Syrian Arab Republic

Executive summary

Syria’s nearly seven-year conflict continued unabated in 2017, with all parties to the conflict intensifying military operations in Idleb, Hama, Eastern Ghouta and in the Northeast of the country against the so-called ‘Islamic State/Daesh’. This resulted in thousands of civilian deaths, the destruction of infrastructure and continued mass displacement. By the end of 2017, an estimated 417,000 civilians, half of whom were children, were living under siege, and some 2.5 million civilians, 70 per cent of whom were women and children, were in hard-to-reach areas. The most recent Humanitarian Needs Overview indicated that the percentage of the Syrian population living in poverty (less than US$2 per day) increased to approximately 69 per cent in 2017.

Against this backdrop, characterised by persistent violations of human rights and humanitarian principles, a series of multi-faceted political processes took place. Most of these efforts had unstable starts and even more uncertain conclusions. The prospects for a sustainable political solution remain distant.

Within the context of such a rapidly evolving environment, UNICEF Syria sustained its interventions in all sectors, in coordination with the Amman and Gaziantep hubs through the Whole of Syria approach. UNICEF focused on responding to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable populations with life-saving interventions, especially in health and nutrition, water and sanitation, child protection and education. UNICEF developed and implemented sustainable resilience-building interventions in education, youth and adolescent programming and social protection through a diversified array of partners.

In terms of emergency interventions, UNICEF Syria participated in 49 inter-agency convoys delivering humanitarian assistance to nearly 500,000 people, including an estimated 215,000 children in hard-to-reach and besieged areas, mainly in Northern Hama and Eastern Ghouta. Through 14 inter-agency airdrops organized in collaboration with OCHA, WFP and partners, UNICEF Syria delivered life-saving assistance to an estimated 30,000 people in need in Deir-ez-Zor. Of particular importance were water-related interventions delivering access to drinkable water to approximately 3.2 million people through continued water trucking and the setting-up and rehabilitating of WASH facilities in areas of recent massive displacement. Sustained access to drinking water and sanitation was ensured for almost 5.4 million people through the rehabilitation of the water and sewage networks, water pumping stations, and the equipping and rehabilitating of wells in 11 out of 14 governorates.

Cash-based programmes were expanded to include a social protection scheme targeting children with disabilities and their families (coupling cash transfers with case management) and seed funding programmes targeting young people. The seed funding programme facilitated opportunities for young people to establish social and business entrepreneurship initiatives such as setting up a local library for vulnerable children in Rural Damascus or local chicken farms in Dar’a a and Homs. The latter provided income generation opportunities for targeted youth.
UNICEF Syria also supported 2.1 million children in formal and informal education through various programmes, including the Back to Learning Campaign, teachers’ professional development programmes, provision of teaching learning materials and provision of textbooks in schools.

UNICEF also supported the inventory and renewal of cold-chain system to ensure the safety of vaccines and effective immunization services in the country.

UNICEF Syria’s major challenge in 2017 was the dwindling of funding streams for the first time since the start of the crisis. This affected overall programme implementation as funds decreased from US$160.8 million in 2016 to US$140.8 million in 2017. While some key donors shifted their humanitarian and resilience-related priorities to other crises around the region and the world, others included strict conditions impacting the ability to target of populations in specific geographical areas and the implementation of long-term focused programmes in all sectors.

Partnerships were intensified with other UN agencies and NGOs for service delivery. UNICEF Syria and WHO collaborated in responding to the polio outbreak originating in Deir-ez-Zor. By the end of November 2017, the outbreak had infected 74 children, more than half of them girls. Two rounds of vaccinations were conducted in Homs, Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa with monovalent oral polio vaccine for children under 5 years and injectable polio vaccine for children aged 2 months to 2 years. Vaccination campaigns also were conducted in Damascus and routine immunization was strengthened nationwide because of the mass displacement caused by military operations. UNICEF Syria also joined five other UN agencies in supporting the national socio-demographic survey (SDS) conducted at the end of the year. The survey targeted 30,000 households in 11 governorates, and will provide an updated picture on specific aspects of the socio-demographic situation of families in Syria.

**Humanitarian assistance**

Under the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Syria, UNICEF Syria’s response focused on three main objectives: save lives and alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable people; enhance the prevention, mitigation and response to protection needs; and improve resilience, livelihoods and access to basic services.

Despite the massive operational challenges, UNICEF Syria and partners continued to respond to overall humanitarian needs, including waves of displacement from Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor due to the increase of military operations against ISIS and waves of Iraqi refugees who temporarily settled in three camps in Al-Hasakeh governorate (Areesheh, Mabrouka and Al-hol).

Inter-agency convoys and airdrops continued to be the main modalities to deliver life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable population in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. Through 49 inter-agency convoys, humanitarian assistance was delivered to more than 500,000 people, including an estimated 215,000 children. Through 14 airdrops, UNICEF Syria delivered life-saving assistance for estimated 30,000 people in need.

In the WASH sector, UNICEF Syria served 5.4 million people through the rehabilitation and augmentation of water and sanitation services, and approximately 3.6 million people through emergency water trucking and the maintenance of WASH facilities. Across the country, almost 14.6 million people had regular access to safe water through the provision of water disinfectants, which contributed to the prevention of outbreaks of major waterborne diseases. UNICEF Syria also supported water trucking in camps for internally displaced persons and
refugees, providing 75,000 people with at least 20 litres of potable water daily, amounting to 198 million litres in total. These at-scale interventions and related results made the UNICEF WASH program the largest externally funded program of its kind in the country.

UNICEF Syria provided the Ministry of Health (MoH) with all needed vaccines and cold chain equipment needed to maintain ongoing vaccinations. More than 2.6 million children under five years of age received polio vaccines in 12 out of 14 governorates in Syria. In response to the measles outbreak in Syria, more than 4.7 million children aged 6 months to 12 years received measles vaccines. In response to a vaccine-derived polio outbreak, vaccination campaigns in Homs, Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa reached approximately 400,000 children under five. A total of 117,000 children aged between 2 months to 2 years received the injectable polio vaccine (IPV) to boost their immunity against polio. UNICEF Syria also supported 23 local NGOs to establish 99 fixed health clinics and supported 56 mobile health teams who provided free paediatric and maternal health check-ups to more than 1.7 million children and mothers in 11 out of 14 governorates. The same NGOs screened more than 1.1 million children and 286,000 women who are pregnant or lactating and mothers for malnutrition and provided treatment to 4,224 severely acutely malnourished children.

In the areas of child protection, UNICEF Syria continued to invest resources to provide community-based emergency psychosocial support to almost 275,000 children. In total, some 1.9 million children benefited from community-based child protection interventions such as structured psychosocial support and awareness raising, including on mine risk education and from expanded specialized services through case management. Protection-related advocacy initiatives were promoted in close cooperation with other humanitarian actors, in particular UNHCR and UNFPA. UNICEF Syria provided 483,000 of the most vulnerable children, including those who had been displaced, with non-food items such as seasonal clothes. More than 6,100 families received regular cash assistance to meet their children’s basic needs.

More than 2 million children accessed formal education and more than 48,000 others received non-formal education. UNICEF Syria supported life skills, citizenship education programmes and community-based vocational training that benefited almost 475,000 boys and girls, adolescents and youth, including more than 58,000 in hard-to-reach locations. UNICEF Syria also initiated the Bursaries Project to enable 9th and 12th grade students coming from hard-to-reach areas to sit for national exams. UNICEF provided transportation and education material to 12,000 students (44 per cent girls) coming from hard-to-reach and besieged areas. Approximately 65 per cent of the students successfully passed the national exams.

**Equity in practice**

Despite the challenges related to restricted humanitarian access, dynamic conflict and overall complexity of the situation, UNICEF Syria contributed to promoting equity for vulnerable children, with a specific focus on including children with disabilities and children deprived from their right to education.

In order to fill the data gap on the prevalence and needs of people with disabilities in Syria, UNICEF and UNDP supported the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MoSAL) to conduct a national survey focusing on access to services and opportunities for children and adults with disabilities. The report will be published in the first half of 2018. This effort facilitated dialogue with national counterparts. UNICEF Syria contracted international expertise to support the review of the classification of disabilities in Syria, applying the principles of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).
UNICEF Syria designed programmes to respond to the specific needs of children with disabilities. In WASH, UNICEF Syria supported the rehabilitation of facilities in 558 schools across 10 governorates, ensuring gender sensitivity and accessibility for children and adults with disabilities in application of SPHERE standards, benefiting 384,000 students (190,500 girls and 193,500 boys). UNICEF Syria and partners focused on the promotion of a multi-sector response to the needs of children with disabilities through professional exchanges among service providers at the international level. A social protection scheme was launched focusing on children with disabilities and their families, as they were among the most marginalized across all the layers of the population. The scheme included the provision of regular, unconditional cash transfers to families of children with complex disabilities, accompanied by the support of social workers through case management. The first one-year cycle of the programme was completed in Aleppo, and was initiated in Tartous. The scheme will be expanded in 2018, with plans to reach more children in Lattakia and Rural Damascus.

According to the latest EMIS 2016-2017 analysis, 2.08 million children (5-17 years old) were out of school and 1.35 million were at risk of dropping out for reasons including displacement, lack of appropriate school infrastructures and crisis-related negative coping mechanisms such as child labour. UNICEF Syria and partners supported some 113,000 out-of-school boys and girls, from grades 1-9. UNICEF Syria and partners provided access to learning opportunities through self-learning materials to children who due to active conflict were on the move, and enrolled displaced children in accelerated learning programmes. Efforts were also made to facilitate the enrolment of displaced children into age-appropriate classes in host community public schools through media campaigns and door-to-door visits, establishment of enrolment desks at schools to facilitate documentation and procedural requirements and provision of necessary teaching learning materials.

Emerging areas of importance

Urbanization and children. Because of population displacement from areas affected by the conflict, the number of people dwelling in urban settlements continued to increase throughout 2017: population estimates from the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2016 and 2017 show an increase of 23 per cent, from 11.9 million to 14.7 million.

With 69.3 per cent of the population estimated to be living in extreme poverty, 35 per cent falling into abject poverty, unemployment hovering around 53 per cent, and high cost of living, families were increasingly unable to meet essential basic needs of their children, access services such as health and education or procure food and non-food items. Their capacity to provide parental care was also reduced, especially for female-headed households and those displaced several times in the last years. There were also increased social tensions derived from the reduced capacity of services to respond to the needs of the population, especially in areas where the massive presence of displaced people has a visible impact on the access to services for everybody. Such tensions, and the new social dynamics related to the movement of groups of the population from some areas to others, will certainly continue to have an impact on returns and resettlement of the population, especially in urban areas.

In this context UNICEF Syria promoted the expansion of specialized child protection services for women and children in urban areas. A safe house for victims of violence and abuse was jointly supported in Damascus with UNFPA. Drop-in centres, providing 24/7 care and specialized services for children living in the streets or temporarily deprived of parental care were opened in Damascus and Aleppo. More centres are planned in Lattakia and Al-Hasakeh. These centres
were entrusted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MoSAL) to formulate individual care plans, with the aim of reunifying children with their families and communities of origin.

**Greater focus on the second decade of life.** UNICEF Syria continued to champion the second decade of life and expand and scale up its commitment to Syrian youth by working with key ministerial counterparts, including the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population (SCFAP), under the auspices of the MoSAL, to develop a draft National Framework of Action on Adolescent and Youth Development and Participation for Syria. The draft framework covers five areas: education, health, labour, participation and social protection. It emphasizes improved coordination between government ministries and other stakeholders to champion adolescents’ rights. The voices of at least 1,000 vulnerable young people were captured and heard following five regional consultations.

Some of the most vulnerable young girls and boys in Syria, including those residing in internally displaced persons camps and host communities, as well as disabled, out-of-school, unemployed, and socially excluded youth, had access to essential skill-building opportunities to increase their employability and professional readiness. This included life skills and citizenship education programmes and vocational/entrepreneurship training, seed funding for social and business entrepreneurship, sport for development and the implementation of cross-sectoral adolescent and youth-led initiatives.

The programmes summarized below reached approximately 476,000 adolescents and youth (54 per cent girls) from 13 governorates, including from some hard-to-reach and besieged locations. Of those, 326,000 enhanced their critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity skills, which are core life skill competencies essential to young people’s transition into adulthood. A total of 57,000 adolescents and youth accessed community-based vocational training courses provided by local NGOs in IT, nursing, home electronics, English language and photography, among others. A total of 1,411 benefited from innovative seed funding for the implementation of social and business entrepreneurship projects.

Civic engagement and social cohesion initiatives benefited approximately 259,000 young people (53 per cent girls), who served as community volunteers and promoted social awareness on crisis-related negative coping mechanisms such as child labour and child marriage. In other examples of civic engagement, youth were involved in waste collection and recycling programmes, in post-distribution monitoring activities of non-food items and as advocates for the 2017 back to learning (BTL), global handwashing and polio campaigns.

Eleven innovation labs across UNICEF Syria-supported project sites were piloted, providing informal spaces for adolescents and youth to meet and work together, with coaching by NGO staff, for the design of community engagement initiatives. These included adolescent-led awareness raising interventions on UNICEF outcome areas such as child protection and education, including child marriage and back to learning. UNICEF Syria also engaged adolescents and youth digitally, through Voices of Youth and U-Report, as well as in participatory action research (PAR) to raise their voices on aspirations, challenges and opportunities. Findings were translated into local action plans at community level.

### Summary notes and acronyms

**Summary notes**

Unless otherwise stated, the situation data quoted in this report is sourced from the 2017 and 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNO). The results data is sourced from UNICEF Syria's

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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
CBS  Central Bureau of Statistics
CDD  Control of Diarrhoea Diseases
CFS  child-friendly spaces
CMT  country management team
DOE  Directorate of Education
EMIS  Education Management Information System
ENAP  Every Newborn Action Plan
ETB  emergency trauma bag
FAO  Food and Agriculture Organization
GAM  global acute malnutrition
GAPAR  General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees in Syria
GOS  Government of Syria
GBV  gender-based violence
HDSS  Humanitarian Decision Support system
HNO  Humanitarian Needs Overview
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 and young child feeding
JOP  joint operational plan
KAP  knowledge, attitudes and practices
KM  knowledge management
LSBE  life skills based education
MAM  magnitude of moderate acute malnutrition
M&E  monitoring and evaluation
MoE  Ministry of Education
MoH  Ministry of Health
MoI  Ministry of Information
MoLA  Ministry of Local Administration
MoRA  Ministry of Religious Affairs
MoSAL  Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour
MoWR  Ministry of Water Resources
MRE  Mine Risk Education
MRM  monitoring and reporting mechanism
MSP  multiservice platforms
MOSS Minimum Operating Security Standard  
MUAC mid upper arm circumference  
NatComs UNICEF National Committees  
NFLs non-food items  
NGOs non-government organizations  
NLG No Lost Generation  
PCBS Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics  
PDM Post-distribution monitoring  
PIN people in need  
PLW women who are pregnant or lactating  
PSS psychosocial support services  
RI routine immunization  
SARC Syrian Arab Red Crescent  
SCFAP Syrian Commission of Family Affairs and Population  
SIAs supplementary immunization activities  
SOP standard operating procedures  
SRM Security Risk Management  
SSAFE Safe & Secure Approaches in Field Environments  
TA technical assistance or temporary appointment  
tOPV trivalent polio vaccine  
TVET technical vocational education and training  
UN United Nations  
UN-Habitat United Nations Human Settlements Programme  
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund  
UNRWA UXO United Nations Relief and Works Agency Un-Exploded Ordnance  
WoS Whole of Syria  
WSAT women security awareness

**Capacity development**

UNICEF Syria conducted major communication for development campaigns focusing on the polio outbreak in Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa, national routine immunisation and the back to learning campaign (BTL).

A total of 1,200 health workers were trained and 3.1 million caregivers received polio and routine immunisation educational messages, contributing to reaching a polio vaccination coverage of 78 per cent.

More than 130,000 community members, parents, caregivers, teachers and children were reached through social mobilization activities during the back-to-learning campaign, ensuring awareness of school registration procedures and the importance of education.

As part of the adolescent development communication for development capacity building programmes, UNICEF Syria enhanced the capacity of more than 5,000 youth volunteers from local NGO partners, who in turn reached out to marginalized adolescents at community level with similar capacity development programs supported by UNICEF.

In collaboration with the UNICEF Global Innovation Centre, UNICEF Syria launched U-Report Syria, which included youth multimedia forum, polls, stories and a blog. The platform reached more than 2,300 users and helped collect indicators establishing a ‘Volunteering Platform’ and data on ‘Vocational Assessment & Evaluation’. 


UNICEF Syria provided technical support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) and to NGOs to strengthen teacher professional capacity in areas of active learning. More than 23,000 teachers were trained on active learning pedagogy, Curriculum B classroom management, life-skills and basics of psychosocial support. Nearly 120 participants from MoE/DoE, NGOs and UN agencies took part in the national education sector workshop in Damascus and in the technical discussions on the emergency response and preparedness plan at national level.

UNICEF Syria used innovative approaches in mine-risk education (MRE) in high risk areas. UNICEF Syria supported the integration of MRE in official school curricula and contributed to the development of interactive games and education materials on the issue. MRE training included community stakeholders, police officers and religious leaders.

**Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy**

Humanitarian Needs Overview data was used to prioritize population needs in the humanitarian response plan and efforts were made to fill the data gaps on disabilities, education and nutrition in Syria. Monitoring and reporting mechanism efforts also served as a main tool for advocacy.

UNICEF Syria and UNDP promoted the preparation of a study focusing on people with disabilities, to assess the availability of, access to and perceived quality of services for children and adults with disabilities and their level of social inclusion. The information, collected through quantitative and qualitative methods, will be used to inform planning and decision-making at national and local levels and will provide a comprehensive evidence base that can contribute to raising awareness on disabilities.

UNICEF Syria, in coordination with UNICEF MENARO and New York Headquarters, undertook the education sector analysis drawing on EMIS 2016-17 and other data sources. UNICEF Syria used the analysis results to advocate with partners to focus education interventions on districts with high populations of out-of-school children and make investment choices in priority-setting and resource allocation.

UNICEF Syria and the Ministry of Health undertook mid-upper arm circumference assessment of under five children in 11 governorates in conjunction with the measles campaign. More than 400,000 children were screened and data collected was used to inform nutrition interventions.

Collection and verification of cases, reporting and advocacy on grave violations of children’s rights continued throughout the year, in accordance with procedures established within the Syria monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM). Data evidence was instrumental to inform ongoing advocacy and actions that called on all parties to the conflict to abide by their obligations under the international human rights and humanitarian law.

**Partnerships**

In partnership with GAVI and WHO, UNICEF Syria developed a coherent and coordinated response plan to the polio outbreak. UNICEF, through its Supply Division, procured all vaccines and cold chain equipment, while WHO was responsible for the surveillance and operational cost.

UNICEF Syria partnered with UNHCR and WFP to provide exam support for children in Ar-Raqq a and Al-Hasakeh governorates. The MoE provided accommodation centres, UNHCR supported the students with non-food items and UNICEF covered basic needs including food,
hygiene kits, transportation and exam preparatory classes. The joint UN education programme exemplifies a unique partnership of seven UN agencies (WFP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, FAO, UN Habitat and UNRWA) to ensure Education for All. Within this context, UNICEF Syria setup a technical working group and played a leading role in managing a Japan-funded initiative with a focus on increasing education access and quality in Aleppo and Rural Damascus.

UNICEF Syria strengthened its partnership with UNFPA to work with the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population (SCFAP) for the formulation of a National Framework for Adolescents and Youth and setting up the UN Youth Taskforce.

A total of 6.5 million people were reached through a diverse range of WASH partnerships managed in a complementary manner. Technical institutions worked closely with private sector contractors on rehabilitation while UN agencies, Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and NGOs complemented efforts, particularly on emergency WASH. UNICEF Syria trained and provided equipment to Damascus Water Establishment to produce sodium hypochlorite locally, and provided training in WaterCAD, hygiene promotion, consultancy services and SPHERE standard for eight partners across Syria, including Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA), SARC and local NGOs.

UNICEF Syria also maintained strong partnerships with some 68 national and international NGOs.

**External communication and public advocacy**

The Syria crisis competed with other emergencies in the region for broadcast, digital and social media coverage. There was media and donor fatigue as the crisis entered its seventh year. Against this backdrop, UNICEF Syria contributed to shifting the narrative to children’s needs, hopes and futures in a positive and proactive way by giving a voice to children everywhere, including in besieged areas, highlighting advocacy priorities, emphasizing the impact and value of UNICEF’s response and mobilizing funding.

Working with UNICEF MENARO, UNICEF Syria produced a song and music video, ‘Heartbeat,’ starring an internally displaced, visually-impaired girl child. The video reached a record of 1.6 million people in the region. With engaging products and active media work during the week marking the six year anniversary of the onset of the crisis, UNICEF Syria had the leading share of coverage among humanitarian agencies, with 78.3 per cent of mentions. UNICEF also became the leading voice for children during the momentous evacuation of Eastern Aleppo and the waves of displacement from Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor.

Capitalizing on a network of photographers and videographers across the country, UNICEF Syria continued to produce an average of 20 products monthly, including human interest stories, blogs, videos, animations and photo albums.

A total of 15 public statements, press releases, news notes and Palais des Nations (Geneva) media briefings were issued, as well as one-to-one media interviews highlighting key advocacy messages and reaching more than 70 million people.

UNICEF Syria strengthened its collaboration with UNICEF National Committees and Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division to support fundraising with multimedia products, including through multiple visits.
UNICEF Syria leveraged innovative digital platforms and tools to help drive greater engagement of adolescents and youth, including through the launch of the Voices of Youth Arabic blogging forums and U-Report. These digital platforms reached a wide public with personal accounts of key issues affecting adolescents’ lives.

South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation

In order to overcome the shortage of specialized health professionals, which is mainly due to the crisis and subsequent brain drainage, UNICEF Syria supported the training in Iran of 46 physicians and health professionals on nutrition, neonatal care and immunization. The training was conducted in cooperation with two universities in Tehran and Hamadan that have good reputations and extensive experience in neonatal care and other primary health care aspects. This contributed significantly to bridging the human resource capacity gaps in the country and is expected to further improve quality of programming.

Identification and promotion of innovation

UNICEF Syria introduced KoBoToolbox (Kobo), a free open source application, for online and offline mobile data collection to ensure better real-time post-distribution monitoring (PDM) of winter kits and e-vouchers. End-user feedback was collected from families on the relevance, quality, variety, appropriateness and timeliness of distribution.

Kobo was also used in Homs to measure the efficacy of UNICEF Syria youth and adolescent programmes through the stories written by adolescents using the most significant change (MSC) technique, which asks adolescents vital questions to be reflected through story writing. This technique aims to promote ongoing dialogue and learning about programmes and how they can be improved to achieve better results. The technique helped young people apply critical thinking and communication skills.

The Humanitarian Decision Support System (HDSS) is an information management tool created by UNICEF Syria that stores all 4Ws (who does what, where, when) data, for all programmatic interventions of the Syria response from all the three hubs (Amman, Gaziantep and Damascus), on one single online platform. The data is verified and updated on a monthly basis. The HDSS is used for monitoring progress, planning, and coordination between the three hubs and for overall decision-making.

Youth seed funding programmes were piloted and reached more than 2,000 youth (52 per cent girls) through basic and advanced entrepreneurship innovation trainings, which included project proposal development. Some 1,300 youth received seed funding of up to US$2,000 to implement social and projects that were presented in front of a jury comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, UNICEF Syria, Syrian Arab Red Crescent and selected private sector enterprises.

UNICEF Syria and partners promoted a new community-based self-learning programme to enable out-of-school children to continue learning and prepare for national exams, no matter where they reside. Self-learning materials were revised in order to make them more conflict sensitive, pedagogically relevant and age appropriate.
Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages

At the institutional level, WASH, education and health programmes worked closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Ministry of Education to develop joint action plans for WASH in schools and health centres, building on locations already receiving UNICEF support. A total of 467 schools and 8 health centres were rehabilitated, with inclusion of WASH facilities and promotion of hygiene awareness at the school level.

UNICEF Syria partnered with MoH to take the opportunity of the measles campaign to undertake a mid-upper arm circumference assessment for under five children in 11 governorates, which resulted in more than 400,000 children screened in 567 health facilities, thanks to the support of more than 1,000 government health staff. The results showed the severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rate at 0.1 per cent, which was a declining trend in 11 governorates compared to 0.7 per cent from the SMART nutrition survey conducted in 2016.

To provide guidance for country specific nutrition interventions, and per global standards to address all forms of malnutrition, UNICEF Syria initiated evidence-backed advocacy for the development of a multi-sector national nutrition strategy, which was developed after an extensive consultation with the MoH, WHO, WFP, FAO and other partners.

Cross-sectoral service delivery was provided in 39 newly established multi-service platforms, covering child protection, WASH and youth-appropriate services, targeting the ‘whole child’ from one space. The polio response campaign in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor provided an opportunity to distribute more than one million Aquatabs and spread health promotion messages and information materials to promote personal hygiene and protect children from waterborne disease.

To deliver humanitarian response in newly accessible areas, UNICEF joined OCHA and other UN agencies to develop Interagency micro-plans that identified which agencies do what and where (i.e. Eastern Aleppo, Wadi Barada, East Goutha).

Service delivery

Many NGOs in Syria still operated with no interaction with the formal social services system. UNICEF provided capacity building and technical support to improve and expand case management practices and promote a model of integrated social services for Syria. The model, endorsed by local and international partners, was illustrated in a training package on case management and management of programme and resources.

To reduce child morbidity and mortality from vaccine-preventable diseases, UNICEF Syria provided the Ministry of Health with all routine immunization vaccines and cold-chain equipment needed to increase the capacity of the system. A total of 63 solar refrigerators were installed in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh and Dar’a and 80 local staff were trained to assess and identify cold-chain equipment gaps on all levels.

UNICEF Syria expanded its support to operation and maintenance of public water infrastructure, rehabilitation and restoration of water and sanitation municipal systems and for the development of alternative water sources and solid waste management. The investment in the development of alternative water supply sources during times of major water cuts was essential, especially in Aleppo and Damascus, and was very effective in ensuring continued lifesaving water supply for more than 3 million people.
Through the rehabilitation and restoration of services through municipal systems and through support to water establishments to maintain minimum equitable services, UNICEF Syria tried to break the vicious cycle of service and infrastructure deterioration caused by protracted armed conflict.

UNICEF Syria used a large network of local third-party monitors (facilitators) in areas where access was difficult or restricted. These facilitators were responsible for monitoring the local situation, for programme implementation and for post-distribution of supplies. This modality provided UNICEF with critical information on the overall situation and progress in the implementation of key interventions.

**Human rights-based approach to cooperation**

In 2016 a government inter-ministerial committee was established for the development of a national workplan to prevent and respond to underage recruitment. UNICEF Syria provided technical assistance in the development of the workplan, which was endorsed in February 2017 by the Cabinet of Ministers. The workplan emphasized prevention of recruitment by armed opposition group and provided an opportunity to promote the protection of children recruited and used by all parties to the conflict.

The workplan included five main goals: legal reform to ensure prevention of all forms of child recruitment and use and rehabilitation of children; capacity building for key actors/stakeholders working on the protection of children recruited or used in the conflict; development and implementation of standardized rehabilitation interventions; awareness raising initiatives and development of an information data management system. Orientation trainings on child recruitment were implemented for government counterparts and NGOs.

The engagement of an international expert for the assessment of the juvenile justice system, including juvenile rehabilitation centres, was approved and the assessment is planned for early 2018. Recommendations will be made for the improvement of judiciary processes involving children and for the feasibility of multifaceted rehabilitation interventions targeting recruited children.

UNICEF Syria supported the UNCG through regularly promoting ethical reporting on children by highlighting violations to children’s protection, dignity and right to privacy. UNICEF Syria also provided training sessions on an ad-hoc basis for journalists and NGO workers on ethical guidelines in interviewing and reporting on children, focusing on children’s rights and the ‘do no harm’ principle. Approximately 60 journalists and NGO workers benefited from those sessions in 2017.

**Gender equality**

UNICEF Syria strengthened its gender focus across programmes by promoting a holistic approach to address gender-based violence (GBV) in emergency settings. The approach aimed to assist and support survivors, mitigate the risks of such violence and implement preventive measures to tackle its underlying causes. International expertise was mobilised to support national counterparts to establish a safe home for women and children victims of violence and abuse in rural Damascus. The service, sustained jointly by UNICEF and UNFPA, included temporary protected accommodation, specialized psychological support, health and legal services and access to education.
UNICEF Syria and partners developed an integrated approach to gender-based violence prevention in internally displaced persons and refugee camps. Gender-based violence-related topics were included in the end-user feedback exercise carried out by the WASH programme in three camps. Data highlighted concerns linked to access and use of sanitation facilities, especially at night due to the absence of adequate illumination. In response, UNICEF procured solar lighting systems for latrines and portable lamps to be distributed to women and girls in the more at risk settlements. As part of the overall response, specific latrines for women and girls in camps and schools were designed and built, and sanitary napkins and baby diapers were included in the distribution of hygiene kits.

UNICEF Syria and the Ministry of Health supported 2,000 adolescents (52 per cent girls) to have continued access to gender-responsive and adolescent-friendly health services, which included information on reproductive health, STIs and HIV/AIDS information. Active multi-service platforms across UNICEF-supported sites incorporated issues such as puberty, safe hygiene and menstrual hygiene awareness and practices. Other UNICEF Syria-supported engagement programs of local NGO partners addressed issues pertaining to girls’ and boys’ equal participation in regular activities, and sought to also target parents of these young people to ensure dissemination of messages around gender roles and norms at community level.

**Environmental sustainability**

UNICEF Syria supported municipalities to address solid waste management, including supplying solid wastes containers, rehabilitating sanitary landfills, and organising clean-up campaigns and the removal of solid waste. WASH interventions focused on rehabilitating and restoring existing public infrastructure, for a durable solution, rather than on developing new systems. More than 297 existing groundwater wells were equipped in 11 out of 14 governorates, benefiting more than 1.5 million people, and increasing water availability by maintaining water management at municipal network level. Rehabilitating the existing water wells was considered a more cost effective and slightly safer approach to tapping ground water sources than drilling new wells under a fast track emergency approach in new aquifers with limited information on the potential long term impact on the aquifer and environmental sustainability. The increased emphasis on restoring services through existing municipal systems, drawing water from surface or spring water as opposed to heavy reliance on deep boreholes, was seen as a more energy efficient strategy that would also avoid the overexploitation of limited ground water resources.

In partnership with ECHO, UNICEF Syria installed solar systems in 40 schools in Aleppo benefiting 53,000 children. More than 27,000 children were provided with solar lanterns for domestic use. More than 1,900 adolescents and youth were supported to engage in initiatives aimed at raising awareness and shared community accountability on environmental protection.

In order to achieve greater efficiency in reducing UNICEF Syria’s carbon footprint and move toward an eco-efficient office, the country management team (CMT) tagged greening as a management priority. Energy saving, water consumption, paper use and recycling in the office were identified as part of the office action plan, with the aim of reducing consumption by 15 per cent by the end of the year. To achieve this target, UNICEF signed contracts with a local NGO in Damascus and Aleppo to recycle used papers, sell them and use the proceeds for child rights activities. UNICEF also installed solar water heaters, which saved approximately US$3,500 per year, and replaced normal electricity lights with LED lights, which saved approximately US$4,300.
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.

The country management team consistently worked to provide adequate focus in reviewing progress for achieving results for children and women and in providing management guidance to deliver according to humanitarian principles in a highly-politicized context like in Syria. To mitigate its reputational risk and risk to security of staff, the country management team ensured that all staff members were kept informed about established internal control mechanisms and security plans and procedures. This included conducting due diligence on local partners and vendors, conducting security drills at least every three months, strengthening financial responsibilities and timely implementing actions to address 2016 audit recommendations in both operations and programme areas (although an official audit report was not issued). UNICEF Syria carried out a risk and control self-assessment covering six main areas: CSO partnership, HACT implementation and DCT processing, contracts for services, contribution management, provision of supply assistance and travel management. The overall findings showed that staff complied with established standard operating procedures. No irregularities were identified during the review. The RCSA report was shared with the UNICEF Regional Chief of Operations.

Financial resources management

The country management team and programme group paid particular attention to the management of financial resources to ensure that planned resources were aligned to results, 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 94 per cent of its Regular Resources (RR), 94 per cent of Other Resources - Emergency and 99.4 per cent of Other Regular Resources.

UNICEF Syria overcame in-country cash flow challenges by maintaining efficient management of the local bank accounts in order to secure liquidity in due time. The office implemented DFAM guidance ‘just enough cash just in time’ to maximize cash level at UNICEF New York Headquarters accounts and minimize cash level at field office accounts. The balance at the end of each month was maintained below US$1 million. Bank reconciliations were maintained clean of any outstanding disbursements and the six cash on hand accounts (COHA) were well maintained at field office level.

The working relationship with the Global Shared Services Centre was very effective as result of intensive training given to the finance team as well as PAs. This resulted in a decreasing ratio of rejected and returned cases from date of migration till -to -date 20 per cent through 13 per cent to 5 per cent.

To maintain reliable and transparent management of resource utilization, UNICEF Syria updated and conducted orientation sessions on the standard operating procedures with the objective of safeguarding the organization’s resources, ensuring timely disbursement and liquidation of direct cash transfers (DCTs) to implementing partners and that outstanding DCTs over nine months were kept below the limit of 1 per cent throughout 2017.
Fundraising and donor relations

Out of the total requirements of US$240.8 million for programme managed from within Syria (US$349.5 million for the whole of the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan), UNICEF Syria received US$140.8 million (58 per cent) compared to US$160.8 million (70 per cent) received in 2016. UNICEF Syria had US$47 million carried forward from 2016 and used in 2017. Education had the highest level of needs (US$71 million) as well as the largest funding gap, with 57 per cent unfunded. Child protection was the most funded programme, with only 22 per cent of the budget needs not met (78 per cent funded).

Most of the funding for the humanitarian response came from public sector donors (Canada, ECHO, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States). Development and recovery funding streams in Syria were very limited given the volatile environment and large scale of humanitarian needs. There was a shift toward more predictable multi-year humanitarian funding from key donors such as Canada, Germany and the UK, which allow for more resilience building and longer term planning.

UNICEF’s National Committees contributed more than US$24.2 million in flexible thematic humanitarian funding, allowing UNICEF Syria to respond quickly to the needs of children. Funding was especially instrumental for UNICEF’s winterisation appeal and response during the emergencies in Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor. UNICEF Syria received US$1.6 million in other resources.

UNICEF Syria maintained strong donor relations and stewardship with current and new donors through monthly situation reports, communication and advocacy products, social media channels, and quality donor reporting. In 2017, eight donor visits took place to Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo.

By end of 2017, UNICEF Syria utilized 99 per cent of allocated contributions and submitted 55 donor reports.

Evaluation and research

The Situation Assessment of Palestinian Refugees in Syria was conducted in 2016 providing an up-to-date evidence base of the socio-economic status and needs of the approximately 500,000 Palestinian refugees living in Syria. During the first quarter of 2017, the final report, in both English and Arabic, was designed, printed and disseminated during a workshop organised with implementing partners and stakeholders. The report was uploaded to the UNICEF Evaluation and Research Database (ERDB). Findings of the assessment were used to inform the Area Programme Document 2018-2022 for Palestinian Children and Women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine.

A programme evaluation of the back-to-learning programme was launched in November, with results expected in the first half of 2018. The aim of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coordination, sustainability and impact of the initiative for the period between 2013 and 2016. A comprehensive Study on Disabilities in Syria was in its final stage of analysis and reporting and was expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2018. The purpose of this study is to assess the availability, access to and perceived quality of services for children and adults with disabilities, and their level of social inclusion.

In 2017, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR, WHO and WFP jointly provided financial and technical support to the Central Bureau of Statistics to conduct a socio-demographic survey.
The survey’s findings will provide insights on household status, including on educational and health, labour force and migration, reproductive health, food security, household income and expenditure, and prevalence of disabilities. The field work for this survey started in October 2017 and results are anticipated in March 2018.

**Efficiency gains and cost savings**

UNICEF Syria continued to build on efficiencies and cost savings measures started in 2016 and explored other opportunities for cost savings and improving efficiencies in its operations. The office seized any opportunities for joint operations through the operations management team (OMT) to cost-share common services and security arrangements in all locations where the UN had a presence. The OMT, led by UNICEF Chief of Operations, started working on a Business Operations Strategy (BOS) that will be implemented in 2018. This strategy will further enhance efficiencies and effectiveness in different areas of operations. The OMT conducted a stock-take of existing common services, identified key needs and opportunities and conducted a cost-benefit analysis for each. Gaining efficiencies and savings in areas related to security remained a challenge, as regular security enhancement was required and international staff were still required to stay in hotels.

**Supply management**

Supply remained one of the major drivers of UNICEF Syria's programme implementation through delivery of essential services such as water trucking, rehabilitation of public infrastructure and distribution of supplies to besieged and hard to reach areas. Supply and logistics supported programme activities with US$73,891,760.60, which constituted 74 per cent of the supply plan for 2017. Local procurement remained consistently higher than offshore, with the help of 66 long-term agreements for goods and services amounting to US$48,067,227.60. Offshore procurement, mainly of vaccines and pharmaceuticals, was US$23,332,253.25. Market research was conducted in five governorates to ensure a wider supplier base, which contributed to minimizing the risks related to working with a limited number of suppliers. An ongoing supplier evaluation was conducted in close collaboration with the UNICEF Supply Division.

UNICEF Syria provided warehousing facilities across the country (in Damascus, Homs, Tartous, Lattakia, Aleppo and Qamishli) for both regular programming and pre-positioning for immediate response, except for vaccines, which were stored at the Ministry of Health cold stores. Supplies received in warehouses controlled by UNICEF Syria were US$66,296,518.92, of which US$56,942,803.43 were dispatched. Inventory as of the end of December 2017 was US$99,251,113.65. There were no stock differences during the physical count of supplies at year end, proving a good inventory management system. The number of warehouses was gradually reduced toward the end of the year with the closing of Lattakia warehouse and phasing out of the Tartous warehouse in accordance with the changing context.

UNICEF Syria facilitated the customs clearance and delivery of all programme supplies from its warehouses to end users across the country for regular programming and immediate response, delivery of vaccine shipments to MoH cold stores in Damascus, and delivery of supplies to hard-to-reach and besieged areas through inter-agency convoys.

Procurement activities with partner NGOs were initiated as part of the resilience project, whereby procurement is a tool for generating economic activities and potential jobs for internally displaced persons, especially women. Other key initiatives in 2017 with significant
supply components included e-voucher projects for summer and winter clothes, constructions projects undertaken in partnership with line ministries and NGOs, systematic evaluation of major suppliers with factory visits and improved monitoring of the overall supply chain to reduce response time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value of procurement including supplies</th>
<th>US$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultant contracts</td>
<td>293,532.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service contracts</td>
<td>14,618,643.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumable POs</td>
<td>940,646.52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asset POs</td>
<td>123,211.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local program supplies</td>
<td>33,448,584.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-paid POs</td>
<td>1,134,888.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local procurement</td>
<td>50,559,507.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offshore procurement</td>
<td>23,332,253.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>73,891,760.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Security for staff and premises**

One hundred twenty three (123) staff completed training in safe and secure approaches in field environments (SSAFE), women security awareness (WSAT), emergency trauma bag (ETB), armoured vehicle (AV) and radio communication, meeting or exceeding compliance and/or target levels. Office Minimum Operating Security Standard (MOSS) and/or Security Risk Management (SRM) compliance levels reached 94 to 98 per cent across all locations. Additional security enhancements were made at UNICEF Syria’s office and new Annex building, exceeding minimum standards. A blast survey was completed on both the main and Annex buildings (results pending) in a further effort to optimize building safety and security. Building evacuation drills were undertaken in all UNICEF locations, including the Four Seasons Hotel and other hub accommodations. UNICEF’s Security Section participated in (and thus actively supported staff) during 28 cross-lines missions into besieged and hard to reach locations.

Staff security awareness levels were maintained with the circulation of ‘special advisory notices’ and dedicated ‘security briefs’ during all staff meetings. Technological advances, including WhatsApp messaging, were used to disseminate security related information, alerts and updates in a more timely manner. UNICEF participated in the completion or re-validation of key security documents, including the Security Plan, SRM products and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure they accurately reflected the security reality and best addressed staff safety and security needs and concerns.

One outstanding priority which could not be resolved in 2017 was the importation of specialized security related equipment (additional AVs and radio communication equipment), which was blocked by host government restrictions.

**Human resources**

In 2017, UNICEF Syria ensured an honest, effective and transparent performance management culture was adopted. This was done through HR-guided communication to staff as part of following up the use of the ACHIEVE performance management system. The 2017 PER planning completion rate was 99 per cent. Continuous staff-supervisor discussions were
encouraged by HR and the management to ensure a balanced feedback was given to staff. A PER webinar was delivered to all UNICEF Syria staff as part of preparing for a smooth year-end phase. UNICEF Syria provided PER clinics for two weeks, in November-December 2017, which answered case-specific queries and provided policy guidance.

Taking into consideration the results of the Global Staff Survey, management involved staff members in addressing shortcomings in areas where the office had low scores by forming staff-based ‘focus groups’ that would work toward deciding on solutions stemming from staff perspectives, enhancing the speak-up culture. A GSS Action Plan for 2017-2018 was laid out. The action plan emphasizes HR reform, career and professional development and work/life balance, among others, as areas for improvement. On work/life balance, the staff counsellor, staff association, and peer support volunteers were available to support staff.

UNICEF Syria ensured transparent and participatory mapping was carried out in preparation for 2018 PBR proposal, with active participation of the staff association. In recruitment, UNICEF sought to obtain the best candidates to ensure the best results for children while observing the diversity of profiles and geographical backgrounds of selected candidates, which resulted in the appointment of 56 new staff in 2017.

Fifteen staff members went on stretch assignments and 16 staff members benefited from external learning opportunities. Sixty eight UN/UNICEF-organized trainings and 37 group trainings were conducted. There was a high completion rate for mandatory learning courses.

**Effective use of information and communication technology**

UNICEF Syria aligned its information and communication technology (ICT) approach with the ICTD Strategic Framework, which sets out the key components required to improve effectiveness and efficiency in programmes through the use of innovative, technology-enabled solutions. UNICEF Syria completed the deployment of Office 365, One Drive and Share Point, which are now the standard tools for all staff. Skype for Business, Polycom Video Conference, and Avaya fully integrated telephone and bridging system were regularly used for all meetings with field offices, regional office and New York Headquarters.

In 2017 UNICEF Syria implemented open-source and mobile tools in its work with partners. Since 2016, UNICEF Syria has been the only UN agency in the country able to maintain effective telephone and internet systems during the cut off of public communication services. UNICEF signed an agreement with a local provider (MTN) to provide the security team with tracking and SMS communication systems for all of the office vehicles. The ICT team worked with the Logistics team to develop an in-house warehouse tracking system. ‘Green ICT’ solutions were implemented to save energy and reduce resource consumption. Solutions included maximizing the use of hardware equipment, consolidating servers and data centres to reduce power consumption and lowering costs by using a variety of green data storage techniques and energy-efficient equipment. UNICEF also converted physical servers to virtual servers, which led to significant reduction in environmental impact.

**Programme components from RAM**

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**

**OUTCOME 1** National institutions and civil society organizations have enhanced capacity in WASH programme implementation
Analytical statement of progress

The health situation in Syria continued to deteriorate in 2017. The humanitarian needs overview conducted at the end of 2016 indicated that more than 12.8 million people in Syria required health assistance. Availability of essential health services remained in critical shortage across the country. Insufficient human resources, supplies, equipment and infrastructure continued to disrupt the functionality of the health system. A significant proportion of health facilities were unable to provide essential care.

All population groups were affected by the crisis, while children under five and women of reproductive age remained the most vulnerable population groups in need of health services. 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.

In response to this situation, UNICEF Syria focused on the provision of basic maternal and child health services by supporting the existing health system as well as expanding partnerships with local NGOs that were providing health services in areas that did not have fully functioning health centres. As a result of UNICEF’s support, more than 1.5 million Syrian children and women benefited from consultations and services in 11 out 14 Governorates in 2017. UNICEF Syria supported the rehabilitating of 15 public health centres, assisted several local NGOs to run 99 health centres and 56 mobile health teams, and provided essential health and nutrition supplies to MoH, SARC and local NGOs.

UNICEF provided support for routine and supplementary immunization activities (SIAs). More than 2.4 million children benefited from the national immunization days for polio across the country, reaching more than 80 percent of targeted children in the two regions with ongoing transmission (cVDPV). The assistance included vaccines, cold chain equipment, syringes, vaccination cards, and capacity building for vaccinators and supervisors, in close collaboration with WHO. The response to the measles outbreak reached more than 4.75 million children aged between 6 months and 12 years. With oversight from the Damascus office, regular immunization services were being offered in 11 Governorates, with a bit more irregular service in the Governorates of Raqqa and Dir Ezzour. The Governorate of Idlib was managed by the Gaziantep hub.

Availability of reliable data was a key challenge hampering evidence and equity focused programing in Syria. To bridge the data gap in nutrition, UNICEF Syria, in agreement with MoH, undertook a nutrition assessment, measuring the mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of under five children in 11 governorates. This assessment was conducted during the measles campaign. More than 400,000 children were screened in 567 health facilities involving 1,000 health staff. The results showed a severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rate at 0.1 per cent, which was a declining trend in 11 governorates (compared to 0.7 per cent rate from SMART nutrition survey conducted in 2016). This large-scale data collection represented a breakthrough in gathering nutrition data and helped ascertain the nutrition status of children in the country. It was also used to define priorities for current and future nutrition programing.

Despite the relatively low levels of acute malnutrition (currently at 0.1 per cent) reported by the MUAC survey among under 5 children, persistent factors are likely to contribute to higher rates of acute malnutrition, especially in hard to reach and besieged areas. Those factors include sub-optimum infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, particularly the low levels of exclusive breastfeeding (below 30 per cent), the use of infant formula in situations of poor sanitation and
limited dietary diversity, as well as worsening food insecurity

In terms of life saving nutrition interventions, more than one million pregnant women and children benefited from screening services, and three quarters of the targeted children were reached with treatment services against severe acute malnutrition. More than half a million women and children were reached with nutrition supplies in hard-to-reach and besieged locations through interagency convoys.

With a view to reinforcing partnerships and synergies for results, discussions were held and the MOH agreed to UNICEF’s proposal to revamp the cadre of village health workers in four governorates to improve access to essential care. An assessment was conducted in 601 health facilities that also received support from WHO as surveillance sites. This assessment was geared toward reinforcing nutrition programming in the coming months and focused on staff capacities and skills and availability of essential lifesaving nutrition supplies.

Efforts to reinforce governance and upstream work also received attention during the year, with a draft multisectoral nutrition strategy and Every Newborn Action Plan among the key achievements.

In the coming months, focus will continue to be on the delivery of humanitarian services as access to populations improves. Early recovery interventions will be intensified to boost basic service delivery and longer term development prospects.

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

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, based on sentinel reports indicating that prematurity was the main cause of neonatal mortality, UNICEF collaborated with other UN agencies (WHO and UNFPA) under the leadership of the MOH to develop a national plan for neonatal mortality reduction (ENAP: Every Newborn Action Plan). At the end of 2017, the plan was being reviewed by the MOH and partners to ensure that appropriate interventions addressing the main causes of neonatal mortality were included before costing and finalisation. The ENAP will be further enhanced in 2018 by the results of the planned study on the causes of under-five mortality. Interventions to reduce neonatal mortality continued. UNICEF also provided support to build the capacity of hospital staff (20 doctors) from six major hospitals with the required skills and medical supplies to address newborn prematurity and other leading causes of neonatal mortality.

UNICEF Syria started to work with national partners to develop a Multi-Sector National Nutrition Strategy (2018-2020) for Syria. A first draft was prepared in consultation with MoH, WHO, WFP, FAO and other partners. The draft strategy included a thorough situational analysis, and recommended provision of nutrition services through a multi-sector approach, while defining the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, with the MoH taking the leading role in its implementation. It is expected that the final version of the strategy will be presented for endorsement in early 2018 and will provide a roadmap for future nutrition programming in the country to address all kinds of malnutrition, including chronic malnutrition.

UNICEF Syria also provided technical assistance for the development of the National Iodine Deficiency Disorders policy (IDD) and the revision of the Micronutrient Deficiency guidelines to comprehensively address the problem of iodine deficiency disorders, anaemia and other
micronutrient disorders, in close collaboration with all stakeholders and partners. The draft version of the infant and young child feeding operational guidelines also was almost finalized.

OUTPUT 2 District health centres are rehabilitated and operational

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, access to essential health services remained in critical shortage across Syria. Insufficient human resources, supplies, equipment and infrastructure continued to disrupt the functionality of the health system. In response, UNICEF Syria worked closely with partners to enhance the capacity of the health centres through provision of technical support, staff training, light rehabilitation for the health centres and health supplies.

UNICEF Syria provided technical support to the Ministry of Health and 20 local NGOs to provide integrated primary health care packages (including maternal and neonatal care) to vulnerable populations, especially internally displaced people. In line with the objective of revamping basic services, UNICEF facilitated the capacity building of more than 1,400 health workers in domains related to the management of different maternal and child health programmes such as immunization, communicable diseases and newborn care. This capacity building exercise enabled them to provide higher quality services to internally displaced people and host communities. Approximately 1.5 million children and women benefited from UNICEF-supported health care interventions through 99 fixed centres and more than 56 mobile teams. Access progressively improved over the months, with utilization figures almost doubling for fixed centres between January and December, while remaining relatively stable for mobile teams. These mobile teams were managed by 20 local NGOs. The rehabilitation of 15 health centres located in areas with large numbers of internally displaced people (Aleppo, Tartous and Hama) provided access to primary care for another 280,000 beneficiaries in these locations.

More than one million beneficiaries, including 542,746 children under five, received UNICEF health supplies through convoys in hard-to-reach areas, distributed by local NGOs and the health directorates in all governorates except Idleb. The delivered supplies included inter-agency emergency health kits (IEHK), diarrhoea kits, resuscitation kits, midwifery kits and paediatric kits.

UNICEF Syria also supported communication for development (C4D) activities with a special focus on health promotion, newborn health and the use of immunization services. UNICEF supported the training of 40 community volunteers who provided health education in their communities during the year. It is estimated that the target for communication activities was exceeded by reaching more than 3 million caregivers with messages on these diverse themes.

OUTPUT 3 Routine immunization services are strengthened

Analytical statement of progress
Since the start of the conflict in Syria, the routine immunization for Penta 3 coverage for children under the age of one year dropped from 90 per cent in 2010 to 61 percent by the end of 2016, according to Ministry of Health (MoH) data. This drop in coverage can be attributed to multiple factors, including issues related to the accessibility of services, availability of human resources, logistic and cold chain system challenges and the stock-out of vaccines.

In response to this situation, UNICEF Syria provided assistance to the MoH during 2017 to
sustain routine immunization services. An extensive rehabilitation of cold chain equipment was undertaken, with 61 solar refrigerators installed in health centres at the district level, in addition to three new cold rooms in Homs, Tartous and Rural Damascus. In order to lay a solid foundation for further improvements, an inventory of cold chain facilities was conducted for more than 1,460 health facilities. A total of 237 vaccinators and supervisors were also trained in different aspects of immunization programmes. The forecasting and supplies of vaccines was also boosted with the delivery of 11.5 million doses of bOPV, 625,000 doses of Hepatitis B, 1.05 million doses of BCG, 1.35 million doses of Pentavalent vaccine, 1.5 million doses of MMR, 0.5 million doses of TT, 0.85 million doses of IPV and 8.6 million doses of measles vaccine. With UNICEF support, as of the end of November 2017, DPT3 coverage reached 82 per cent of children under 1 year of age, according to administrative data of the UN Joint Operational Plan estimates.

As a result of the declining coverages, the country faced a dramatic increase in cases of vaccine-preventable diseases, including outbreaks of polio and measles. The current polio outbreak, due to the mutated polio virus type 2 (cVDPV), affected 74 children, with the last case having an onset late in September 2017. The measles outbreak affected 706 children, with the last case having an onset in early December 2017. Supplementary immunization activities were conducted during the year in response to these outbreaks, with the UNICEF support covering needs in vaccines and social mobilization funds. A total of 2.6 million children under five were reached with polio vaccines and more than 4.7 million children aged 6 months to 12 years received the measles vaccine during these supplementary immunization activities.

A joint response plan was developed by MOH, UNICEF and WHO when the polio outbreak occurred in three governorates. The campaign reached more than 400,000 children in two rounds with monovalent oral polio and injectable polio vaccines.

Communication and social mobilisation activities were also intensified to support both routine and supplementary immunisation. UNICEF Syria produced and distributed more than one million flyers and posters to raise awareness on immunisation services. Health workers also benefited from training programs, with 625 focal points, health educators and volunteers benefiting from such training in inter-personal communication skills and relevant campaign messages. A total of 120 visits were conducted to tribal elders, community leaders and influencers, and 350 mosques were mobilized to disseminate campaign messages.

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

**Analytical statement of progress**

Optimal infant and young feeding practices contributed significantly to the reduction of both acute and chronic malnutrition. In emergencies, the implementation of the infant and young child feeding (IYCF) strategy is vital in protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding to ensure child survival and development. During 2017, UNICEF Syria continued capacity building and awareness raising on the importance of optimal IYCF practices. Approximately 934 health workers were trained on IYCF and 664,774 mothers were reached with IYCF counselling. Preventing stunting and overcoming micronutrient deficiencies were also priorities of the IYCF strategy. UNICEF Syria supported facility and community-based counselling and awareness raising through active involvement of the Ministry of Health, Syrian Arab Red Crescent, Syrian
Commission for Family Affairs, and other national and international NGOs. UNICEF Syria reached a more than 150,000 women who are pregnant or lactating with multiple micronutrients aimed at preventing micronutrient deficiencies (iron, zinc) and undernutrition among newborns, and another 442,000 under five children with multiple micronutrient powders. More than 1.3 million children were provided with vitamin A supplements during the measles campaign.

To address acute malnutrition in women and children, a total of 975,669 children (boys and girls) and 261,058 pregnant and lactating women benefited from screening interventions. A total of 3,839 out of a targeted 5,100 children with severe acute malnutrition subsequently received treatment. The SPHERE quality of care indicators for those malnourished children were largely met. This was a major contribution in preventing nutrition-related mortality, in addition to the 236,346 children and 45,498 pregnant and lactating women who received high energy biscuits for the prevention of acute malnutrition. A total of 856,687 children and mothers were able to access nutrition supplies provided by UNICEF, including 516,032 in hard-to-reach and besieged locations, through interagency convoys.

The nutrition supplies, support for service delivery, capacity building and awareness raising on IYCF contributed to averting nutrition-related morbidity and mortality among children and women. Various evidence sources (SMART Survey 2016, 2017 and MUAC assessment 2017) showed declining trends in SAM rates at national level. In certain hard-to-reach areas there were increasing levels of acute malnutrition and stunting that will be addressed as access improves.

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 to meet life-saving needs in the immediate term, and the second focused on durable solutions that built the resilience of local institutions and strengthened the capacity of local communities. Through this dual 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 the 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. In addition to meeting lifesaving needs, the impact of UNICEF interventions included the prevention of waterborne disease outbreaks.

UNICEF reached more than 3.2 million people through life-saving interventions such as water trucking, rehabilitation of WASH facilities in internally displaced person shelters and hospitals. In most cases, resilience building activities were implemented simultaneously with the emergency response. UNICEF provided improved and sustained access to drinking water and sanitation to almost 5.4 million people through infrastructure interventions. The targets for life-saving interventions and for resilience building interventions were significantly over-achieved due to the fact that UNICEF was able to support cost-effective, at scale WASH response activities and basic WASH service restoration in Aleppo and Damascus, Syria’s two largest cities.
Overall, UNICEF was able to reach 39 per cent of the people in need (Acute WASH PIN) with emergency WASH interventions and 29 per cent of the population with improved and sustained access to water and sanitation services.

UNICEF’s work covered both accessible and hard-to-reach areas, including Idleb, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor. Nearly 1.05 million people (33 per cent of the total beneficiaries) were reached with life-saving interventions and more than 0.58 million people (11 per cent of the total beneficiaries) were reached through resilience building intervention in hard to reach areas. This included more than 0.3 million people reached with WASH non-food items through cross-line inter-agency convoys.

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

**Analytical statement of progress**

Noting the key role of the national institutions in advancing sustainable and durable results, UNICEF continued to provide technical assistance in WASH to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). The technical assistance began 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. As a result, SARC became better positioned to implement WASH programmes employing state-of-the-art techniques in conformity with international norms and standards. UNICEF trained and provided equipment to the Damascus Water Establishment to produce sodium hypochlorite locally. In addition to training in WaterCAD, SewerCAD, project management, billing and sphere standard for both water establishments and local NGO respectively. UNICEF was able to increase the WASH technical capacity of eight partner organizations across Syria, including the Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Local Administration, SARC, and local NGOs.
OUTPUT 2 Water and sanitation systems and services are rehabilitated.

Analytical statement of progress Syria, like many middle-income countries, had fairly developed water and sanitation infrastructure prior to the crisis. In 2017, urban areas hosted 63 per cent of the population, including 62 per cent of internally displaced people. While continuing to give top priority to emergency response, 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. This was done through stand-alone interventions or simultaneously with emergency response.

In terms of the emergency response, UNICEF provided more than 2 billion litres of safe drinking-water through water trucking benefiting more than 0.8 million people in Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Hama, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor. More than 178,000 family hygiene kits and more than 549,000 bars of soap were distributed to more than 0.4 million people in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Homs, Lattakia, Tartous, and Rural Damascus, including through IA cross-line convoys. UNICEF continued addressing the critical needs of internally displaced people in collective shelters and camps through a wide array of interventions, which included the provision of 636 mobile toilets and bathing cubicles benefiting 33,400 people in Mabroukeh, Ein Issa, Al-Hole and Areesheh camps in Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates. UNICEF also supported the provision/rehabilitation of permanent and temporary water supply systems benefiting 15,000 people in Aleppo and Hama; the provision of water heaters, emergency water supply, and distribution of WASH non-food items benefiting more than 1.6 million people in Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Lattakia, Tartous, and Rural Damascus; and delivery of hygiene awareness raising sessions reaching more than 41,000 people in Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous, Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, and Rural Damascus.

In hard-to-reach areas, UNICEF ensured people had potential access to safe drinking water through the distribution of nearly 11.5 million water treatment tablets (Aquatabs) capable of treating nearly 0.5 billion litres of water.

In 2017, UNICEF focused on ensuring quality of results. This involved comprehensive programming that focused on service quality as opposed to individual elements of respective systems. UNICEF reached more than 4.6 million people through source rehabilitation/development, transmission and distribution systems which encompass pipelines and more than 297 groundwater wells equipped and rehabilitated.

UNICEF reached more than 0.5 million people in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Hama, As-Sweida, Al-Hasakeh, and Ar-Raqqa through sewage rehabilitation and solid waste projects.

Due to the ongoing electrical power cuts, delivering fuel for operating water and sanitation facilities was critical for operating the water supply systems. UNICEF provided more than 3.7 million litres of fuel to enable the provision of services to more than 1.7 million people in Aleppo and Damascus. UNICEF ensured access to safe drinking water supplies to more than 13 million people who depended on the municipal water supply systems as their main source of water supply, 32 per cent of them in hard to reach areas. UNICEF provided critical drinking water supplies’ disinfectant (sodium hypochlorite), which was a key contributor to eliminating outbreaks of waterborne diseases. This intervention had a wide geographic footprint across Syria, including hard-to-reach areas in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor.
OUTPUT 3 Schools provide improved water and sanitation facilities

Analytical statement of progress
In addition, Syria had fairly developed education system, with nearly 22,000 schools nationwide. Seven years into the crisis, with education budgets decreasing, and attacks on schools, the water and sanitation facilities in many of these schools were rendered dysfunctional or inadequate. It also became evident that communities and children in particular, were developing poor coping mechanisms, which were compromising hygiene practices.

To address these issues and ensure that schools provide the appropriate learning environment for children and to support the increase in enrolment rates and reduce dropouts, UNICEF scaled up its WASH in Schools programme. In 2017, UNICEF provided selected schools with a WASH and education support package. This included rehabilitation/development of water and sanitation facilities while simultaneously delivering comprehensive hygiene awareness raising campaigns and distributing critical hygiene supplies or individual components as deemed appropriate. UNICEF improved the learning environment in 558 schools by providing gender-responsive and child-friendly water and sanitation facilities that addressed the special needs of children with disabilities, benefiting nearly 384,000 school children.

OUTPUT 4 Technical Support

Analytical statement of progress
The primary purpose of UNICEF’s work in the WASH sector was to optimize delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene promotion assistance to affected populations through improved coordination of the response at all levels. UNICEF sought to strengthen the humanitarian response by demanding high standards of predictability, accountability and partnership. By the end of 2017, the WASH sector had sub-national coordination platforms in Tartous (covering Tartous, Idlib and Lattakia) and Aleppo. Qamishli, Damascus and Homs coordination forums were run based on needs. In 2017, available resources were leveraged and division of labour was clarified among sector partners, with clear roles and responsibilities identified and interventions prioritized. UNICEF maintained active contacts with key donors and regularly provided updates on issues of concern, especially on the state of service delivery. UNICEF also maintained an information system that supported the decision-making process and helped identify gaps in service.

UNICEF, as the leading agency of the WASH sector (along with SARC as co-lead) maintained good coordination with the Ministry of Water Resources and more than 25 sector partners to meet critical needs, both on resilience building and lifesaving emergency WASH response across the country. UNICEF provided leadership in planning and coordination for responding to emerging needs to ensure a predictable response to the people in need in Syria was achieved. WASH sector partners reached more than 106 per cent of the target of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) on strategic objective one, with more than 7.16 million people benefiting from sustained interventions through repair, rehabilitation and augmentation of water supply system. On the humanitarian life-saving front, WASH non-food items reached more than 2 million people to maintain or sustain their established hygienic behaviour and 1.6 million people were reached with humanitarian lifesaving WASH facilities. These services reached the most disadvantaged internally displaced people and overburdened communities in high severity ranking sub-districts, as identified by Whole of Syria/WASH through sector assessment in 2016.
In this process, UNICEF also maintained a cordial relationship and partnership with ICRC and IFRC and made every effort possible both at national and sub-national levels to ensure critical needs were met, gaps were filled and overlaps were minimized.

Within the Whole of Syria approach, in 2017 the sector coordination was distributed among three distinct hubs: Syria (Damascus), Turkey (Gaziantep), and Jordan (Amman) and NE Syria to respond to the needs of people affected by Ar-Raqqa and Deir-es-Zor crisis. This approach assisted implementing partners 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 an informed decision-making process across the three locations. The Whole of Syria approach enabled partners to ensure coverage was maximized and people in need were reached within acceptable timelines and 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**

Due to the ongoing conflict and multiple displacements of people in the country, the education situation remained acute in Syria. Access and quality was significantly restricted. Per the Sector Analysis 2016, across the country there were 1.75 million children (5-17 years old) out of school and 1.3 million at risk of dropping out. The economic loss of school dropout accounted for US$10.7 billion, which means that two decades of educational development have been lost. More than 180,000 education personnel and teachers left the teaching force. Teachers on duty were overstretched with overcrowded classrooms and an influx of displaced children to safe areas.

In response to those challenges in 2017, UNICEF Syria scaled up equitable access to education, enhanced the quality of education services and strengthened education systems. UNICEF strove to reach the most marginalised groups of children (5-17 years) and adolescents (10-19 years), in particular those who were internally displaced and out of school, and including those living in hard to reach and besieged areas and those with disabilities. UNICEF attempted to deliver education services and supplies across the country, no matter who controlled the areas. UNICEF reinforced a partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Directorates of Education (DoEs) and other UN and NGO partners, while playing a leading role in the education sector coordination mechanisms. As a result, UNICEF’s upstream and downstream interventions contributed to an increase in enrolment from 3.24 million children to 3.67 million between academic years 2014/15 and 2016/17. The positive enrolment trend was attributed to collective education sector efforts in a Whole of Syria approach.

For the 2017/18 academic year, UNICEF and partners reached more than 1.7 million in-school children with education supplies (textbooks, stationery, school bags) under the ‘Back to Learning (BTL)’ initiative. Special efforts were made to deliver education supplies to 494,297 children in 492 hard to reach and besieged locations. The BTL media campaign reached 6 million people with education messages through radio, TV spots and door-to-door community mobilization activities. More than 155,684 community members, parents, caregivers, teachers and children were reached with door-to-door visits through which they became more aware of school registration procedures and the importance of education. Timely enrolment was key to regular attendance and retention. To improve a protective learning environment, UNICEF and
Due to an influx of displaced children, some schools operated in double or triple shift (morning, noon and afternoon classes) to accommodate the large influx of displaced children. This reduced the teaching/learning hours from six hours a day to only two to three hours per day, adversely affecting learning outcomes. 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, UNICEF provided technical support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) and United Nations Relief and Works Agency, thoroughly revised the contents of self-learning materials for conflict sensitivity and quality assurance. The self-learning programme, accredited by MoE, enabled out-of-school children to keep learning at home or in their communities and to prepare for the national exams. UNICEF Syria, along with MoE and UNICEF MENARO, jointly produced an operational guide and an end user guide for the self-learning programme. UNICEF Syria sought to expand the accelerated education programme ‘Curriculum B’ for previously out-of-school children who have missed out on education for years. Curriculum B helped them to catch up on two years of academic contents within a single year and to integrate them into the formal education.

The latest sector analysis data showed that Aleppo, Rural Damascus and Idleb governorates accommodated a significant number of out-of-school children. The percentage of out-of-school children recorded in A’zaz and Jarabulus districts of Aleppo, controlled by opposition groups, was 91 percent and 89 percent, respectively. To tackle this issue, UNICEF placed greater weight on disparity reduction in access to learning opportunities for every child, regardless of their hardship environment. UNICEF, along with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and United Nations Relief and Works Agency, thoroughly revised the contents of self-learning materials for conflict sensitivity and quality assurance. The self-learning programme, accredited by MoE, enabled out-of-school children to keep learning at home or in their communities and to prepare for the national exams. UNICEF Syria, along with MoE and UNICEF MENARO, jointly produced an operational guide and an end user guide for the self-learning programme. UNICEF Syria sought to expand the accelerated education programme ‘Curriculum B’ for previously out-of-school children who have missed out on education for years. Curriculum B helped them to catch up on two years of academic contents within a single year and to integrate them into the formal education.

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The education system was overstretched and increasingly fragmented, with multiple displacements and lack of children’s access to schools. This continued to have serious repercussions on the delivery of education. UNICEF Syria continued monitoring the education situations across the country.

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

Analytical statement of progress

The ongoing crisis took its toll on the education system in Syria. A number of schools did not function as a protective learning environment. The 2017 analysis by the World Bank indicated that across the country, 53 per cent of educational facilities were partially damaged and 10 per cent were destroyed. Many schools in accessible areas suffered from the overcrowded classrooms due to an influx of internally displaced children. Some schools introduced double or triple shifts (morning, noon-time and afternoon class), but this meant that learning hours per child were reduced from six to two or three hours a day, which had serious implications for the quality of teaching and learning.

partners rehabilitated 398 schools (5,903 classrooms) for 243,188 children and established 217 prefabricated classrooms for 12,248 children across the country. UNICEF advocated to facilitate the travel of more than 12,430 children (including 5,816 girls) from hard-to-reach areas to government areas to sit for national exams.
In 2017, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) in updating and implementing the operation standards of safe and protective school environments, giving due consideration to inclusion, protection, gender, and 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 recognised as standard benchmarks for all education sector partners including NGOs, the UN and third parties for school rehabilitation. Throughout 2017, UNICEF supported MoE in operationalising the national standard guidelines in areas of school infrastructure. UNICEF provided technical support to MoE and sector partners in undertaking light school rehabilitation and provision of prefabricated classrooms equipped with child-friendly furniture and WASH facilities, including disability- and gender-responsive latrines. UNICEF introduced a new design of desks and chairs, which facilitated interactive learning. UNICEF also advocated for the adoption of these standards across the sector.

The scope of light school rehabilitation work included repair or replacement of doors and windows, and minor fixtures (walls, tiles, sports facilities). As part of disaster risk reduction, shatter-proof films were placed on classroom windows to minimise the risks to students and teachers caused by shelling explosions and mortars. Special arrangements were made for children with disabilities (hand rails in the corridors of first floor and ramps in school entrances); repair/maintenance of electric system; painting for classroom, corridor and entrance with child friendly colours and constructive drawing related to hygiene promotion.

UNICEF and MoE formulated operational guidelines and a user guide for programme implementation and monitoring. These guidelines and standards were designed for placement of children for curriculum B, including pre-testing, classroom arrangements, accreditation, and final integration to age-appropriate classes. The education sector analysis aided UNICEF in responding to the needs of displaced children, especially those who missed a number of years of schooling.

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

**Analytical statement of progress**
The education sector coordination, co-led by MoE and UNICEF, advanced the capacity development of sector partners in terms of preparedness, response planning and information management. This included training on geographic data entry, data collection, data validation and verification, which lead to a cleaner EMIS and improved real time sector level data collection. UNICEF worked closely with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to support EMIS data collection and analysis in Syria. A capacity gap assessment was conducted by the MoE Planning department and its IT department based on the existing policies, procedures and capacities. This informed a joint capacity development plan in information management (IM). UNICEF and MoE/DoE launched the IM capacity development sessions for school-level data collection and 4Ws (who does what, where, when) database. The availability of quality education data will promote evidence-informed planning and equity-based programming in response to the Syria crisis.

In order to identify the critical education needs at the decentralized level and to make contextually relevant response plans at the governorate level, UNICEF facilitated the technical discussions around emergency response and preparedness plans at the national and governorate levels. In February 2017, nearly 120 participants from MoE/DoE, NGOs and UN
agencies participated in this discussion, which served as a capacity development opportunity for the sector partners. As part of institutional capacity development of the education sector partners, UNICEF strengthened sector coordination mechanisms for partners to better understand their roles and responsibilities for better communication and coordination with local authorities, partners, schools and communities. UNICEF organised a national-wide education workshop in November 2017 where more than 100 participants discussed good practices and bottlenecks relating to the governorate-level sector planning, school data collection and analysis, non-formal education and early learning.

During implementation, contentious content was identified in the Self Learning Materials (SLM). Consequently, a technical committee was established with representatives from UNICEF and UNRWA and education and curriculum specialists. The changes proposed by the technical committee were then discussed during a consultation held by UNICEF and UNRWA with the Syrian MOE (Deputy Minister and technical experts). The review committee further suggested a subsequent detailed review of the contents by engaging experts on pedagogy, tracking and measuring learning to coincide with the Syria MoE/Damascus curriculum reform.

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

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, UNICEF Syria, along with MoE and partners, launched the Back to Learning (BTL) initiative, which reached 1.7 million in-school children with textbooks and teaching learning materials in all governorates. The BTL initiative supported timely enrolment of children in the new academic year. More than six million people were reached with BTL education messages through radio, TV and SMS, while more than 155,684 community members, teachers and children were also reached with door-to-door visits for awareness-raising. UNICEF Syria reached more than 494,297 children with learning materials in 492 hard-to-reach and besieged locations in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Homs, Idleb, Ar-Raqqa, Quneitra, Deir-ez-Zor and Rural Damascus.

UNICEF supported MoE in reaching 83,061 previously out-of-school children with ‘Curriculum B’ helping them to learn two-year curriculum contents in a single year. Curriculum B was designed to reintegrate the children into the formal education system. A further 7,561 children benefited from remedial education and improved academic performance and 27,278 out-of-school children were reached with the self-learning programme.

UNICEF and partners advocated for and facilitated the movement of 12,430 ninth and twelfth graders (including 5,816 girls) from hard-to-reach and besieged areas to take their exams in safer areas. This included 8,755 children travelling from Ar-Raqqa and Idleb governorates. These children were also provided with necessary support during the exam period, such as accommodation, meals, education bursaries (to cover exam registration fee, travel expenses), learning materials and remedial sessions. According to the report from NGO partners, approximately 60 per cent of children from hard-to-reach and besieged areas passed the exams.

According to the 2017 sector analysis, one in three schools were destroyed, damaged or used for purposes other than education. In response, UNICEF and partners rehabilitated 398 schools (5,903 classrooms) for 243,188 children and established 217 prefabricated classrooms for 12,248 children across the country. To enhance the capacity of teachers, UNICEF Syria adopted a three-pronged approach to teacher training: active learning; specialised training for
To promote early childhood care and education (ECCE), UNICEF Syria supported the dissemination of the ECD training manuals for pre-school teachers and other stakeholders. MoE and Aga Khan Foundation, supported by UNICEF Syria, provided training to 491 MoE/DoE officials and NGO staff/teachers on community-based ECCE. The partnership with NGOs enabled UNICEF to reach 13,824 pre-school children in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Rural Damascus and Tartous. Pre-school children had access to in-door learning activities, age-appropriate toys and storybooks for early learning and school readiness.

OUTPUT 4 Education Sector Coordination

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF played a leading role in the education sector, providing technical support to MoE and the sector partners in strengthening the coordination mechanisms at the national and sub-national levels. The education sector reached 2.5 million children and youth with formal and non-formal education services and supplies, including 350,000 in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. This was attributed to collective efforts by 51 implementing partners that included national/international NGOs, SARC and Palestinian Red Crescent Society, line ministries, and UN agencies. The sub-national education sector coordination remained active in Aleppo, Homs, Rural Damascus, Tartous and Quamishli. 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 launched the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) initiative in coordination with Amman and Gaziantep hubs in a Whole of Syria approach. It negotiated and made efforts to secure funding for education NGO partners in Syria under the ECW initiative. Several partnerships for delivery of the initiative in Syria were finalized and will commence in 2018. Challenges identified included the streamlining of procedures between the ECW Committee and UNICEF Syria standard operating procedures. Coordination on these issues will need to be further strengthened.

The annual sector analysis drawing on EMIS 2016/17 dataset was launched in coordination with UNICEF MENARO and New York Headquarters. The analysis will support MoE, UNICEF and other partners with evidence-based planning and equity-focused programming.

In November 2017, the education sector organised the national education workshop where more than 100 participants discussed good practice and bottlenecks relating to the governorate-level sector planning, school data collection and analysis, non-formal education and early
learning. This interface enabled them to understand their roles and responsibilities for better communication and coordination with local authorities, partners, schools and communities.

OUTCOME 4 Adolescents have improved capacities to contribute to enhancing resilience and social cohesion in their communities

Analytical statement of progress
Young Syrians have a critical role to play in promoting tolerance, peace and ensuring inter-generational transfer of protective family and social norms practices. To maximize their potential and enable them to become citizens driving the economic and social development of Syria, they need access to learning, skills and employment opportunities, spaces for social participation, and mechanisms to ensure their well-being and respect of their rights. Prolonged conflict has kept adolescents and youth (10-24 years old, representing approximately 31 per cent of the population) from recovering their potential and rebuilding their future.

In 2017, UNICEF’s partners across Syria contributed to ensuring that out-of-school adolescents, unemployed, vulnerable girls and young people who were displaced multiple times due to the ongoing conflict and affected by lack of access to education, job opportunities, unpredictability and lack of structure in daily life, improved their capacities, ultimately contributing to the strengthening of social cohesion of local communities.

Anchored in the No Lost Generation (NLG) initiative and the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP), a total of 473,756 adolescents and youth (54 per cent girls) from 13 governorates were reached with a holistic package of multi-sectoral services and opportunities (96 per cent of the annual target). Services included life skills and citizenship education (LSCE), vocational and entrepreneurship training and seed funding for the implementation of social and business entrepreneurship projects. Social cohesion, through Sport for Development, targeted the most vulnerable young people, including those with disabilities and young people of mixed religious and ethnic backgrounds.

A total of 57,562 youth (53 per cent girls) were reached in multiple hard to reach and besieged locations. Active multiservice platforms (MSPs) across UNICEF-supported sites incorporated issues such as puberty, safe hygiene and menstrual hygiene awareness and practices into existing life skills programs targeting girls and boys. Cross-sectoral service delivery provided in 39 new MSPs established (59 total) covered child protection, WASH and ADAP and targeted the ‘whole child’ from one space.

Cooperation with the Ministry of Health ensured that some 2,000 adolescent girls and boys had access to gender-responsive health services such as reproductive health, STD and HIV/AIDS awareness sessions. UNICEF’s partners enhanced the capacity of more than 5,000 youth volunteers from local NGO partners on LSCE, vocational training and concepts and approaches to adolescent development and participation.

ADAP scaled sector mainstreaming. This included support to programs for the identification of adolescents’ needs and priorities across sectors. Existing multisectoral needs assessment tools were revised to better reflect adolescent issues and strategy and action plans were developed to engage young people across sectors. Civic/social engagement and social cohesion initiatives, such as Sport for Development, helped 387,555 young people become positively engaged. Adolescents and youth identified and addressed issues affecting them and their communities (innovation labs served as collaborative working spaces for adolescents and youth
Key difficulties encountered included access to hard-to-reach areas and the availability of qualified partners in those areas to deliver relevant services. Young people highlighted the importance of environmental protection, including waste collection and recycling. Other examples of civic engagement were seen in conjunction with post-distribution monitoring of non-food items and the 2017 back to learning (BTL), global handwashing and polio campaigns. More than 100 blogs on issues such as aspirations and peace were developed by young people and showcased on social media platforms, including Syria U-Report.

The seed funding program fostered social and economic inclusion of the most vulnerable youth. Some 2,000 youth, 52 per cent girls, benefited from entrepreneurship innovation training and were equipped with skills in project development and analysis. A total of 1,411 youth received seed funding of up to US$2,000 to implement social and business entrepreneurship projects. The program expanded to Aleppo late 2017. Participatory action research (PAR) was extended to 60 young people from Damascus and Aleppo. In Homs, areas of study included education, employment, abuse, special needs, immigration, social/civic participation and social inclusion. Findings were translated into local action plans.

The programme significantly expanded system-strengthening, advocacy and policy. Following the finalization of a National Youth Assessment Survey (in collaboration with UNFPA and UNDP), UNICEF led the development of a first-ever National Framework of Action on Adolescent and Youth Development and Participation (in collaboration with UNFPA) under the leadership of the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population (SCFAP). A draft outline was completed, with broad participation by nine line ministries, UN agencies and other local partners. The outline included five areas: education, health, labour, participation and social protection. It aims to enhance coordination between ministries and other stakeholders to champion adolescents’ rights and needs. The voices of at least 1,000 young people from 11 governorates were heard following regional consultations. The framework will be submitted to the Prime Minister’s office for endorsement by early 2018.

Key difficulties encountered included access to hard-to-reach areas and the availability of qualified partners in those areas to deliver relevant services. The programme was expanded through ministry counterparts. Sector mainstreaming took significant investment; an action plan was drafted and will be put into practice in 2018. Severe funding shortages in 2017 hampered some of the planned programme expansions.

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 toward the planning of a national youth policy. The outbreak of war in 2011 halted that process. In 2017, policy and advocacy efforts made significant progress compared to 2016. UNICEF initiated and led the drafting of a first-ever National Framework of Action on Adolescent and Youth Development and Participation (in collaboration with UNFPA) and under the leadership of the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population (SCFAP). The framework included the broad participation of nine line ministries, various UN agencies and other local partners. The framework focused on five areas: education, health, labour, participation and social protection and it emphasizes the coordination between government ministries and other stakeholders to champion adolescents’ rights and needs across all areas identified.
The participatory action research (PAR) was extended to 60 young people from Damascus and Aleppo who received training by 10 young master researchers from Homs (already trained in 2016), and who collected qualitative data from 130 young people between the ages of 10 and 24 years old in the city of Homs. In Homs, areas of study included education and employment, social/civic participation and social inclusion. Findings were translated into local action plans. The young researchers built their skills, generated new knowledge on their existing social conditions and used their findings to advocate with local municipal leaders and identified entry points for social change.

Advocacy plans, with recommendations made by young people, will be shared with local decisions-makers aimed at action for young people. Local partners will now be responsible for mentoring young researchers and ensure partnerships for the roll out of action plans. One main challenge was bringing local NGO partners onboard. This eased over time and partners had a clear vision of their role and that of UNICEF.

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

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF delivered cross-sectoral services and opportunities, including LSCE and vocational/entrepreneurship training, Sport for Development and cultural activities and supported the implementation of adolescent and youth-led social and civic engagement initiatives. A total of 473,756 youth aged 10-24 years (55 per cent girls) from 13 governorates were reached through expanded partnerships and extended geographic reach by line ministries. This included young people displaced multiple times, marginalized internally displaced people, poor and unemployed youth and young people with disabilities and severely socially excluded. A total of 57,562 youth (53 per cent girls) came from hard to reach and besieged areas. Of the grand total, 323,478 were equipped with critical thinking, communication and creativity skills and core competencies viewed as essential to young people’s transition to adulthood (target 250,000). Adolescents equipped with these skills learned how and why to be engaged citizens who can transfer their knowledge to peers and can express their opinions about governance issues, and who can propose solutions to their local challenges. The program exceeded its
target due to geographic expansion by ministry counterparts. A total of 57,220 youth (against a total of 10,000) accessed vocational training courses provided by local NGOs (including IT, nursing, home electronics, English language and photography). This achievement can be attributed to geographical expansion by several NGO partners, as well as the increase in new partners at the start of 2017. Multiservice platforms expanded (39 new) and incorporated services and sessions around puberty, safe hygiene and menstrual hygiene awareness and practices into existing life skills programs. Cooperation with the Ministry of Health ensured that adolescent girls and boys had access to gender-responsive health services such as reproductive health and HIV/AIDS awareness sessions.

Civic engagement and social cohesion took various shapes. A total of 224,795 young people from 13 governorates took part in Sport for Development and social arts initiatives, all of which promoted the equal participation of internally displaced people and young people of the local communities, including participation of internally displaced people, host communities and young people with disabilities (target 330,000). The reach was below target due to the various sensitivities these kinds of activities represent in conservative communities and the long efforts it took by partners to get parental consent to allow girls to participate. The results picked up toward the end of the year. A total of 162,760 young people supported the mainstreaming of adolescents and youth engagement across UNICEF sector areas. Young people promoted social awareness on child labour and child marriage and contributed to the back to learning (BTL), global handwashing, hygiene and polio campaigns. More than 5,500 initiatives were implemented. A youth volunteer platform was developed in Rural Damascus, aimed at identifying volunteer opportunities for young people.

A total of 2,000 youth (52 per cent girls), benefited from entrepreneurship training and were equipped with skills in project development. A total of 1,411 received seed funding to implement social and business entrepreneurship projects. Those projects were presented in front of a jury comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, UNICEF, SARC and selected private sector enterprises. The program expanded to Aleppo late 2017.

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 throughout 2017, along with disregard for the rules of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict and their corresponding obligations to protect children. The prolonged conflict continued to expose children to violence, abuse and exploitation and grave child rights violations. As highlighted in the latest Secretary General CAAC report (2017), parties to the conflict continued to recruit children, train and actively use them in hostilities. There were 300 verified cases of children recruited and used during the first half of 2017. The killing and injuring of at least 524 children was verified in the first six months of 2017. Airstrikes were responsible for 37 per cent of the child casualties, shelling of civilian areas was responsible for 22 per cent and IED attacks were responsible for 22 per cent.

In this context, key protection concerns included 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 experienced by children.
Progress in the implementation of the national work plan to prevent and respond to underage recruitment, endorsed in February 2017, was achieved through the engagement of high level officials of various departments in discussions related to child recruitment, justice for children, and child trafficking.

Concrete actions to step-up awareness raising and protection responses to child labour were discussed with the International Labour Organisation and with national counterparts, including the Ministries of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSAL) and Education and NGOs. In the first workshop organized in November 2017, 69 front-line workers gained skills to engage with employers, children and their families.

The opening of drop-in centres supported by UNICEF in Damascus and Aleppo provided a new model of response to children living in street situations and deprived of parental care, including working children. The safe house for victims of violence and abuse, supported in Damascus jointly with UNFPA, represented a concrete response to the growing concerns related to the spread of gender based violence.

More structured responses were set up in areas of massive displacement – especially in the North East of Syria – with the establishment of child protection units focused on the identification of children in need of advanced protection, such as separated and unaccompanied children, children with disabilities, and victims of violence and abuse.

All these services, as well as essential psychosocial support to children heavily traumatised, saw a paradigm shift in 2017 with the introduction of case management practices. The training package on case management and integrated social services, introduced in November 2016 and endorsed by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2017, was further refined throughout the year in close coordination with national counterparts, and was used to train service providers from NGOs and public services across the country. Almost 9,900 boys and girls (58 per cent of the target) benefited from the provision of specialised services. The limited funding for both social protection and child protection and the slow roll out of a new modality of working constrained the achievement of a full result.

The assessment and care plan forms included in the training package were distributed among NGOs working in 11 governorates, in the attempt to facilitate the harmonization of data collection and analysis and enhance the application of case management practices across all the child protection service providers.

The foundations were set for the development of a national information management system, in full respect of principles of confidentiality and protection of individual information.

An inter-ministerial dialogue was initiated at the end of the year to identify modalities to implement the proposed model of integrated social services and enhance the cooperation of service providers at local level to better respond to the needs of the most vulnerable families and children.

UNICEF Syria’s advocacy work continued, in cooperation with other agencies, focusing on grave violations of children’s rights, which were reported through the monitoring and reporting mechanism. Data evidence was instrumental to inform the ongoing advocacy strategies and actions that called on all parties to the conflict to abide by their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, with particular attention to the latest developments of the conflict in the North-East areas of the country, in areas previously controlled by ISIS.
UNICEF Syria continued to support school and community-based mine risk education (MRE) through partnerships with governmental and non-governmental partners in 13 governorates, reaching more than 1.8 million children (93 per cent of the target). As a result of UNICEF’s partnership with the MoE, MRE was integrated in the official school curriculum.

The child protection sub-sector supported by UNICEF continued to ensure coordination among all the actors involved in Syria and provided 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 national assessment on child protection issues, for the first time involving many community stakeholders within Syria. The information collected underlined increasing concerns over protection risks involving large numbers of children, such as child labour and early marriages.

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

Analytical statement of progress
The dialogue with national counterparts continued in 2017 to promote a systemic response to emerging protection risks affecting children in Syria.

Following the establishment of a government inter-ministerial committee in 2016, the national work plan to prevent and respond to underage recruitment, developed with UNICEF’s technical assistance, was endorsed in February 2017. The work plan was developed prior to the listing for recruitment of the Government of Syria forces in the Secretary General’s Annual Report published in September 2017. It emphasized recruitment by armed opposition groups, with possibilities of inclusion of elements of protection of all children recruited and used by all parties to the conflict. The work plan, which recognised children associated with armed groups and armed forces as victims of a grave violation, included five main goals: legal reform to ensure prevention of all forms of child recruitment and use and rehabilitation of children; capacity building for key actors/stakeholders working on protection of children recruited or used in the conflict; development and implementation of standardized rehabilitation interventions; awareness raising initiatives; and development of an information data management system.

The involvement of children in child labour was a growing concern among communities and service providers. In 2017 UNICEF continued the dialogue with key stakeholders to define an action plan to address the phenomenon in a systemic way. UNICEF supported an in-depth assessment in two industrial areas of the country (Homs and Rural Damascus) where many children were involved in labour. Key findings and recommendations will be shared in the first quarter of 2018. Intensive communication campaigns were effective strategies in increasing awareness about the risks and negative consequences associated with child labour. A communication for development campaign was proposed, with actions prioritised for the coming months. Through the campaign a change in knowledge, attitude and behaviours on child labour will be promoted among key stakeholders, including parents and other caregivers, employers of children, local officials, community leaders and representatives of civil society.

Intensive support was provided throughout the year to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoSAL) to finalise the conceptual framework and training package promoting case management as the key modality to ensure an integrated social services response to the protection needs of families and children. The conceptual framework was presented to relevant ministries in December 2017, thus opening the dialogue on the need to formalise inter-sectoral
To ensure the sustainability of the mine risk education (MRE) programme in Syria, and to achieve behavioural change toward the danger associated to mines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs), UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education (MOE) in integrating MRE into the official school curriculum for the 1st, 4th, 7th and 10th grades. The topic is included in different subjects, to maximize the reach of awareness messages.

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
The development of the capacity of NGOs and public service providers remained an integral component of child protection strategy in Syria, focusing on enhancing quality of community-based child protection interventions, such as psychosocial support, prevention and awareness initiatives and expanding specialised responses.

In 2017, UNICEF supported the training of 2,071 frontline workers (69 per cent of the target) in 8 governorates (Aleppo, Al Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Damascus, Hama, Homs, Rural Damascus and Tartous) on the delivery of quality psychosocial interventions, especially in areas of new displacement, such as northeast Syria, Aleppo and Rural Damascus. A total of 2,365 teachers and other service providers (doctors involved in vaccination campaigns; policemen) and 1,039 professionals from NGOs were equipped with new materials and tools on mine risk education. Partnerships stakeholders who have direct contacts with citizens, including religious leaders, were pursued in order to maximise the spread of life-saving information in the shortest possible time possible.

A paradigm shift was promoted with the promotion of case management practices. The training package on case management and integrated social services was applied in sessions involving 649 service providers from the departments of social affairs and labour (DOSALs), NGOs, and SARC, operating in psychosocial support services, child protection units, and in specialised services (including social protection schemes) in seven governorates. The training focused on: the role of case managers in the promotion of integrated social services, the organisation of services at local level, the assessment of the needs of families and the definition of individual care plans, and the application of principles of relational social work, which allowed to empower the family and the informal network around children, before recurring to specialised services. A total of 120,000 copies of the assessment tools, approved by MoSAL, were dispatched to 11 governorates to encourage the harmonised application of case management practices among the NGOs.

Capacities to establish specialised services were supported in 2017. Qualified technical expertise was involved to support national counterparts in establishing a safe home for victims of violence and abuse in Rural Damascus, and the improvement of services provided to children in drop-in centres. Sessions were organised with 35 case managers to define standard operating procedures for their services and refine modalities to assess the needs of children and formulate individualized response plans.

To facilitate the implementation of the workplan on child recruitment, at the end of 2017, UNICEF organised a series of trainings engaging government officials (including the Ministry of Reconciliation; Ministry of Justice; MoSAL), NGOs and media, to familiarize them with the
international framework and guidance on prevention and response to child recruitment. A training manual and related materials were prepared.

As part of the strategy to address child labour in Syria, UNICEF and ILO facilitated four workshops to enhance the capacity of labour inspectors, social workers, education personnel, community-based organizations and humanitarian workers to prevent the exploitation of children involved in child labour. A total of 69 front-line workers gained skills necessary for engaging with employers, children and their families.

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

Analytical statement of progress

In 2017, provision of structured and sustained psychosocial support continued to be the primary response to the increasing protection needs of children exposed to traumatic life conditions. The resilience and coping skills of more than 222,000 children (89 per cent of the target; 50 per cent girls) were stimulated in 161 child-friendly centres, and through the work of 72 mobile teams, across 12 governorates. Of those, 71,846 children lived in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. In Rural Damascus, psychosocial initiatives were complemented by innovative music, theatre and figurative art sessions managed by qualified professionals to stimulate the creativity, social skills and perception of reality of children and adolescents.

Families rendered vulnerable by the conflict were resorting to negative coping mechanisms, resulting in increased incidences of child labour, child marriage, separation from families and children living in the street. Awareness sessions on the negative consequences of such protection risks for children were organised for 227,851 children (50 per cent girls) and 37,376 caregivers (85 per cent women), reaching 90 per cent of the target.

Child-friendly centres also functioned as the entry point for the identification of advanced protection needs. A total of 6,812 children, identified by case managers, benefited from individualised care plans, defined with the engagement of their families and including referral to specialized services.

An additional 9,862 children were put under the care of case managers in specialised services, including the social protection scheme benefitting children with disabilities. Only 58 per cent of the target was achieved due to the shortage of funds.

The escalation of military operations – especially in Raqqa, Deir-Ez-Zor and Aleppo – forced thousands of families to flee their homes. Massive and sudden movements caused an increase in the number of separated and unaccompanied children. Through the establishment of Child Protection Units, including full time social workers dedicated to case management practices, 1,101 separated children (49 per cent girls) and 111 unaccompanied children (47 per cent girls) were identified in Raqqa, Hassakeh, Der Ez Zor and Aleppo governorates. To date, 87 children were reunited with their families, 787 children were living in informal foster care settings, under regular supervision by case managers, and interim residential care was arranged for 26 children.

Specialised responses were supported throughout the year for identified protection needs. Since January 2017, 187 children living in street situations in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Aleppo (53 girls and 134 boys) benefited from the services provided in three drop-in centres and
in the Family Protection Unit for victims of violence and abuse. Children had access to temporary accommodations, specialized psychological support, education, awareness on child protection issues and health promotion. The involvement of case managers ensured the focus on the identification of the long-term care solutions that would respect their right to grow up in a family-like environment. The limitations imposed by the Syrian law on alternative care solutions pose a major challenge in this sense.

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

Analytical statement of progress
Collection and verification of cases, reporting and advocacy on grave violations of children’s rights continued throughout the year according to the procedures of the monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM) established within Syria. More than 1,000 violations against children were verified in the first half of the year. UNICEF advocacy continued to be centred on highlighting the nature and scope of grave violations of child rights based on evidence-based monitoring and reporting and on calling on all parties to the conflict to abide by their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, particularly in relation to the use of water as a weapon of war, and to the release and reintegration of children recruited and used, or captured, by parties to the conflict. To ensure consistency of information and outreach to relevant humanitarian and child protection actors, a standardized MRM4Syria information package with analysis of trends and patterns was developed and was used to inform partners and donors. The Syria Country Task Force on MRM was convened twice to discuss strategies to increase the engagement with parties to the conflict on grave child rights violations, and increase other UN Agencies’ participation in the mechanism.

In close collaboration with local communities, NGOs and government institutions, and with the involvement of all service providers that can reach out to families and children, UNICEF further increased its mine risk education (MRE) interventions to promote safe behaviours and to prevent civilian casualties. A total of 1,773,108 children and 88,812 caregivers in 13 governorates (93 per cent of the target) were provided with lifesaving information and materials on how to better protect themselves from risks posed by unexploded ordnance and remnants of war. Brochures on mine risk education were produced to further engage in an interactive way with very young children. Learning games to reach children living in hard to reach and besieged areas where it was difficult to organise ordinary MRE sessions were produced, to be delivered in inter-agency convoys.

Taking into consideration the difficulties in identifying alternative care solutions for children deprived of parental care, an analysis of existing laws was conducted by UNICEF to identify viable options to expand family-based alternative care placements; The analysis will be used as a base for advocacy interventions with national counterparts. Increased attention also was paid to measures put in place for the care provisions and registration of children born to unknown or foreign fathers and parents (a problem affecting many children who lived in hard to reach and besieged areas), especially those born to foreign fighters who joined ISIS.

OUTCOME 6 Social and economic vulnerabilities of disadvantaged children and their families are identified and addressed.
Analytical statement of progress
The scope and range of social protection issues affecting children and families in Syria is ever widening and deepening due to the prolonged nature of the conflict. The vulnerability of the Syrian population across the country has been further exacerbated by factors including the deep economic recession, ever growing unemployed rate and loss or damage of property. A middle-income country prior to the conflict, Syria now has an estimated 85 per cent of people living below the poverty line, 69 per cent below extreme poverty line, and 35 per cent in abject poverty, unable to meet their basic needs for survival. The reduced access to services and continuous displacement of large groups of the population has continued to weaken the capacity of families to provide for the basic needs of their children and especially of the most vulnerable ones.

The social protection programme component focused on essential in-kind and cash transfers to families of particularly vulnerable children, in consideration of their exposure to life-threatening conditions, and of the numerous factors constraining their livelihoods.

In 2017, UNICEF Syria reached more than 485,000 children through the distribution of clothes, blankets and vouchers to procure clothes (75 per cent of the target), protecting them from the consequences of harsh weather, especially in winter. Supplies for the massive winter programme were entirely procured locally. Despite the fund mobilisation campaigns launched before the beginning of the winter season, delays in receiving adequate funding continued to constrain UNICEF’s efforts to effectively reach as many children as possible.

In urban areas, where internally displaced people continued to be concentrated and shops were reasonably accessible, UNICEF continued to expand the distribution of e-vouchers to families for the direct purchase of children’s clothes’ kits. With access to pre-selected shops, families could directly choose the type and the quantities of items responding to the needs of their children.

The direct distribution of winter kits in internally displaced people camps and informal settlements and in hard-to-reach area, remained the most efficient and effective way to implement this life-saving intervention, the flexibility provided by the vouchers programme encounters the full appreciation of families. This was demonstrated by the findings of post distribution monitoring exercises, conducted throughout the year through the utilisation of an online application (KoBo) that simplified and facilitated the data collection and analysis process.

The flagship achievement of the social protection programme was the implementation of the first social protection scheme promoted by UNICEF Syria. Initiated at the end of 2016, the scheme aimed to reduce the social and economic vulnerabilities of targeted groups of the population, through the provision of regular, unconditional cash transfers, and the support provided by social workers trained on case management practices throughout the duration of the programme. In consideration of the numerous constraints experienced by many agencies in Syria to provide direct cash transfers, and with the aim of promoting social inclusion interventions, the programme targeted a particularly vulnerable group: children with disabilities. The provision of predictable and regular amounts of cash to their families, combined with the support of social workers, empowered caregivers to respond to the needs and promote the rights to social inclusion of their children, through improved access to services and opportunities. Anecdotal evidence highlighted the improvement of caregiving modalities even in extreme circumstances.

The first cycle of the programme was completed in Aleppo and Lattakia, reaching more than
5,890 children. In the last quarter of the year UNICEF successfully negotiated the expansion of the programme to Tartous, and some areas of Rural Damascus, based on a thorough review of the completed programme with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MoSAL).

Despite several constraints in the identification of partners to conduct the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, two rounds of post-distribution monitoring exercises were conducted. Data also was collected from a small sample of families to conduct a consumption analysis. The findings of these exercises have not yet been finalised.

The promotion of case management practices, conducted in cooperation with the child protection programme, allowed UNICEF to open the discussion with national counterparts on the introduction of a model of integrated social services. The conceptual framework was included in the training package on case management discussed in detail with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, and was presented to other relevant ministries in December. Initial discussions took place for the establishment of a national information management system related to case management. The principles of confidentiality and protection of information, defined within the Inter-agency guidelines on case management and child protection, were shared to guide the future design of the database.

The social inclusion agenda was promoted through support provided to a national survey conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour among families of children and adults with disabilities, with the aim of assessing barriers in access to services and social inclusion opportunities. The report will be published in 2018. This initiative, also supported by UNDP, allowed for discussion on the need to revise the national classification of disabilities, as a starting point for the provision of inclusive services.

Lack of timely and sufficient funding, lack of access to certain areas with high levels of need, and lengthy government approval processes were among the key challenges constraining the full achievement of the results under this outcome.

**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**
Throughout 2017, UNICEF provided quality technical advice and support to several surveys and studies conducted or planned jointly with national partners. UNICEF Syria took the lead in mobilizing various national and international actors 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. The final report is expected by February 2018. Findings from this study will inform planning and decision-making at national and local levels in relation to the needs, priorities and actions required to better support children and adults with disabilities in Syria.

In 2017, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR, WHO and WFP jointly provided financial and technical support to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) to conduct a socio-demographic survey (SDS). The survey’s findings will provide insights on household status, including on educational and health, labour force and migration, reproductive health, food security, household income and expenditure and prevalence of disabilities. The field work for this survey started in October 2017 and results are expected in March 2018.
The evaluation of the Back to Learning Initiative kicked-off in November. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coordination, sustainability and impact of the BTL initiative promoted by UNICEF Syria from 2013 to 2016. The evaluation report is expected to be finalized in March 2018.

Throughout the year, regular situation 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 to remain up-to-date on people’s needs on the ground, including internally displaced people, and to further improve the implementation of programmes based on the monitoring reports from the various governorates. Regular training sessions and exchanges of lessons learned contributed to enhancing capacities of UNICEF staff, third-party monitors and implementing partners on monitoring, reporting and information management.

During 2017 UNICEF Syria further strengthened its information management system, ensuring the production of regular information feeding into corporate reporting mechanisms and Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM). New infographics and maps were developed for effective communication and advocacy on the urgent need to protect the rights of all children in Syria. As part of the Whole of Syria (WoS) operation, the Joint Operational Planning (JOP) together with the UNICEF hubs in Jordan and Turkey further increased the capacity to coordinate interventions, identify gaps and rationalise the allocation of resources in response to identified needs of Syrian children. A joint WoS standard operating procedures on information management was developed, ensuring disaggregated data sharing.

A new online SMART 4Ws database (HDSS) was developed, which was being used by UNICEF Syria Country Office and all WoS hubs. The HDSS provided solid and reliable information and disaggregated data on UNICEF emergency response. This new tool enhanced reporting and improved the coordination between the WoS hubs.

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

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF Syria promoted social protection interventions to enhance the resilience of the most vulnerable families in the face of the adversities of the ongoing conflict, to strengthen the continuum of humanitarian and early recovery interventions, and to preserve the social protection space in the country. Cash transfer schemes were promoted not as a one-off substitute of supply distribution, but as regular and predictable social transfers sustaining the ability of the most vulnerable families to respond to economic shocks, social vulnerabilities and the loss of livelihoods.

In 2017, UNICEF Syria rolled out its first social protection scheme, targeting children with complex disabilities. Adopting an integrated approach to social protection, the scheme complemented regular and unconditional cash transfers with professional support to families, provided by social workers trained on case management practices. In support of the identified needs of children and their families, social workers were engaged to empower families to better cope with the complex situation of their children. A network of service providers was mobilised to enhance referral mechanisms and better integrate interventions across different departments.

In 2017, UNICEF Syria completed one full-cycle of cash transfer in Aleppo and launched the scheme in the governorate of Lattakia, reaching a total of 5,892 children.
UNICEF used the services of a third party financial institution for the distribution of the cash, and set up a solid monitoring system to ensure transparency and effectiveness of the programme. The beneficiaries were identified by the implementing partners based on the defined eligibility criteria applied to the entire geographic area where the programme was implemented. While the initial target was defined based on an estimate applying principles of equity, efforts were made to ensure that all eligible children in the geographic area were included in the scheme. A randomized verification of the eligibility of beneficiaries was conducted at the beginning of the programme, and the social workers carried out on-site monitoring throughout the implementation. The eligibility criteria and the purpose of the programme were clearly communicated with the local communities through the implementing partners. UNICEF also used periodic post-distribution monitoring surveys to document the beneficiaries’ feedback and perceptions, and to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme. A consumption analysis involving a small sample of families was also carried out to gather evidence on the impact of the programme on the well-being of children with disabilities and their families. The findings of the analyses were still being refined at year end. Increased efforts will be required in 2018 to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and produce solid evidence on the impact of the programme.

The lack of sufficient funding and lengthy government approval processes presented the programme with challenges. UNICEF continued to work closely with MoSAL and successfully negotiated expansion of the programme to new locations in 2018. Building on the achievements and lessons of this programme, UNICEF engaged in a dialogue with MoSAL on the support to the development and refinement of nationally-owned social protection schemes to respond to specific vulnerabilities of children.

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

**Analytical statement of progress**

The several-fold increase in prices of essential commodities, combined with the deteriorating economic situation of households, left many Syrians unable to protect their children from the harsh weather conditions, especially during the winter months. This was particularly true for families who were displaced several times over the last few years and continued to live in dire conditions.

In 2017, UNICEF Syria reached 433,795 displaced and vulnerable children (87 per cent of the target) with seasonal clothes and blankets. Among them, 155,875 children were in hard-to-reach and besieged areas, and were reached through inter-agency convoys.

All the children’s clothes and blankets procured by UNICEF Syria were produced locally. Apart from timely and cost effective delivery, the local procurement of non-food items also supported the local economy and recovery process, and enhanced community resilience through the multiplier effect of the cash that was injected in the local market. In 2017, UNICEF also continued to partner with NGOs who involved displaced women in the production of non-food items, thus helping them to earn a living and provide for their needs and those of their families.

In 2017, UNICEF continued to distribute e-vouchers to families living in urban areas, where local markets were reasonably accessible. In this way, vulnerable families had the opportunity to directly purchase clothes for their children in pre-selected shops, allowing them to make more
autonomous and responsible choices, while at the same time reducing logistics and distribution costs. A solid online system provided for real-time monitoring of the programme and timely adjustments as required. In 2017, the e-voucher programme reached 51,956 children (35 per cent of the target) in urban areas of Homs, Tartous, Lattakia, Al Hassakeh and Damascus. The programme was expanded to Aleppo, Hama and Rural Damascus during the winter campaign 2017-2018.

In the second half of 2017, the mobilisation of resources allowed for the procurement of winter clothes before the end of the year, and the achievement of 87 per cent of the non-food item target for the winter campaign 2017-18. Distribution was scaled up, especially in the areas where the last massive displacements happened (Al Hasakeh, Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa). From September, the programme reached 10,000 children in the Deir-ez-Zor governorate, one of the areas most affected by the conflict. Despite the timely resource mobilisation campaign, sufficient funds were not provided in time to ensure the full outreach to children before the winter.

The post-distribution monitoring (PDM) exercises conducted for non-food items and e-voucher programmes (2016-2017 winter campaign) registered overall high satisfaction with efficiency and effectiveness of the interventions. More than 90 per cent of those surveyed indicated the e-voucher amount and the quantity of the designated items were sufficient to provide the needed protection to children during the cold winter season. The PDM of the non-food item programme also indicated that 78 per cent of the surveyed beneficiaries were satisfied with the quantity of the distributed items. The PDM results also highlighted the seasonal nature of the intervention, and the importance of timely response to prevent the negative impact of harsh weather on children.

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. The programme was coordinated through regular programme group meetings, quarterly programme internal reviews, and an end year review with partners. Programme coordination meetings focused on monitoring programme implementations, key performance indicators and bottlenecks, and annual management plan programme priorities. UNICEF Syria had comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems 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 toward planned results. This included physical verification to ensure any bottlenecks were identified and adjustments made in real time.

Field offices supported the implementation of the programme priorities across Syria. Field offices had measures in place to define their accountability and tools to report on humanitarian and programme developments. In 2017, UNICEF Syria developed contingency plans that provided a strategic planning framework for the programme sections and field offices to ensure an appropriate, timely response to ongoing and sudden emergencies.

UNICEF Syria enhanced partnership and quality assurance activities through the implementation of the harmonized approach to cash transfer. Support was provided to programme staff to better engage with partners and improve programme implementation.
UNICEF provided training to 18 implementing partners, including 36 NGOs staff, on financial and procurement aspects of work.

Communication for development (C4D) played a key role in supporting country programmes. More than 3,103,728 caregivers were reached with polio and routine immunization educational messages (900,000 print materials were disseminated to raise awareness about the outbreak). More than 1,200 health workers and mobilizers were trained on social mobilization. Evidence-based C4D strategies were developed for handwashing and child exclusive breastfeeding.

Programme implementation was supported by active external communication and advocacy efforts. At least 70 million people were reached with key UNICEF messages globally. UNICEF Syria strengthened partnerships with National Committees, which enabled them to provide US$50.9 million net revenue to the 2017 Syria Humanitarian Action for Children campaign, including US$25.8 million for the Syria Crisis alone.

**OUTPUT 1 External Relations**

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, UNICEF Syria continued to provide children across Syria with equal opportunities to voice their plight and dreams and advocate for their rights. UNICEF Syria conducted approximately 30 one-to-one media interviews reaching more than 70 million people around the world with key advocacy priorities, including using water as a weapon of war, killing and maiming of children, attacks on schools and hospitals, as well as sustained, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access. Approximately 35 per cent of the 195 multimedia products published in 2017 focused on public advocacy for children’s rights. UNICEF issued a total of eight statements and seven press releases, in addition to news notes and Palais media briefings around major issues and incidents that directly impacted the lives of children in Syria.

UNICEF Syria presented innovative products that helped to counter media and donor fatigue about the protracted crisis. During a one-week period marking six years of conflict, UNICEF had the leading share of coverage among humanitarian agencies, with 78.3 per cent of mentions. Visually appealing products, supported by active media engagement, resulted in more than 34 television and radio mentions on a variety of outlets, including BBC, CNN, Al-Jazeera and France 24, with extensive pick up from other international platforms. UNICEF received more than 201 media mentions in 2017, compared to 67 in 2016, for the same period. Hashtags of UNICEF’s campaign ‘Hitting Rock Bottom’ reached more than 641.5 million people and directly engaged more than 200,000. The song and music video ‘Heartbeat’ reached a record 1.6 million in the MENA region alone.

UNICEF Syria produced approximately 20 multimedia products per month, reaching a monthly average of 20,000 people, and 200,000 for the top 10 products on MENA Facebook page. Despite access constraints, partnerships with freelance photographers and videographers across the country allowed UNICEF to be the voice of children everywhere in Syria. Following the evacuation of east Aleppo, media interest notably shifted from the worsening humanitarian situation in the city. UNICEF’s media partnership with the UK Mirror reached more than 52 million people by highlighting dangers to children of unexploded remnants of war and UNICEF’s response through mine-risk education. It also allowed UNICEF to proactively create news instead of passively feeding into existing news cycles.
UNICEF Syria collaborated with UNICEF National Committees (NatComs) and the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division (PFP) to support fundraising with multimedia products, enabling more than 40 National Committees to collectively remit US$50.9 million net revenue to the 2017 Syria Humanitarian Action for Children appeal, including US$25.8 million for the Syria Crisis alone. Top contributors were UNICEF National Committees in Germany, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. Compared to other Level 3 emergencies around the world, the Syria crisis remained by far the number one focus of private sector emergency fundraising in donor countries, exceeding the second highest Level 3 revenue by two and half times.

**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**
C4D interventions reached more than 3,103,728 caregivers with polio and routine Immunization educational messaging, and 1,200 health workers and mobilizers were trained on social mobilization. Approximately 900,000 print materials were disseminated in ‘Raqqa and Der Ez Zor’ governorates to raise awareness about the outbreak, which contributed to reaching 78 per cent of the eligible children with polio vaccine.

C4D supported the planning and roll out of the ‘Back to Learning’ media campaign, which reached 6 million people through radio, television spots and door-to-door community mobilization activities. More than 20,000 community members, parents, caregivers, teachers and children were reached with door-to-door visits through which they became more aware of school registration procedures and the importance of education.

A total of 15 NGOs and 10 UNICEF WASH officers were trained on hygiene promotion techniques and practices.

More than 2,300 users were reached through the U-report initiative, which helped to collect indicators for ADAP on establishing a ‘Volunteering Platform’ and ‘Vocational Assessment & Evaluation’. In partnership with local Syrian radio stations, UNICEF Syria disseminated an opinion poll to adolescents and encouraged them to think out of the box and work together to support the country, regardless of differences in religion, political views and backgrounds.

UNICEF Syria trained 10 facilitators to deliver 18 workshops on ‘Social entrepreneurship and Social media’ to 262 adolescents in Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, and Hasakeh. The training programme was designed to empower youth and provide them with opportunities to design, develop and establish social and business entrepreneurship initiatives. C4D support was also extended to media professionals through the ‘Health Journalism’ programme, in which 10 journalists from leading media outlets were given the opportunity to enhance their technical skills and to improve the quality of human interest stories related to child and maternal health.

**OUTPUT 3** Field Support - Hubs

**Analytical statement of progress**
In 2017, field office accountabilities and communications lines with relevant programme and operation teams were clarified. A set of tools and systems were developed to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the field operations. The tools were useful to monitor the humanitarian and
security situations and provided support to programmatic needs and addressed many bottlenecks and operational challenges. Systems included bi-weekly conference calls, weekly and quarterly reports and regular field visits. UNICEF Syria developed contingency plans that provided a strategic planning framework for the programme sections and field offices to ensure an appropriate, timely response to the ongoing and sudden emergencies. The plans foresaw preposition of supplies and Quick Impact Packages (QIP), dedicated resources, including implementing partners, surge HR and funding. These plans enabled UNICEF to respond rapidly to the major peaks in the crisis in 2017. The bi-annual Chiefs of Field Office meeting was used to identify more efficient and effective working modalities, and workplans and indicators were developed in line with the overall office workplan and performance monitoring framework.

UNICEF Syria contributed, on a regular basis, to identify hard-to-reach and besieged areas. Forty-six interagency convoys delivered assistance to more than 500,000 people, including an estimated 215,000 children. Internal standard operating procedures (SOPs) were reviewed and updated to guide UNICEF participation in convoys, and to improve coordination in convoys’ preparation between programme sections, sectors lead and supply division. SOPs helped identify better reporting systems, challenges, follow up actions and lessons learned. UNICEF technical staff visits to hard-to-reach and besieged areas allowed programmatic follow up from previous missions in the same locations.

**OUTPUT 4 Enhanced partnership**

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, UNICEF Syria supported programme staff on translating UNICEF policies and procedures for a better engagement with partners and enhancement of programme implementation. During 2017, UNICEF continued to support the Partnership Review Committee (PRC), contributed to the rolling out of the new eZHACT procedures, conducted quality assurance activities and capacity development of staff and NGOs on UNICEF policies, procedures and eTools.

UNICEF supported the PRC activities, including the revision of the PCA/PDs submissions, documenting the PRC meetings and maintaining a central repository system of documents. In 2017, UNICEF reviewed a total of 99 programme documents, 15 PCAs/SSFAs before sharing them with the PRC /Deputy Representative for recommendations and endorsement. UNICEF conducted due diligence checks for all partners and maintained an implementing partners list that was updated and shared with programme staff on regular bases. The partnership standard operations procedures (SOPs) for UNICEF Syria were revised and updated to facilitate more effective and efficient engagement with partners.

At the beginning of 2017, a HACT assurance plan was developed and approved by the UNICEF Representative. To implement the HACT plan, a new third-party service provider was contracted, which resulted in achieving 60 per cent of the planned micro-assessments (100 per cent for CSOs), 56 per cent of the planned audits (71 per cent for CSOs) and 62 per cent of the planned spot checks (70 per cent for CSOs).

UNICEF advanced and facilitated capacity development and training for staff and partners in 2017. A total of 73 programme staff benefited from training on eTools, 64 staff participated in trainings on eZHACT and 60 staff attended orientations and training sessions on partnership with CSOs/HACT procedures. UNICEF supported the capacity development of implementing
partners by providing training to 18 implementing partners, including 36 NGO staff, on financial and procurement aspects of work.

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

Seven years into the crisis, the conflict has adversely affected the education situation of Palestinian refugee children inside Syria. The education sector analysis drawing on EMIS 2016/17 showed 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. Enrolment dropped to 44,200 in 2016/17. The most heavily affected areas were Damascus and Rural Damascus. The reason for this decline was mainly considered to be a consequence of the proliferation of school closures in Damascus, especially in Al Moukhaim and Rural Damascus. Evidence demonstrated that the number of UNRWA schools went from 119 in 2011/12 to 92 in 2016/17. 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 people. The number decreased to 1,785 people for 92 UNRWA schools in 2016-17.

In response, UNICEF Syria sustained its partnership with UNRWA and the General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR) to improve education access for Palestinian children in host communities. UNICEF Syria supported UNRWA and GAPAR with education emergency supplies, professional development of teachers in pre-school and basic education. In 2017, as part of the back to learning campaign, UNICEF Syria reached 18,150 Palestinian children with education supplies in Damascus, Aleppo, Lattakia, Dara’a, Homs and Hama. UNICEF also supported UNRWA and GAPAR on professional development of 280 teachers in active learning, positive discipline, prevention of corporal punishment, and on how to care for children with learning difficulties. A total of 473 children were enrolled in Curriculum-B for the summer session.

To promote early learning among Palestinian children, UNICEF supported UNRWA and GAPAR in providing 550 pre-school teachers and community members with two training courses on the early childhood development (ECD) manuals in Damascus and Rural Damascus. UNICEF also supported 5,280 pre-primary school children to access ECE services in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Lattakia and Hama.

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

Analytical statement of progress

In 2017, UNICEF provided support to UNRWA and GAPAR in promoting equitable access to quality learning for Palestinian refugee children in Syria. UNICEF, along with UNRWA and GAPAR, supported 18,150 Palestinian children (against the target of 20,000) to attend schools by providing them with the necessary school bags and stationery as part of the Back to Learning campaign. This enabled them to continue learning at UNRWA schools, GAPAR institutes and shelters in Damascus, Aleppo, Lattakia, Dara’a, Homs and Hama. A total of 500 Palestinian children benefited from accelerated learning programme using Curriculum B.
OUTPUT 2 Output 1.2. Palestinian pre-school boys and girls have access to the community-based ECD services

Analytical statement of progress
Building the capacity of pre-school teachers was a priority for UNICEF Syria in 2017. UNICEF supported GAPAR and UNRWA in training 550 pre-school teachers and community members with two training courses on the ECD manuals in Damascus and Rural Damascus. The training enhanced the teachers’ skills on child-centred and age-specific teaching and learning. UNICEF also supported 5,280 pre-primary school children to access early childhood education services in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Lattakia and Hama, where they had access to storybooks and play with age-appropriate toys and games. 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 2017, UNICEF expanded child protection activities for Palestinian children in partnership with the General Authority for Palestine Arab Refugees (GAPAR) and UNRWA. Community-based child protection programmes reached 1,430 children (100 per cent of the target) in the settlements in Damascus, rural Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Lattakia. Awareness activities on child protection issues and mine risk education were scaled up, reaching 50,292 Palestinian children (50 per cent girls) and caregivers, exceeding the 2017 target.

Palestine children were among the worst affected by the conflict, as large Palestine refugee camps, such as in Yarmouk and Khan Eshieh remained in the frontlines of conflict. As a result, Palestine children suffered multiple displacements, with increases in the number of injuries and deaths due to limited access to basic services, exposure to unexploded remnants of war and mortar attacks. UNICEF interventions focused on children and caregivers, mothers, displaced from hard-to-reach and besieged areas such as Al Yarmouk, Sabine, Al Husseiniya, Ein al-Tal camp, al-Nairab.

Meetings were organised at regional level with the protection teams of UNRWA in the attempt to identify more opportunities for joint interventions; in particular, the promotion of case management practices, and the use of the tools promoted by the Ministry of Social Affairs, were discussed. Areas of collaboration for 2018 were defined to increase access to quality services for Palestinian children, including capacity enhancement on case management, social inclusion of children with disabilities and expansion of psychosocial initiatives in hard-to-reach and newly accessible areas.

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
UNICEF continued to work with the General Authority for Palestine Arab Refugees (GAPAR) to provide psychosocial support to Palestinian children and female caregivers living in temporary internally displaced persons shelters. With UNICEF’s support, GAPAR organized psychosocial support for 1,430 children (68 per cent girls) and caregivers (100 per cent of the target) in Aleppo, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Lattakia, Homs and Hama. UNICEF assisted GAPAR to
The ongoing conflict has increased the vulnerability of Palestinian children in Syria. Thousands of families have been displaced, with a majority of the population lacking basic services and having to rely on humanitarian assistance. According to a 2016 assessment, 11.3 per cent of children aged 5-14 were engaged in child labour, and 12 per cent of adolescent girls aged 15-19 years were reported as currently married. Prevention of protection risks, including strengthening support networks around children, remained an integral part of the community-based child protection prevention and response initiative. UNICEF supported awareness raising sessions engaging 180 caregivers in the camps on the rights of children and women, prevention of violence and legal registration of marriages.

**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**

Palestinian adolescents and youth residing in Syria remained socially excluded and chronically disempowered from poor access to services and opportunities. They lacked avenues for contributing to their communities and opportunities for involvement in social cohesion processes. Strengthening the self-reliance of Palestinian adolescents and youth was time-critical and imperative to laying the foundation for a longer term recovery process.

UNICEF, through the General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR) and UNRWA, supported the promotion of an enabling and protective environment for Palestinian adolescents and youth (10-24 years), girls and boys alike. A grand total of 8,276 youth (48 per cent girls) from seven governorates (Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Lattakia, Dar’a, Damascus and Rural Damascus), were reached in 12 UNRWA-supported community spaces and 11 shelters (against a target of 8,000). Support included a holistic package of age-appropriate services and opportunities, in the form of life skills and citizenship education (LSCE), vocational (e.g., nursing, English language, photography) and entrepreneurship training, as well as civic and social engagement, social arts and Sport for Development. All interventions targeted the most vulnerable young Palestinians, including those with disabilities. Young people in shelters received messages about proper hygiene practices, HIV/AIDS prevention and healthy lifestyles (e.g. prevention of smoking and alcohol/drug addiction). These access points, shelters and community spaces 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 5,600 adolescents (more than 50 per cent girls) supported the development of their communities and led their own initiatives in Palestinian refugee camps, internally displaced persons 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. Some 560 service providers and community volunteers went through a comprehensive capacity building package, covering key modules of life skills based education and adolescent participation principles.
The mobile teams, which served as a critical component for UNRWA to deliver needed services among the most vulnerable young people, continued their operations. Ten mobile teams comprised of 40 young volunteers were supported.

The main constraint in 2017 was financial allocations to the programme; the lack of funding hampered further expansion of needed services and support. Another challenge was related to the conservative social norms in some communities, for example, with regard to the participation of girls in some social arts activities. This required extra support by the local partner to influence and persuade parents to allow their daughters to participate, and over time the programme achieved good progress.

**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 reached 8,276 youth (48 per cent girls) from seven governorates (Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Lattakia, Dara’a, Damascus and Rural Damascus) through 12 UNRWA-supported community spaces and 11 shelters. These young people accessed a holistic package of services and opportunities in in the form of life skills based education (LSBE), vocational and entrepreneurship training. Through LSBE specifically, 2,640 adolescents and youth were equipped with critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity skills; core life skill competencies viewed highly essential to young people’s transition to adulthood and strongly predictive of life outcomes ranging from wages to the probability of engaging in high-risk behaviour. LSBE, coupled with other alternative forms of learning, such as community-based vocational training, becomes crucial in crises contexts, because it increases resilience of young people and are critical in empowering young people to realize their full potential. Young people also received knowledge about proper hygiene practices, HIV/AIDS prevention and healthy lifestyles (e.g. prevention of smoking and alcohol/ drug addiction).

Support to building social cohesion through social and civic engagement of 5,636 young people took various shapes. Girls and boys took part in structured social arts and Sport for Development interventions, which targeted the most vulnerable, including young people with disabilities. These access points promoted positive peer-to-peer initiatives. Participation in training sessions contributed to improve their capacity to organise adolescent/youth-led activities. Young people served as community volunteers and promoted social awareness on key UNICEF outcome areas, such as child marriage and health (e.g. adolescent reproductive health). The process of planning and implementing civic engagement initiatives helped young Palestinians become engaged in matters related to them and developed their self-efficacy, skills and capacities to take more control over their lives.

In 2017, UNICEF also supported the capacity development of 520 service providers and community volunteers who completed a comprehensive training package covering key modules of LSCE, basic PSS and adolescent participation principles. This ensured quality and responsive interventions to the demand for such services made by Palestinian adolescents and youth.

The main challenge related to addressing conservative social norms. This required additional work by local partners with parents. This effort was successful, and enrolment improved over time. Further C4D activities will be promoted and implemented in 2018.
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 were among the most vulnerable groups who suffered from the prolonged crisis in Syria. UNICEF Syria continued to support Palestinian partners (GAPAR, UNRWA and Palestinian Red Crescent) and provided health and nutrition services to the Palestinian refugees who were living in Syria, with special focus on those who live in high-risk areas, such as Al-Neirab district in Rural Aleppo.

To sustain basic services among the Palestinian refugees in Syria, UNICEF supported the health centres of UNRWA with health and nutrition supplies (including for routine immunization services), while assisting the Palestinian Red Crescent to provide paediatric and maternal health services to the vulnerable children and women in Rural Aleppo. UNICEF also supported the training of community volunteers from PLS NGOs to sustain the provision of health care services to the most vulnerable Palestinian populations.

Provision of health services to the Palestinian refugees in Syria living in the camps in rural Damascus governorate was constrained in 2017 due to the lack of access, limited number of partners working in those camps and difficulties in obtaining authorizations to implement for the existing NGOs.

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 10,000 Palestinian refugees were reached with health items distributed through the Palestinian Red Crescents in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Rural Aleppo and Lattakia. UNICEF Syria supported the Palestinian Red Crescent in Aleppo to reach vulnerable Palestinian internally displaced people and host communities in Rural Aleppo, in Al-Nairab camp and the surrounding five villages. The Palestinian Red Crescent reached approximately 42,000 children and women with paediatric and maternal health services.

In 2017, provision of health services to the Palestinian refugees living in the camps in rural Damascus governorate was constrained due to the lack of access for security reasons, the limited number of partners working in these camps and difficulties in obtaining authorizations for NGOs to implement programmes.

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-supported interventions, continuous screening of children by mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) was conducted to monitor acute malnutrition levels. A total of 11,840 children under five benefited from the distribution of micronutrients powder (MNPs) to combat micronutrient deficiencies and 8,393 children under five benefited from the distribution of 461
Plumpy Doz cartons for the treatment of moderate malnutrition. Data from Aleppo indicated that 125 Palestinian children were treated during 2017. Data is not yet available from the other sites. The General Administration for Palestine Arab Refugees (GAPAR), UNRWA and Palestinian Red Crescent implementing partners trained staff providing services to the refugees in camps, including communication with mothers on use of MNPs and other nutrition supplies. There were gaps in monitoring due to access challenges.

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

**Analytical statement of progress**
A total of 931 Palestinian mothers benefited from counselling on breastfeeding and Infant and young child feeding (IYCF) in internally displaced person shelters, largely exceeding the target set at the beginning of the year. These mothers were given basic information on the importance of the early initiation of breastfeeding within the first one hour of birth, exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of a child’s life, proper complementary feeding and continuous breastfeeding for up to two years. One of the implementing NGO partners reported that exclusive breastfeeding increased from 39 per cent to 79 per cent, breastfeeding in first hour increased from 38 per cent to 49 per cent, and the overall breastfeeding rate increased from 63 per cent to 87 per cent in their area of intervention.

OUTCOME 12 Outcome 5: Cross Sectoral

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF’s cooperation with GAPAR and UNRWA continued to increase throughout 2017, with the promotion of the Situation Assessment of Palestinian Refugees in Syria, and with the increased distribution of non-food items for children, based on the counterparts’ request. Dialogue continued to help define new results and strategies to be implemented through the new programme cycle 2018-2022.

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

**Analytical statement of progress**
The situation assessment of Palestinian Refugees in Syria was conducted in 2016. During the first quarter of 2017, the final report was published in English and in Arabic. A workshop was organised with the partners involved to disseminate the results, and approximately 300 copies of the report were distributed to various stakeholders. The final report was uploaded to the UNICEF Evaluation and Research Database (ERDB). Findings of the assessment were used as evidence to inform the development of a new Area Programme Document (APD) for Palestinian Children and Women, including programmes to be promoted by UNICEF in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine in 2018-2022.

OUTPUT 2 output 5.2: NFI and emergency supplies

**Analytical statement of progress**
Many Palestinian refugees in Syria lived in dire situations, which were further exacerbated by the ongoing conflict. While all the Palestinian families received cash assistance from UNRWA,
for many the income received was not sufficient to provide for all their basic needs. Starting from 2016, UNICEF included Palestinian children among the beneficiaries of its non-food item winter programme. In 2017, more than 8,600 Palestinian refugee children were reached with winter kits and blankets, distributed under the supervision of the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR).

### Document centre

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#### Other publications

- #Educationunderfire: children cross conflict lines to sit for exams in Syria, animation video
- Sarah crossed conflict lines in Syria to sit for her exams, animation video
- Bisan crossed conflict lines in Syria to sit for her exams, animation video
- Education can't wait for an end to the conflict in Syria, animation video
- ‘Heartbeat’ video featuring visually-impaired girl Ansam marking six years of conflict

#### Lessons learned

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