNICEF Headquarters (Data Research and Policy Division), a few implementation challenges and opportunities for further consideration in the SP are:

a) Need to synergize priorities with clarity of strategies. The five goal areas and related key results are aspirational and pertinent for children globally, including South Asia with huge numbers of most marginalized populations. The SP clearly highlights UNICEF’s contribution towards a world that is both fair and fit for children. The choice of a mix of strategies (How) in which UNICEF resources and investment will contribute to systemic changes and measurable results for children in context of the SDGs, fragility, changing political climate and resource constraints is a challenge. Hence, it is critical to sustain attention to results based management within UNICEF, the larger UN, Government and importantly local partners.

b) Demonstrating the SP results would depend on building a culture of accountability for results, set-up of systems to measure and report development gains/deficits virtually in real time for partners to take responsibility for equitable socio-economic progress within nations. This hinges on credible national data that is ‘informational’ in driving investment decisions for most deprived children.

c) It is difficult to predict if the Strategic Plan is affordable. Matching SP results globally with resources in an uncertain global political and economic future is not easy, more so at country levels. This is compounded by fragility and weak governance that undermine fair development. Tools to articulate the resource requirements and cost key strategies for the delivery of country programme results are vital.

d) Enlarging the scope for innovation is both an opportunity and a challenge. Technology-based changes are helping to take social services to more, and neglected clients and communities. Yet the SP requires transformational innovation to reach under served and most deprived children in context of social exclusion based on caste, class, religion, region etc. Human innovations that can change the course of history for good are currently lacking and sometimes blighted by over dependence on high tech.

e) Evidence based programme interventions to address numerous deprivations faced by adolescents is a complex challenge of science, organizational learning, innovation, participatory engagement and partnership. Strategic partnerships at global, regional and national levels are essential in driving progress in this area.

Finally, the Regional Office shall continue to synchronize country programmes in India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, with the SP 2018-2021. Concurrently define ‘enabler’ role in the Regional Office
Management Plan (ROMP) 2018-2021, to better support country offices in all contexts to define, deliver and demonstrate results for children.
Part 2: Analysis of Programme Strategies and Results: Development Effectiveness

2.1 Nutrition

The region is on track to achieve its Headline Result – ‘Stop Stunting’ (12 million fewer children with stunted growth and development by 2017), particularly given the significant decline in the prevalence of stunting in a number of important countries, including India, in the last couple of years. ROSA continued to focus its technical support to the five high burden countries that account for 99 per cent of stunted children in South Asia - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Key highlights included guidance to Afghanistan on transitioning from a primary focus on emergency nutrition and the management of severe acute malnutrition to a greater emphasis on preventing stunting, wasting and other forms of malnutrition. ROSA facilitated a south-to-south learning visit (Bangladesh to India) on community-based management of acute malnutrition, and its integration into existing programmes to prevent malnutrition. In addition, continued support was provided to states in India and provinces in Pakistan (KP and FATA) to establish multi-sector coordination on nutrition.

UNICEF’s South Asia and East Asia and Pacific regional offices co-hosted a regional meeting on ‘Public Finance on Nutrition in Asia’ with the global Scaling Up Nutrition Secretariat in Bangkok in April 2016. Country delegations discussed methodologies to track budget allocations on nutrition and the costing of nutrition actions, and the use of investment case data to leverage additional resources for nutrition. Meanwhile, cost-benefit analyses of scaling up nutrition are underway in partnership with the World Bank in Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

The series on ‘Stop Stunting in South Asia’ was published in the international Maternal and Child Nutrition journal and identifies child feeding, women’s nutrition and household sanitation as priority areas for investment to prevent child stunting and enhance cognitive capital. It was launched with global experts at an event in Delhi that highlighted the cost of stunting to children and nations in the region. (For more information see advocacy section under implementation strategies).

Ongoing partnerships with six universities (Cornell, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Sidney, Tufts, UC Davis) are progressing to further examine the links between stunting and cognition, and to explore the epidemiology of stunting, wasting, anaemia and feeding practices in South Asia. These partnerships are expected to deliver a series of analytical reports that will inform the policy and programmatic work by UNICEF and its partners in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) era.

With growing recognition that gender-sensitive investments are needed to address the vulnerabilities of adolescents to undernutrition, UNICEF conducted a comprehensive review of survey and research evidence on adolescent nutrition in South Asia. This review identified a set of policy and programme priorities that will shape UNICEF’s future actions to improve adolescent nutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of nutritional deprivation. The review identified five areas where urgent action is needed if South Asia is to accelerate progress. These are: strengthening the evidence base on the nutrition situation of adolescents; delay the age of marriage and pregnancy to maximize girls’ potential for catch up growth; ensure that nutrition programmes address the nutrition needs of pregnant adolescent girls; design and scale up multi-sectoral national nutrition policies and programmes to deliver evidence-based nutrition interventions for adolescent girls and boys and ensure that nutrition
programmes do not lead to increased rates of adolescent marriage or increased rates of overweight and obesity.

The independent evaluation of the four-year partnership with the EU on *Maternal and Young Child Nutrition Security in Asia* concluded in 2016. The evaluation found that regional programmes generate many ‘how-to’ examples of good practice in a range of country contexts, and that regional oversight supports learning across countries. The [www.stopstunting.org](http://www.stopstunting.org) website will continue to house information on approaches, good practices and lessons learned to scale up nutrition intervention to reduce child stunting in South Asia. UNICEF also published ‘*Nutrition Upstream*’[^19], a series of case studies from Nepal, Bangladesh and other EU partnership countries that used organizational network analysis to examine the role of governments, UNICEF and other partners in contributing to results in the upstream areas of policy development and reform and budgetary allocations.

### 2.2 Water Sanitation and Hygiene

The region is currently on-track to the **Headline Result ‘Stop Open Defecation’ (120 million fewer individuals practise open defecation by the end of 2017)**. Direct support was provided to countries to strengthen data pertaining to the achievement of this target. Work was undertaken to refine the methods for estimating the falling numbers of open defecators more accurately at district and sub-district levels. This is corroborated by country level data from the ‘Strategic Monitoring Questions’ (SMQ’s), which demonstrate that programming for reducing open defecation has increased dramatically over the past three years. Preliminary assessments of UNICEF’s direct support for Community Approaches to Total Sanitation/ Community Led Total Sanitation (CATS/CLTS), triggering change at community level, indicate an almost tenfold increase in the number of communities declared open defecation free in 2014 (2,619) and 2016 (24,404), across the region. This in turn leads to a significant increase in the numbers of certified communities and ultimately people living in Open Defecation Free (ODF) communities.

ROSA initiated work in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nepal to update the statistical analysis to refine the methods for estimating the falling numbers of open defecators more accurately, and provide better forecasts of the number of people without toilets by end-2016 and end-2017. This involved the development of a methodology - approved and adopted globally by the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP)[^20] and proposed for SDG measurements - to analyze and map collected data into sub-district level snapshots, indicating not just open defecation rates but also equity profiles at those levels. Additionally, ROSA participated in the global evaluation of the Rural Water Supply (RWS) programme and the DFID evaluation of the ASWA programme, where Nepal and Pakistan respectively were used as case study countries. ROSA also developed a regional Framework for Urban WASH to be used in the future by COs in the region, building on existing experiences and inputs. In south-south cooperation, ROSA played a key role in the organization of the 5th bi-regional (South Asia and East Asia-Pacific) WASH in Schools

[^19]: This was a product from the EU – UNICEF ROSA and EAPRO regional partnership on Maternal and Young Child Nutrition Security Initiative in Asia (MYCNSIA) (2011 – 2015). The web link is below. [https://www.unicef.org/eapro/Nutrition_Upstream.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/eapro/Nutrition_Upstream.pdf)

[^20]: The JMP is the official mechanism of the UN system mandated to monitor global progress towards sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
international learning exchange held in Jakarta, with the participation of Governments and partners representatives of WASH and Education sectors from 18 countries, exchanging good practices, learning and sharing experiences.

Through the UNICEF-International Cricket Council (ICC) partnership - Cricket for Good - the opportunity of the World Twenty20 India 2016, was used to coach children about the importance of handwashing and using toilets, through ‘Team Swachh’ cricket clinics.

The UNICEF WASH sector saw a large staff turnover in 2016. Fortunately the recruitment of four new Country WASH Chiefs and a Regional WASH Advisor within acceptable timelines, ensured continuity. These changes came at a critical time as the country programme development were also underway in four COs. A focus on open defecation free communities is emerging in the region, with countries with the largest burden of open defecation - India, Pakistan, Nepal and Afghanistan – increasingly using CATS, tailored to local preferences and learning. These approaches are inherently equity focused, achieving an end to open defecation community-wide.

During the year specific focus and support was provided to strengthen knowledge management, in WASH, including knowledge generation activities. Quality assurance of knowledge products garners country exchange of knowledge and lessons learned. Based on the findings and commonalities of various Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) studies carried out by four countries in the region, ROSA has started working on a regional consolidation analysis, to better inform and strengthen programming with a focus on girl’s views, visions and aspirations around sanitation, hygiene and menstrual hygiene management. Inputs were made to the global WASH in Emergency Training specifically on strengthening the gender components of the package.

2.3 Education

Over 2016, ROSA in partnership with COs significantly advanced efforts towards achieving the Headline Result ‘Educate all Girls’ and Boys’ (12 million currently out-of-school children enjoy quality education) through equity profiling and strengthening monitoring systems linked to high impact, cost effective quality education interventions at national and sub-national levels in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. The SAARC Framework for Action on Education SDG 4 facilitated by the SAARC Secretariat, UNICEF and UNESCO has given a big boost to South Asian governments to complete the Unfinished Business of EFA/MDG and OOSC alongside investment in early childhood education and learning.

Although there is still much work to do in South Asia, particularly India, in order to reach the Headline Results target there is some promising progress. The 2016 ASER annual assessment, which is the largest citizen led assessment globally, highlighted a 26 per cent reduction in OOSC in India (from 8 to 6 million). A combination of things has been instrumental in driving this change, including the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act in 2010 and improvements in learning levels for the first time in several years, this, without any increase in children’s participation in private schools. Preliminary analysis indicates that some of the key factors in driving this change have included political will (particularly at State level), leadership, targeted investment to improve teaching quality and school management, along with equity based planning, supported by stronger Education
Management Information Systems. Remarkable improvements in the school environment including girls’ access to usable toilets which went from 33 per cent in 2010 to 62 per cent in 2016, also played a key role in providing a more conductive learning environment.

In May, ROSA with UNICEF Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Education organized the first ever high level South Asia Symposium on Sustainable Peace and Education bringing senior government officials, eminent academics, journalists and civil society to identify approaches on how education can promote peace, social cohesion and resilience in a region where millions of OOSC live in conflict affected zones. This has resulted in knowledge platforms for academics and practitioners towards new avenues of risk-informed education programming in the region.

In 2016, ROSA stepped up its efforts to use knowledge management as a main vehicle to support countries in achieving results in Education, through linking evidence generation to results. Social media and other platforms (internal and external) were used for sharing, good practices and lessons learned. This has included the development of a community of practice around Peacebuilding Education following the May Symposium on the subject. The launch of the Education Team’s e-bulletin also facilitated knowledge exchange and sharing.

In July, the high level Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) organized by the Government of Malaysia, UNESCO, UNICEF (EAPRO & ROSA) and the Asia Pacific Network on Early Childhood resulted in greater commitment by governments to invest in the historically under-funded pre-schooling sector.

The evaluation of the Child Friendly Approach (CFA), a UNICEF and Government of Sri Lanka initiative, demonstrated that CFA successfully improved school planning, monitoring of attendance and drop-outs, and holistic child development. It also highlighted gaps in implementing child-centered pedagogies and improving learning outcomes. Also, the UNICEF-Educational Initiatives evaluation of Activity Based Learning concluded that this child-centred pedagogy significantly reduced learning gaps, social barriers and discrimination when imbedded within state educational programs with sufficient support for teachers. Building on these, India CO and Sri Lanka CO evaluations completed in collaboration with ROSA, ROSA is launching a systematic review of which policies and strategies will most significantly contribute to improving teaching and learning outcomes across South Asia.

ROSA in partnership with Afghanistan CO and the Government has supported the development of the first ever National Girls’ Education Strategy for the country which has an updated situation analysis and an ambitious results framework. Despite tremendous progress in enrolment over the last decade, 75 per cent of the 3.5 million OOSC are girls.

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21 7 million children (aged 5-14 years) who are out of school live in conflict affected areas of countries in South Asia (EFA GMR 2015)
2.4 Health

Unfortunately South Asia is currently off-track to achieve the Headline Result **Saving additional 300 000 Newborn Lives by 2017**, aligned to the SDG target of reducing newborn deaths to no more than 12 per 1000 live births by 2030. To accelerate progress we are working closely with countries to strengthen investments in quality and integrated care around birth, strengthen health systems to optimise the organisation and delivery of care, reduce inequities in access to and coverage of care, engage with parents, families and communities and improve data for decision-making and accountability. Our support is organised around a Results-Based Management approach. In 2016 for example, we worked closely with COs to support the launch, implementation and close monitoring of national newborn action plans. We also held a regional advocacy event, *‘Reaching Every Child in South Asia’* to generate momentum for efforts to save newborns and children in the region. (For more information see advocacy section under implementation strategies). In addition, during 2016 the Health team collaborated with Gender colleagues to conduct research on gender differentials in care-seeking for newborns in South Asia.

The region also focused on improving coverage of immunisation among the most vulnerable populations in order to reduce inequities. For example, the health team participated in a joint mission to review immunization in Uttar Pradesh. The team also organised a workshop to revitalise Home Based Records (to improve the availability and quality of immunisation coverage data) in collaboration with the Gates Foundation. Knowledge management functions were strong with a review of routine immunization in South Asia accepted in *Perspectives in Public Health*, a *Lancet Global Health* article on inactivated polio vaccine, and a report produced on immunisation inequities in South Asia. Partnering continued with WHO and GAVI through the Regional Working Group and Immunization Technical Advisory Group. During the *Reaching Every Child in South Asia* event, we also released the *South Asia Health Atlas* which highlights deprivations and underlying contributing factors of under-immunisation across and within countries in the region.

During 2016, country offices and partners received technical support from HIV on knowledge generation and management, generation of sex and age-disaggregated data, and inputs on strengthening of structures and systems for delivering services to vulnerable pregnant women and mothers who are at high risk of HIV and AIDS. For example, Maldives received support to conduct and finalise their Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveillance (IBBS) survey, while Nepal, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were supported to contribute to the peer reviewed journal special issue on South Asia in *Current Opinion in HIV and AIDS*. Two countries (Nepal and India) are being supported to scale up and strengthen PMTCT and paediatric HIV services, and while multiple stakeholders are engaged, UNICEF is the lead technical agency. In addition, the section helped draft a discussion paper to guide the direction of UNICEF’s HIV programming for 2018-2021, which was presented to the Global Management Team in June 2016. The section also contributed to a costing exercise for HIV programming between 2017 and 2021.

Knowledge management, research and south-south (S2S) cooperation (for more see S2S under implementation strategies) were major areas of focus. In 2016 we conducted webinars, produced a new regional *Health e-Bulletin* newsletter and published journal articles relating to research on newborn health, immunisation and universal health coverage. In HIV, the section published a special issue on HIV
in South Asia in *Current Opinion in HIV and AIDS*. The RO worked with CO colleagues in Nepal, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to contribute articles to the special issues which was launched at the 12th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, coordinated by ROSA in collaboration with other UN regional agencies and UNICEF headquarters.

A key element highlighted in our advocacy work to promote universal health coverage (UHC) was that UHC can advance Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to ensure the child’s right to health, by ensuring a comprehensive package of services and eliminating financial barriers. In the HLM3, we worked closely with partners to advocate and impress on government policymakers to devote a minimum of 3 per cent of their GDP. The thematic paper on UHC, developed by ROSA Health Team in collaboration with Chatham House, was published by British Medical Journal (BMJ) Global Health, was presented and well received at the meeting.

Constraints encountered during 2016 included long appointment times for some key health posts which delayed some planned activities, particularly during the first quarter of the year. In addition, while there has been important progress in reduction of the newborn mortality rate over time, accelerated progress is necessary, particularly in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India, in order to achieve both regional and global goals. In South Asia HIV is an epidemic that is primarily spreading among key and marginalised populations, and unfortunately these marginalized groups face discrimination, and are often excluded from services. Overall challenges include that there are inadequate financial resources for health and HIV, including a shortage and maldistribution of health personnel (with rural areas being often understaffed), and that the quality of HIV services is poor and often not sustained. Advocacy is needed to ensure that HIV interventions are delivered by qualified skilled staff who can address the needs of different target groups and HIV prevention for adolescents.

### 2.5 Eradicate Polio

South Asia is on track to meet this **Headline Result — Eradicate Polio**. In 2016, only two countries in South Asia remained endemic for wild poliovirus circulation: Afghanistan and Pakistan. While strong progress continues to be made in both countries, with clear country cum cross border strategies and a comprehensive ‘Low Transmission Season’ response, transmission has continued in several locations. The recent confirmed case in Kandahar (January 2017), is a reminder that insecurity remains the greatest obstacle to accessing and vaccinating all children.

The eradication of polio in endemic countries was a high priority, as was continued support for polio-vaccination in neighbouring countries. India has responded strongly to several Vaccine Derived Polio Virus (VDPV) events and is following through a clear transition strategy. ROSA has continued to provide continuous support to Pakistan, Afghanistan and India as requested with remote technical, mission and outbreak support assistance.

Some of the strategies that have really made a difference in the fight against polio have included more attention to the quality of campaigns, to ensure every eligible child is vaccinated. Reviews and field validation of micro-plans have helped to identify new settlements and mapping of all high risk populations for polio virus (mobile, nomads, IDPs, economic and agriculture migrant populations), with a specific strategy for reaching them in and beyond every campaign. Routine immunization in between
polio campaigns (listing all defaulters and drop out children, following up and referring them to the nearest health facility for immunization) has also been strengthened. Any children who miss vaccination during the campaign are followed up and vaccinated in-between the campaigns. Finally, cross border coordination between the two endemic countries has helped improve reporting on any population movement.

A total 33 children in the region (Afghanistan 13, Pakistan 20) were paralyzed due to wild polio virus, fewer than in any preceding years (in 2015, for example there were 20 in Afghanistan and 54 in Pakistan). In Pakistan, national and provincial Emergency Operation Centres (EOC) were established to coordinate the programme, and a new focused National Emergency Action Plan was developed with firm management, oversight and accountability mechanisms. In Afghanistan, more than half of the country’s cases were from one district (Bermal) and only 2 environmental WPV1 positive samples were reported. While the global target to eradicate polio in 2016 was not achieved, overall these achievements in 2016 provide good reasons to be optimistic about eradication in the near future.

There is continued work on transition planning within the polio programme, and discussions are ongoing regarding how to shift resources and support to routine immunisation and other health interventions.

2.6 Child Protection

ROSA Headline Result ‘End Child Marriage’ - 750 000 child marriages are averted. A baseline survey conducted by ROSA, estimated the number of child brides among girls below the age of 18, to be 4,733,070 at the end of 2013. This suggests a significant decline in child marriage in the region. South Asia has one of the highest rates of child marriage globally (around 45 per cent). Efforts to track progress in reducing child marriage are challenging, given most surveys such as DHS and MICS look at child marriage retrospectively, i.e. if women aged 20-24 was first married or in reunion before age 18. This makes it hard to gauge real time progress in reducing rates.

Child marriage is a complex problem with many intersecting root causes and drivers. A regional expert group meeting on ending child marriage, hosted jointly with UNFPA, examined the evidence around programming and policies to end child marriage in South Asia. It reaffirmed that this is a human rights agenda, and recognised that ending child marriage is a complex problem requiring unique tools for monitoring and evaluating progress. The economic nature of marriage, driven by gender, was emphasised, as was its result of managing sexuality. There were questions poised to the programmes about the focus on relationships rather than structural drivers, and caution about the unintended consequences of ending child marriage and of programme approaches.

Within the context of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, the regional offices worked closely to support the country offices in their programming. A highlight of this collaboration

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was a joint meeting held with the country and regional offices of both agencies to examine the 'Theory of Change' and to nurture synergies across the countries in the region. This built on the work during the year to support the institutionalisation of a joint team at country and regional level, supported by joint mailing lists, monitoring, programme communication, reporting and work plans. Feedback from the country offices confirmed that this approach will continue into 2017 with regional office organised studies, common meetings and webinars and communication materials being jointly owned and/or led by the UNFPA and UNICEF regional offices.

In country and remote technical support was provided to all countries; continuing to promote and develop effective child protection systems and positive social norms to prevent and respond to child protection risks. Examples include: the completion of the child protection system assessment in Sri Lanka; guidance to the programme to end child marriage in Bangladesh, India and Nepal; review of the civil registration in India and Bangladesh; and inputs to the evaluation of the Child Protection Action Network in Afghanistan and the Child Protection programme in Bangladesh. Child on-line sexual exploitation is a global crime yet this region has not extensively engaged in the move to combat it. Therefore a five country study of the situation of child on-line sexual exploitation “Victims are not Virtual” was completed, and found that the legislative and investigative environment does not yet have the capacity to respond to this crime. It also challenged the understanding of what this type of exploitation refers to in the global versus the national context and highlighted the difficulty of separating on and off line responses to sexual exploitation.

ROSA Child Protection is a member of the governing board of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC), a SAARC Apex Body, and the chair of South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG). Promoting SAIEVAC’s institutional development, UNICEF supported its Governing Board as well as the drafting of a monitoring framework for the agency. During 2016 a Regional Action Plan to End Child Labour was adopted and the Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage Reviewed. During UNICEF’s tenure as chair of the SACG the focus was on influencing political agendas, increasing SACG accountability, and building stronger memberships and partnerships.

The SDGs recognise that ending violence against children (VaC) is imperative for sustainable development. High-level representatives from South Asian governments, SAARC, UN, and NGOs were joined by leaders in the field to contextualise the SDG VaC agenda for South Asia. Organised by SAIEVAC, the meeting identified the challenges in realising the goals, and began to delineate a way forward. It acknowledged the crippling effect of violence on development, recognised that the socio-cultural context of gender, caste and class hinder the realisation of the goals, committed to collaboration and coordination, and reaffirmed that a child protection systems approach is the means to deliver the SDG VaC agenda.

One modality to strengthen the child protection network has been through knowledge sharing and dissemination. A monthly South Asia Child Protection Bulletin for all child protection staff in the region shares the latest research, upcoming events, news articles, and staff information and quarterly webinars were organised to exchange thoughts on latest studies and evaluation findings.

The country offices continued to promote the inclusion of all including those with disabilities. Disability focal points have been identified in every office, encompassing child protection, education, adolescents, social policy and management, reflecting how children with disabilities are a target group for all programmatic areas and for UNICEF itself.
2.7 Adolescent Development and Participation

2016 saw significant progress in Adolescent Development and Participation in South Asia. Technical support was provided to country offices to design and plan for innovative and evidence-based adolescent programmes with a specific focus on adolescent nutrition, education, pregnancy, participation and child marriage. The multi-country adolescent programme funded by IKEA Foundation (IKEAF) achieved important milestones in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan country offices, in particular in the field of programme, monitoring, baseline and evaluation design. The lessons learnt and tools developed through this initiative has been shared in the region to facilitate adoption of good practices. Strategic support was provided to countries finalizing or initiating their CDP (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka) and to Bhutan (Mid-Term Review) to position the second decade as a second window of opportunity, to build on and strengthen the cognitive, nutritional and health capital gained in early childhood.

Country offices (India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan) have increasingly engaged with adolescents and young people to capture their voices and needs while developing new country programmes or designing adolescent programmes. In December 2016, the CRC committee adopted the General Comment on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence. This is a major step forward and will further strengthen the human right based approach to programming with and for adolescents. At the regional level, a two-month interactive social media campaign with and for adolescents reached over one million people. The campaign engaged audiences, particularly late adolescents, through social media on issues related to child marriage, enrolment in secondary education and teenage pregnancy. ROSA will keep on using social media to reach and engage large numbers of online users on adolescent girls’ and boys’ issues in South Asia.

Important steps have been undertaken in the field of knowledge management. The regional formative evaluation on adolescent programmes highlights important recommendations that will contribute to strengthen programmes for and with adolescents in South Asia. The documentation of the inception phase of the IKEA Foundation funded adolescent programme will allow ROSA to capture and share the significant experience gained in designing, monitoring and evaluating cross-sectoral adolescent programmes.

The planning phase for the multi-country IKEA Foundation (IKEAF) funded adolescent programme was found to be more complex than initially planned due to its cross-sectoral and innovative nature. These challenges significantly delayed the implementation of the programme particularly in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Although the ‘second decade’ (adolescents) is increasingly gaining momentum in the development agenda, resources (human and financial resources) allocated for this age group remain insufficient. As a result, interventions tend to remain ‘project’ based and on a small scale.

In close collaboration with India CO, a photography workshop for adolescents was conducted in Assam, with the support of the Field Office. In addition to capacitating twenty adolescents on how to take quality photographs, it allowed them to learn how to use photography to tell stories, capturing their daily struggles and their hopes and dreams. Mechanisms have been put in place to provide these adolescent “champions” with structured supervision to encourage them to keep on telling their stories. Similar workshops are being planned in other countries in South Asia in 2017. The best stories will be shared regularly in various interactive regional platforms, including social media.
The Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) section conducted an innovative exercise to develop and pilot a data framework (Data for Adolescents – D4A), to assess the situation of adolescents in South Asia. The framework combines the identification of country specific indicators and the development of an index - to keep a ‘pulse’ on development trends and wellbeing of adolescents in South Asia. The data framework aims at feeding regional and national advocacy for increased attention from policy makers and programme implementers.

2.8 Social Inclusion

Given the critical relationship between rapidly changing structures of economic productivity, cognitive capital and human resource development in South Asia, the major objective of work in 2016 was to analyse the budgetary constraints, to engage towards addressing the reasons for low investments in social sectors at national and sub national level. This was done through provision of targeted assistance to senior managers in country offices on budgetary analysis, its link to building cognitive capital and exposure to basic public finance concepts. In addition to presentations at regional office, missions were undertaken at sub national and national level to India, Pakistan, and Nepal and Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

At sub national level three State offices in India were offered technical advice on public finance and how to strategize to leverage resources for children. The missions were aimed at raising awareness of the importance of public finance for children and enabling State offices to access technical advice on important issues locally. An important part of work was to look at how data and evidence can enhance political and social accountability. Both Maharashtra and Hyderabad offices were encouraged to look at the possibility of electoral constituency mapping and disaggregation of social indices to that level. That effort is now underway and is likely to play a role in creating social data trends making improvements in social sectors an important part of political performance. Both in Pakistan and India, large federal states, were also advised to look at fiscal space issues at local level and use new data that has been generated to influence resource allocation processes. Local institutions with high analytical capacities for budgetary and fiscal analysis were identified for Pakistan. Opportunity was taken to hold sessions with sub national offices and ‘think-tanks’ to encourage partnerships around creating fiscal space for children. In all engagements with COs and sub national offices the importance of considering the influence of political economy over public policy process was highlighted. In particular it was stressed that COs need to take this into account while developing their situation analysis. In Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, this was followed by providing concrete recommendations for both situation analysis and country programme formulation.

ROSA partnered with Oxford Policy Management (OPM) to provide exposure to senior managers including the Deputy Representatives on importance of engaging countries on budgetary analysis and politics of decision making. To continue this effort, procure high level technical assistance for in country advice on budgetary issues four countries have expressed interest in taking this forward in 2017.

As part of capacity building efforts, ROSA began to work with Bhutan CO in 2015, supporting the delivery of a two week social policy course, conducted for high level government officials, including politicians, by Jindal University. Lessons learnt from the course in 2015 provided new insights into making it more effective. The second social policy course was conducted in December 2016. Regional office provided
support with delivering several presentations and secured other experts to deliver lectures. Both sessions ran in 2015 and 2016 have provided impetus in moving forward the social policy agenda in Bhutan. Bhutan office also completed an Investment case Study for ECD in 2016. This is an important development and will be critical to advocate for higher allocations to ECD sector in 2017.

2.9 Communications

The Progress Report on the Six Headline Results for Children in South Asia has been one of the most sought-after, resourceful documents (both print and e-version) for both external and internal audiences since it was first published in 2015. It has also been used extensively for public communication and advocacy. In 2016, ROSA Communications worked with all technical sections to update the Progress Report online with the latest data, research documents, stories and best practices in the region. This has greatly added to the transparency, credibility and challenges of progress monitoring of the headline results and the ‘enabling’ role of Regional Office in supporting country offices on this.

The Regional Communication section updated its digital strategy to make its online reach and engagement through existing platforms more efficient and effective. ROSA’s social media followers have increased by over 500 per cent during this period of time. The ROSA social media reach (Facebook and Twitter) is now over 138,000. Digital advocacy campaigns, to raise the profile of children in the region and galvanise support and engagement, were conducted in close coordination with programme sections, relevant COs and partners. Campaigns were launched around the following events: Stop Stunting, the Education and Peacebuilding Symposium, the Nepal Earthquake - One Year After, Regional High-level meeting on Prevention of Violence against Children, Reaching Every Child in South Asia: Health Advocacy Event, as well as the High-Level Meeting (HLM 3), entitled ‘Smarter Children, Healthier Economies’ http://billion-brains.org/, etc.

The regional communication team also worked with ADAP section to produce a month and a half long online campaign. The social media campaign #AdolescentsinSouthAsia was launched in mid-August to support the programmatic framework and its objective to reduce child marriage, increase enrolment in secondary education and reduce adolescent pregnancy. The aim of the engagement was to create awareness on these issues and foster dialogue with target audiences through opinion polls, thought-provoking questions, data and stories on adolescent issues. This campaign successfully reached its target of over one million audiences within few weeks (again just from ROSA platforms) and made an unprecedented milestone of engaging thousands of adolescents through various posts. The various lessons learned from this campaign will feed into the planned regional campaign in 2017.

With the support of ROSA, India and Bhutan COs, Aamir Khan, UNICEF’s Regional Ambassador for nutrition in South Asia, visited Bhutan for two days in October 2016. The visit helped to position the importance of good nutrition, in support of Bhutan’s development aspirations. The regional communication team produced an effective and successful communication and social media strategy. Highlights include wide media coverage in the region that focused on nutrition and reaching over 1 million people and engaging with over 400,000 in just over 3 days on ROSA Facebook, that in addition to Aamir Khan’s Facebook post (to over 33 million fans).
Throughout 2016, technical support and guidance was provided to COs in the region; assisted Bhutan CO in drafting their Advocacy and Communication Strategy 2016 to 2018; trained the Maldives CO staff in strengthening their digital outreach approach (Maldives has one of the highest internet penetrations in South Asia). Support was also provided to plan and implement UNICEF’s 70th Anniversary in respective countries. This included events, media engagement, ICON stories, multimedia content, new branding guidelines, etc.

2.10 Emergency and Disaster Risk Reduction

Emergency preparedness response trainings were provided to staff and partners in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan. ROSA provided Bangladesh and Nepal with technical support on the mitigation and management of risks to UNICEF staff and assets through Business Continuity Planning. Emergency surge support was extended to Sri Lanka for the flood response in May 2016. Dedicated support was provided to Afghanistan as a result of the massive return of 1 million Afghan refugees from Pakistan. In absence of a formal Government sanctioned Appeal, Sri-Lanka was able to receive donor funding via the regional pass-through funding mechanism under the Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC). Security support missions were conducted in Bangladesh, Papua-New Guinea and Myanmar. By end 2016 ROSA was able to extend financial support to Bhutan and Maldives COs to strengthen context-specific emergency preparedness and response and disaster risk reduction initiatives, including training over 300 UNICEF and partners on emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction.

In addition, as of September a technical capacity was re-established in ROSA to provide dedicated security and risk management support covering all UNICEF offices in South Asia (8) and East Asia and the Pacific (14).

The external evaluation of the UNICEF Nepal response to the April 2015 earthquake acknowledged the great added value of emergency preparedness and availability of contingency stocks in response to large scale emergency. This is a lesson of high relevance for other high risk countries with low medium coping capacity in South Asia and beyond.

In November the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMC-DRR) held in New Delhi, India - the first important conference in Asia after the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) in 2015. The conference adopted the 'New Delhi Declaration' and the 'Asian Regional Plan (ARP) for implementation of the ‘Sendai Framework’\textsuperscript{23}. While the 'New Delhi Declaration' is a political statement that spells out the commitment of the participating governments to reduce and manage risk in their respective countries, the ARP provides a roadmap; helping to convert these commitments to tangible results. ROSA supported the coordination of UNICEF’s inputs into the AMC-DRR notably by coordinating with the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (delegation of approximately 60) for the pre-event of Children and Youth Stakeholders that was held to agree on key advocacy messages for the conference.

\textsuperscript{23} United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), \url{http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework}
2.11 Information Communication and Technology (ICT)

The ICT section participated in the reference group for the study on on-line child sexual exploitation ‘Victims Are Not Virtual: Situation assessment of online child sexual exploitation in South Asia’. The purpose of the study was to inform UNICEF programming on the online sexual exploitation of children in these countries and to provide concrete recommendations on key priority areas to address, both at a national and regional levels. The ICT involvement in the reference group work, in particular in the individual sessions with the researchers, provided an opportunity to revise the initial analysis and findings with respect to law enforcement. The revised assessment included the analysis of police’s capacity and responsiveness to reported child online exploitation incidents and identification of interventions better suited to improve them.

In line with the global ICT direction of fostering closer collaboration between ICT and programme areas the Joint Regional IT Network Meeting, organized together with EAPRO in Kathmandu in April 2016, included sessions by the UNICEF Senior Adviser. The agenda included familiarization sessions delivered by C4D and Child Protection Regional Advisers who highlighted the work of their sections and potential areas of engagement with ICT. Training on project management was also included for the participants, to strengthen their capacity to deliver ICT-related innovation projects in their respective Country Offices.

The Regional Office ICT, in collaboration with the India CO and the ICTD Technical Architecture section, held a workshop on the application of developments in Azure cloud technology that is now progressively being adopted by UNICEF and to identify its potential uses to deliver field services. The workshop looked at the Azure cloud architecture and the catalogue of ICT services and identified the following possible developments: hosting of public-facing web sites; developing U-Report portal as a multi-tenancy site; hosting of web-based Technology for Development (T4D) applications and project sites; and implementation of Disaster Recovery (DR) sites.

Greater emphasis is being placed on ICT as a business partner for programme instead of merely providing ICT support. One of the ways ICT in ROSA is supporting Country Offices is through the promotion and use of technology driven innovative solutions, as a key implementation strategy. For example, the ongoing supply chain monitoring and tracking pilot being developed by Nepal CO with support from ROSA. The mobile based applications use barcoding and smartphones to track humanitarian supplies to targeted beneficiaries. In Nepal supplies arriving in warehouses are recorded in UNICEF’s system (VISION) using the application. Implementing partners use the applications to record distribution of supplies to end users and UNICEF monitors this against distribution plans. Finally the system also enables UNICEF to receive and respond to feedback from end users. The applications have greatly reduced time spent in processing arriving supplies. It has also facilitated better tracking of supplies and applications are simple and easy to use. Importantly it provides a voice for end users to provide feedback. This pilot system has potential to strengthen mutual accountability between UNICEF, communities and beneficiaries. Other technology driven innovations in the region include Pakistan Country Office, in partnership with the Government and Telenor, leveraging mobile technology to increase birth registration. (for information visit: https://www.unicef.org/health/pakistan_90880.html)
Part 3: Analysis of Programme Strategies and Results: Global and Regional Programme

3.1 Influencing global/regional discourse and policy

UNICEF Regional Office was the only UN agency invited to participate in the July 2016, EU DG - DEVCO (Commission’s Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development) regional meeting in Delhi. The meeting provided an opportunity to further position UNICEF as a strategic partner to the EU, moving beyond classical financial relationship to strengthening our work in areas of common interest, such as the child rights agenda and joint advocacy. In addition, as the EU increasingly provides direct budget support (DBS), there is an opportunity to work with recipient countries to leverage these resources towards critical investments for children while optimizing resource efficiencies in the social sector. The meeting also provided an entry point for continued local discussions in-country on funding against the EU Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs). Strategic dialogue with the EU continued when UNICEF extended an invitation to senior EU representatives (regional and country level) to a dedicated session at the November Regional management Team (RMT) meeting, where several joint actions were agreed upon.

Given the rapidly changing global and political situation, the subdued projections of global economic growth by IMF and the transition to SDGs, the importance of domestic financing for child centered social development investment cannot be overemphasized. South Asia in particular, with one of the lowest tax to GDP ratio has consistently underinvested in social sectors. To advocate the need for investing in cognitive capital, a high level meeting was held in Kuala Lampur, Malaysia. Hosted by the Government of Malaysia, under the title “A BILLION BRAINS Smarter Children, Healthier Economies”.

The event focused on three key themes, which were; Cognitive Capital: Investing in children to generate sustainable growth; Accelerating Progress towards Universal Health Coverage for Women and Children in South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific and Prevention of violence against children and how this contributes to building stronger economies. These three papers were presented at the meeting and were followed by a session where the government delegations from 29 countries committed to follow up on these issues. Government representatives at the Ministerial level attended, along with regional organizations including South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and major development partners such as the World Bank (WB), Asia Development Bank Development Bank (ADB) and the European Union (EU).

The relatively low international press coverage notwithstanding, the regional as well as national press in Malaysia did cover the story extensively. It is expected that going forward, this event will bring changes to public discourse and also influence social policy at country levels. Examples of promising outcomes from the meeting include; Government of Maldives is considering a peer visit to Malaysia, to learn more about their juvenile justice system, including diversion programmes for young offenders convicted of serious crimes. While Government of Bangladesh is planning a visit to learn more about China social protection system and early childhood education programmes.

South Asia will be the largest contributor to urbanization globally in the next few decades, in this context UNICEF held its first Global Urban-Climate Consultation in Mumbai, India in October 2016. Key recommendations emanating from the meeting, that are strongly applicable to South Asian situation
were: focus on enhancing governance and provision of essential services for urban poor children; develop interventions to partner with the urban poor; emphasize the importance of urban adolescent participation and voice; make safe, clean and resilient cities a key priority for urban work; promote child-friendly urban planning; generate enhanced and disaggregated evidence on urban children and prioritize strategic partnerships with diverse urban stakeholders.

Finally, the multi-country IKEA foundation funded initiative “Improving Adolescents’ Lives in South Asia” (2015-2020) has entered into the implementation phase in two of three countries – India and Pakistan. The programme is developing evidence-based models to influence policy and increase social investments/budgets for adolescents in the region. In India, the programme is progressively scaling up adolescent related interventions. In this context, UNICEF India mapped and identified interventions/schemes for convergence and scaling up initiatives on adolescent empowerment. The programme is fostering national and sub-national commitment by governments, local ownership and partnership for implementation. For instance, in West Bengal and Assam, district adolescent cell/units were established under the District Commissioner/District Magistrate in Purulia and Sivsagar. District level consultation was conducted with key government stakeholders in Assam, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh to gain their ownership over the programme.

3.2 Evaluation and Research (see Annex III)

Overall, 2016 was a good year for the UNICEF evaluation function in South Asia, which continues to strengthen, with most countries conducting evaluations and demonstrating an increasing demand for evaluation. The role-out of RBM training across South Asia in 2016, helped to raise the profile of evaluation and reinforced the continuum between strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, learning and evaluation. A total of 12 UNICEF evaluations were conducted and completed in South Asia (in 2016), of which, two were by ROSA. Of these 12 evaluations, eight have already been rated by HQ – with six receiving a “Satisfactory” rating. However, the region remains close to the organisational target of spending at least 1 per cent of its budget on evaluation (0.9 per cent in 2016), with uneven progress across the countries.

ROSA contributed to ensuring that evaluations met quality standards by managing a regional external evaluation quality review facility and directly providing technical support through advisory missions and interactions. In addition, ROSA – in collaboration with CEE-CIS and MENARO – set up new Long Term Agreements (LTAs) that will help COs also to enhance and assure the quality of research and studies, in line with new organizational research policy.

A key milestone was the completion of the first phase of the impact evaluations under the IKEA Foundation-funded adolescents programme, with Pakistan being well on track. Both Afghanistan and India continue to struggle with the programmatic (and cost) implications of conducting impact evaluations, and decisions will need to be taken in early 2017 as to whether to change the evaluation approach.
3.3 Implementation Strategies

South to South Triangular Cooperation

UNICEF’s South to South (S2S) Collaboration for Health facilitates cross-country learning exchanges to take advantage of the considerable experience, knowledge and innovation relating to maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (MNCAH) available within the region. During 2016, seven exchange missions were held to improve country teams’ capacities in various aspects of health systems strengthening such as learning on Advanced Pediatric Life Support, Immunisation Cold Chain Equipment Repair, and Kangaroo Mother Care. Two workshops were conducted (one in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) and the second one for Country Offices and government partners to develop cost projections to support their national Newborn Action Plans. We also facilitated hands-on information sharing and facility visits to learn how India’s online data monitoring system supports real-time monitoring of special newborn care units; and a visit to China to understand how hospitals have established functional systems to audit maternal and perinatal ‘near deaths’ and review quality of health care provided.

The S2S initiative has a strong monitor and evaluation component. For example all training and learning events include pre- and post-training assessments of participants’ knowledge of content, in addition, to participant feedback. ROSA Health S2S focal point monitors progress against agreed ‘Action Plans’, developed by participants after each event. And finally, a matrix with indicators is used to track and report progress on the overall initiative bi-annually.

To learn more visit: https://www.unicef.org/srilanka/s2s.html

Partnerships

The Regional Office in South Asia continuously strives to build partnerships and collaborative relationships as they significantly support in leveraging resources, achieving sustainable results, and creating a political space for children. Notable ROSA partnerships comprise several leading academic institutions (Harvard, Cornell, John Hopkins, Chatham House, Tufts, and University of California Davis). These partnerships helped to generate knowledge which in turn provides strong evidence to inform programme and policy actions. The research findings resulting from these partnerships are widely disseminated through academic publications, UNICEF’s network of partners and online platforms. This contributes to the global evidence base on children and childhood in South Asia.

In partnership with the IKEA Foundation, ROSA continued its work on the “Improving Adolescent’s Lives in South Asia” programme, which seeks to develop models and to document lessons learnt to reinforce the mainstreaming of adolescents issues into national strategic priorities, plans and budgets across South Asia. Also in 2016, ROSA partnered with UNFPA to map current initiatives addressing child marriage in the region and identify key factors and drivers that perpetuate this issue with the objective of jointly preparing a strategy to reduce child marriage.
In addition, the RO continues various strategic partnerships with key agencies and institutions such as the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, the Regional H6 partnership, the World Health Organisation and UNICEF EAPRO to develop common strategies and action plans to accelerate progress on MNCAH.

An overall partnership mapping was undertaken in 2016 with the aim to outline the in South Asia’s Regional priorities and areas of engagement with current and potential partners with the overarching objective of supporting all eight COs in the region in accelerating results for children.

Advocacy

In close collaboration with the India CO the regional communication team organized the Stop Stunting advocacy event in New Delhi, in May, with the aim of positioning child stunting as a major development issue in South Asia. Twenty research papers were launched as part of this event. A photo exhibition was also presented. It was followed by a panel discussion with media and nutrition experts. Evidence-based advocacy was a vital part of the Stop Stunting events. Such tools (including evidence-based messaging) were shared with other stakeholders, partners, and communication teams from South Asia - contributing to knowledge-sharing. The event garnered wide media coverage especially in India where stunting is a major development challenge (about 38 per cent of Indian children are stunted24). The social media campaign reached more than 1.5 million online audiences (just from UNICEF ROSA social media platforms) within a few weeks. UNICEF COs, NatComs and HQ also amplified these messages through their platforms.

Another key high level advocacy events of 2016 took place in November. UNICEF South Asia, in partnership with the Nepal Ministry of Health and UNICEF Nepal, organized a regional health advocacy event titled “Reaching EVERYChild in South Asia” not only to continue momentum in efforts to reach under-immunised children and to reduce newborn deaths but also to galvanize discussions on these two priority child health issues in South Asia. The event was attended by senior policymakers and government representatives from Nepal, development partners, civil society, academia, and media. Key Health knowledge products produced and launched during the event include the South Asia Health Atlas, Nepal Newborn Action Plan, Reducing Newborn Mortality in South Asia and Immunisation Inequities in South Asia: A Policy Review.

To reach out to wider audiences with some of the key messages from the event, UNICEF South Asia also launched a digital campaign and released a new videographic “Reaching EVERYNewborn in South Asia”. A social media campaign was also organized as part of this event. It reached more than 500,000 people in the region in just a few weeks. Well over 10 million additional people were reached via UNICEF global digital platforms.

Communication for Development (C4D)

During the first year of the C4D work plan in 2016, the focus has been to provide technical assistance and guidance to countries, build capacity and foster knowledge management with the objective of enhancing the function and strategic positioning of C4D in country programmes. For example, ROSA facilitated a 4-day capacity building workshop in Islamabad, with South to South collaboration from Bangladesh and India sharing best practices and case studies. On the Headline Result of Stop Open Defecation, UNICEF is working with religious leaders in the Swachh Bharat campaign in India whereby

24 Rapid Survey on Children (RSOC), India, 2013/14
faith leaders are promoting the use of latrines, during religious festivals, as a positive cultural and individual behavior.

Overall C4D approaches to accelerating the Headline Results will be articulated in Regional C4D Framework with a focus on strategic approaches, quality implementation and strengthening of local capacities. The first phase of the framework development was undertaken in consultation with COs. Findings to date indicate high CO demand for C4D approaches to accelerate results. However, countries report that organizational challenges related to funding and reporting, have restricted the potential of C4D in contributing to results and its added-value to cross sectoral programmes. In addition, several high burden countries are under-resourced

Another focus has been on expanding the understanding of C4D as an organizational strategy and supporting COs developing new country programmes to better integrate C4D into strategic planning early in the country programmes. With this objective in mind, an orientation on C4D and social norms was provided to Deputy Representatives, Chief of Operations and Chief of Field Services in Kathmandu which enhanced the ‘buy in’ and understanding of C4D in country programmes. The indications are that C4D will have increased prominence in the new Country Programme Strategy Notes in all four countries.

**Data and Evidence and Knowledge Management (KM)**

Building on the existing partnership with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), a second technical working session on child deprivation profiling was organized in April 2016. Initiated in 2015, this partnership engaged statistical authorities to address both technical and systemic issues on data collection and analysis related to children. National statistical offices and UNICEF are ‘mining’ multiple data sources into ‘Child Deprivation Profiles’. A proliferation of profiles across the region have been generated on issues such as saving newborn lives, giving learning opportunities to out of school girls and boys, addressing open defecation, stop stunting and other forms of deprivations.

Using the ROSA conceptual approach to KM, the second working session provided an opportunity to strengthen the continuum between evidence generation and use. The emphasis on utility, through the deliberate consideration of audiences and dissemination platforms, has helped to make a more explicit connection between knowledge products and policy-advocacy. It also helps promote accountability for knowledge management and results for children, while contributing towards capacity building of staff and partners.

**3.4 Normative Principals**

**Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation**

In pursuit of multisectoral programming that responds to children holistically, human rights based approach to cooperation was advanced in two interlinked pathways in South Asia. Firstly, the RBM learning case studies were built from human rights/equity-based SitAn, depicting socioeconomic deprivations faced by children and women. This assisted interrogation of child rights violations, analysis of causalities as well as institutional and governance weaknesses that perpetuate discrimination and erosion of human dignity.
Secondly, ongoing work interrogating ‘who’, ‘where’ and ‘why’ on child deprivation analysis was supported across countries in South Asia. National data from multiple sources were analyzed to profile deprivations of children’s rights to nutrition, education, health, child protection, water sanitation and hygiene. Entrenched causes of human rights violations were unpacked using the Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) framework.

Both streams of work, promoting learning and application of human rights tools and skills, were advanced in all eight countries. More intensely in the four countries (India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka) developing evidence-base and rationale for new UNICEF Country Programmes 2018-2022, informing their SitAn as well as Common Country Analysis of the UNDAF 2018-2022. As a result, countries are analyzing and using data to, show, tell and convince decision makers on who are the most deprived, where do they live and what are the persisting bottlenecks that are sustaining those deprivations. The analysis and profiles help government and development partners to target and effectively reach most deprived populations. Ultimately, this investment has advanced regional and national partnerships and capacities to analysis and use local data and evidence – through the human rights lens – to inform and influence national accountabilities in restoring the rights of children, especially the most disadvantaged populations.

UNICEF ROSA emergency and DRR section applies emergency preparedness and response strategies and activities based on its global Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), rooted in strong normative frameworks such as International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Humanitarian Principles and Human Rights instruments (CRC etc.) and global resolutions (UN General Assembly resolutions, UN human rights up front etc.).

Gender

Across the South Asia region the Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2014-2017 was catalytic and has positioned UNICEF on a strong trajectory toward supporting and reinforcing gender equitable results. Three of the four key GAP targeted priorities have gained traction across Country Offices - Ending Child Marriage, Gender Responsive Adolescent Health and Girls Secondary Education. To further advance the Gender Action Plan, systematic and the structured use of Gender Programmatic Reviews, Gender Marker and gender transformative results reporting are being further improved across all eight countries.

With a new Regional Gender Adviser in post mid-2016, ROSA undertook extensive gender review of SitAns, Child Deprivation Analysis for the four countries (India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka) developing new CPDs. ROSA assisted CO Gender Specialists and focal persons to further increase the gender responsiveness of the evolving programme strategy notes, in addition to supporting Bangladesh on gender responsive training for all staff. The gender reviews noted deprivations identified at varying levels, however clear gaps exist in a robust gender analysis, evidence and data. This highlighted a greater need across all countries for generating data and robust evidence that analyses and systematically monitors the specificities of gender inequities by sex, age, geographical area, ethnicity, and wealth quintile. The new CPD in Bangladesh (2017-2020) is a good example of aligning with the CEDAW framework, SDGs, Gender Action Plan, National commitments and in having a specific Gender Programmatic Review and Gender Strategy across the Country Office. A joint initiative between ROSA and EAPRO will further generate a gender data report on the State of Girls in South Asia in the third quarter of 2017.
The weak capacities on gender analysis, mainstreaming and the understanding of gender programming is a critical component to be further addressed for all country offices. The ongoing 2016-17 ROSA Gender Assessment and Capacity review at all country offices is a first step towards engaging all Country Offices in strengthening programmatic and institutional effectiveness on gender equality. This will further increase sectoral gender competencies to provide high quality technical support to government sectors across the different programmes.

**Environmental Sustainability**

Following the introduction of a ‘greening score card’ Country Offices are now more robustly applying and monitoring the normative principles for environmental sustainability within their programmes. All offices have undertaken significant greening initiatives during 2016 from the procurement and use of electric cars in Kathmandu to the solar electrification of zonal offices. Immense strides have been taken throughout the region with many new and innovative country initiatives for further reducing our carbon footprint.

South Asia is highly vulnerable to climate change with evident environmental degradation, intensified natural disasters and unpredictable variations in seasonal rain and drought patterns. This has meant that the protection of the environment and promotion of environmental sustainability is increasingly becoming an area of focus, including DRR. As part of the CPD processes in Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka specific attention has been given to climate change and environmental sustainability both as part of the situation analyses and the commissioning of specific studies and in developing and adapting sustainable programme approaches.

Ongoing UNICEF work in South Asia has to date focussed on strengthening the enabling environment through support to the establishment of new Government ministries and departments for the Environment/Climate Change, supporting the development of strategies, policies, budgets and risk and resilience programmes at all levels and supporting the development of advocacy and education programmes on climate change and DRR. We are also actively supporting communities and schools to undertake assessments and climate sensitive programmes and have empowered and trained children to become ECO-Warriors.

While traditionally in this region focus was placed on the impact of climate change and natural disasters, much more focus and urgent attention is now being given to air pollution and the urban environment as south Asia is the home to half of the world’s most polluted cities. Monitoring ambient air pollution is vital and identifying key interventions as well as “small doable actions” to mitigate both air pollution and environmental degradation are parts of the on-going discussions in the region. India hosted the UNICEF Urban and Climate Change conference where the global vision was discussed.
Part 4: Management

4.1 Management and Operations

In 2016 the operations of the Regional Office for South Asia have aimed at enhancing business process simplification, increasing the efficiency of in-house business support centers for a smooth transitioning to the Global Shared Services Center (GSSC), enhancing the quality of Human Resources service delivery and sustaining the quality of life on the premises in a carbon neutral environment.

The business support centers developed in seven South Asian countries over the past three years have played a key role in the smooth transfer of finance transactions from country offices to the GSSC. The efficiency gains achieved by country offices in centralizing their VISION transactions locally were sustained after the transfer to GSSC. Recorded gains from the centralization have spanned from faster processing time and reduced transaction errors - thanks to the enhanced expertise built up by the ‘Local Focal Points’ (LFP) - to clearer process accountabilities and increased quality time for core business and programme delivery.

The impact of the GSSC on country offices that are already experiencing centralization cannot be genuinely assessed yet. The value added of MyCase and local LFPs can be challenged. The process does not support the tracking of payments and performance and the integration with VISION, which could eliminate some existing duplications. ROSA provided dedicated technical support to the GSSC, through a four week mission (by the Regional Chief of Operations). A key outcome of this missions was an assessment GSSC country office transaction processing, which are being implemented and have helped to streamline processes and communications channels. The GSSC communication and performance have gradually and notably improved over the year.

The mobilization for the simplification of local travel that ROSA initiated three years ago with NYHQ has finally paid off. Division of Finance and Administration Management (DFAM) and Field Results Group (FRG) have agreed to scale up the ROSA initiative called travel2field, which will be finally streamlined in e-tools. UNICEF India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have adopted this simplified approach for local field trips raised outside VISION where expenses are charged to the WBS (work breakdown structure). This approach resulted in efficiency gains, which will be further increased with the move to the new system (e-tools).

In 2016, nine Programme Budget Reviews (PBRs) were conducted through mail polls and contributed to serve the needs of country offices effectively by enabling the establishment or abolishment of positions in line with changing programming needs. Three were conducted for Pakistan, two for Afghanistan, two for ROSA and one each for India and Bangladesh new CP (Country Programme Management Plan - CPMP).

In 2016, regular clinic sessions were held between the Business Support Center team and the Section Programme Assistants. The discussions raised awareness, built capacity and exchanged information about new rules and procedures but also challenges and fostered improvements. The clinics provided a forum where gaps and misunderstandings are addressed before they become an impediment to programme support. They also provided critical feedback that allows work processes to be adjusted.
Within the framework of the formal agreement between Supply Division (SD) and ROSA the SD team has provided a risk assessment and identified areas for SD to supplement oversight, technical support and quality assurance of key issues related to service procurement, supply, logistics and warehouse management functions in South Asia. The assessment was presented at the Chief of Operations meeting as well as the Supply workshop for South Asia and East Asia-Pacific Regions. Based on this countries have implemented mitigation measures.

An overall improvement of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is noted in South Asia. The monthly KPI warnings and quarterly analysis developed by ROSA and shared with offices has contributed to enhancing awareness and to motivating Operations and Programme teams to working together in the areas of Direct Cash Transfer (DCT), open items, Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT), Governance etc. KPIs below the set standards are discussed with Operations staff. This approach has prompted offices to quickly address pending issues and is making the difference.

Priorities identified by audits conducted in South Asia (internal and external) are reasonably balanced and are addressed with ROSA support as needed. ROSA has supported Afghanistan CO on site during the audit exit meeting and managed to limit the scope and to revise the wording of some recommendations. ROSA has also guided Office of the Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI) for UNICEF Sri Lanka audit and ensured that the situation of the CO and its environment are well understood. ROSA was audited by external auditors. The output was satisfactory with three areas to be addressed “Overdue donor reports, late delivery of services and unrealistic IMEP”.

ROSA is keeping up the quality of its office premises renovated in 2013-2014. One major aspect of the project has been solar energy, which makes up approximately 65 per cent of ROSA’s total energy consumption. The office ensured that reputable, reliable service providers were contracted to maintain the premises, provide equipment and help maintain our carbon neutral status. Several projects in line with greening were achieved so far i.e. waterproofing, drainage, seepages, electricity upgrades and surge protection. The main challenge this year was to identify from within existing structure and arrange working space for new staff. Twelve new office spaces were created since last year.

**Human Resources**

The management and development of human resources continued to be a priority to ensure high calibre human capital is available to achieve results for children. Some challenges remain in attracting qualified female candidates to reach gender parity in some countries in the region. However, strategies have been developed to improve this area, for example headhunting and reaching out to disadvantaged groups, based on country context.

ROSA played an active role in the revision of global HR policies and guidelines in line with the organizational HR reform agenda. Streamlined, simplified, harmonized HR processes and capacity building led to enhanced quality of Human Resources services. Technical leadership and support were provided to country offices to ensure efficient and effective implementation of global HR reform initiatives including smooth transition to GSSC, Talent Management System (e-recruitment, new performance management – ACHIEVE - and on-boarding), and use of “MyCase” tool for benefits and entitlements by all staff.

Staff learning and career development was another noticeable achievement with a full implementation of the learning plan aimed at strengthening programme, leadership, management and technical
excellence and which provided fair opportunities to all categories of staff, as well as orientation programme for new staff. Limited allocated regional budget was fully utilized, and internal resources were used to maximize results. Key completed learning programmes include RBM (approximately 521 staff trained in the region against a target of 250), Managing People for Results, use of the new e-PAS, 80 stretch assignments/support missions for staff within and outside South Asia region and Executive Coaching. The Executive Coaching tailored programme, has helped to strengthen senior leaders (Representatives, Deputy Representatives, Chiefs of Field Offices and Regional Advisers in South Asia at (P5 level and above), in the areas of negotiating, influencing, managing people and communication.

On staff well-being, actions have been taken to address the three most critical areas identified and prioritized by the office in 2014 Global Staff Survey Action, namely Career/Professional Development, Personal Empowerment and Work/Life balance. In this regard key actions taken to address these critical areas were: stretch assignments/surge deployment opportunities (as noted above) and approximately 50 promotions from national professional to international professional category; HR continued to promote the five days self-learning per year; executive coaching and managing people/performance for results trainings were pursued for managers and staff to improve their managerial and supervisory skills; continued dialogue with senior management during weekly meetings; flexible working arrangements in the workplace and stress counselling services to staff and their families were promoted (including dedicated discussions with all staff on services available).
List of Evaluations, Research, Studies, Surveys, and Publications Completed in 2016

EVALUATION

Title: Maternal and Young Child Nutrition Security Initiative in Asia: External Evaluation of the EU-UNICEF Partnership 2011-2015
Year: 2016
Sequence number: 2016/001
Type of report: Evaluation
Themes: Nutrition, MNCH
Management response: A proper management response to the evaluation was developed in compliance with the guidance on management response and uploaded in the Global tracking system.

Title: Formative regional evaluation of UNICEF’s contribution to the empowerment and rights fulfilment of adolescents in South Asia Abridged version
Year: 2016/002
Sequence number: 2016/002
Type of report: Evaluation
Themes: Adolescents
Management response: A proper management response to the evaluation was developed in compliance with the guidance on management response and uploaded in the Global tracking system.

DESK REVIEW

Title: Violence against Children in Education Settings in South Asia
Year: 2016
Sequence number: 2016/003
Type of report: Desk review
Themes: Violence against children in education settings
Link: http://www.unicef.org/rosa/VACineducation.pdf

TECHNICAL REPORT AND PAPER

Title: Global Initiative on Out of School Children: Nepal Country Study
Year: 2016
Sequence number: 2016/004
Type of report: Technical report
Themes: Out of School Children

Title: Estimating the Number of Out of School Children – Methodological Problems and Alternative Approaches. India Case Study
Year: 2016
Sequence number: 2016/005
Type of report: Technical Paper
Themes: Out of School Children
Link: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?req=0&mt=100&mt_p=%3C&by=3&sc1=1&look=default&sc2=1&lin=1&futf8=1&gp=1&hist=1&pn=1&text_p=inc&text=Estimating%20the%20Number%20of%
Year: 2016  
Sequence number: 2016/006  
Type of report: Annual Publication of research, field experiences and unique initiatives  
Theme: Documenting ‘Noteworthy ECD Practices’ – More than Just a set of Case Studies  

Title: Childhood immunisation in South Asia – overcoming the hurdles to progress (Perspectives in Public Health)  
Year: 2016  
Sequence number: 2016/007  
Type of report: Technical Report  
Themes: Childhood immunisation  

Title: Revitalizing the home-based record: Reflections from an innovative south-south exchange for optimizing the quality, availability and use of home-based records in immunization systems  
Year: 2016  
Sequence number: 2016/008  
Type of report: Technical Report  
Themes: Childhood immunisation  
Link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309182682_Revitalizing_the_home-based_record_Reflections_from_an_innovative_south-south_exchange_for_optimizing_the_quality_availability_and_use_of_home-based_records_in_immunization_systems

Title: Progress in South Asia after the launch of the Global Every Newborn Action Plan  
Year: 2016  
Sequence number: 2016/009  
Type of report: Technical Report  
Themes: Newborn Action Plan  
Link: http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/langlo/PIIS2214-109X(16)30171-1.pdf

Title: 2016 Progress Report. Save newborns  
Year: 2016  
Sequence number: 2016/010  
Type of report: Technical Report  
Themes: Newborn  

**NEWSLETTER**

Title: UNICEF ROSA Education Newsletter: Peace Building and Education: May 2016  
Year: 2016  
Sequence Number: 2016/011  
Type of report: Newsletter  
Audience: South Asia Region network, Regional Education Advisors, UNICEF Head Quarter, Regional Offices, ROSA all Programme staff
Link: https://unicef.sharepoint.com/teams/PD/Education/Shared%20Documents/Peacebuilding%20Newsletter%20-%20Final.pdf#search=Newsletter

Title: UNICEF ROSA Education Newsletter: September 2016
Year: 2016
Sequence Number: 2016/012
Type of report: Newsletter
Audience: South Asia Region network, Regional Education Advisors, UNICEF Head Quarter, Regional Offices, ROSA all Programme staff
Link: https://unicef.sharepoint.com/teams/PD/Education/Shared%20Documents/UNICEF%20ROSA%20Education%20Newsletter%20(September%202016).pdf#search=Newsletter

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Title: Papers from the UNICEF High Level Meeting on South-South Cooperation for Child Rights in Asia and the Pacific, 2016
Year: 2016
Sequence Number: 2016/013
Audience: Public health practitioners and researchers. The objective of the publication is to inform readers of the importance of cognitive capital for children, how prevention of violence in childhood builds healthier economies and smarter children, the importance of accelerating progress on universal health coverage and the importance of cognitive capital, equity and child-sensitive social protection.
Authors: Douglas Noble, Stephen Blight, Gaspar Fajth, Steve Woodhouse and Daphne Francois (UNICEF), Deborah Fry (University of Edinburgh), Allison Beattie and Robert Yates (Chatham House) and Michael Samson (Econo Policy Research Institute and Williams College)
Quantities: 500 copies
Estimated Cost: US$ 58,565.37

Title: Reducing newborn mortality in South Asia: A results-based management approach to improving knowledge and accelerating results.
Year: 2016
Sequence Number: 2016/014
Audience: Public health practitioners working in South Asia. The objective is to share UNICEF’s vision and strategic approach to reduce newborn mortality in South Asia.
Authors: Sufang Guo, Alyssa Sharkey, Douglas Noble
Quantities: 250 copies
Estimated Cost: US$ 815

Title: South Asia Health Atlas 2016
Year: 2016
Sequence Number: 2016/015
Audience: Public health practitioners working in South Asia. The objective is to illustrate within-region and within-country disparities with respect to immunisation coverage, newborn mortality, antenatal care, skilled delivery and early initiation of breastfeeding.
Authors: Alyssa Sharkey, Meika Bhattachan, Sufang Guo, Douglas Noble
Quantities: 250 copies
Estimated Cost: US$ 6,084

Title: 2016 South Asia Data Pocketbook
Year: 2016
Authors: UNICEF ROSA
Sequence Number: 2016/016
Type of report: Data booklet
Quantities: 1000 printed copies and e-version
Estimated Cost: USD 890
Link: https://www.unicef.org/rosa/South_Asia_Pocketbook_(2016)_5Sept016.pdf