

## Tunisia

### Part 1: Situation update in the country

Political tensions and increasing competition within the governing coalition accelerated the reconfiguration of alliances and led to another reshuffle of the Tunisian Government in the autumn of 2018. Blockages and intra-elite quarrels had an impact on the institutions' effectiveness, coupled with the rise of criminality and the perception of growing corruption across power networks. These factors contributed to fuel public distrust in elected officials and the political process and further delay the implementation of reforms. A bubbling civil society has emerged since the 2011 revolution, yet its capacities remain limited to supporting development interventions. A new and innovative private sector is also emerging while at the same time struggling to create a space for itself against the well-established traditional private sector. The 2018 October floods highlighted the fragility of the humanitarian response system. The effects of climate change with increased natural hazard have stressed the need to conduct a systemic analysis of risks and their likelihood and their impact on children and their families.

Declining socio-economic conditions in Tunisia remained a major concern despite a 2.6 per cent economic growth rate in 2017 and the gradual recovery of the tourism industry and agriculture sector. Rising inflation, high servicing of foreign external debt and dependency on aid, and depreciation of the local currency coupled with austerity measures in a stagnating economy are having a strong impact on the purchasing power of households, especially the poorest. This is also affecting the resilience of the middle class, while pushing many Tunisian families with adolescents and children to the margins. Close to 100,000 highly educated and skilled workers have left Tunisia for better economic and life prospects.

High youth unemployment is putting more young people at risk of engaging in illicit work, irregular migration and some to suicide, especially in the impoverished regions of the country. Furthermore, violence against children and adolescents remained at a high rate of 93.4 per cent. Equally concerning, there is a sizable number of children of foreign fighters with their mothers waiting abroad to return to Tunisia. All these factors have a profound impact on the realization of children and adolescent's rights. The much-needed investments and implementation of transformation in the education, health, social and child protection sectors are not being realized. Inequalities, vulnerabilities and regional disparities are widening and fuelling youth discontent in the country.

Despite the above, some progress for children and adolescents were visible in 2018. The Government submitted its long overdue reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and adopted the Third Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It established a dedicated unit for justice for children within the Ministry of Justice to develop policies and improve children's access to justice including girls' and boys' victims of all forms of violence, and to foster coordination with other ministries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Tunisian Parliament approved the establishment of an independent Human Rights Commission with a dedicated unit for the realisation of children's rights. Once operational, monitoring and gross violation of boys' and girls' rights will be more effectively addressed. The country held successfully its first free and fair municipal elections which saw half of the seats won by women and young people, including females acceding to the position

of mayors. Municipalities are expected to contribute to the realization of children rights, being entrusted with construction and maintenance of schools, health and recreational facilities and the inclusion of children and adolescent in their councils. The Commission for Civil Liberties and Equalities handed its report to the Head of State, and the Parliament will discuss it during its next session. If adopted, national laws on children issues including equal rights for girls and boys to inheritance, will come closer to the Committee on the Rights of the Child provisions.

Tunisia was one of the first early adopter countries of the World Bank Human Capital Project, an indication of its commitment to increase its investments in quality basic services. Tunisia's Human Capital Index (HCI) has dropped from 0.52 to 0.51 since 2012, lower than the average for its region but higher than the average for its income group. The Index points to quality learning equivalent to 6.3 years when Tunisian boys and girls are expected to complete 10.2 years from pre-primary to secondary, a learning gap of 3.9 years.

Efforts are under way for mitigating the impact of current economic shocks and reduction of fuel subsidies on the poorest and most vulnerable households including children and adolescents. Following UNICEF advocacy and generation of an evidence base, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) included some safety net provisions within its programme.

The recently published household consumption survey indicated that child poverty had increased and children were 21 per cent poorer than the average poverty level at 15.2 per cent. Child poverty is more striking in Tunisia Central and North Owest regions. Through provision of technical expertise and advocacy from UNICEF and the World Bank, the Government is working on the development of a child allowance to be implemented progressively once fiscal space becomes available. In 2018, Tunisia completed its Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6) with UNICEF support and expects to publish it in early 2019. New data on children and adolescents, including on learning outcomes and water quality, will be used to inform the next national development plan, the national Sustainable Development Goals voluntary report as well as the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the UNICEF programme of cooperation.

During the year, the Government of Tunisia and the United Nations (UN) conducted an evaluation and mid-term reviews of the UNDAF and UN agencies respective programmes of cooperation. The structure of the programme of cooperation between the Government and UNICEF was adjusted to respond more effectively to challenges facing children and adolescents, especially the most vulnerable ones within the present socio-economic context. The programme was rationalized and prioritized following the life course approach, taking into consideration the recommendations from the health and juvenile justice external evaluations, the gender programme review, UNICEF's 2017-2021 Strategic Plan and the SDGs. It also places a stronger focus on emergency preparedness and response, including strengthening of UNICEF's internal response capacity.

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

### Goal area 1: Every child survives and thrives

Within the framework of the Joint Programme with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Joint Programme on HIV and AIDS

(UNAIDS0, UNICEF continued its work on strengthening the coverage and equity of routine immunization system. This included strategic advocacy and convening high-level meetings for introducing the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) in the routine immunization schedule and facilitating access for Tunisia to preferential prices through UNICEF coordinated grouped procurement. Using innovative technology, a comprehensive nationwide assessment of the cold chain inventory was conducted, covering 2,291 health facilities - maternities, maternities and primary health centres –and 4,648 items of equipment, as well as examining the capacity of 2,615 health professionals and technicians. With the tablet-based Data4Action.tool, almost 10,000 entries through three questionnaires (Arabic, English, French) were collected by 100 trained surveyors in all 24 governorates in Tunisia within five weeks. The findings of the assessment, expected in early 2019, will inform the development of plans for strengthening the supply and cold chain system and leverage and mobilize resources.

UNICEF also contributed to the development of the first National Maternal and Neonatal Health Strategy 2019-2023. With UNICEF's advocacy and support, a health financial and technical partners group was established, with WHO as the secretariat.

During the last quarter of 2017, UNICEF commissioned an external mid-term formative evaluation of its limited health interventions. The evaluation was conducted in a participatory manner following the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OCED-DAC) criteria. The report, rated as satisfactory, was validated during the first quarter of 2018 and a management response plan submitted and implemented. The recommendation calling for integrating the health interventions of the programme under the early year programme Outcome was finalized during the Mid-Term Review of the Country Programme.

UNICEF will focus its support in the health sector on the early years of life of children, to ensure that relevant health interventions are mainstreamed in strengthening early childhood development governance and positive parenting.

## **Goal area 2: Every child learns**

To enable every child and adolescent to learn, the Government of Tunisia initiated an education reform in 2016 supported by a five-year implementation plan. In 2018, the curriculum reform advanced at a constant pace. The general curriculum, not been updated since 2002, was finalized and is pending approval.

Tunisia is among the pioneer countries in the MENA region for integrating life skills, citizenship education and gender parity across the curriculum and teacher training reform ([www./sce-mena.org](http://www./sce-mena.org)). The revision of economics, technology and computing curricula at secondary level started. In-service and pre-service teacher training and teaching aids based on the new general curriculum are available and being rolled out at universities and the Ministry of Education's (MoE) training facilities. These efforts will contribute to increase quality learning outcomes, and the completion rate of adolescent boys and girls at secondary school which is currently at 47.5 per cent.

To enable all girls and boys to learn and complete the full education cycle, Tunisia initiated in 2018 the design of two important programmes using a modelling approach: the school dropout prevention programme and the second chance programme. The testing phase of these models will start in 2019 in partnership with the private sector as implementer. These new initiatives are

driven through a multi-sectoral effort from the Ministries of Education, Social Affairs, Employment and Vocational Training and Health and funding from the Italian Cooperation and the United Kingdom Embassy.

At the policy level in early childhood development (ECD) the multi-sector and multi-partner (including private sector) ECD Strategy 2017-2025 was adopted and launched in collaboration with UNICEF and the World Bank. It covers children's development from pre-pregnancy to the age of eight years. Led by the Ministry of Family, Women, Childhood and the Elderly (MFFES), it was designed in a participatory manner, together with 10 other Ministries, including Education, Health, Social and Religious Affairs, Development and Cooperation, and Finance, civil society from across the country, the private sector, local authorities and with technical expertise from UNICEF and the World Bank.

The first pre-primary curricula standards for preschool services and training of trainers were developed and started rolling out with technical expertise from UNICEF and contributions from the European Union (EU), Italian Cooperation and the World Bank. The design of national standards for infrastructure and equipment, pedagogical practices and school management were initiated and will be used in the construction of the three ECD reference centres in 2019. The roll out of the new pre-primary curriculum started with the training of 30 trainers and 330 school inspectors. Training of 1,000 teachers is planned for early 2019. A knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey was conducted amongst 5,000 households. The results will inform the design of a parenting early childhood development programme in 2019. This progress in 2018 paves the way for improved early childhood education (ECE) services in selected areas for young children.

UNICEF support to girls and boy' learning was delivered through:

- 1 Support for policy dialogue and design through technical assistance to the Government ministries cited above, on sector plans and specific policies;
- 2 Support for policy implementation through a modelling approach involving programme design, piloting and scaling-up strategy of specific programmes such as the school prevention drop out and the second chance, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in school and ECE standards, and parenting education;
- 3 Support for policy dialogue and partnership mobilization through the coordination of the technical and financial group in the education sector as well as NGOs in the implementation of some programmes, initiating the involvement of the private sector in the policy discussions, during the implementation of national standards, and in service delivery;
- 4 Advocacy campaigns, in particular on the ECD strategy and the school dropout prevention agenda, and;
- 5 Resource mobilization and leveraging for financing the above services, including generating resources from the EU, Italian Cooperation and the United Kingdom.

In all these areas, the UNICEF contribution was significant, not yet in terms of beneficiaries reached, but in the support provided for policy reform and implementation at the system level. For example, school dropouts might not have been a high priority agenda for the country if UNICEF had not supported the MoE with its 2016-2017 advocacy campaign and provided the technical assistance for designing the programme response.

This also applies to the ECD strategy, and to most of the above-mentioned agendas. The end beneficiaries will ultimately significantly benefit from the reforms, the systems strengthening,

and national programmes brought to scale. During 2019-2020 the main priority will be to build the foundations for this to happen.

UNICEF's partnership with the World Bank is the deepest and most concrete at the policy, technical and operational levels. In ECD, the collaboration with the World Bank has allowed for the integration of implementation of the new pre-primary curriculum with a thorough investment on teacher training and preschool classrooms building and equipment based on the new national standards that are being developed. The national ECD strategy development has been supported by technical assistance provided by the two organizations. In the education sector, UNICEF started its collaboration with the World Bank to support the development of teacher training plan in the midterm (3-5 years). Gender has been a key feature of all the technical assistance provided and advocacy undertaken in both early childhood development and education.

### **Humanitarian action**

Following the floods in October, UNICEF supported MoE's response with the provision of hygiene kits and school bags to 5,000 students in the 16 most-affected schools out of the 57. In addition, UNICEF procured 5,000 additional hygiene and school bags to build the contingency stock for MoE's future emergency responses. UNICEF's contribution to the crisis revealed some weaknesses in the capacity to respond. With support from the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO), a plan was developed to strengthen emergency preparedness and response within UNICEF Tunisia and will be implemented in early 2019.

### **Goal area 2: Every child is protected from violence and exploitation**

Through UNICEF's advocacy efforts, the high-level visit of the Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the implementation of the 2017 law on violence against women, the silence on violence against children, girls and boys has been broken. The highly publicized event with the Chairperson triggered dialogue on violence, especially at home against girls and boys, and the urgency for ensuring better protection of most vulnerable children amongst officials, academics, media and civil society.

A mix of communication for development (C4D) interventions, including the establishment of five regional platforms and social communication activities such as street theatre, community debates and sermons at mosques were initiated and reached more than 27,000 policy and decision-makers, media, religious leaders, bloggers, families, and boys and girls. Just over one-half (54.5 per cent) of the participants were female. Violence against children activities conducted by the NGO, Ado+, mobilized 56.5 per cent of girls and 43.5 per cent of boys. The C4D approach contributed to sensitize parents on violence against children and to discuss alternative disciplinary measures to adopt with their boys and girls as well as enhance their interpersonal communication skills. Stakeholders acknowledged for the need to strengthen the involvement of the community leaders, including religious leaders, in preventing and protecting girls and boys against violence. In addition, within the five-established regional C4D platforms, the capacity of the stakeholders to plan, implement and monitor communication and social behaviour change interventions for preventing violence against children was enhanced.

The national strategy on de-institutionalization was elaborated, based on a situation analysis on alternative care and social policies targeting vulnerable families, accompanied by an action plan and a communication strategy. A total of 220 professionals working with 956 children

deprived of family care were trained to better apply standards in line with the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. Regarding children and adolescents' access to justice, a dedicated unit on access to justice for children was created within the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) with EU support to develop policies on children's access to justice and foster coordination with concerned ministries. Further progress was achieved regarding the implementation of the 2017-enacted Law 58 on violence against women. Based on the identified capacity building needs of the newly-established specialized units for women and children, 380 police officers and national guards were equipped with tools and their capacities strengthened to manage the case load of children and adolescents in contact with the law, including child victims of crime. 2018 also saw the Tunisian Parliament adopting the establishment of an independent Human Right Commission, with a dedicated member responsible for children's rights.

UNICEF also further increased its advocacy and policy dialogue on child rights and on need to strengthen child protection systems and services. As a key convener, UNICEF contributed to strengthening three sub-inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms and broadened the partnership with the inclusion of civil society representatives. For example, thanks to the broad membership of the Committee on Children without Parental Support involving 14 NGOs, long pending cases of young children awaiting family placements were resolved and closed.

Further, thanks to UNICEF support, 914 adolescent girls, representing 56 per cent of the total members, joined the U-Report platform and had their voices heard. Their participation was also important in the call for more gender equality in digital communication. U-Report provides a venue for adolescents from diverse backgrounds, including those hard-to-reach to share and voice their views and concerns on issues affecting their daily life such as violence, volunteer work, school dropout, and migration. All the above-mentioned progress was achieved due to the enhanced partnership between Government and diverse partners, including NGOs. These same partners acknowledged UNICEF's contribution as a key partner for advancing prevention of violence against children, access to justice for children and adolescents and strengthening the social work system in Tunisia.

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

In partnership with the United National Office for Project Services (UNOPS) 2,247 children in seven out of 11 primary schools with an elevated risk of water-borne diseases have access to newly built WASH facilities and playgrounds. Due to water supply shortage in three out of the 11 selected schools, water masonry, pumphouse treatment and storage facilities with equipped boreholes were also been put in place.

Throughout the year, programme visits and small-scale WASH assessments were conducted in schools. The outcomes were used to inform the development of the WASH facilities standards and construction plans. Gender, age category, privacy and dignity of every child were considered in the design. The Ministry of Education approved the standards and the plans in early 2018. They will be piloted in the remaining 23 selected schools. Support was also availed to the Department of Works and Construction of the Ministry of Education in the areas of planning and management.

Coordination mechanism amongst various ministries especially Health and Agriculture, technical and financial partners and NGOs was strengthened through the establishment of a Steering Committee at national level. The Committee coordinated various construction works, established a work plan, validated new works projects, approved common advocacy and

communication materials, such as awareness raising campaigns, and hygiene kits. Through the MoH, the Committee assessed water quality in six schools at elevated risk of water-borne diseases which led to the establishment of an improved water quality and supply plan to reduce risk of disease and infection for children. To strengthen the capacity on hygiene promotion, training on sanitation and communication technique was conducted in a participatory manner with 68 teachers and school principals, as well as with 23 volunteers and community leaders. A hygiene promotion and sanitation manual, toolkit and educational support materials such as games were designed for classroom activities with children and teachers. UNICEF also encouraged MoE to establish partnerships with NGOs, including the Scouts and Islamic Relief, for increasing the participation and engagement of local communities and families in the construction and maintenance of school WASH facilities and playgrounds and for reactivating the school hygiene clubs run by students. Through a partnership between the Scouts, Islamic Relief, Ministry of Education, Italian Cooperation and UNICEF, 15,000 children and adolescents participated in hygiene promotion activities in flood- and non-flood-affected schools, and 10,000 girls and boys received hygiene kits.

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

In 2018, UNICEF provided technical support and conducted high-level advocacy dialogue for strengthening the social protection system and increasing investment for children. With the World Bank, UNICEF expanded its strategic policy dialogue and provision of expertise for the design of a progressive Universal Child Grant (UCG). Once established, the UCG will provide Government with measures to mitigate current and future economic shocks and austerity measures that impact children and adolescents, especially the most vulnerable ones. Partners providing budget support operations to Tunisia including the EU, Germany's KfW, IMF and others were sensitized about the benefits of putting in place a progressive UCG. This resulted in a growing interest, if the UCG is established, to include specific related indicators in budget support disbursement tranches.

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs and with support from UNICEF and the World Bank, a Child Grant Steering Committee was established and tasked to develop a costed road map for designing, operationalizing and funding the UCG mechanism. In view of the limited fiscal space and economic and budget constraints, the Government requested UNICEF support to identify both public and innovating financing for funding the UCG. A study is being conducted with the expertise of Oxford Policy Management and expected to be available by mid-2019. This will hopefully contribute to inform the discussions for the establishment of a progressive UCG during the elaboration of the 2020 national budget and financial bill.

Tunisia was one of the first early adopters of the World Bank's Human Capital Project, an indication of its commitment to increase its investments in quality basic services. Tunisia's Human Capital Index has dropped from 0.52 to 0.51 since 2012, lower than the average for the region but higher than the average for its income group. UNICEF teamed up with the World Bank by mobilizing and advocating to policy and decision makers and with the provision of data for the establishment of both the Tunisia HCI and its action plan.

In 2018, Tunisia, with EU support formulated a social inclusion strategy. The strategy foresees a series of measures including increasing family and school allowances amounts; expanding coverage of beneficiaries of discounted medical assistance programme; provision of a parenting education programme; improving quality learning outcomes; establishment of

mechanisms for preventing and reducing adolescent school dropouts; provision of clean and safe water in health and school facilities, and maintaining nationwide immunization coverage. Most of these measures were drawn from UNICEF policy briefs and evidence-based data on health, education, child poverty, and WASH and resulted from advocacy and policy dialogues with policy and decision makers. This result was also achieved thanks to the members of the Child Grant Steering Committee who were also in the Social Inclusion Strategy Committee.

Tunisia has also been actively involved in the regional assessment of the Social Service Workforce. The findings, expected in mid-2019 will inform a comprehensive system strengthening programme of the Tunisia Social Service system.

With the availability of a next set of data on children and adolescents through the MICS6 that will be released in early 2019, Tunisia will be able to update its child poverty analysis and generate evidence to inform strategic interventions to address child rights deprivations in the country. The new data will also inform the National Voluntary Report on the SDGs that the country will submit in 2019.

## **Enablers**

In 2018, UNICEF Tunisia moved into new premises to accommodate increased staffing and improve well-being. The interior design of the office will be completed by early 2019, including greening initiatives. The transition into an office of over 34 staff remained a challenge as did the onboarding of many staff.

UNICEF Tunisia's funding utilization increased from US\$3,352,379 in 2017 to US\$7,203,990 in 2018.

The office well-being team implemented its workplan drawn during the 'Speak Up' culture workshops. Activities including clinics on human resources, finance, UNICEF's procedures, ethics, career development and security for female staff were conducted and will be pursued in 2019. An international operations manager assumed function in late summer and contributed to office efforts to consolidate the new staff onboarding and transition. A new Deputy Representative and a national human resource officer will join the team to contribute to office-wide system strengthening and well-being. 2018 saw the much-awaited conclusions of the national local salary survey. The ongoing economic and social crises and the political instability within the country impacted on staff, families and motivation. The staff association, peer support volunteers and the ethics focal point all contributed to draw management attention on these challenges which were discussed through the established mechanisms of Country Management Team (CMT), Joint Consultative Committee and weekly stand-up meetings, along with ad hoc meetings when necessary.

UNICEF Tunisia used both programme and operations management indicators as key management tools for monitoring office performance. The performance management reports were regularly shared during monthly CMT meetings. The Office Dashboard was monitored regularly to ensure the segregation of duties and take immediate actions. It also served to monitor budget utilization, outstanding items, outstanding direct cash transfers and travel authorization. The harmonised approach to cash transfers (HACT) assurance plan was closely monitored on regular basis.

As planned in the Country Programme Action Plan 2015-2019, a Mid-Term Review (MTR) was

held in 2018 to assess the progress towards planned results as well as the effectiveness of the implementation strategy of the programme. Emerging challenges in the country for children and adolescents were highlighted through the update of the situation of children in the country and the situation analysis of the adolescents that was conducted. The MTR process also set the ground for a thorough discussion on the efficacy and efficiency of the programme implementation approach and its strategies. The strategic thinking process led the country programme stakeholders to agree to reduce the number of country programme results and revise its strategy to foster multi-sectoral approaches. This resulted in an agreement to develop the first strategy note of the country programme in Tunisia, thus aligning the office on the latest revised UNICEF global policies and procedures. The new strategy note will allow the UNICEF Tunisia to structure its implementation approach around multi-disciplinary teams to deliver results for children and adolescents in the country and foster dialogue and collaboration between different sectors and priorities.

The MTR process allowed UNICEF Tunisia to also conduct a Gender Programmatic Review (GPR) of the country program with the support of UNICEF MENARO and headquarters. The GPR helped identifying opportunities to mainstream gender at policy level as well as in existing country programme areas. Education, child protection, health, and C4D were identified as the main programmatic areas to mainstream the elements of the global Gender Action Plan. Key interventions in which gender can be mainstreamed in a systemic approach were discussed and will nurture the preparation of country programme workplans for 2019 and 2020. The GPR highlighted the importance of conducting gender training for staff and appointing gender focal points. As part of the MTR process, a full situation analysis on adolescents was developed during the reporting year. The outcomes and recommendations emerging from consultations held with adolescent girls and boys throughout the various regions of the country on the implementation of the provisions of Committee on the Rights of the Child were used and enriched the programming process and the strategic note. The adolescents produced an alternative Committee report which will be sent to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The adolescent situation analysis was also discussed and validated with adolescents.

The MTR and an annual review of the Annual Management Plan (AMP) 2018 were organized respectively on 17 September and on 17 December 2018. The reviews were participatory and consultative and key achievements, bottlenecks and solutions were identified and two key 2019 AMP priorities formulated. UNICEF Tunisia continued to implement the internal finance policy by setting-up indicators which were monitored monthly and reported to the Country Management Team.

### Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints

Tunisia's transition to democracy offers opportunities for the realization of children's rights. The 2014 Constitution underscores children's rights as well as new laws including violence against women and on the independent commission for human rights. Numerous reforms including in education, health, justice, and social protection have been initiated. The 2016 National Development Plan's focus on social cohesion, equity and gender equality also presents positive opportunities. In addition, the transition has fostered a political opening to tackle issues previously considered taboo, including violence against children.

UNICEF Tunisia took advantage of the changing context by repositioning itself and diversifying partnerships by engaging with civil society, media, children and adolescents. The office

undertook many pieces of research previously not possible to conduct on issues including children out-of-school, child poverty and the viability of data. The findings contributed to the articulation of UNICEF's programme niche. This also allowed for positioning the office as a knowledge broker and convener in social and child protection, early childhood education and in education sector reforms. New programme strategies were put forward such as modelling, provision of high calibre technical expertise in emerging areas such as early childhood education, remedial education for out-of-school adolescents, justice for children and adolescents, violence against children and social inclusion. Efforts were also undertaken to contribute to strengthening coordination, dialogue and partnerships with various stakeholders, notably between Government and civil society. UNICEF's technical and convener roles were acknowledged during the adoption in 2018 of Tunisia's multi-sector ECD national strategy and action plan. The strategy developed through a consultative and decentralized approach and involved various actors within Government as well as civil society, private sector and the World Bank.

Since 2016, UNICEF has leveraged millions of US dollars from international finance institutions and bilateral donors for children and adolescents, as well as increased by three fold its country programme ceiling. These changes have forced UNICEF to adjust through deployment of additional expertise at both national and international levels. Although UNICEF Tunisia attempted to adopt and innovate within a fast changing external and internal environment, it could have benefited from a solid political economic and change management analysis to tackle more effectively the widespread and unfolding challenges.

Eight years after the Spring Revolution, UNICEF Tunisia still strives to achieve results for children and adolescents, while operating in an environment with significant challenges and changes, including:

- Regular reshuffling within Government - ten since 2011;
- Safety and security remaining a concern, despite substantive progress;
- Deepening economic crisis, with peaks in food commodities, a high debt burden, and widespread youth unemployment;
- A striking decline in human capital (*MICS6*), especially children's learning outcomes, immunization rates, and water quality, which all require urgent investments;
- Growing social unrest, youth discontent, polarization of the education sector and the rise in suicide and illegal migration including of adolescents- all of which are impacting the pace of the implementation of the much-needed reforms and the economic growth.

These external factors were also accompanied by internal constraints as UNICEF Tunisia was managing its own transition from a small team into a team of more than 30 staff. The office encountered many challenges in managing the transition and rapid and innovative programme changes. Adopting to a new pace has proven more demanding than expected. The integration of new members of the team was at the time seen as a threat to the routine work practices; and the rapid and innovative programmatic changes were also seen as a constraint after a decade of 'business as usual'. This was coupled with the external environment, which on one hand offered new opportunities for the realization of children's rights and on the other hand the social, economic and political situation affected partners' motivation and performance.

This called upon the UNICEF Tunisia to invest more in staff well-being in its drive for achieving results for children and adolescents. This is gradually being done with the commitment of both staff association and management through the conduct of "speak up" workshops facilitated with support from UNICEF MENARO (notably the staff counsellor); establishment of a well-being

committee to monitor that a set of agreed actions including from the staff survey results are implemented; induction clinics, including orientation on career development; facilitation of exchanges with other country offices; encouragement of staff to take leave; provision of leadership and expertise to the local salary survey committee; establishment of key positions and deployment of experienced managers. These investments must be continued and sustained as the journey to change is a lengthy process, especially in a tense and difficult external environment where the demand for achieving results for children and adolescents continues to rise. 2019 offers opportunities for further shaping the strategic direction of the programme as per the outcome of the 2018 MTR, as well as consolidating and continuing investing in the team's well-being.