Update on the context and situation of children

Bulgaria is an upper-middle-income country and a member state of the European Union (EU) since 2007. Its population was 6,951,482 people in 2019, of which 1,189,680 or 17.1 percent were children. The demographic trends have been improving over the last five years, but Bulgaria has a negative population growth rate of minus 0.74 (UNDESA data from 2020) due to a combination of low birth rates and high crude death rates due to ageing population and lower life expectancy and net emigration.

Data from the latest census (2011) indicates that the main ethnic groups are: Bulgarians 84.8 percent, Turks 8.8 percent and Roma 4.9 percent. Bulgaria’s Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2020 was 0.816, positioning it at 56 out of 189 countries and territories. The gender development index is 0.995 (2020), placing Bulgaria among countries with high equality in HDI achievements between women and men. However, Bulgaria ranks 19th out of 28 European Union Member States on the Gender Equality Index with 59.6 out of 100 points (compared to 67.9 EU average).

In Bulgaria, the global COVID-19 pandemic has strained the health system and resulted in 201,220 people infected and 7,576 deaths in 2020 among them 4 children, furthermore it has affected the social and economic development and has had significant impact on children and families. Based on UNICEF data and surveys, the most vulnerable children (children living in poverty, children in institutions, children with disabilities) have been among the most affected by the pandemic. The existing vulnerabilities have been exacerbated and inequalities became more visible, especially in access to remote learning. The emergency also highlighted the existing weaknesses in coordination and application of integrated approaches to children’s wellbeing. However, the government response to the crisis was well coordinated and institutions adapted their working methods and their activities to the new challenges implementing various measures to protect children and young people. Distance learning was organized relatively smoothly and families in need received additional support but the number of children at risk of dropping out of school increased. Apart from increasing poverty and inadequate hygiene materials, social isolation was a key factor affecting children and families and leading to increased risks of domestic violence and mental health issues.

Throughout the year the Government introduced a package of socio-economic measures to mitigate the negative effects of COVID-19 on business and households and 2.4% of GDP is attributed to anti-COVID measures. To support families with children the Government introduced new cash transfers: one-off cash transfer of BGN 375 (EUR 192) to parents of children under 14 who are on unpaid leave, one-off cash transfer of BGN 250 for the families of eight-graders, a monthly allowance of BGN 610 for families with children under 14 who study online from home. The Government decided to drop the income criterion for monthly allowance for raising a child and to extend it to all families with children as a universal child benefit (UCB) for a period of 12 months, starting in January 2021. The lowest-income parents will continue to receive monthly child benefits through the social assistance system, while all parents will be eligible for tax concessions.
There is still high uncertainty about the projected impact on the economy in 2020, with estimates of decline in GDP growth varying from -3% (Government) to -7.1% (EC). According to preliminary data from the Ministry of Finance, the consolidated state budget posted a full-year deficit, equivalent to 3% of GDP, well below the Government target of a deficit of 4.1%. In 2020, the Government increased the budget allocations for social protection (11.7% of GDP), healthcare (4.5% of GDP), and education (3.8% of GDP). The unemployment rate remained low at 4.8% in October 2020 with higher youth unemployment rate (15–24 years) at 13.2% (October 2020) and the young, the low-skilled, the Roma and the rural population continued to face difficulties in entering employment. In December 2020 the government started rolling out the COVID-19 Vaccine procured through the EU mechanism but still needs to deal with increasing vaccine hesitancy.

According to the EU SILC study “Social Inclusion and Living Conditions survey”, the share of the children-at-risk-of-poverty and social exclusion was 33.9% or 411,100 in 2019 compared to 32.5% among the general population, and the level of poverty is expected to increase as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. The engagement of UNICEF in the preparation of the National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2030 and the Operational Programmes to be funded through ESF+ 2021-2027 contributed to placing children at the center of national recovery and development efforts and to leveraging national and EU resources for combatting child poverty and social exclusion.

In addition, Bulgaria was selected by the EC as a pilot country for Phase III of the Preparatory Action for the Child Guarantee, which will be tested with support from UNICEF. This will provide an additional instrument for addressing child poverty and social exclusion and for ensuring access to quality services for all children.

The health and economic crisis, generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, was aggravated by social and political unrest and street protests against the Government and the ruling coalition, which continued throughout the second half of 2020. The online attacks on human rights and child rights, fake news and manipulations also continued and created tensions around the implementation of policies and measures targeted at vulnerable groups, especially the Roma minority. In 2021, with the up-coming two elections, Parliamentary in the spring and Presidential in the autumn, the political context remains uncertain. According to the latest polls, the two largest political parties have less than 50% support combined, and the upcoming election could result in a parliament with at least six or more parties.

The stress on the economy and its impact on individuals and businesses reduced charitable giving in the country and hence affected the private sector fundraising efforts to benefit children. However, the very active digital media allowed for increased communication and advocacy and enabled sharing of appropriate information.
Major contributions and drivers of results

Policy development

In Education, the COVID-19 crisis triggered changes in the educational legislation to introduce and regulate online education and stipulate additional support for children living with disabilities. This enabled Unicef to support knowledge and tools for use in remote learning with focus on access for vulnerable children.

On Migrants and refugees, advocacy and technical support of UNICEF and the partner, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee contributed to the endorsement by national parliament of the amendments on the Law on Asylum and Refugees, proposed by the State Agency for Refugees (SAR). This led to change in the arrangements for representation of UASC to be entrusted to specially selected list of legal aid lawyers from the Public Register of the National Legal Aid Bureau (NLAB). Children will be guaranteed qualified representation of a provider with solid knowledge of the law and familiar with the applicable standards and procedures for choosing the best approach to ensure the child’s access to justice.

UNICEF's recommendations related to Access to Justice and juvenile justice reform were included in the UPR recommendations to Bulgaria and are among those accepted for implementation.

On Gender equality, UNICEF contributed to the draft National Strategy for Promoting Equality between Women and Men for the period 2021-2030, especially in the areas of strengthening the capacity and competencies of the social workforce.

A major contribution to various policies was the Mapping of the workforce in the social and allied sectors finalized with UNICEF leadership and the results and recommendations validated by national stakeholders and will contribute to the implementation of the new Social Services Act, enforced in July 2020. Additionally, UNICEF contributed to the development of the Implementing Regulations to the Social Services Act adopted by the Council of Ministers in November 2020 and the drafting of the Ordinance for planning of social services. These instruments will improve the performance of the social sector and contribute to efficiencies and improved results for children.

Regarding violence against women and children, although Bulgaria failed to ratify the Istanbul
Convention in 2019, the National programme for prevention and protection of domestic violence for 2020 was adopted. Among many legislative and regulatory changes proposed, the programme included the modeling of a whole-school programme for violence prevention led by the Ministry of Education and Science, supported by UNICEF and this will allow for allocation of resources and monitoring.

On social policy, Bulgaria will contribute to testing approaches to reduce child poverty through the pilot project on the EU Child Guarantee. UNICEF in cooperation with line ministries selected 10 municipalities where the project will support the development of innovative approaches and services to ensure inclusion and access to services of children with disabilities and development difficulties and children in precarious family situations (including children living in poor and extremely poor households and Roma children), starting from birth through transition to school.

**Services Modelling**

In 2020, the CO continued to support modeling of services in order to demonstrate approaches to ensure access to services to the most vulnerable population and to generate evidence for legislative and policy changes. The direct result of several models include:

- **5,074 parents of children under 3 years** (4,249 mothers and 815 fathers) benefited from individualized support, guidance and information on nurturing care provided through the home- visiting services. These services delivered evidence-based messages on COVID-19 to families with young children and provided essential guidance and information on health and caregiving when the national preventive child health services were suspended due to the pandemic.

- Parenting competencies of **8,720 parents of children under 5 years** were strengthened through community-based parenting support programs, digital platforms (dedicated parenting website, digital tools), as well as through engagement with pre-school teachers.

- Through the Family Consultative Centres (FCCs) **2,046 families and 3,055 children from vulnerable and isolated communities** (1,497 boys and 1,558 girls) benefited from outreach and preventive services and information related to prevention and response to COVID-19. In addition, the interventions of FCCs and UNICEF advocacy contributed to an updated national methodology for provision of state-delegated community support services by the Agency for Social Assistance(1).

- Through a partnership with Center Amalipe, over **400 children from vulnerable communities** (54% girls and 46% boys) were assisted in distance and online learning, by education mediators and supported with vulnerability funds. **2,290 vulnerable children** received education materials before the start of the school year and 450 kindergarten teachers and over 1,000 parents received ECE materials for learning at home.
• 538 children and 413 parents benefited from integrated services on prevention and response to VAC (crisis interventions, therapeutic and legal support, medical and forensic expertise) from Child Advocacy Centers. These services were operational during the lockdown both online and face-to-face and provided 1428 psychosocial consultations to 687 children and 741 parents.

• The prevention and response services (incl. COVID-19 related) conducted case management, social evaluations and implemented plans actions reaching 1,337 persons. UNICEF reached 30 vulnerable mothers of 28 children aged up to 3 years via mother and baby unit and crisis center’ support as part efforts to improve access of GBV survivors to social services providing essential accommodation and psychological support, support for improvement of parenting skills, employment consultations, Bulgarian language study.

• UNICEF reached a total of 315 individuals with access to vaccinations, individual assessment and referral to state-led health care, raising also the health literacy among the refugee/migrant population.

• 480 unaccompanied children benefitted from tailored information sessions on regular and safe movement opportunities and 299 unaccompanied children received specialized legal aid and 91 unaccompanied children received support for family reunification

Monitoring and learning

The office invested resources in gathering evidence on the impact of the global pandemic on children, families and the systems(2). For example, assessment of impact of COVID-19 on education showed how the closure of all kindergartens and schools in the country negatively affected over 700,000 pre-school and school aged children and this, among other findings from the assessment, informed the development of the National framework for safe re-opening the schools.

Additionally, the Situation analysis of children and women in the country was updated and a Public finance for children SITAN and analysis of impact of business on child rights carried out. The Business Sitan provided in-depth research on the overall performance and potential of the economy, business direct intersection with children’s rights (impact of business operations, products, services for children) and/or the potential to amplify their positive results on children through core assets.

A national study on attitudes and social norms toward children with disabilities and developmental difficulties under 7 years of age was completed and the findings will be used in 2021 for development and implementation of targeted interventions to address attitudinal barriers to inclusion.

The study on Roma Early Years Inclusion (RECI+ studies), supported by the Open Society Foundation, the Roma Education Fund and UNICEF was completed and the findings disseminated among key national and international stakeholders and informed the draft national strategy for inclusion and participation of Roma for the period 2021-2030.
An independent external evaluation of the Child advocacy Centres model and the services provided by the three pilot services was completed and provided a set of recommendations for improving quality of the services and informed sustainable scale-up approaches.

The “Evaluation of the Family for Every Child Project in the Region of Shumen, Bulgaria, 2017: Helping to de-institutionalize children in Bulgaria:”, was included in the Best of UNICEF Research and Evaluation 2020 and has helped to position UNICEF and to contribute to policy development.

Communication for Social Behavior Change

Evidence generation contributed to the first Bulgaria national research on Negative social norms towards children with disabilities and to the national research on Prevalence of violence and systems capacity. National surveys for young people and COVID-19 (focus on beliefs, behaviors, online representation of marginalized youth) were carried out and results will be inform the adolescents and youth component of the programme in 2021.

Digital innovations were prioritized as a key tool for reach, engagement and agency of change among various communities. The U-Report in Bulgaria, with focus on adolescent participation and youth empowerment, reached nearly 2 million young people though social media) and a parenting application (prototyped by ECARO) was prepared for the roll out.

As part of the CO’s emerging focus on Business for results (B4R), a partnerships with corporate businesses, NGOs, media and academia was developed to organize the first youth-led virtual hackathon on digital solutions for media literacy. (https://unicef.sharepoint.com/sites/icon-pfp/good-practice/Pages/bulgaria-hackaton-2020.aspx). Partnerships with media were evaluated in the Ethical reporting impact assessment providing concrete guidance for future work.
**Business for Results**

An Advisory Council on Business and Child Rights (ACBCR) was created and gathered senior private sector representatives who identified four main areas of joint activities: **exchange and network; provide data and expertise, build capacity and co-create.**

**The CSR Mapping** served as a baseline of the state of maturity of corporate responsibility and proved that majority of CSR practices were sustainable and children and young people are a key social target group for businesses.

The Office partnered with the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski and organized 3 modules of the national Academy on Business and children and an online Summer School "Business as a partner for child rights".

A “**Menu of options**” for Unicef work with business sector was developed, in order to facilitate dialogue with business and present some of UNICEF's current interventions. The first joint project was the **BACK2SCHOOL (B2S) with Business Campaign**, aimed to support parents and their children meet the challenges of a school year 2020/2021 in a COVID-19 environment by providing valuable and relevant information/advice. The B2S campaign was for companies that realize the importance of work-life balance, and value the importance of employees to care for children. **It reached 23,720 employees, including more than 14,500 parents, from 18 companies** in eight industries, including Energy and Utilities, Information and Communication Technologies, Light Industry/Manufacturing, Mining, Trade, Health and Public Services, Advertising, Marketing and Outsourcing.

**UNICEF Bulgaria staff successfully participated in the pilot online training on “Business for results”** organized by the UNICEF HQ/RO and improved skills on working with business and are more prepared to engage and influence.

**Partnerships for Child Rights**

The **2020 Communication** efforts focused on risk communication responding to the global pandemic and also contributed strongly to two integrated campaigns with the common theme of children living with disabilities.
The risk communication related to COVID-19 was an essential part of the programmatic response of the CO- COVID-19 related content from UNICEF and gathered an unprecedented total of 55,577,870 impressions through UNICEF channels and radio, TV, online and print media.

The Spring integrated campaign ‘Education for every child’ was dedicated to children with disabilities offering an online solution to prevent their exclusion from education during and beyond COVID-19 pandemic. UNICEF together with the MoES and the Regional Inclusive Education Support Center Sofia are developing the first digital educational platform in Bulgaria that will make the learning process more accessible to children with disabilities.

The Bulgarian national television (BNT) was the official media partner and more than 10 media outlets supported the campaign and reached 3,100,402 people through UNICEF channels and traditional media (TV, radio, online and print) while advocacy messages reached 538,500+ people through the channels of corporate partners.

The Autumn integrated campaign supported non-verbal children ‘A voice for every child’, offering solutions through assistive technologies to support education. An extensive media coverage was negotiated and 4,572,523 people reached through TV, radio, print and online media and UNICEF channels.

UNICEF Bulgaria’s presence in traditional media scored 34.2% positive, 65.1% neutral tone of the articles or other materials and the negative tone was 0.7% which is below the 1% KPI.

Despite all the challenges, the local fundraising achieved an overall annual target at 74% and raised a total of BGN 1,581,728 (USD 992,301). This represents a decrease of 20% compared to 2019. Individual donations remained the major source of income forming 78% of the total funds collected locally.

The income from corporate partnerships of BGN 335,782 (US$ 210,654) had the biggest decline of 51% compared to 2019 meeting 48% of the annual target for 2020. However, UNICEF managed to attract one new high- value corporate partner FANTASTICO contributing over BGN 170,000 (USD 107,000) from customer fundraising and. BGN 98,129 (USD 50,219) were raised from SMEs. For the COVID-19 emergency response in-kind contributions of educational and hygiene kits were mobilized from 6 companies totaling BGN 83,644.
UNICEF engaged more than 100 participants in its first virtual Annual Corporate Summit GIVE2GROW which targeted business leaders. The overall objective of this event was to generate warm leads and opportunities for prospecting, to cultivate relationships with existing partners and to mobilize private fundraising and partnerships in support of the UNICEF Bulgaria Country Programme. Through this event, over BGN17,000 (USD10,660) was raised and a set of lessons learnt to guide future engagements defined.

The income from private individual donors was BGN 1,245,946 (USD637,639) and reached 86% of the 2020 annual target remaining consistent over the years. The monthly pledge donations constituted 91% or BGN 1,136,942 (USD581,854) and one-off gifts of BGN 107,299 (USD54,912) showed a considerable increase (82%) in comparison to 2019 due to investments in digital fundraising and integrated campaigns.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the level of donor attrition increased to 22% but the total number of active pledge donors as of December 2020 is still over 22,500.

The face-to-face (F2F) fundraising performance was high despite the crisis through its enhanced team and expansion to 4 large cities (Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv and Rouse). Through F2F 4,268 new donors were recruited among them 3,025 pledge SMS donors.

Management Results

A Mid-Year review was conducted which contributed to budget and staff structure alignment to the priorities of the remaining two years of the CPD implementation. The overall budget expenditure amounted to USD3,080,802 from RR; OR, BMA and ORE. One emergency temporary post was filled to support Migrant and refugee coordination. Since 13 March 2020, due to the global pandemic, the office activated shifted to remote working and only 10% of staff work from the office. To support emergency efforts, the CO allocated 250,000 USD for hygiene/wash supplies for 10,058 children and families, 55 social services and PPEs and test kits for the health system.

References:
(2) Representative survey on needs and vulnerabilities among families and the impact of COVID-19

- Assessment of COVID-19 impact on pre-school and school education
- High-Frequency Monitoring Survey on the socio-impact of COVID-19 on households (with WB)
- An overview of municipal responses to COVID-19 with a focus on social and economic measures
- Legal analysis on the COVID-19 impact on child rights
- Global assessment of the COVID-19 impact on early childhood interventions services
- A nationally representative research on preferred information channels, communication platforms, influencers and online behaviors of adolescents and youth in the digital space
- Rapid assessment on Knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices among adolescents regarding COVID-19.
- Behavioral Insights national research related to COVID-19 (with WHO)

**UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships**

The UN presence in Bulgaria is small with six UN resident agencies- IOM, IMF, WB, UNICEF, UNHCR and WHO and with EBRD constitute the UN-Heads-of-Agency (UN-HoA) group under the coordination of UNICEF as Designated Official. The major function of UN-HoA group is coordination of UN security and safety and Security of UN personnel supported by the UNDSS Regional Security Advisor residing in North Macedonia. The global emergency response strengthened cooperation of UN agencies ensuring regular coordination meetings, activation of the UN contingency plan, production of 15 COVID-19 situation updates, development of a phased prevention plan, safe return to work plan for UN staff and a MEDVAC procedure.

UNICEF partnership with WHO was strengthened to support the MoH in implementing a comprehensive risk communication strategy through various information channels and utilizing scientific evidence and facts to combat fake news and to support the decision of the MoES for safe reopening of schools. With UNHCR and IOM, UNICEF participated more actively in prevention and response to COVID-19 for migrants and refugees and supported the government’s efforts to received and settle UASC from Greece.

The office strengthened its partnerships with CSOs establishing (16 partnerships worth $1,169,682USD) to support programme implementation and ensured appropriate application of HACT procedures.
With WHO and other partners UNICEF strengthened the response to Violence Against Women and contributed to dialogues in drafting related strategies. In partnership with WHO and Animus developed a pocket guide for domestic violence and a video clip and with WHO contributing EUR 10,000.

UNICEF and partners strengthened national and local response, advocated and leveraged approximately BGN 1.5 million (USD 900,000) to support various responses to GBV, VAC and childcare reform. In addition, the CO contributed to the ZONTA campaign during the 16-Days of Activism against GBV, including a social media campaign, webinars and orange lighting of key Sofia buildings (the National Palace of Culture, the Musical Theatre and the National Library).

Through advocacy and technical support, UNICEF leveraged BGN 1,212,596 (USD 748,655) under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 to support the implementation of “Improvement of the effectiveness of police work in the area of domestic violence and GBV” implemented by Directorate General National Police.

UNICEF contributed to planning of funding programmes supporting CSOs working with vulnerable children and families to address COVID-19 challenges including programme “Iris” funded by Tanya’s dream-fund of BGN 620,000, Reach-for-change Special edition which supports 5 NGOs with a BGN 25,000 grant each and Tulip foundation programme “The power of the family and the community”.

During the COVID-19 lock-down, UNICEF successfully advocated with Agency for Social Assistance (ASA) the fund manager for “EU operational programme for food and provision of basic material assistance” to include vulnerable families as recipients of food packages and then supported municipalities and local partners in identifying 13,000 additional beneficiaries among them vulnerable families.

UNICEF supported the Ombudsman Office in ensuring alternative submissions for CEDAW and UPR and also initiated a survey and discussion on the impact of COVID-19 on children among the 25ENOC members resulting in a comprehensive report and recommendations/actions for follow-up.

**Lessons Learned and Innovations**

While acknowledging the significant challenges of the COVID-19 crisis globally and in Bulgaria the
country office (CO) outlines several lessons learnt in the process of achieving the results in 2020:

**COVID-19 emergency:**

The COVID-19 crisis being a health emergency resulted in increased morbidity and mortality and stressed the health system and other institutions in Bulgaria. In addition, the response measures impacted various sectors of Bulgaria’s economy contributing to increased unemployment and exacerbating poverty. The crisis contributed to further marginalization of the most excluded and vulnerable children. Child rights monitoring was particularly challenged as most institutions and communities were inaccessible to civil society and other monitoring agencies. To address the challenges, UNICEF mobilized resources and encouraged partners to apply innovative ways of gathering data and for information sharing including using remote channels and applying decentralized approaches.

Using different online platforms, the CO carried out several rapid assessments including collecting behavioral insights data which was a game-changer in informing a rapid COVID-19 awareness and prevention response, policy development and service design and delivery.

To closely monitor the situation of all children, institutions were supported to undertake more regular on-line surveys and inform on progress and bottlenecks. This unprecedented situation provided the engine to drive coordination and efficiency of information sharing resulting in a gradual adjustment to regular virtual meetings with service providers and authorities. Remote access, including complaints and case management, were strengthened and ensured through digital means like phone, email and online platforms. New telephone lines and chat-bots were introduced providing more accessible channels of information sharing, and were more attractive to adolescents and young people.

Access to closed facilities remained challenging especially for children’s institutions and receptions centers for migrants and refugees. Partners reported that more refugees became unemployed and at higher risk of becoming homeless and/or victims of violence, including GBV and sexual violence. Mainstream education and access to state health services is still a problem for asylum-seeking children. UNICEF and partners will need to advocate for and find more reliable ways to monitor the situation of these often "invisible" children.

Measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 including Lockdowns constrained the delivery of face-to-face parenting support activities. This highlights the need to define diverse approaches for ensuring continuous support for parenting and early learning of children, particularly those from the most vulnerable groups.
The COVID-19 crisis fostered/energized the long-awaited digitalization, especially in education by enhancing technology-based innovations/solutions such as virtual classrooms, collaboration tools and development of online resources, including for children with disabilities through UNICEF support.

The lock-down and closing of kindergartens and schools stimulated effective collaboration between teachers and parents, particularly of young children and children from vulnerable groups with limited access to online education. UNICEF took every opportunity to engage the MoES and provided current evidence, global tools and advocated for reopening of schools and will continue to advocate for innovations to be maintained and improved beyond the COVID-19 response.

**Services Modelling:**

*UNICEF Bulgaria has developed and evaluated various service models to demonstrate implementation of policies defined by Government and some activities have been mainstreamed and scaled using the state budget, however, it is necessary to develop joint exit strategy with relevant partners for the remaining services. This should lead to gradual hand-over of model-services to Government while making efficient and relevant impact on the legislative framework, ensuring sustainability and national scale-up with guaranteed local financial resources.*

The CO observes that in a dynamic political context with constantly changing priorities, modelling should be integrated into existing structures and provisions, strengthening and expanding their capacities to deliver support to children not establishing new services requiring additional financing. In that regard, as part of the EU Child Guarantee Phase III, UNICEF implements a project aimed at improving the living conditions and increasing access and use of integrated services for children with disabilities and children living in precarious family situations through building on existing services and expanding their capacities.

In future no new models should be encouraged, and the office should consolidate results from the “field” and accelerate advocacy at national level with strong advocacy on investing in effectively public finance for children.

In addition, partnerships with youth as agents of change and with Business as policy influencers is crucial for positioning and reimagining the relevance of UNICEF within an UMIC in the EU context.
Partnerships for results

Engagement with the business sector requires a change in narrative from mainly fundraising to Shared-Value-Partnerships and co-creation with stronger positioning of UNICEF as an expert partner. In that regard, the office is exploring approaches of engaging with and influencing the agenda of business associations, the stock exchange and chambers of commerce.

The economic instability in the country, the impact of the pandemic on the performance of companies and growing unemployment rate in combination with increasing competition on the local fundraising market and decreasing level of trust in charity organizations had a negative impact on the overall fundraising results. However, businesses reacted rapidly and creatively to support the health sector and to partner with UNICEF to deliver in-kind donations to the most vulnerable children and families. The office used this opportunity to position UNICEF as knowledge leader providing trusted global information and advancing the business for result agenda.

The crisis enabled the office to test the flexibility of Private Sector Fundraising approaches and used this experience to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic on fundraising. Since F2F fundraising was curtailed an enhanced focus on supporters’ engagement and retention and diversification of fundraising channels including digital and direct mailing was applied successfully. Furthermore, improved planning, whole-office engagement and integration of advocacy and fundraising goals led to improved results from integrated campaigns, particularly raising visibility of UNICEF and advocating for children living with disabilities. However, acquisition of new major corporate partners and increasing individual pledges should remain the main strategy in 2021 with an innovative corporate fundraising strategy. Over 40 celebrities and influencers were successfully engaged to advocate and support fundraising for UNICEF and this experience will be used for future efforts.