

South Africa

Part 1: Situation update in the country

Its population of 57.73 million and gross national per capital income of US\$5,430 in 2017, make South Africa an upper-middle income country with one of the largest economies in Africa. Yet it is one of the most unequal societies in the world, with a GINI coefficient of 0.7 and an unemployment rate of 27.2 per cent (as of the second quarter of 2018). Youth unemployment is even higher, at 39 per cent.

A wave of optimism swept through South Africa following the African National Congress' peaceful December 2017 convention and election of a new president who advocated against corruption and favoured private sector development to propel growth. This led to a surge of confidence in the economy. However, political uncertainties around upcoming general elections in May 2019 and allegations of corruption continued to undermine investor confidence in 2018. The economy – in a technical recession, with a growth rate of less than 2 per cent for the past decade – further contracted (by 0.7 per cent) in the second quarter of 2018, leading to a downward revision of the projected growth rate of 1.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent for 2018.

South Africa invests significantly in the social sectors (education, health and social development). The budgeted amount for these sectors is almost US\$40.6 billion, representing 44.7 per cent of the 2017/2018 consolidated (national and provincial) budget. Yet many children in South Africa still live in poverty. In 2017 about 65 per cent of children lived below the upper-bound income poverty line (US\$78 per month), with substantial disparities across provinces. Using the upper-bound poverty, more than three quarters of children in Limpopo, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal are poor. Gauteng and the Western Cape have the lowest child poverty rates at 44 per cent and 37 per cent respectively. Child poverty is most pervasive in rural areas, where 86 per cent of children live in poverty. The urban child poverty rate, by contrast, is 51 per cent. There are glaring racial disparities in income poverty; while 72 per cent of black African children lived in poor households in 2017 and 45 per cent of coloured (mixed race, Asian or other non-white) children were defined as poor, only 2 per cent of white children lived below the poverty line.

South Africa's progressive fiscal policy, however, works to reduce inequality. By taxing the income of the rich proportionally more than the poor and using social spending to boost the incomes of the poorest more than 10-fold, fiscal policy seeks to narrow the income gap between rich and poor. According to the latest World Bank study, before taxes and social spending the richest 10 per cent in South Africa earn over 1,000 times more than the poorest 10 per cent. After taxes and social spending this gap narrows, such that the income of the richest 10 per cent becomes 66 times that of the poorest 10 per cent. Furthermore, in spite of its troubled economy, during the recent mid-term budget submission in October 2018, the South African government managed to maintain its fiscal space for priority expenditures on social services, while recognizing a need for: more efficient and effective management of the budget at all levels, reducing spending arrears and further promoting equitable budgeting for children.

With this strong policy and fiscal commitment, South Africa continues to make steady progress toward reducing child poverty. South Africa is implementing the largest cash transfer programme on the African continent – the child support grant – which plays a vital role in reducing child poverty. As of March 2018, over 12 million children received the grant. In addition, 416,016 children in foster care received foster care grants, and 147,465 children with disabilities received the care dependency grant. There is substantial evidence that grants, including the child support grant, are being spent on food, education and basic goods and services. Grants help alleviate income poverty and realize

children's right to social assistance. Nevertheless, the level of inequality is still much higher than in most other countries in the world, because the income gap was high to begin with.

South Africa also boasts a robust corporate sector, coupled with a strong legislative and regulatory framework that compels South African companies and various sectors to spend 1 per cent of their net profit after tax on development initiatives to aid the country's economic transformation. South Africa is also home to 40,400 high-net-worth individuals with a combined wealth of US\$171 billion, offering opportunities to advocate and position child rights and UNICEF within the corporate and philanthropic sector to leverage additional resources for priority programmes for children.

Remarkable progress has been made in fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The number of new HIV infections dropped by 44 per cent between 2012 and 2017. South Africa has the largest treatment programme in the world, involving 20 per cent of global total of people on antiretroviral therapy (4.4 million). A total of US\$2.07 billion was spent from domestic public and international sources in 2017 for the HIV/AIDS response, but approximately 75 per cent was funded by the Government –one of the largest domestically funded HIV/AIDS response programmes. Nevertheless, the epidemic is still a significant challenge for South Africa, which still has 20 per cent of the global number of people living with HIV/AIDS, 15 per cent of new infections and 12 per cent of global AIDS-related deaths.

The reduction in the under-five mortality rate at– 37 per 1,000 live births in 2017, compared to 41 per 1,000 live births in 2016 – was mostly driven by successful prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT). Progress was also made in expanding access to health services and improving health outcomes. However, disparities in morbidity and mortality have become more marked. A black African child is almost five times more likely to die before his or her first birthday than a white child, and Free State has double (49.1 per 1,000 live births) the under-five mortality of Western Cape (24 per 1,000 live birth). Although the percentage of children under one year of age receiving the diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT) vaccine slightly increased (from 72.1 per cent in 2017 to 77 per cent in 2018), it was estimated that 380,000 children were not reached with the third dose of DPT-containing vaccine. Furthermore, the overall immunization rate is concerning; according to the latest available data (from 2016), only 61 per cent of children under one year receive all basic vaccinations. In addition, South Africa faces complex, overlapping and interconnected nutrition challenges, with the co-existence of stunting, which remained stable between 2003 and 2016 at 27 per cent per cent, (DHS 2003 and 2016 respectively), and overweight and obesity. Forty per cent of adolescents and young women aged 15–24 years are either overweight or obese.

South Africa is currently moving towards universal health coverage through national health insurance (NHI). Although the NHI Bill of 2018 set ambitious goals for improved equity and quality of health care, given the diverse range of geography and economic status and disparities in access, quality of care and health system capacity, there are concerns that, if not well managed, the implementation of this ambitious health reform could further exacerbate poor health outcomes in South Africa. A presidential health summit held in October 2018, with the aim of further exploring the challenges facing South Africa's health system and proposing solutions, reiterated that high-quality health systems are a core component of efforts to achieve universal coverage.

South Africa has made remarkable progress in improving access to education. By 2014, some 99 per cent of 7-to-15-year-old children (the compulsory age for schooling) were in school, with gender parity. Participation remained consistently high across provinces and population groups. Attendance rates for those aged 14–18 years increased from 88 per cent in 2002 to 90 per cent in 2015, with notable gender parity. The number of children with disabilities aged 7–15 years who are out of school declined from 36,465 in 2002 to approximately 22,952 in 2014. According to the 2015 General Household Survey (GHS), 90 per cent of learners aged 7–15 years with disabilities were attending school, with no gender differences reported. However, this figure has remained constant since 2010.

However high enrolment ratios tend to conceal the fact that up to 15 per cent of learners do not complete Grade 9; dropout rates increase significantly in Grade 10 (10.6 per cent) and Grade 11 (13.4 per cent). Despite spending many years in the education system, only 40 per cent of learners complete their final year of schooling, leaving 60 per cent with no qualification beyond Grade 9 level. The 2018 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute of

Statistics reported an overall primary repetition of 8.79 per cent, but higher for boys (10.66 per cent) than for girls (6.8 per cent). In 2015, grade repetition in secondary education was high, at an average of 15 per cent system-wide, rising to 19 per cent in Grade 10. In the absence of remediation, repetition rates increased from 8 per cent during primary school to 15 per cent in secondary school.

System-wide progress is noted in education outcomes through national, international and regional assessments, demonstrating that the South African education system is on an upward trajectory with the characteristics of a maturing and stabilizing system. National senior certificate examinations indicated an improvement in Grade 12 pass rates between 2015 (70.7 per cent) and 2017 (75.1 per cent), mainly linked to systemic gains reported at lower levels of the system. However, international tests reported worryingly low levels of reading in the early grades. The latest available 2016 PIRLS results showed that 78 per cent of Grade 4 learners could not read for meaning. As reading is foundational to all other knowledge and skills acquisition and generation, this is a worrying sign of the quality of education outcomes in South Africa.

Of the total 5.87 million children in the birth to four-year age group, approximately 2.16 million (36.9 per cent) were attending an early learning and development programme in an early childhood development (ECD) centre or pre-school in 2017. Attendance at centres in this age group differs by province; the Western Cape and Free State have the highest attendance rates (between 40 per cent and 46 per cent) and the Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal have the lowest rates (25.3 per cent and 27.8 per cent, respectively). Most young children in this age group (50.2 per cent) received care, support and early stimulation at their homes by their parents (45.8 per cent) or another adult (6.7 per cent). According to the 2017 GHS (released in June 2018), data on early stimulation activities with children from birth to four years showed that 63.3 per cent of their parents often or sometimes tell them stories, while 36.7 per cent never tell stories; 55.3 per cent of children's parents often or sometimes draw or colour with them, while 44.7 per cent never do this; and 65 per cent of children's parents often or sometimes count to them, while 35 per cent never do so. More than 88 per cent of five-year-old and 96.6 per cent of six-year-old children attended an educational institution for Grade R or other levels in 2017.

Learning outcomes present clear evidence of the pervasive inequalities between the rich and poor, girls and boys and white and the black/coloured. Despite girls outnumbering boys in access, boys continued to outperform girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. Only 28.5 per cent of female graduates in STEM-related careers, and only 7 per cent of the workforce in STEM careers are women. Patriarchal attitudes and prejudices are the major contributors to this gender divide.

Widespread violence against children and adolescents takes place in school settings. According to the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, 15.3 per cent of children in primary and secondary schools have experienced some form of violence while at school – mostly threats of violence, assaults and robbery. The Centre noted that the credibility of this data is borne out by affirmations by school principals, 20 per cent of whom report incidents of physical violence perpetrated by learners against fellow learners in their schools in the preceding year. Teachers are also increasingly being subjected to violent treatment by their students.

The impact of poverty, migration and unemployment continued to disrupt traditional family structures, leaving single mothers, grandparents and adolescents responsible for caring for children without adequate resources to do so. A 2018 study undertaken by the University of Johannesburg found that a majority of caregivers are single female-headed households and that one third suffer from mental health problems, resulting in a majority of women living in a constant state of toxic stress. Therefore, children and families continue to experience persistent insecurity and fear. One in three children experience violence during their childhood, often by an adult charged with their care. Sexual violence is widespread and often recurrent. South Africa's child homicide rate is double the global average. Nearly 3.6 million children are orphans, and over 20 per cent of teenage girls report having ever been pregnant. Even though basic material needs are partially met through social assistance grants, the lack of consistent and nurturing care and widespread violence hinder children from realizing their full potential.

In addition, South Africa is a major destination for children on the move from countries throughout Eastern and Southern Africa, with an estimated over 4 million international migrants in 2017. Refugee and migrant children often experience repeated violence and exploitation. Reliable data on numbers of children at risk are difficult to obtain, as many cross the border irregularly, and no mechanism exists to register at-risk undocumented, unaccompanied and separated children.

Part 2: Major results, including in humanitarian action and gender, against the results in the country programme documents

UNICEF South Africa worked with national and provincial governments, other United Nations agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), academic institutions and the private sector to accelerate accrued progress and address the remaining challenges mentioned above. Especially in the context of: strong government policy commitments to promoting the rights and well-being of children; significant domestic investment in social sectors; and diminishing donor investment and interest due to South Africa being a middle-income country. UNICEF South Africa increasingly focused its efforts on ensuring concerted action – through technical leadership, coordination and advocacy with all partners – to invest in new and innovative solutions for issues affecting children in South Africa.

Goal area 1: Every child survives and thrives

The country programme document (CPD) sought to achieve “improved access of women, children and adolescents to quality high impact maternal, neonatal and child health and nutrition interventions,” while the South Africa-United Nations Strategic Cooperation Framework (UNSCF) seeks: “Accelerated progress towards the sustainable achievement of the health Millennium Development Goals; a multi-sectoral and sustainable response to HIV, sexually transmitted infections and tuberculosis developed and implemented at all levels in line with the NSP”.

South Africa has made remarkable progress in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT); coverage of antiretroviral treatment (ART) for women who are HIV-positive and pregnant and early infant diagnosis of HIV infection services is estimated to be over 95 per cent for both. MTCT rates are estimated to be 0.9 per cent at birth and between 1.2 and 1.4 per cent around 10 weeks. However, only 58 per cent of children 0–14 years living with HIV are accessing antiretroviral treatment.

Considering UNICEF South Africa’s limited resources, its support was largely catalytic, focused on filling urgent gaps that needed to be addressed for PMTCT. UNICEF supported the establishment of systems for cohort monitoring of programmes for women who are HIV-positive and children who are HIV-exposed to improve planning, treatment and care.

It is estimated that 1,300 adolescent girls and young women aged 15–24 years are newly infected every week and continue to bear the brunt of the HIV epidemic in South Africa. Together with partners, UNICEF South Africa has developed and implemented an innovative and integrated pilot approach that provides peer-based, facility- and household-linked psycho-social and health education support for adolescent girls and young women to access PMTCT and maternal, newborn, child and women’s health and nutrition services. Results from the pilot were highly promising, showing: improved retention in care (93 per cent vs. 50 per cent nationally); improved ART initiation rate (98 per cent vs. 95 per cent nationally); and an improved exclusive breastfeeding rate (54 per cent vs. 46.9 per cent in Gauteng). This approach was adopted for national scale-up by the PMTCT and paediatric technical working group led by the National Department of Health (NDoH). UNICEF South Africa and partners are currently supporting the NDOH to facilitate a phased national scale-up through the development of intervention packages and tools for district-level scale-up and capacity-building of district teams in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces for the provision of services in districts.

Concerned about the high number of unimmunized children, which poses a high risk for the health outcomes of young children, UNICEF South Africa and the World Health Organization (WHO),

supported the NDoH to develop a national expanded programme on immunization (EPI) turnaround strategy to strengthen EPI and acute flaccid paralysis surveillance systems in the country. All 52 districts in the country developed and implemented these plans (including periodic monitoring and programme reviews) which led to a 5.8 per cent increase in full immunization coverage in 2018. UNICEF South Africa also built capacity among provincial cold chain and EPI managers for effective vaccine management, and they subsequently developed supply chain improvement plans.

While early initiation of breastfeeding is over 80 per cent, exclusive breastfeeding for children under six months is around 32 per cent (DHS 2016). Following the dissemination of national breastfeeding campaign materials to 1,300 health facilities across the country in 2017 – which urged communities and families to engage in conversations about supporting mothers to breastfeed – a qualitative evaluation on the campaign materials and messaging was conducted in 2018 in Eastern Cape and Northern Cape provinces. The findings were used to adjust the campaign and develop its second phase.

UNICEF South Africa played a key convening role in coordinating different national technical working groups, especially on PMTCT and breastfeeding, and co-chaired the maternal and child health think-tank, leveraging the country's expertise in maternal, newborn and child health issues to advise the NDoH on policy and programming.

Goal area 2: Every child learns

The result sought in UNICEF's country programme was to improve access to quality education for all boys and girls, and increase school retention, completion and achievement rates. The related UNSCF result called for improved access to equitable quality basic education for children in South Africa, a multi-sectoral and sustainable response to HIV, sexually transmitted infections and tuberculosis to be developed and implemented at all levels, in line with the NSP.

UNICEF South Africa focused on national priorities for improving early childhood development (ECD) and education outcomes, in line with government policies and plans.

UNICEF's contributions were catalytic, strengthening the early years (0–9 years) of learning and development, directly contributing to the development and finalization of the Government of South Africa's national integrated ECD plan, which will be approved by the Cabinet in 2019. The plan integrates strategic work that UNICEF South Africa supported during 2018 with three interlinked focus areas: (1) improved quality, (2) increased access to services (dual focus on centre and non-centre-based ECD programmes) and (3) adequate resourcing of ECD services. By year's-end, increased access to structured ECD programmes for children 36–59 months had advanced more slowly than expected (63 per cent against 70 per cent target). This was due to the heavy reliance on centre-based ECD programmes. However, as the new ECD policy provides for non-centre-based programmes, these will be increasingly supported in 2019, which will ultimately increase overall access to ECD programmes by children aged 36-59 months.

Two key strategies were implemented to improve quality in early learning and development. First, the Minister of Basic Education launched a large-scale, online, in-service training programme for ECD practitioners and foundation phase educators (Grades R to 3), called P.L.A.Y (learning through play). PLAY was developed through a partnership between the Department of Basic Education (DBE), UNICEF South Africa, the LEGO Foundation and Cotlands. As of December 2018, combined enrolment for this training was 165,551. The interim satisfaction survey showed that 72 per cent of participants found the training extremely helpful. Learning through play is now recognized as a core pedagogical approach in early learning and development in South Africa. Second, to generate evidence on what works in early grade reading, UNICEF South Africa, the DBE and other partners supported a randomized controlled trial at 230 schools in North West Province. The study concluded that a structured learning programme can significantly improve learning outcomes, and centralized training is better than the decentralized cascade model. UNICEF South Africa is currently working with the Government and partners to implement this model.

To improve education outcomes UNICEF South Africa focused on strategic determinants that impact

quality education. Standardized learning assessment is a critical marker of the health of an education system and represents an opportunity to provide collective support to schools and teachers and individualized support to learners. While South Africa has a long-standing, robust summative assessment, generally carried out at the end of schooling, assessments for the early grades has been suspended since 2015. Re-instituting the national assessment is a key target of the NDP. In 2018, UNICEF South Africa achieved considerable progress in assisting the DBE to develop a national sample-based systemic assessment framework, which was piloted for grade 3, 6 and 9 learners in selected provinces. National roll-out of this framework is planned for 2019.

Development of relevant curriculum content for learners was another major milestone realized in 2018 by UNICEF South Africa. In partnership with the DBE and National Education Collaboration Trust, UNICEF developed curriculum content (in the areas of human rights, creative arts, world of work, study skills and careers) for nine life-orientation textbooks for grades 4–12, to mainstream the development of 21st century skills into children’s learning. The textbooks are also intended to foster greater social cohesion in South Africa. A national improvement plan on reading was also developed and presented to the national steering committee on early grade reading, on which UNICEF is represented. This plan was endorsed by the Cabinet as one of the most significant contributions to education, and fostered greater coordination and focus within the education sector.

In addition, UNICEF South Africa demonstrated its key technical influence by helping the DBE to leverage approximately US\$ 6.2 million from the United States Agency for International Development for 2019–2020 to implement the early grade reading study (EGRS) in all schools in two districts in the country. As part of developing a longitudinal cohort, 3,304 grade 4 learners, 4,204 grade 1 learners and 2,116 grade 3 learners were assessed in 2018, to test the ongoing impact of the study. UNICEF and the DBE will use this longitudinal data, together with data being produced as part of EGRS II (in Mpumalanga) on English as a first additional language, to develop reading norms in African languages in 2019. Reading norms in local languages are instrumental to teachers’ understanding of achievement of milestones and progression in reading. More evidence on what works in early grade numeracy was generated by a national scoping study, with direct UNICEF support, to identify the most promising interventions. To increase the likelihood of post-research uptake, the scoping study forms part of the National Mathematics Strategy led by the DBE’s curriculum branch.

Violence, gender inequality, a lack of programmes supporting healthy living and other related environmental factors constitute unintended barriers to learning and may elevate risks for children. UNICEF South Africa strengthened its programming on safety for children within the education space through direct financial and technical support for implementation of the national school safety framework. A total of 989 senior management teams, including learners from 250 schools, benefited from school-based training on the framework. The participants (57 per cent female) heightened their awareness on preventing and managing violence. This, in turn, benefited approximately 125,000 children (58 per cent female). UNICEF South Africa also provided direct financial and technical support to the Government to develop a national gender-based violence (GBV) protocol, which provides a guide for schools to manage and report sexual abuse in schools. This protocol is intended to ensure preparedness for appropriate and timely response to cases of sexual abuse and harassment perpetrated against learners. Further awareness was created through nine provincial consultative workshops on the protocol, in partnership with UNESCO. Some 300 participants (55 per cent female) in positions of leadership attended these workshops. The workshops also empowered participants from 120 schools to develop policies in support of preventing gender-based violence, to reach 60,000 children (58 per cent female).

Appropriate support materials and frameworks are essential for sustained strengthening of systems to respond to the multiple challenges facing schoolchildren. UNICEF South Africa spearheaded development of a draft manual on management and prevention of alcohol and substance abuse in schools. As part of continuing global efforts to address the safety of school children within the ‘safer cities’ initiative, UNICEF South Africa deployed technical expertise and financial support for the ‘safe travel to school’ programme, involving 866 scholar drivers (96 per cent male) to improve their driving skills and behaviour, safely transporting about 18,000 children (56 per cent girls) to and from school daily and making the journey to and from school safe for children, as passengers, and pedestrians.

In addition, UNICEF South Africa made great strides toward promoting adolescent development, participation and empowerment in a gender-sensitive manner, supporting key DBE interventions to mitigate risks and build resilience among adolescents. The TechnoGirl programme, a flagship model to address gender inequity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), benefited 4,059 girls from disadvantaged communities through job shadowing opportunities; the programme offered mentorship to 2,559 girls in STEM careers and further supported 1,500 alumni girls at institutions of higher learning. The TechnoGirl programme has been recognized globally and is ready for immediate scaling-up under UNICEF'S global Generation Unlimited (GenU) initiative.

Additionally, to combat obesity due to lack of physical activity among children – coupled with the purely academic nature of the South African schooling system that is a known cause of drop-out– UNICEF South Africa worked with the DBE to develop a programme to increase physical activity as part of schooling. To strengthen adolescent participation, the sport for development initiative, driven by UNICEF South Africa's technical and financial support, empowered 956 (57 per cent female) adolescents with life skills, including for youth leadership. These trained youth leaders reached another 26,950 (59 per cent female) learners with life skills education, resulting in a significant increase in beneficiaries' understanding and appreciation of the key issues and challenges facing them, the opportunities around them, accountability and self-confidence.

UNICEF South Africa also laid the groundwork for U-Report, which will be used as a youth engagement and communication tool. Through an inter-agency partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF South Africa supported the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), the government department responsible for youth issues, to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the national youth policy. Toward the end of 2018, the Cabinet finally approved and endorsed the use of U-Report as an official means to monitor youth policy, a significant milestone for U-Report.

Starting out with few U-Reporters, UNICEF South Africa had recruited nearly 4,000 U-reporters by the end of 2018, mainly through a digital marketing campaign that started in November 2018. In December UNICEF signed a contract with a reputable youth development agency in the country (South African Institute for International Affairs) for the recruitment of an additional 40,000 U-Reporters by July 2019. UNICEF also signed a memorandum of understanding with Girl Guides, through which more U-Reporters will be recruited. The platform will continue to grow as various recruitment strategies are rolled out. Furthermore, to explore ways to further engage young people via social media, UNICEF partnered with the University of Cape Town D-School to consult young people via human-centred design workshops. This process was helpful, and speaks to most of the focus areas of the GenU initiative.

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

UNICEF South Africa's corresponding result sought to ensure "a national child protection system that effectively prevents and responds to violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and ensures the rights of vulnerable children, mindful of the impact of HIV and AIDS". The related UNSCF result calls for: "a multi-sectoral and sustainable response to HIV, sexually transmitted infections and tuberculosis developed and implemented at all levels in line with the NSP; increased access by vulnerable populations to social protection services; improved capacity of national, provincial and local governments to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate government policies for improved service delivery and strengthened participatory democracy; and strengthened capacity of state systems to provide access to justice and social welfare services for all, particularly vulnerable groups

Despite having one of the most progressive and inclusive constitutions in the world, with laws that are human rights-focused and include the right to live without violence and having signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, South Africa's translation of child protection policies into practice has not been optimal. This implementation gap is manifested through under-reporting of actual cases of violence and inadequate investment in child protection services to prevent violence against children (VAC).

UNICEF South Africa invested in strengthening the protection of children through four main

approaches: support to authorities on knowledge management and dissemination, policy reform and advocacy, capacity building/systems-strengthening and scale-up of effective early intervention and prevention programmes. UNICEF South Africa also continued to play a pivotal role in improving multi-sector coordination, including through support to the governmental technical task team on violence against women and children.

The number of cases of violence against children is grossly under-reported. Compared to 2017, there was a two per cent decrease in the number of reported cases (from 44,252 to 43,540) in 2018. One study (The Diagnostic Review of 2015) indicated that performance and management of reported cases by the South African Police Service is a major cause of under-reporting on VAC. The performance management system creates perverse incentives for reporting, hiding the true reflection of the number of actual cases. Prosecution of perpetrators is another ongoing challenge, as it relies heavily on witnesses (often including children) and (2) evidence produced by the law enforcement officers who have perverse incentives. Therefore, UNICEF South Africa continued to provide critical technical support to enhance the capacity of law enforcement officers to provide multidisciplinary victim-centred and child-friendly justice services.

It has been estimated that one in three children (of a total child population of c. 20 million) may be exposed to violence, but the number of children benefiting from prevention and early intervention services promoting care and protection remains very low: 117,207 were reached with direct UNICEF support in 2018. The budget allocated to the Department of the Social Development (DSD) for child protection services is insufficient. Currently, prevention and early intervention services (under which state violence prevention programmes are funded), account for less than 1 per cent of the combined national and provincial DSD budget. Furthermore, all but one province show a decrease in the share being allocated to these services over the period of 2016/2017 to 2018/2019.

In the context of political transition and upcoming general elections in May 2019, civil society protests put violence against children and women at the top of the political and policy agenda, leading to renewed commitments to children's rights and greater unity around the violence against children prevention agenda. This commitment was articulated by the President at a summit on gender-based violence organized by the Presidency in November 2018, providing momentum for renewed action in 2019, including acceleration of the child protection system through building capacity, changing attitudes and promoting effective cross-sectoral collaboration among departments to ultimately trigger changes in duty-bearers' inappropriate behaviours.

The challenge remains to translate political will and commitment into improved protection for children. In this context, in collaboration with the DSD and civil society partners, UNICEF South Africa generated increased commitment to ending violence against children and leveraged public and private financial support for violence against children prevention through various advocacy initiatives involving key strategic partners across sectors – such as government policy-makers, high-net-worth individuals, CSOs, journalists and religious and traditional leaders. For the summit on gender-based violence, the UN technical team group on gender participated as co-organizer, and UNICEF South Africa played a pivotal role, hosting high-level visits from the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister, the Global GenU Ambassador, the Canadian Minister of International Development and Cooperation, goodwill ambassadors and high net-worth individuals. This has resulted in financial support from the global partnership to provide technical support to the DSD to revise the national programme of action addressing violence against women and children. In partnership with Sonke Gender Justice and the Human Sciences Research Council, UNICEF South Africa also co-hosted the launch of the 'State of South Africa's Fathers' report, highlighting key advocacy points around improving gender equality by increasing male involvement in child care.

UNICEF South Africa provided direct support for scaling-up evidence-based prevention and early intervention programmes. In partnership with the National Association of Child Care Workers, 31,167 children across 14 safe parks in the Eastern Cape benefited from the Isibindi adolescent and youth development programme. Through this effort UNICEF levered commitments and strategic partnerships in support of the global child and youth care conference planned for 2019 in Durban, which will be attended by representatives from local government, high net-worth individuals, bi-laterals, foundations and the UN. UNICEF South Africa also supported positive parenting

programmes (such as Sinovuyo and MenCare), which continue to be implemented nationwide by trained social service professionals.

Through its partnership with the DSD, UNICEF South Africa provided financial and technical support for strengthening policies related to children. UNICEF provided technical inputs to the development of the child care and protection policy, as well as technical support for the revision of an amendment to the Children's Act, and through its partnership with the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, UNICEF provided financial and technical inputs for drafting the national policy framework on the management of sexual offences, which aims increase the focus on prevention and the increased coordination of multi-sectoral services to support victims of sexual offences. UNICEF South Africa also made positive contributions to systems-strengthening and capacity-building. It played a key role in strengthening the social welfare workforce with the DSD and the National Council for Social Service Professionals, and provided technical support for the development of case management standard operating procedures. To multiply and reinforce the impact of the revised national programme of action on violence against women and children, UNICEF supported additional training on violence against children, reaching a total of 177 government officials, civil society representatives, journalists and religious and traditional leaders, as well as corporates.

UNICEF South Africa participated in the 'children on the move' research project with the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office. Although the research findings were not finalized as of year's end, these will inform future programming. UNICEF worked with Save the Children to support a cross-border meeting of Southern African countries on migrant children and cross-border cooperation in March 2018. This meeting allowed these countries to share good practices on children on the move and identify solutions to address common problems, including cross-border family reunification; improving data collection and analysis; strengthening intra- and cross-border coordination mechanisms; and addressing barriers to birth registration, residency and other forms of documentation. In addition, UNICEF South Africa provided technical and financial support to Save the Children South Africa for the revision of an inter-agency capacity-building package focusing on statelessness and targeting front-line staff. UNICEF South Africa worked closely with The United Nations High Commission on Refugees and other UN agencies to develop preparedness scenarios, given the high likelihood of escalating violence against foreigners impacting refugee and migrant children. This served as a basis for strengthening and updating the emergency preparedness plan and integrating preparedness actions in UNICEF South Africa's 2019 rolling work plan.

Finally, UNICEF South Africa co-led action-orientated research on linking cash with care. The findings demonstrated that linking cash with care leads to improved caregiver, family and child relationships. Social and community connectedness was also improved as a result of group discussions among peer caregivers, and there was a positive change in parental involvement in their child's education. Caregivers' financial capabilities were improved as a result of the intervention, better enabling them to spend the child grant in the best interests of children. The key findings of this research will be launched in February 2019 and will influence the design of South Africa's 'child grant PLUS' policy in 2019. Continued evidence-based advocacy by UNICEF South Africa resulted in a renewed commitment to the 'Cash PLUS' agenda in the country.

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

UNICEF South Africa's corresponding result area is to achieve "improved access of women, children and adolescents to quality, high-impact maternal, neonatal and child health and nutrition interventions", while the related UNSCF result area calls for accelerated progress towards the sustainable achievement of the health Millennium Development Goals and development and implementation of a multi-sectoral and sustainable response to HIV, sexually transmitted infections and tuberculosis at all levels, in line with the NSP.

A key government priority in 2018 was addressing a crisis in school sanitation brought to the fore by the death of a child in a school pit latrine. According to the 2018 national education infrastructure management system, all 23,471 schools in South Africa have access to water, but types and service conditions differ. Of 29,958 school sanitation facilities, 4,358 (18.6 per cent) are basic, non-ventilated pit latrines, and 37 schools have no sanitation facilities at all. In response to the crisis in infrastructure

backlogs, the DBE set up the accelerated school infrastructure delivery initiative. However, progress in reducing the backlog has been uneven and slow. At the end of April 2018, the DBE confirmed to the portfolio committee on basic education that 3,532 pit toilets are being used by schools across the country.

In this context, during their bilateral meeting in South Africa in May 2018 South Africa's president asked the UNICEF Executive Director for support to improve water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in schools. Subsequently, UNICEF South Africa worked closely with the DBE to leverage private sector support for the presidential sanitation initiative, under the auspices of 'sanitation appropriate for education' (SAFE). The DBE set up a committee to work on a presidential breakfast, which was held in August 2018 to galvanize private sector support. A national steering committee was constituted to coordinate this effort. UNICEF South Africa was unanimously elected to chair the committee, which will soon be transformed into a national sanitation partners' forum to allow for greater private sector engagement. Between the presidential breakfast and end-November 2018, a total of US\$13.1 million in cash and in kind had been raised to eliminate inappropriate sanitation in 3,898 schools.

UNICEF South Africa also supported WASH in schools with the aim of improving hygiene and handwashing practices. As one of the key factors for keeping learners at school – and thereby improving overall learning outcomes – UNICEF supported the development of an innovative WASH model in 292 primary schools in Mpumalanga Province, in partnership with MIET Africa and the Mpumalanga Department of Education, reaching over 200,000 grade R–2 learners. Three important contributions were made by UNICEF South Africa in 2018: expanding reach through learner support agents (young unemployed graduates) when district capacity is limited, building low-cost, easily-replicable group handwashing stations at 28 schools and conducting training for janitors for the first time in South Africa on the rationale for WASH and how to maintain toilets.

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

UNICEF's country programme goal was to ensure that "equity-sensitive national policies, programmes and budget allocations are made based on high quality evidence and strengthened oversight". The related UNSCF result called for "increased access by vulnerable populations, especially children and women, to social protection services; improved capacity of national, provincial and local governments to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate government policies for improved service delivery and strengthened participatory democracy; strengthened capacity of state systems to provide access to justice and social welfare services for all, particularly vulnerable groups.

UNICEF South Africa explored three pathways to promote social inclusion for boys and girls and to ensure that every child has an equitable chance in life: institutional lobbying to promote the interests of children, public advocacy to raise the profile of issues affecting children and research that offers the latest information on contextual enablers, such as resources and targeting, that promote the realization of children's social and economic rights.

Institutional lobbying was undertaken with three key national institutions, the national legislature, the Presidency and the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). UNICEF South Africa signed a five-year technical agreement, through a memorandum of understanding, with the legislative branch to carry out work focused on child rights, violence against women and budgeting for children's programmes and services. Another agreement was reached with Parliament to roll out a series of seminar topics to be facilitated and led by academic partners, civil society organizations, members of foreign governments and government officials in South Africa. While the technical partnership will form the core of the work to be done over the next five years, UNICEF South Africa will use the space to lobby members of parliament to establish a cross-party and cross-committee children's caucus.

Given the ongoing reconfiguration of government departments, UNICEF South Africa also worked with officials in the Presidency and involved the First Lady in important official UNICEF and Government functions. UNICEF's efforts to connect with the highest-level of the Government culminated in the meeting between the President of the Republic of South Africa and the UNICEF Executive Director to explore ways to strengthen child rights implementation in the country. The strategic thrust of the work with the Presidency centres on bolstering social policy support and

evidence and making the case for re-establishing the Office of the Rights of the Child (ORC). During UNICEF South Africa's internal strategic reflection in early 2018, it was noted that fragmentation in implementation of children's rights and the lack of an overall empowered coordinating structure within the Government has weakened the strategic thrust and pull of children's issues in the country. Thus UNICEF South Africa began to reach out to the SAHRC to explore ways in which both organizations can promote children's rights. The two institutions are working toward centralized coordinating structures for monitoring child rights, and are planning joint work in 2019 to make such a structure a reality.

UNICEF also used public advocacy as an effective strategy to raise the profile of children's issues in the country. First, the Parliament, (specifically the joint appropriations committee) and the National Council of Provinces were chosen to make an informed and detailed presentation on the country's medium-term budget policy statement (MTBPS) and how it is likely to affect the realization of children's socio-economic rights. One of UNICEF South Africa's recommendations on expenditure arrears was accepted by the committee in its core set of recommendations to the National Treasury. Second, UNICEF South Africa convened a round table on the MTBPS prior to its tabling in Parliament and invited civil society organizations and members of international financial institutions and government line departments to participate in reviewing the MTBPS and its potential impact on diverse constituencies, including children. Third, UNICEF worked directly with civil society organizations to enhance their capacity to analyse budgets and strengthen the evidence base on children's access to budgetary resources. Lastly, considerable progress was made in 2018 toward finalizing the country's national plan of action for children, but due to complications related to the availability of micro-indicators, the plan will only be finalized after the May 2019 elections.

UNICEF South Africa also relied on research to identify information on contextual enablers that affect the realization of children's social and economic rights. In addition to the five annual budget briefs that examined government resources for children in social sector line departments, UNICEF invested in cash and care research that was completed by the University of Johannesburg in cooperation with the City of Johannesburg. UNICEF South Africa also played a leading editorial role in this year's *ChildGauge* publication, which focused on the relationship between the state and families. Finally, UNICEF South Africa and Statistics South Africa made progress toward finalizing the multidimensional poverty analysis tool by agreeing on dimensions and indicators and completing the first cursory analyses of the data. This is a great achievement, because for the first time in South Africa, a multidimensional poverty analysis using a child, not a household, as a unit of analysis will be conducted. More work will take place in the first quarter of 2019 to refine indicators and obtain verification and acceptance of the tool by South Africa's Council of Statistics.

Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints

Constraints

Despite progress and gains made in advancing child rights and well-being in South Africa, significant implementation gaps remain between progressive policies and actual investment in the social sectors. Another unfinished agenda item is related to the goal of ensuring equitable access to quality social and protection services for children, due to the following constraints: increasing political uncertainties, sub-optimal inter- and intra-sector coordination, insufficient implementation capacities, deep-rooted social prejudice and norms and limited financial and human resources.

Political uncertainties in South Africa adversely affected continuity of policies, strategies and priorities, thereby negatively impacting on results for children. After a Cabinet reshuffle in February 2018, the new Cabinet focused on creating jobs and employment and reducing dependency on the state. If the national plan of action for children is to become a truly useful document, it requires new medium-term targets and indicators, which will only be available after the May 2019 national elections. This led to the deferral of the finalization of the NPAC until middle 2019. In addition, the provinces restructured district health management teams and reviewed their human resource structure with the main goal of gaining efficiency and adjusting to the budget constraints, but the uncertainties associated with

restructuring caused a delay in moving key initiatives and interventions forward.

Continued ineffectiveness of inter- and intra-sector coordination constitutes a major constraint to optimal intervention in key areas. One of the key challenges for a range of education programmes was sub-optimal coordination among all stakeholders when implementing evidence-based solutions. UNICEF South Africa, together with the DBE research branch, scientifically identified the most effective intervention modality for improving learning outcomes through a randomized controlled trial, but the modality was not implemented as effectively and efficiently as expected due to difficulties in coordinating different layers within the DBE. While training in the multiple overlapping deprivation analysis methodology proceeded well in 2018, coordination challenges between Europe-based trainers and senior staff in Statistics South Africa (impacted by Government austerity measures) slowed down implementation. Despite the Government's commitment to working together on violence against children and women – with different line departments through the technical task team and provincial coordination structures—coordinating actions across programmes and departments and between different DSD layers posed a challenge to addressing violence effectively.

Weak capacity for implementation, in spite of strong legislation and policies, was also a constraint to delivering front-line services for children and their caregivers. Capacity constraints in government departments varied both across and within the branches and across the provinces. Since these impeded the achievement of several key results, UNICEF South Africa frequently was required to augment capacity with its own resources, intended for use in other programmes. In addition, resourcing key game-changing interventions was not always prioritized in sector resource allocation at all levels, due both to competing priorities and insufficient capacity to adjust priorities. Additionally, data to inform programme implementation was not always produced in a timely and reliable manner. For example, the information management system for the social welfare sector is manual and inefficient, which sometimes hampers timely and appropriate responses. The quality of data being produced by different management information systems also frequently came into question.

South Africa ranks 27th among the 108 countries covered by the 2014 social institutions and gender index produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; the highest ranked African country. South Africa's high ranking reflects the country's strong legal framework for gender equality and women's rights. Despite wide-ranging successful interventions— including those supported by UNICEF such as TechnoGirls and MenCare – anchored in a progressive constitution and elaborate policies, discriminatory attitudes, social norms and persistent stereotypes continued to result in inequitable access to opportunities, resources and power for women and girls and to constrain the translation of outputs into outcome results.

Lastly, despite UNICEF South Africa's strong efforts to mobilize and leverage resources for both its own work and directly for government programmes, internal and external funding constraints adversely affected the delivery of results for children. Difficulties around obtaining a tax exemption certificate constitute a major disincentive for corporate donors to commit to major UNICEF donations. UNICEF South Africa will have to be even more creative in its approach to shared-value, multi-faceted partnerships to secure much-needed resources for its programmes. For example, the health programme faced unpredictable and insufficient funding in two areas: support to provincial departments of health, where the need for capacity building was greatest; and for investing in research, data and analysis to better understand and operationalize the linkages between public health programmes and other sectors that impact child health and well-being. The limited budget also negatively impacted UNICEF's overall human resources. External to UNICEF, the Government also faced budgetary constraints for key interventions; such as the development of reading norms in African languages, which was re-phased to 2019 due to lack of funding.

Lessons learned

Nevertheless, 2018 was also a fruitful year with new insights and lessons generated to inform course correction and strategy refinement. First, strategically focusing on overcoming a few vital bottlenecks, based on UNICEF's comparative advantage, proved effective. For example, UNICEF South Africa's experience with HIV/AIDS programming, especially in a country where the HIV response is funded mainly through domestic resources. With its limited resources, UNICEF South Africa positioned itself

to engage in catalytic interventions that fill urgent gaps by moving fast; the approach was highly effective.

In addition, UNICEF South Africa realized that pooling existing resources from all stakeholders, both within and outside the state, to implement nationally agreed solutions yields greater and faster progress. With its convening power, UNICEF South Africa worked to support and potentially direct and improve the use of resources for health interventions from Government, the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the Global Fund by providing policy advice underpinned by strategic analyses and information. UNICEF South Africa also played a key role in supporting the DBE to leverage US\$13.2 million from the United States Agency for International Development to scale up early grade reading findings in 2019/2020. With a clear demonstration of results, development partners are willing to implement strategic interventions that would complement government efforts to achieve optimal results. Partnerships with CSOs and quasi-state agencies were also an effective mechanism for cost-effective programme implementation.

Another lesson learned was that combining evidence-based policy advice and upstream advocacy with systems strengthening at the mid- and down-stream levels is still an imperative for UNICEF South Africa, as the discrepancy in capacities between the national and provincial/district levels for analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation causes ineffectiveness and inefficiencies of key interventions. UNICEF South Africa's WASH in schools programme demonstrates that even in a middle-income country, downstream work is still required to strengthen entire systems, while structural, resourcing and accountability factors are addressed in the system at the upstream level. Unique challenges in some rural areas include a lack of affordable, efficient service systems and services, weak institutional structures and inadequate responses. All these have equity implications in realization of rights. Therefore, UNICEF South Africa needs to focus on strengthening sub-national systems and institutions, particularly in high-burden and low-performing districts, while at the same time supporting improvements in the overall policy and budgetary environments.

Way forward

With key constraints faced in 2018 and new lessons learned in mind, UNICEF South Africa stands ready in 2019 to tackle existing bottlenecks and newly emerging challenges, as well as deep-rooted underlying causes.

High-levels of poverty, unemployment, inequality, violence and child rights violations still prevail, undermining children's and women's day-to-day well-being, despite high-level political commitments to end violence and create jobs. As 2018 was dedicated to leveraging political will, awareness and commitment towards ending violence against women and children, in 2019 UNICEF South Africa will focus on social mobilization to address social norms and achieve behaviour change. Although health outcomes have improved in the past years, achieving ambitious health goals will also require tackling underlying or related factors, such as poverty, education, violence, nutrition, WASH and gender norms, which lie outside the domain of the Department of Health. This necessitates stronger coordination and inter-sectoral collaboration, to which UNICEF South Africa can make an important contribution through its convening power.

To win support for the cause of children, UNICEF South Africa will further expand space for the child rights work nurtured in 2018 and form multiple national coalitions for multiple causes. UNICEF South Africa will support the Government to monitor the effectiveness of policies to deliver results for children across government departments, with a view to helping the Government to prioritize resources and actions and focus on results. UNICEF South Africa will also invest in forming a coalition of reading supporters and mount a major reading campaign to respond to one of the most critical challenges for education: that 78 per cent of Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning. Work with CSOs to establish a budget justice coalition will also be intensified to ensure child-sensitive, child-friendly budgeting in the country. To leverage accelerated investment in child care and protection, currently underfunded in the state budget, UNICEF will co-host the global child and youth care conference with other key players in 2019.

UNICEF South Africa will continue to take a dual-track approach: policy and evidence-related work

upstream and systems-building work at mid- and downstream, especially in high-burden, low-performing districts. For example, for child and youth care work, parenting programmes and case management, UNICEF South Africa will continue to work on policy development upstream and on service delivery for prevention and early intervention programmes downstream. Additionally, UNICEF South Africa will prioritize addressing implementation gaps in the execution of well-designed policies and plans, and in so doing, test the effectiveness and efficiency of the platforms for multi-sectoral service delivery. For instance, as per the national school nutrition guideline to be developed, delivering essential nutrition interventions through schools and early childhood centres, in collaboration with the DBE and DSD, will be supported to prevent and control overweight and obesity and improved dietary diversity among South Africa's school children. School-based training on school safety will be rolled out, with a strong focus on preventing gender-based violence, alcohol/substance abuse, off-line and on-line bullying and road injuries among children.

To carry out the interventions described above –social and behaviour change, strengthening sector coordination, developing/ leveraging strategic public and private partnerships, policy advocacy and institutional strengthening of national and sub-national systems –UNICEF South Africa will ensure that its interventions are evidence-based, innovative and adequately financed.

Data quality issues affected the interpretation of immunization coverage data, resulting in discrepancies of over 10 per cent between WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage and the country's official estimates, highlighting the need for a rigorous survey to accurately estimate vaccination coverage in South Africa and accurately explain the reasons for non- and under-vaccination. With technical support from UNICEF South Africa and WHO, an evaluation of the coverage of the expanded programme of immunization got underway in December 2018 and is scheduled for completion by March 2019. Given the critical nature of this survey, UNICEF South Africa will closely monitor the evaluation to ensure that quality data is generated to inform future actions. UNICEF will also complete the multi-dimensional poverty analysis in 2019 and subsequently design an advocacy strategy to urge line departments to use the analysis as a central plank in their strategic prioritization processes.

UNICEF South Africa will also further strengthen existing innovative technology-based solutions or deploy technology to address new challenges. Existing digital health tools, including MomConnect and NurseConnect, will be further expanded as per a request from the NDH. The 'Road to Health' booklet, a guidebook for women who are pregnant and mothers who are lactating on healthy behaviours for themselves and their babies, is currently being tested for digitization. Once digitized, it will be connected with MomConnect, NurseConnect and other platforms. For child protection, the pilot digitization of the case management system will be rolled out, and the outcomes will feed into a process for the creation of a simplified information management system. For education, a number of innovative solutions – including the ECDmobi and TechnoGirl applications – will be advanced, to improve caregiver practices, facilitate knowledge and experience-sharing among youth and enhance the capacity of education service providers.

South Africa is a middle-income country competing for investment for children with countries affected by war, humanitarian disasters and poverty –although the differences for some social indicators are minimal. Thus there is a need for innovative fundraising and financing for South Africa's children. As proven effective in 2018, UNICEF South Africa will continue to develop and leverage resources and partnerships for children; for example, sourcing and channelling cash and in-kind contributions from private-sector donors directly to UNICEF implementing partners. Based on the 2018 experience, which showed that corporates value UNICEF's expertise and advice but prefer to channel funds to local entities, UNICEF will adopt a segmented resource mobilization approach going forward. This will include a focus on private foundations and high-net-worth individuals, including through UNICEF national committees, to fund UNICEF directly, along with strategic engagement and leveraging local corporates and private foundations to invest in priority programmes for children implemented by Government and other local partners. To further expand UNICEF South Africa's partnerships, the office will also expand engagement with UNICEF's regional office, headquarters and national committees as part of the multi-country 'schools for Africa' campaign. In addition, following a positive review of South African market potential for individual giving, the office is developing a new individual giving strategy, with a focus on pledges, for implementation in 2019.

The coming year will be the last full year of the current country programme. During 2019, UNICEF South Africa will comprehensively review results achieved to date and the theories of change underpinning the current country programme. It will work with the UN country team to develop a new strategic cooperation framework to support implementation of the new Government five-year implementation plan for achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 national development plan and the SDGs. The platforms UNICEF South Africa has leveraged and consolidated to date will help the office to strategically position the child rights agenda in the country and address the many issues affecting children.

END/