UNICEF Annual Report 2016

Syrian Arab Republic

Executive Summary

During 2016, Syria’s children continued to suffer from escalating conflict and brutal violence, which directly impacted their survival, protection, development, and well-being. By the end of the year, there were 13.5 million people in need of assistance, including 5.8 million children. Of these, 6.3 million people had been uprooted from their homes and forced to relocate, while close to 5 million had fled the country.

Throughout the year, children faced violence, abuse and exploitation, recruitment and use by armed groups, killing, maiming, abduction and sexual and gender-based violence. Schools were directly targeted, resulting in death, injury, and interruption to learning. Throughout the year, the UN documented more than 60 incidents of attacks on schools. During the same period, 101 hospitals were reportedly attacked, resulting in damage and destruction and impacting critical health services. Water continued to be used as a weapon of war. On approximately 30 different occasions, water infrastructure and water supply were directly attacked or deliberately turned off as a tactic of war.

By the end of the year, 4.9 million people remained living in areas that were hard to reach, including close to 1 million people living in besieged locations where movement of people and goods was systematically denied and access to services interrupted. A critical lack of medical services and health supplies left sick and injured children vulnerable to death and prolonged suffering. Throughout 2016, health and nutrition medical items continued to be removed from humanitarian convoys to these locations.

Amidst this horror, rays of hope emerged for children, including positive results through the work of UNICEF and its partners, which focused on immediate lifesaving responses while simultaneously promoting resilience-based, longer-term interventions.

Syria remained polio free in 2016, with 2.4 million children under 5 immunized against polio. Through investments in routine immunization, just over 279,000 children under one year (58 per cent) were reached with DPT3, some 372,000 (77 per cent) were reached with MMR, and 454,000 (94 per cent) were reached with BCG. Multi-antigen campaigns focusing on besieged and hard-to-reach areas were able to screen more than 1.7 million children under five. Of those screened, 1.3 million (75 per cent) were up to date with their vaccinations, while some 444,000 (25 per cent) defaulters were vaccinated.

As a direct result of investments in clean water, hygiene, and sanitation, there were no major disease outbreaks or waterborne diseases. UNICEF Syria’s support to the provision of more than 6,437 metric tons of water disinfectant ensured 13 million people had access to clean water every month. More than 3.9 million people had improved access to sustainable drinking water and sanitation through rehabilitation of municipal systems.

Before the 2016 conflict, UNICEF’s interventions in education, focusing on quality, access, and institutional strengthening, had contributed to an increase in school enrolment from 3.24 million children (60 per cent of school-age population) to 3.66 million (68 per cent) between 2014/15 and 2015/16. These efforts also resulted in a decrease in the number of out-of-school children from 2.12 million (40 per cent) in 2014/15 to 1.75 million (32 per cent) in
Together with community based interventions, including psychosocial support and risk education, increased child protection investments were made in specialized responses, focusing in particular on children victims of violence and abuse and on children living in the street and involved in child labour.

UNICEF Syria maintained the scale and coverage of its response throughout the year, reaching a total of more than 11 million people with multi-sectoral interventions, including 1.57 million people in hard to reach and besieged areas, compared to some 10.4 million people reached in 2015. UNICEF diversified its interventions, launching cash based responses in social protection and adolescent development. The seasonal response was also reinforced through use of e-vouchers.

A greater focus on integration and convergence led to improved cross-sectoral collaboration and strengthened joint programming efforts with other UN agencies. Multi-service platforms were launched as an additional delivery gateway for more impactful service delivery, galvanizing UNICEF’s efforts around the No Lost Generation Initiative.

UNICEF consolidated its field presence in 2016, enhancing staff capacity across five field offices (Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Tartous, and Quamishli) with UNICEF’s footprint increasing from 177 staff at the end of 2015 to 208 by December 2016, with several posts still under recruitment. Monitoring efforts were buttressed through continued use of third party monitors, and full roll out of the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) that ensured robust assurance activities were in place as part of strengthened partnership management. Strengthened coordination efforts in WASH, nutrition, education and child protection were also critical to the achievement of sustainable results.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

Heightened levels of violence, worsening security, and ongoing access constraints continued to hamper efforts to reach those most in need. Despite massive operational challenges, UNICEF Syria and partners sustained the scale of humanitarian operations, improving the quality of the response while expanding access.

A total of 2.4 million children were vaccinated against polio and three multi-antigen campaigns screened more than 1.7 million children under-five (including more than 633,000 in hard-to-reach areas) and vaccinated some 444,000 children who had defaulted. To maintain the cold chain, 1,127 refrigerators and 11 cold and freezer rooms were installed. To address the national stock-out of vaccines, UNICEF procured millions of doses of vaccines (BOPV, OPV, IPV, Pentavalent, BCG, and MMR). More than 1.64 million children and women accessed health services through 16 rehabilitated public health centres, 95 health centres and 30 mobile health teams run by NGOs.

UNICEF Syria and partners undertook a SMART nutrition survey which found a magnitude of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) rate of 1.2 per cent, severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rate of 0.5 per cent, and stunting rate of 12.7 per cent. UNICEF reached close to 350,000 children and mothers in hard to reach and besieged locations with therapeutic nutrition supplies, complementary food, and micronutrient supplements. Some 800,000 children and more than 202,000 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) were screened for malnutrition, of which close to 11,000 children and 1,400 mothers received treatment. More than 356,000 of these women were counselled on proper breastfeeding and complimentary feeding and more than 445,000 children and 126,000 mothers received multiple micronutrient supplements.
UNICEF reached more than 1.7 million people through life-saving interventions, including trucking of nearly 1.5 billion litres of water and provision more than 5 million litres of fuel for generators to run water pumping stations. UNICEF supported rehabilitation of WASH facilities in shelters for internally displaced persons (IDP), distributed WASH non-food items (NFIs) for more than 800,000 people and delivered hygiene awareness to more than 112,000 people. Improved and sustained access to drinking water and sanitation was provided to more than 3.9 million people through infrastructure interventions. WASH in schools reached 607 schools benefitting more than 290,000 children, including by addressing the special needs of children with disabilities.

The nationwide ‘Back to Learning (BTL)’ initiative reached more than 3 million children with textbooks, stationery, and school bags. UNICEF and partners rehabilitated 401 schools benefitting more than 189,000 children and provided 324 prefabricated classrooms that ensured learning spaces for close to 25,000 children. The self-learning and Curriculum B (accelerated learning) programmes reached more than 136,000 out-of-school children. UNICEF also supported more than 12,000 students from hard-to-reach and besieged areas to participate in the grades 9 and 12 national exams.

UNICEF Syria supported the establishment of 141 child-friendly spaces and 76 mobile teams, reaching more than 328,900 children (53 per cent girls) and approximately 67,400 caregivers (67 per cent women), with structured and sustained child protection interventions. Of these, an estimated 20,000 children lived in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. Collaboration with national counterparts on case management and referral mechanisms will better allow service providers to consolidate their response and address the protection needs of children and families.

In collaboration with local partners, more than 750,00 adolescents and youth (54 percent girls) from 11 governorates, including 91,244 in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, were reached with a holistic package of services, including life skills based education (LSBE), vocational training and entrepreneurship training, as well as Sport for Development.

As part of UNICEF’s seasonal response, more than 562,000 children were reached with clothing kits and blankets, including more than 119,000 children living in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. The use of e-vouchers was scaled up to reach more than 39,000 children in Homs, Tartous, Lattakia, Quamishli and Damascus.

UNICEF introduced its first cash transfer scheme for families of children with complex disabilities. Implementation started in Aleppo, reaching 1,760 children out of a total target of 4,200. The programme will be expanded in 2017, paying strong attention to the engagement and ownership of public services.

Some 1.57 million people in besieged and hard-to-reach areas were reached with a multi-sectoral package of assistance through regular programmes and convoys. Of these, more than 820,000 people were reached through 86 convoys and 85,800 people were reached through airdrops. This compares to just over 1.4 million people reached (1.1 million through convoys) in 2015. In besieged areas specifically, UNICEF participated in 45 convoys reaching close to 360,000 people in 2016, compared to 190,000 people reached in besieged areas in 2015.

As sector lead in WASH, Education, Nutrition, and sub-sector lead in Child Protection, UNICEF Syria continued to enhance coordination and information management (IM) capacity, including at the sub-national level. All sectors maintained regular outreach with partners and stakeholders, and strengthened situation and results reporting through systematic data collection exercises, tools and analyses.
**Emerging Areas of Importance**

**Greater focus on second decade of life.** Syrian adolescents and youth (10-24 years) experienced limited access to quality education, protection and basic services, high unemployment and restricted livelihood and engagement opportunities. In 2016, investing in the second decade of a child’s life was a key priority for UNICEF, ensuring that girls and boys were more resilient and had opportunities to secure meaningful participation.

As part of the No Lost Generation (NLG), UNICEF supported delivery of age-appropriate services and opportunities, including life skills and citizenship education (LSCE) programs and vocational/entrepreneurship training, Sport for Development and civic engagement initiatives. More than 750,000 girls and boys ages 10-24 years, from 11 Governorates (54 per cent girls) were reached. This included some 192,000 adolescents and youth who were supported with enhanced critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity skills. Some 16,000 youth accessed community-based vocational training courses provided by local NGOs. Together with the Ministry of Education (MoE), a systemic approach was adapted to incorporate life skills and citizenship education in both formal and non-formal education, initially starting with teacher training and updating the life skills and citizenship education training manual for the non-formal set-ups.

Support to social cohesion through civic engagement took various forms. Nearly 252,000 accessed Sport for Development activities in nine governorates, including internally displaced persons, host communities and young people with disabilities. Some 131,000 young people participated in support of mainstreaming youth engagement across UNICEF sector areas. Young people promoted social awareness on child labour and child marriage issues, back to learning, handwashing and polio campaigns. More than 6,800 initiatives were implemented at the community level. UNICEF established seven Innovation Labs which served as collaborative working spaces for adolescents and youth to work around common goals through the design of social and business entrepreneurship projects and other innovative ideas.

UNICEF Syria also engaged youth in action research by raising young people’s voices on their aspirations, the challenges and opportunities to those aspirations across key areas in their lives: education and employment, family life, social/civic participation and social inclusion. Routine monitoring tools and guidelines were piloted with the aim of improving qualitative monitoring of social, civic and economic engagement of adolescents and youth.

A seed funding project began in late 2016 to build the skills of 1,500 youth (ages 15 and over) to design and implement social and business entrepreneurship projects. To date, 282 youth (52 per cent of them girls), participated in basic and advanced entrepreneurship innovation boot camp training. Fifteen projects are envisaged to be supported with seed funding in early 2017.

**Support ‘movements’ to accelerate results for children.** UNICEF Syria provided critical education, child protection and adolescent development programmes that, since 2013, have been framed within the No Lost Generation (NLG) Initiative. In 2016, as part of the second phase of the initiative, UNICEF Syria focused on how best to address the multiple and interconnected needs of children and young people affected by the Syria crisis, including further strengthening the alignment of programmatic approaches linking education, child protection, adolescent and youth participation.

As part of its roll out of the No Lost Generation (NLG) Initiative, UNICEF Syria finalized an operational strategy focusing on four core components:

1. Enhancing integrated social services through public institutions: Building on the existing
system of service provision, policy and capacity development initiatives aimed at improving the ability of public services to respond in a more systemic way to the needs of vulnerable groups.

(2) Enhancing community-based service delivery through multiservice platforms: The launch of the Multiservice Platform (MSP) concept in 2016 helped reinforce cross-sectoral service delivery and led to more efficient outcomes for children. Operationalized through local NGO partners, stronger collaboration between the Adolescent Development and Youth Participation (ADAP), Education and Child Protection programs ensured that age appropriate services targeted the 'whole child' from within one space. A total of 28 MSPs were established in 2016 and will be expanded in 2017.

(3) Innovation in education, protection and adolescent development: Within each programme, there were several innovative approaches piloted in 2016, including self-learning, cash transfers, Youth Innovation Labs and Evidence Generation in Partnership with Young People. These were prioritized as part of the NLG Initiative in Syria, with a view to replicate them or take them to scale in 2017.

(4) Enhanced NLG advocacy: In line with the sub-regional NLG Advocacy Strategy, which is a critical component of the broader NLG initiative, UNICEF Syria’s NLG strategy included protection and programme advocacy as one of its key components. This component provided a platform for advocating around a common set of issues and delivering a core set of messages related to the needs and aspirations of children and young people, particularly around education and protection.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

4Ws  Who does What, Where, When
ADAP  Adolescent Development and Youth Participation
ARI  Acute Respiratory Infections
bOPV  Bivalent Polio Vaccine
BTL  Back to Learning
C4D  communication for development
CBO  Community-Based Organizations
CDD  Control of Diarrhoea Diseases
CFS  Child Friendly Spaces
DOE  Directorate of Education
EMIS  Education Management Information System
ENAP  Every Newborn Action Plan
GAM  Global Acute Malnutrition
GAPAR  General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees in Syria
GOS  Government of Syria
HPM  Humanitarian Performance Monitoring
HRP  Humanitarian Response Plans
HTR  Hard-To-Reach Areas
IDD  Iodine Deficiency Disorders
IEHK  inter-agency emergency health kits
IM  Information Management
IMCI  Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses
INEE  Inter-agency network for education in emergencies
IYCF  Infant Young Child Feeding
JOP  Joint Operational Plan
Unless otherwise stated, the situation data quoted in this report is sourced from the 2016 and 2017 humanitarian needs overviews. The results data is sourced from UNICEF Syria’s Humanitarian Performance Monitoring System and the programme 4Ws (Who does What, Where, When).

**Capacity Development**

Capacity development remained an integral part of UNICEF’s programmes and a cross cutting strategy that underpinned the link between humanitarian and longer-term programming.

UNICEF continued to build the capacity of health and nutrition counterparts with more than 6,300 doctors, nurses, midwives and technicians trained on immunization, maternal health, control of diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections, integrated management of childhood
Illnesses (IMCI), neonatal care, vaccines supply management, school health, and reporting systems.

UNICEF Syria provided technical assistance (TA) to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) covering capacity mapping of human resources accompanied by capacity strengthening programmes focusing on assessment, planning, implementation and management.

UNICEF provided technical support to MoE/DoE to strengthen school-level data collection, analysis and reporting. The education sector provided orientation to 417 education practitioners on the inter-agency network for education in emergencies (INEE) minimum standards for education. UNICEF and partners adopted a three-pronged approach to teacher training that included active learning, specialized training for Curriculum B and continuous teachers’ professional development (TPD). Training on active learning and Curriculum B reached 5,350 teachers. Advocacy continued with the Ministry of Education, which incorporated life skill and citizenship education in all teacher training programs.

UNICEF supported a large-scale capacity development exercise in mine risk education involving more than 2,300 professionals. The provision of materials for children (magazines, knowledge games) enabled the capacity of the trainees to roll out a massive awareness raising campaign that will continue to be expanded in 2017.

As part of the communication for development (C4D) strategy, 18 technical health outreach workers, 10 national NGO representatives, and 15 journalists benefited from comprehensive C4D capacity building activities. The training programmes focused on the promotion of positive behaviour practices of child survival and development. The evidence generated from the C4D knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) study helped inform programme priority areas capacity building programmes.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

In 2016 UNICEF Syria generated new evidence and strengthened the capacity of partners in data collection and analysis.

UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) to conduct a SMART Nutrition Survey, and worked with MoH, CBS and WHO on an Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) coverage survey. An analysis of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) for the 2015/16 school year was also conducted.

UNICEF Syria contributed to a Situation Assessment of Palestinian Refugees living in Syria, with a focus on children and women, jointly with UNRWA, General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees in Syria (GAPAR) and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). The findings of the various surveys were used to inform evidence-based planning, priority setting and programming at different levels by national partners, UNICEF and others.

UNICEF led partners in the first-ever study to assess the access to and quality of services for children and adults with disabilities, and their social inclusion. During 2016 UNICEF, UNDP and WHO, together with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, the National Council for Disabilities and CBS, developed a range of data collection tools for fieldwork to be completed in 2017.

While the conditions did not allow for a full upstream agenda, the dialogue with national institutions continued, including on social inclusion and social protection. For example, a cross-sectoral dialogue was initiated to increase the attention for children with disabilities, one of the most vulnerable groups in need of support in Syria.
UNICEF undertook evidence-based advocacy initiatives, including with Government, with a view to respond to and prevent grave violations. As a result of continued advocacy led by UNICEF, the Government established a national committee which developed a national workplan to systematically address the issue of child recruitment. UNICEF provided technical guidance and advice on the draft workplan.

**Partnerships**

In 2016, UNICEF Syria diversified its partnership modalities for responding to the needs of children across the country.

Partnerships with technical institutions at the national and sub-national levels were strengthened as a means of scaling-up results for children while simultaneously promoting more sustainable service delivery. UNICEF also maintained strong partnerships with some 64 national and international NGOs for programme implementation.

UNICEF Syria stepped up engagement with relevant institutions in social protection to strengthen social care and protection systems through boosting capacity of social workers, integrating responses and promoting close cooperation between public service providers and NGOs. As a result, a model on integrated social services and case management was produced.

Working with more than 20 local NGOs, UNICEF Syria reached more than 1.64 million children and women with paediatric and maternal health services through fixed health clinics and mobile teams.

UNICEF’s WASH programme reached a total of 4.9 million people through a diverse range of partnerships managed in a complementary manner. Technical institutions worked closely with private sector contractors on rehabilitation while UN agencies and Syrian Arab Red Crescent NGOs complemented efforts, particularly on emergency WASH.

Ongoing collaboration with UN agencies supported a more integrated approach to service delivery. Work with UNRWA and GAPAR enabled UNICEF to reach Palestinian children, adolescents and youth in a more comprehensive and systematic manner. UNICEF and World Food Programme (WFP) leveraged resources and results in the ‘Back to Learning’ initiative through which some 458,000 children benefitted from joint efforts. WFP’s food vouchers were provided to children who attended the accelerated learning programme ‘Curriculum B’. UNICEF mobilized 1,200 youth volunteers and raised public awareness of school registration in partnership with NGOs and private media companies, which helped ensure timely enrolment.

In C4D, capacity building of 10 national NGO partners across five sectors included training on social mobilization skills.

**External Communication and Public Advocacy**

The Syria crisis received unprecedented levels of broadcast, digital and social media attention. UNICEF Syria developed a communications strategy closely aligned to UNICEF’s global communication and advocacy objectives. The strategy aims to build public awareness and support for Syria’s children; raise awareness among key national and international stakeholders of the life-saving impact and value of UNICEF’s response; support UNICEF’s advocacy efforts; and enhance mobilization of funding for UNICEF’s work.
In implementing the communications strategy, UNICEF Syria led a comprehensive global media approach across the organization that placed UNICEF as the leading public advocate for Syria’s children – especially at key crisis moments. This resulted in focused media engagement supported by robust content, and included close monitoring of the overall situation to ensure that UNICEF was in a position to quickly respond to unfolding events.

Staff blogs and stories from children, including in besieged areas, helped give real faces and voices to profiles. A total of 30 public statements and press releases were issued highlighting violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, with key advocacy messages, and generated wide media coverage.

A media guidebook was produced by the C4D team with a focus on child rights reporting skills and information about knowledge, attitude and practices on issues affecting boys and girls, such as early marriage and perception on education. Data included breakdown by gender in order to inform appropriate interventions.

In 2016, UNICEF Syria focused on establishing consistent messages and leveraging common digital platforms and tools to help drive greater engagement with communities and youth. The C4D team established a strong partnership with key local influencers and social media forums reaching more than 2 million Syrians, as well as providing external communication and advocacy. UNICEF Syria also generated evidence to support advocacy and communication efforts through knowledge, attitude and practice surveys.

**Identification Promotion of Innovation**

In 2016, UNICEF continued to explore opportunities for sustainable clean drinking water solutions through local technologies by expanding on innovations piloted in 2015. UNICEF continued to scale-up the local water disinfection technology and conducted a technical evaluation that confirmed the drinking water met international standards. By investing in this innovation, UNICEF reduced the cost of water disinfection interventions by 40 per cent and addressed the logistical challenges associated with importing supplies from abroad.

UNICEF employed an innovative approach for out-of-school children through an accelerated education programme called ‘Curriculum B’ which helped more than 18,000 previously out-of-school children to learn a two-year curriculum in a single year. UNICEF also scaled up the self-learning programme for out-of-school children, reaching more than 118,000 children.

In the Syria context, the introduction of a cash-based programme was an innovation, especially since UNICEF was one of the few agencies using this modality. The cash-based programme aimed to reach one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of children – those with disabilities – and sustain the resilience of their families by providing the means to meet the needs of their children in a rapid, responsible and flexible way.

UNICEF Syria developed a mobile application (based on Kobo) which enabled feedback from a significant number of ‘end-users’ (i.e. families) regarding the quality, variety, appropriateness and timeliness of winter clothes and blankets provided by UNICEF. A major advantage of this technology was that it could be used in challenging environments since it did not require internet access during data collection. The use of this application significantly reduced costs and ensured that results were available in near real-time for analysis. The detailed feedback collected from families proved to be helpful to continuously improve the quality and type of items provided by UNICEF.
Support to Integration and Cross-sectoral Linkages

In 2016, UNICEF Syria formalized its approach to cross-sectoral and integrated programming through a conceptual framework that addressed integration at three levels.

At the institutional level, the WASH, Education and Health programmes worked closely to develop joint action plans for WASH services in schools and health centres, building on locations already receiving UNICEF support. For example, a total of 401 schools were rehabilitated, with inclusion of WASH facilities and promotion of hygiene awareness at the school level. Similarly, the joint work of the child protection and the social protection programmes in support of integrated social services and case management practices enhanced the capacity of service providers to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized children.

At the community level, the new multi-service platforms created a space where services in child protection, education, adolescent development, and WASH converged. This was further promoted through partnership agreements that brought together NGOs around common results. For example, NGOs working with ADAP volunteers were involved in the Back to Learn (BTL) campaign. Partnerships with one NGO increasingly covered more than one programme. For example, all health partnerships also included a nutrition component to ensure full integration of health and nutrition services.

In priority districts, UNICEF piloted area-based programmes where evidence showed that vulnerabilities were compounded by multiple deprivations, for example, Hessya industrial city in Homs.

C4D interventions continued to act as a bridge for integrating programmes. C4D activities between health and nutrition ensured more than 300,000 caregivers were reached with key health education messages. Coordination between health and WASH resulted in prevention of cholera and other epidemics. Health and education came together to train school health staff on child health issues. The BTL campaign reached 6.5 million people with education messages, including through some 1,200 youth volunteers.

Service Delivery

In 2016 UNICEF Syria continued to expand service delivery, guided by data and evidence on performance from partner reporting, third party monitoring, and end user feedback.

Service delivery to internally displaced persons continued in WASH, including safe drinking water and sanitation services, with measures in place to test and verify water quality. UNICEF expanded its support to operation and maintenance of public water infrastructure, rehabilitation of water and sanitation municipal systems, provision of the critical water disinfectant, development of alternative water sources, and solid waste management.

In 2016, UNICEF’s immunization programme focused on strengthening routine immunization services. In line with the recommendations of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), UNICEF supported the MoH to implement a successful switch from trivalent OPV to bivalent OPV. UNICEF Syria supported the activation of a comprehensive programme on neonatal care through establishment of sentinel reporting hospitals for neonatal death surveillance. This will feed into a national database on the main causes of mortality among newborns, and will direct efforts towards priority interventions at health facility and community level.

UNICEF continued to support child protection community-based service delivery for children affected by the conflict through psychosocial support and awareness raising initiatives for them and their caregivers. During last quarter of the year, increased efforts were sustained
to facilitate the introduction of more specialized services for children involved in child labour, living in the street, and victims of violence and abuse. More concrete results in this direction will be achieved in 2017.

Post-distribution monitoring exercises for winter clothes and e-vouchers allowed UNICEF to verify the level of satisfaction of beneficiaries, compare their preferences, and make necessary adjustments based on recommendations of users and implementing partners. The feedback also provided evidence in support of programme expansion.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

Ongoing armed conflict and violence continued to have a devastating and direct impact on children in Syria. There was a notable increase in the number of grave child rights violations documented in 2016, which totalled more than 2,100 (71 per cent verified), up from 1,700 violations verified in 2015.

UNICEF Syria prioritized its work on protecting and promoting the rights of children through both public and private advocacy, centred on obligations of all parties under international humanitarian and human rights law.

UNICEF led the establishment of the country task force to facilitate monitoring, reporting and response to grave child rights violations. As a co-chair and secretariat, UNICEF continued to provide regular leadership and technical support and facilitated coordination leading to significant increase in its contribution to documentation of grave child rights violations. Monitoring of grave child rights violations provided the evidence base for advocacy and response.

UNICEF Syria led in developing a ‘whole of Syria’ advocacy strategy focused on humanitarian access, attacks on schools and hospitals, use of water as a weapon of war, and recruitment of children. Advocacy was focused on the deliberate and attacks and denial of water, denial of access to lifesaving assistance, especially in besieged locations, and relentless attacks on schools and hospitals, which not only constitute a violation of international humanitarian law (IHL) but also deny children the basic right to education and adequate healthcare, and the recruitment of children increasingly at a younger age for direct participation in hostilities.

Programmatic interventions were increasing highlighted from a rights lens, with the right to education highlighted when UNICEF Syria facilitated support to students from besieged and hard-to-reach locations to sit in school examinations. All key programmatic interventions were framed in rights language, stressing that the situation in Syria impacted children’s access to their rights and how the conflict eroded those rights and promoted inequalities. UNICEF Syria supported training for staff members from all programme areas on child rights, humanitarian principles and key principles of international humanitarian law (IHL). The C4D team also organized media training that included sessions on the Geneva Convention as well as IHL.

Gender Equality

UNICEF Syria continued to strengthen its gender focus across its programmes throughout 2016.

Child-friendly spaces were used to conduct outreach and awareness on child rights, with special attention paid to child marriage and sexual and gender-based violence. Approaches were proposed to enhance protection and mitigate risks of exposure to violence. Qualified technical support was provided to national institutions for provision of specialized services
for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. The first safe house for children and women victims of violence will be opened in Damascus in 2017 to mitigate the traumatic effects of the exposure of violence during the first phase of recovery.

Teacher training reached more than 5,350 participants, 50 per cent of them women. Education and WASH programmes developed standards for school rehabilitation, including gender-sensitive school latrines with boys and girls now using separate toilets in targeted schools. UNICEF and partners delivered education messages to ensure that both boys and girls have equitable access to learning. Back to Learning household visits reached 551,000 people, including more than 269,000 females, through culturally sensitive messages on the right to education.

Adolescent boys and girls were provided with equal access to free primary health care in health centres across Syria, with certain services directed to girls only (e.g. the rubella vaccinations). Reproductive health education addressed the needs of adolescent girls specifically. The UNICEF-supported healthy behaviours and HIV prevention programmes reached both girls and boys.

The WASH programme contributed to protection of women and children against exposure to attacks and exploitation by increasing the services delivered at household level, which reduced the risks associated with collecting water from communal water points.

Throughout 2016, UNICEF Syria collected, analysed and disseminated gender disaggregated data. As part of humanitarian performance monitoring (HPM) as well as UNICEF-supported surveys, disaggregated data was collected and shared. The findings of surveys were used to inform evidence-based planning and programming at different levels. For example, the knowledge, attitudes and practices study showed male non-enrolment at school due to family economic situation and female non-enrolment due to insecurity. These gender-based differences provided evidence for more informed programming.

**Environmental Sustainability**

Environmental sustainability remained an integral part of the WASH programme. UNICEF adopted international and national standards for providing water supply and sanitation facilities, mindful of adverse effects on the environment. This included addressing water losses from emergency water trucking by supporting water storage and water intake into the pipe networks. UNICEF also focused on rehabilitating and restoring existing public infrastructure, for a durable solution, rather than developing new systems. For example, UNICEF equipped 450 existing groundwater wells in Aleppo, Damascus, Dara, Sweida and Hama governorates, benefiting more than 3 million people. UNICEF also increased water availability by maintaining water management at municipal network level.

UNICEF supported local institutions to address longstanding solid waste management issues across the country. This support included supply of solid waste containers, rehabilitation of sanitary landfills, clean-up campaigns, awareness raising, and removal of solid waste. Together with its local partners, the UNICEF WASH team completed a water quality monitoring study in Al-Abrash River in Western Syria, ensuring the water quality changes arising due to the ongoing crises (i.e. uncontrolled discharges, etc.) were within acceptable limits. The findings of the study will guide the implementation of the treatment of liquid waste sanitation programme in Western and other parts of Syria by protecting water sources.

With its move to new office premises in 2016, UNICEF promoted energy efficiency, with a focus on efficient use of lighting, heating and cooling. Staff were encouraged to re-use office
consumables where possible, including re-using paper, double sided printing, and reducing use of disposal plates and cups.

**Effective Leadership**

The country management team (CMT) provided guidance and oversight of major programme and operations initiatives including: implementation of flagship programmes; monitoring of results against targets; oversight of programme quality including establishment of a task team to ensure quality infrastructure; strengthening accountabilities of field offices and improved coordination mechanisms between field-based and Damascus-based teams. Efforts also included establishment of a HACT committee to ensure appropriate planning, implementation and monitoring of HACT by the office; tight budget control for ensuring full utilization of allocated grants within expiry dates as an integral part of contributions management; issuance of an M&E Strategy and SOPs to ensure robust monitoring systems and capacities; and review of partnerships and updating of UNICEF’s partnership strategy.

UNICEF Syria was audited by the Office of Internal Audit in March 2016. The scope of the audit covered three major areas: Whole of Syria response objectives and delivery structure; UNICEF Syria programmatic and humanitarian response; and programme implementation support. Although the final audit report was pending at the time of the preparation of the annual report, most of the suggested audit actions were already being proactively implemented.

Reputational risks, staff safety and security, and the volatile operating environment continued to be the main risks to programme implementation. To mitigate these risks, UNICEF Syria updated its risk library and planned actions to manage residual risk, namely programmatic assessments, spot checks, micro-assessments, use of third party monitors, revised business continuity and preparedness plans, and capacity building of staff partners, all of which were implemented and monitored.

**Financial Resources Management**

In 2016, to align planned resources to results, the CMT and Programme Group paid attention to the management of financial resources, including reprogramming funds between programme components based on needs and utilization trends. Weekly dashboards were produced highlighting progress against key financial indicators. These were used by the Programme Group to track progress and bottlenecks.

By year end, UNICEF Syria had implemented all of its Regular Resources (RR) and its Other Regular Resources (ORR/ORE). Efforts were also made to ensure timely disbursement and liquidation of DCTs to implementing partners. Outstanding DCTs over nine months were kept below a limit of 1 per cent throughout 2016.

To maintain a reliable and transparent management of the utilization of resources, UNICEF Syria updated and conducted orientation sessions on the SOPs with the objective of safeguarding the financial and other assets of the organization. UNICEF Syria also conducted a market survey to widen the variety of commodities available to procure locally and to identify potential local vendors for signing LTAs in order to ensure significant long-term cost savings and efficient benefits to the organization. Bidding time was shortened and the local procurement process was enhanced.

**Fundraising and Donor Relations**

In 2016, of the total funding requirement of US$233 million for programmes managed from within Syria (US$316 million for the whole of the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan, (HRP), UNICEF Syria received US$168.5 million (72 per cent funded), compared to US$140 million in 2015 (61 per cent funded). While WASH (73 per cent funded) and health (74 per cent
funded) programmes received substantial funding, education (45 per cent funded) child protection (37 per cent funded), nutrition (32 per cent funded) and early recovery (11 per cent funded) had large funding gaps. UNICEF Syria also had US$39.1 million from 2015 which was used in 2016.

A majority of funding for the humanitarian response came from public sector donors (United Kingdom, United States, European Union, Canada, Japan, Norway and Sweden). UNICEF’s National Committees contributed more than US$36 million (a twofold increase from 2015) in flexible thematic humanitarian funding. This funding was instrumental in allowing UNICEF Syria to respond quickly to the needs of children in a volatile and shifting environment. UNICEF Syria also received US$746,000 in other resources- regular.

UNICEF Syria maintained strong donor relations and stewardship with current and new donors through monthly situation reports, communication and advocacy products (photos, videos, human interest stories, etc.), social media channels, regular correspondence, high quality donor reporting and donor visits.

In line with UNICEF Syria’s focus on complementing the immediate emergency response with longer term resilience building interventions, UNICEF Syria office is strategically pursuing multi-year funding to achieve durable results.

UNICEF Syria continued to strengthen its monitoring and management of contributions, supported by the UNICEF Regional Office. In 2016 UNICEF Syria submitted 52 donor reports.

**Evaluation and Research**

The 2015 sub-regional evaluation of UNICEF’s humanitarian response to the Syria crisis was concluded in early 2016. A joint management response was prepared by the UNICEF Regional Office with inputs from UNICEF Syria. Considering the ongoing crisis context, no other in-depth programmatic evaluations were conducted during 2016. An evaluation of certain components of may be considered for 2017.

Overall, the 2016-17 integrated monitoring and evaluation plan was monitored on a regular basis by the country management team, particularly during the mid-year review and annual review meetings. By December 2016, five of the seven surveys and studies planned for 2016 were completed (71 per cent) with final reports available or in the last stages of completion. These included the EPI coverage survey, SMART nutrition survey, survey of Palestinian refugees, the KAP study of caregivers and EMIS 2015/2016 analysis. The study on disabilities was on track, as was the WASH infrastructure study, both of which are planned to be completed until 2017.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

After a sustained effort in 2015 to finalize the rehabilitation works of its premises in Mezzeh, UNICEF Syria finally moved back into its building in February 2016. In addition to providing a productive working environment for staff, the office move also resulted in a substantial reduction in the cost of rent from US$587,000 per year to US$155,000 per year. The internet costs also decreased, from US$60,600 to US$46,200 per year. UNICEF Syria continued to participate in the cost sharing of various common services in Homs, Aleppo, Tartous and Quamishli where UN hubs are established.

**Supply Management**

Supply remains one of the major drivers of UNICEF Syria’s programme implementation through delivery of essential services such as water trucking, rehabilitation of public
infrastructure, procurement of critical supplies from both offshore and local sources and distribution of supplies to besieged and hard to reach areas.

Total procurement reached US$75 million in 2016, with supply plan implementation at 86 per cent. Efforts continued to strengthen local procurement, which increased by 27 per cent from US$44 million in 2015 to US$ 60 million in 2016. This was possible due to an increase in the number of local long term agreements (LTAs) from 44 to 60 (36 per cent) in 2016. Offshore procurement increased by 14 per cent as more vaccines and medical supplies were imported.

More than US$60 million worth of supplies were distributed and more than US$75 million was handled in seven warehouses across five governorates. These included more than US$11 million worth of supplies for hard to reach and besieged areas.

Key initiatives in 2016 with significant supply components included e-voucher projects for summer and winter clothes, comprehensive market research initiated in five governorates, systematic evaluation of major suppliers with factory visits and improved monitoring of overall supply chain to reduce response time.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Value of procurement including supplies (Amount in US$)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total procurement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultant contracts</td>
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<td>Service contracts</td>
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<td>Pre-paid POs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program supplies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offshore procurement</td>
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<td>Total distribution</td>
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Security for Staff and Premises

During 2016, UNICEF Syria implemented and enhanced previously identified physical security measures in Damascus as well as in Aleppo, Tartous, Quamishli and Homs. Due to continued expansion, an additional building for Damascus-based staff was contracted and security risk assessment was completed, with designated staff expected to move in during the first quarter of 2017.

Additional personal protective equipment was purchased and distributed in all UNICEF armoured vehicles (AVs) as per MOSS requirements. Communication equipment was distributed to staff. To date, 123 UNICEF staff members have completed the training in safe and secure approaches to the field environment (SSAFE). Ninety-one per cent of staff successfully completed the basic and advanced security in the field courses. Arrangements were made with DSS for additional SSAFE training for remaining staff.

An AV defensive driving course was delivered to UNICEF drivers by a certified UNICEF field security advisor (FSA) and local security advisor (LSA). For armoured vehicles, training of trainers (ToT) was provided to three staff. An in-house AV defensive driving training was provided for two drivers and will be rolled out for remaining drivers and designated staff.

Training related to emergency trauma bags (ETB) was provided for two LSAs, and two LSAs received LSA training. An in-house first aid training was delivered to UNICEF staff in Quamishli and to the UNICEF premises’ security guards.
Two international security officers and two local security advisors were recruited during 2016, and another local security advisor is expected to be recruited in 2017 to cover Quamishli. As a response to the expansion of Aleppo Office, an additional local security advisor will be recruited to meet increasing security demands.

Building evacuation drills for international staff at the Four Seasons Hotel were conducted, as were drills for staff in Quamishli and Aleppo. The warden system for both international and national staff was regularly updated and tested to ensure the necessary messages were properly delivered to all SMs and the headcount was accurately conducted.

**Human Resources**

In 2016, UNICEF Syria consolidated its human resources (HR) expansion, advertising 125 vacant posts throughout the year and filling more than 90 per cent of them.

UNICEF Syria appointed a staff counsellor to promote staff well-being, including through counselling; monthly e-bulletins; focus group discussions; and workshops (stress management, negotiating your needs, prevention of harassment and abuse). The counsellor visited field offices to provide counselling and team building. Six staff members also attended the ethics dialogue facilitation training in Amman.

A fully functional peer support volunteer team was put in place, ready to support staff members as needed.

UNICEF Syria national staff continued to benefit from the use of compressed work schedules that allowed staff to take two days off after cumulative 20 days physical presence. Staff also benefitted from the SECTO for field offices, which allows staff to take one week off after a continuous period of eight weeks worked on a compressed work schedule.

Training was held to ensure that staff and supervisors actively engaged in performance management focusing on SMART key deliverables and linkages to training needs, which resulted in 92 per cent completion of the 2016 planning phase of the PER.

UNICEF Syria’s commitment to learning was formalized through a dedicated learning budget, revised standard operating procedures, a learning database to track learning opportunities and streamline application and review processes. A total of 139 staff benefited from one or more learning opportunities, with 17 supported by the learning committee to complete external learning, and 36 participating in stretch assignments in and outside the country.

The office improvement plan that was developed based on a staff survey conducted last year was implemented in full collaboration with the staff association. The staff association played a critical role in improving staff morale by working closely with the management. A total of four Joint Consultative Committee Meetings were held between the staff association and management in 2016.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

Despite challenges throughout the year, particularly in terms of permissions and approval for procuring IT and telecommunication equipment, UNICEF Syria was able to upgrade its IT infrastructure to enhance the delivery of its programme operations. Server rooms were set up in all offices with requirements such as servers, storage, UPS, Switch, Wireless connectivity, secure system gateway, printing, scanning and Fax service.
Laptops were upgraded to ensure uninterrupted work and standards maintained in line with ICT policy. All offices were provided with VHF radio to cover needs for all staff as per MOSS requirements. To ensure redundancy internet link and readiness in field offices, VSAT stations were installed in Aleppo, Homs, Quamishli and Tartous. A new Citrix portal site was setup and configured at the main office to provide remote access to local drives.

A new E1 line was installed to increase capacity and provide multiple services such as conference bridge simultaneously for all offices and redundancy for external lines. To ensure continuity of internet service, a microwave link was installed from Damascus to Aleppo, which provided reliable and secure access to internet.

The Syria share point web site was configured to provide online services such as human resources advertisement, online address book and sharing online documentation between all offices. A new telephone system was installed that extended service to two backup sites through secure and reliable connectivity. As part of the disaster recovery plan, two backup sites were set up with all required IT services.

The ICT footprint continued to be reduced by streamlining IT operational services through the use of Apps, Telecommunication services, digital scanner and fax services.

Programme Components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 Children and women benefit from quality health and nutrition services with a focus on the most vulnerable groups

Analytical Statement of Progress:
More than 1.3 million children and women had access to health services through 16 rehabilitated public health centres, 95 health centres and 30 mobile health teams run by local NGOs. UNICEF expanded the provision of basic maternal and child health services through support to the existing health system as well as partnership with local NGOs to provide health services in areas where MOH cannot reach or areas that do not have functional health centres. The expansion of health services was achieved through rehabilitating health centres, expanding partnerships with local NGOs to provide health services and provision of essential health and nutrition supplies to MOH, SARC and local NGOs.

To prevent children’s deaths, UNICEF supported a routine immunization (RI) programme and supplementary immunization activities (SIAs). Some 2.4 million children were reached during the national immunization days for polio. UNICEF provided vaccines, cold chain equipment, syringes, vaccination cards, capacity building for vaccinators and supervisors, and supported logistics in collaboration with WHO. In coordination with the Regional Office, a special multi-antigen campaign consisting of three rounds was implemented with a focus on hard-to-reach and besieged locations. The numbers of U5 reached in HARD-TO-REACH and besieged areas in the three rounds were 475,549, 225,915, and 394,571, respectively. All besieged locations were reached with vaccination services by the mobile vaccination teams, except Idleb and Raqqa.

UNICEF provided technical capacity training to 2,706 male and female health workers on the management of acute malnutrition and Infant Young Child Feeding (IYCF) to treat and prevent malnutrition and stunting. Evidence generated through SMART surveys conducted in accessible areas in 11 out of the 14 Syrian governorates over the course of 2015/2016 indicated moderate levels of global acute malnutrition (GAM) and chronic malnutrition or
stunting among girls and boys under five years of age at 3 per cent and 12.7 per cent, respectively. A GAM rate of 7.8 per cent was recorded among women in child-bearing age, which is much higher than the under-five GAM levels. Similar results were recorded by a rapid SMART survey conducted in January 2016 in Ar-Rastan district and Taldou sub-district in northern rural Homs, where a GAM level of 2.9 per cent was reported among girls and boys under five, which is considered acceptable based on the WHO classification of acute malnutrition. SMART survey results also revealed that anaemia was prevalent among children under five, with prevalence rate of 25.9 per cent, and women in child-bearing age, with a prevalence rate of 24.5 per cent. These results alerted nutrition partners to the possibility of other serious levels of micronutrient deficiencies beyond anaemia among children and women.

Despite the acceptable levels of acute malnutrition reported among under 5 children, factors such as sub-optimum infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices (particularly the low levels of exclusive breastfeeding below 30 per cent, use of infant formula in situations of poor sanitation and limited dietary diversity) were likely to contribute to higher rates of acute malnutrition.

Existing food insecurity, deteriorating livelihood options, and population displacement exacerbated vulnerability, while limited access to quality water and poor hygiene practices contributed to a high prevalence of diarrhoea and other childhood diseases. These factors can negatively influence the nutrition situation, especially in the context of worsening healthcare and service coverage that characterize inaccessible besieged and hard-to-reach locations.

Combined, these factors have the potential to further jeopardize the health status of girls and boys under five and pregnant and lactating women (PLW), thus increasing the risk of undernutrition, morbidity and mortality.

**OUTPUT 1** National health and nutrition policies and strategies are developed based on quality data

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

UNICEF supported MOH to review Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI), Control of Diarrhoea Diseases (CDD) and Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) strategies, and developed an integrated package for managing childhood illnesses with focus on the neonatal period to reduce children’s death. The latest study on the causes of under-five death in Syria in 2009 showed that 50 per cent of U5 deaths and 70 per cent of infant deaths occur during the first month of life (i.e. during the neonate period), and this can be prevented if more attention is directed towards this very critical stage of a child’s life. UNICEF supported MOH to modify the IMCI strategy. The training manuals for doctors and nurses were simplified and adjusted to the current crisis situations in the country. During 2016, the IMCI was piloted in one district in Lattakia and one district in Damascus, and it will be expanded to other districts in 2017.

Following a WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF Joint Intercountry Regional Meeting on the national management of maternal and child health attended by officials from the Ministry of Health, a national plan was developed for reducing neonatal death (ENAP: Every Newborn Action Plan). The plan was piloted in six hospitals in three governorates and seven sentinel reporting sites were established in private and public hospitals to report on newborn deaths and the causes of these deaths. Implementation of this plan will be assessed at a later stage to support those hospitals with needed trainings and supplies to reduce death among newborns. If the pilot proves successful, the plan will be implemented in all hospitals in 2017.
UNICEF supported MOH to develop and implement a withdrawal strategy for the trivalent polio vaccine (tOPV) by the end of April 2016, and replaced it with the bivalent polio vaccine (bOPV) according to the global plan. This step was critical to ensuring polio eradication in Syria.

The Ministry of Health reviewed the national nutrition strategy jointly with UNICEF. The strategy was reviewed to reflect the current nutrition status based on the SMART survey findings, to ensure the provision of proper IYCF interventions, respond to changing priorities from CMAM into IYCF, and address anaemia among children and pregnant lactating mothers.

UNICEF also supported the establishment and revision of the Iodine Deficiency Disorders policy (IDD) through working groups with all stakeholders and partners, and work is ongoing on the integration of nutrition programs with vaccination programs to integrate screening for malnutrition in the vaccination sessions.

**OUTPUT 2** District health centres are rehabilitated and operational

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
To enhance the technical and managerial capacity of health workers at the district level, more than 6,300 health workers gained knowledge and skills on how to manage different maternal and child health programmes and to provide the needed services to internally displaced people IDPs and host communities. This was done through 150 UNICEF-supported training courses for health workers from all governorates.

UNICEF supported the provision of an integrated primary health care package (including maternal and neonatal care) to the vulnerable population with a focus on IDPs through MOH and 20 local NGOs. In 2016, approximately 1.3 million children and women benefited from a UNICEF-supported health care package through 95 fixed centres and more than 30 mobile teams run by 20 local NGOs. Sixteen health centres located in poor areas with high population density and huge numbers of IDPs were rehabilitated by UNICEF in Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Tartous, Lattakia and Quneitra to increase access to primary health care services for IDPs and vulnerable communities. It is estimated that more than 300,000 beneficiaries can be served by those centres.

Approximately 1.2 million beneficiaries were reached with UNICEF health supplies through convoys, and through distribution to local NGOs and the health directorates in all governorates. The health supplies delivered included inter-agency emergency health kits (IEHK), diarrhoea kits, resuscitation kits, first aid kits, midwifery kits for the normal deliveries, and paediatric kits that are specially designed for Syria for easy passage through checkpoints.

UNICEF also supported communication for development (C4D) activities on maternal and child healthcare issues, with focus on newborn health in coordination with the healthy villages programme. More than 60 female community volunteers gained knowledge on newborn care to pass to their communities in Damascus and Rural Damascus. Hama and Lattakia villages were included in the programme during the second half of the year. The total reach was approximately 300,000 caregivers.
OUTPUT 3 Routine immunization services are strengthened

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Routine immunization services were strengthened through extensive rehabilitation of the cold chain equipment, where a total of 1,127 refrigerators were installed in health centres and in health districts to ensure the effectiveness and potency of vaccines, in addition to 14 cold rooms installed at the central level and at the governorates level.

More than 6,300 vaccinators and supervisors gained knowledge and skills on different aspects of immunization programmes through UNICEF-supported training courses on effective vaccine management, implementation of Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs), and communication skills.

Some 2.4 million children were reached with UNICEF-supported supplementary immunization activities for polio and measles, and a catch-up campaign during the Global Vaccination Week. UNICEF supported the routine vaccination programme and SIAs with one million doses of tOPV, 7 million doses of bOPV, 1.1 million doses of Hepatitis B, 1.06 million doses of BCG, 1.53 million doses of Pentavalent vaccine, 1 million doses of MMR, 0.4 million doses of TT and 0.8 million doses of IPV.

With UNICEF support, as of October 2016 the coverage with DPT3 reached 56 per cent and for measles it reached 78 per cent.

A multi-vaccines campaign targeted the hard-to-reach and besieged areas for the first time since the beginning of the crisis (one round implemented in April, with 85 per cent coverage, a second round implemented in July with 78 per cent coverage, and the third round implemented in November).

 Mothers were aware of the vaccination campaigns and the routine vaccination services thanks to UNICEF efforts in producing and distributing more than one million flyers and posters, as well as training for 155 focal points on communication skills and C4D, and more than 50 orientation sessions for mothers in different governorates.

OUTPUT 4 Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices and micronutrient supplementation are improved

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF shifted the program of nutrition from treatment to prevention through the promotion of breast-feeding and the appropriate infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, which is one of the key areas of the nutrition program. Facility and community-based counselling and awareness raising on exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding were implemented with UNICEF support and the involvement of Ministry of Health, Syrian Arab Red Crescent, Syrian Commission for Family Affairs, and other national and international NGOs. UNICEF reached a total of more than 349,348 children and mothers in hard to reach and besieged locations. Of them, 4,718 were treated for malnutrition with therapeutic nutrition supplies and ready to use complementary food, 344,246 received micronutrients supplements, and 384 mothers were treated for malnutrition. UNICEF screened more than 531,773 children and 133,968 pregnant lactating mothers (PLW) for malnutrition, out of which 10,833 (1,860 SAM and 8,973 MAM) children and 1,436 mothers received subsequent treatment. A total of 333,508 pregnant and lactating mothers were counselled on proper breastfeeding and complimentary feeding practices and 405,368 children and 112,961 mothers received multiple micronutrient supplements.
Air drops for 1,764 cartons of Fortified Spread Pots (Plumpy Doz) were sent to Deir Ezzor, which was enough to prevent malnutrition among 15,876 children aged 6-37 months. A total of 2,059 cartons of high energy biscuits were air dropped, which was enough for 10,295 children.

**OUTCOME 2** Children and their families benefit from safe drinking water, sanitation and improved hygiene practices

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF adopted a dual approach to addressing the WASH needs in conflict-torn Syria. The first strategy aimed at meeting lifesaving needs in the immediate term, whereas the second comprised focused on durable solutions that built the resilience of local institutions and strengthened the capacity of local communities. Through this approach, UNICEF was able to achieve its targets in a cost-effective manner. Results were achieved through a diverse range of partnerships with line Ministries, including Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA), and Water Authorities at Governorate level, private sector, UN agencies, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), and national and international NGOs. The impact of UNICEF interventions included eliminating waterborne disease outbreaks.

UNICEF reached more than 1.7 million people through life-saving interventions such as water trucking and rehabilitation of WASH facilities in IDP shelters and hospitals. This represented approximately 118 percent of the target. In most cases, resilience building activities were implemented simultaneously with emergency response. In terms of resilience strengthening, UNICEF provided improved and sustained access to drinking water and sanitation to more than 3.9 million people through infrastructure interventions representing approximately 98 percent of the target.

Overall, UNICEF was able reach 12 per cent of the people in need (PIN) with emergency WASH interventions and 21 per cent of the population with improved and sustained access to water and sanitation services.

UNICEF’s work thus far covered both accessible and hard-to-reach (HARD-TO-REACH) areas including Eastern Aleppo, Idlib, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor. Of the abovementioned results, nearly 0.2 million people were reached with life-saving interventions, representing 12 per cent of the result, and more than 0.5 million people were reached through resilience building, representing 14 per cent of the result in hard-to-reach areas. More than 0.6 million people were reached with WASH non-food items (NFIs) through cross-line Inter Agency (IA) convoys.

**OUTPUT 1** National institutions and civil society organizations have enhanced capacity in WASH programme implementation

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Noting the key role national institutions play in advancing sustainable and durable results, UNICEF Syria continued to provide technical assistance (TA) in WASH to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). The TA commenced with capacity mapping of available human resources, followed by design of tailor made capacity strengthening programmes for furthering the capacity of available staff. This included all aspects of programming covering assessment, planning, implementation and management. SARC is now better positioned to adequately implement WASH programmes employing state-of-the-art techniques and in conformity with international norms and standards.
OUTPUT 2 Water and sanitation systems and services are rehabilitated.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Similar to many middle-income countries, Syria had fairly developed water and sanitation infrastructure prior to the crisis. Having established that more than 90 per cent of internally displaced persons reside in host communities and while continuing to accord emergency response top priority, UNICEF explored every opportunity to build the resilience of local institutions and strengthen the capacity of local communities for more durable results in a cost-effective manner as stand-alone interventions or simultaneous with emergency response.

In terms of emergency response, UNICEF provided nearly 1.5 billion litres of safe drinking water through water trucking, benefiting more than 0.6 million people. More than 135,000 family and baby hygiene kits and more than 1.2 million bars of soap were distributed to nearly 770,000 people, including through IA cross-line convoys. UNICEF continued to address the critical needs of internally displaced persons in collective shelters and camps through a wide array of interventions, which included the provision of 26 mobile toilets and bathing cubicles benefiting nearly 7,500 people, provision/rehabilitation of permanent and temporary water supply systems benefiting nearly 20,000 people, provision of water heaters, emergency water supply, distribution of WASH NFIs benefiting more than 0.6 million people, and delivery of hygiene awareness raising sessions reaching more than 112,000 people.

In hard to reach areas, UNICEF ensured people had access to safe drinking water through the distribution of 250 million water treatment tablets (aquatabs) capable of treating nearly 1.25 billion litres of water.

In 2016, UNICEF focussed on ensuring quality of results. This involved comprehensive programming that focussed on service quality as opposed to individual elements of respective systems. In this regard, 25 comprehensive water supply projects were completed, benefiting approximately 2.5 million people. These covered source rehabilitation/development, transmission and distribution systems and encompassed more than 150 km of pipelines and more than 450 groundwater wells equipped and rehabilitated.

On the sanitation front, UNICEF completed rehabilitation of 15 projects benefiting more than 1.2 million people.

Due to the ongoing electrical power supply crises, delivering fuel for operating water and sanitation facilities was critical for operating the water supply systems where UNICEF provided more than 5 million litres of fuel benefiting more than 1.5 million people. UNICEF ensured access to safe drinking water supplies to more than 13 million people, 25 per cent of whom were in HARD-TO-REACH areas, through provision of the critical drinking water supplies’ disinfectant (sodium hypochlorite), which was a key contributor to eliminating waterborne diseases outbreaks. This intervention had a wide geographic footprint across Syria, including HARD-TO-REACH areas in Ar-Raqqa, Eastern Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor.

OUTPUT 3 Schools provide improved water and sanitation facilities

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Similar to many middle-income countries, Syria had a fairly developed education system, with nearly 22,000 schools nationwide. Six years into the crisis, with Education budgets decreasing, many schools used by internally displaced persons, overburdening of school WASH facilities, and attacks on schools, the water and sanitation facilities in many of these schools were rendered dysfunctional or inadequate. It also became clear that communities...
and children have started developing ill coping mechanisms, which were compromising hygiene practices.

In order to address these issues and ensure that schools provide the appropriate learning environment to children, in addition to supporting the increase in enrolment rates and reducing dropouts, UNICEF scaled up its WASH in Schools programme. WASH and education sections worked jointly to provide a comprehensive schools package. This included rehabilitation/development of water and sanitation facilities while simultaneously delivering comprehensive hygiene awareness raising campaigns with the distribution of critical hygiene supplies or individual components as deemed appropriate. To date UNICEF has improved the school learning environment in 607 schools by providing gender responsive and child friendly water and sanitation facilities that address the special needs of children with disabilities, benefiting more than 292,000 school children.

OUTPUT 4 Technical Support

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The primary purpose of the WASH sector is to optimize delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene promotion assistance to affected populations through improved coordination of the response at all levels. WASH programming seeks to strengthen the humanitarian response by demanding high standards of predictability, accountability and partnership. To date, the sector has sub-national coordination platforms in Tartous (covering Tartous, Idleb and Lattakia), and Aleppo, while Quamishli and Homs coordination forums are run based on needs. Coordination promoted the achievement of more strategic responses through better utilization of available resources by clarifying the division of labour among sector partners, better defining the roles and responsibilities and prioritization of interventions. The WASH sector also maintained active contacts with key donors and regularly provided updates and issues of concern, especially on the state of service delivery. The WASH sector also maintained a good information system that supports the decision-making process and helps identify gaps.

UNICEF led the WASH sector (along with SARC as co-lead) and maintained coordination with the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) and sector partners to meet and harmonize the critical needs both on resilience building and lifesaving emergency WASH response across the country. The WASH sector provided leadership in planning and coordination for responding to emerging needs to ensure that a predictable response to the people in need in Syria is achieved. As of November 2016, WASH sector partners could reach more than 66 per cent of the target of Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) on strategic objective one, with more than 5.8 million benefitting (against the target of 8.7 million) with resilience and sustained interventions through repair, rehabilitation and augmentation of the water supply system. On the humanitarian lifesaving front, more than 185.5 per cent of the target obtained access to WASH NFI, which reached more than 4.5 million people (against the target of 2.4 million) for maintaining/sustaining their established hygienic behaviour and 42.6 per cent of the target, with 1.4 million people (target: 3.3 million) with humanitarian lifesaving WASH facilities. In this process, the WASH sector also maintained cordial relationships and partnerships with ICRC and IFRC and made every effort possible both at national and sub-national levels to ensure critical needs were met jointly, gaps were filled and overlaps were minimized throughout.

Within the Whole of Syria approach, the WASH sector is distributed among three distinct hubs, namely Syria (Damascus), Turkey (Gaziantep), and Jordan (Amman). This approach facilitated and assisted implementing partners (within Syria and cross-border) to agree on common strategic objectives and response plans to ensure complementarity of activities while eliminating overlaps. This entailed development of a joint operational plan, periodic
review and management of information and analysis for informed decision making processes across the three locations. Some of the key functions of the Whole of Syria (WoS) are enabling partners to ensure coverage is maximized and people in need are reached within acceptable timelines within often unpredictable and highly insecure operational environments.

OUTCOME 3 School-age girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable, benefit from inclusive quality pre-primary, basic, secondary and non-formal education

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2016, UNICEF Syria provided technical support to the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Directorates of Education (DOEs) and other education sector partners in advancing equitable access to quality learning opportunities for vulnerable children (5-17 years) and adolescents (10-19 years), regardless of where they live. UNICEF played a leading role in formulating and operationalizing the national education response planning, institutional capacity development, and the education sector coordination mechanisms. The nationwide ‘Back to Learning (BTL)’ initiative succeeded in reaching 3,018,500 in-school children with education supplies (i.e. textbooks, stationery, school bags). The BTL media campaign, supported by C4D, reached 6.5 million people with education messages through radio, TV spots, and door-to-door community mobilization activities. An estimated 1,200 volunteers, including youth, informed community members, parents, caregivers, teachers and children of school registration procedures and encouraged them to support children to return to and learn in school.

To improve a protective learning environment, UNICEF and partners rehabilitated 401 schools for 189,199 children and established 324 prefabricated classrooms for 24,698 children in Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Hama, Homs, Lattakia, Hassakeh and Tartous. UNICEF, along with MOE and NGOs, launched alternative education for out-of-school children. The self-learning and Curriculum B reached more than 136,339 out-of-school children in both accessible and hard-to-reach and besieged locations. Special advocacy efforts were made by UNICEF for simplifying school registration and examination procedures, as well as for wider humanitarian access to previously inaccessible areas in some governorates. As a result, UNICEF’s upstream and downstream interventions contributed to an increase in enrolment from 3.24 million children (60 per cent of the school-age population) to 3.66 million (68 per cent) between academic years 2014/15 and 2015/16. These efforts also resulted in a decrease in the number of out-of-school children from 2.12 million (40 per cent) in 2014/15 to 1.75 million (32 per cent) in 2015/16. The positive trends were attributed to collective sector initiatives by MOE, DOEs, NGOs and the UN agencies in the Whole of Syria response.

Through inter-agency aid convoys with the UN agencies and Syria Arab Red Crescent (SARC), UNICEF managed to provide essential teaching-learning materials to 137,380 children in 25 hard-to-reach and besieged locations of Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Idlib, and Rural Damascus. These results were critical to demonstrate that UNICEF maintained impartiality in terms of education response to both government-controlled areas and cross-line besieged areas. UNICEF strived to deliver education aid to the most vulnerable children, regardless of which areas they lived in.

Another notable achievement spearheaded by UNICEF was the investment shift towards education opportunities for out-of-school children. UNICEF acknowledges that 1.75 million children (5-17 years old) still remain out of school and 1.35 million are at risk of dropping out across the country in 2015/16. The economic loss of school dropout accounts for US$ 0.7 billion, which means that two decades of educational development has been lost. In
particular, Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Idleb, Raqqa, Homs, Lattakia and Damascus suffer from high populations of out-of-school children.

To tackle this issue, UNICEF placed greater emphasis on disparity reduction in access to learning opportunities for out-of-school children, regardless of their hardship environments. UNICEF, along with MOE and UNRWA, finalized innovative self-learning materials. The self-learning programme, accredited by MOE, was launched to enable out-of-school children to keep learning at home or in their communities and to prepare for the national exams, where they have no access to school due to insecurity or other barriers. MOE and UNICEF generated the standard operational procedures and the user guide for the self-learning programme. The implementation of the self-learning programme was a notable breakthrough in 2016. UNICEF also launched the accelerated education programme 'Curriculum B' for previously out-of-school children who missed out on education for months and years. Curriculum B helps them to catch up on two-years of academic contents within a single year to integrate them into the formal education.

Because the quality of the education also matters, the following is of concern. More than 150,000 education personnel and teachers left the teaching force due to ongoing violence and displacement. Teachers on duty were overstretched with overcrowded classrooms and an influx of displaced children in safe areas. Many schools in double or triple shifts have come to terms with shorter and/or disrupted teaching hours. Most of the school teachers and counsellors were not properly equipped with knowledge and skills to handle children in need of psychosocial support and risk awareness, or children with disabilities.

In response, MOE and UNICEF accelerated teacher training in areas of active learning and continuous professional development. Teacher training on active learning, Curriculum B classroom management and ECE reached 6,017 teachers in 2016. Teachers’ professional development was also one of the priority areas to promote in the education sector in 2016 and beyond. Non-state armed groups influenced the quality of education, introducing slight or extensive modifications to the curriculum in schools partly or fully under their control. Due to the political sensitivity, history and religious subjects were removed from the curriculum. Although the exact figures were not available, the government schools reportedly had to be shut down in Raqqa and Deir ez Zour. The education sector and UNICEF continued to monitor the education situation across the country.

OUTPUT 1 Policies, strategies and guidelines are available for efficient management and delivery of inclusive quality education

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF provided expertise to MOE in formulating the national standard guidelines for school infrastructure. MOE prioritized the provision of light school rehabilitation and prefabricated classrooms equipped with child-friendly furniture and WASH facilities, including gender-sensitive latrines. UNICEF advocated successfully for a new design of desks and chairs that facilitates interactive learning. The need for school infrastructure assistance remained acute in Syria.

Multiple displacements is one of the major reasons for children dropping out of school in conflict areas. Many schools in accessible areas suffer from overcrowded classrooms with an influx of internally displaced children. To address the overcrowded classrooms, some schools introduced double/triple shift (morning, noon-time and afternoon class), however this means that learning hours per child are reduced from six to two to three hours a day. This has serious implications for the quality of teaching and learning. Overcrowded classrooms do not allow for sufficient spaces to accommodate new arrivals, leaving them out of school. In this sense, providing additional learning spaces is critical in three ways: to decongest
already overcrowded classrooms; to accommodate out-of-school children in school, and to
prevent internally displaced children from becoming groups of out-of-school children.
UNICEF education and WASH sections jointly supported MOE in updating the operation
standards of safe and protective school environments, giving due consideration to inclusion,
protection, and gender, as well as child friendliness. The standards defined technical
specifications for classrooms, prefabricated classrooms, floors, ventilation, electrical works,
WASH facilities and play areas for children. These specifications are recognized as standard
benchmarks for all education sector partners, including NGOs, the UN and third parties, for
school rehabilitation. The light school rehabilitation work covered repair/replacements of
doors and windows and minor fixtures (i.e. walls, tiles, sport facilities). As part of disaster risk
reduction, shatter-proof films were placed on classroom windows to minimize the risks to
students and teachers caused by shelling explosions and mortars. Special arrangements
were made for children with disabilities (i.e. hand rails in the corridors of first floor, and
ramps in school entrances). There was repair/maintenance of electric system; painting for
classroom, corridor and entrance with child friendly colours and constructive drawing related
to hygiene promotion.

To scale up alternative education for out-of-school children, UNICEF and partners developed
the implementation guidelines and operation standards for the self-learning programme. The
guidelines and standards were designed to explain or clarify the steps to be taken by
MOE/DOEs, NGOs, SARC and the UN to identify out-of-school children and organize the
self-learning sessions in different local contexts. The operation guidelines and standards
were shared with UNICEF Regional Office and partners for wider use and replication at the
WoS level.

OUTPUT 2 Institutional capacities at national and governorate level are enhanced to ensure
emergency preparedness and response in education

Analytical Statement of Progress:
MOE and UNICEF led the education sector coordination and provided technical support to
the capacity development of the sector partners in terms of education response and
information management systems. UNICEF organized the orientation workshop on the Inter-
agency network for education in emergencies (INEE) minimum standards for 417
practitioners from MOE, SARC, NGOs and UN agencies. This helped the practitioners to
understand their roles and responsibilities for communication and coordination with local
authorities and communities. Building on this initiative, MOE and UNICEF were supposed to
develop the education preparedness and response plan at national and governorate levels
in late 2016. This was postponed until early 2017 due to competing priorities of emergency
responses to Aleppo and Raqqa. The institutional capacity development at the sector level

For system enhancement, UNICEF worked closely with UNESCO to organize a two-day joint
workshop on support in EMIS in Damascus. Key stakeholders, such as the MOE Planning
Department and IT Department, agreed upon the development of the joint workplan that
covers the assessment of capacity gaps and the capacity development support in terms of
information management (IM). UNICEF and MOE/DOEs launched the IM capacity
development sessions on school-level data collection and 4Ws (who does what, where,
when). This upstream support is expected to promote evidence-informed planning and
equity-based programming in response to the Syria crisis.

Under this output, UNICEF also initiated the end-user assessment for quality programme
delivery. To gauge the relevance and usefulness of the self-learning programme, UNICEF
undertook a qualitative assessment drawing on essential end-user feedback. The
assessment collected and analysed the views and experiences of a randomly selected group
of 102 children and 37 teachers in selected locations in Aleppo and Hama. The aim was to
provide a snapshot of end-user feedback on various aspects of the self-learning modality, including the perceived relevance and usefulness of the programme, level of satisfaction with the self-learning materials and related issues. Overall, the self-learning materials were positively received by both children and supervisors (parents and resource persons). Of those interviewed, there was an overall 80 per cent satisfaction rate from children and a 97 per cent satisfaction rate from supervisors on the quality and usefulness of the materials. The assessment also pointed to areas for future improvement. A number of children found that there was a need for more space for writing in the exercise booklet and some of the content needed further clarity. The self-learning materials distributed were found to be used by children on a regular basis, though the exact engagement varied, presumably depending on children’s circumstances.

**OUTPUT 3** Equitable access to quality education opportunities provided.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

For the Back to Learning (BTL) initiative in academic year 2016/17, UNICEF, along with MOE and partners, reached 2,580,798 in-school children with textbooks and teaching learning materials in all governorates. Of those, 856,566 children received school bags and stationery. The BTL initiative supported timely enrolment of children in the new academic year. More than 6.5 million people were reached with BTL education messages through radio, TV and SMS, and 300,000 people, including 90,000 children were also reached with face-to-face mobilization activities by 1,200 community volunteers. UNICEF also made efforts to reach 287,141 children with teaching-learning materials in 146 hard to reach and besieged locations of Aleppo, Hassakeh, Hama, Homs, Idleb, Raqqa, Quneitra and Rural Damascus.

UNICEF launched the accelerated education programme ‘Curriculum B’, helping 18,026 previously out-of-school children to learn two-year curriculum contents in a single year. Curriculum B was designed to reintegrate the children into formal education. UNICEF also had a partnership with MOE, NGOs and Syria Arab Red Crescent (SARC) to provide remedial education for children at risk of dropping out. More than 255,376 children were able to access remedial education and improve academic performance. UNICEF scaled up the self-learning programme for out-of-school children in both accessible and hard to reach areas. UNICEF reached 118,313 out-of-school children and helped them to keep learning and prepare for the national exams, regardless of which area they lived in.

Quality education was also addressed throughout 2016. According to the sector analysis, one in three schools – more than 7,400 schools – were no longer used as a learning environment. In response, UNICEF and partners rehabilitated 401 schools for 189,199 children and established 324 prefabricated classrooms for 24,698 children in Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Hama, Homs, Lattakia, Hassakeh and Tartous. Temporary classrooms were created to provide learning space for 14,135 through NGO partners. UNICEF, along with MOE and NGOs, reached 6,017 with active learning, Curriculum B classroom management and ECE. UNICEF adapted a three-pronged approach to teacher training: active learning; specialized training for Curriculum B; and continuous Teachers’ Professional Development (TPD). UNICEF and MOE planned the operationalization of TPD to enhance teachers’ capacity based on the training needs assessments that incorporate life skills and citizenship education. TPD is part of system strengthening and school-based management by re-activating sub-district-level teachers’ resource centres in target governorates. UNICEF advocated a TPD framework that was adopted by MOE and DOE and will be launched early 2017 in Homs, Hama, Tartous and Lattakia, benefitting 7,000 teachers.
To promote Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), UNICEF supported the dissemination of the ECD national strategy and training manuals for pre-school teachers and other stakeholders. UNICEF and Aga Khan Foundation provided training to 18 DOE and NGO staff on ECCE community-based activities in Homs and Hama. The partnership with NGOs enabled UNICEF to reach 3,403 pre-school children in Hama, Rural Damascus and Lattakia. Pre-school children had access to indoor learning activities, age-appropriate toys and storybooks for early learning and school readiness.

**OUTPUT 4 Education Sector Coordination**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
As the sector lead, UNICEF provided technical support to MOE and the sector partners in strengthening the coordination mechanisms at national and sub-national levels. The education sector reached 3.4 million children and youth with formal and non-formal education services and supplies, including 411,932 in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. This was attributed to collective efforts by 39 implementing partners that included 24 national NGOs, 6 international NGOs, SARC and Palestinian Red Crescent Society, 2 line Ministries, and 5 UN agencies. The sub-national education sector coordination was launched in Aleppo and Rural Damascus, with which the sector partnership was expanded to a total of 69 organizations (3 line Ministries, SARC, 43 national NGOs, 13 international NGOs, 9 UN agencies). The coordination and coherence in both cross-line and cross-border responses was improved through the joint education sector analysis, strategy development and joint operational planning with Amman and Gaziantep hubs in the Whole of Syria approach.

The education sector, led by MOE and UNICEF, completed the sector analysis of the 2015-16 school year based on the latest EMIS data in coordination with the Central Bureau of Statistics. The sector analysis, drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, demonstrated the trend of enrolment and dropout per district and estimated that 1.75 million children were out of school in the country. The findings revealed geographical disparity in education access and informed the HNO and the HRP 2017. The 2010-15 EMIS analysis was finalized and published. These products helped MOE, UNICEF and other partners to inform evidence-based planning and equity-focused programming. The findings of the analysis were utilized by partners in preparing and designing education interventions for the HRP 2017, advocacy and resource mobilization.

To promote equity and impartiality, the education sector, together with UNICEF, advocated with MOE to facilitate the travel of children from hard-to-reach and besieged areas to the examination centres in the period between May and August 2016. Provision of bursaries enabled 12,606 students to participate in the 9 Grade and 12 Grade national exams. For system strengthening, the education sector facilitated a capacity building initiative to orient 417 education practitioners of MOE/DOEs, UN, national and international NGOs, and SARC on INEE minimum standards for education between January and April 2016. Training of data collection and analysis at school and community levels was undertaken for 71 MOE/DOE officials to improve their monitoring and reporting within the framework of HRP 2017. The education sector also facilitated UNICEF and UNESCO to provide technical support to EMIS by training 229 MOE/DOE officials to enhance their skills to collect the annual school census between September and October 2016. This contributed to reinforcing the systematic and timely data collection and analysis for evidence-informed planning and advocacy.

The education sector supported resource mobilization by facilitating five NGO partners to apply for the Syria Humanitarian Fund (SHF), of which two national NGOs received US$4 million. The fund contributed to scaling up education access for the most vulnerable children and youth, including those in hard-to-reach areas.
OUTCOME 4 Adolescents have improved capacities to contribute to enhancing resilience and social cohesion in their communities

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Syrian adolescents and youth (10-24 years) remained disempowered by low access to quality education, including Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), limited access to protection and basic services, high unemployment and restricted livelihood and engagement opportunities. They lacked voice, avenues for contributing to their communities and involvement in social cohesion and decision-making processes. UNICEF continued to urge longer-term investments to meet the needs of adolescents and youth, to equip them with the assets, skills and motivation to build a more stable future for themselves. As provision of positive opportunities for learning and development is an essential protection strategy for vulnerable and marginalized young people, investing in the second decade of a child’s life so that girls and boys are more resilient and have opportunities to secure meaningful participation remained a priority.

UNICEF maintained a strong focus on promoting the development and participation of adolescents and youth inside Syria (including out of school adolescents, unemployed, vulnerable girls and young people who have been displaced multiple times due to the ongoing conflict). In collaboration with local partners, improved access to a quality package of services responded to the needs of adolescents and youth, while at the same time recognizing that participation opportunities remain limited in the current context. Anchored in the No Lost Generation (NLG) initiative and the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP), and targeting the most vulnerable, including young people with disabilities, a grand total of 750,433 adolescents and youth (54 percent girls) from 11 governorates were reached with a holistic package of services and opportunities, including: alternative education in the form of life skills based education (LSBE), vocational training (e.g. IT, nursing, home electronics, English language, photography, etc.) and entrepreneurship training; and Sport for Development. Access to Adolescent Friendly Services provided through the Ministry of Health improved service utilization and expanded more than 2,800 young people’s knowledge about HIV/AIDS and promoted healthy lifestyles (e.g. prevention of smoking and alcohol/drug addiction). Of the grand total, 91,244 (52 per cent of them girls) were reached in multiple hard to reach and besieged locations.

UNICEF’s partners enhanced the capacity of 466 youth volunteers from NGO partners on alternative education, including Life-Skills Based Education (LSBE), community-based vocational training, as well as concepts and approaches to adolescent development and participation and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These youth in turn reached marginalized girls and boys who were provided with similar training sessions and supported the building of their individual capacities and empowerment. LSBE, coupled with vocational training, becomes crucial in crises contexts, because it increases resilience of young people, boosts employability skills and represents a key pillar for recovery and peacebuilding. This explains why amplifying their voices and establishing mechanisms for engagement at local level must remain a UNICEF priority.

ADAP-scaled C4D and civic/social engagement through sector mainstreaming and supported innovative models of youth engagement. A total of 4,162 adolescent and youth-led initiatives enabled civic leadership and resilience-building of 31,073 young people who developed and led their own initiatives. Girls and boys took an active role of responsible citizenship-building and as community advocates. UNICEF embraced a rights-based approach whereby young people were involved as partners, rather than beneficiaries (i.e. engaged or taking part in the implementation). Young people now serve as community volunteers by promoting social awareness on key UNICEF outcome areas, such as protection, including child labour and child marriage. Young people led the way in
highlighting the importance of environmental protection, including waste collection and recycling. Other examples of civic engagement were seen in conjunction with the 2016 Back to Learning (BTL), Global Handwashing and Polio campaigns, when multiple youth groups were effectively mobilized. When young people are empowered to lead and implement initiatives in their communities, they make positive choices and transcend violence and discrimination. Identifying forums for young people to advocate with decision-makers towards greater social accountability will be explored.

ADAP, together with local partners, designed and established seven Innovation Labs. These innovation labs serve as collaborative working spaces for the most disadvantaged adolescents and youth to work around common goals through design of social and business entrepreneurship projects that directly impact their lives, their peers and the community at large. The seed funding was launched late 2016 and aims to foster greater leadership, resilience, social and economic inclusion of the most vulnerable young people. Thus far, 282 youth (52 per cent of them girls) participated in two phases of basic and advanced (145 youth from the initial pool of 282) entrepreneurship innovation boot camp training. Phase three will support youth with skills in project development and analysis. Fifteen projects are envisaged to be supported with seed funding and mentorship early 2017. ADAP engaged Homsi youth in capacity development on Action Research. The aim is to generate evidence by raising young people’s voices on their aspirations, the challenges and opportunities to those aspirations across key areas in their lives: education and employment, family life, social/civic participation and social inclusion.

The push for a comprehensive cross-sectoral approach to programming culminated in the ADAP-led design of the Multiservice Platform (MSP) concept. Children’s and young people’s (up to 24 years) vulnerabilities remain underpinned by multiple factors. Ensuring cross-sectoral service delivery through MSPs will now lead to more efficient outcomes for UNICEF. Operationalized through local NGO partners, stronger collaboration with the Education and Child Protection programmes ensured that age appropriate services targeted the ‘whole child from one space. The 28 MSPs established expanded services by also including WASH.

OUTPUT 1 Policies, strategies and programmes are in place to enhance skills, capacities and resilience of vulnerable adolescents and youth

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Before the war, Syria had made substantial progress towards the planning of a national youth policy. The outbreak of war in 2011 halted the process and has since drastically changed the situation of young people. There has been limited progress towards the development of a draft outline of a National Framework of Action on Adolescent and Youth Development and Participation. This was due to other competing priorities within UNICEF Syria. The ultimate purpose of a multi-sectoral national framework for action on young people in Syria is to bring together stakeholders – the government, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs); community-based organizations (CBOs); UN agencies, young people and their families – to take action in improving the living conditions of young people specifically. The development, approval and buy-in by all stakeholders of a multi-sectoral national framework for action will allow mainstreaming of young people’s concerns at all levels and into national plans. A draft concept note on how to take this forward was developed and will be taken forward with other internal and external sectoral actors in 2017. Informal consultations were held with some of the key line Ministry partners. The initiative will need further discussion internally. Synergies with other planned Action Frameworks, including in Child Protection, will be explored to leverage and maximize efforts. The idea itself received interest and support at the first meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Youth in November, convened by the Coordination Support Office upon instruction from the RC.
A total of 466 youth volunteers improved their technical capacities in LSBE and vocational training, including PSS, and upon return to their own communities across Syria provided needed capacity building services for adolescents targeted with UNICEF support. This capacity building setup follows a model strategy applied by UNICEF whereby the main training partner of UNICEF, IECD, builds capacity of volunteers associated with local NGOs, some of which UNICEF enters into a program agreement with; thus, enabling UNICEF to reach vulnerable girls and boys with much needed services and opportunities.

OUTPUT 2 Adolescents and youth benefit from equitable access to a comprehensive package of services and opportunities

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF supported delivery of age-appropriate services and opportunities, including LSBE and vocational/entrepreneurship training, Sport for Development and the implementation of adolescent and youth-led social and civic engagement initiatives ('led' is defined as when young people take a leadership role in the planning and implementation of initiatives). A grand total of 750,433 girls and boys (54 per cent girls) ages 10-24 years from 11 Governorates were reached due to continued expansion of NGO partnerships, as well as extended reach to targeted population groups by line Ministries. Of them, 90,234 came from HARD-TO-REACH and Besieged areas, including Eastern Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh City, Al-Waer in Homs, Deir-ez-Zor and areas of Rural Damascus.

Of the grand total of 750, 433 adolescents and youth, 91,528 were equipped with assets in the form of critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity skills; core life skill competencies viewed essential to young people’s transition to adulthood. LSBE and vocational training becomes crucial in crises contexts as it empowers young people to realize their full potential. A total of 16,276 youth accessed community-based vocational training courses provided by local NGOs.

Support to social cohesion through civic engagement (defined as individual or collective actions aimed at improving the wellbeing of young people or their communities) took various forms. Nearly 252,000 youth accessed Sport for Development activities in nine governorates, including IDPs, host communities and young people with disabilities. A total of 31,073 young people participated positively in support of mainstreaming youth engagement across UNICEF sector areas. Young people promoted social awareness on child labour and child marriage issues and participated in the 2016 Back to Learning (BTL), Global Handwashing and Polio campaigns. More than 4,162 initiatives were implemented at community level. ADAP established seven Innovation Labs that serve as collaborative working spaces for adolescents and youth to work around common goals through the design of social and business entrepreneurship projects and other innovative ideas.

Seed funding aimed at providing 1,500 youth (ages 15 and above) skills to design and implement social and business entrepreneurship projects ran into unforeseen delays outside of UNICEF’s control after signing of the annual workplan. Final approval by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour came in October. The initiative will expand access to critical livelihood prospects and aims to foster social and economic inclusion of the most vulnerable. A total of 282 youth, 52 per cent of them girls, participated in basic and advanced (145 youth from the initial pool of 282) entrepreneurship innovation boot camp training. Fifteen projects are envisaged to be supported with seed funding in early 2017. ADAP engaged youth in action research by raising young people’s voices on their aspirations, the challenges and opportunities to those aspirations across key areas in their lives: education and employment, family life, social/civic participation and social inclusion. Routine monitoring tools and guidelines were piloted with the aim of improving qualitative monitoring of social, civic and
economic engagement of adolescents and youth. The ‘Multiservice Platform’ (MSP) approach was designed and rolled out. A Guidance Note, attached to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) was finalized, explaining the core package of minimum services being provided with UNICEF support in 28 sites across Syria.

OUTCOME 5 Children at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation benefit from improved prevention, protection and response interventions

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Widespread conflict and high levels of violence continued in Syria, along with disregard for the rules of international humanitarian law and their corresponding obligations to protect children by all parties to the conflict. The prolonged conflict continued to expose children to violence, abuse and exploitation and grave child rights violations. During 2016, UN documented violations included the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, killing, maiming, abduction, arbitrary detention, attacks against schools and hospitals, sexual and gender-based violence against children, and the denial of humanitarian access.

In this context, separation and deprivation of parental care, involvement in child labour including its worst forms, child marriage, child trafficking, exposure to violence including unexploded ordnance (UXO), along with the profound psychological distress that children are experiencing, remained key protection concerns that need to be addressed, among the numerous difficulties related to the provision of concrete responses.

During the second half of the year, strategic areas of intervention were identified for a more effective response. Together with community based interventions, including psychosocial support and risk education, increased investments were made on the definition of more specialized responses – focusing in particular on children victims of violence and abuse, and on children living in the street and involved in child labour. Funds mobilized during the second part of the year were utilized to support specific interventions to address the needs of separated and unaccompanied children and children living in street situations in Aleppo, while preparatory work is still ongoing for the promotion of specialized responses to children victims of violence and involved in child labour, in particular in Damascus and Homs. Projects responding to the multiple needs of children with disabilities are ongoing in Damascus and Aleppo.

Intensive discussions with national counterparts have set the foundation for the promotion of a model of integrated social services, to be implemented through case management and referral mechanisms, which will allow service providers (both of public services and of NGOs) to consolidate their response and progressively address the most urgent protection needs of children and families in a sustainable way. The first foundational training on case management and integrated services took place in November. The training package utilized includes specific tools for the assessment of the situation of families, and the definition of individual plans for the children needing case management services, as well as guidelines for local social planning, and for the establishment of protocols of cooperation among services. The model will be submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister to obtain the authorizations required for a wider implementation.

The systemic approach promoted allowed UNICEF to ensure a close link between the child protection and the social protection components of the Syria country programme, which were merged in one unit, under the same chief.

UNICEF consolidated and expand the advocacy work promoted throughout all the sectors, focusing on grave violations of children’s rights, which are reported through the monitoring and reporting mechanisms (MRM) and constantly underlined by UNICEF and other agencies
through various channels, with a particular focus on the situation of children in hard to reach and besieged areas.

The expansion and qualification of the provision of psychosocial support to children continued across the country, with increased attention placed on hard to reach areas and areas where new displacements take place and immediate response is more needed. Throughout the year, more than 219,000 children and caregivers participated in structured and sustained psychosocial support activities (88 per cent of the target); more than 467,700 children, adolescents and adults were reached through awareness raising initiatives on child protection (78 per cent of the target), and more than 1,822,000 children received education on the risks of explosive hazards (91 per cent of the target). Under the guidance of the Deputy Representative, extensive efforts were made to identify opportunities to combine multiple interventions through the promotion of multi-service platforms (MSP), based on the successful experience of other offices in the region. The MSPs aim to provide a more comprehensive and effective response to the multiple needs of children who access the services, also ensuring a clear interaction with public service providers through case management, in the attempt to scale up the application of a systemic approach.

Advocacy and awareness initiatives on main child protection threats continued to underpin programmatic interventions during 2016. UNICEF provided technical assistance in addressing child recruitment through the establishment of a high-level committee tasked with developing a prevention and response plan. The plan was presented in June to the Office of the Prime Minister for endorsement. Technical support was also provided for revising the legal framework on child/women trafficking and in the development of a manual on dealing with trafficked women/children.

The child protection sub-sector supported by UNICEF continued to ensure coordination among all the actors involved in Syria, and technical support to enhance the collective response to the protection needs of children. UNICEF contributed to ensuring Syrian authorities' approval for the implementation of a rapid national protection assessment. The information collected from the assessment was critical for the protection analysis of the Humanitarian Needs Overview for 2017, and for defining the child protection response for 2017 included in the Humanitarian Response Plan 2017. UNICEF is also an active member of the gender-based violence sub-sector, as well as of the mental health – psychosocial support working group.

OUTPUT 1 Policies and plans are in place to scale up child protection interventions

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Responding to the concerns raised by the increasing number of children engaged in child labour, UNICEF Syria sustained the inception of a national dialogue through a one day working session that gathered relevant ministries, UN agencies and implementing partners involved in addressing the problem, which led to the identification of priority areas of intervention, including data collection and analysis, and the outline of specific responses.

As a starting point, awareness messages for parents, employers, and children were promoted through national counterparts, the NGO partners and the media. More than 24,700 Facebook users engaged in an online debate about child labour, and more than 13,000 children and 4,000 caregivers were reached and sensitized on the risks to which children are exposed through child labour.

Agreements were made for the promotion of an in-depth assessment in two industrial areas of the country (in Homs and Rural Damascus), where child labour has been identified as a major protection concern, having a very negative impact on the lives of children, starting from early ages. The assessment will be conducted in January 2017, and the results will inform a specific response in the coming months.
From a survey conducted by UNICEF partners within the framework of the ‘back to learning campaign’ in Homs Industrial area, 666 children ranging from 6 to 18 years old were reported as engaged in hazardous work in the surrounding food, chemical and textile factories. The survey also reported that children’s pay is not exceeding US$1.50 per week and that family displacement, low family income and lack of education opportunities are the main causes identified for the exposure of these children to major hazards.

The prevention and response to child trafficking, in line with international standards, was sustained through capacity development initiatives promoted by national institutions for key actors involved. As of 30th November, 2016, 125 representatives from the Ministry of Interior, the Syrian Commission of Family Affairs (SCFA), law enforcement officials and NGOs had participated in four-day training sessions. UNICEF also provided technical support in revising the legal framework related to the trafficking of women and children, as well as the development of a manual for public service providers on the provision of specialized responses to victims of trafficking, which was recently finalized.

To prevent and respond to child recruitment in Syria, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to establish a national work plan on child recruitment. This response plan encompasses international best practices and standards, together with the State’s obligations under international law, to deal with children associated to, and used by, armed groups as victims. The plan was presented to the Prime Minister’s office, and is waiting for endorsement.

The particularly difficult situation of the country, and the sensitivity of issues related to the protection of children, did not provide for the condition to have major progress in other areas of work requiring a revision of legislation and plans, as initially planned and agreed with national counterparts.

**OUTPUT 2** Capacities of Child protection actors and services providers strengthened to better protect vulnerable children from abuse, violence and exploitation

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Responding to the increasingly traumatic situation in which children and their families live, UNICEF continued to enhance the access and quality of psychosocial services (PSS) provided in many parts of the country, including hard to reach areas. In cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MoSAL), the Syrian Commission of Family Affairs and Population (SCFA) and the Ministry of Education (MoE), ‘National guidelines on psychosocial support for children’ were launched in 2016, promoting a set of standard practices based on international principles and methodologies. Induction trainings on the PSS guidelines were organized for public and non-government services. UNICEF also engaged 2,261 staff and volunteers of NGO partners in 11 governorates on a better understanding of psychosocial and child protection principles and practices, for an effective support to children. Sixty one nurses from Damascus, Quneitra and Rural Damascus were also provided with the needed skills to identify and refer children with psychosocial needs.

Schools are one of the most indicated settings for the provision of support to children in distress; for this reason, UNICEF worked closely with the MoE to mainstream psychosocial interventions in schools. A manual for school counsellors on PSS practices was finalized and used to train 132 school counsellors from 11 governorates. The trainees in turn are expected to roll out the training for other colleagues, as an integral part of the teachers’ professional development programme to be promoted in 2017.
With the continuously increasing level of vulnerability affecting children and families, professionals of public services (in particular of DOSAL) and of NGOs need to step up their capacity to respond in a sustainable and coordinated way to the needs of the population. In this direction, UNICEF’s experience in other countries, shared with national counterparts, has facilitated the definition of a model of integrated social services for Syria, focusing on innovative methodologies for case management and referral mechanisms, and on elements of programme and resource management.

A comprehensive training package for case managers and service managers was developed, addressed to public service providers and professionals of NGOs. The first of its kind in Syria, the package also included tools to assess the needs of vulnerable children and families and define individualized responses. Thirty five professionals from DOSALs (14) and NGOs (21) attended a five-day foundational training conducted by UNICEF in November. The MOSAL committed to present the model, and related regulatory provisions, to the Office of the Prime Minister for endorsement.

The capacity of service providers of many stakeholders, with whom UNICEF expanded its partnerships, were also enhanced in mine risk education (MRE), in the attempt to scale up a key intervention to mitigate the increasing risk of exposure to explosive hazards for children and families. A total of 1,080 teachers coming from nine governorates, and 1,245 professionals in local communities, received comprehensive trainings and tools on MRE, and were enabled to roll out the training to other professionals, thus maximizing the outreach of children in schools with life-saving education.

**OUTPUT 3** Case management and referral mechanisms are in place to respond to the protection needs of children

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF continued to expand psychosocial support (PSS) services, as the primary response to the protection needs of children, in the awareness that immediate respite care is essential to help children overcome the traumas to which they are daily exposed. PSS services are also an entry point for the identification of more complex child protection needs. Throughout the year, UNICEF supported the establishment of 141 child friendly spaces and 76 mobile teams in 11 governorates, reaching more than 219,300 children (49 per cent girls) and approximately 21,600 caregivers (86 per cent women), with structured and sustained child protection interventions. Of these, an estimated 20,000 children lived in hard-to-reach and besieged areas.

Awareness activities for children and caregivers and mobilization of local actors, focusing on prevention and mitigation of children’s vulnerabilities, reached more than 370,600 children (49 per cent girls) and more than 97,100 caregivers (55 per cent women).

Efforts are ongoing to enhance the provision of specialized and preventive protection responses to children, either through the combination of multiple interventions in the same location – thus promoting the establishment of Multi-Service Platforms (MSP), in line with the principles of the No Lost Generation initiatives – or identifying among existing child friendly spaces (CFS) those that could be transformed in more specialized services.

In this direction, guidelines on the setup of drop-in centres for children living in the streets and involved in labour were presented to national partners. Three centres are planned to be set up in early 2017, pending funds availability. A package of interventions, including case management, is also planned to respond to the specific needs of children involved in child labour in Homs.
Qualified technical expertise was provided to national counterparts (SCFA) for the establishment of a safe home for victims of violence and abuse in Rural Damascus, focused on providing intensive care to overcome traumatic exposures to various forms of violence, while defining a longer-term project through the involvement of case managers. The service is intended as a model to be replicated in other areas.

The shift in the provision of more specialized services has also informed the response to the exacerbated situation of Aleppo: together with psychosocial services and advanced psychological support, children displaced from Eastern Aleppo are being taken care of through the mobilization of social workers in cooperation with DOSAL, the identification of temporary residential placements for children deprived of parental care, and specialized responses for children with disabilities. Of the 551 children reached with specialized child protection services throughout the year, 228 were in Aleppo.

An innovative programme aimed at supporting children with disabilities and their families was launched in 2016 in partnership with an Italian NGO. Individual development plans were developed for 120 children with disabilities, sustaining their psycho-motoric development through advanced technology solutions. In the attempt to ensure a comprehensive response to the multiple needs of these children, a platform gathering key stakeholders (MoSAL; MoH; MOE) was created, and sustained through exchanges with Italian professionals.

**OUTPUT 4** A protective environment is enabled through enhanced awareness and advocacy including for risk education

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF, in close collaboration with its partners, including the MoE, continued the implementation of its mine risk education (MRE) programme in schools, aimed at mitigating the risks associated with the exposure of children to explosive remnants. Approximately 1,732,700 children from 11 Governorates were provided with lifesaving information. UNICEF also expanded its partnership on MRE at community level, and engaged with other relevant stakeholders (Ministry of Information, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Local Administration, Ministry of Health, UNRWA, GAPAR, and NGOs) to promote MRE through a range of initiatives. More than 89,000 children and adults were reached in out of school settings. UNICEF also conducted a social media campaign - with a potential audience of more than 1.6 million people - on risks associated with explosive remnants. Mine risk educational videos, human stories and photos were published on social media. Innovative materials (a 3D risk education video and knowledge games) were produced to further engage children in an interactive way. UNICEF continues to work with the MoI for the development of a long-term strategy of UXO risk reduction.

UNICEF supported the Government in addressing child recruitment through the establishment of a high-level committee tasked to develop a prevention and response plan, and provided technical guidance throughout the working sessions to ensure international legal standards were reflected in the draft response plan. The high-level committee finalized a national work plan that was submitted to the competent authorities for endorsement. The plan identifies five main areas of intervention that will require UNICEF’s future support, such as: policy and law revision to ensure protection of children associated with armed forces; psychosocial support and rehabilitation to recruited children and re-integration; capacity building of national institutions staff dealing with recruited children; awareness raising for the prevention of child recruitment and on addressing the needs of recruited children; and national reconciliation committee discussion/information sharing. The sensitivity of the issue, and concerns related to the topic allowed UNICEF to achieve progress at a slower pace than planned.
Reporting and advocacy on grave violations of children’s rights continued through the verification and reporting of cases according to the procedures of the UN Security Council-mandated Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM). UNICEF advocacy continued to be centred on highlighting the nature and scope of grave violations of child rights, and on calling on all parties to the conflict to abide by their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law.

OUTCOME 6 Social and economic vulnerabilities of disadvantaged children and their families are identified and addressed.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Under this programme component, UNICEF Syria is focusing on the provision of essential responses to families of particularly vulnerable children, in consideration of the high levels of poverty affecting the Syrian population and of the numerous constraints related to their livelihoods. The main component of the response in 2016 was the distribution of clothes and blankets to protect children from the consequences of harsh weather, especially in winter. As of November 2016, approximately 500,000 children have been reached with winter and summer clothes, and almost 300,000 clothes kits and blankets are in the pipeline for a massive distribution during winter 2016-17. UNICEF has continuously improved procurement processes, which has allowed high quality items to be acquired locally, thus sustaining the local economy and shortening the procurement time and ensuring timely distributions. A major constraint in reaching as many children as possible is the lack of adequate and timely funding, despite the funds mobilization campaign launched at regional level.

Since the first months of 2016, the utilization of e-vouchers has been introduced and expanded as a new modality for the efficient and effective distribution of NFIs. An efficient system of identification of local providers (clothes shops) and of distribution of electronic cards enabled thousands of IDP families living in urban areas to purchase clothes for their children, giving them the chance to choose from various options and meet their needs in a flexible way.

During the last months of the year, a remarkable innovation was introduced in UNICEF’s social protection programme, aimed at sustaining the resilience of particularly vulnerable families in the response to the needs of their children: the direct distribution of cash transfers. The distribution of supplies still seems to be the most utilized – and in many instances the only possible - modality in Syria of responding to social protection needs of families, but solid preparatory work throughout the first part of 2016 created the conditions for the launch of the first cash-based social protection programme for Syrian families promoted by a UN agency (apart from UNWRA, which focuses on Palestinian refugees in Syria). The programme targets a particularly vulnerable group of children -- those with disabilities -- and started in November in Aleppo, one of the most affected areas of the country. The intervention includes two components: cash transfers provided directly to families, and social support through case management, ensured throughout the duration of the programme. A total of 1,700 families of children with complex disabilities were reached in November, and will be supported for one year. The programme will be expanded starting in January 2017, thanks to the contribution of the German Government.

As a result of UNICEF’s advocacy and technical assistance, new evidence will be gathered on children and adults with disabilities. UNICEF took the lead in mobilizing various national and international partners to conduct a comprehensive first-ever study to assess the availability, access to and perceived quality of services for children and adults with disabilities, and their level of social inclusion. In 2016, UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, the National Council for Disabilities, the Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs, the Central Bureau of Statistics, UNDP and WHO, developed
a range of data collection tools, including survey questionnaires, as well as protocols for key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Data collection will be done in 2017. The findings will inform planning and decision-making at national and local levels for the needs, priorities and actions required to better support children and adults with disabilities in Syria.

A number of qualitative end-user assessments also were conducted to obtain feedback on UNICEF programmes and supplies. Post-distribution monitoring tools were developed and rolled out during the 2015-16 winter, collecting feedback from a sample of approximately 4,000 families on the quality, variety and timeliness of the winter clothes and blankets provided for children. This detailed feedback was extremely useful for the Social Policy and Child Protection Section and the Supply Unit to further improve the quality and the type of items for the 2016-17 ‘Winterization Programme’. For the 2016-17 end-user monitoring of the winter kits (through direct distribution and e-vouchers) the M&E/IM Team developed a mobile application (based on Kobo, a free open source software) which enables interviews to be conducted with households, using smartphones instead of paper questionnaires. This significantly reduces costs and ensures that results are available in near real-time for immediate analysis. A small-scale qualitative assessment of the self-learning programme was conducted in May 2016 through interviews with children and teachers in selected areas. Their feedback is being used to further improve certain aspects of the learning materials.

**OUTPUT 1** Reliable evidence is generated and analysed timely according to agreed-upon mechanisms to inform policies and programmes for vulnerable children and families.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

At the start of the new Country Programme in 2016, UNICEF Syria developed a two-year Strategy to further strengthen the complementarity between Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Information Management (IM) and Knowledge Management (KM). The 2016-17 Strategy outlines key approaches, systems, tools and products for M&E, IM and KM as well as the capacities required for implementation. Along with the strategy, updated Standard Operating Procedures for monitoring, reporting and IM were rolled out. The M&E/IM Team also developed a concise training kit on Monitoring & Reporting that was used to further enhance capacities of staff, third-party monitors and national implementing partners. Throughout 2016 the M&E/IM Team provided quality technical advice and support to several surveys and studies conducted or planned jointly with national partners, for example on education, children with disabilities, and Palestinian refugees, as well as knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) regarding child care and protection.

Technical expertise was continuously provided to counterparts and implementing partners for the implementation of specific surveys as well as post-distribution monitoring exercises collecting feedback from beneficiaries, which was instrumental to produce a solid evidence-base for programme evaluation and adjustments and ensure reporting accountabilities.

Despite the many security and access constraints, throughout the year regular situation monitoring and programme monitoring visits were undertaken across the country by UNICEF staff and, in hard to reach areas, by third-party monitors (‘facilitators’). This helped UNICEF Syria remain up-to-date with people’s needs on the ground, including IDPs, and to further improve the implementation of programmes and supplies delivered, based on the monitoring reports from the various governorates. Regular training sessions in 2016 and exchanges of lessons learned contributed to enhance capacities of UNICEF staff, third-party monitors and implementing partners in terms of monitoring, reporting and information management.

During 2016 UNICEF Syria further strengthened its comprehensive Information Management system, ensuring the production of regular information feeding into corporate reporting mechanisms and Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM). At the same time, new
infographics and maps were developed for effective communication and advocacy on the urgent need to protect the rights of all children in every corner of Syria. Through the IM ‘One Stop Shop’ concept, a range of tailor-made information products were produced for internal as well as external purposes. The preparation of a Joint Operational Plan (JOP) together with the UNICEF hubs in Jordan and Turkey as part of the Whole of Syria (WoS) operation further increased the capacity to coordinate interventions, identify gaps, and rationalize the allocation and utilization of resources in response to identified needs of the Syrian people. A joint WoS SOP on Information Management was developed, ensuring disaggregated data sharing, while a SMART 4Ws database developed by UNICEF Syria will be rolled out among all WoS hubs in 2017 to further enhance reporting while reducing transaction costs.

OUTPUT 2 Social care programmes at national and local level address identified vulnerabilities of disadvantaged children and families

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In consideration of the serious economic deprivations affecting the large majority of the population in Syria and of the availability of markets and goods in the country, it is generally understood that cash transfers should be promoted as an efficient and effective way to respond to the needs of families and children, while sustaining their resilience and capacity to provide for themselves in a flexible and responsible way.

The numerous constraints related to the resistance of both the Syrian Government and donors in supporting such interventions prevented UN agencies from promoting cash transfers programmes in Syria, with the exception of UNRWA, targeting Palestinian and Iraqi refugees.

During 2016 UNICEF sustained the dialogue with national and local counterparts, as well as with donors, to promote the introduction of cash transfer schemes. A thorough analysis of the situation resulted in the proposal to support a particularly vulnerable group of families, for whom no specific interventions have been designed so far: families of children with complex disabilities. The benefit for children has been calculated at US$40 per child per month, in consideration of the livelihood needs both of children and of their caregivers (corresponding to the estimated amount required for the purchase of the minimum monthly food basket for two persons). As of December 2016, 1,760 children, out of a total target of 4,200, were reached. The programme will be expanded in January 2017, and further extended to other areas of the country (Tartous, Latakia, Damascus and Rural Damascus, Homs) depending on the availability of resources. Lack of funds has been the major obstacle to the achievement of the planned result for 2016.

The social protection programme intends to provide not only unconditional financial support to families, but also continuous professional support to address their social vulnerabilities. This will be ensured through the involvement of social workers, engaged from the beginning in the identification of eligible beneficiaries, based on criteria agreed with the local Department of Social Affairs. All the social workers are progressively trained on innovative case management methodologies, and will ensure a constant dialogue with public service providers, thus enhancing referral mechanisms and integration of responses.

This component of the programme was developed in close coordination with national counterparts (MOSAL and departments), and in synergy with the child protection programme. This allowed for a consolidation of the systemic approach promoted by the two programmes, and a multiplication of positive effects in the response to the needs of common beneficiaries, i.e. vulnerable children and families. A solid monitoring system was set up to mitigate the risks related to the introduction of this innovative social protection intervention in the country. Thorough verifications were
conducted by UNICEF staff on the eligibility criteria of beneficiaries; on-site monitoring was ensured by the presence of social workers and periodic post distribution monitoring exercises. A consumption analysis involving a small sample of families will be conducted to gather evidence on the impact of the programme on the wellbeing of children and of their families.

**OUTPUT 3** Children are protected from weather hazards through essential winter kits and blankets

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The distribution of NFIs continued throughout the year as one of the most efficient and effective ways to protect children from the consequences of harsh weather, in support to families who are not in the condition to provide for all their needs. From the beginning of the year, more than 562,000 children were reached with seasonal clothes and blankets; in addition, more than 119,000 children living in hard to reach and besieged areas were reached through inter-agency convoy.

All the NFIs procured by UNICEF are produced in Syria, thus ensuring a contribution to the local economy and the livelihood of many families. In Qamishli, small quantities of items were procured through the involvement of NGOs employing IDP women, thus helping them to actively provide for their needs and those of their children.

Since winter 2015-2016, an innovative way of distributing NFIs has been introduced: the utilization of e-vouchers, distributed to families for the direct purchase of needed items in pre-identified shops. The modality allows families to make more autonomous and responsible choices, while at the same time substantially reducing logistics and distribution costs. A solid monitoring system online allows UNICEF to constantly verify the progress of the programme and to adjust it in a short time if required.

The review of the winter NFI programme, conducted with partners in various areas of the country in May 2016, provided evidence of the fact that families were satisfied with the utilization of vouchers, since they can choose sizes and types of clothes more adapted to the needs of their children.

The programme, which allowed UNICEF to reach approximately 7,000 children in Homs during the first months of the year, was expanded during summer and the first month of winter to reach more than 39,000 children in Homs, Tartous, Latakia, Qamishli and Damascus. It will be further expanded in the coming months, focusing in particular on families living in urban centres, Families living in areas where access to markets is more constrained will continue be reached through direct distribution.

The procurement of clothes for winter 2016-17 started early this year, reaching approximately 67 per cent of the target. The distribution started in early November 2016, in the awareness that timely response is the most effective life-saving strategy when dealing with the consequences of harsh weather on children. More than 290,000 winter clothes kits and blankets are being produced to be distributed in the coming weeks. An urgent response is needed, especially for the population forced to flee one more time from their homes due to the latest developments of the conflict in Aleppo and in Hasakeh. Funds were secured to distribute e-vouchers for approximately 57,000 children. Needs are overwhelming, especially for the youngest children. A strong funds mobilization campaign is ongoing, under the leadership of the MENA regional office, to ensure the timely expansion of the programme.

**OUTCOME 7** Country Programmes are efficiently designed, coordinated, managed and supported to meet quality programming standards in achieving results for children
Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Syria’s country programme was implemented through one main office in Damascus and five field offices around Syria. Field offices had measures in place to define their accountability and tools to report on humanitarian and programme developments and for joint identification of bottlenecks.

In 2016 the programme was coordinated through regular bi-weekly programme group meetings, quarterly programme internal reviews attended by chief of sections, chief of field offices and key programme staff, and an end year review with partners. Programme coordination meetings focused on monitoring programme implementations, key performance indicators and bottlenecks, and AMP programme priorities.

UNICEF Syria had a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (ME) system in place with the required capacities and procedures to regularly assess the situation in the country in terms of needs and priorities for assistance, and to monitor progress of all programme interventions towards planned results. This included physical verification to ensure any bottlenecks were identified and adjustments made in real time.

Programme monitoring focused on assessing the implementation of programmes, verification of supplies delivered, bottlenecks and required follow-up actions, monitoring of programmes and supplies to assess beneficiaries’ feedback in terms of the relevance, quality, timeliness and impact of specific programmes or supplies delivered.

UNICEF Syria enhanced partnership and quality assurance activities through rolling out of the harmonized approach to cash transfer (HACT) with NGO partners in Syria. Support was provided to programme staff to better engage with partners and enhance programme implementation. Sixty-nine Programme Corporation Agreements and 173 programme documents were reviewed by the Partnership Review Committee (PRC) in 2016. UNICEF supported the capacity development of implementing partners by providing training to 40 implementing partners, including 106 NGOs staff, on financial and procurement aspects of work.

UNICEF Syria advanced the Communication for Development (C4D) interventions through design of a two year strategy and capacity building. Fifteen young journalists were trained, (10 of them women) on child rights and survival reporting. Eighteen health outreach workers from 11 governorates received training on immunization communication.

Programme implementation was supported by active external communication and advocacy efforts. At least 100 million people were reached with key UNICEF messages globally. This contributed to building public awareness and mobilizing support for the needs of children in Syria, in addition to raising awareness among key influencers on the life-saving impact of UNICEF’s programmes in Syria as well as supporting the whole of Syria advocacy strategy.

Communication and public advocacy was supported by proactive partnerships with key stakeholders during 2016. UNICEF Syria’s external communication established and strengthened partnerships with eight Natcoms and local citizens that led to engagement and action around key issues, including the impact of the crisis on children and the added value of UNICEF’s presence on the ground to respond to the needs of children.
OUTPUT 1 External Relations

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Since January 2016, UNICEF Syria conducted more than 70 one-to-one interviews with a range of international media, including print, TV, radio and online. During 2016, a total of 30 press releases, statements and news notes kept children and their needs at the forefront of the continually changing Syria story. At least six blogs highlighting staff first-hand insights from field were published, including four that were amplified and prominently quoted by key media outlets including BBC and the Mirror in the UK, Metro in the Netherlands, Spezial in Germany and Huffington Post Canada. Combined, these media outreach efforts could catch the global news cycle and based on first-hand information and experiences they were able to reach more than 400 million people around the world.

Active partnership with UNICEF National Committees comes through regular updates on response and key messages to inform their advocacy efforts and provision of multimedia content supported their communication and fundraising activities. This enabled the story of children in Syria to be amplified globally and gave increased visibility to the UNICEF Syria programmes. For example, the Finland National Committee reported that by mid-November it had raised more than €750,000 earmarked for Syria (compared to €250,000 in all of 2015). Similar reports were received from UNICEF National Committees in the UK, Netherlands, Norway and Germany. The number of National Committee Offices fully engaged in the Syria year-end campaign increased significantly from 2015. It now includes nine top-donor countries, including Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, United Nations and the United States. This active engagement has increased the remittances for Syria HAC and Syria Refugee HAC to US$67.3 million as of 19 December 2016, compared to US$25.7 million in 2015.

UNICEF Syria’s communication section produced an average of 20 multimedia products per month, including videos, human interest stories, photo essays and photo albums prominently featured on global media. These products performed very well, with videos generating more than one million views on UNICEF HQ and UNICEF Regional Office social media platforms. These products were shared numerous times by the National Committees through their own social media platforms, which more than doubled the reach and engagement rates.

The products highlighted the situation of children across Syria, including in besieged locations. They also covered the various aspects of UNICEF regular programming and emergency response to emerging situations, including influx of displacement and UNICEF’s response and humanitarian assistance delivery to besieged and hard to reach areas, as well as nationwide response such as the back-to-learning, routine immunization campaigns, and the use of water as a weapon of war, demonstrating UNICEF’s ability to provide a rapid life-saving response as well as longer term assistance.

OUTPUT 2 C4D activities integrated in all programme components of the Country Programme and are inclusive of research, capacity building, community engagement and media production.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Syria advanced the Communication for Development (C4D) interventions through design of a two-year strategy. Key components of the strategy design included social marketing, capacity building, knowledge generation and voice and participation. Specific knowledge-C4D activities included the production of formative research on communication and child survival. The study outcomes provided a basis for evidence-based programming and demand for C4D interventions where social barriers are addressed through a wide range of communication activities. A C4D skills guide in Arabic was produced in support of increased programme and partner demand. A toolkit on communication, cholera outbreak...
preparedness and response was made available in Arabic and was adopted by the global health and nutrition division and Arabic-speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.

For the first time since 2010, UNICEF trained a total of 15 young journalists (of whom 10 are women) on child rights and survival reporting. A guide for media on child rights ethical reporting was produced by regional experts and a media award programme was launched in collaboration with the American University of Beirut. A C4D capacity building programme was launched in collaboration with global communication partners. A total of 18 health outreach workers from 11 governorates received training on immunization communication and 11 NGO field workers will be trained on community mobilization skills in early January 2017.

UNICEF Syria took regional leadership in designing the Arabic version of the global U-Report Application for community reporting. The application consists of social norms polls, blogs and chat rooms on child survival practices. The application is available on the web across Syria and will enable youth groups, community workers and caregivers to engage in dialogue and information sharing on social change for child development. To support an enhanced media role in social marketing, the C4D section launched monthly media meetings where social messages were shared with the media along with briefs on programmes interventions and tips on ethical child rights reporting.

**OUTPUT 3 Field Support - Hubs**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

By the end of 2016, Field Offices’ accountabilities, tasks and communication lines with relevant programme and operation sections were clarified and in place. All Chiefs of Field Offices were recruited. A set of tools and systems was developed to monitor humanitarian and security situations and ensure regular support mechanisms to programmatic needs, and to address bottlenecks and operational challenges. Tools include: bi-weekly conference calls between field offices and Field Operations Unit Deputy Representative and Chief of Operations, weekly updates, quarterly reports, and regular field visits. Contingency Plans were developed for each Field Office. They are updated regularly and they are adaptable, given the fluid situation in country, to respond to different scenarios and nature of emergencies. The Annual Chiefs of Field Office meeting was held to identify more efficient and effective working modalities among Field Offices, and between Field Offices and Sections and Sectors.

UNICEF, as regular and active member of Intersector Coordination (ISC) and Access Working Group (AWG), contributed to the identification and selection of hard-to-reach and besieged areas/localities monthly, as well as to the identification and implementation of needed advocacy strategies. By November 2016, UNICEF had participated in 86 interagency convoys to Besieged and Hard-to-Reach Areas, delivering humanitarian assistance to nearly 824,000 people. Internal SOPs were developed and set in place to guide UNICEF participation in convoys, and to improve coordination in convoys’ preparation between programme sections, sectors leads and supply division. SOPs also have helped to identify better reporting systems, challenges, follow up actions and lessons learned. UNICEF staff regularly participated in HARD-TO-REACH and BSG areas to cover priority areas (Nutrition, WASH, CP, Health and Education). Programmatic follow up from previous missions in the same locations is promoted by timely sharing of mission reports.

Sector’s coordination accountabilities tasks and communication lines with relevant programmes have been established and are functioning at national level and at sub-national level via dedicated or double hatting staff. Regular field visits and regular communication
ensured that sector coordination at field level was in line with objectives established at national level. UNICEF-led sectors were active participants in the Intersector Coordination system to identify best modalities for planning and delivery of humanitarian assistance in hard-to-reach and besieged areas and improved efficient information sharing. Sector coordinators led and efficiently coordinated the work for the development of the HNO and HRP documents with subnationals and WoS counterparts, IM and programme colleagues. A regular reporting system was devised to ensure timely update to UNICEF Syria Representative and senior management on sectors activities, challenges and proposed solutions.

OUTPUT 4 Enhanced partnership

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Support was provided by the HACT unit to programme staff on translating UNICEF policies and procedures to better engagement with partners and enhancement of programme implementation. During 2016, HACT unit provided support to: Partnership Review Committee (PRC), roll out of HACT and quality assurance activities, capacity development to staff and NGOs on HACT policy and procedures, and eTools roll out.

HACT unit supported the Partnership Review Committee (PRC) activities. In 2016, 69 Programme Corporation Agreements and 173 programme documents were reviewed by the committee. The HACT team supported documentation of the PRC meetings and partnership agreements, including all PCA/SSFAs documents. Improvement of Programme Cooperation Agreements documentation was a result of the PRC.

HACT standard operation procedure (SOP) for partnership was developed to facilitate engagement with partners more effectively and efficiently. The 2016 HACT plan was developed and approved by the Representative, and a third-party service provider was contracted to conduct micro-assessments, audit and capacity building for partners. All 28 planned micro-assessments were completed, 34 out of 35 planned spot checks were completed, and 2 out of 3 planned audits were completed in 2016.

Capacity building of partners on areas identified during micro-assessments was conducted by the HACT team and a third-party service provider. Forty implementing partners were trained, including 106 NGOs staff, on financial and procurement by the third-party service provider (Deloitte). Thirty-four implementing partners, including 89 NGOs staff, 54 UNICEF programme staff and 14 facilitators, were oriented on HACT procedures and SOP for partnership by the HACT team.

A partnership mapping exercise was conducted by an external consultant. Following this exercise, a list of partners, including potential partners, has been maintained and updated monthly.

The HACT team has also supported the eTools roll out. All 2016 Programme Cooperation Agreement documents were uploaded on eTolls. The plan for 2017 is to train all staff on the eTools system, followed by an official roll out.

OUTCOME 8 Outcome 1: 46,660 vulnerable Palestinian children benefit from improved access to learning opportunities from preschool to completion of basic education by end of 2016.
Analytical Statement of Progress:
The protracted crisis adversely affected the education situation of Palestinian refugee children inside Syria. Due to the intensified conflict, many of the Palestinian refugee families and children in Al Yarmouk camp, a hard-to-reach area heavily affected by the crisis, left their homes for other areas of Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Lattakia and Hama. Armed conflict led to many UNRWA schools closing, and multiple displacements coupled with economic poverty further deteriorated Palestinian children’s access to education. The education sector analysis drawing on EMIS shows that, prior to the crisis in the school year 2011/12, approximately 66,000 Palestinian children were enrolled in basic education (Grades 1-9) at UNRWA schools. The enrolment dropped by almost one-third, to 42,747 in 2015-16. The most heavily affected areas were Damascus and Rural Damascus, with 21,358 children and 3,975 children dropped out, respectively. The reason for this decline is mainly considered to be a consequence of the proliferation of school closures in Damascus, especially in Al Moukhaiam and Rural Damascus. Evidence demonstrates that the number of UNRWA schools went from 119 schools in 2011-12 to 93 schools in 2015/16. The crisis impacted the quantity and quality of teaching forces. The total number of education personnel available for 119 UNRWA schools in 2011-12 was 2,183 persons. The number decreased to 1,655 persons for 93 UNRWA schools in 2015-16.

In response, UNICEF Syria sustained a partnership with UNRWA and the General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR) to improve education access for Palestinian children in host communities. The education situation for Palestinian children is part of the education sector analysis, which allows UNICEF and partners to better understand education needs and gaps for effective programming. UNICEF also supported UNRWA and GAPAR with education emergency supplies and services in pre-school and basic education. Education access for Palestinian children remains limited. This means that UNICEF and partners need to accelerate efforts to provide education supplies under the Back to Learning campaign, as well as to support early learning and school readiness for pre-school children in 2017. UNICEF aims to support UNRWA and GAPAR on professional development of teachers in active learning, positive discipline, prevention of corporal punishment, and how to care for children with learning difficulties.

OUTPUT 1 Output 1.2. Palestinian pre-school boys and girls have access to the community-based ECD services

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2016, UNICEF provided support to UNRWA and GAPAR in promoting equitable access to quality learning for Palestinian refugee children in Syria. The enrolment data of Palestinian children is not available for the latest school year 2015/16. Therefore, it is difficult to examine and demonstrate the outcome-level achievements made in 2016. Nevertheless, UNICEF made the following effort and investment in promoting access to quality education for Palestinian refugee children in 2016:

UNICEF supported MOE and UNRWA in setting up four prefabricated classrooms equipped with desks and chairs to address overcrowded schools in Jaramana, Sahanaya and Jdaydet Artouz of Rural Damascus. This enabled 165 children to access protective learning environments. UNICEF, along with UNRWA and GAPAR, supported 19,800 Palestinian children with school bags and stationery and 507 recreation kits as part of the Back to Learning campaign. This enabled the children to study using pencils and notebooks for learning at UNRWA schools, GAPAR institutes and shelters in Damascus, Aleppo, Lattakia, Dara’a, Homs and Hama. A total of 360 teachers were trained on active learning and child-centred teaching methodology.
UNICEF also provided UNRWA with self-learning books for 16,500 children (grades 1-9), enabling them to continue learning at home as supplementary materials. This collaboration is to be scaled up in 2017.

OUTPUT 2 Output 1.2. Palestinian pre-school boys and girls have access to the community-based ECD services

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF supported GAPAR and UNRWA in training 40 pre-school teachers and community members with two training courses on the ECD manuals in Damascus and Rural Damascus. This benefited Palestinian children with child-centred and age-specific teaching and learning. A total of six prefabricated classrooms were established for ECD centres in Damascus, and Lattakia. This enabled 480 pre-school children and adults to engage in ECCE-related activities. UNICEF also equipped 12 prefabricated classrooms with furniture (round tables, chairs and whiteboards) to ensure a learning environment for pre-school children. These interventions facilitated early learning and school readiness for Palestinian pre-school children.

OUTCOME 9 Outcome 2: Girls and boys increasingly benefit from improved child protection systems for prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2016, UNICEF worked closely with General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR) in Syria to enhance community-based mechanisms that would benefit children in need of social care and protection. Awareness raising initiatives on child protection risks and mitigation measures addressed to children and adults were conducted, along with structured and sustained psychosocial support for children and caregivers. The increased quality and effectiveness of the child protection activities was ensured through the capacity enhancement of front-line workers, including on provision of services as such family counselling, legal advice and documentation of marriages and birth registrations.

The overall support to GAPAR was limited due to the scarcity or resources available. All the activities were promoted in close coordination with UNRWA, in the awareness of the more comprehensive response of the agency to the needs of Palestinian refugees.

In 2017, UNICEF will be prioritizing the support to direct provision of community-based and specialized services, also through case management. Capacity development and awareness raising initiatives for community members, caregivers and service providers will continue to sustain the prevention of violence and abuse on children. Special attention will be given to child marriage, domestic discipline and mine risk education, also based on the findings of the comprehensive situation assessment of Palestinians conducted in 2016 with UNICEF support.

OUTPUT 1 Output 2.1: Increased capacity of civil society, child protection and sectoral key actors to provide PSS to targeted children and women

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2016, UNICEF worked with the General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR) in Syria and provided psychosocial care to Palestinian children and female caregivers through activities organized in temporary camp areas. A total of 526 Palestinian children and 384 caregivers in Damascus, rural Damascus, Latakia, Homs and Hama benefited from psychosocial activities provided by UNICEF. UNICEF also provided
recreational materials such as sports, art and music kits to support implementation of age appropriate psychosocial and recreational activities for Palestinian children.

**OUTPUT 2** Output 2.2: Increased community capacity and awareness to protect children from, and address violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF’s engagement with GAPAR in 2016 also focused on the capacity enhancement of front-line workers, providing them with more instruments to effectively raise awareness on protection issues, including provision of services such as family counselling, legal advice and documentation support for marriages and births. In 2016, through such activities, GAPAR reached 512 Palestinian refugees, women and caregivers in Damascus, rural Damascus, Latakia and Hama.

UNICEF also provided technical assistance to GAPAR to implement life-saving awareness raising initiatives on risk education. Training was provided to 119 GAPAR staff on how to promote risk education. The trained staff were able to reach more than 10,300 Palestinian refugee children with important messages on the risks of exposure to unexploded ordnance.

Discussions are ongoing to identify innovative ways to expand the outreach of Palestinian children and adults with risk education in 2017, based on the positive evaluation of the activities conducted so far, and in the awareness of the high importance of such information to protect children and adults in current circumstances.

**OUTCOME 10** Outcome 3: Adolescent girls and boys are enabled to contribute to community and national development and make a productive transition to adulthood.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Similar to other adolescent and youth groups inside Syria, Palestinian young girls and boys remain socially excluded, frustrated and disempowered by low access to quality education, including alternative education in the form of Life Skills Based Education (LSBE), Vocational Education, limited access to protection and basic services, high unemployment and restricted livelihood and participation opportunities. They lack voice, avenues for contributing to their communities, and opportunities for involvement in social cohesion and decision-making processes. UNICEF continued to urge longer-term investments to meet the needs of every adolescent and young person inside the country. As provision of positive opportunities for learning and development is an essential protection strategy for marginalized young people, UNICEF invested in the second decade of child’s life so that young girls and boys become more resilient and have needed capacities and opportunities to secure meaningful participation and transition to adulthood more confidently equipped.

UNICEF remained fully committed to addressing the rights of Palestinian adolescents and youth (10-24 years), girls and boys alike. Experiences of sharp inequities in society continue to negatively hamper their access to education, protection and participation in society on issues affecting their lives.

UNICEF, through the General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR) and UNRWA, spearheaded and supported the promotion of both an enabling and a protective environment by providing 22,142 adolescents and youth (54 per cent girls, 10-24 years) with a holistic package of services and opportunities in 12 UNRWA-supported community spaces in seven governorates (Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Lattakia, Dara’a, Damascus and Rural Damascus) as well as 11 shelters across Syria. The package of services included alternative education in the form of LSBE, vocational (e.g. IT, nursing, home electronics, English
language, photography, etc.) and entrepreneurship training, as well as Sport for Development, targeting the most vulnerable, including young people with disabilities. Young people in shelters received knowledge about correct hygiene practices, HIV/AIDS prevention and healthy lifestyles (e.g. prevention of smoking and alcohol/drug addiction). These access points provided a safe space for learning and development, and facilitated opportunities to enhance peer-to-peer initiatives at community level on issues affecting their lives. More than 5,000 adolescents developed and led their own initiatives in Palestinian refugee camps, IDP shelters and collective gatherings, with a focus on tackling day-to-day needs and challenges of Palestinian adolescents. These initiatives allowed young people to model positive behaviour and lead by example, thus strengthening their contribution to social cohesion and community development. Fifty social workers, service providers and community volunteers went through a comprehensive capacity building package covering key modules of LSBE, PSS and adolescent participation principles. A by-law (SOP) on a Mobile Team approach was developed and rolled out through 10 mobile teams established by UNRWA. These mobile teams, comprised of 80 young volunteers, contributed to serve more than 8,000 young people (more than 50 per cent of them girls) with services. Feedback from girls and boys showed that these interventions enhanced social inclusion and provided an arena for partners to enhance skills and capacities of otherwise extremely neglected girls and boys.

**OUTPUT 1**

Output 3.1: Capacities of partners are enhanced to provide life skills programming to adolescents and promote adolescent participation

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF supported the capacity development of 50 social workers, service providers and community volunteers, who all went through a comprehensive training package, covering key modules of LSBE, basic PSS and adolescent participation principles. This ensured quality and responsive interventions to the demand for such services made by Palestinian adolescents and youth. With a strong focus on ensuring timely and quality delivery of services to marginalized young people, a by-law (SOP) on the Mobile Team approach was developed and rolled out through ten mobile teams, comprised of the above-mentioned duty bearers, established by UNRWA. These mobile teams, which also included 80 young volunteers, served more than 8,000 young people (more than 50 per cent of them girls) with services and opportunities. The mobile outreach teams remain valued as an effective means of providing a timely response to the needs of adolescents, particularly for those who have experienced multiple displacements and remain at risk of violence, exploitation and abuse. The results achieved are in part attributed to long-established partnerships with UNRWA and GAPAR, support from Palestinian communities, availability of community spaces, and the continuous investment in capacity building of partners. Further specialized training on facilitation, leadership and planning for mobile teams will be conducted in 2017.

**OUTCOME 11**

Outcome 4: Women and children, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, increasingly use improved maternal, child health and nutrition services, and apply improved health practices.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Palestinian refugees are among those most vulnerable groups who have suffered from the prolonged crisis in Syria. UNICEF supported the Palestinian partners (GAPAR, UNRWA and Palestinian Red Crescent) to provide health and nutrition services to the Palestinian refugees who were still living in Syria, with special focus on those who lived in the high-risk areas like Al-Neirab district in Rural Aleppo.

To sustain resilience among the Palestinian refugees in Syria; UNICEF supported the health centres of UNRWA with health and nutrition supplies (including supplies for the routine
immunization services) and supported the Palestinian Red Crescent to provide paediatric and maternal health services to the vulnerable children and women in Rural Aleppo, and trained community volunteers from PLS NGOs to sustain the provision of health care services to the needy Palestinian population.

OUTPUT 1 Output 4.1: Capacity of partners is enhanced to provide emergency health services to cover the affected Palestinian children and women

Analytical Statement of Progress:
To ensure availability of essential health supplies, approximately 21,750 Palestinian refugees were reached with health items distributed through the Palestinian Red Crescents in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Rural Aleppo and Lattakia. Approximately 60,000 children and women were reached with paediatric and maternal health services in Rural Aleppo (Al-Nairab and surrounding villages) through the Palestinian Red Crescent.

To reduce newborn morbidity and mortality, UNICEF reached 560 Palestinian newborns in shelters with essential clothes (newborn kits) during winter to protect those newborns from the cold. Technical capacity was enhanced for more than 350 community volunteers on maternal and child health issues, including newborn care at community level. Fifty trainers on Communication for Development (C4D) were trained by UNICEF and provided support to community volunteers in all PLS shelters to raise awareness among more than 1,000 caregivers, reaching them with health education on maternal and child health issues.

OUTPUT 2 Output 4.2: Boys and girls in targeted IDP camps benefit from improved MAM and SAM services

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Through UNICEF support, continuous screening of children by Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) was done for children for acute malnutrition. Children were provided with 36,000 cartons of micronutrients powder (MNPs) to prevent micronutrient deficiencies, enough for 36,000 children under five. Two thousand Plumpy Doz cartons were provided for 36,000 children under five.

OUTPUT 3 Output 4.3: Mothers have increased knowledge and are practising proper IYCF including exclusive breastfeeding

Analytical Statement of Progress:
More than 160 mothers were counselled on Breast Feeding and Infant Young Child Feeding in shelters. These mothers were given the basics of early initiation of breast feeding within one hour of birth, exclusive breast feeding in the first six months of the child’s life, proper complementary feeding and continuous breast feeding up to two years.

OUTCOME 12 Outcome 5: Cross Sectoral

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Harsh winters have a life-threatening effect on children, especially when living in precarious situations. The livelihood conditions of Palestinian refugees in Syria, in the large majority of cases, don’t allow them to provide for the needs of their children. While all the Palestinian families receive cash assistance from UNRWA, in many situations the support is not sufficient. For this reason, in 2016 UNICEF included Palestinian children among the
beneficiaries of its winterization campaign, aimed at providing a timely response and preventing the consequences of harsh weather on the health of children.

UNICEF provided 18,000 blankets and quilts and 5,000 winter kits for distribution in centres where Palestinian refugees lived, under the supervision of GAPAR. All the supplies provided were directly procured in Syria and delivered to counterparts for their direct management of the distribution.

A comprehensive Situation Assessment of Palestinian Refugees in Syria, with a special focus on children and women, was conducted in 2016, providing an up-to-date evidence base representative of the current socio-economic status and needs of the approximately 500,000 Palestinian refugees living in Syria. A joint initiative by GAPAR, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, UNICEF and UNRWA, the survey was designed based on the MICS methodology, with questionnaires for households, women and children under five. The last large-scale survey of Palestinian refugees was conducted in 2006. The 2016 survey was fully funded by UNICEF. The results will inform evidence-based decision-making at various levels, including identifying key priorities for future support to Palestinian refugees by both national and international stakeholders. The survey also provided baseline data for some SDG indicators.

OUTPUT 1 Knowledge on the situation of PLS refugee children and women in Syria

Analytical Statement of Progress:
A comprehensive Situation Assessment of Palestinian Refugees in Syria, with a special focus on children and women, was conducted in 2016, providing an up-to-date evidence base representative of the current socio-economic status and needs of the approximately 500,000 Palestinian refugees living in Syria. A joint initiative by GAPAR, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, UNICEF and UNRWA, the survey was designed based on the MICS methodology, with questionnaires for households, women and children under five. The last large-scale survey of Palestinian refugees was conducted in 2006.

The results of the survey will inform evidence-based decision-making at various levels, including identifying key priorities for future support to Palestinian refugees by both national and international stakeholders. The survey also provided baseline data for some SDG indicators.

The assessment covered a wide range of indicators in areas such as health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, child protection, disabilities and employment. Based on inputs from the various UNICEF Syria Programme Sections and from key partners, questionnaires were designed for households, women 15-49 years of age and children under 5. An anthropometry module was also included to assess the nutrition status of children under 5. A random cluster sample of close to 3,000 Palestinian households was selected based on Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) methodology, ensuring that the findings are representative of Palestinians living in camps and ‘gatherings’ (specific neighbourhoods) in Damascus, Dar’a, Homs, Hama, Aleppo and Lattakia.

While indicators such as the full immunization coverage of Palestinian children aged 12-23 months (89.5 per cent) and antenatal care coverage (94.7 per cent) were found to be fairly high, several key findings provided reason for concern, including a relatively high percentage of infants with low birth weight (21.6 per cent), a relatively high prevalence of stunting of Palestinian children under 5 (17.4 per cent), low levels of exclusive breastfeeding (18.1 per cent) and iodized salt consumption (43.0 per cent), a very high percentage of deliveries by caesarean section (55.9 per cent), a relatively high prevalence of early marriage (13.4 per cent of women first married before age 18) and children being subjected to violent discipline (22.3 per cent of children aged 2-14 years experienced severe physical punishment).
The survey findings were included in the regional UNICEF SitAn, informing the 2018-2022 Area Programme Document (APD) for Palestinians.

**OUTPUT 2** output 5.2: NFI and emergency supplies

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Harsh winters have a life-threatening effect on children, especially when they are living in precarious situations. The livelihood conditions of Palestinian refugees in Syria, in the large majority of cases, don’t allow them to provide for the needs of their children. While all the Palestinian families receive cash assistance from UNRWA, in many situations the support is not sufficient. For this reason, in 2016 UNICEF included Palestinian children among the beneficiaries of its winterization campaign, aimed at providing a timely response and preventing the consequences of harsh weather on the health of children.

A total of 18,000 blankets and quilts and 5,000 winter kits were distributed in centres where Palestinian refugees lived, under the supervision of GAPAR. All the supplies provided were directly procured in Syria and were delivered to the counterparts for their direct management of the distribution.

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