El Salvador's population is 6.7 million comprising 1.9 million children. In 2020, children were affected by the impacts of COVID-19 and tropical storms Amanda and Cristobal. The country responded to an emergency within an emergency: 30 people perished, 149,800 were affected, 16,200 evacuated to shelters; 392 schools were damaged. COVID-19 hampered the availability of official data on the situation of children and a national survey based on the MICS methodology was postponed until 2021 subject to the evolution of the pandemic.

On March 14, the Government of El Salvador declared a state of emergency, adopting strict social distancing measures: closure of international borders, establishment of state-run quarantine centers for returnees, mandatory use of face masks, cessation of public transport and nation-wide school closures. Additional measures were implemented to mitigate negative impacts on the economy: Fiscal Responsibility Law for the Sustainability of Public Finances was suspended, as were utility and other payments (electricity, water, loans, credit cards, etc.). 1.7 million households received cash transfers (US$300) and the Government distributed food packages to its most vulnerable populations.

According to ECLAC's 2020 year-end projections, El Salvador is expected to experience a 6.5 pp increase in its poverty rate. Prior to COVID-19, 30.9% of the population was experiencing multidimensional poverty. This figure increased considerably in households with children (36.1%).

Approximately 65% of Salvadorians are employed in the informal sector, with no access to social security. Prior to the pandemic, remittances comprised 21% of GDP. Between January and November, households received US$5.274 million, indicating that despite COVID-19, remittances increased by 3.5% (BCR, 2020). The Salvadorian economy is projected to grow close to 5.8% in 2021. During 2020 it decreased by 8.2% (IMF, 2020).

The National Budget ($7,453 million) for 2021 was approved in December, including an increase of $281.2 million for the Ministry of Education.

As of February 2021, El Salvador registers 55195 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 4.7% of which are children, and 1,638 fatalities. Testing is limited and the health system has, at times, verged on collapse, yet the nation has made steadfast efforts to increase intensive care-unit facilities, including hospital bed availability, systematically improving response capacities.

While no data is available for 2020, child mortality declined in 2018 and 2019 according to MINSAL: the mortality rate of children under 5 went from 10.9 to 10.2 per every 1,000 births. Neonatal mortality fell by 15%, going from 6 in 2018 to 5.1 per every 1,000 births in 2019.

While adolescent pregnancies experienced a reduction of 24.5% compared to 2019, girls under 18 represent 1/4 of pregnancies.

10.2% of households with children do not have access to basic family and community health services (EHPM, 2019). Vaccination coverage is estimated to have fallen by over 15% during 2020. 19.6% of households still lack drinking water and 41.5% sanitation services. 1/4 of the population accesses its drinking water through Rural Water Boards that faced technical and economic difficulties ensuring service during lockdowns. Access to water and sanitation in schools remains critical, with over 18% of public schools requiring improved water and sanitation (MINEDUCYT, 2020).
In 2019, 17.3% of households with children lacked food security (EHPM, 2019). Between December 2019 and May 2020, over 182,000 people lapsed into severe food insecurity due to COVID-19. By November 2020, this figure decreased by 30,000, mostly due to large scale food assistance conducted throughout the country. Notwithstanding, over 2 million Salvadorans remained moderately food insecure (WFP, 2020).

The latest Height and Weight Census among first graders revealed stunting and/or chronic malnutrition calculated at 11.4% nationally. 30.5% of first graders were overweight/obese.

The Government estimates a loss of US$605.65 million in the Health sector due to COVID-19 and damages worth US$58.6 million in the Housing sector due to the tropical storms (PDNA, 2020).

To date, schools remain closed impacting over 1.3 million students. The Ministry of Education put in place its Plan to Ensure Educational Continuity until the reopening of schools, envisaged for Q1 2021. The Ministry invested in multimodality learning platforms that leverage educational television, radio, printed learning guides, on-line learning through web enabled platforms, and virtual education, all which it intends to retain and strengthen once schools reopen.

However, only 60% of the population aged 10 or older have internet access (44.8% gaining access via mobile phones)(EHPM 2019). While 72% of urban areas have connectivity, this figure drops to 41.5% for rural areas. 12.3% of households lack electricity.

Before the pandemic, the education crisis in El Salvador loomed large: between 2014 and 2018, preschool rates decreased from 58.6% to 57.4%; for primary school from 86.4% to 82%; and for middle school from 64.9% to 57.3%; while for secondary school rates remained essentially stagnant ranging from 37.5% to 37.6%. Only 4/10 children who enter primary school graduated from secondary school. Post COVID-19, the Ministry of Education warns of potential further increases in school desertion rates impacting the employability and opportunities of children for years to come.

Children in El Salvador continue to be victims of chronic violence in their homes, schools and communities. Although homicides decreased by 59.5%, extorsions and territorial control from gangs have continued (PNC, 2020).

The effect of lockdowns and the stress on families contributes to a potential increase in domestic violence. Sexual violence against children reached 2,086. 9/10 victims were girls. Between January and June 2020, 2,427 reported cases of violence against women were reported, while early pregnancies surpassed 6,800 (PDNA, 2020). During 2020, 74 victims of femicide (70% less than 2019) were identified, 11 of which were under 18 (FGR, 2020).

According to IOM, 9,953 migrants returned to El Salvador in 2020, 73.3% less than 2019. 10.3% were children who migrated due to economic factors, insecurity or family reunification. 108 unaccompanied children quarantined in government-run facilities until they were closed.

The rise in COVID-19 cases, fear of contagion, school closures and socio-economic pressures have affected the mental health of children and their families, increasing the demand for psychosocial support and care.

Major contributions and drivers of results

2020 was marked by the impacts on children and families of COVID-19, not only in health but also with respect to socio-economic shocks aggravating child poverty, education and child protection. In
May/June, the country was struck by tropical storms Amanda and Cristobal. The Government and cooperation had to respond to an emergency within an emergency; efforts were adapted to respond to the needs of the population, while preventing the transmission of COVID-19.

At the request of the Government of El Salvador, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNICEF's Country Programme Document (CPD) were extended for a year through 2021, to ensure the new frameworks reflect priorities to respond to COVID-19 health and socio-economic effects. The frameworks (2016-2021) were developed prior to the SDGs and the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021, however, the results contribute directly to their implementation.

Notwithstanding COVID-19 and tropical storms Amanda and Cristobal, the CO is on track to achieving all outcomes and outputs of the CPD. The year extension provides additional time to consolidate results.

The formulation of the UNSDCF initiated with the Country Common Assessment (CCA) and the evaluation of the previous UNDAF. The CO led the elaboration of the People Pilar, ensuring the situation of children was reflected. The CCA was reviewed at year's end to incorporate the effects of COVID-19.

The CO completed a preliminary version of the Situation Analysis (SitAn) of children. Through its social, economic, political, gender and legal lens, it provides statistical evidence on progress towards the fulfilment children's rights and the SDGs. The SitAn captures the perspective of Government officials, private sector, academy, parents and children. An online survey was developed and disseminated through social media to allow children to express their needs and concerns about COVID-19. The findings and recommendations of the SitAn will inform the formulation of the next CPD and UNSDCF.

The availability of official disaggregated data on the situation of children was hampered, and the national health survey based on the MICS methodology postponed until 2021 subject to the evolution of the pandemic. The CO participated and provided inputs for designing a Regional Rapid Assessment on COVID-19 in households with/without children. Results were incorporated into the SitAn and shared with the UN to inform the CCA. In collaboration with CID Gallup and El Salvador’s National Statistics Office (DIGESTYC), the CO designed two COVID-19 modules to assess the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic on children and families: one for the OMNIBUS public opinion survey and another for the EHPM 2020 available in 2021. Despite limited data available, there is evidence of an increase in violence against children, in particular GBV and sexual violence, and the deterioration of mental health in the population.

Amongst the CO’s main added values in the emergency response was its facilitation of the coordination amongst Government, NGOs, and cooperation agencies. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) activated nine clusters: UNICEF led the WASH and Education in Emergencies clusters, co-led the Food Security and Nutrition, and Protection clusters, and formed part of the remaining Health, Shelter, ICT, Logistics and Early Recovery clusters. Through the HCT, COVID-19 and Humanitarian Response Plans, Sitreps, and a Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) reflecting COVID-19 were elaborated with UNICEF contributions ensuring that the situation of children informed response priorities. The CO co-led the Food Security and Nutrition cluster, leading the nutrition sector and promoted C4D campaigns with partners on health nutrition. UNICEF, together with WFP and FAO, worked closely with the Minister of Education to ensure MINEDUCYT data informed the prioritization of families with children for cash-transfers and food distribution.

The CO’s leadership in the WASH sector optimized cooperation and strengthened response
accountability. Direct lines of communication with the Presidency were established in support of mid-to-long term water requirements of rural populations precariously serviced by Rural Water Boards. Water storage facilities capacities were amplified in 17 health centers treating COVID-19 benefiting 43,395 patients and frontline responders. In response to tropical storms, the CO led the WASH response funded by CERF in the six most affected Departments. 3,320 families received supplies for water treatment and storage, hygiene and arbovirus prevention; 25 community water safety points were installed, including in schools, benefiting 15,838 people; 8,503 benefited from improved access to water resulting from repairs of 12 community water systems; and 2,800 patients benefited from the installation of four latrines in health centers.

The CO led the Child Protection and Psychosocial Support Sub-clusters to respond to the impact of prolonged confinement, loss of livelihoods, school closures and related stress on families. 177,538 children, parents and primary caregivers received community-based mental health and psychosocial support through different modalities. During the state of emergency, the Government of El Salvador installed quarantine centers to shelter returnees. The CO supported the General Directorate of Migration to improve the conditions of shelters according to minimum standards and biosecurity measures, providing non-food items (mattresses and sheets), disinfectants, and PPE. In these centers, the CO disseminated information on helplines for counselling/psychosocial support and claim mechanisms.

Main results in emergencies: 1) PPE was distributed to 172,765 health facility and community frontline personnel. 2) 508,074 people received WASH supplies (including hygiene kits) and/or services and 3) 177,538 children, parents and primary caregivers received community-based mental health and psychosocial support.

The CO is approaching (scores: 5-6 over 10) the GAP standards, and is developing the GPR in Q1 2021, to inform the new CPD. Prevention of child marriage, GBViE and nutrition and health of girls are 2020 tagged priorities. Corrected gender-equality marker indicates 62%; 5% of all CPD outputs are respectively tagged as principal (GEM 3) or significant (GEM 2) gender-equality contributions.

From the onset of the crisis, the CO supported the Health Sector to respond to COVID-19 and continue services, mobilizing supplies including PPE, disinfectants, oxygen concentrators and medical equipment distributed throughout the National Health System, prioritizing frontline workers. This proved pivotal in strengthening COVID-19 detection and treatment of patients in hospitals and diagnostic centers. The continuity of essential child-maternal health services was supported with PPE distributed to the principal pediatric hospital in the country, including continuity of routine vaccination schedules and prenatal and postnatal controls. The CO advocated for the reactivation of essential child-maternal health services and supported the Ministry of Health to develop and implement a C4D campaign raising awareness amongst families of the criticality of vaccinations that according to Ministry of Health estimates, fell by 15%.

In partnership with National Health Solidarity Fund (FOSALUD), six human breast-milk banks were equipped to augment human breast-milk stocks to improve neonatal health for children born prematurely and/or with low-birthweight ensuring that the equipped venues comply with the WHO/UNICEF Child Care Development (CCD) strategy. According to the Ministry of Health, 6,000 children are prematurely born each year. This proved cost-effective and high yielding in meeting health needs of premature and infants born with low-birthweight to combat malnutrition.

The CO continued promoting the CCD: 3,108 Health professionals, specialists from the ISRI, the Ministry of Education, the Salvadoran Institute for Children and Adolescents (ISNA), the University of El Salvador (UES) and civil society organizations, received the “Pasito a Pasito” (step-by-step) guide benefiting 30,000 families with children from 0 to 5. During the response to COVID-19 and
tropical storms, this CCD approach was applied in shelters. The ISRI adopted this guide as the basis for its service provision and continuity of services adapting it through a tele-rehabilitation modality that enabled 1,342 children (526 girls/816 boys) to continue their rehabilitation.

The CO played a critical role in advising the Government and private sector on the development of public programs, policies and plans to mitigate the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 during national lockdowns and when economic activities reactivated in August. The CO provided data and evidence on the state of children, identified priorities and challenges, offered evidence-based strategies and developed investment plans for poverty eradication, continuing education services, ECD and health, as well as developed an evidence-based policy dialogue and advocacy platform for sustaining child-related services, promoting investment in social sectors. The CO estimated the impacts of COVID-19 on monetary and multidimensional poverty and developed a Mitigation and Social Protection Strategy for Households with Children presented to the Government that informs ongoing discussions with the Presidential Office and Ministries of the Social Cabinet. The CO also developed a position paper regarding the intergenerational effects of debt (pre- and post-COVID19), evidencing the need for sustained fiscal space for investing in children. In partnership with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, a pipeline of ECD investments was developed and included in the 2021 National Budget; for education the Budget was increased by US$281.2 million.

The CO supported the elaboration of the UN Socio-economic Response Plan, ensuring the priority actions to mitigate the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 on children were contemplated for each social and child protection, education, health, nutrition and WASH sectors.

Schools remained closed since March. MINEDUCYT made important efforts to ensure students continue their education through different modalities, adapting its in-person educational services, developing printed educational workbooks, an internet site with educational contents, formulating teacher/family orientation materials and generating television and radio content “Aprendamos en casa”. To support schools reopening, MINEDUCYT’s “The Joy of Returning to School” plan was developed with UNICEF’s technical support to combine in-person, blended and remote learning modalities incorporating required health protocols.

The CO continued supporting MINEDUCYT’s in generating mechanisms, modalities and practices for school insertion and retention of students at risk of school desertion. 74 teachers (25 men/43 women) received training benefiting 635 students (369 boys/266 girls) from 40 schools in Basic Accelerated Education curricula, and the in-person modality was adapted to be remotely conducted to enable 1,162 students (459 boys/703 girls) in ten open venues to undertake tutorials to attain academic leveling.

The curriculum update for Basic Accelerated Education for Primary Education (2nd-6th) was finalized and its digitalization initiated, to be concluded in 2021. The CO is supporting MINEDUCYT in the crafting of the curriculum of the Accelerated Education for Lower Secondary Education (7th-9th) to be concluded in 2022.

The UNICEF-World Bank (WB) alliance was strengthened through joint work with MINEDUCYT for coordination with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). In September, the Government’s GPE proposal to develop a national 10-year education sector plan (ESP) focused on closing the existing access/quality gaps and those deepened by COVID-19 was approved. UNICEF serves as Coordinating Agency responsible for supporting MINEDUCYT in coordinating the Local Education Group, participates in the Education Sector Analysis and Sector Plan, and ensures the functioning of required participation mechanisms. UNICEF will lead the design of the M&E framework; the WB serves as Grant Agent.

Despite challenges faced, the CO continued strengthening the child protection system, and the
continuation of child protection services supporting CONNA to strengthen the confidential and free counselling and referral helpline 1.2.3 Habla Conmigo (Talk to Me) for children through the provision and installation of equipment to extend their services. The CO assists in developing communication materials to disseminate amongst children and families for how to access services provided.

Contributing to continuity of child protection services, hygiene and disinfection products were provided to essential child protection system institutions to ensure fulfillment of biosecurity measures. Approximately 600 frontline personnel providing services to children victims of violence or unaccompanied migrant returnees, received PPE. This enabled 245 unaccompanied migrant children to receive the attention needed from specialized services. Additionally, 833 adolescents in conflict with the law, deprived of liberty or protection measures, continued receiving support for their reintegration into society at centers managed by ISNA.

Prior to COVID-19, children and adolescents already suffered high levels of violence in all settings; evidence is mounting that these levels may have increased during 2020, especially sexual abuse and gender-based violence. The CO has continued implementing the first phase of the European Union’s Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls. The CO progressed in the proposal of a legal reform to strengthen the protection of children against violence in accordance with international standards, the continuation of C4D gender-based violence prevention actions, and the strengthening of specialized services for children victims of violence. The CO supported the Justice Sector in creating spaces to provide non-revictimizing friendly integral care for children victims of crime: the National Civil Police inaugurated a new complaints receipt area and provides services for victims of GBV in San Miguel, and the Supreme Court of Justice now counts with seven safe spaces to undertake quality services to children during a crisis and a new Gesell Chamber providing services for children in San Salvador, Soyapango and Ciudad Delgado.

Despite the difficulties of working at local level due to movement restriction measures decreed by the Government, the CO achieved the result of implementing the violence prevention strategy, further strengthening the gender approach in ten country municipalities distributed in the western, central and eastern parts of the country experiencing high-levels of returnees and violence, particularly GBV. 6,394 children participated in activities implemented with local governments through virtual modalities to prevent violence and/or empower girls, and promote new masculinities, 2,683 children received psychosocial support and recreational kits designed for social distancing contexts; 837 children with protection needs received grants to continue their education. Progress was possible thanks to increased support from the Government of Canada and the David Beckham 7 Fund.

The CO strengthened alliances with UNHCR, OIM, Government and NGOs to consolidate the model to reintegrate children returnees. 2,086 returned migrant and displaced children, parents and tutors received psychosocial support; 1,345 children and their families received cash transfers; 306 returned migrant and displaced families received legal support; 496 children medical attention; and, 670 children support to develop alternative life plans. The RO led the development of the C4D strategy to protect Children on the Move for Honduras, México, Guatemala and El Salvador. Implementation will commence 2021.

The CO continued investing in evaluations, participating in Children on the Move and Real-time Assessment of the COVID-19 Emergency to gauge the effectiveness and agility of UNICEF’s programs and emergency response; both conclude in 2021. Findings will reinforce CO preparedness and response to emergencies and programmes for the protection of child migrants. An evaluability assessment for the Territorializing Strategy for Comprehensive Early Childhood Development was conducted, its evaluation planned for 2021.

Given the consistently high quality, accuracy and relevance of our messages, Facebook included the CO as a reliable source of information on COVID-19, with the Office of the President and PAHO/WHO. Facebook followers increased by 98% (45,000 new). Instagram increased by 70%
(11,000), and Twitter 21% (8,000). UNICEF continues to be the children's organizations with most followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. With respect to radio, print media and television, the CO leads the coverage ranking and is the reference on children issues. The value of coverage in advertising and PR is estimated at US$3.1 million, doubling the amount reached in 2019. The website received an increase in visits of 143% (357K), and a subsite was created to disseminate specific information on COVID-19: https://www.unicef.org/elsalvador/coronavirus/covid19.

The CO achieved the Annual Priority Programme and Management Results outlined in the offices' Annual Management Plan.
UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

The facilitation of effective coordination between the Government and humanitarian actors represented a core UN and UNICEF value contribution in the response to COVID-19 and tropical storms. The Humanitarian Country Team clusters were activated: UNICEF led the WASH and Education in Emergencies clusters, co-led the Food Security and Nutrition and Protection clusters, and actively contributed to the Health, Shelter, Logistics, ICT and Early Recovery clusters. To strengthen coordination, the clusters contributed to creating new partnerships, information sharing, identification of synergies, avoidance of duplication and strengthened accountability. Through the HCT, a Humanitarian Response Plan, sitreps, communication materials and a HNO reflecting COVID-19 were elaborated including health, WASH, nutrition, education and protection sectors. UNICEF raised funds from CERF to respond to tropical storms Amanda and Cristóbal on WASH, and supported as an associated agency in an MPTF COVID-19 project led by WFP.

The CO contributed to the UN Socio-economic Response Plan for COVID-19 leading the social protection and basic services pillar to ensure children's needs are duly considered. The UNDAF and UNICEF CPD have been extended to 2021. During 2020 the CO has participated in the elaboration of the CCA, leading the people pillar, and in the evaluation of UNDAF. The formulation of the UNSDCF is priority for 2021.

The CO strengthened its alliance with the World Bank for the implementation of the Global Partnership for Education. UNICEF is the Coordinating Agency of the GPE and supports the MINEDUCYT in the coordination of the Local Education Group, and the elaboration of an Education Sector Plan adapted to the challenges evidenced by COVID-19. The CO also supported the MINEDUCYT in its application for GPE-multiplier funds to strengthen the education system.

During 2020, partnerships for protecting returned migrant children have been strengthened with IOM, UNHCR and the Government. The CO is part of the working group led by the Presidency of the Republic. For the first time, the CO is RUNO of a joint program funded by the Peacebuilding Fund for the reintegration of returnees with IOM, WFP, and UNHCR, and leads a joint program with UNHCR funded by DEVCO for the identification of best practices for the protection of migrant children. The implementation of both programs will begin in 2021. The PRM approved funds to protect child migrants and displaced children and reintegrate returnees in 2020 for the first time.

In 2020, the implementation of the first phase of the Spotlight Initiative to End Violence against Children progressed in coordination with UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, Government institutions and civil society. Progress was made in creating specialized care services for girls, promoting legal reforms and preventing GBV. The first phase is under evaluation, and the CO is advancing second phase planning, ensuring girls are prioritized. El Salvador is a pathfinder country for the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

The CO has continued to establish partnerships with leading centers as the NYU Global Ties for Children, Inclusion and Fundaungo to obtain high-quality information and data to bolster its advocacy for children's rights.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Beginning March 2020, COVID-19 drove response priorities and shaped Government, UN, and CO programmes in support of affected populations' health, socio-economic, and educational needs, also shaping response to tropical storms in late May/early June with all actors responding to an emergency
Within an emergency, UNICEF-led Education and WASH clusters galvanized emergency response, providing fora to promote whole-of-society coordination. Continued advocacy for education and WASH to become sectorial commissions within the National Civil Protection System is recommended.

While social-distancing thwarted collection of quality-disaggregated data on children to inform interventions, the CO reduced information gaps by contributing to the design of innovative digital instruments, including UNICEF’s Regional Rapid Assessment, a module for CID-Gallup’s OMNIBUS and KoBos surveys for real-time data collection for designing WASH, Health and Nutrition interventions.

To enable children to express themselves and influence decision-making, the CO together with FLACSO, facilitated their active participation creating a mobile platform “Con el cel te lo digo” to capture and disseminate their views regarding remote education and issues concerning children.

In a country prone to natural disasters, vulnerable to pandemics, designing strategies and interventions based on global and regional evidence is essential to advocate for the continuity of services for children. The CO formulated evidence-based social investment proposals to mitigate the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 which were considered and adopted by the Government. Despite reprioritizations, the Government benefited from UNICEF’s evidence, for example, in designing the fiscal strategy to implement the ECD policy “Crecer Juntos”. The CO successfully reframed its ECD rationale and advocacy that resonated with and was adopted by both Government and private sector for reopening the economy with a child-friendly approach, including through the strengthening and reopening of ECD services. The CO with partners, elaborated an innovative Multidimensional Microsimulation Modelling tool that contributes to designing public policies to address COVID-19 effects of on child poverty.

The CO continued working locally designing intervention models to be adopted by Government and civil society capable of being scaled nationally. The CO adapted models and methodologies to distance modalities to increase coverage and reach the most vulnerable children: the "Soy Musica" methodology developed to promote peaceful coexistence proved effective managing stress and negative emotions, and was adapted for broadcasting on educational television. Use of new technologies for training and communication for development, and to maintain interaction with partners and communities, proved essential to continue strengthening institutions and community leadership. The CO purchased IT equipment that enabled participation of ISNA personnel in trainings and provided the Integral Rehabilitation Centre (CRINA) with ICT equipment to continue rehabilitation services for children with disabilities.

Adapting programmes to social distancing requires high organizational flexibility within and amongst UNICEF, donors and partner institutions.

The CO designed innovative interventions, including C4D methodologies to promote behavioural changes to improve hygiene practices and prevent violence against children, adapted to prevent COVID-19 transmission and gender-based violence (GBV). Experience in promoting positive child-rearing practices (Tambien soy Persona) supported families and partners, improving inter-generational dialogue amongst family members during lockdown. C4D messages disseminated through social networks and partners reached the most vulnerable families. Peer-to-peer methodologies proved successful in building trust and empathy when addressing vulnerable populations, including returned migrants.

The CO adapted to the evolving context to deliver timely and relevant assistance to children, families and frontline workers, facilitating coordination with Government, NGOs and cooperation through Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) clusters. The HCT promoted synergies and coordination in the
design of multisectoral response plans with local actors, crucial to building sustainability and accountability. The involvement of NGOs (i.e. Save the Children, the Passionist Service and CIDEP) and community leaders' empowerment, facilitated the implementation of emergency actions, adding value to the services provided.

Prolonged effects of the health crisis and tropical storms threaten to impact children the hardest. As the situation continues to unfold, the CO prepares to address children's escalating needs (health, increase in migration flows, interruption of essential services and growing poverty and inequality). Bolstered connections between humanitarian and development work are essential, while CO must increase presence within communities to strengthen monitoring and accountability.

Effects on the mental health of this crisis are still largely unknown. The CO’s experience in psychosocial support to reintegrate child migrants and students in the school system proved instrumental to lead the HCT response through HCT clusters. The criticality of emphasizing this component in education, protection and health interventions during its next CPD is stressed.

Given the rise in adolescent pregnancies, reinforced coordination between the Ministry of Health and the Adolescent Alliance is critical to strengthen adolescent-friendly health services and, to prevent HIV/STD.

The rollout of the MINEDUCYT's *Early Warning Mechanism for the Prevention of School Desertion* becomes vital for monitoring cases of school desertion and obtaining evidence to define and revise policies and programmes.

During 2020, essential components of the Child Protection System, including helplines and claim mechanisms, proved effective in providing distance counselling and psychosocial support. It is essential to widely disseminate information on how to access these services and systematize data gathered by these mechanisms to analyse trends.

The returned migrant population is not concentrated in a specific area of the country, therefore the expansion of the model to reintegrate returned child migrants and families to rural areas, especially in the north and west of the country, is necessary. The CO insisted on the need of specialized attention for displaced children and returnees including school reintegration, pediatric care, and/or the generation of alternative life plans to migration.

The CO considers climate change adaptation as a multisectoral intervention to be refined with the finalization of the CLAC and elaboration of a risk analysis during 2021.

Robust monitoring and evaluation evidence-based frameworks rooted in the quantitative and qualitative research are also essential to foster the institutionalization and scalability of interventions and improve emergency response actions.

The CO will adjust programmes, interventions and models based on the best practices and lessons learned identified, also to contribute to scale up and sustainability.