

Division of Communication

Update on the context and trends

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Consequently, the Division of Communication had to adjust its annual work to focus on the Covid-19 pandemic emergency response. DOC developed a COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan in consultation with EMOPS, PD, other HQ Divisions the Regional Offices that contributed to the broader UNICEF response plan with a focus on communicating and engaging with different audiences for awareness, influencing and support through traditional media, digital channels and advocacy strategies. DOC played a lead role in implementation of the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) component of UNICEF broader Humanitarian Response Plan. DOC also developed the Global COVID-19 Advocacy Framework and a public-facing Agenda for Action, to highlight that COVID-19 was also a child rights crisis. Four Global Advocacy Priorities – vaccines, education, mental health and water and climate – the great equalizers – were established to accelerate results for children. In 2020, DOC also supported the organization transition from the Cause Framework campaigns to the Global Advocacy Priorities and a strengthened approach to humanitarian advocacy, all with a strong focus on Covid-19 response.

DOC quickly adapted to the remote working arrangement ensuring continuity, and mostly scaling up of, its communication, advocacy and campaigning work while also adopting special measures to ensure staff wellbeing. The Advocacy Capacity Building Initiative shifted to virtual rather than in-person workshops, country missions and webinars. Goodwill Ambassadors (GWAs) and influencers supported the new priorities by leveraging new approaches and engagement tactics in the absence of field visits. While faith-based actors leveraged their influence to scale up engagement, especially around vaccine hesitancy and misinformation.

On the media front, the pandemic led to a re-evaluation of priorities. As more programmatic data became available, and as UNICEF's role in the global response became clearer, DOC promoted stories on the knock-on effects of the pandemic on children and thus secured a stronger share of voice in media. There was unprecedented growth in searches for UNICEF's online content. In the face of logistical challenges, multimedia production moved to home studio set-ups and remote online interviews. This transition to remote working necessitated an agile shift in strategy, messaging, content and campaigns to make the situation of children everywhere more visible, particularly those children already disadvantaged by conflict, discrimination, social exclusion and other crises.

Opportunities emerged for web and social media content. Specifically, engaging audience-driven content on COVID-19, its impact on and needs of parents, while simultaneously leveraging partnerships with digital platforms, most notably Facebook. Throughout 2020, the value and power of unicef.org to reach and engage audiences to take action, to donate, and to join UNICEF in support for every child was evident. However, in a climate of growing distrust, brands are pivoting, how a values-based UNICEF shows up in global campaigns and initiatives needs to be aligned in narrative, purpose and visual appearance.

It was a particularly difficult year for hundreds of thousands of young people. They took to platforms such as U-Report and Voices of Youth to share their views and demands to create change, highlighting the importance of digital and real-time two-way communication systems. The pandemic delayed the Climate Change Conference (COP26) and necessitated a shift of attention for World Children's Day (WCD), to make it more responsive to national priorities, and to align it with the COVID-19 Reimagine narrative for a better post-pandemic future.

A New Partnerships and Projects section was established in 2020 to multiply the reach and strategic impact of DOC's current and new activities across languages and platforms. The multitude of partnership opportunities within the entertainment, sports and media industries, the UN and its affiliates, presents enormous potential to maximize the impact on results for children to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Regarding internal communication, the pandemic radically disrupted UNICEF's working environment, and the organization's ability to effectively reach and intensively engage staff. Mental health, diversity and inclusion emerged as priority issues for the organization's attention. To efficiently support DOC staff off-site work operations, standard operating procedures were developed, including a Staff Well-being Plan, and the Business Continuity Plan was activated. Budget, finance and administration functions were nimbly managed to deliver on planned outputs. Lastly, to enhance coordination, a new emergency structure for field support was introduced with more regular calls with regional (ROs) and country offices (COs) as part of the COVID-19 emergency response.

Major contributions and drivers of results

1.1 Media

DOC undertook intensive work in 2020 to identify story angles; ride news waves; pitch and facilitate interviews; strengthen relationships with journalists; and to shape the narrative around issues affecting children. UNICEF was mentioned in 240,902 articles in online/print media (at least 1 mention, in 6 UN languages), including 16,105 in top-tier media outlets. Additionally, UNICEF was mentioned in 2,953 broadcasts.

On COVID-19 and COVAX, UNICEF generated 14,782 mentions. DOC issued 218 press releases, facilitated hundreds of interviews with leading experts, and secured pick up in top-tier outlets, e.g., the *New York Times*, *The Economist*, BBC, and the main wires.

A joint analysis with Save the Children of the economic impact of COVID-19 on children and families, delved into monetary and multidimensional poverty, and generated over 2,000 pieces of media coverage. A new report on universal child benefits was launched in collaboration with the Overseas Development Institute. Our biggest non-COVID story was on the Lead Report. DOC supported the launch of UNICEF's COVID-19 and humanitarian appeals, the surge mission to Gaziantep, and the placement of op-eds in top-tier outlets, including *LA Times* and *Al Jazeera*.

1.2 Internal Communication

UNICEF's first-ever Global Internal Communication and Staff Engagement Strategy was developed. DOC effectively communicated to staff all critical information on measures taken by the organization to ensure business continuity and staff safety in real-time. In the 2020 Global Staff Survey, 81% of 11,000 UNICEF staff responded positively on internal communication and information-sharing. In two NYHQ Pulse Surveys, 80% of staff felt that they were provided with adequate information on COVID-19, while all channels, including *uMessage*, were rated as highly effective (+80%).

Strategic shifts in editorial direction coupled with an omni-channel approach, led to a 58% increase in readership and 198% increase in staff engagement on ICON; a 60% increase in readership of *uMessages*; and a 23% increase in engagement on Yammer. Two-way communication between UNICEF leadership and personnel in global all-staff meetings resulted in a 136% increase in attendance for Global Townhall meetings, a 32% increase in viewing time and a 210% increase in staff engagement. For the DED-Management Conversations, we recorded a 533% increase in attendance, 28% increase in viewing time and 218% increase in engagement. Over 5,000 staff participated in the first-ever regional consultations on Organizational Improvement. Staff understanding of UNICEF's core values was boosted through the 'Humans of UNICEF' initiative, generating almost 1,900 staff nominations, with 81% of nominees from field locations.

1.3 Global Content Strategy

Highlights include the COVID-19 *What You Need to Know* video series interviewing experts, the *Learn with Me* video series, and the *Healthy at Home* photo series for social media platforms. In March, the first DOC explainer video, *6 things to know about Coronavirus*, was a tremendous success and was picked up by broadcasters worldwide. COVID-19 youth diaries, e.g., Keya's diary had over 67M views. Over 190 photo packages were edited, and over 3,400 photos were captioned and uploaded to WeShare. Support to field offices during COVID-19 resulted in over 75 packages edited, uploaded, captioned, and promoted on global platforms.

Strong interdivisional partnerships were built around copyediting and fact-checking -- a total of 162 projects with over 291,000 words; and over 90 UNICEF reports were published on the publication's hub. The UNICEF Style Book was updated for the first time since 2017. Graphic design, translation and production of the UNICEF Annual Report and the WCD report '*Averting a Lost COVID-19 Generation*' in four languages contributed to increased media pick-up while also providing support materials for COs, ROs and National Committees. COVID-19 content accounted for a large volume of translations – over 3,500,000 words into Arabic, French, and Spanish.

2.1 Advocacy Capacity Building Initiative (ACBI)

Under DOC's Advocacy Capacity Building Initiative, the virtual Global Advocacy Skills workshops, webinars, and country missions trained over 400 colleagues working on 12 focus country strategies. Where measured, an average of 86% participants confirmed increased post-training knowledge and confidence in applying advocacy skills. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, training was shifted to virtual platforms. This demanded collaborative skills, expertise and a mindset to try new tools and take on challenges. The ACBI methodology also supported the development process of the Global Advocacy Priorities. Furthermore, two PPP-X topic pages were created and included in a webinar series.

2.2 Partnerships with Goodwill Ambassadors (GWAs)

Support was provided to UNICEF Offices that worked with high-profile personalities. A key success was GWA Angelique Kidjo's rendition of the *Pata Pata* song with COVID-19 messaging. The music video made its global debut to more than 100M people online. Lilly Singh's fundraiser for UNICEF during an interview with Dr. Fauci dispelled myths around the coronavirus. She also secured a donation of \$0.25M from Google, receiving 7M organic views. Millie Bobby Brown's conversation with UNICEF's Executive Director for the '*World's Largest Lesson Live*' delivered the most views ever with 371,000+ on UNICEF's YouTube channel. The Pitch Perfect fundraiser for UNICEF succeeded with support from the talent and the label, generating 19M organic video views on UNICEF channels in one month.

2.3 Partnerships with Civil Society Partners

DOC led the launch of the COVID-19 Faith in Action for Children initiative in collaboration with C4D and partnered with Religions for Peace. Leveraging World Children's Day, we co-organized the Global Week of Faith in Action for Children with Arigatou International – an interfaith online conference attended by 1,700+ people of faith from 86 countries. Advocacy was also included in the second ever humanitarian NGO consultation, jointly organized by UNICEF's DAPM, DOC and EMOPS Divisions. UNICEF partnered with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency on the initiative *Every Child. Everywhere. In School*. Immunization emerged as a priority for faith engagement and brought new actors such as the UN Multi-Faith Advisory Council, Latter Day Saints Charities and Arigatou International to the table. Six child-focused agencies, ChildFund, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages and World Vision, endorsed UNICEF's COVID-19 advocacy agenda -- the Six Point Plan to Protect our Children.

2.4 Thematic Advocacy

The 'Reimagine Education' campaign centred on the learning crisis and digital connectivity, helping about 90 countries to keep schools open during the pandemic. The End Violence against Children

campaign delivered two high-profile integrated global activations, namely the Champions for Children to spotlight disruption of child protection services. World Mental Health Day propelled this new advocacy agenda and included the activation of Parenting Month. Through the Early Moments Matter campaign, we published a series of parenting tips linked to violence prevention and contributed to policy briefings on childcare and universal child benefits. Over 90 countries engaged in a public activation which generated 22+M social media engagements, half a million visitors to English web content alone and 280 top-tier media mentions.

The Pneumonia Forum helped UNICEF to garner major government commitments in addition to a record-breaking GAVI Replenishment and resumption of vaccinations in several key countries. UNICEF's first-ever report on stillbirths exposed this hidden tragedy as critical to pandemic planning. DOC with WHO, mobilized high-level partners through the Hand Hygiene for All initiative and Global Handwashing Day. The State of Sanitation boosted advocacy for improved water sanitation and hygiene services.

2.5 Humanitarian Advocacy

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged as UNICEF's first global Level-3 emergency. It dramatically shifted our advocacy approach -- pivoting thematic priorities to the overarching Global COVID-19 Advocacy Framework. This led to new ways of working and a recalibration of existing plans. In late 2020, UNICEF launched the largest ever Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) Appeal to respond to pandemic-related service disruptions, economic chaos, and lock-down restrictions that disproportionately affected children. From the outset, strategic and integrated advocacy was recognized as a core part of the COVID-19 response – and essential for delivering programme goals. Successes include the launch of the Agenda for Action and a new Data and Advocacy Brief launched alongside World Children's Day. The key tenets of the Global Advocacy Framework were endorsed by 172 UN Member States and Permanent Observers in May 2020 and reaffirmed ahead of the UN General Assembly Special Session on COVID-19.

3.1 Web Editorial

Traffic to and engagement on UNICEF.org grew to unprecedented levels with more than 107M users (+161% increase from 2019) and 156M unique pageviews. More than half of those users and pageviews were on the HQ-managed website. This content ranks high on Google search results and has been picked up and linked to myriad governments' communication platforms (e.g., Ireland, India, Mexico, and New York), Facebook's COVID-19 portal, news outlets (BBC, CNN, National Geographic), health authorities (NHS) and non-profits (Red Cross), universities (Aga Khan, Cornell, and Harvard), and private sector companies. Global crisis pages, including Ebola, Rohingya, Syria and Yemen, rank high on Google for non-branded search terms ahead of many major news outlets. The Yemen crisis page, for example, ranks in the top-five Google search results for "Yemen" and had 1+M unique page views. In a single week in June, over US\$1M was raised through donate buttons on the page after it was amplified via social media. UNICEF's Parenting Hub featured high quality content aligned to the pandemic, thereby reaching nearly 9M visitors as organic traffic tripled compared to last year.

3.2 Platforms and Digital Governance

DOC provided technical support to 686 Drupal users (compared to 492 in 2019) and trained 145 new users in 2020. Training scaled up with the launch of the Agora e-course on Drupal. We launched 28 new ROs and COs, branded and non-branded websites, bringing the total number of sites launched on the web platform to over 130. DOC supported 159 digital governance cases, with the introduction of the new Service Gateway request for new web presence to simplify and streamline the process. We dealt with 133 brand abuse cases and 68 COVID-19 misinformation responses. 18 webinars strengthened capacity in digital communication. The Drupal web platform matured through continuous improvements in collaboration with the Information and Communication Technology Division – implementing 20+ new features; 300+ functional improvements; 200+ bugfixes; and 20+ features through a product development cycle covering design, development, testing, quality assurance,

training, and documentation. DOC also rebuilt the platform's front-end design model to correct legacy issues.

3.3 Social Media

In August 2020, UNICEF doubled its global digital supporters on social media and U-Report in less than 3 years to 110M. The partnership with Facebook generated unprecedented levels of traffic and engagement. We received over \$2M in COVID ad credits, helping us to reach 56M unique users globally with public health and advocacy content. This, and UNICEF's inclusion in the Facebook COVID-19 Information Hub, led to a seven-fold increase in engagements on our global Facebook pages in four languages in 2020 – more than the combined total of the previous eight years. We delivered almost a billion paid impressions on Facebook and Instagram, up 113% from 2019 thanks to ad credits and increased investment. More than 178 campaigns were activated on Global/HQ Channels in 2020. A total of 166 digital influencers from 24 countries supported eight digital activations or campaigns, generating 29.8M engagements and 126.1M video views. At the UNGA, the band BTS collaborated with the Executive Director on a video message about the impact of COVID-19, generating 20.4M video views, 9.4M engagements and 1M mentions. Twitter Arabic increased by 9%, Spanish by 21% and French by 32%. With Facebook followers, Arabic increased by 90%, Spanish by 64% and French by 322%. Across all languages, 91% of total engagements were for COVID-19 content.

3.4 Fundraising Support

DOC had 1.3M donation clicks, a 140% increase from 2019. The click-through rate in 2020 more than doubled from 0.89% to 1.7% as our content, design, and action prompts to donate were optimized to inspire supporters. Performance was more diverse as 20% of all donation clicks in 2020 occurred on the Chinese home page, while emergency-focused content such as the Yemen Crisis campaign, and COVID-19 performed best in the click-through rate. For the first time, DOC tracked online fundraising behaviours. We increased organic promotion of fundraising and set up analytics to track results, with the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division facilitating for individual markets fundraising via global. Over 10 dedicated fundraising facilitation campaigns were promoted on global channels, including GWAs and influencers (Greta Thunberg, Pitch Perfect, Kate Perry-Orlando Bloom Baby) and partners (One Love Solidarity Fund), crisis appeals (Yemen and Lebanon) and evergreen COVID-19 donation platforms (Reimagine Appeal). DOC also established standard operating procedures for the cross-HQ marketing programme and operationalized PFP's non-PSFR fundraising programme via DOC global channels, thereby helping to raise US\$1+M.

3.5 Youth Engagement

World Children's Day (WCD) 2020 was activated in 185 countries, generating 27M engagements and 36M videos views on social media. 22 new youth advocates were appointed, and 42 country offices produced young Changemaker profiles, while 129 COs organized Kids Takeovers.

Throughout 2020, 42 youth advocates engaged CEOs of major companies, UN leaders, government ministers and global celebrities on priority issues such as COVID-19, mental health, and climate.

Voices of Youth (VoY) has been firmly positioned as UNICEF's global digital home for young people, with over 3.5M web sessions (210% increase from 2019).

U-Report reached 6.6M new young people in 2020 and was deployed in 12 new countries, bringing the total to 76 countries connecting almost 13M subscribers. A COVID-19 chatbot reached 6M young people and communities with essential information on staying safe. Through U-Report, over 25M responses on COVID-19 outreach were received, informing programmatic intervention by UNICEF and partners.

In collaboration with partners, we produced the World's Largest Lesson Live, an innovative digital broadcast in response to the school lockdowns, featuring UN leaders, young people from civil society partners such as the Scouts, and GWAs. DOC supported the VoY Climate Action Portal and promoted climate awareness through World's Largest Lesson and a new collaboration with #FridaysForFuture.

4.1 Brand

An increased number of COs adopted more elements of the Brand Strategy -- logo, modular statement, tone of voice, UNICEF values, and photos. The UNICEF logo is now available in more than 70 languages, leading our brand identity to resonate more deeply with audiences. We designed the Humans of UNICEF programme for internal communication and its accompanying visual identity and creative assets. Staff were provided with branded Zoom backgrounds, email signatures, presentation templates, and other assets for adoption in their work, while integrating core values to foster brand stewardship among staff. Sessions on brand were designed and facilitated during the virtual Skillshare; an e-course on brand was developed; countries were identified in which to pilot brand capacity building; and webinars were conducted on brand ambassadorship. DOC also delivered professional, high-quality assets and collateral, continuing to strengthen brand association with cyan and “for every child” to build public affinity towards UNICEF. Robust management of the UNICEF brand was bolstered to protect it from abuse and to uphold UNICEF’s reputation and trusted voice. The 2020 Brand Barometer report showed public gains in awareness of UNICEF, and the association of UNICEF with children.

5.1 Strategic Planning, Monitoring, Reporting and Knowledge Management

The Office Management Plan and its results framework were updated to align with evolving organizational priorities through the Mid-Term Review. To facilitate virtual work, we developed templates, organized virtual meetings and outlined annual priorities. Communication with the field was enhanced through eleven editions of the global Monthly Planner for Advocacy and Communication. DOC produced 22 COVID-19 communication and advocacy updates and contributed to 9 rounds of the COVID-19 HAC Global Situation Reports. Analysis and reporting were provided for all major campaigns, as well as for media and digital performance, the workforce, and the Strategic Monitoring Questions.

The DOC SharePoint intranet site was upgraded, and a COVID-19 resource database was created. Thirteen regional quarterly calls were convened and bi-weekly calls with the Regional Chiefs of Communication. Content from COs/ROs on the COVID-19 response was amplified in 24 weekly updates and on SharePoint. Communication and advocacy capacity was strengthened through global webinars, learning activities, the global helpdesk and calls with subject matter experts. Two webinars on Risk Communication and Community Engagement were attended by 261 UNICEF staff from 87 countries. Global webinars on the SMQs, the Talkwalker social listening tool and the PPP-X were attended by 50-60 participants from UNICEF offices worldwide.

5.2 New Partnerships, Projects and Institutional Events

The launch and global distribution of the *Coping with COVID-19* documentary series created global awareness on issues affecting children, including education and gender. UNICEF received \$2+M worth of donated media across three priorities: COVID-19 response, International Day of the Girl and World Children’s Day. *Pro bono* support was provided by Mindshare World to liaise with global media vendors. The Right Runner mobile game app was downloaded 150,000+ times, with Apple supporting it within their app store. Through game play, more children and adult players now understand the rights of children as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The One Love Tiktok Activation campaign secured the participation of 18 digital influencers, who engaged their audiences on the #OneLoveOneHeart challenge on TikTok and Instagram live events using their own content. Their participation, together with that of the Marley family, garnered 2.2 billion views on TikTok, surpassing the 1M engagements on Instagram. In total they generated 3M views and over 120,000 interactions. UNICEF’s top video received 3.5M views.

6.1 Operations and Management

DOC recruited 40 new staff through rigorous recruitment processes, with 55% of the new recruitments from programme countries. About 189 consultancy contracts were processed to provide the additional expertise required, including for the COVID-19 response. The Division’s workforce totaled 173 personnel: 59 consultants, 3 Temporary Appointments and 111 Fixed-Term appointments – a 15%

increase compared to 2019. A realignment exercise was undertaken to strengthen collaboration within teams and to promote consistency, while ensuring coherence of the organigram in relation to reporting lines. Coaching and staff wellness activities were jointly coordinated with staff representatives and Peer Support Volunteers. Over 40 new colleagues participated in two virtual induction sessions. DOC invested in the 360-degree review process for all managers to support professional development and to equip them for leadership. The Division's budget was closely monitored, and resources were strategically allocated. Staff capacity building and re-orientation sessions were conducted.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Data and Evidence: The power of national and global data helps national advocacy and it also fosters inter-office collaboration between DOC, DAPM, Innocenti and PD. There is a strong case for disaggregated data, including data from high-income countries, to deal with possible reticence around proactive advocacy when there is no compelling evidence and to maximize coverage in National Committee media markets. Beyond that, UNICEF ought to be more confident that, in situations of data paucity, its assumptions should be right as a firm basis to act since they are rooted in decades of experience – even as a pre-emptive strategy.

Agility: More than ever, COVID-19 taught us the need to quickly adapt. By capitalizing on the continually evolving environment, we were able to stay relevant and create new opportunities for communication and advocacy. Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented and is unparalleled.

Strategic Partnerships: Again, the importance of working with external partners to expand reach and impact was evident in 2020. For example, partnerships with WHO and the private sector helped build high level support for access to hand hygiene. Other partnerships with private companies (e.g. Facebook) and faith-based outfits boosted fundraising, voice amplification and delivery of significant results for children in constrained operational environments.

Streamlining and Focusing: Focus was of the essence, especially in working with other HQ Divisions and external shareholders. However, inter-divisional strategies must be improved to reduce any potential duplications or overlaps. The Global Advocacy Priorities are an example of streamlining work and coordinating teams that have related priorities but, as all thematic issues took a COVID-19 angle, prioritization became more complicated.

Coordination and Leadership: While interdivisional strategies do work, there should be a clear convener of process to prevent diffusion of responsibility. Workflow processes should have clear leads and support teams that promote creative collaboration and cohesion. As priorities keep changing, so must expectations be adjusted and prioritization emphasized, especially when surge resources cannot be mobilized quickly, e.g. around COVID-19.

Knowledge Management: There was evidence of recreation of content material or doing work that had already been done elsewhere, e.g. mapping our engagement with X-UNICEF (UNICEF retirees). A stronger knowledge management system would help show existing work and redirect efforts and investments to new areas or improvements. DOC is seeking resources to strengthen this area in 2021 and beyond.

Profitable Synergies: Fundraising strategies need to be evaluated for efficiency, including those involving GWAs. A key lesson is to cultivate new relationships with talent that supports UNICEF's work, particularly through global fundraising events/telethons with celebrities. This is an opportunity for joint planning across offices to prioritize events with the most robust rationale and highest estimate

of a return on investment.

Digital Strategy: As the Digital First strategy began to take hold across the organization, we experienced many growing pains in terms of organizational readiness and capacity and infrastructure support:

- Lack of technical solution for hosting and featuring publications and technical documents.
- Consistent growth in the number of Drupal users and the complexity of their demands in global offices has not been matched with an increase in support at headquarters.
- With the reduced ICTD support (1.5 FTE) and most skilled developers being relocated to other projects, implementing complex features and keeping the platform running smoothly is a challenge.
- There is a need for more targeted Drupal capacity building/training in some regions, and for training and support resources in local languages (French and Spanish).
- The lack of awareness and knowledge of digital governance results in creation of new digital channels (mostly sites) that do not comply with UNICEF procedures and standards.
- The lack of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system gives us little visibility over global channel performance for country fundraising.

With the new Strategic Plan: 2022 - 2025, DOC is putting forward a 'Digital First' proposal together with ICTD, PFP and other divisions that will address many of these issues.