Update on the context and trends

The Division of Data, Analytics, Planning & Monitoring (DAPM) started as per 1 August 2019. The Division consists of three sections: 1) Strategic Planning, Implementation, Monitoring & Reporting; 2) Data & Analytics; and 3) Learning & Knowledge Exchange. The division is supported by a small front office for divisional planning and operations. DAPM is part of the Programme Cone, along with Programme Division and EMOPS.

The purpose of DAPM is to drive decision making and organizational learning for now and the future, improve effectiveness and achievement of results of UNICEF and its partners to realize the rights and improve the life of every child. DAPM aims to take responsibility in promoting the use of data and monitoring for policy messaging, informed programming, risk management and partnership to achieve transformative impact on lives of children.

This annual report describes the results achieved during the first full year of implementation (2020) of the DAPM OMP while going through a ‘light’ (Mid Term) Review for the division to align with the results of the corporate Mid Term Review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan.

DAPM demonstrated its flexibility to adapt to rapid changes in the context and to organizational challenges. This included the need to implement organizational improvement initiatives rapidly, while quickly adjusting work plans and budgets due to budget cuts and responding to changing needs due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (including remote working arrangements).

The pandemic underscored the need for responsive tools and systems for guiding the UNICEF response and for measuring the impact of a pandemic or disaster on children. Working in close coordination with Programme Division, EMOPS and Regional Offices, DAPM designed and implemented regular reporting by country offices and visualized the response through scorecards. This was also accompanied by a continuous capturing of lessons learned and sharing them through existing knowledge management platforms.

In addition, many countries had a good baseline of statistics about children due to MICS or other systems and were able to use that to highlight issues or parts of the country where children were most vulnerable to the socioeconomic impact of COVID while supporting rapid data collection through Country Offices for a global dashboard of interruptions to services and likely impact on children. And finally, DAPM worked closely with Office of Research and Programme Division in the rapid response research that underpinned UNICE response. The response reaffirmed the importance of the role of the division in developing and implementing tools and processes.

Beside from supporting the response to the pandemic, and the accompanying high workload, a broad range of other important initiatives was undertaken and continued. This includes the continuation of support to SDG-monitoring and analyzing the situation of children through data collection by the MICS Household Survey Programme, production of approximately 100 analytical products on the entire spectrum of child rights, exploring working with new types of data ('frontier data') and supporting governments in enhancing their statistical and child rights monitoring systems and tools, including in humanitarian situations.

The division coordinated the mid-term-review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021 and ensured that the important findings of that review were integrated into planning for the remainder of the time.
that the plan is under implementation. This also included a strong emphasis on humanitarian and development programming nexus. Immediately upon concluding that exercise initiated the first steps for the design of the next Strategic Plan.

DAPM continued strengthening and simplifying programming tools for planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting on country programmes. Solid emphasis was put on strengthening management for results and also implementing partnerships management. DAPM also launched a new initiative to strengthen the UNICEF monitoring function as well as the new global knowledge management strategy. Both initiatives will allow for better organisational learning and contribute to faster programmatic course correction, when required.

Major contributions and drivers of results

Key results achieved during 2020 include:

**Improved processes for implementation, monitoring and reporting of the UNICEF Strategic Plan (DE)**

Under the coordination of DAPM and with close collaboration with all HQ divisions/offices, UNICEF successfully completed the mid-term review (MTR) of its Strategic Plan (SP) 2018-2021. UNICEF ensured that the SP is underpinned by robust strategies and theories of change, while reflecting up-to-date risks and assumptions. The MTR also allowed UNICEF to reaffirm its ambitions regarding the Decade of Action to make programmatic accelerations and ensure the world reaches child-related SDGs. This ambition of acceleration was reflected in the adjustment of the SP results framework, where UNICEF proposed new or revised indicators, milestones, and/or targets.

As a custodian of SP data, DAPM computed SP indicator values which included the review of the SMQ survey responses nearing 500 questions submitted by 157 Country Offices and multi-country programmes. The final SMQ responses submitted by Country Offices and reviewed by HQ/RO reviewers were recorded in the inSight SMQ portal for documentation, also allowing any user with a UNICEF account to download and analyse the SP indicator data. SP indicator values were computed, in coordination with HQ Divisions/Offices, and in strict adherence to the SP indicator methodology sheets to ensure quality, consistency and transparency. Analysis on SP data formed a basis of the annual report of the Executive Director, which was submitted to the UNICEF Executive Board Annual Session along with its annexes.

In the second half of 2020, DAPM launched the development of the new SP 2022-2025 involving a series of organization-wide consultations, board engagement and external consultations. DAPM will continue leading the process towards submission to the Executive Board in 2021.

**Enhanced efficiency through simplification, modernization and recalibration of business process (DE)**

DAPM made significant contributions to the Organizational Design and Improvement initiatives, particularly the “MTR Task Team 3”, which reviewed UNICEF’s programme delivery model and key business processes from both programme and operations perspectives for simplification, modernization and recalibration of responsibilities between programme and operations staff. As the co-chair of Task Team 3 and also the lead of two of five working groups, DAPM facilitated rigorous consultations with HQ divisions, regional offices and country offices, resulting in recommendations to increase efficiencies in the planning, implementing and monitoring process by digitalizing country planning, monitoring and partnerships process, connecting multiple systems/portals to eliminate duplication of data entries and aligning partnership modalities with partner risk assessments. These recommendations were formally approved by the Executive Director in late 2020, and DAPM will lead
their implementation in 2021.

**Enhanced processes and performance management tools for programme implementation, monitoring and reporting (DE)**

In 2020 DAPM demonstrated its agility, flexibility and responsiveness to rapidly changing organizational requirements and programming environments through a series of responses and coordinated approaches to the COVID-19 response.

For example, foreseeing a need for coherent joined-up approaches to programme monitoring across the emergency and socio-economic responses to COVID-19, DAPM seized the initiative to establish and co-lead the COVID-19 PME (planning, monitoring and evaluation) Working Group with EMOPS and PD and quickly developed and rolled-out global scale harmonized solutions to programme monitoring across the humanitarian-development nexus, especially through the COVID-19 Programme Monitoring and Analysis Framework, and provide guidance on remote monitoring.

The collaboration also led to simplification of programme coding in VISION, roll-out of COVID-19 related tagging, and putting in place efficient mechanisms for the selection of COVID-19 indicators in RAM, which reduced an initial commitment of 620 unique indicators in country responses plans to only 31.

COVID-19 SitRep data was reported and visualized in real-time through a COVID-19 dashboard on key COVID-19 indicators. Delivery of new data packs/tools (e.g. Results Dashboard, RAM Tabular), and upgrades to existing tools (e.g. Regional Dashboard) efficiently facilitated the use of results data for more informed decision-making.

A significant decline (17%) was noted in the volume of cash transferred to Government IPs, while cash transferred to CSOs increased by 6%, compared to 2019. The growth in transfers to CSOs in the aftermath of COVID was facilitated by the simplified and flexible measures introduced by DAPM early in the COVID response, along with training and communication products targeting both UNICEF field staff and CSOs. This included Guidance for Civil Society Organizations on Partnership with UNICEF, Agora e-course on UNICEF and Civil Society Organizations and other public-facing guidance and education resources.

In the last quarter of 2020, DAPM launched RAM version 3.0 (RAM 3.0), following a participatory and inclusive process. The indicators’ catalogue is one of the key features of the new system that addresses challenges around harmonization of attributes and metadata, as well as data aggregation. With data disaggregation and decentralized planning and reporting, RAM 3.0 supports better equity and evidence-based programming and delivery of impactful results.

To accelerate transformation of the monitoring function, a Monitoring Action Cell was formed, co-led by DAPM and PD, and UNICEF’s systemwide reputation was further cemented with the launch of a Global Partnership for Better Monitoring.

Through the cross-divisional effort facilitated by DAPM, UNICEF’s focus on transparency has been significantly advanced with notable achievement in the 2020 Aid Transparency Index – scored "Very Good" and ranked 6th.

Towards operationalization of measures to bolster the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) among implementing partners, DAPM issued an organizational procedure on PSEA, rolled out in a phased approach prioritizing 38 high-risk emergency countries with all countries and offices on board by the end of 2020. A comprehensive toolkit and upgrade/enhancement of existing systems (VISION/eTools) provide practical capacity to manage PSEA risks.
Reinvigorated tools and support for programme excellence (DE)

UNICEF’s new gateway to programme guidance, PPPX, was launched in January 2020. PPPX quickly gained recognition as a solid foundation for Programming Excellence, having over 6,000 users with more than 200,000 single visits in its first year. Content continued to be expanded in 2020, with new sections on Evaluation, Research, AAP, PSEA and others. In response to the pandemic, a COVID-19 section was swiftly created to serve as the ‘one stop shop’ for all guidance on programming during the pandemic.

In close collaboration with the Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP) Division, the Situation Analysis Guidance for high income countries (HICs) was finalized and used to inform relevant indicators within the Executive Director’s Annual Report.

DAPM continued co-leading the Joint MAPS Team with UNDP and leading the policy and knowledge management work of the Task Team. The e-course on MAPS was launched in September 2020, attracting more than 1,500 people (including UN staff from 32 UN entities and non-UN personnel from government agencies, academia, think-tanks, etc) from 148 countries.

Increased availability statistics on children, women and their families, including during the COVID-19 pandemic (GRP)

To be able to measure the impact of the pandemic on children, a new phone-based household survey tool (MICS-Plus) was introduced and rolled-out, initially in Belize (pilot), and Mongolia and Georgia (national). This MICS-Plus methodology allows for monthly rapid data collection and processing allow quasi-real-time tracking of situation of children. Further, the division introduced a guidance mechanism on data collection and carried out orientation to UNICEF country offices on methodologies and tools for rapid data collection. Advanced global measurement standards and methodological development on key priorities including innovations were introduced to enhance data availability.

Even though that nearly all countries halted data collection through traditional household surveys, including the flagship UNICEF supported Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), work continued and even accelerated on processing and analysing MICS data that was collected before the pandemic. As a result, MICS reports were published for 34 additional countries while another 17 reports entered in the final phase before publication and 16 are at the field work stage. These reports substantially contribute to the availability of high quality, disaggregated data on children, women and their families and contain more SDG indicators than in any other global survey programme, making this UNICEF supported initiative the most important household survey programme for measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals by country and globallyMICS is now working with IPUMS at the Institute for Social Research and Data Innovation (ISDRI), University of Minnesota to harmonize MICS datasets and develop of a web based data analysis platform to enable easy and in-depth comparative research across time and countries.

Progress with analysis and increased use of statistics for situation monitoring and tracking progress towards child-related SDGs and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children (GRP)

Upon the outbreak of the pandemic, the Data & Analytics Section in the division immediate reprioritized its workplans and developed a COVID-19 analytical agenda to generate evidence for responding and adjusting programming. The analysis was aimed at generating analytical thought products to inform public health response, understand the impacts on children –through service disruptions and economic dislocation, - and how to mitigate them. The analysis also informed programme planning, effectiveness and impact measurement. Specifically, the analysis included:

· Impact of COVID-19 on (multi-dimensional) child poverty, an analysis carried out jointly with Save the Children
· Impact of COVID-19 on access to- and participation in education including first-ever estimates of internet-availability in the home for remote learning
· Impact of COVID-19 on child mortality and stillbirths around the world
· Impact of COVID-19 on child nutrition and diet, breastfeeding practice and vulnerabilities
· Impact of COVID-19 on access to health services, including regular immunization programmes
· Impact of COVID-19 on levels of violence and abuse of children
· Availability of WASH facilities in schools (as part of school-reopening discussion)

In a major extra effort, D&A organized a series of questionnaires sent to Country Offices to ascertain the extent of interruption of services to children (due to COVID), the reasons for interruption, and other programmatically crucial situational data. The questionnaire, the dashboards and analytical products in easy-to-consume PowerPoint format were developed from scratch in record time, and made an unparalleled repository of information about how the pandemic was affecting children.

Above mentioned analytical products on the impact of COVID-19 on children were produced and disseminated, including on the dedicated COVID-19 hub on www.data.unicef.org/COVID-19andchildren. The website accumulated more than 3 million unique visitors in 2020 (redoubling the 2019 figure which in turn was double that of 2018) and its use continues to grow. The analytical products received substantive international attention such as by media, civil society, governments, inter-governmental organisations. Senior UNICEF management, regional offices and country offices maximized the use of the analytical products for targeted advocacy for informed policy formulation to respond to the impact of the pandemic and for programmatic action.

Working closely with the UN Statistical Division, World Bank, and UN agencies, Funds and Programmes, efforts continued in providing estimates for child related SDG indicators, building national capacity to monitor child-related SDGs, keeping children front and centre in SDG policy debates. DAPM led or provided inputs to major UNICEF flagship publications. Other key analytical products were produced particularly on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals for which UNICEF is the custodian of 9 indicators and co-custodian for another 10. The team worked with a range of UN entities in the estimation of, among others:
· Infant and child mortality, while important work in estimating stillbirths was launched.
· Nutrition, including the first publication with data on unhealthy eating among children and improved standardization of cross-country estimates
· Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health, with new efforts in measuring adolescent mental health
· Water and sanitation (WASH) coverage, and also published a report on trends in WASH coverage and inequalities in countries around the world and a report with new data on WASH in health care facilities
· Immunisation rates
· HIV prevalence among children
· Early Childhood Development
· Enrolment rates in education and school participation
· Prevalence of violence against children, with special emphasis on street children, children in residential care and children in juvenile justice
· Prevalence of child marriage
· Number of children living with disabilities
· Gender equality
· Multi-dimensional child poverty

To ensure that all this analysis and information on the situation of children, more than 100 high profile publications and knowledge products were launched and side-events were organized in high-level meetings and conferences, including the UN Statistical Commission. These efforts further strengthened UNICEF’s position as the knowledge leader on the situation of children and have resulted in significant recognition by other UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, civil society organisations, academics, opinion leaders, and other key stakeholders.

In order to improve availability of high-quality disaggregated data, existing data bases on situation of
children and women were updated with most recent data for existing and new via CRAVE and SDG indicator annual consultation processes. Work is ongoing to have a common set of disaggregation variables such as gender, age disability, HH wealth and geography. Innovation on data analysis such as small area estimation, use of data from social media to monitor changes in abuse-related content and cyberbullying online, geographic distance and service availability as determinants of child poverty were explored.

Important work progressed, in close collaboration with the Programme Division, in improving UNICEF’s efforts in strengthening administrative data systems. With Emergency Operations (EMOPS), efforts continued to enhance humanitarian situation monitoring, allowing for better targeted humanitarian response. Innovative work on the use of geo-spatial data was also undertaken and will continue to grow.

**Increased emphasis on harnessing innovative methodologies and tools for ensuring that the right data are at the right hands at the right time**

In response to the call of senior management for more ‘real-time data’ the division started looking at new ways of data collection (e.g. MICS-Plus) and data analysis, including geospatial analysis and using big data from technology- and telecommunication companies. For this purpose, partnerships were established with several academic institutions and it is expected that the work on ‘frontier data’ will obtain increasing attention over the next years.

Improved practices in data management and communication both internally and externally through a combination of new user-friendly data tools and components were expanded access to indicator data, and a focus on outreach and learning to make those new tools and data accessible to a wide audience (HDX and others) and a renewed and interactive SDG portal.

Established COVID-19 hub on socio-economic impacts to children supported rapid data gathering: survey creation, execution, publication, and marketing. A total of 60 products (interactive dashboards - regional and global, datasets, brochures, factsheets, and publications) were made available. The interactive dashboard of socio-economic impacts on children (mentioned above) drew over 100,000 visitors per month.

Expanded support to country and regional offices: new grants totalling more than $250,000 through the Data for Children Catalytic Fund, launch of a data savvy channel on AGORA and rapid iteration of data action plans – from LTA to DIY and now a “workbook” approach (designed with Jamaica and Botswana) for others to follow, and continued supporting the data community and data helpdesk.

Supported significant progress in the inter-agency discussions around biometrics and the cash MIS design and organisation wide processes and tools to improve data work – including the global data protection policy, legal data sharing templates to make country office work easier, the legal identity agenda, and ensuring data reflected in the UNHCR blueprint

As first steps towards establishing a system of governance of data (in response to the UN Data Strategy promulgated by the SG in May 2020), the division started, in close collaboration with the Office of Research, putting more emphasis on ensuring and promoting the responsible use of data on- and for children, including issues such as addressing data privacy and ethical use of data.

**Increased use of tools and materials for learning & knowledge exchange (DE)**

The Learning & Knowledge Exchange team worked closely with other divisions, particularly with the knowledge management teams in Programme Division and EMOPS and the COVID-19 Secretariat, in documenting and organising case studies and lessons learned about the UNICEF COVID-19 response. The information was shared through various internal- and external channels, including the Yammer platform.
In addition to all the coordination of documenting and disseminating lessons learned from the response to the pandemic, a new global knowledge management strategy was launched, with the support of a network of knowledge management staff across the globe. This strategy will contribute to UNICEF being an even better learning organisation. While many UNICEF staff were working remotely for the vast majority of 2020, they took the opportunity to access the many learning courses available on the internal AGORA platform. Other specific courses were also designed in such a manner that they could be delivered virtually.

Work on promoting and South-South Cooperation focused on facilitating knowledge exchange between governments on response to the pandemic. Cooperation on several other topics was also brokered between several governments.

**Strengthened Internal management**

All divisional operations functions were transferred from Programme Division to DAPM on the 1st of January 2020. Key performance indicators, including on human resources, were reviewed by the DAPM management team on a quarterly basis. Overall performance improved throughout the year despite the many challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a 25% reduction of the divisional budget. Both aspects required a substantive reprioritization of activities and budgets, allowing for maximizing the DAPM contribution to the overall UNICEF response to the impact of the pandemic on children and their families. Also, a light review of the Office Management Plan 2019 – 2021 was implemented. Throughout the year, emphasis was placed on streamlining business processes and finding additional efficiency gains, contributing to cost-savings and reducing the workload, including of administrative support staff.

Focus on staff-wellbeing continued, with the implementation of the ‘We are DAPM’ strategy and following the first all-staff retreat of November 2019. Based on the results of the Global Staff Survey (mid-2020) a divisional task team was established to address some of the persisting challenges for the division.

In human resources, and in close collaboration with the Human Resources Business Partner team, solid emphasis was placed on improving gender and geographical diversity of DAPM staff and considering diversity candidates for each of the around 30 posts that were recruited during the year.

**Lessons Learned and Innovations**

During 2020, many lessons were learned due to the DAPM response to the COVID-19 pandemic and this was described in the previous sections. Other lessons include:

Responding to the call of senior management, and building on previous and ongoing divisional efforts, DAPM will need to continue actively exploring and implementing efforts in simplification, particularly in system coherence and simplification across programme planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting, allowing for increased programme effectiveness and easing the perceived and felt heaviness of planning and reporting processes in both development and humanitarian settings. Digital transformation of planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting processes could prove to be transformative in that respect. The digitalization of processes also resulted in substantive efficiency gains and therefore reducing staff time required for process management. This allowed colleagues in country offices to spend more time in implementing and monitoring programmes, along with governments and partner organisations.
While UNICEF has robust planning and reporting systems, there is a need to further reinforce the monitoring function with a view to learn and increase programme effectiveness across the organization. Such efforts will ensure that UNICEF: remains the recognised global leader in impact-level situation data on children, while extending this leadership and maximising the value of existing and new data sources; retains the confidence of resource partners in the veracity of output-level monitoring, while streamlining to focus on programme management, quality and programme effectiveness; and, accelerates improvements to rapid and timely outcome-level monitoring and institutionalises feedback loops to drive quality, results and organisational performance.

With earmarked HACT-funding, additional investment was made in enhancing tools, systems and practices for working with implementing partners. These efforts need to continue and at the same time also new requirements need to be addressed, including addressing prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of children and their families by partner organizations and also for establishing environmental safeguards and standards. Moreover, additional investment is required to gradually shift towards reinforcing partnership risk management.

Significant investment was made in management for results by strengthening capacities in regional offices and country offices, including through Results & Rights Based Management training, improving access to programming guidance (PPPx), and reinforcing quality assurance of programming documents (programme strategy notes, country programme documents), among others. Continued attention is required in ensuring that country offices analyse and use programme data effectively, to develop, adjust or adapt country programmes and implementation to respond to priorities and dynamic contexts (e.g. humanitarian situations). More emphasis will be required on addressing the implications of UN Reform initiatives on programming, while actively and constructively contributing to those initiatives.

DAPM continued to produce a wealth of data and analysis about children and by doing this UNICEF remains the ‘go-to place’ for data & analytics, by internal – and external stakeholders, whether for measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (and other major commitments), or progress of the UNICEF Strategic Plan. Investments are required in innovations in the implementation of MICS, and introducing frontier data (big data, geospatial data, e-government data, and tools such as artificial intelligence) in the DAPM data work. Moreover, efforts will need to be made to maximise the use and the impact of all the analytical products. The MICS programme provides robust statistics for advocacy and accountability. The sixth round of the MICS programme supported more governments than ever before to measure progress to the SDGs and other national targets related to children. This brings challenges both for implementation and funding for technical assistance.

There is a need to accelerate efforts in providing such ‘real-time’ data and information for informed decision making, advocacy and action. When the right data are in the right hands at the right time, decisions can be better informed, more equitable, and more likely to protect children’s rights. Effective use of data can help us not just plan, track and report results for children, but also shape those results with better insights about what’s working, what’s not, which children are thriving, and which are being left behind. DAPM will continue striving towards contributing to the development and implementation of organizational systems for such purpose while also exploring new opportunities for ‘nowcasting’, forecasting and predictive analysis, including by using new techniques and tools (‘frontier data’) such as analysis of social and news media streams, undertake geospatial analysis, and link administrative data systems for more powerful data for children.

In 2020, DAPM initiated the roll-out of the global knowledge management strategy, leveraging the organization wide knowledge management network for this purpose in order to maximize the reach of the strategy within the limited resources available. However, to ensure that the implementation of this strategy is successful, including the anticipated need to advise and support the field, this work must be
prioritized further within the overall portfolio of the learning and knowledge exchange team. This will also require fostering increased collaboration between teams within DAPM and will rely on strong collaboration with Programme Division and EMOPS.

DAPM has continued to support flagship programmatic learning initiatives and provided advice and support to technical and programmatic related learning initiatives in programme sectors, regional and country offices. While this approach has been successful, an increasing demand for more tailored support to technical learning needs, and a desire to look beyond training to promote continual improvement through strengthening skills and knowledge including learning from experience. Use of the AGORA platform has tripled and the success of the platform has led to a substantial increase in user support requests as well as increased platform maintenance costs and a steep increase in the number of projects.

Finally, upon the results and follow-up process to the 2020 Global Staff Survey, there remains a continuous need to invest in implementation of corporate initiatives that promote organizational values and staff wellbeing and of relevant actions recommended by the UNICEF Action Plan on Anti-Racism and Discrimination and by the DAPM GSS Task Team. For this purpose, the new ‘We are DAPM’ initiative aims at upholding organizational CRITA norms and values and nurturing an inclusive, respectful, and positive work environment.