

Thailand

Part 1: Situation update in the country

In recent decades, Thailand made significant progress in reducing poverty and enhancing social development. In 2015, the national poverty rate was 7.2 per cent, down from 20 per cent in 2008. Thailand, a success story in social and economic development, achieved many Millennium Development Goals and boasts free education, universal healthcare and social protection benefits.

However, the estimated rate of child poverty is almost 10 per cent (1.4 million children), and much of the population has not benefited from the economic growth and poverty reduction. In order to achieve the ambitious targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to 'leave no one behind', the need to address inequity for children has, if anything, grown more urgent.

Data from the most recent Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey (MICS2015-2016), both national and for the 14 most disadvantaged provinces, highlight inequities for children concerning wealth, gender, language, education level of parents and geographical location. For example, data on adolescent birth rates show that for adolescent girls living in the poorest and second poorest quintiles, the birth rates were 76 births per 1,000 and 82 per 1,000 respectively, compared to adolescents living in the richest households (12 births per 1,000). With regard to stunting among children under five years old, the prevalence in Narathiwat (one of the five southernmost provinces) was 29 per cent compared to the national average of 11 per cent.

Thailand's sweeping demographic change, driven by the growing elderly population and the declining birth rate, is a structural challenge. By 2022, Thailand will be the first country with a gross national income per capita below US\$12,056 (i.e. a high-income country) to become an "aged" society, according to the Bank of Thailand, with more than 14 per cent of its population over 65 years old. When today's children reach adulthood, there will be just 1.7 workers to support each old person, compared to five to one today.

In response, the Government is promoting a new economic blueprint, "Thailand 4.0", aimed at pulling Thailand out of the middle-income trap and shifting the country from a production-based to a service-based economy, emphasizing industries such as next-generation automotive, smart electronics, high-income tourism and medical tourism, efficient agriculture and biotechnology, robotics and aerospace.

Thailand is in a “nutritional transition”: facing the double-burden of malnutrition characterized by the coexistence of under-nutrition (11 per cent of children under five years of age are stunted and 5 per cent are wasted) as well as issues associated with overweight (8 per cent of children are overweight).

A secondary data analysis of MICS 2015/2016 by UNICEF to identify the drivers of the double burden, showed an increase in the risk of stunting among children who are born with low birthweight. Under-nutrition in Thailand starts ‘in utero’ and thus nutrition-sensitive interventions should start from maternity care. There is also a low exclusive-breastfeeding rate, with less than one quarter of children in Thailand exclusively breastfed for the first six months of their life, far from the World Health Organization’s (WHO) target of 50 per cent. Thailand achieved the WHO targets for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis in 2016 and received validation for maintaining this status in 2018.

The 2017 Constitution expanded free education to three years of pre-primary education, a provision which was included in the Draft Education Act. Over 94 per cent of four-year old Thai children now attend an early childhood development programme, according to MICS 5 data. The most vulnerable who are not attending include children in the north-east and conflict-affected far south. The quality of early childhood development services, however, is a more pressing challenge than access, based on assessments conducted by the Office of Education Standards and Quality Assessment.

The need for quality early childhood development services within the reach of every home is acute in Thailand, where both parents often leave their children in relative’s care to seek work in a city to support the family. Almost one-quarter of children in Thailand---more than three million---live with neither biological parent. A next step towards full early childhood development coverage will involve addressing the “3:3 challenge” – the period between three months of age, when maternity leave ends, and three years of age, when free structured early childhood development services begin. Overseeing a standardized and regulated programme of child care for all children under three years old presents challenges for the Government, from regulating the curriculum, standards and caregiver qualifications to supporting relevant service delivery channels, which could include incentives for business.

Thailand’s hefty investment in education (20 per cent of the national budget) spearheaded very high levels of school attendance, with primary school attendance at 95 per cent although disparities remain based on wealth and geography particularly at secondary school level. The Ministry of Education’s 15-year free education policy (from pre-primary to upper secondary) does not discriminate on the basis of a child’s nationality or legal status, however disadvantaged children are still overlooked. An estimated half of all migrant children are out of school and almost three quarters of children with disabilities advance no further than primary school. Language is a barrier to learning for children who do not speak Thai as their mother tongue, with significant and recurrent impacts on learning outcomes.

Thailand's youth literacy rate is 98 per cent, about one in three 15 to 24 year olds from non-Thai speaking households are illiterate in Thai according to MICS 5. Local education authorities are supporting enrolment of marginalized children, including ethnic minority children in Mae Hong Son, migrant children in Chiang Mai and Patani Malay-speaking children in the far south, with UNICEF support. In order to address inequities and as part of wide-ranging reforms underway or planned for the education sector, the Equitable Education Fund Act came into effect in May 2018. The new act and accompanying fund is an indication of the Government's stated intention to improve equity-focused budgeting using research, data and evidence-generation to address issues of disparity, educational dropout and the quality of teaching and instruction.

Thailand's participation in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) revealed a deficit in literacy, numeracy and science skills, with a drop-in performance in the 2015 international student assessment. To provide young people with relevant skills, the Government proposed an agenda of education reform that includes a competency-based curriculum with focus on skills development, including life skills. The curriculum will also revamp teacher education and development strategies to modernize classroom pedagogy and focus on student knowledge and skills.

At the secondary level, fewer males pursue secondary education (77 per cent) than females (86 per cent), with disparities based on wealth and mother's education. Almost one-third of 17 year-olds are no longer in secondary school, leaving many young people without marketable skills and meagre employment prospects, a factor perpetuating the cycle of poverty and relatively low youth workforce participation. In Thailand, 7 per cent of 15 to 24 year-olds are unemployed and almost two-thirds of those employed work in the informal sector. According to data from the International Labour Organisation, around 15 per cent of young people aged 15-24 years (1.3 million) are not in education, employment or training; two-thirds of whom are young women, indicating gender-based challenges.

According to the ILO's 2017 Asia-Pacific regional report, in the next two decades in Thailand up to 98 per cent of workers could be replaced in the 10 most vulnerable professions: subsistence farmers; farm labourers; retail sales assistants; stall and market salespeople; livestock and dairy producers; food counter attendants; cooks; construction workers; office clerks; and junior accounting professionals. This adds up to about 9.2 million jobs. Three in four workers in the auto-industry – a major manufacturing sector – are potential victims of automation. All told, up to 44 per cent of all jobs in Thailand are at risk, many of which employ young people today. Thailand's 4.0 vision to transition to a high-income, innovation-based economy over the next decade will require massive investment in young people's skills, especially those excluded.

The 10 to 17 year-old age group is garnering attention in the demographic tilt towards the aging society with fewer children. The health and development of adolescents, how they think, behave and spend money has never been of more importance in the Thai context, galvanizing the Government to brainstorm on adolescent-friendly policies, strategies and procedures.

A challenge for adolescents in Thailand is their sexual and reproductive health. The average age that Thai adolescents start having sex precedes the age that they can access sexual and reproductive health services without adult consent. Many adolescents still have little or no knowledge about HIV; and 70 per cent of sexually transmitted infections, including almost half of all new HIV infections, occur among 15-24-year-olds.

The teenage pregnancy rate in Thailand is three times the regional rate: almost 300 girls aged 15 to 19 years old give birth each day, or over 90,000 births from adolescent mothers per year. According to the 2015 UNICEF situation analysis of adolescent pregnancy, gender roles are a factor. Girls often lack negotiating power, weakening their ability to demand the use of contraception and weakening their options if they get pregnant. Teenage pregnancy has life-altering consequences, including health risks and the likelihood of school dropout. With a limited public nursery system, young mothers struggle to find and hold even low-skilled jobs.

Over 40 per cent of beneficiaries are young mothers aged 15 to 24 in poverty-targeting schemes such as the child support grant. Teenage pregnancy perpetuates inter-generational poverty: teenage pregnancies happen in poor households with limited education options; and cause poor outcomes for the young mother and the child. This results in a risk of teenage pregnancy for the next generation. UNICEF supported the Government to implement the Teenage Pregnancy Act (2016) that articulates Thailand's vision to reduce adolescent births by two-thirds by 2030.

Another challenge faced by adolescents and young people in Thailand is mental illness, a critical but often neglected problem. Globally, an estimated 70 per cent of life-long mental health problems are present before age 24. In a 2015 World Health Organization's global school-based student health survey of 13-17 year-olds, one in eight students (13 per cent) in Thailand reported to have attempted suicide. The issue is compounded by adverse factors affecting young people's future in terms of health, education and employment.

Efforts to expand Thailand's child protection system continued to gain ground amid still-high levels of violence, abuse, exploitation and child neglect. Every day, 52 children, the vast majority of them girls, are reportedly abused in Thailand. The actual incidence is most likely higher due to under-reporting of cases. The Government recognizes this challenge and is undertaking large-scale reform of the child protection and social protection legislative frameworks, building the capacity of multi-disciplinary teams in provinces and districts, refining case management tools, improving data collection and quality, and adopting safeguard measures in child welfare and juvenile justice institutions.

Legislative changes are set to strengthen child protection frameworks. Work is in progress to amend the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 years to 12 years. The 2003 Child Protection Act is under revision to strengthen child protection provisions following establishment of the first-ever five-year National Child Protection Strategy in 2017. Underpinning these moves is the imperative to mainstream migrant, refugee and stateless children into the child protection fold and better protect children in the far south.

An estimated three quarters of parents use corporal punishment or other violent means to punish their children, according to MICS 5; 4 per cent of all children aged one to 14 years

(almost half a million children) have experienced severe physical punishment. National campaigns such as Early Moments Matter are aimed at gradually influencing attitudes and behaviours by driving home the harmful, lifelong impacts of hitting children.

On the health emergency front, a measles outbreak in October and November 2018 struck the southernmost provinces of Thailand with Yala province most affected. There were more than 2,400 confirmed measles cases and 22 deaths, mostly of children aged under five years old. As part of the Government's rapid response, routine immunization was strengthened, a fact that highlights the region's low immunization coverage. Over a third of young children in the far south are not fully protected against immunization-preventable diseases, double the national average.

In terms of migrants, Thailand is home to as many as four million migrants, mostly seeking employment as low-skilled or semi-skilled workers. The number of children accompanying their migrant families is estimated between 300,000 and half a million. More than half of these migrants are reportedly undocumented and therefore considered illegal immigrants under Thai law. Thailand has a progressive policy environment that offers documented and undocumented migrant children legal access to basic services including education, healthcare and child protection. However, migrants face practical obstacles to access, such as negative attitudes towards migrant children, fear of authorities, lack of understanding of policies and procedures by officials and migrants themselves, weak capacity of service providers to support migrant children and poor ability to pay for associated costs. Thus, an estimated 50 per cent of migrant children are out of school and only 25 per cent are accessing health care.

In terms of detention, a crackdown on illegal-entry persons led to the detention of more than an estimated 100 children and their families, many of whom were refugees and asylum seekers, at the Central Immigration Centre in Bangkok. UNICEF Thailand and its partners advocate with and provide technical support to the Government on finding alternatives to the detention of children in immigration centres. Though significant progress was achieved during the last quarter of 2018, much remains to be done to ensure a systematic and sustainable approach.

No major natural hazards struck Thailand in 2018, but the country is vulnerable on this front. The effects of climate change have raised the risks of natural and human-induced disasters, threatening economic development and livelihoods. The drive to self-sufficiency in disaster preparedness and response already paid dividends. Thailand appears to be ready to handle all but the largest natural disasters without significant external support.

Part 2: Major Results including in humanitarian action and gender, against the results in the Country Programme Documents

Executive summary

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand celebrated its 70th year in Thailand. The milestone was a way to mark Thailand's impressive results in improving children's lives over the last decades, as well as to highlight the challenges that remain. Thailand hosted visits of UNICEF Executive Director and the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Director. The high-level visits were opportunity

to advocate at the most senior levels of Government, with the HRH Princess, and with private sector leaders to change children's lives in Thailand. This year was the second year of the UNICEF Thailand 2017-2021 country programme. With an annual programme budget of US\$10 million, UNICEF Thailand managed a total of 40 strategic partnerships with 19 government departments and 21 civil society groups.

In 2018, Thailand took the next leap forward to invest in early childhood development through focused legislation, improved quality early childhood development services and social transfer grants for families with young children. The National Early Childhood Development Act was approved by the cabinet in October and by the council of state in December 2018. UNICEF supported the expansion of early childhood development demonstration centres to 24 provinces, now implemented in over 147 early childhood development centres enrolling 10,300 children. The programme is a model of early childhood development capacity-building for better quality of care and services for children aged three to five years old.

The child support grant was again a headline Government policy and a topic of discussion at national level. Since 2017, the number of grant beneficiaries increased by 50 per cent to 600,000 – more than four times that of its first year of operation in 2015. Given the high proportion of teenage and young mothers among the beneficiaries (more than 40 per cent), the child support grant is also supporting the well-being of vulnerable young women. A reason to celebrate was the Prime Minister's public announcement in August of his support for expanding the child support grant to children up to six years of age from the current under-three limit. The position was informed by evidence from a co-funded UNICEF evaluation of the grant and advocacy conducted by UNICEF in partnership with a coalition of national civil society organizations.

In 2018, Thailand's investment in generating and using data on children to inform policy, planning and budgeting made progress. The National Statistical Office and the Bureau of Budget included the next Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) to be funded by the national budget. The previous round of the MICS informed the UNICEF-supported development and endorsement of 70 provincial early childhood development budgeted plans in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Bureau of Budget and Thammasat University. And, UNICEF initiated work with the Government on the Sustainable Development Goal nationalization process, in particular the development of the methodology for a national multidimensional poverty index to measure progress on Sustainable Development Goal 1.2 (reducing poverty).

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand's investment in equitable access to quality education yielded significant results in legislation, funding and policy recommendations from innovative demonstration models. In May 2018, a year-long advocacy effort led to the establishment of the Equitable Education Fund through the Equitable Education Fund Act. The Fund aims to address inequities in education and support the education of disadvantaged children.

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand strengthened its focus on adolescents and young people, setting a precedent under the "Generation Unlimited" initiative. An estimated 15 per cent of young

people (15-24 years) in Thailand today (about 1.3 million people) are not in education, employment or training. Thus, UNICEF Thailand is developing a vision to bring together partners and young people to unlock investment, co-create solutions and take them to scale to end not in education, employment or training by 2030. The UNICEF-supported adolescents and young people-focused online health platform multiplied its reach five-fold in 2018 with over 750,000 young people accessing information, counselling and referrals on sexual, reproductive and mental health.

UNICEF Thailand's top priority for child protection is strengthening the system for case management at the community level, a challenging and ambitious goal to respond to the needs of some of the most at-risk children in the country. In 2018, UNICEF's demonstration model in 236 sub-districts reached a record 25,000 children screened for child protection risks and 1,589 cases were referred as medium and high-risk from those 236 sub-districts alone (out of 7,200 sub-districts).

A significant and tangible result for migrant children was achieved in 2018 with the release of almost all children in immigration detention in Bangkok. This was the result of UNICEF Thailand's ongoing advocacy with UNHCR, IOM and non-government organizations to end immigration detention of migrant children in favour of release to families during case review. In addition, an inter-ministerial memorandum of understanding with standard operating procedures on the release of children was developed with UNICEF technical support.

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand's voice reached a wide audience with a 250 per cent increase in social media reaches from the previous year. A multi-phase campaign as part of UNICEF's 70th anniversary celebrations drew intense public interest with over 20 million reaches online from August to December. Over 20,000 people signed a petition for the cause of children through 'art for the future' and a flagship video amassing one million views on YouTube.

An initiative launched in October, 'I Am UNICEF', recruited volunteers through a platform for activities supporting UNICEF Thailand's work. Over 11,200 people registered on the platform by the end of December, with 1,900 active volunteers devoting 1,521 hours of work on behalf of children.

UNICEF Thailand was the first UNICEF country office to finalize an evaluation of advocacy to strengthen accountability and UNICEF's ability to manage resources towards results for children. This was an organizational milestone for middle-income countries, where advocacy is a core investment to leverage change for children, and one of UNICEF's principal roles. As such, the findings and lessons-learned were shared with headquarters, regional advisors and country offices as part of the Global Evaluation meeting.

The Blue Carpet Show, a fundraising variety show launched by UNICEF Thailand and the first of its kind in Asia, brought together more than 40 high-profile celebrities and influencers to garner public support for vulnerable children by raising awareness of issues facing children in Thailand and around the world. The show raised over US\$450,000 in less than two hours,

while giving over two million viewers the opportunity to better understand UNICEF's efforts to improve the lives of children.

UNICEF Thailand raised US\$17.3 million from Thailand-based individuals and private sector partners. The funds provided 96 per cent of non-core regular resources to the country programme. The balance of the funds contributed to UNICEF global and regional regular resource, and to funding humanitarian responses in Africa and Indonesia.

Goal area 1: Every child survives and thrives

Early childhood development

UNICEF engaged with the drafting of the national early childhood development act, which was approved by the cabinet in October and by the council of state in December 2018.

In partnership with the Department of Local Administration and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, UNICEF Thailand supported the expansion of early childhood development demonstration centres to 24 provinces. The early childhood development demonstration programme is aligned with the national reform agenda whereby Department of Local Administration improve the quality of its early childhood development centres to meet national early learning development standards, including demonstration centres in each province.

Several tools and resources were developed in 2018 to support the demonstration programme, including a training curriculum for early childhood development professionals and the nutrition and hygiene guidelines for early childhood development centres, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health.

MICS data (including provincial data) underpinned the development of provincial early childhood development plans in 2018 through a UNICEF partnership with the Ministry of Education. UNICEF's technical support ensured the alignment of the provincial plans with national early childhood development priorities, and the use of results-based management approaches to planning and the capacity development of a resource team within the Ministry of Education to take the lead on future planning exercises.

Based on the findings of the knowledge, attitudes and practices survey, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the Ministry of Public Health to strengthen their communication efforts to inform parents and caregivers to improve health literacy and support positive behaviours. UNICEF Thailand co-led the creation of a UNICEF-Ministry of Public Health platform, 'early moments matter on mobile', developed in 2018 to launch in 2019 established to send daily parenting advice to parents of children under six years old. The platform is a first of its kind in the world, to reach all parents nationwide with instantaneous two-way communication platform. Parenting guidelines were launched in August with UNICEF support. UNICEF Thailand advocacy ensured that parenting practices, including positive discipline, positive communication and good nutrition and feeding, are a central component of services at early childhood development centres.

The public campaigns #EatPlayLove with Central Group and #Workplaceformom were implemented in 2018 primarily through online channels served two objectives: 1) to mobilize public interest and action to create an enabling environment for children (such as raising awareness about the importance of early childhood development or advocating with employers to create breastfeeding rooms in the workplace); and 2) to reach parents with information that allows them to practice positive care and parenting.

Adolescent development and participation

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand was a trailblazer in the “Generation Unlimited” initiative, a new global partnership of young people, the private sector, the Government and civil society that aims to ensure all young people are in school, training or employment by 2030. Thailand was the first country to organize the Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge: Over 50 youth aged 14 to 24 from diverse backgrounds, including those from juvenile training centres and those living with HIV and disabilities, gathered for a three-day ‘boot-camp’ in Bangkok in October to unleash their creativity and develop solutions to address pressing challenges they face in their daily lives. Five winning teams received seed grants and mentoring opportunities to test and validate their ideas in their communities.

In addressing Thailand’s high adolescent-pregnancy rate, UNICEF Thailand assisted the Ministry of Public Health to integrate qualitative adolescent pregnancy-related data as collected by a number of hospitals and clinics into the existing reproductive data management system. The integration will generate more accurate reasons for the high rates to better address the root causes, given the disruptive impact of teen pregnancy on the lives of young women.

Young generations are spending more time online (40-50 hours per week), with internet connectivity at 97 per cent and only slightly lower for mobile technology, which makes online media the most strategic platform to reach young people.

Over 770,000 adolescents used the UNICEF-supported an online health platform in 2018, ‘Lovecarestation’, particularly for information on contraception and teenage pregnancy. This was a significant jump from 150,000 users in 2017. In 2018, 7,209 young people registered for its online counselling and referral services, the majority (5,334) were girls aged 10-25 years. The site was expanded to include information and counselling for men who have sex with men and transgender people. Young men having sex with men are the only population group with an increasing HIV infection rate. For the very first time, ‘Lovecarestation’ featured information and counselling on mental health.

Mental health training was added to the Ministry of Public Health’s capacity development of 2,053 health professionals – mainly nurses, psychologists and health development officers. The Ministry of Public Health trained 200 teachers from schools in Bangkok on psychological first-aid, mental health screening and the referral system. UNICEF Thailand and the Ministry of Public Health developed two screening tools in 2018: a patient health questionnaire for adolescents to identify depression and a Thai youth checklist to assess mental health overall.

The mental health of more than 188,000 adolescents in schools was assessed in 2018 using the new tools.

Based on training sessions for pharmacy staff and nurses, organized by UNICEF in collaboration with Path2Health, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and the Pharmacies Association, there are now 92 pharmacies and 88 hospitals in Bangkok – from 30 and 44 respectively in 2017 – with at least one staff trained to provide adolescent-sensitive counselling, conduct an initial health screening and make an appropriate referral to medical or other social services.

With the goal to help vulnerable youths improve their prospects of finding decent employment, over 350 Thai adolescents in welfare institutions, juvenile training centres and small communities in Bangkok as well as 112 migrants (aged 10-19 and 20-24) in Fang district were engaged in life skills education, sports for development, job readiness coaching, and links to job placement opportunities with local businesses.

By the end of 2018, 6,950 migrants were enrolled in the community-based health insurance scheme that UNICEF Thailand is supporting in Tak province; of these 1,622 received health services in 2018.

Unleashing youth participation, creativity and innovation was the ethos behind U-Report Thailand. In 2018, U-Report, reached 10,000 users in Thailand – two thirds of whom are adolescent girls aged 15-19. About one quarter of them, on average, responded to each of the 25 opinion polls that were conducted in 2018 using mobile technology.

Goal area 2: Every child learns

Education

UNICEF Thailand year-long advocacy led to the Equitable Education Fund, which aims to address inequities in education and support the education of disadvantaged children. The Fund was established in May 2018 through the Equitable Education Fund Act. UNICEF was invited to be a member of the committee to draft secondary legislation for the Fund, helping to develop its principles and modes of operation. UNICEF successfully argued that the Fund should be a catalyst for the entire education plan and budget, and should support research and information management for more effective and equity-focused planning, including around access and retention of migrant children living in Thailand.

UNICEF Thailand developed life skills education partnership with OBEC to develop a new skills framework for education in Thailand and strengthen life-skills education in the curriculum and teacher training systems. The work will involve education stakeholders, including private sector representatives and young people.

Language is a barrier to learning for children who do not speak Thai as their mother tongue, with an absence of national strategies to support their specific learning needs. At the Ministry of

Education in September 2018, UNICEF and Mahidol University launched the results of a 10-year longitudinal research of the mother tongue-based education programme in the southern border provinces of Thailand. The programme, supported and documented by UNICEF, focuses on mother tongue-based instruction in the early grades as a bridge to the national language and transformed literacy and learning outcomes for children whose mother tongue is not Thai. The publication also includes recommendations for scaling up the approach to other schools in the far south and other parts of Thailand, and advocacy with policy-makers will continue in 2019, including on the draft National Language Policy.

As part of its advocacy for equity in education, UNICEF Thailand convened a human-centred design co-creation exercise with private-sector partners and local education authorities and schools in Fang District, Chiang Mai, to strengthen migrant education and learning. Initiatives were identified and during the year over 500 migrant children accessed education in Chiang Mai with UNICEF support.

UNICEF began documenting the results and lessons learned of a programme providing education for disadvantaged children in Mae Hong Son, where over 1,000 children from 33 Highlander communities are enrolled in schools with UNICEF support. UNICEF Thailand is amassing a body of knowledge on small-school management initiatives to advocate for investment in disadvantaged communities as well to replicate good practice in school mapping, budget allocation and teacher recruitment in remote areas.

These remote communities are served by the UNICEF-supported mobile library initiative that encourages more children to read books, part of a push to improve literacy levels in disadvantaged communities. Supported by long-term funding from UNICEF private sector partner TOPS, the programme expanded to the most remote part of Tak province in 2018 and is now working with 51 schools and over 2,700 children.

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

Child protection

Work to strengthen Thailand's child protection system in 2018 focused on four tasks: legislative revision; national level advocacy on the system structure and child protection workforce composition; capacity development of child protection personnel in sub-districts and provinces; and strengthening protection frameworks for migrants and stateless children and children in the southern border provinces.

To reinforce protection for migrant, refugee and stateless children, UNICEF Thailand and the European Union embarked on a multi-year initiative, 'Protecting children affected by migration in Southeast, South and Central Asia.'

UNICEF Thailand successfully advocated with UNHCR, IOM and non-government organizations to end immigration detention of migrant children and release them to families during case review. When advocacy began, Thailand held nearly 50 children in immigration

detention, some of whom had been detained for months. Many were asylum seekers whose claims were being assessed by UNHCR. By the end of 2018, most children had been released from the central immigration detention centre in Bangkok either to the community, to shelters with their mothers or to foster care. In addition to this successful policy advocacy, UNICEF provided technical support on an inter-ministerial memorandum of understanding and on standard operating procedures for alternatives to immigration detention for children.

Capacity development of child-protection teams in sub-districts improved detection and management of child-protection cases at the community level. In 2018, more than 200 sub-districts in 21 UNICEF pilot provinces developed capacity in child prevention, detection, response and referral. A total of 25,024 children were screened for child protection risks, a record achieved in conjunction with previous efforts to improve detection of cases at the community level.

Promising results came from a new UNICEF Thailand partnership with the Inquiry Official Association of Thailand, which developed the capacity of 51 female inquiry officials across the country on child protection skills. In police stations, these officers are often assigned to collect evidence from child victims of crime; trained officials could potentially play the role of de facto child protection focal points in their offices.

Through the Office of the Attorney General, the third year of child protection training reached an additional 31 public prosecutors. Prosecutors who have completed this specialized training are now in 41 out of Thailand's 77 provinces. The objective is national coverage of trained prosecutor focal points who can address child cases and properly treat children in the provincial justice system.

In a new joint initiative with the central juvenile and family court, UNICEF supported a workshop on alternatives to detention, attended by 103 professional judges and 82 psychologists of juvenile and family courts. At a UNICEF Thailand briefing session in Udon Thani, 2,500 lay judges improved their knowledge of international standards of juvenile justice.

Work on strengthening alternatives to detention and ending violence in juvenile justice institutions continued through a review of policies and informational sessions for directors of juvenile justice institutions. The application of pre-trial alternatives to detention increased from 1,468 cases in 2017 to 2,765 cases in 2018. Another significant result was the expansion of the child safeguarding policy to cover all 29 government residential child care institutions.

Similar activities were pursued with partners in the southern border provinces, where children face unique challenges related to armed violence. More than 160 child protection professionals, security personnel and non-government organization staff took part in a training workshop on child protection by the Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, that raised awareness of child protection issues and approaches, enabled exchanges on organizational child protection roles and responsibilities, created common understanding on detection and referral of child protection

cases, and reinforced child protection networks.

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

Social policy

In 2018, success in equity-driven social policy cemented UNICEF Thailand's position as an advisor to government partners on data for children, entrenching the use of evidence to inform policy and child-focused budgeting.

Research generated with UNICEF Thailand's support guided development in policy and budget, including the 20-year national development strategy. Data from MICS 5 were heavily used. For example, survey findings informed the National Economic and Social Development Board analysis on early childhood development, outlining priority areas for investment, which generated interest among cabinet members.

In 2018, a testament to the importance of MICS data was the National Statistic Office and the Bureau of Budget's decision to fund MICS 6 with the national budget. This welcome decision indicates the value of MICS data to the Government, and ensures data availability for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with disaggregation by indicator to monitor implementation and outcomes for children.

UNICEF Thailand technical guidance to two members of the National Committee on Sustainable Development, the National Economic and Social Development Board and National Statistic Office, was important basis for SDG implementation. In 2018, the groundwork to nationalize SDG 1.2 was established with the adoption of the child multi-dimensional poverty index undertaken with the National Economic and Social Development Board. This was also a good-practice precedent in Thailand to nationalize other SDGs led by the National Statistic Office. In late 2018, the Thai experience was shared globally at the OPHI Forum with countries that have opted for the multidimensional poverty index, which helped inform approaches to nationalization of SDG 1.

Increased capacity in cross-sector planning and budgeting, and provincial capacity for planning and budgeting on early childhood development were notable social policy results in 2018 through a partnership between UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, Bureau of Budget and Thammasat University. As a result, 70 provincial teams developed and received approval for their provincial early childhood development plans and budgets. The documentation of this result is a model to inform the ongoing efforts of the Bureau of Budget and Ministry of Education to prepare a cross-sectoral multi-year framework for budgeting, essential for the achievement of national early childhood development strategic plan results.

UNICEF Thailand prioritized government capacity to make evidence-based policies. Success was marked by the adoption and dissemination of a case study on national evaluation capacity, and the National Legislative Assembly's public discussion on the use of evaluation that followed the case study. The Thailand Evaluation Network boosted the capacity and use of the

professional evaluators' network with the creation of an in-service training centre for evaluation at Kasetsart University.

Social protection for children

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand and its partners ensured that the widely acclaimed child support grant continued to be a headline topic of discussion at national level. The number of beneficiaries of the grant rose to 600,000, more than four times the take-up in its first year of operation (2015). The US\$19 (600-baht) monthly cash transfer has proven a vital fillip to low income families, particularly impoverished young parents, helping them to cover basic child needs for food, clothes and toys. Further, given the high proportion of teenage and young mothers among the beneficiaries, the child support grant is also supporting the well-being of vulnerable adolescents.

In 2018, the Prime Minister officially announced the Government's intention to expand the child support grant for children up to six years of age. The announcement recognizes that the cut off at age three years misses a crucial period of early child development. Extension of the child support grant, scheduled for a vote in early 2019, is sure to be closely followed in the region, where it was hailed as a model for equity-enhancing child social protection.

Several factors were instrumental to achieve this result. There was a national evaluation of the impact of the child support grant, funded by the Government and UNICEF Thailand and led by the respected Thailand Development Research Institute. The data-rich findings on the scheme's impact revealed the benefits of cash assistance and a stark fact: large-scale exclusion. Tens of thousands of children are left out by the low yearly income ceiling (US\$1,133 or 36,000 baht) that's the criteria for eligibility. The evidence on exclusion, in particular, supported policy-makers willingness to review the grant's conditionality rationale and impact.

Public advocacy for the child support grant was successfully coupled with individual, high-level lobbying. Personal advocacy by the UNICEF Executive Director during her visit to Thailand elevated the Thai Government commitment to investment in children, including expanding the child support grant to cover children aged under six years instead of three years.

Programme effectiveness

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

The evaluability assessment of the country programme, finalized in early 2018, led to the creation of outcome-result groups for better cross-sectoral planning, monitoring and reporting of progress. The groups developed integrated outcome workplans for 2019, to be operated through workplans signed with the Government; partnership cooperation agreements with civil society; and memorandums of understanding with the private sector. This responds to the evaluability assessment's findings on potential misalignment (gaps and duplication) between the expected results and targets in the country programme, and its operations through workplans, partnership cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding.

UNICEF Thailand is the first UNICEF country office to finalize an evaluation of advocacy to strengthen accountability and ability to manage resources for results for children. This is an organizational milestone for middle-income countries, where advocacy is a core investment to leverage positive change for children and is one of UNICEF's principal roles. The findings and lessons learned were shared with UNICEF headquarters, regional advisors and country offices as part of the global evaluation meeting. The evaluation main recommendations are to strengthen results-based management around advocacy; improve stakeholder analysis and stakeholder management; review advocacy resourcing requirements; strengthen the centralized advocacy function; and incorporate national staff knowledge.

Two baseline assessments were finalized in 2018 that will be followed up with an endline assessment in 2021, thus enabling results to be shown over the period of the country programme. The assessment of the child-protection system from the cross-sector knowledge, attitudes and practices survey generated data for monitoring and for decision-making on the programme direction. A case study on Thailand's national evaluation capacity was finalized and generated public discussions on the use of evaluation by the National Legislative Assembly.

Communications and public advocacy

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand's voice and reach achieved a wider echo than ever before, with digital growth instrumental in advocacy and fundraising efforts. UNICEF Thailand's Facebook page recorded 60 million reaches in 2018, double the total of the previous year. The number of online Facebook and Twitter followers grew by 26 per cent, for a total of 245,262 followers on both platforms.

In 2018, a successful advocacy initiative was UNICEF Thailand's 70th anniversary campaign, conducted in phases. It celebrated the progress achieved for children in the country and recognized the 'unsung heroes' behind the successes; highlighted the remaining challenges for children; and called to action stakeholders to commit and address the challenges. The campaign rallied strategic partners from government officials at ministerial level to the private sector, civil society, celebrities including artists, the media, young people and the general public. The public took note: there were over 20 million reaches online from August to December. Over 20,000 people signed a petition of 'art for the future', which spoke of the barriers children in Thailand face from having a fair chance in life, and also inspired people to get involved and become UNICEF supporters. Art for the future's flagship video became the first UNICEF Thailand video to amass one million views on YouTube.

Other campaigns that galvanized an audience included the #WorkplaceforMom campaign, YM2M Love Care Station, U-Report 'act out loud' and #EatPlaylove. UNICEF Thailand adapted messages for a Thai audience from global campaigns including #GenerationUnlimited and #LongestGoal competition during the World Cup.

There were over 2,655 mentions of UNICEF (with a public relations value of approx. US\$14 million) in national newspapers, TV, magazines and online media, an increase from 1,934

mentions in 2017, driven by strong content and media partnerships and multiple integrated communication-fundraising campaigns implemented during the year.

In 2018, private fundraising initiatives such as the Blue Carpet Show for UNICEF, the Expo focusing on early childhood development with Central Group, and #ThaiforChildreninAfrica were supported by communication activities. Key communication support included celebrity engagement, video content and other communication material production which also involved organizing field missions for celebrities, as well as media engagement and visibility generation, and social media support.

Programme effectiveness was enhanced with a new initiative launched in October called I Am UNICEF. Through this platform, volunteers sign up for activities that support UNICEF Thailand's work, for example in advocacy, educational materials or donations. Over 11,000 people registered on the platform by December, with 1,820 active supporters devoting 320 hours volunteering on behalf of children. This supporter base will allow UNICEF to amplify its messages in 2019 and to advance children's well-being in Thailand and strengthen UNICEF's brand in the country.

Following the completion of a knowledge, attitudes and practices baseline survey of parents, adolescents and decision-makers, advocacy and communication for development strategies were developed for four priority issues (early childhood development, equity, adolescent health, and violence against children). The survey provided inputs to design social and behaviour-change communication strategies and activities, with communication for development activities implemented to support the achievement of programme goals for children.

Children's rights and business principles

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand focused to secure commitment from leaders of industry for partnerships with UNICEF at scale, including dedicating core assets, advocacy and financial contributions to improve the lives of children in Thailand. There were four priority areas for corporate engagement: early childhood development and family-friendly workplaces; adolescent education, skills and pathways to decent employment; migrant children's access to social services; and integrating child rights into Thailand's corporate sustainability frameworks.

In terms of early childhood development and family-friendly workplaces, UNICEF launched two major initiatives in 2018: first, the partnership with the Central group for the EatPlayLove Expo, which toured 10 malls across the country, raising awareness about the importance of early childhood development and providing a visible fundraising platform. Second, a campaign to support breastfeeding in the workplace conducted with Sansiri, Delta Group, DTAC (Telenor's subsidiary) and other partners, launched during Breastfeeding Week.

For the Generation Unlimited initiative, UNICEF Thailand's efforts in 2018 focused on developing new partnerships with corporate leaders in education and pathways to employment for young people. Thailand hosted the UNICEF Executive Director and the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Director which were opportunities to engage at high level with institutions

such as the Charoen Pokphand Group, Sansiri, the Petroleum Authority of Thailand Public Company Limited, and the Stock Exchange of Thailand. The collective revenue of corporate leaders engaged during the visits is more than 30 per cent of Thailand's Gross Domestic Product. The engagements were opportunities for UNICEF to discuss partnerships towards Generation Unlimited. The engagements also resulted in a partnership on thought leadership with the Thailand Development Research Institute to better map out the challenges facing young people's learning and employability and articulate a common national vision around some of the solution pathways at national scale.

In terms of migrant children's access to social services, UNICEF Thailand's engagement with the private sector focused on the real-estate and construction sector. In March 2018, UNICEF, Baan Dek Foundation and corporate partners, including Sansiri, launched a report entitled "Building Better Futures in Thailand" based on the joint initiative to help children living in construction site camps gain access to education, health and a protective environment. The report identified the challenges of the vulnerable child population, estimated in the tens of thousands, who live in and around construction sites in Thailand, and made recommendations to address the challenges. UNICEF Thailand's vision is to achieve an industry-wide commitment to take this framework to scale to reach all children living in construction site camps in Thailand.

In terms of integrating child rights into Thailand's corporate sustainability frameworks, the focus in 2018 was on developing strategic partnerships with the Stock Exchange of Thailand and Thailand's Global Compact Network. The partnerships create opportunities for capacity building, reporting and investment incentives for the corporate sector (particular top-listed companies) to protect and promote child rights in line with UNICEF's "Better Business for Children" initiative.

Private sector fundraising

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand raised US\$17.3 million and recruited a total of 16,410 new donors from a range of channels, including face-to-face, SMS, telemarketing and digital platforms. One element of the face-to-face growth was the partnership with the Central Group and the EatPlayLove Expo, which toured 10 Central malls across Thailand. As well as signing up thousands of donors, UNICEF Thailand spoke to over 20,000 people about the importance of the early moments in a child's life, an advocacy priority.

In mid-2018, UNICEF Thailand organized an SMS campaign for the famine-affected children in Africa. More than 50,000 people responded to the campaign, raising more than US\$766,000. At the end of September, a tsunami hit the Indonesian island of Sulawesi and within a few weeks, Thai people had donated almost US\$300,000.

The Blue Carpet Show for UNICEF, a fundraising variety show and the first of its kind in Asia, brought together more than 40 high-profile celebrities and influencers to garner public support for vulnerable children by raising awareness on issues facing children both in Thailand and around the world. The show raised over US\$450,000 in less than two hours, and over two

million viewers learned more about UNICEF's efforts to improve the lives of children. Given the success of this unique initiative, UNICEF Thailand plans to make the show an annual event.

Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints

As the UNICEF Thailand Country Programme 2017-2021 approaches its half-way mark, the country office gathered evidence to guide and inform the mid-term review with partners in the first half of 2019. The following lessons learned and challenges arise in general from 2017-2018, particularly where the theories of change and corresponding results logic in the results frameworks required adjustment.

In 2018, constraints and lessons learned included:

- The lack of clear inter-ministerial mandates and responsibilities in the Government somewhat hampered progress on adolescents, child protection and social protection;
 - With the absence of a medium-term expenditure framework for early childhood development, provinces could not plan or secure multi-year funding for early childhood development;
 - A high turnover of senior officers among UNICEF's direct partners made it difficult to develop a long-term vision of, and policy reform for, mother tongue-based bilingual education; and challenged cooperation of a shared vision for child protection and social protection;
 - There is the need to review and make recommendations for the programme strategy of demonstration models to inform prioritization, strategic investment and scale-up, and to build synergy across sectors in the second half of the country programme;
 - There is a need to review criteria and potential synergies of the country programme's geographical targeting;
- There were difficulties in translating policy into practice at the community level, such as the issues around migrant access to education;
- There is an emerging need to address adolescent skills for employment; especially relevant as the economy will rely on today's adolescents, given the demographic's of Thailand's aging population.

On the social policy planning and budgeting area of early childhood development, 70 provinces (out of 77) developed and received approval for early childhood development plans and budgets for the first time. The lessons learned from this exercise were documented to inform the full institutionalization of provincial early childhood development plans and budgets in Thailand. The analysis revealed a lack of a medium-term expenditure framework for early childhood development, however. Without this budgeting framework, provinces cannot plan for or secure multi-year funding for early childhood development. The operation of the new early childhood development act and the national early childhood development strategy will not be possible without medium- to long-term planning and the associated budget. UNICEF established a partnership with the Government Office of the Public-Sector Development Commission and Oxford Public Management to support the Government in 2019 to address this challenge.

In terms of social protection, UNICEF Thailand's advocacy to expand the child support grant at technical, public and senior decision-making levels was successful in 2018, ensuring the Cabinet's commitment to expand the policy to children under six years old. The policy design regarding universality versus targeted was postponed to early 2019. Addressing the inefficiencies in the social-protection sector was challenging, primarily due to a lack of clear leadership and mandate from a single ministry. The country office approached different entities with partial mandates on social protection schemes to prepare the base for a diagnostic review of social protection to be led by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in 2019. Despite its new leadership role, the compartmentalized leadership of individual child-sensitive social protection schemes (within and across the Government ministries) results in weak coordination. UNICEF plans to strengthen the capacity of the high-level committee on children to play a stronger role in coordination and monitoring of all such schemes.

In terms of quality of education, UNICEF Thailand prioritized the documentation of a UNICEF-supported mother tongue-based education model in the southern provinces, which was published and launched at the Ministry of Education in September 2018. The research showed a clear advantage for children who study in their mother tongue in the early grades. Taking the model to scale, however, is challenged by a lack of consensus among policy-makers especially at the central level. Language is a barrier to learning for children who do not speak Thai as their mother tongue, with an absence of national strategies to support their specific learning needs. However, according to the study, only 13 per cent of central level decision-makers strongly agree that children should have access to early learning programmes in their mother tongue. The figure for the provincial level is 32 per cent and for the sub-provincial level 44 per cent. UNICEF Thailand will need to focus resources to disseminate the results of introducing a mother tongue-based education across the country. A challenge to this advocacy is the turnover rate of senior officers in the Ministry of Education, which hinders long-term vision and policy reform.

In terms of access to education, a challenge remains to scale up access to education for children from migrant families in Thailand. The issue is a growing priority for the Government, as there are several hundred thousand migrant children who are out of school. The current policy guarantees free education for all children in Thailand. However, the draft Education Act is not as explicit in this regard and UNICEF is advocating for its explicit inclusion in the legislation. Gaps between policy and practice remain, with bottlenecks including indirect costs, language barriers, social attitudes and discrimination, and the availability of essential information to schools and families.

An emerging challenge is supporting education and skills for adolescents: there is a high drop-out rate in Thailand after the last compulsory grade 9 (71 per cent attendance rate for 17-year-olds); low PISA scores (Thailand ranks fourth out five ASEAN participating countries); decreasing PISA scores between 2012 and 2015; and a high level of functional illiteracy (32 per cent of 15 year-old students).

A child protection challenge is the system's limitation to deliver effective case management that links children at the community level with services at the provincial level. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security holds the mandate for child protection but has no presence below the provincial level. The prevention, identification, referral and service response to cases of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation at the district and sub-district administration levels is poorly resourced with unclear mandates and coordination. Currently, the number of child protection, or social worker, personnel is insufficient to prevent, detect and respond to child protection risks. UNICEF's efforts to strengthen the capacity of Ministry of Social Development and Human Security at provincial level, and to strengthen capacity of sub-district level authorities in case management, have not yet resulted in a sustainable model. A lesson learned was that the roles of other ministries, especially Ministry of Interior for local authorities, need to be clarified and institutionalized for an effective system. The revision of the 2013 Child Protection Act currently underway is an opportunity to achieve progress, particularly on the role of local government.

Information management is a factor limiting analysis of the situation in communities and the Government's ability to track child protection cases. While a standard case record form was introduced to all sub-districts, the child protection baseline assessment showed that only 31 per cent of sub-districts surveyed had written case records. An evaluation is planned for the first quarter of 2019 to draw lessons learned from the first half of the country programme and inform the mid-term review for this core programme priority. UNICEF is also drawing on international experience and expertise to develop options for the case management system in Thailand. Options include extending the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security professional presence to lower administrative levels, strengthening other line ministries with a district and sub-district level presence to deliver on child protection, further leveraging government volunteers at community level, and increasing effective outreach and services through outsourcing to civil society and the private sector.

In terms of partnerships, a challenge of 2018 was the fragmentation of the programme across government departments, both between different line ministries and within different ministry departments. The fragmentation sometimes prevents UNICEF from harnessing opportunities for synergy, especially across different programme areas. A lesson learned from 2018 was the lack of integration of civil society partnerships into the corresponding government workplans, for coherence and coordination in programme areas with complementing implementing partners from both Government and civil society. In planning for 2019, UNICEF Thailand fully included civil society partnerships in the relevant government workplans for the common programme areas.

In 2018, UNICEF continued to prioritize engagement with the private sector to protect and promote children's rights. A challenge in engaging the private sector strategically was the development of clear priorities and identification of the space for shared-value partnerships based on programme priorities, UNICEF core assets and the core businesses of companies. UNICEF Thailand is planning an analysis and corporate engagement strategy for the first quarter of 2019 to address this challenge. On the corporate side, although many in the

business sector are informed and committed to protect and promote the rights of children in Thailand, the sustainability approach of business at-large remains weak on their assessment, reporting and proactiveness towards the fulfilment of child rights. Moreover, the concept of protecting and promoting child rights needs to be explicitly emphasized in the broader human rights and SDG agendas with business. Where this is not the case, the broader agendas do not focus sufficiently on children and at times can, in fact, compete for the space and attention of the corporate sector. UNICEF Thailand's strategy was to shift focus to develop strategic partnerships directly with The Stock Exchange of Thailand and the Global Compact Network for Thailand as these entities can amplify this message and integrate it into sustainability frameworks.

Securing advocacy partners, when done right, could open doors for engagement. In 2018, UNICEF Thailand deviated from its traditional circle of partners by bringing artists on board through 'Art for the Future' as part of the 70th anniversary campaign. It was the first time for UNICEF Thailand to join with partners such as artists, and the campaign's execution was adjusted and corrected as the campaign progressed. The new concept proved successful, delivering a powerful message in an innovative and edgy manner through art, and creating partnerships traditionally unfamiliar to the organization. It was a valuable exercise that will guide future advocacy and partnership efforts. A challenge remains to engage those reached by the campaign, in a way to galvanize public support into action and change.

The visible, innovative and successful campaigns in 2018 demonstrated the impact that can be achieved with a clear definition of a 'supporter engagement journey' which, in turn, can inform the design of mechanisms and campaigns to achieve the intended engagement journey and objectives.

UNICEF Thailand faced challenges in implementing the costed evaluation plan developed in 2016, as some planned evaluations no longer corresponded to programmatic priorities. As a result, the country office updated its costed evaluation plan in 2018 to ensure that evaluations will provide the necessary information for decision-making strategically.

To conclude, UNICEF Thailand will take forward the lessons learned and challenges that emerged in the first two years of country programme implementation to inform the mid-term review in the first half of 2019. The mid-term review will include partners from Government, civil society and the private sector as well as other stakeholders, including children and young people. The process will inform the priorities, future actions and any corresponding revision to the programme and related strategies for 2020-2021 to ensure theories of change and corresponding results logic in the results frameworks are an adequate basis for impactful programming.

END/