

Colombia

Update on the context and situation of children

In 2021, children and families in Colombia were positively impacted by the increase in COVID-19 vaccination, including prioritized groups, such as teachers and children; the re-opening of schools; the launch of a measles and rubella immunization campaign for children under 10 years; the approval of a ban on corporal punishment and harmful practices against children; and the granting of the Temporary Protection Status for Venezuelans, providing eligible Venezuelans with a 10-year residence permit and access to education, health, employment and social protection.

Challenges related to deepening pre-existing structural conditions due to the impact of COVID-19, especially in peri-urban and rural areas, where poverty, inequalities, domestic and community violence threaten child rights. The presence of non-State armed groups in some territories caused mass displacement, affecting families and children and requiring humanitarian response. Indigenous communities were significantly affected by explosive ordnances, while end-year alerts show increased risks in child recruitment and use.

Colombia experienced COVID-19 peaks in January and July, ranking fourth in the region for cumulative cases (5,127,971) and fifth in cumulative deaths (129,798). COVID-19 vaccination efforts began in the first trimester with a full vaccination coverage of 55 per cent by year-end. Colombia used the COVAX mechanism and direct contracts. In October, the Government opened vaccination to children over 3 years of age and irregular migrants, prioritizing pregnant women. Booster shots are underway and vaccination certificates are mandatory in public places.

Government efforts focused on the implementation of a comprehensive economic recovery plan, including strengthening resilience of families under the poverty line through expansion of social protection, increasing employment and private sector productivity. End-year reports show that Colombia will have a positive GDP in 2021 (estimated at 9.4 per cent). Key concerns relate to youth and gender gaps in employment.

Nationwide social mobilizations took place between April–June, with support by civil society actors, including unions, students, women's, indigenous and Afro-Colombian organizations, with an unprecedented level of participation of young people. While initial demonstrations were a reaction to fiscal reform, these evolved to include long-standing grievances, seeking solutions to address root causes of unemployment, poverty, corruption, insecurity and lack of access to health and education. The events drew national and international concerns, along with appeals for non-violence, respect for human rights and peaceful dialogue. The Government announced a comprehensive policy on youth, seeking to reach 13 million young people with housing, education and employment initiatives.

Child immunization campaigns to return to pre-pandemic levels and the re-opening of schools were prioritized. The Government led a nationwide immunization campaign, with UNICEF supporting measles and rubella vaccination for children aged under 10, reaching over 87,000 children. Acknowledging both learning losses and other risks posed by the lack of in-person learning (violence, child marriage, early unions, adolescent pregnancy, recruitment, child labour), the Ministry of Education prioritized the return to in-person learning, with resources made available to local governments. By October, 91 per cent of schools offered in-person learning, with about 7 out of 10 million children back in schools. Significant bottlenecks remain to ensure that families have up-to-date information on biosecurity. UNICEF supported efforts to ensure that targeted schools have quality reopening plans, pedagogical tools, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and communication

for development (C4D) support.

In April, after over three years advocating for a law against corporal punishment, Bill 2089 prohibiting the use of physical punishment, cruel, humiliating, or degrading treatment and any type of violence as a method of correction against children and adolescents was enacted in line with Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recommendations. A national strategy was launched with UNICEF support on positive parenting. Colombia's Constitutional Court is reviewing the existing civil code articles that allow for children between 14 and 17 to legally marry, with their parents' consent. UNICEF, Government institutions, civil society and United Nations agencies, submitted technical notes to advocate for these to be declared unconstitutional according to CRC and CEDAW recommendations. In August, the Government submitted the 6th and 7th combined reports to the CRC Committee.

A highlight of the year – linking humanitarian action and social inclusion – was the Government decision to grant a temporary protection status for Venezuelan migrants living in Colombia. According to *Migración Colombia*, 1,842,390 Venezuelans are settled in Colombia (24 per cent children). The temporary protection statute (TPS) is considered a rights-based measure addressing bottlenecks for their access to social services. Its implementation has required massive efforts to register population, issue cards and address misconceptions on access. By December, over 850,000 Venezuelans had completed their registration, while children aged between 0 and 7 were prioritized to receive ID cards, with UNICEF support with funding from the US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 58 per cent of humanitarian responses in Colombia were related to forced confinement, 42 per cent to forced displacement, and 32 per cent to natural events. Protection concerns around child recruitment by illegal armed groups continue to increase. Interventions to prevent and protect cases of child recruitment and use through community-based system strengthening were prioritized by UNICEF.

The UN Secretary-General visited Colombia as part of the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Peace Agreement, reinforcing the UN support for the peace process. Colombia's Constitutional Court extended the Truth Commission mandate until June 2022. The Truth Commission, with UNICEF support, is integrating the views of children and adolescents and will include a dedicated chapter on the impact of the armed conflict on children. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) made progress in its investigation of the cases of child recruitment during the armed conflict. The JEP's preliminary analyses point to about 18,000 cases of child recruitment that could have taken place between 1971 and 2016 by FARC-EP. The child focus will contribute to the goals of the transitional justice system. This is of critical importance considering that the Ombudspersons Office issued 19 alerts on the risks of recruitment in 73 municipalities.

Major contributions and drivers of results

UNICEF interventions, both in development programming (in the first year of the current country programme cycle) and humanitarian response, continued to reflect and incorporate the impact of the pandemic on the lives of the most disadvantaged children and women in Colombia, as well as on forward-looking initiatives to place children at the core of policymaking. With more flexible mobility conditions, UNICEF built on the previous year of pandemic programming experience and its enhanced field presence and focus to deliver results for children, understanding the challenges and opportunities posed by the national context, characterized by a triple emergency situation of armed

violence, migration flows and seasonal natural disasters.

UNICEF support to the national vaccination programme is an example of priority-based and data-driven intervention supporting emerging challenges posed by the pandemic. Considering the well-documented coverage decline in regular immunization programmes for children aged under 10, UNICEF worked closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to support efforts to increase coverage to prevent outbreaks of child diseases that had been long eradicated. As the MoH set an ambitious target to reach 7.5 million children, UNICEF Colombia provided technical and financial support to the vaccination drive. Year-end estimates show that UNICEF support to the MoH allowed over 87,000 children throughout the country to receive vaccines.

As Colombia pursued making in-person learning the norm rather than the exception, UNICEF focused on providing technical support to local education secretariats and schools, with a view to both addressing learning losses and ensuring that schools become protective environments that help mitigate risks exacerbated by the pandemic, such as violence, child recruitment, child labour, early marriage/unions and adolescent pregnancy. By year-end, UNICEF had reached over 165,000 children in 243 schools nationwide with WASH in schools' interventions, pedagogical support, C4D and the transition from blended to in-person learning. Noting the challenges of the return, UNICEF also provided technical support to about 2,200 teachers to strengthen their capacities in managing curricular workload and the need to support children from a psychosocial perspective.

A flagship 2021 result, reflecting the humanitarian–development–peace continuum, was UNICEF support for the implementation of the TPS. The TPS reaffirms Colombia's open-door policy and is expected to enhance access to services for Venezuelans who have settled in Colombia for the next 10 years, while also allowing them to seek formal employment. The measure is a rights-based approach that fosters their longer-term social integration in Colombia. Understanding the unique opportunity this measure represents for about 400,000 Venezuelan children in Colombia, in terms of their access to health, education and child protection services provided by the Colombian State, UNICEF supported every step of the registration process, from the pre-registration of families to the issuance of ID cards that will support this access. During the pre-registration stage, UNICEF, in partnership with local authorities and the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), organized 86 registration drives in seven departments, enabling the registration of over 12,000 Venezuelans, including about 1,900 people from ethnic communities, 1,324 adolescent girls, 1,233 adolescent boys, 1,528 girls, 1,618 boys, 3,666 women and 2,679 men.

The registration drives also presented an opportunity to provide counselling and other services for Venezuelan families, such as the activation of protection routes, vaccination and nutritional assessments. Ensuring that the access to this measure reached the last mile, UNICEF, in partnership with *Migración Colombia*, ICBF, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), supported the issuance of ID cards for 50,000 Venezuelan children under 7 years of age. Mindful that the process of accessing services does not end with the delivery of ID cards, UNICEF is also working closely in the field with relevant authorities to ensure that decision makers understand the implications of the TPS and help address and remove the barriers that sometimes prevent Venezuelan children from accessing services.

While the TPS provides a path towards regularization and inclusion, migration flows from Venezuela into Colombia still demand a humanitarian response in border areas and host communities. Following a pandemic-related decrease in the mixed migration flows, 2021 saw an uptick in people entering the country, with over 200,000 people doing so. As such, UNICEF maintained, adapted and enhanced its humanitarian action, with support from key partners such as PRM, ECHO, Canada, Norway, Germany, Sweden, UNICEF USA, UNICEF Denmark and UNICEF Spain, to ensure that interventions are relevant to the needs seen in the field.

Key results in humanitarian interventions in 2021 include a new design to deliver mobile early childhood development (ECD) services for the most vulnerable migrant population, namely the *Caminantes* (walkers), which reached over 14,200 children with early stimulation through arts, play and literature, while about 9,000 parents and caregivers received nutritional and breastfeeding counselling and about 7,000 children, parents and caregivers received psychosocial support.

Child protection interventions were also adapted to address the heightened risks posed by the pandemic, namely in relation to the prevention of violence, recruitment, mine accidents and children living in the streets, among others, especially in relation to unaccompanied children. In coordination with partners and ICBF, UNICEF reached about 4,300 children (including 220 unaccompanied children) through its drop-in centres in Norte de Santander and La Guajira with wide-ranging services including self-care practices, nutritional support, recreation, violence prevention workshops with families, delivery of biosecurity and hygiene kits, alternative learning and activation of protection routes when necessary.

The UNICEF flagship flexible learning model for migrant children and children from host communities, *Circuitos de Aprendizaje*, continued amidst new challenges in 2021. As Colombia prepared for the return to in-person learning, the *Circuitos* also did so, in coordination with local authorities and education secretariats. Each *Circulo* developed biosecurity plans and protocols to ensure a safe return, with about 831 girls and 958 boys returning to in-person learning through this model, of which 90 per cent are expected to transition to official schools to continue with their formal education in 2022 and beyond.

In 2021, migration flows through Colombia included a complex phenomenon of people from multiple nationalities passing through Colombia into Panama as they move towards North America. Official data indicates that over 100,000 people, including about 19,000 children (about half of them under 5 years old), are estimated to have attempted to make the hazardous journey from Colombia into Panama throughout the year. Faced with daily crossing quotas between the two countries, thousands of migrants had to remain in border areas awaiting their crossing turn for weeks. The border towns' infrastructure was thus overwhelmed, requiring swift action on WASH and child protection services. In response, UNICEF, with support from ECHO, set up six water distribution points and additional distribution through water tanks estimated to have provided WASH solutions to 28,500 people. To mitigate child protection risks, UNICEF is working with ICBF and the Colombian Red Cross to enhance psychosocial support and case management in the area.

UNICEF's work in conflict-affected regions took a new territorial approach and focus in 2021 in line with the 2021–2024 Country Programme. Key interventions in these territories seek to enhance a protective environment for children, with a special emphasis on the prevention of recruitment and system strengthening for the response, with a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach. The prevention of recruitment was a top 2021 priority, considering that the impact of the pandemic in families often left them more vulnerable to such risks due to the limited in-person learning opportunities and the exacerbated socioeconomic hardship in remote areas and indigenous communities, at a time when illegal armed groups also exerted territorial control in some areas of the country. Through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund-funded initiative *Sumate por Mi*, UNICEF, jointly with IOM and Government entities forming part of the intersectoral commission for recruitment prevention, reached over 13,000 children, 2,000 families, 1,000 community leaders, 600 teachers and 500 local decision makers with coordinated initiatives, including the activation of rapid response teams and plans, the design of community-based roadmaps for prevention, risk identification and psychosocial support.

Understanding the linkages between protection interventions and the need to return to in-person learning, UNICEF also worked with UN Women and UNDP to protect the educational pathways of

children in Chocó, placing special importance on the safe return to schools to prevent risks through WASH interventions, violence prevention, sexual and reproductive health and girl's empowerment. This MPTF-funded initiative reached 4,800 students in 23 schools in two municipalities in Chocó, using an ethnically appropriate approach to support school completion and prevent drop-out.

Considering past and current challenges and the impact of the armed conflict on children, UNICEF Colombia prioritized the integration of a specific child focus into the country's transitional justice system. With the aim of putting into practice the principle of non-repetition, UNICEF is working with the Truth Commission to reflect the views of children and adolescents on how to best disseminate the findings of its final report. The final report will include a dedicated chapter on the impact of the conflict on children and adolescents, while their views, gathered through a UNICEF-supported national consultation with the participation of over 5,000 children and adolescents, provide important findings that will inform the Commission's legacy strategy. This will be developed and implemented in 2022, with UNICEF support and in partnership with the Government of Germany.

UNICEF also provided technical support to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace for the investigation of case 07 on child recruitment during the armed conflict, through the design of a victim participation and accreditation strategy and the support of victims' organizations that gather reports on the impact of the armed conflict on children and adolescents.

UNICEF has achieved important results in its policy advocacy and upstream work, through technical inputs and support to key child priorities, such as the eradication of early marriage (currently under review by the Country's Constitutional Court), the prohibition of corporal punishment (with a UNICEF-supported implementation strategy now underway) and the special child focus of the country's poverty reduction strategies. For the latter, key results include the design of the National Strategy for Overcoming Child Poverty, which was informed by UNICEF Colombia's technical inputs on international best practices and child poverty measurement methodologies and launched under the leadership of Colombia's Social Prosperity Department. The Government also launched a national budget spending benchmarking exercise focused on investment in children, carried out with UNICEF's support within an inter-agency Integrated Financing Framework initiative, along with UN Women and UNDP. This critical tool will allow for using lifecycle and territorial lenses in making policy and budget decisions to improve effectiveness and efficiency in public spending for children.

From a Business for Results perspective and to maximize progress for children and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNICEF made important steps in health, education and protection. In the Family Friendly Workplaces agenda, it is worth noting that UNICEF's corporate partner (Banco de Bogotá) was mentioned as a model to follow in the Government's recently released 'Decennial Breastfeeding Plan' (2021–2030). UNICEF had previously provided technical assistance for the development of Banco de Bogotá's Family Friendly Workplaces roadmap jointly developed a business case to be followed by other companies and sectors in the country. Also, with the UN Global Compact and Ministry of Health UNICEF co-led a webinar (around 100 major companies have accessed it to date) on 'Breastfeeding and Colombian SDG goals'.

On another front, *Ecosistemas para la Innovación en la Educación Media* (key initiative in *Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial* (PDET) territories, led by Ministry of Education and supported by UNICEF) included key private sector actors to contribute their technical expertise on key matters such as employability skills, among others. The private sector also started contributing to the implementation of the recent law prohibiting physical punishment in children with UNICEF support in awareness raising through webinars with two of Colombia's top employers, CLARO and Banco de Bogotá.

To ensure that these results are achieved in full compliance with international standards and humanitarian principles, UNICEF also revamped its prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse

(PSEA) and accountability to affected populations (AAP) capacity. In terms of PSEA, UNICEF, as co-leader of the UN Task Force, provided technical support for the development and approval of standard operating procedures (SOPs) and worked with 29 implementing partners in the development of their action plans for risk mitigation and reporting. PSEA and AAP actions interlinked in the field with a view to fostering communities' awareness and reporting. In AAP, over 13,000 people provided feedback on UNICEF interventions through suggestion boxes, focus groups, surveys and other mechanisms. The feedback is incorporated in real-time in the programme design and adjustments made in coordination with communities and implementing partners.

Within the context of the nationwide social mobilizations, adolescent and youth engagement was also critical in programme design and implementation. As young people became particularly active in expressing their concerns over social and economic trends in the country, UNICEF, in partnership with several UN agencies, developed a strategy and methodology to foster a civic dialogue around issues that concern young people, ensuring that the dialogues would reflect a representative sample of youth in Colombia, including indigenous, afro-descendant and young people from remote rural communities as well as migrants and refugees.

These dialogues, with about 200 participants in six municipalities across the country, highlighted young people's demand for participation, access to education and employment as well as for addressing discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and nationality. The dialogues also put forward concrete proposals presented by young people with a view to strengthening participation mechanisms and the need to support community-based youth organizations, as well as initiatives for participation through arts and culture. For addressing these views and proposals, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have developed a PBF-funded initiative entitled '*Civic Spaces for resilience and reconciliation*', seeking to strengthen young people and youth organizations as agents for change for peacebuilding, reconciliation, conflict resolution and violence prevention in their local communities.

As 2021 was the first year of the new country programme implementation, UNICEF implemented an innovative matrix management structure that reflects inter-sectoral outcomes, namely on '*Stabilization: Peace with Legality*', '*Migration as a Development Factor*' and '*Technical Assistance for the Acceleration of Catalytic SDGs*', as well as the technical leadership of sectoral-based priorities on health, education, child protection, social inclusion and WASH. While Government partners have expressed their appreciation for this strategy's alignment with the CPD, preliminary internal surveys point to staff appreciation in the strategy's impact on improved communication, coherence and lateral coordination, as well as for identifying gaps and solution in complex initiatives. Further, all the 2020 internal audit recommendations were addressed and have been closed. To ensure a safe programming environment, monitoring staff security in conflict related areas, combined with duty of care interventions at territorial level while investing in training and staff exchange was a priority for the year. Colombia became the first country to launch the new Supporter Engagement Strategy Digital Platform enhancing the quality of engagement with private donors.

UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

An expanded and enhanced partnership base was a key change strategy for achieving UNICEF Colombia's results in 2021. In a record-breaking year for public partnership fundraising, the donor base was expanded to include new partners such as Germany (in support of the workstream on transitional justice), Spain (on child protection for unaccompanied children) and Cataluña (on recruitment prevention). Further initiatives approved for funding developed at an inter-agency level include Civic Spaces for Young People with UNFPA and ILO approved for PBF funding, Inclusion of Women and Girls with Disabilities with UN Women and UNFPA, approved at its first stage by the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Integral Care Model as part of the reincorporation process for the consolidation of PDET territories with UN WOMEN.

Ongoing inter-agency initiatives also helped position UN agencies and UNICEF in critical aspects of national level decision making. An MPTF-funded recruitment prevention initiative carried out in partnership with IOM provided a basis and lessons learned for local systems strengthening around recruitment prevention as well as the need to ensure an ethnically designed strategy adapted to local needs. An SDG fund programme on Innovative Financing Framework implemented jointly with UNDP and UN Women was catalytical for the development and launch of a child expenditure budget marker to improve budget allocations for children in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, in line with CRC general comment 19.

Other inter-agency initiatives were results-oriented and focused on emerging issues. One such case related to the dialogues carried out by UN agencies in Colombia with young people in light of the social mobilizations seen throughout the Country between April and June. Different agencies joined efforts to develop methodologies and host dialogues that will inform advocacy priorities for 2022. In addition, UNDP, UNCHR, IOM and UNICEF joined forces to carry out TPS registration drives and to support the issuance of ID cards for registered Venezuelans through inter-agency cooperation. Further, UNHCR and UNICEF implemented a joint workplan on issues including the TPS implementation, xenophobia prevention and child protection actions for unaccompanied and separated children. UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF also came together on the development of an advocacy brief for the eradication of early unions and child marriage. The UN task force on PSEA also enhanced its coordination with the approval of SOPs, through specific case management and the implementation of communication strategies.

Inter-agency cooperation also focused on duty of care around COVID-19 related measures for staff. These included noteworthy efforts for the vaccination of staff, dependents, consultants and implementing partners in coordination with the Ministry of Health.

Key partners for 2021 included BPRM, ECHO, the government of Canada, Sweden, Norway and Germany, as well as national committees of Spain and Denmark. New corporate partners include Google and Baxter (with support from UNICEF USA). Despite the COVID-19 challenges, UNICEF Colombia Private Sector Fundraising experienced a 28 per cent increase over the last year. Income results represent 23 per cent of initial forecasts prepared at the beginning of the pandemic.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Innovation: Technical assistance for results-based payments on ECD.

A key milestone this year consisted of an effective use of a UNICEF Colombia key research product for decision-making at the national level, which will potentially impact the efficient access to ECD

services for 1.7 million children under 5 years of age throughout the country. In 2020, UNICEF Colombia partnered with a consultancy firm, ICBF, and the Social Prosperity Department (DPS) to analyse the feasibility of implementing a results-based payments system.

Initially there were four Government-led programmes with a specific child focus identified as priorities for the feasibility analysis (namely the ICBF's Early Childhood Development Programme, ICBF's reintegration programme for adolescents who had been in contact with the law, DPS's social assistance programme for families living in poverty, and a conditional cash transfer to overcome poverty). A joint analysis between the Government and UNICEF Colombia demonstrated that ECD showed the best potential for implementing this initiative. The selection was based on a set of key factors, including: the response capacity of service providers; available data on ECD outcomes; the enabling environment around the programme; and its own fundraising appeal with the private sector for potential public-private partnerships. The selection process also took into consideration a risk assessment. With this top-line priority selected, UNICEF Colombia and ICBF joined technical and financial resources through a partnership agreement to implement the results-based payments on the US\$1.5 billion ECD service programme, administered in over 600 locations through 350 service providers. As key deliverables for 2022, this agreement, now underway, includes building the evidence base for a business case, including the mechanism's potential for accelerating SDG4 achievement, increasing public spending effectiveness, developing institutional capacities for the results-based payments – based on evidence – and improving transparency and quality of service providers.

Lesson Learned: Responding to a sudden triple emergency

In late March 2021, over 5,000 Venezuelan and Colombian nationals living in the state of Apure suddenly crossed into Colombia's Arauquita municipality (Arauca department) within the course of two weeks. The two countries are separated by the Cutufi river. Entire families reported fleeing from a sudden armed confrontation along the border areas, where shootings and bombings had been witnessed. The sudden influx included about 1,800 children and adolescents at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic was raging through Colombia. As emergency shelters were quickly set up, the adequacy of WASH and child protection services became a major concern for national and local authorities as well as the humanitarian actors with a traditionally scattered presence in the area with work on the more steady and limited migration streams.

In this very challenging situation, UNICEF Colombia set up a rapid response combining WASH, child protection and C4D interventions, in coordination with humanitarian partners as well as local and national authorities including the Border Management Presidential Office and ICBF. The triple affectation, including the sudden emergency intertwined with the complexities of setting up a response in the COVID-19 context, where UNICEF Colombia focused on addressing all the emergency layers, namely migration, impact of armed conflict and COVID-19 in a mostly rural municipality of about 56,000 people, with 76 per cent of the territory being vulnerable to flooding, where all these issues co-existed with lagging child-related indicators (69 per cent net coverage for education, 13 per 1,000 births of women between 14 and 17, 4.7 repetition rate and about 22,000 people displaced by conflict between 1984 and 2017) and high levels of poverty (49 per cent).

In this context, UNICEF Colombia initially prioritized life-saving interventions on WASH, setting up 48 sinks, 11 showers, 23 toilets and 9 bathrooms in some of the areas used as temporary shelters to ensure dignified conditions as well as hygiene standards, which were also critical to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in relatively small (although mostly open-air) spaces. UNICEF Colombia also supported the ICBF's surge capacity by providing technical assistance for the set-up of 10 mobile child protection teams that strengthened and activated child protection routes and protocols, while also supporting the prevention of child recruitment and using creative and pedagogical methodologies as part of the psychosocial support needed by the community. Understanding the specific risks of unaccompanied and separated children and adolescents, UNICEF Colombia also advocated for the expansion of slots for the official foster home modality, using a family-based approach. With the specific concerns related to potential PSEA risks, UNICEF Colombia also disseminated key PSEA guidance among humanitarian workers, service providers, implementing partners and staff responsible

for shelters.

As the situation settled, additional actions also took a more development-oriented shape based on the needs seen as the initial response took place, taking into host communities concerns and the strain created by this sudden emergency. As such, additional WASH rehabilitation and storage initiatives took place, reaching a total of 20,000 people. Maintenance of this increased capacity has been taken up by local authorities. These actions were further complemented with C4D materials delivered for the dissemination of key messages on child protection and promotion of key hygiene practices during COVID-19, support for the Mayor's Office's radio spots, and through recreational and cultural activities. Arauquita is also part of UNICEF Colombia's prioritized municipalities on its signature '*Child Friendly Territories*' initiative, which is supporting the sustainability of these actions with a forward-looking perspective on accountability and prioritization on investment in children at the local level.

On balance, the response and development initiatives rapidly designed and put in place in Arauquita show the importance of adapting existing interventions used in conflict situations (displacement) for other emergencies in consultation with communities. In addition, this demonstrates UNICEF response capacity, guaranteed through a strong field presence and a functional network of local implementing partners, with a strong humanitarian and development approach in line with AAP and PSEA standards. Actions were implemented in a record time in close coordination with relevant authorities and host communities to ensure relevance and sustainability. This successful good practice was also adapted and replicated for the response developed for migrants heading into Panama.