

Honduras

Update on the context and situation of children

2020 was an extremely challenging year for all children in Honduras, especially the most marginalized. With schools closed for most of the year, safe places for children became more limited, and opportunities for learning, play, and entertainment were greatly reduced. Growing up in Honduras became more linked to child survival and protection from violence, than enhanced education and vocational opportunities for development. Access to education and health services were greatly reduced. Increases in household poverty were felt by many. The future for Honduran children is challenging. The damages from COVID-19 and the storms may take more than a decade to recover from.

The COVID-19 global pandemic and the impact of two tropical storms (Eta & Iota) impacted the situation of children in Honduras immensely. Prior to Eta and Iota, COVID-19 cases were already peaking in Honduras, with over 103,551 cases and 2,853 deaths as of November 19th, 2020, challenging an already weak health system pre-pandemic. As of September, 4,853 cases of COVID-19 had been reported for children and adolescents (53.7% girls, 46.3% boys), representing 6.4% of all cases to that date.

The lives of children have been negatively impacted by the social and economic effects of the pandemic, which has deepened inequality. Interruption of learning, food insecurity, poverty, rising violence against children and women, disruptions in access to clean water, sanitation, health services and vaccinations for young children, are among the impacts of the pandemic on children. Between 900,000 and 2.5 million people could fall into poverty in Honduras.

Over 4.6 million were affected by the tropical storms Eta and Iota, including approximately 1.7 million children according to official figures. At least 93,000 people sought safety in 994 shelters, among them around 35,000 children. Damages include more than 7 thousand homes, 534 schools, 134 bridges and 927 road sections, leaving close to 370,000 people isolated in 79 communities. The United Nations, in coordination with the humanitarian network, led a multisectoral needs assessment to better understand the impact of Eta and Iota. Results show 85 per cent of the total affected households have children. Households headed by women (one in every three) reported greater hardship after Eta and Iota: i) greater perception of experiencing unhygienic conditions; ii) reduced number of meals per day on average and smaller portion size; iii) spent more days without eating; iv) had to abandon their homes after the flood; and v) experienced insecurity in their neighborhoods.

Honduras has been categorized as High Risk according to the INFORM 2021 Risk Management Index. The effects of climate change in the country will continue increasing the probability of threats like tropical storms, cyclones, epidemics, drought, forest fires and pests. Honduras' Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Plan lacks attention to children, despite being especially vulnerable to climate emergencies, indicating the need to strengthen attention to children's rights in the plan and in its implementation.

The pandemic exacerbated maternal and child malnutrition through three pathways: poor access to nutritious diets, poor access to essential nutrition services, and poor dietary and food practices.

Honduras faces important challenges in fulfilling the right to health and nutrition of children, mainly due to a weak supply of services and a health system with low capacity, equipment and infrastructure. Health services are not free of cost and health spending has decreased over time (from 3.2% of GDP in 2009 to 2.4% in 2018).

Enrolment rates vary by educational level. While there is close to universal access for primary education (93.1%), only 35.5% children access pre-primary education, 55.5% access lower secondary and 35.7% access upper secondary. It is estimated that around one million children between the ages of 3 and 17 were out-of-school at the beginning of 2020, which is about 37 per cent of the school-age population.

With school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, educational inequality is exacerbated. A

UNICEF rapid survey revealed that 29 per cent of the children and adolescents surveyed engaged in distance learning, but without teacher support and adequate access to devices and internet. Only 59% of schools are equipped with facilities for handwashing, hindering compliance with biosafety procedures to prevent and control infections. This compromises the capacity of the education system to reopen schools safely.

One of the most critical violations of children's rights in Honduras is exposure to violence. Between 2013 to 2019 a child was murdered every 27 hours on average and at least four sex crimes against girls were perpetrated every day. Violence is one of the main causes of school dropout, as 23.9 per cent of girls and 14 per cent of boys aged 13-17 years miss school due to acts of physical violence. Amongst adolescent girls, 21.2 per cent were absent from school as a result of an act of sexual violence. Data from a UNICEF rapid household survey shows that about half of the interviewed households perceive that internal conflict at home has increased during the quarantine. Official data shows that the restrictive measures implemented to curb COVID-19 spread, have led to increased domestic violence in the country.

The number of migrant children returned to the country increased by 234 per cent between 2017 and 2019. In 2020, a totally atypical year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the registry shows 2,859 children and adolescents returned as of October. 22 per cent of children deported to Honduras suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

The compounded effects of COVID-19, Eta and Iota, added to the existing acute violence in the country leave children at risk of further violence, migration, abuse, and health complications. Key areas of urgent action for UNICEF are prevention and mitigation of violence against children, adaptation to climate change and resilience in response to natural disasters; and ensuring the continuity of learning for all children in safe and hygienic learning environments.

UNICEF's support to the new household survey ENDESA/MICS 2019 constitutes an important contribution to SDG tracking: access to WASH services for children (SDG6), updates on SDG3, and disaggregation by ethnic group for all indicators, contributing to monitoring progress for the most marginalized children.

Major contributions and drivers of results

1. Early Childhood Development

The expected outcome for the Early Childhood Development component is, “By 2021, children aged 0 to 6 years and their families in municipalities selected from six departments access comprehensive services linked to early childhood development with a gender-based and intercultural perspective”. This programme component contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”, and Outcome 2 of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2017-2021 “Excluded populations in priority municipalities have access to comprehensive, quality health services, focusing on the social determinants of health to advance the right to health”.

UNICEF has strengthened the national ECD system (Sistema Nacional de Primera Infancia) through the joint delivery of results by five government institutions. UNICEF contributed to ensuring delivery of quality early childhood services in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, benefiting 196,608 children under 6 years of age. This result was achieved not only through facilitating the articulation between government institutions, but also through UNICEF's direct support to the programme *Criando con Amor* [Parenting with Love], which targets marginalized children and their families in three indigenous municipal associations (mancomunidades) in the departments of Intibucá, Lempira and Copán, benefitting Lenca and Maya populations. Through UNICEF's partnership with the Ministry for Development and Social Inclusion (SEDIS), 22 additional municipal associations were reached with ECD services, including the department of Atlántida, thus also benefiting population of African descent. The programme focus on excluded populations, because of their ethnicity and rural location,

contributed to advancing the UNDAF (outcome 2).

UNICEF prioritized continuous provision of ECD services for marginalized women and children through the COVID-19 pandemic, even during the 9-month long lockdown mandated by the government to curb the virus spread. Thanks to the programme *Criando con Amor*, 36,662 families from six departments, including pregnant women, benefitted from receiving at least two visits from May to November in compliance with biosafety regulations. This action directly benefitted 21,608 children (10,588 boys and 11,020 girls) by building caregivers' competencies on nurturing and sensitive care, including tools for taking care of children's health, nutrition, safety and security, and early learning opportunities through responsive caregiving. Families also received messages about COVID-19 prevention. This programme receives financial support from the private sector, Kimberly Clark.

Responding to the declining rates in immunization in the country, UNICEF directly supported front-line health workers with personal protective equipment (PPE), thereby contributing to immunizing 175,000 children under 5 years of age (89,025 boys and 85,975 girls), from 16 Health Regions. This action was of crucial support for the country's Expanded Programme on Immunizations (EPI), as it allowed to ensure adequate vaccination rates. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, during January and February, the national vaccination coverage reached 84 per cent among children under 12 months for the polio, pentavalent, rotavirus and pneumococcal vaccines. Vaccine coverage for measles, mumps and rubella reached 90 per cent, but fell short of the 95 per cent recommended to maintain control of vaccine-preventable diseases. By June (four months after lockdown began) vaccine coverage had declined sharply, dropping to 78 per cent for almost all vaccines administered to infants under 1 year of age (except rotavirus, at 82 per cent). According to the National Institute of Statistics' (INE) population projections for 2020, UNICEF's contribution benefitted 11 per cent of the country's under-five population. With this support, 8,663 adolescents, 36,927 pregnant women, 146,580 older adults and 19,625 people from other population groups also received necessary vaccination.

2. Inclusive and Quality Education

The expected result for the Inclusive and Quality Education component is "By 2021, the most disadvantaged children and adolescents, mainly those affected by violence, forced displacement and migration, have access to safe, inclusive, flexible and innovative forms of quality education". This programme component contributes to SDG 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", as well as UNDAF Outcome 1 2017-2021 "The most vulnerable children and adolescents in priority municipalities in pre-basic, basic and middle education have access to inclusive and quality education".

Achieving education results in 2020 was challenging, given nation-wide school closures, a measure adopted by the government to contain COVID-19. To ensure continuity of learning it was necessary to reprioritize efforts, privileging technical assistance to SEDUC to design and implement a response plan to COVID-19 that includes differentiated strategies by population groups: online classes in urban and resourced areas and TV and radio-based lessons or printed materials for the most remote and poorest areas. UNICEF played a key role in the rollout of the response plan. To support the online strategy of the action plan, UNICEF provided technical support to SEDUC to strengthen its educational platform "Educatrachos" and to set up a UNICEF innovation, the Learning Passport. This allowed reaching over 62,000 children and adolescent with age-appropriate digital learning content while schools were closed. To promote distance learning, including the use of the digital platform and the availability of TV-lessons, support was provided to SEDUC for design and rollout of a communication strategy reaching 600,000 children and adolescents.

School dropout has been one of the consequences of COVID-related schools' closures and disruption of normal life after Eta and Iota storms hit the country. Taking into account that only 20 per cent of rural population and 12 per cent of low-income population access Internet, and that only 4 per cent of rural population and 1 per cent of people in the lower income quintile have a computer at home (INE, 2019), UNICEF also supported the offline component of the

COVID-19 response plan. UNICEF promoted and supported the implementation of flexible modalities, such as the Tutorial Learning System, face-to-face coaching, and psychosocial support, prioritizing areas of high vulnerability. Face-to-face coaching was provided by teachers in rural areas following safety protocols. This type of support was also provided to students with disabilities. 4,654 marginalized adolescents (2,316 girls and 2,351 boys) were reached with these strategies. UNICEF's also supported climate resilient WASH and MHM interventions in and around schools, reaching close to 530,000 students. 937 teachers received training as part of the COVID response.

As part of the response to COVID-19 and tropical storms Eta and Iota, UNICEF led coordination efforts to ensure that donors, INGOs and academic institutions working on psychosocial support with the SEDUC adopted a common approach; optimizing equitable reach to marginalized populations and enabling a coherent and quality response after the two storms hit the country in late 2020. Having common approaches to the provision of psychosocial support for children and adolescents, as well as common strategies and materials already approved by SEDUC was a key contribution of UNICEF to ensure a quick and robust response from the education sector, reaching 4,883 children and adolescents in shelters as of December 2020. Considering the long duration of the COVID-19 response, leading to school closures and social distancing, and the impact of the tropical storms, the provision of quality psychosocial and mental health support for students, teachers and families directly and through partners was a priority. UNICEF provided technical support on psychosocial support for children, at the national and local levels, through direct coordination with the SEDUC, the National Child Protection System (SIGADENAH), the education donor's group, the WASH and education clusters, children's rights and participation groups, and the municipal governments. UNICEF's support to SEDUC during 2020 has contributed to strengthening its preparedness to ensure continuity of learning for future emergencies, which are likely to occur, given Honduras' propensity to climate disasters.

3. Protecting Children from Violence

The expected result for the Protecting Children from Violence component is "By 2021, the country has a better system to protect against violence in its various forms in the selected municipalities and departments". This programme component contributes to SDG 16, "Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies", as well as UNDAF 2017-2021 Outcome 4 "The Honduran population, and in particular the most vulnerable groups in municipalities with high rates of violence and crime, has improved coexistence, citizen security and access to protection mechanisms with broad citizen participation".

Through UNICEF's advocacy, the Honduran government deemed child protection services essential during the COVID-19 related quarantines, and during the emergency response to Eta and Iota. Child protection was a priority area for UNICEF in 2020, a year marked by a global health pandemic that increased domestic violence against children and women, migrant caravans, and two consecutive tropical storms that sent thousands of families with children to shelters. 340,073 children, adolescents and caregivers were reached through community-based actions for the prevention and reduction of violence against children. These children and adolescents were supported before and during the response to COVID-19, and tropical storms Eta and Iota.

A strategy that resulted fundamental for achieving results in this area was UNICEF's continued partnership with 40 out of 298 municipal governments, as well as community leaders and youth-led organisations of children and adolescents to build up a national child protection system and develop integrated pathways for the prevention and protection of children against violence, reaching 81,569 Honduran children through direct service provision (53,768 as part of emergency response and 27,801 through regular programming), including 2,100 adolescents benefiting from improved access to justice through UNICEF support to INAMI. There was an increase in the percent of UNICEF-supported municipalities that have activated community-based mechanisms to protect children against violence, abuse and negligence; going from 60 per cent in 2019 to 83.8 per cent in 2020. All UNICEF-supported municipalities activated emergency committees to coordinate responses for children and

families in the aftermath of tropical storms Eta and Iota.

Another factor that drove the delivery of results during emergency response was UNICEF's quick activation of the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CO AoR), partnering with the government and 507 community-based and youth-led organizations to ensure continuity of child protection services during the mandated COVID-related quarantines and during emergency response to tropical storms Eta and Iota. The CP AoR collectively assisted 46,534 girls, boys and families displaced in temporary shelters, of which 29,012 were directly supported by UNICEF, through the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance, training shelter managers and volunteers on child protection guidelines and the development of a toolkit for setting up child friendly safe spaces in shelters and communities most affected by the tropical storms Eta and Iota.

UNICEF has strengthened its partnership with DINAF to mobilize child protection officials to monitor the protection conditions in shelters across the north coast. As of December 2020, 123 separated children and 6 victims of sexual abuse had been identified and placed in protective custody. 1,764 children and caregivers were reached in shelters with programmes focused on self-care, violence prevention and GBV elimination.

In response to the surge in domestic violence and emotional distress brought upon by 9 months of social restrictions, large-scale evacuations, displacements to temporary shelters, and the loss of loved ones, UNICEF focused on improving access to MHPSS, both in person and virtually, reaching collectively 13,198 girls, boys, men and women. In response to migrant caravans departing Honduras in January and October 2020, UNICEF partnered with the government, Honduran Red Cross, UNHCR and IOM to set-up temporary quarantine multi-service safe spaces for 4,221 deported and returned children, and specialized reintegration services for 288 returned girls and boys.

4. Social Inclusion

The expected outcome for the Social Inclusion component is “By 2021, the social policy environment is based on a child rights approach, is gender sensitive and emphasizes excluded children”. This programme component contributes to SDG 1 “End poverty in all its forms everywhere” as well as to Outcome 3 in UNDAF 2017-2021 “The most vulnerable Honduran populations in priority municipalities have improved the exercise of their rights with more effective, inclusive and transparent institutions and broad and effective citizen participation”.

UNICEF's investment in capacity building at the municipal level was a driver of results to ensure that municipal governments responded to 2020's humanitarian emergencies prioritizing the needs of children and adolescents. 48 officials from the 37 priority municipalities received training in social protection in emergencies, including the use of a simple tool developed by UNICEF for planning and systematizing their actions on the ground, which are mainly the acquisition of food kits as an in-kind measure for the horizontal expansion of their programmes. This capacity building strategy facilitated delivery of social protection assistance for 27,195 people (6,475 households), that received in-kind social transfers through the action of UNICEF-supported municipal governments as part of the response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and tropical storms Eta and Iota.

UNICEF, in collaboration with the technical team of the Social Affairs Office and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), carried out a simulation of the impact of COVID-19 on extreme child poverty. Among other findings, it was established that extreme poverty was 2.5 times greater in households with children. As a result, the Social Affairs Office added the variable “families with children under 5 years of age” to the vulnerability index used by the government to target populations that benefit from social welfare programmes implemented as part of the emergency response.

With regard to the comprehensive care of children and adolescents, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Integrated Child Protection System in Honduras (SIGADENAH) to finalize the National Policy for Guaranteeing the Rights of Children and Adolescents, which has been put to the SIGADENAH National Council for approval. This policy is the first to address children's rights in a comprehensive manner in Honduras and includes an Action Plan for short-term targets (2023), a medium-term (2026) and long-term vision (2030) in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also includes a projection of the budget necessary for these policies to achieve their goals. With support from UNICEF, SIGADENAH has developed Operational Regulations for Councils and a

Guide for Municipal Councils and a Strategic Plan for the National Council.

In terms of adolescent participation, 1,340 adolescents developed citizen participation competencies and life skills during the extended COVID-related lockdown. UNICEF Honduras adapted 'Plan 12', a UNICEF global programme on transferable skills, to make it relevant to the local context and to strengthen the implementation of the existing package of modules on life skills and participation, thus providing adolescents with in-person and virtual options for developing skills.

5. WASH in emergencies

As a result of UNICEF multi-sector humanitarian assistance, children in the most vulnerable communities improved their access to basic supplies and services to cope with the impacts of droughts, COVID-19, and the effects of storms. 36,000 people affected by droughts benefited from WASH humanitarian assistance in 16 municipalities in the south area of Honduras. Moreover, 270,000 people affected by COVID-19 and 43,000 people affected by ETA/IOTA in 42 municipalities received humanitarian support.

As part of the COVID-19 response UNICEF coordinated the WASH National Board in Emergencies, which was activated in March 2020, reaching 49,772 people with critical WASH supplies and services and leading to 317 schools partly implementing safe school protocols, in preparation for schools re-opening.

4,952 people in shelters were provided with WASH services and supplies (the WASH cluster covered 58,263 people with hygiene kits)

UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

The major change for children was the radical shift to a humanitarian crisis nationwide, started by Covid-19 and exacerbated by the two major storms.

Contribution to Honduras' United Nations Strategic Cooperation Framework

The next UNSDCF for Honduras made significant advancements during the second half of the year. In light of the radical change in the programmatic landscape for the UN in Honduras, we find greater humanitarian challenges than before and the new strategy aims to tackle the major humanitarian bottlenecks that now impede development in many parts of the country. An enhanced focus on climate change mitigation and environmental impacts management will provide a stronger platform for both WASH, along with Education – both clusters led by UNICEF. In addition, the epidemic violence will be addressed by a platform focused on safe spaces and safe places, which is in line with and supportive of the UNICEF new strategic programme notes and plans for the next cycle.

Government Partners (bilateral aid)

Key Government partners include Canada in both Education and Child Protection; Korea in Education and the United States, Spain, Japan, and the European Union for humanitarian responses to the devastating storms. UNICEF led clusters of WASH and the sub cluster of Child Protection. When the storms hit and created massive damage, the WASH work of UNICEF and partnerships became recognized as life saving and the Government Partners investments increased substantially. USD \$4.3 million raised exclusively for emergency response through ECHO, CERF, the United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), and the government of Japan. The partners' humanitarian experiences have been important to enable us to sharpen the focus of interventions and engage more efficient approaches and partners to enhance the responses. Government partners demonstrated significant flexibility in our joint programming throughout the year, in order to take into consideration Covid-related issues and accelerate investments in the hardest hit communities.

Private Sector Partnerships

Partnerships in 2020 with the private sector have led to increased visibility and potential fundraising opportunities for UNICEF. We partnered with 13 companies in the maquila sector, sugar and coffee producing sectors, television networks (e.g. MTV), and mobile phone companies to position children's rights at the forefront of the national debate in Honduras. We also partnered with Kimberly Clark to deliver results on ECD in marginalized communities.

The most important mobile phone company in the country (TIGO Millicom) worked with UNICEF on an advocacy strategy on the correct use of new information technologies through the alliance "Juntos de Corazón" #ConectateSeguro with experts on Child Protection, Learning, and girls' empowerment in the Digital Age. The identification of new allies such as TIGO Millicom, has allowed UNICEF to innovate and reach non-traditional audiences, resulting in expanded coverage through digital and face-to-face platforms.

Honduran private sector philanthropies have also demonstrated the power of partnerships, especially through FUNDHARSE, the Honduran Foundation of Business Social Responsibility. Our alliance with their member companies expanded in light of the humanitarian crises and have focused on increased life saving responses at municipal level, through municipal governments.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Early Childhood Development

The evaluation of the programme Parenting with Love finalized in December pointed at key

lessons. The scaling of the programme with full government operation and financing is still a challenge after five years of UNICEF's support. SEDIS does not have adequate quality assurance mechanisms for extending the territorial coverage of this programme with quality; nor public budgets have been allocated that allow reaching more families with the frequency that ECD prevention and care interventions require. Although the programme has been operational since 2015, coordination between SEDIS and DINAF has not yet been achieved, compromising the sustainability and future impact of the programme. The evaluation also identified important aspects that have led to the success of the programme in the communities where it has been implemented. The production of simple materials, such as the 'Young Hondurans Growing with Love' guide, is viewed positively by the beneficiaries of the programme. The inclusive and visual language of this material, used as part of the counselling service, made it an effective element for promoting changes in parenting practices. The community component of the programme was positively evaluated, specifically the involvement of volunteers, who changed their own beliefs and behaviors in relation to protection issues such as physical punishment through their participation in the programme.

Quality and Inclusive Education

Public education in Honduras is managed in a centralized manner, making it difficult to deploy education in emergencies strategies in an effective manner. 2020, a year marked by emergencies and nation-wide school closures, required finding new ways to achieve education results at local level. UNICEF's coordination of education response at local level was essential to ensure timely provision of psychosocial support and continuity of learning in the aftermath of the Eta/Iota emergency.

UNICEF is now leading the education cluster, providing support to a Ministry of Education (SEDUC) that typically works through bilateral agreements, rather than playing a convening role to galvanize action from relevant education stakeholders. A lesson learned is that timely advocacy for SEDUC to activate the education cluster and other multi-lateral mechanisms such as donors' working groups has positive effects on efficient and timely emergency response, avoiding duplication of efforts and expenses. UNICEF will continue supporting and convening coordination mechanisms and multi-stakeholder working groups in 2021.

In terms of innovations, a lesson learned is that given the insufficient internet coverage and the widespread poverty exacerbated by COVID-19 and the impact of the tropical storms, the free expansion of the digital learning platform must include offline tools (e.g. Learning Passport offline), and should be accompanied by in-person tutoring and distribution of printed materials. These lessons will inform the education work plan for 2021.

Protecting Children from Violence

A key lesson learned in the context of emergency response is that in order to quickly reach the most vulnerable population with child protective services, it is more effective to partner with organizations as close to the target population as possible. UNICEF was able to quickly adapt preexisting workplans with local governments, community-based organizations and the Honduran Red Cross to provide emergency protective services, temporary shelter and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS), reaching hundreds of families in some of the most vulnerable communities.

Social Inclusion

UNICEF showed its capacity to innovate and adapt to change during the humanitarian crisis caused by COVID-19 and tropical storms Eta and Iota. Strong relationships with national counterparts and existing workplans allowed emergency funds to be channelled by adapting workplans. The work being done with the municipal level has helped greatly in a context where immediate action was required. This level of government has shown great capacity to adapt to the circumstances, thanks to UNICEF-supported management capacities.

An important lesson learned is that the main partners of the Honduras government in the area of social inclusion are the International Financial Institutions (e.g. IDB, World Bank, IMF), and the UN agency

with capacity and experience in designing cash transfer schemes is WFP. These organizations are well positioned to achieve impact for children in social inclusion, signalling the need for UNICEF to forge strategic partnerships with them in 2021, in preparation for the new CPD 2022-2026 which is in construction.

Emergency Response

After the complex multilayered emergencies of 2020 UNICEF emerged as a leader in Honduras, able to effectively channel humanitarian funds for children, convene relevant stakeholders including government, coordinate cluster action and monitor the emergency response in the field. UNICEF needs to continue positioning itself as a leader in emergency response, given Honduras high risk for climate-related emergencies, taking into account that children are one of the most vulnerable groups to health and climatic shocks.

One lesson learned was the urgent need of strengthening sector contingency plans to address multi-hazards scenarios, mapping existing resources, key stakeholders and their capacities. Given the current COVID-19 crisis, further aggravated by the adverse effects of tropical storms ETA and IOTA.

Communications

The ability of the communications area to adapt to new circumstances such as COVID-19, using community structures, the private sector, social networks, the media and volunteering to respond to the demands of children and adolescents during the pandemic was essential to effectively contribute to delivering life-saving information during emergencies, and was also important for fundraising. One lesson learned is that strategic advocacy campaigns can make a difference for groups of children that face great exclusion and stigma. In 2020, UNICEF raised awareness on the issue of children living with HIV. The country office forged an alliance with Fundación to rollout a communication and advocacy strategy focused on the reduction of stigma and discrimination, access to health care and access to education, treatments for HIV, human rights, prevention against sexual crimes, and sexual and reproductive rights. 1,200 HIV positive children and adolescents in the context of COVID-19 were direct beneficiaries.

Based on lessons learned, UNICEF Honduras will focus efforts in 2021 in scaling up emergency response with a triple nexus approach, creating linkages between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actions, in close collaboration with the UN system and our partners in the field.