

## Turkey

### Part 1: Situation update in the country

The presidential and parliamentary elections in June, and the simultaneous adoption of the new presidential system of government, constituted a major political event in 2018. A number of changes were made in the structure of the Government. Key partners for the Turkey-UNICEF Country Programme underwent significant restructuring. The Ministry of Family and Social Policies was merged with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to create a new Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS). The Ministry of Development was abolished and the Strategy and Budget Office of the Presidency was established. The finalization of the 2019-2023 National Development Plan was postponed until 2019.

The state of emergency put in place after the 2016 coup attempt was lifted. New anti-terrorism measures were introduced. Terrorist attacks and other security incidents continued to decline in comparison to previous years.

The gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 7.2 per cent and 5.3 per cent in the first two quarters of the year. Later, the Turkish Lira weakened, GDP growth slowed (1.6 per cent in the third quarter) and inflation rose, ending the year at 20.3 per cent. The New Economic Programme envisages modest growth and relatively tight budgets for 2019 and 2020.

Turkey remained the country with the largest registered refugee population in the world. There were 3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey as of December, including 1.7 million children. The majority are living in host communities throughout Turkey, with the proportion of refugees living in temporary accommodation centres (camps) falling to about 4 per cent. There are also around 370,000 non-Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey, including approximately 120,000 children. Some irregular migrants, including children, continued to reach or attempt to reach Europe via Turkey, many risking death at sea. The numbers apprehended or rescued in Turkey continued to increase.

The Government continued to lead the overall crisis response and remained the largest provider of humanitarian aid to Syrians as well as other refugee and migrant groups. The United Nations Country Team and other actors continued to support national efforts to respond to the Syria refugee crisis within the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP).

Nevertheless, many refugee children continued to face challenges in terms of material deprivation, limited access to services, and protection risks. The 2019 Annual Programme of the Presidency acknowledges the need to increase and diversify the services provided to refugee children and young people in several areas and highlights the need for more programmes to develop their life skills and enhance social cohesion.

#### **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 - No poverty/SDG 2 No hunger**

According to national statistics, absolute poverty is virtually non-existent in Turkey. However, many children continue to experience relative poverty. The most recent data by the Turkish

Statistical Institute (Turkstat) showed that relative poverty rate was 25.1 per cent among households with children compared to 6.7 per cent for households without children. The figures are for the Turkish population.

Refugee families experience high levels of poverty. Surveys conducted to monitor the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) managed by the World Food Programme (WFP) and Turkish Red Crescent found that 11.7 per cent of ESSN beneficiary households were living in extreme poverty while 59.18 per cent were living in moderate poverty.

The 2013 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) found that 9.5 per cent of the children under 5-years-old were moderately stunted, 1.9 per cent moderately underweight and 5.2 per cent obese. No representative statistics are available for specific groups of children, including refugee children who may be more affected by malnutrition, considering the poverty rates in their households. Updated figures from the DHS will be available in 2019.

### **SDG 3 - Good health and well-being**

According to Turkstat, infant mortality was 9.2 per 1,000 live births in 2017. Regional disparities existed. The proportion of mothers receiving prenatal care and giving birth in health facilities was 99.7 per cent and 98.0 per cent respectively. The 2013 DHS indicated that full immunization rates were 74.1 per cent. No representative statistics are publicly available for specific groups of children, including refugee children who may face more difficulties in accessing health services.

According to data from the 2011 Population and Housing Survey, there were 422,000 children aged 3-17 years living with at least one form of disability. Some 2.3 per cent of children aged 3-9 years, 2.1 per cent of 10-14 years and 2.3 per cent of 15-19 year olds had a disability. Due to different factors, early detection of disabilities remained an issue. Although official statistics are not available for refugee children, rates of disability are thought to be higher, as many have physical injuries caused by war, or from dealing with extreme stress as a result of their experiences, and are observed to face more difficulties in accessing health and other services.

### **SDG4 - Quality education**

According to the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), the net preschool enrolment rate was 38.5 per cent for children aged 3-5 years and 66.9 per cent for five year olds in the 2017/2018 school year. Regional and other disparities persist. The Government repeated its commitment to provide at least one year of pre-school compulsory education for all young children, and efforts in this direction have been made.

Enrolment in primary and lower secondary education is over 98 per cent in both school levels. With respect to upper secondary education, compulsory since 2012, 12.8 per cent of girls aged 14-17 year and 11.9 per cent of boys aged 14-17 years were not in school in the 2017/2018 school year. While in some provinces (particularly in the East) adolescent girls are less likely to go to school than boys, the trend is inverted in other provinces.

The number of Syrian refugee children included in formal education was 645,140 as of December 2018, representing an increase of 5.7 per cent by comparison with the 2017/2018 school year and 31 per cent with the 2016/2017 school year. Despite this progress, access to pre-primary education is still limited (33 per cent). Adolescents continue to face challenges in

access to education, with a gross enrolment for refugee children in upper secondary education of 26.3 per cent.

Despite efforts, about 400,000 Syrian refugee children are still out of school for various reasons including language barriers, child labour, gender norms, disability or illness, and lack of information regarding schooling opportunities.

Education opportunities for out-of-school refugee children are provided mainly through public education centres. These education opportunities, including Turkish language courses and accelerated learning programmes, are being strengthened to respond to the diverse needs of those children.

MoNE's strategy document 'For a stronger tomorrow: Education Vision for 2023' unveiled in October, plans to address key aspects related to the quality and inclusiveness of the education system. These include disparities in education, student assessment, challenges in vocational and technical high schools, and the need to reinforce learning of contemporary skills and foreign languages.

The Vision 2023 document also foresees renewed attention and opportunities for children with disabilities.. Some children with disabilities are studying in regular schools, with access varying significantly among education levels. Access for children with disabilities in pre-primary and primary schools is relatively lower than access in upper secondary schools. Institutional, physical and human capacity require further development for successful mainstreaming.

## **SDG5 - Gender equality**

According to the latest Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data, women accounted for 31 per cent of employment in 2017, compared to an average of 44.4 per cent for all its member countries. The most recent TurkStat data showed that 34 per cent of young women were not in employment, education or training, compared to 14.6 per cent of young men. According to MoNE, net enrolment in upper secondary education was 83.8 per cent for boys and 83.4 per cent for girls in the 2017/2018 school year. However, while net upper secondary enrolment rates were higher for girls than boys in many provinces, a gender gap in favour of boys persisted in eastern and central areas. Among Syrian refugee children, gross enrolment rates are higher among girls than boys at all levels.

In some cases, girls may be allocated gender roles including responsibilities for housework and care of younger children from an early age. They may also face more restrictions than boys on their choices and participation in certain activities. Among refugees, gender norms continued to play a part in keeping girls out of school, while child labour seems to be the main factor for adolescent boys.

Child marriage is still practised among Turkish citizens, although the incidence continues to decline. The most recent TurkStat statistics showed that 23,906 girls aged 16-17 years got married in 2017 either with parental consent or approval of a judge (4.2 per cent of all women getting married) compared to 27,637 (4.6 per cent) in 2016. The data also showed regional discrepancies. Child marriage is observed more among Syrian refugees, particularly as a coping strategy, but representative statistics are lacking.

Government institutions, led by the MFLSS, begun to work more systematically to combat child

marriage among refugee and non-refugee children under a strategy adopted for 2018-2023. A United Nations (UN) Joint Programme led by UNICEF is ongoing to support these efforts.

### **SDG8 - Decent work and economic growth**

According to TurkStat's 2012 child labour survey, 601,000 children aged 15-17 years (430,000 boys and 171,000 girls) and 292,000 aged 6-14 years (185,000 boys and 108,000 girls) were engaged in economic activities. This is 15.6 per cent of the 15-17 year olds and 2.6 per cent of children aged 6-14 years in employment. While representative statistics are lacking, child labour is understood to be widespread among refugees and is cited as one of the major causes of non-participation in education among refugee children. Adolescent boys are most likely to be affected, but girls and boys of all ages are also involved.

Children generally work in small industrial enterprises, in the service sector, on the streets and in agriculture, including migratory agriculture. Besides insufficient household income, the lack of employment opportunities for adult family members, social acceptance of child labour as a practice in some segments of the society, difficulty to access educational opportunities, and the demand from employers for cheap labour are among the factors which appear to exacerbate this harmful practice.

Following the adoption in 2017 of the National Programme and Action Plan for Combating Child Labour, 2018 was declared a year of combating child labour. In February, six ministries and 11 business and labour organizations signed a declaration to cooperate to prevent child labour.

### **SDG10 - Reduced inequalities**

Different groups of children in Turkey are at risk of being left behind in access to social services and/or relevant opportunities that would enable the full realization of their rights. These groups include children with disabilities, Roma children, refugee children, and vulnerable adolescent girls and boys including those out-of-school, those involved in economic activities, or those in conflict with the law. These aspects are already discussed in the relevant SDGs.

Some policy efforts are ongoing to enable the inclusion of vulnerable groups of children. For example, in March, a Parliamentary Commission was established to "establish the prevalence of Down syndrome and autism and other developmental disorders and determine the measures that need to be taken to resolve the problems of the individuals affected and their families".

Discrimination and bullying are of concern especially for children with disabilities, refugee children and Roma children. While representative data is not available, monitoring data on refugee children suggests that this is a phenomenon of increasing concern.

### **SDG16 - Peace, justice, strong institutions**

The most recent TurkStat and Ministry of Justice data showed that the number of alleged child offenders brought into security units declined to 107,984 in 2018 from 108,675 in 2017. The number of children aged 12-17 years against whom cases were opened or reconsidered declined from 135,517 to 120,786 in the same period.

About half of all children who went on trial were tried in specialized courts, as a result of the

gradual establishment of child courts across the country. Fewer children received prison sentences in 2017: 11,264 a reduction from 12,423 in 2016. However, the percentage of children convicted who received prison sentences rose to 31.1 per cent in 2017 from 28.1 per cent in 2016. Girls are a small proportion as compared to boys. A recent review on the implementation of the individualized rehabilitation system for children under detention indicated that despite the increased number of child-specific detention centres and the improvements in the physical conditions and case-management schemes, systemic challenges in implementation prevail. To enhance the use of alternatives to imprisonment, a new risk evaluation system for children on probation was developed and is expected to be rolled-out nationally in 2019.

Regarding the child care system, the nationwide operationalization of the Family Social Support Programme (ASDEP) service model, which is intended to provide social services and assistance in a holistic manner to families in need, is included in the Annual Programme of the Presidency for 2019, ensuring that more vulnerable families will be reached by social services, including child protection.

Cases of missing children, abductions, child rape, child murders and sexual abuse continued to prompt widespread concern and public condemnation in 2018. In July, political parties agreed to support a bill on sexual harassment and abuse. In dialogue with policy-makers, concerned UN agencies in Turkey pointed to the need to also consider more preventive and rehabilitative measures and awareness-raising. TurkStat figures indicated that 122,209 children were received into security units as victims of crimes or other incidents and misdemeanours in 2017, of whom 62.4 per cent were allegedly victims of (non-sexual) assaults and 10.4 per cent of sexual offences. Nationally representative survey data to complement administrative statistics is not available.

Turkey continued to make good progress on alternatives for children deprived of parental care. According to MoFLSS, there were 14,189 children in residential care at the end of 2017. This included 1,640 children receiving temporary residential rehabilitation in various types of child support centres for children under protective and supportive measures. There were 16,171 adopted children and 5,642 living in foster families.

Although minimum standards are in force, there is room for further professionalization in the child care system and improvements in arrangements for all groups of children living permanently or temporarily without parental care. This includes the need for an effective legal guardianship system, a national Best Interest Determination mechanism, more capacity for children with additional needs such as children with disabilities and refugee children, and increased monitoring.

Irregular migrants including children who are intercepted with their families are given the opportunity to apply for protection in Turkey, but they also risk deportation, and in certain cases may be placed in administrative detention pending deportation. There are concerns about the lack of alternatives to administrative detention for children and their families and the rights and services for those in detention, and the need for proper age assessment. Unaccompanied minors are taken into care by MoFLSS, but there are needs for additional professional capacity, legal guardianship and non-residential care options. MoFLSS intends to increase the number of foster families.

The Ombudsperson Institution, which has a Deputy Ombudsperson in charge of children's

rights, continued its efforts towards strengthening children's right to access to justice. During the year, the Ombudsperson Institution adopted a child rights strategy, which is expected to establish more child-friendly procedures in case handling and strengthen the outreach processes.

## **SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals**

About half of the SDG indicators are measurable for Turkey, according to TurkStat. The 2018 DHS, whose findings are expected in 2019, will provide updated data on various child-related indicators. The DHS is also expected to provide for the first time data disaggregated for Syrian children and will produce data on a new indicator on early childhood development, which is included in the global list of SDG indicators.

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

### **Introduction**

The Turkey-UNICEF Country Programme is aligned with the United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy (UNDCS) for 2016-2020. Both the Country Programme and the UNDCS are aligned with national priorities set by the Government of Turkey in the 10<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan 2014-2018.

The country programme includes four cross-sectoral outcomes summarized as follows: equity through social inclusion and resilience-building; quality data, knowledge and advocacy for child rights; gender equality among children and adolescents; Turkey-UNICEF expanded partnership beyond borders.

These outcomes contribute from a child rights perspective to seven of the eight UNDCS outcomes, in particular those dedicated to social inclusion, gender, migration and international protection, human rights and good governance, and sustainable economic development. UNICEF continued to chair the UNDCS Results Group on Social Inclusion and the Monitoring for Strategic Results Working Group and be an active member in other relevant inter-agency groups.

The country programme outcomes also contribute to the refugee crisis response in four of the six sectors set out by the 3RP: education, protection, basic needs and health. UNICEF continued to co-chair the education sector group and the child protection working group.

The country programme contributes to four of the five goal areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and to eight of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 1 (No Poverty), 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

During 2018, UNICEF Turkey continued to maintain a balance between addressing the specific and urgent needs of refugee children and working to uphold the rights of all vulnerable children in the country. The humanitarian response is fully integrated in the country programme and refugee and migrant children are one of the vulnerable groups of children who are at risk of

being left behind – albeit a group which remains very large and continues to face particular deprivations. Other vulnerable children at risk of being left behind are children with disabilities, children involved in economic activities, and children in contact with the law.

A wide range of strategies was employed, ranging from the delivery of services to strengthening of national systems and engagement in policy dialogue often used in middle-income countries with a high level of institutional capacity like Turkey. Across the country programme, including for support to refugee children and families, this combination of strategies is used to promote and support system strengthening at national and subnational levels and improve the delivery of services to the most vulnerable children. This approach is in line with the UNICEF global strategic objectives to promote the ‘humanitarian-development nexus’ and programming for at-scale results for children.

In line with the gender-responsive programming guidelines included in the new Strategic Plan and in the Gender Action Plan 2018-2021, the Turkey-UNICEF Country Programme includes three of the five targeted gender priority areas under Outcome 3, while mainstreaming gender in the remaining outcomes. There are three cross-sectoral priorities: ending child marriage, addressing gender-based violence in emergencies, and advancing girls’ secondary education, including non-formal education.

Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children is another key strategy used in the implementation of the country programme. To complement historical partnerships with key ministries, UNICEF Turkey has been expanding its partner portfolio to include new actors such as municipalities and other subnational entities, as well as the private sector such as the Confederation of Craftsmen and Tradesmen. UNICEF Turkey also facilitates agreements between multiple partners. An example is the partnership between the Ministry of Family Labour and Social Services, Turkish Red Crescent, the Ministry of National Education and UNICEF for the Conditional Cash Transfer programme for education of refugee children. Since the beginning of 2018, UNICEF Turkey has signed 11 workplans with key government partners for the period 2018-2019 and eight new cooperation agreements with civil society organizations.

In 2018, the annual financial throughput reached US\$181 million, as compared to US\$151 million in 2017. The number of staff in the Ankara and Gaziantep offices reached 122. These additional financial and human resources allowed UNICEF to expand the scale of its support to partners and advance the child rights agenda for vulnerable children, both Turkish and refugees.

2018 was the third year of implementation of the country programme. Since the beginning of the programme cycle, significant changes have occurred in the country, including a shift to a Presidential system of governance and a subsequent re-structuring of government. At the same time, globally, UNICEF has adopted a new Strategic Plan and Gender Action Plan.

Considering these circumstances, in 2018 UNICEF Turkey embarked on a review of the country programme to assess its performance and discuss lessons learnt as well as future directions until the end of the cycle and beyond. Challenges ahead include maintaining a scale of intervention commensurate with the needs and ensuring their sustainability while continuing to sharpen the focus of the programme on the most vulnerable children. Efforts will continue to be made to use an increasingly multi-sectoral and holistic approach. Lessons learnt and constraints identified during the review process will be further discussed below.

Key results for UNICEF Turkey for 2018 are detailed in the following sections, largely aligned with Goal Areas 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the UNICEF Strategic Plan.

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

In 2018, UNICEF stepped up its contributions to enhance capacity for the healthy growth and development of young children, an issue attracting growing attention from a national development perspective. UNICEF also accelerated its support for the timely detection of disabilities and early intervention for children, which would remove a critical barrier to the realization of the rights of children with disabilities. Meanwhile, UNICEF contributed to positive nutrition practices and improved nutrition monitoring, particularly among refugee children, who are most at risk of missing out on their right to health in Turkey. These efforts contribute to the advancement towards SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

With the technical assistance of UNICEF, the 2018 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey – currently in its data collection phase – includes for the first time an additional module to measure indicators on early childhood development, based on UNICEF’s global Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) methodology. This allows calculation of one SDG indicator currently not measured in the country and will generate new data that can inform new early childhood development (ECD) policies, an increasing priority in Turkey. At the policy level, UNICEF worked with a range of partners in 2018 to support the development of the Care for Child Development training package, which is designed to prepare health providers and community and frontline workers dealing with families of young children to promote their healthy growth and psychosocial development.

UNICEF engaged with Ministry of Health in the preparatory phase of the roll-out of the new regulation on the Children’s Special Need’s Health Report, which is to be implemented in public hospitals nationwide starting in 2019, and of the Guide to Monitoring Child Development to be implemented in the health care system. This is expected to contribute to an increase in the technical skills of relevant health professionals and facilitate improved awareness among parents.

With respect to nutrition, UNICEF worked together with WFP to enhance capacity for positive nutrition practices and nutrition monitoring among refugees. Health professionals working in migrant health centres were trained on promoting positive infant and young child feeding practices among refugees. Staff of 40 national and international non-governmental organizations running community centres acquired knowledge and skills for the early detection of cases of severe acute malnutrition.

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

The education programme component focuses on access to and quality of education and contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

As indicated in Section A of this report, different groups of vulnerable children face specific challenges. Refugee children are particularly at risk of not accessing any form of education. At the beginning of the current country programme cycle in 2016, only about 320,000 refugee children were enrolled in school (approximately 36 per cent of the school-age refugee population), posing a significant challenge for the education sector to accommodate an



unprecedented number of additional children in school. At the end of 2018, 645,140 (317,761 girls and 327,379 boys) were enrolled in formal education, representing 62 per cent of the refugee population of school age. In addition, approximately 15,426 refugee children participated in UNICEF-supported non-formal and informal education opportunities. This progress is the result of the continuous collaboration between the MoNE, UNICEF and other partners in both formal and non-formal education, and of cross-sectoral interventions involving other entities particularly in the child protection and the social protection sectors. An example of such interventions is the extension of the Conditional Cash Transfers for Education (CCTE) programme for refugee children (See also Goal Area 5).

### **Formal education opportunities for refugee children**

In order to facilitate access to formal education, UNICEF continued to collaborate with MoNE in strengthening the capacity of education personnel, in improving and expanding learning spaces, and in supporting families with access to essential school supplies.

Ensuring an adequate supply of education services adapted to the needs of refugee students and families was facilitated by the provision of monthly incentives to Syrian Volunteer Education Personnel (SVEP). As of December, 12,994 SVEP (6,062 men and 6,932 women) were receiving monthly incentives in line with the Turkish minimum wage through a tripartite arrangement between UNICEF, MoNE, and the Turkish Post Office.

Significant progress was made on the development of the Education Personnel Management Strategy, which will make it possible for SVEP to continue to contribute to the education of children as they transition from the temporary education centres (TECs) serving refugees only to education in Turkish public schools. Together, UNICEF and MoNE developed and formalized roles for the SVEP in education, counselling, administration and outreach support. They will perform these functions in the centres, in Turkish public schools and in other educational institutions responsible for school guidance and counselling. These new roles meet critical needs and will support the smooth integration and learning of Syrian children within the Turkish national education system.

To expand the supply of available learning spaces, eighteen early childhood education container classrooms with furniture and equipment were provided, serving 900 children. Financial support was provided to cover the increased maintenance costs associated with hosting refugee children in 328 schools, serving more than 188,440 children.

To reduce families' school-related costs, in cooperation with MoNE, UNICEF distributed 800,000 school kits containing school bags and stationery to refugee and vulnerable Turkish students throughout Turkey.

### **Informal and non-formal education opportunities for adolescent refugees**

While significant progress has been made in enrolling refugee children in formal education, MoNE and UNICEF are committed to developing specialized support and learning pathways for out-of-school children, particularly adolescents. In 2018, MoNE and UNICEF launched the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP), which provides a second chance to refugee children aged 10-18 years who have already been out of school for some time and are not ready to participate in formal education alongside other children in their own age group. The Programme is available in a network of 70 public education centres in 12 provinces across the country, offering certified learning with a curriculum approved by MoNE. As of December, the ALP was benefiting 5,656 children (2,626 girls and 3,030 boys).

Language is another major barrier to the participation and retention of refugee adolescents in education. In 2018, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) in providing Turkish language courses at youth centres in 24 provinces where the children can also participate in social activities with their Turkish peers. After completing the first two levels they are referred to Turkish public schools. As of December, 4,406 children (2,012 girls and 2,394 boys) were attending Turkish language courses.

In order to expand the reach of these programmes, MoNE and MoYS in collaboration with UNICEF conducted community-based education outreach campaigns and reached 31,839 children (15,054 girls and 16,785 boys). As a result, 10,490 out-of-school children (5,309 girls and 5,181 boys) were identified and referred to provincial directorates of National Education for enrolment in formal education. Out-of-school children for whom this solution was not viable for different reasons were provided information about the relevant education services available and referred to age-appropriate non-formal and informal education opportunities.

### **Building capacity for quality inclusive education**

As mentioned earlier, MoNE's vision document 'For a stronger tomorrow: Education Vision for 2023' identifies important aspects of quality inclusive education for all children in Turkey as key priorities for the education sector. In this context, UNICEF has been collaborating with MoNE in the areas of education policy and practice, professional development and learning assessment systems, and inclusive early childhood education.

In support of efforts to ensure that schooling and learning are inclusive for all children, an inclusive education teacher training module was developed. It was implemented on a large scale to increase the capacity of teachers to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable students, including, but not limited to, refugee children. By December, the training had been implemented in all 81 provinces for 154,451 teachers and school administrators (70,121 women and 84,330 men).

During the year, 87,003 children (37,920 girls and 49,083 boys), including 7,684 refugees, benefited from the first-year implementation of the remedial education programme, which was developed to support the significant number of children who are unable to reach the expected 3rd and 4th grade basic literacy and numeracy learning achievement levels. In addition, an improved psychosocial support module, including guidebooks and training for school counsellors and teachers, was developed to improve the capacity of the education system to support students for whom different types of trauma are causing learning difficulties. Training in the use of the new module is ongoing.

The Grade 9 School Orientation Programme, developed in partnership with UNICEF, was implemented in all 'general' upper secondary schools, reaching approximately one million students. This programme aims to prevent non-attendance and dropping out among vulnerable adolescents by facilitating students' transition from lower to upper secondary school. Ninth-grade students in 'technical and vocational' and 'religious (imam hatip)' upper secondary schools will now be included as well.

### **Support for inclusive preschool education**

UNICEF continued to engage with MoNE on the implementation of the Government's policy making at least one year of preschool education compulsory in the near future. In addition, UNICEF promoted inclusive early childhood education and continued to support the access of

children with disabilities to mainstream early childhood education programmes and primary education classes. The 'One at Least' initiative seeks to improve the development and learning of more than 31,000 children, of whom at least 350 will be children with disabilities, using a multi-pronged approach focusing both on families/caregivers and on education personnel.

The standardization of educational assessment and diagnostic tools programme, completed in April, aims to improve educational assessment processes for children with disabilities so that they can access appropriate education programmes. An estimated 465,000 children are expected to benefit each year.

To complement the services available in formal early childhood education and meet the needs of different groups of vulnerable children, UNICEF also supported community and home-based early childhood education programmes, including a ten-week summer school programme reaching 16,429 Turkish and refugee children (8,077 girls and 8,352 boys) in Southeast Turkey.

### **Support for gender equality in education**

In 2018, UNICEF provided MoNE with technical assistance in further strengthening the capacity of its staff to implement an equality and gender-sensitive approach. Teaching staff were provided with gender-specific guidance materials to be used in Grade 9. A total of 575 teachers and school administrators (218 women and 357 men) received gender equality training. A gender equality package was implemented in a first batch of 162 secondary schools in all 81 provinces.

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

The child protection programme component targets various groups of vulnerable children who are at risk of being left behind due to different protection concerns. It contributes to SDG 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

As mentioned in Section A of this report, Turkey has a strong tradition of delivering on State responsibilities through extensive public service networks. The longstanding cooperation between the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services and UNICEF focuses on further strengthening national child protection systems for child care and justice for children with the aim to serve all children living in Turkey, including refugee children.

### **Improving child care systems**

In 2018, UNICEF and MoFLSS collaborated on further improvements in the national child care system. In order to strengthen the case management process, an analysis of its practices was conducted and an operating model for the first assessment centres was developed. These are safety/transit centres for children in need of protection whilst the risk/needs assessment is carried out. In addition, 320 staff were trained on specialized child protection.

Compliance with quality assurance mechanisms in MoFLSS residential facilities for children without parental care was strengthened through the implementation of self-assessment standards in 172 facilities. Further guidelines and training modules were developed for the child development programme, which is expected to increase the quality of care in residential facilities for children deprived of parental care, including unaccompanied and separated children. Its implementation is expected to benefit about 12,500 Turkish and foreign children in care facilities.

MoFLSS and UNICEF also collaborated in the development of the ANKA programme, a psychosocial support and life skills development programme for children in residential care. In 2018, the programme was adapted to respond to the specific needs of unaccompanied and separated children accommodated in 10 of the ministry's child support centres. The training programme and reference materials were developed and 193 frontline workers were subsequently trained.

As part of the efforts to strengthen the MoFLSS's capacity to respond to emergencies, the Psychosocial Support Guidebook and the correspondent training programme were reviewed and 238 staff of the MoFLSS, MoH, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) and the Turkish Red Crescent were trained as trainers.

In order to support the development of capacity for the new national protection outreach programme ASDEP, which is expected to extend the coverage of child protection services for both Turkish and refugee children, an assessment of training needs was conducted for 1,160 ASDEP personnel nationwide and an action plan was agreed to strengthen and standardize its case management system and tools.

In consideration of the specific child protection needs of refugee children and vulnerable Turkish children living in the same communities, the services delivered by the national systems are complemented by community-based services supported by UNICEF. These are delivered in conjunction with municipalities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other partners through a network of safe spaces, community centres, outreach services and mobile teams in 32 provinces. In this context, about 91,000 children (51 per cent girls) benefitted from structured psychosocial support programmes in 74 safe spaces in 24 provinces. Programme monitoring showed that approximately 64 per cent of children reported an improved sense of social and emotional well-being following the programme. Through other child protection services, 65,226 refugee children were identified and assessed (including 1,966 children with disabilities), of whom 47,276 were referred to specialized care services. Other services delivered included parenting education programmes, legal assistance, assessments and referrals for children with disabilities, and emergency cash assistance. Meanwhile, trained child protection staff began to identify and assess vulnerable Turkish and refugee children in youth centres located in 25 provinces as a result of a new partnership with the MoYS.

UNICEF also continued to support two Girls' Safe Spaces in Mardin and Sanliurfa. These spaces provide girls at risk and survivors of gender-based violence with counselling, tailored psychosocial support, legal counselling and referrals. They reached 8,082 Syrian and Turkish girls and women (78 per cent of them girls) with structured and community-supported activities. Moreover, 29,050 individuals (65 per cent of them girls) from participated in community-based interventions for the prevention and mitigation of psychosocial support.

The child protection component of the extension of the conditional cash transfer for education programme to refugees was fully operational in 15 provinces and reached 53,561 refugee children (49 per cent girls), including 4,853 refugee children (43 per cent girls) with medium or high protection risk who were referred to specialized services. This component complements the cash transfer component of the CTE – both implemented in collaboration with the MoFLSS, MoNE and Turkish Red Crescent - and aims at facilitating regular attendance and enrolment of the refugee children most at risk of leaving school or those that are out of school (See also Goal Area 5). Work continued to ensure the sustainability of this service and its

integration into the developing national social services outreach system in partnership with the MoFLSS.

In addition to implementing a comprehensive response for refugee children under temporary protection in Turkey, in 2018 UNICEF worked in partnership with the Directorate General of Migration Management and civil society partners to better meet the needs of children and families on the move through Turkey. Five child-friendly spaces were established in removal centres benefiting 2,659 boys and 2,390 girls. Minimum operating standards were drafted to support the provision of age-appropriate nutritional, educational, recreational and health services. UNICEF-supported outreach teams identified and assisted a total of 6,492 children on the move to access protection services, including legal and psychosocial counselling. IN addition, 56,823 children received hygiene kits.

### **Building capacity to combat child labour**

UNICEF continued to contribute to efforts to combat child labour through a multi-sectoral strategy involving capacity development, support to services for families at risk and evidence generation and advocacy in partnership with employer associations, municipalities, NGOs and other UN agencies. The Child Labour Technical Group established by UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO) developed a toolkit for identifying, preventing and responding to cases of child labour among Turkish and refugee children, which will be disseminated among different entities working with children. Training was provided to 355 MoFLSS labour inspectors, all 81 deputy provincial directors of National Education, 320 coordinator teachers and 1,500 members of the Confederation of Craftsmen and Tradesmen. Two studies on child labour, particularly in agriculture, were finalized to inform advocacy and programming (See also Goal Area 5).

### **Support for eliminating child marriage**

At the policy level, UNICEF provided technical support to the MoFLSS for the development of the National Strategy Document and Action Plan for Combatting Early and Forced Marriages. National capacity for improved and harmonised case management was enhanced through the dissemination of the Guidelines for Service Providers on the Prevention of Child Marriage, developed by UNICEF in 2017, to 1,900 service providers from Government institutions and NGOs.

The UN Joint Programme on the Elimination of Child, Early and Forced Marriage was initiated under the leadership of UNICEF and with the participation of UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This programme takes a multi-sectoral approach to the challenge of eliminating child marriage. So far, over 1,000 service providers, including MoFLSS staff, NGO frontline workers and teachers have been reached with capacity building programmes. Strategies were also designed to promote positive social norms and behavioural change at community level.

### **Improving the system for justice for children**

UNICEF continued to cooperate with the Ministry of Justice and CSOs to enhance child-friendly procedures in the justice system. In order to expand the use of alternatives to detention, the probation framework for children and young people was strengthened through the development of a new risk assessment tool empowering probation officers to better assess the needs of children and serve them through supportive intervention programmes. Extensive training was provided, the availability of specialized services for children in probation was mapped, and

integration of the development assessment system into the national judicial information management system was ensured to guarantee sustainability and facilitate monitoring of the results.

As a result of the collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the Child Protection Centres Support Society, the capacities of over 1,000 judges, public prosecutors, court experts and clerks for implementing child-sensitive proceedings were enhanced. Awareness was raised among judges, public prosecutors, lawyers, and social workers concerning the purpose and use of the child-friendly judicial interview rooms introduced earlier with UNICEF support. In November, the Ministry of Justice issued a circular on the specialized interview processes concerning sexual offences against children, which reaffirms that children's testimony should be taken only once in the entire judicial process, and that child-friendly judicial interview rooms should be used as required.

### **Increasing access to redress mechanisms**

With the Ombudsperson's Institution, UNICEF contributed to developing new mechanisms for managing and investigating complaints, and enhanced systems to improve access for children to the institution. In October, the Ombudsperson Institution formally adopted a new Child Rights Strategy developed with the technical support of UNICEF. The Strategy includes specific goals for improving the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, raising awareness in society, and strengthening the capacity of staff to respond to individual cases.

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

The principle of "Leaving No One Behind", which is critical to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, is fully mainstreamed in the Turkey-UNICEF Country Programme. In 2018 the focus of the Country Programme remained firmly on efforts to identify and include those girls and boys who are left behind or at risk of being left behind due to factors such as displacement, socioeconomic status, disability, and gender, or a combination of these and other factors.

As is clear from the results outlined in the various goal areas, all UNICEF's efforts in support of the rights to survival, health, development and learning, protection from exploitation, violence and abuse are focused on the children most at risk among both Turkish citizens and refugees. Under Goal Area 5, the country programme addresses some of the key root causes, especially those related to cross-sectoral issues, that prevent the most vulnerable groups of children to fully realize their rights. These efforts contribute to the advancement towards SDG 1 (No Poverty), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

In 2018, the focus was on strengthening evidence-based policy-making, reporting and advocacy on child rights and child-related SDGs, promoting child-friendly governance especially at municipal level, facilitating opportunities of positive engagement, social cohesion and meaningful participation for adolescents and youth, and tackling key socio-economic barriers through social protection systems.

### **Evidence-based policy-making, advocacy and awareness on child rights and child-related SDGs**

UNICEF contributed to the preparation of the upcoming 11th National Development Plan

(NDP), advocating together with its government and non-governmental partners for key elements of children's rights to be considered in the mid-term national priorities. The NDP is directly connected with the process of nationalization of the SDGs. Jointly with other UN agencies, UNICEF continuously engaged with the coordinating government entity, the Strategy and Budget Office of the Presidency and contributed to a training programme on the SDGs for Government and with civil society organizations actors.

With regards to SDG monitoring, UNICEF initiated a dialogue with the SDG Indicators Unit at the TurkStat, which was established in 2018. A large proportion of the SDG indicators in Turkey are measured through the Demographic and Health Survey. The 2018 DHS will be the first nationwide survey in the country to generate official data disaggregated for the Turkish and the Syrian refugee population. As mentioned previously, it will also measure a new indicator on ECD, which is part of the global list of SDG indicators. UNICEF Turkey signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Hacettepe Institute of Population Studies, which is conducting the survey, for the operationalization of data collection in refugee households and of the ECD questionnaire module.

Besides the collaboration on national statistics, research conducted with contributions from UNICEF will facilitate further efforts to identify the most vulnerable children and to inform advocacy efforts in their favour. In the field of child labour, research was conducted with an NGO partner on some of the most invisible children and families who are working in seasonal agriculture. The findings are being used for advocacy to improve local policies targeting these families. A situation analysis of children with disabilities is being finalized in collaboration with the NGOs Network for the Rights of Children with Disabilities. Finally, UNICEF supported the NGOs Network on Preventing Violence Against Children in enhancing the monitoring and advocacy capacity of NGO members on violence against children. The Network prepared a series of advocacy notes on topics related to violence against children, in collaboration with local Bar Associations and university-based child protection centres. This Network also initiated an online signature campaign calling for comprehensive solutions concerning cases of sexual exploitation of children, which obtained more than 205,000 signatures and was presented to the public and relevant stakeholders, thus promoting public debate on this issue.

In 2018, UNICEF Turkey continued to act as a voice for children, to raise awareness on child rights and keep them on the agenda of the country's decision-makers. To mark World Children's Day 2018, UNICEF took part in the Go Blue global initiative. Support was enlisted from over 60 celebrities and corporate partners including Turkish Airlines. Iconic landmarks turned blue in major cities, including the bridges on the Bosphorus and Galata Tower in Istanbul, Atakule tower in Ankara and the Clock Tower in Izmir. A Go Blue signature video was released, and an online petition was launched in Turkish. The #DünyaÇocukGünü [World Children's Day] hashtag became the number one trending topic on Twitter in Turkey and entered the world trending topic list, becoming number two worldwide for about an hour on World Children's Day.

Throughout the year, UNICEF Turkey disseminated key messages through its social media presence and a series of media and communication activities. In this context, UNICEF Turkey organized the fourth International Day of the Girl Child Conference in cooperation with Aydin Dogan Foundation and other UN agencies. The office also amplified global social media campaigns including, for example, the Children Uprooted Campaign, the World Breastfeeding Week and 16 Days of Activism to #ENDviolence against girls and women. Finally, it also amplified awareness about the global report "An Everyday Lesson: #ENDviolence in Schools" and the Generation Unlimited partnership unveiled at the UN General Assembly in September.

### **Promoting child-friendly governance at municipal level**

Through the child friendly cities initiative, UNICEF continued to contribute to further enhance the capacity of local administrations to promote policies in favour of the most vulnerable children and adolescents. In 2018, guidelines and training materials were developed and implemented to increase the capacity of municipalities in child participation, child rights programming, prevention of child marriage and child labour, as well as child-focused strategy development and budgeting. UNICEF is collaborating with the Union of Municipalities of Turkey, ensuring availability of tools and training to a wide range of municipalities across the country, using an online platform.

UNICEF is also implementing multi-sectoral workplans with four municipalities whose combined population is over 3.6 million Turkish citizens and about 600,000 refugees, with the total number of children (Turkish and refugees) reaching almost 1.3 million. In Izmit, Turkish and refugee children working on the street were identified and assessed by a mobile team established to support the My House Child Support Centre, which was opened by the municipality in April to provide psychosocial support services and referral pathways. In Kilis, where about half of the population is made up of refugees, the municipality was able to reach out to previously underserved populations and include them in community-based education, child protection, and social cohesion activities. In Kilis and Gaziantep, where the municipalities have identified child marriage as a key priority, relevant service providers and NGOs were trained on positive social norms' changes. These local authorities also implemented the Guidelines for Service Providers on the Prevention of Child Marriage, developed through a participatory process coordinated by the Gaziantep Municipality and UNICEF. In Yüreğir, where seasonal migrant child labour and social inclusion were identified as key priorities, municipal community centres' staff and teachers received training on child rights, child labour and working with vulnerable children.

### **Opportunities for positive engagement and meaningful participation for adolescents and youth**

The country programme uses a multi-sectoral approach to address the issues of adolescents. Besides the interventions described in Goal Areas 2 and 3, another area of focus is increasing opportunities for positive engagement with and between Turkish and refugee adolescents, promoting social cohesion between communities and the meaningful participation of young people in their communities.

In 2018, UNICEF scaled up its cooperation with MoFLSS, MoYS and several other government and non-government institutions to ensure increased adolescent engagement through national systems. The result was a significant number of adolescents and young people, including refugee and Turkish adolescents, participating in social, peer-to-peer, and leadership development activities. The approach, which aims to bring adolescents and young people from refugee and Turkish communities together, also contributes to increased social cohesion by promoting mutual understanding and enabling these young people to act as agents of change in their communities. Peer-to-peer activities, including services offered in MoYS' 'Girl-Friendly' and 'Adolescent-Friendly' Centres, reached 98,576 adolescents and young people (56,078 girls and 42,498 boys).

UNICEF Turkey continued to cooperate with the MoFLSS to support institutional mechanisms for children's participation, including the work of provincial child rights committees and the national Children's Forum. The Children's Forum is held annually on World Children's Day and



includes a visit to Parliament by child leaders. In 2018, the 19th National Children's Forum organized by UNICEF and the MoFLSS focused on child labour. As a result, child representatives from all over Turkey, including Turkish and refugee children, presented a list of recommendations to eliminate child labour to the President and to Parliament. The key recommendation – to establish provincial units for combatting child labour – was subsequently included in the Government's second 100-Day Action Plan announced in December.

### **Tackling key socio-economic barriers through social protection systems**

The extension of the CCTE programme to refugee families has been implemented since June 2017 by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, the Ministry of National Education, the Turkish Red Crescent and UNICEF. This programme aims to alleviate the financial difficulties which constitute one of the main barriers to the participation of refugee children in education. It is composed of a cash transfer component, where families receive bi-monthly payments on a bank card with amounts adjusted according to the child's age and gender, and a child protection component which provides outreach services (including screening, identification and referral where necessary) to provide additional support to families whose children are most at risk. Involving national actors from the education, child and social protection sectors, this programme is an example of fruitful cross-sectoral cooperation which is producing results for children at scale. The CCTE is also closely aligned with the Emergency Social Safety Netprogramme, which is implemented by Turkish Red Crescent and WFP and provides a monthly unconditional grant to families to cover their basic needs. Approximately 83 per cent of CCTE beneficiaries also benefit from the Emergency Social Safety Netprogramme, which demonstrates their complementarity.

In 2018, the extension of CCTE to refugees began its second school year supporting refugee children and the coverage of the programme more than doubled. Since the beginning of the programme, 410,740 children (205,736 girls and 205,004 boys) have benefitted from cash transfers conditional on attendance to formal education. In addition, in late 2018 the programme was expanded to include vulnerable children accessing non-formal education through the accelerated learning programme, implemented by the MoNE with support from UNICEF.

Administrative data shows that 76 per cent of CCTE beneficiary children regularly attended school, and programme monitoring reveals that 60 per cent of beneficiary families attributed their children's school attendance directly to the CCTE.

## **Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints**

2018 was the third year of implementation of the Turkey-UNICEF Country Programme 2016-2020. Towards the end of the year, UNICEF Turkey embarked on a programme review, which entailed a comprehensive reflection on the implementation so far based on available evidence, internal discussions and consultations with partners. The following paragraphs draw on the lessons that have emerged from this process, as well as on experiences in 2018.

The overall aim and logic of the country programme remain relevant. It has continued to form a sound basis for UNICEF's cooperation with a wide variety of partners in effectively addressing a range of child rights issues. However, the dynamic context in the country has required fine-tuning and shifts in some areas.

### **Cross-sectoral programming including adolescents and out-of-school children**

The Turkey-UNICEF Country Programme 2016-2020 emphasizes integration and cross-sectoral linkages. It adopts a cross-sectoral approach within which outcomes are not defined along sectoral lines. Instead, cross-sectoral results groups were established for each programme outcome. The programme also identified promoting inter-sectoral cooperation as a key strategy for achieving results, alongside supporting national capacity, making available the best technical knowledge, and partnering with a wide range of stakeholders.

In practice, UNICEF Turkey has increased its joint work across sectors, and the benefits have been apparent in areas such as support for multi-service centres, engaging with different sectors to prevent child marriage, and integrating a child protection component into the conditional cash transfer for education. Nevertheless, it is felt that cross-sectoral implementation could be strengthened in parts of the country programme by approaching the target groups of children in a more integrated manner or involving a wider range of potential stakeholders.

One lesson learned, therefore, was the need to streamline internal coordination mechanisms further and enable more systematic cross-sectoral work. This would also be in line with the call for cross-sectoral and multi-sectoral programming that responds holistically to children's needs underlined under the programming at scale results for children strategy defined in the UNICEF global Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

This need for a more cross-sectoral and integrated approach is most pressing in certain programmatic areas that have been identified as renewed priorities during the programme review – early childhood development, adolescents, and out-of-school children. Addressing the child rights issues affecting these vulnerable groups of children requires an integrated approach to tackle the multiple bottlenecks and barriers that span different sectors and stakeholders.

Early childhood development is a global priority for UNICEF, and an increasing development priority for the Government. ECD programming has continued during the current cycle with a focus on early childhood education and strengthening the systems for early identification of disabilities and development delays. However, implementation of activities has been managed within the relevant sections, with perhaps insufficient attention to the more multi-sectoral and policy-related bottlenecks, including the need for a more comprehensive national ECD policy and more inter-sectoral coordination. Competing priorities and a limited focus on discrete initiatives can constitute a constraint to an evidence-based, integrated, cross-sectoral approach both in the country and within UNICEF Turkey.

Several issues mainly affecting adolescents are being addressed under the country programme with various degrees of cross-sectoral integration and coordination. These include work in the areas of justice for children, cash transfers, child marriage, and child labour. However, more coordination and integration are required for the many activities within programme sections which are currently focusing on the common target group of most vulnerable adolescents. Otherwise, the discreteness of these programme components may result in a failure to address common bottlenecks and issues, such as family poverty, social norms and questions of mental wellbeing. Narrowly-focused initiatives may also see adolescents as objects rather than subjects and fail to promote their participation, foster their creativity or support them in developing and implementing their own initiatives. A more comprehensive, evidence-based and holistic approach to adolescents would correspond well to the newly-released UNICEF

Programme Guidance for the Second Decade as well as the Generation Unlimited and the priority focus on adolescents reflected in the Strategic Plan 2018-21.

The non-participation of children in education is another issue which mainly faces adolescents. The reasons why children of various backgrounds and genders are out of school are diverse and cannot solely be tackled through programmatic work and partnerships in the education sector. Once again, there may be scope for more holistic and coordinated action as well as linking the issue more rigorously to the wider adolescent agenda.

As a result of this reflection on cross-sectoral ways of working, UNICEF Turkey is renewing its coordination mechanisms and revising the terms of reference of the Results Groups, to be incorporated into the 2019 Annual Management Plan. The office decided to refine existing theories of change for ECD, out-of-school-children and adolescents, to better spell out the integrated strategic approaches beyond what is already foreseen for these groups of children in the sectoral theories of change. This exercise will help improve existing cross-sectoral programming and will feed into the preparation of the new Turkey-UNICEF Country Programme.

### **Humanitarian action, integrated programming, and social cohesion**

The country programme was designed to contribute to reducing the equity gaps affecting the most vulnerable boys and girls living in Turkey. This means realising the rights of a large number of refugee children from Syria and other countries at the same time as addressing the unfinished agenda for those groups of Turkish children who have not benefitted as much as others from the socio-economic progress and improvements in most child-related indicators in the country.

The refugee crisis caused by the conflict in Syria was still escalating when the country programme was developed. Since then the scale of the crisis has continued to increase, making Turkey the country with the largest registered refugee population in the world for the past three years. Nevertheless, given the strong national capacities and leadership in responding to the crisis, the country programme document was written with a close eye on the humanitarian-development nexus and the emerging resilience agenda as well as a focus on working with and through national systems.

This approach, which dovetails with the 3RP, has proven successful and was sustained in 2018. For example, it has enabled UNICEF to support community-based services that are open to refugee children as well as members of host communities, to use inclusion in national systems to quickly scale up support to vulnerable families, as was done with the extension of the CCTE to refugees. It has also allowed UNICEF to pursue an integrated approach to addressing child labour and child marriage, issues which affect both the refugee and Turkish communities. UNICEF Turkey has also scaled up its work in social cohesion, focusing on adolescents and young people as agents of change to promote meaningful interaction and mutual understanding between communities.

The fact remains that addressing the pressing needs of such an unprecedented number of refugee children has required many actors, including UNICEF, to support the large-scale and visible delivery of basic services specifically for these children. As the protracted nature of the Syria crisis continues to strain resources and infrastructure at the local level, and with some evidence of shifting and increasingly negative perceptions of refugees among local communities, both the Government of Turkey and humanitarian actors are increasingly

prioritizing the need to promote tolerance and build social cohesion among different groups and layers of society.

In this respect, UNICEF Turkey became increasingly aware in 2018 of the need for a more clearly articulated conceptual framework to guide its approach to building social cohesion. At the same time, clearer areas of focus and entry points where UNICEF and its partners can have an impact needed to be identified. Accordingly, in 2019 UNICEF will define a clearer strategy and focus for the future work in the area of social cohesion.

### **Sustainability**

UNICEF's comparative advantage in an upper middle-income country such as Turkey generally lies not in its ability to mobilise resources and support the delivery of basic services, since these capacities are already available in-country. Rather, UNICEF contributes to the well-being of children by deploying its expertise through 'upstream' strategies such as evidence-based advocacy, systems strengthening for quality and inclusion, the transfer of innovations and the latest global knowledge, and the promotion of international cooperation and exchanges.

Nevertheless, the numbers of refugee children that national systems and services have had to absorb have strained Turkey's capacities in certain respects and called for additional support as well as increased solidarity from the international community. As part of the UN system, and in line with its Core Commitments for Children, UNICEF has significantly scaled up its presence in Turkey and responded through a series of strategies including direct support for service delivery, both through national systems and non-governmental partners, as well as capacity-building and technical assistance.

As part of the programme review, reflections began on approaches and strategies to ensure that the results of UNICEF Turkey's work in response to the refugee crisis can be sustained even in the event of a decline in international solidarity. Lessons learned from other countries and contexts show that this post-humanitarian transition process can bring risks to children's well-being and UNICEF's reputation if not properly managed. In Turkey, these risks will be lower than in other countries, given the strong leadership and investment of the Government in the crisis since the beginning, and the fact that UNICEF's assistance has already evolved to include and emphasise the strengthening of systems to benefit both refugee and Turkish children.

In response to these issues, UNICEF Turkey will continuously seek to diversify its sources of funding, identify the most cost-effective and long-term partners for programme implementation, consider more multi-sectoral and geographic convergence of existing community-based activities, and sharpen the focus and selectivity of its programming – for example, with respect to training activities. Advocacy will continue to complete the integration of UNICEF-supported activities into national and local government systems and budgets, taking account of beneficiary needs. New modalities will be explored for cooperation with public institutions, particularly municipalities, as well as with the private sector. In addition, UNICEF Turkey will adjust and reinforce its technical capacities, procedures and partnerships in line with the anticipated shift in its roles.

### **Public financing for children**

Following on from the above, one constraint which UNICEF Turkey identified was its limited engagement and capacity in the area of public finance for children. UNICEF programming in this area has become common in other middle-income countries that have greater capacities to

find fiscal space and fund large-scale national programmes for children, as well as to institutionalize such programmes into a well-developed national portfolio of services. In the case of Turkey, however, this area remains relatively unexplored at this stage.

At a time when reviewing programme costs and the feasibility of various public financing options under different scenarios is essential to facilitate the post-humanitarian transition and to ensure the sustainability of the results achieved for children, the need for UNICEF to be meaningfully engaged, together with other actors, in policy discussions that relate to public finance for children has become urgent.

UNICEF Turkey has identified public finance for children as an emerging priority, notwithstanding a likely temporary contraction in fiscal space in 2019 as a result of the current economic situation. In preparation for the next country programme cycle, UNICEF Turkey therefore intends to build its expertise in this field and explore the possibility of engaging on priority issues in the short term. Meanwhile, more importantly, it will seek to build new partnerships and expand the scope of its existing dialogue with relevant national entities in such a way as to contribute to policy discussions from the perspective of public finance for children in the medium and longer term.

### **More systematic documentation**

UNICEF Turkey has made substantial efforts to progressively expand the country programme. The financial throughput has tripled from US\$56 million in 2015 to approximately US\$181 million in 2018. UNICEF has continuously monitored and adapted to changes in the operating environment. This situation of controlled but rapid growth in the last three years has resulted in strong results on implementation and risk management, but with less time available to reflect comprehensively and document how the priorities and strategies have evolved.

At the same time, several external observers have indicated that the country programme has been using programming approaches that could be better documented as innovative solutions and/or good practices. Examples of this include the application of the humanitarian-development nexus and the integration of a cash transfer programme with a child protection programme linked with national services delivery systems.

It has thus become apparent once again that priority needs to be attached to assessing the relevance and achievements of the work undertaken, and documenting the achievements, good practices and lessons learned more systematically, in order to allow for learning at the organizational and country level.

Several upcoming evaluations and documentation exercises will address this priority. These will include the ongoing Evaluation of Community-Based Child Protection Services and Evaluation of the Response to the Syria Refugee Crisis in the Education Sector, as well as the Country Programme Evaluation and the Evaluation of Conditional Cash Transfers in Education, both of which are scheduled for 2019.

### **Looking ahead**

During the programme review, UNICEF Turkey has identified a number of areas in which lessons have been learned or constraints have arisen in 2018. It has also specified some potential solutions in terms of its own procedures and strategic thinking. The review was still ongoing at the end of 2018, with discussions with government partners. During this process, additional issues may be identified and/or responses agreed. Major changes in the structure of

the current country programme are not anticipated, but some changes could be made in the way in which it is being implemented, and some adjustments to outputs or indicators. The report of the programme review and the ongoing discussions with partners will also be considered during preparations for the development of the next country programme, which will commence in 2019.

END/