

El Salvador

Update on the context and situation of children

El Salvador's population is estimated at 6.3 million, 30.8% of which are children (1,951,221). Persons with disabilities are estimated at 463,075, with children comprising 26% (119,944) with physical, mental and psychosocial disabilities being most prevalent.

As of December 2021, the government reported over 121,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 (50.3% women and 49.7% men), with children and adolescents representing 7%. A total of 3,797 deaths were reported. The COVID-19 pandemic has strained the health system, yet COVID-19 vaccination progressed effectively. By the last quarter of 2021, over 70% of the population had received two COVID-19 vaccine doses, nearly 80% received a first dose, and over 15% a third dose. 1.2 million vaccines were administered to the 61% children and adolescents.

Notwithstanding COVID-19, progress is reported in three health Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators : maternal mortality (24.3 per 100,000 live births in 2019); under-5 mortality (9.28 per 1,000 live births in 2020); and neonatal mortality (5.0 per 1,000 live births in 2020). These rates represent reductions that the Ministry of Health attributes to the institutionalization of 99% of deliveries. Between 2010 and 2016, the vaccination rates for the triple viral vaccine and the pentavalent vaccine dropped by 14.6% and 12.9%, respectively, with the combined rate of vaccination for the two vaccines falling from 90% to nearly 80%. The Ministry of Health projects an additional 15% decrease in 2020 owing to COVID-19-related factors.

In 2021, the prevalence of overweight in children under 5 was 8.3%, 2.9% the prevalence of wasting, 10% the prevalence of stunting, and 5% the prevalence of underweight. In 2017, the cost of this double burden of malnutrition surpassed US\$2.5 million (10.3% of GDP). Four out of ten children with this diagnosis do not complete primary school and eight out of ten do not complete secondary education. In 2018, only 55.2% (7,485) of children aged 1–4 years with malnutrition received nutritional monitoring and support.

To inform evidenced-based public policies, the Ministry of Health conducted its National Health Survey to yield data on women, children, and adolescents, on reproductive health, health, child development, education, child protection and nutrition. It reported the percentage of births in adolescent girls aged 15–19 years is 39.4 per 1,000; with 63% of children receiving age-appropriate breastfeeding. Five out of ten children still experience violent discipline from their caregivers.

Inadequate provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services has deepened social inequality and inequity. In urban areas, over 90% of households have access to piped water and sanitation, while only 77% have access in rural areas. 7% (24,351) of poor households with children lack access to sanitation and 13.4% (46,090) to piped water. Six out of ten schools are ill prepared to face environmental risks and disasters. A total of 1,943 schools require improved sanitation, 938 lack access to drinking water, and 964 receive intermittent water services.

Job and income losses resulting from the COVID-19 crisis have affected progress in poverty eradication. In 2019 and 2020, extreme poverty increased by 2.4% and poverty by 6.0%, rising from 5.6 to 8% % and from 30.4% to 36.4%, respectively, making El Salvador the second most affected country by monetary poverty in Central America.

The incidence of multidimensional poverty in El Salvador is 27.2%, affecting 508,335 households or 1,933,742 people. Moreover, multidimensional poverty is concentrated in families with children

(33.8%): its incidence is twice that of adult-only households (17.4%).

In 2021, the state budget reached US\$7,453.5 million (30% of the GDP in 2020). El Salvador experienced increased public debt, posing fiscal challenges. UNICEF country office's advocacy efforts influenced an increase of social funding and investment in children. The national budget for 2022 increases social funding and investment in children and includes a total allocation of US\$177.07 million for early childhood development (ECD), which is US\$10.2 million higher than that in 2021.

From March 2020 to April 2021, 1.3 million children were affected by containment measures that ushered a 13-month closing of schools, further aggravating the learning crisis. ECD services reach only 5.3% of children aged 0–3 years, while just 54.5% of children aged 4–6 years attend preschool. Learning poverty is prevalent, with only 34% of high-school graduates reading and understanding a simple text. The latest assessment by the Ministry of Education in 2018 indicates that address changes (66%), migration (45%), job searches (20%), gang threats (12%) and adolescent pregnancies (3%) are the leading causes for school dropout. As of November 2021, the Ministry of Education reports that the average annual flow of students attending in-person education was almost 300,000.

Violence has differentiated impacts; while homicides diminished in the past five years, six in ten victims are boys and young men (aged 13–35 years), and sexual violence disproportionately affects girls and young women. Between 2016 and 2021, the National Civil Police reported over 32,000 sexual crimes, of which 55% of victims were girls and young women (aged 0–24 years). Reporting of sexual crimes increased progressively since 2016, doubling by 2019. Limited access to complaint mechanisms during the COVID-19 confinement and fear of reporting while living with a perpetrator may explain a 27% decrease in reporting rates in 2020.

Migration and displacement are fuelled by the search for better living conditions and escaping from violence. Communities in El Salvador are affected by gang violence, extortion, death threats and forced recruitment. IOM reports between January and November 7,124 migrants returned to El Salvador of which 2,283 were children, 1,141 were unaccompanied. Children and adolescents migrate due to economic factors (45.0%), family reunification (30.7%) and insecurity (19.3%) (IOM, 2020). Due to migration, over 72,500 children live without one or both parents (DIGESTYC, 2021). Upon return to their communities of origin, adolescents and their families receive limited support and are faced with the same violence and extortion that forced them to migrate initially. Shortfalls in specialized services for children and adolescents pose barriers to their protection and community reintegration.

El Salvador is vulnerable to rising sea levels, increased heat waves, extreme tropical storms, earthquakes, prolonged droughts, and floods.

Major contributions and drivers of results

2021 was the final year of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) 2016–2021, that were extended by one year at the request of the government to ensure the new United Nations Cooperation Framework for Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDCF) and CPD considered priorities in response to COVID-19 health and socioeconomic impacts.

In 2021, the Country Common Assessment and situation analysis were updated and finalized to ensure that the principal social and economic difficulties that El Salvador faces as a result of COVID-19 are duly considered, through analysing trends in the progressive realization of children's rights while considering their perspectives.

In September 2021, the UNSDCF 2022–2026 – elaborated in consultation with the Government of El Salvador and the civil society – was endorsed and signed by the government. UNICEF's advocacy ensured the new UNSDCF includes all strategic priorities to progress in the development, well-being and protection of children in El Salvador.

The CPD is the result of a consultative process with the government, the civil society, the private sector and the United Nations to support national efforts and enable the effective and universal implementation of children's rights, focusing on the reduction of inequalities amongst the most disadvantaged children and the progressive elimination of barriers to reach their full potential. It is aligned to support all ten priorities of the Government's Social Development Plan 2019–2024, UNSDCF 2022–2026, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

The country office also conducted a gender programmatic review and the *Analysis of the impact, vulnerabilities and environmental risks affecting children and their families* to inform the CPD and ensure it promotes gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women, and mitigates the impacts of climate change on children.

As part of its humanitarian work, UNICEF has continued its support to respond to COVID-19. The Nutrition, WASH and Child Protection UNICEF-led clusters have remained active throughout 2021. The Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) were coordinated by the clusters leads with OCHA support. UNICEF contributed to the needs analysis and planning, particularly for UNICEF-led sectors ensuring the needs of children were included. UNICEF launched a sub-regional Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal to support children on the move, which was fully funded for El Salvador by the United States' Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). UNICEF has provided humanitarian assistance and supported specialized services for displaced and migrant children in education, child protection, gender-based violence and WASH.

In 2021, UNICEF together with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) coordinated their support to the Ministry of Health to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative. UNICEF, PAHO and WHO provided technical and financial support to implement the national COVID-19 vaccination programme supporting the vaccination registry, targeted communication for development (C4D) initiatives to promote prevention measures and vaccination, distribution of health supplies including personal protective equipment (PPE), strengthening the vaccination cold-chain and monitoring vaccination coverage, contributing to strengthen the routine immunization programme. The COVID-19 vaccination coverage has surpassed 70% (92% in adults), but coverage remains low among adolescents and children of six years. During the reporting period, the COVAX initiative has donated 3,606,050 COVID-19 vaccine doses to El Salvador, reaching its target of supporting the vaccination of 20% of El Salvador's population.

In 2021, UNICEF supported the continuity of essential children's health services and the development of C4D interventions to raise awareness of the importance of complying with children's regular vaccination schedules and to offset the observed tendency towards reduction of childhood vaccination coverage, and to promote the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for girls 9 years of age or older.

UNICEF has advocated and supported the Ministry of Health to ensure rights-based and adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services. Through the European Union's Spotlight Initiative, services for victims of sexual violence have been strengthened. Ten hospitals have adopted a specialized victim attention protocol, and post-exposure prophylaxis kits have been delivered to the leading paediatric hospital.

The Care for Child Development approach has been adopted by the health, education, child protection

and rehabilitation sectors as an integral part of El Salvador's national ECD policy *Crecer Juntos*, an achievement that will contribute to its nationwide scaling-up to reach more children in El Salvador.

To inform social policies and programmes, UNICEF has supported evidence generation of the nutritional state of children under 5 years old and pregnant and lactating mothers. UNICEF has continued to promote breastfeeding, including creating three human milk banks and the strengthening of 55 human breastmilk collection centres to improve the health of children born prematurely or with low birthweight. UNICEF has advocated combating the triple burden of malnutrition threat (overweight, undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies). These efforts bolstered and contributed to the government's participation and national commitments in the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 and the Nutrition for Growth initiative, which is comprehensively focused on the nutritional needs of children and adolescents, including children with disabilities.

In WASH, UNICEF has supported government institutions to expand water and sanitation services and promote hygiene protocols to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and transmissible and water-borne diseases. Menstrual health hygiene has also been a focus of UNICEF's support.

UNICEF also continued to work at the local level to mobilize children and adolescents and their communities to gain awareness of climate change and promote disaster preparedness and risk reduction in vulnerable coastal areas.

COVID-19 containment measures ushered 13 months of school closures, affecting 1.3 million children. UNICEF, together with the World Bank and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), advocated school reopening. On 6 April 2021, the gradual reopening of schools in a semi-presential, optional and safe manner was initiated, prioritizing the right to education and the well-being of students. To reopen schools, the government launched The Joy of Returning to School plan developed with UNICEF's support with revised health protocols, including psychosocial support. Successful advocacy ensured the prioritization of teacher vaccinations. As of November 2021, the Ministry of Education reported an average annual flow of students attending in-person education of almost 300,000 and conducted a socio-emotional survey to analyse the impact of online classes on the well-being of students, reporting that 21% (135,088) students from fourth grade to the first year of baccalaureate experienced symptoms of anxiety that required mental health care. Notwithstanding the pandemic's impact, the Ministry of Education registered a slight improvement in the cognitive results from students from third and sixth grades compared with a previous evaluation in 2014.

To strengthen shock-resistant, resilient learning, the Ministry of Education leveraged COVID-19 best practices and lessons learned to inform its transformation of the education system, in alignment with UNICEF's global Reimagine Education initiative. UNICEF supported the government with large-scale purchase of laptops (261,000) for students and teachers, providing technical specifications, including for children with disabilities, and supported strengthening its multimodality educational system. UNICEF championed the creation of virtual and hybrid accelerated education modalities to prevent dropout and facilitate the reintegration of excluded students into the education system, including returnee and displaced children, victims of violence, children from rural areas and pregnant adolescents.

To incorporate technology at the service of education and learning, south-south cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Plan Ceibal of Uruguay was fostered, and a high-level delegation led by El Salvador's Minister of Education visited Uruguay in the last quarter of 2021.

Coordinating with the Ministry of Education and the Salvadorean Institute for the Comprehensive Development of Children and Adolescents (ISNA), UNICEF supports the implementation of the comprehensive quality education reintegration model for adolescents and youth in conflict with the law

deprived of liberty in one social insertion centre and the design and implementation of a transition strategy for all social integration centres based on best practices and lessons learned.

El Salvador's Education Management Information System was strengthened with support from the country office, improving the system's capacity to collect data, prioritizing the early warning system to prevent dropout, and designing a real-time monitoring dashboard for prioritized indicators.

UNICEF continued to strengthen the child protection system and services, prioritizing services for victims of violence, including gender-based violence, and the internally displaced and migrant returnee children.

UNICEF El Salvador is considered a reference in child rights and protection. In the reporting period, UNICEF has been systematically consulted by El Salvador's Legislative Assembly and the Office of the President concerning legal reforms to strengthen legislation on children as captured in the Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Protection Law (LEPINA 2010) and the Child Adoption Law. UNICEF has provided technical assistance to promote and support the implementation of legal international standards.

The country office continued to strengthen child protection services, including the child protection helpline *123HablaConmigo* and specialized child-friendly services of the justice sector for girls and boys, victims of violence, in particular victims of gender-based violence.

In the humanitarian context, the Child Protection sub-cluster remained active in 2021 under UNICEF's leadership, with 18 participating entities from the civil society and the United Nations. The sub-cluster coordinates efforts with the institutions of the child protection system. Throughout 2021, a comprehensive mapping of the existing child protection services was conducted to identify the available specialized services in El Salvador.

At the local level, UNICEF established new alliances with local authorities to consolidate its violence prevention strategy in ten municipalities with a high incidence of violence, internal displacement and migration. In the new CPD 2022–2026, lessons-learned and best practices will be mainstreamed to enable scaling-up in other municipalities.

In 2021, child displacement continued, and the incidence of child migrant returnees has increased. UNICEF worked to strengthen the child protection system services, including government institutions, the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). During the reporting period, UNICEF has provided humanitarian assistance, created safe spaces for children and strengthened comprehensive and specialized services with a gender focus that include psychological, legal, shelter, education reintegration, humanitarian assistance and development of life plans. Among its achievements, the migration authorities and NGOs adopted a child-friendly focus to create and/or strengthen specialized child-centred services.

In the second half of 2021, the Government of El Salvador launched the Plan for the Protection and Attention for Girls, Boys and Adolescent Migrants, and Returnees. UNICEF is supporting the implementation of this plan through strengthening the government's Centres for the Attention to Returnee Families (CANAF) administered by the ISNA, including an evaluation of existing services to support the reintegration of migrant children.

The Spotlight Initiative began the second phase of its implementation. A key result has been the revision of El Salvador's Penal Code concerning sexual crimes and the Family Legal Code concerning early non-marital unions that resulted in a legal proposal to harmonize legal codes submitted for the deliberation of the Legislative Assembly.

In December 2021, the government presented the Road Map to End Violence against Children as part of its participation in the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, following the seven INSPIRE strategies. This road map was elaborated with the civil society, NGOs and the United Nations. A National Plan of Action will be developed in 2022.

The country office played a critical role in advising the government and private sector on the development of public policies, programmes and plans to reactivate the economy and mitigate the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19. The country office supported the creation of evidence on the state of children, identified priorities and challenges, offered evidence-based strategies, and developed investment plans for poverty eradication, while supporting the continuation of education and promoting ECD and health services. The country office also continued, in collaboration with think tanks and civil society organizations (CSOs), to mobilize key local actors, donors and international cooperation to increase investment in children that contributed to galvanize a 6.1% increase in ECD and education.

Advocacy for child-centred public policies is ongoing. El Salvador's ECD Policy *Crecer Juntos* (Growing up Together), developed with UNICEF support, was launched, and its implementation was initiated in 95 prioritized municipalities out of 262 (over 36%). The country office supported the systematization of best ECD community models and practices to further inform the policy's implementation, leveraging UNICEF's past lessons learned in the territory. UNICEF continued supporting the development of a unique birth registration number to be piloted in 45 municipalities with El Salvador's Innovation Secretariat. The country office participated and promoted a high-level dialogue to present this policy to the United Nations Member States.

UNICEF El Salvador also collaborated with the International Monetary Fund to elaborate its Article IV brief, analysing fiscal policies to determine sustainable investment in children and contribute to the economic recovery focusing on households with children and adolescents.

In partnership with Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), the country office supported the elaboration of an historical analysis on public policies affecting children during the last 200 years in El Salvador, promoting reflection on the evolution of child-focused public policies as part of the nation's 200th anniversary of its independence. This research was presented as evidence of the urgency of investing in children to critical decision makers, including El Salvador's Legislative Assembly. The country office continued positioning children and adolescents' voices with innovative approaches to build agency by strengthening core abilities to increase ownership and develop tools for their self-advocacy via multimodal platforms. Subsequently, adolescents presented the results of these processes to members of the legislative assembly.

In 2021, the country office deepened its advocacy efforts in positioning children and adolescents, creating the innovative initiative and multi-actor collaborative platform #EsHoraDeLaNiñez. The country office engaged the private sector and 15 social media influencers, NGOs and CSOs, including FUSAL, Contextos, Glasswing and National Pediatric Association. Thirteen million people were reached via radio, television, newspapers and social media, representing a return on investment of approximately US\$1,000,000. The 2021 Public Policies Week co-hosted with the Fundación Guillermo Manuel Ungo served as a platform to present evidence of the impacts of COVID-19 in school achievements and developmental milestones that were also discussed in events with government authorities, the civil society and the private sector.

In partnership with Glasswing, based on the Proposal for the Second Decade of Life in El Salvador developed with NYU Global TIES for Children, the case for mental health was presented in the virtual conference Healing Wounds. Leading global experts from Harvard University, Child Mind Institute and Global Trauma Project provided high-value evidence to inform response interventions and programmes.

The country office successfully presented to the Ministry of Economy and the legislative assembly the Strategy for the Economic Reactivation and Productive Inclusion to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic focused on households with children and adolescents.

Additionally, the country office supported government institutions in strengthening statistical systems to provide up-to-date information on the situation of children and measure progress on the SDGs. Lastly, the country office participated in two evaluations a real-time assessment of the COVID-19 response and the work on children on the move.

The country office continued supporting partners and UN on PSEA with training of staff, and assessments. These efforts will continue in 2022.

UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

In 2021, UN system agencies signed with the Government of El Salvador the UNSDCF, which establishes the strategic priorities and actions for the next five years to advance compliance with the SDGs.

The CO continued to play an integral part in response to the COVID-19 health emergency. The collaboration with the Ministry of Health and WHO/PAHO and COVAX has been substantially strengthened to support implementing the COVID-19 national vaccination plan. A joint work plan and a memorandum of understanding were signed with the Ministry of Health.

The Humanitarian Country Team has remained active and has effectively supported the exchange of information and effective coordination between the government, international cooperation and NGOs, facilitating synergies and resource optimization. UNICEF continues leading the Nutrition, WASH and Child Protection clusters and coordinated the elaboration of an HNO and HRP in these sectors.

The partnership with the World Bank to support the Ministry of Education to strengthen the educational system has proved highly strategic. The World Bank's multi-country experience with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), their high technical expertise in the design of education sector plans coupled with the loan options, informed El Salvador's application for the new GPE fund that, if approved, will garner US\$15,000,000 in necessary financing to advance in the transformation of education.

As a direct result of donor support, including the PRM, UNICEF El Salvador has successfully scaled up its child protection mandate, working in close collaboration with government institutions, CSOs, international and national NGOs, and United Nations system agencies to improve local-level emergency child protection services for internally displaced and migrant returnee children and their families. With the support of the European Union's Director-General for International Partnership and Development Policy (INTPA) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), gender-focused programming and specialized services have been strengthened with both government counterparts and NGOs implementing partners. INTPA supported a joint UNHCR/UNICEF programme implemented in El Salvador, Mexico, South Africa and Zambia, designed to share child protection best practices and lessons learned concerning internally displaced and child migrant returnees. The PBF finances a joint programme with IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Food Programme to promote the successful reintegration of returnees. In the last quarter of 2021, the work to create a United Nations Migration Network for El Salvador led by IOM with the participation of UNICEF has been initiated and will be advanced in 2022.

The country office continued establishing new partnerships with leading global excellence centres to

elaborate policies and programmes based on latest available evidence. In 2021, the country office strengthened its collaboration with the Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo, recognized as one of the most influential think tanks in Central and South America by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania.

The country office also strengthened collaboration and partnerships with the United Nations system agencies and international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, to galvanize and advocate increased investment in children.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Innovations

The country office has implemented innovations that have contributed to achieving important results for children.

The country office has continued using new technologies and promoting innovative virtual training modalities. To strengthen the health system, the first virtual capacity-building course consisting of six modules for the comprehensive care of premature children was launched with the technical endorsement of the Universidad del Oriente. It targets health-care professionals at the first, second and third levels and has contributed to scaling up this specialized care throughout the country.

The country office developed innovative methodologies to channel children and adolescents' voices and provide them with tools for their self-advocacy:

- As an integral part of the support for national consultations to inform the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021, UNICEF El Salvador developed a pioneer methodology to consult children aged 8–12 years and capture their perceptions and insights with regards to food security and nutrition. The findings of these consultations informed El Salvador's Summit report that captured the country's commitments to this critical agenda and was further highlighted during El Salvador's General Assembly speech. El Salvador's Sustainable Food Systems road map is also reflected in efforts spearheaded by El Salvador's First Lady. UNICEF is part of the working group established by the government that incorporates the Ministry of Health, other national government and NGO entities, and United Nations system to support the country's Sustainable Food Systems commitments.
- In 2021, the country office, in partnership with FLACSO, to continue promoting innovative processes for the participation of children and youth by first fostering and honing their core abilities to provide them with tools to strengthen ownership for their self-advocacy. Adolescents and critical country office-implementing partners have appreciated and positively leveraged this capacity-building process.

The country office continued using its microsimulation tool to support the government in gaging the impact of its multidimensional poverty eradication programmes and measures, and introduced innovation through its development and promotion of the Strategy for the Economic Reactivation and Productive Inclusion to mitigate the effects of the pandemic with an emphasis in households with children and adolescents.

Focused on the need to create a sustainable fiscal framework for investment in children, the country

office leveraged its positioning and expertise to engage in evidence-based and data-driven advocacy. As the country moves forward with Bitcoin as a legal tender, the country office will closely look for innovations and linkages between monetary and fiscal policy for children and the performance of cryptocurrency.

Lessons learned

During the CPD 2016–2021, the country office identified lessons learned in evaluations, and programme development, that inform the new CPD 2022–2026 and provide recommendations to expand interventions in this upcoming programme cycle.

Best practices and lessons learned drawn from the evaluations conducted during the CPD 2016–2021 informed the development of intervention models for the reintegration of children deprived of their liberty, the prevention of violence at the local level and a reintegration model for internally displaced and migrant returnee children that can be scaled up throughout El Salvador by central government institutions and municipalities at the local level.

Lessons learned from the "multi-country evaluation of UNICEF interventions on migration El Salvador contributed to strengthened: Coordination mechanisms between UNICEF and partners, stronger monitoring system, development of an advocacy strategy, and strength the intersectorality¹. The CO participated in a Real Time Assessment of UNICEF's response to COVID-19 which contributed to increased UNICEF's strategic positioning during the pandemic contributing to generating evidence on the impact of COVID-19, strengthen of multi-sector programming identifying local needs/opportunities and strengthening pilot to scale strategies, and development of partnership and fundraising strategies².

New opportunities to reach more children have arisen by digitizing programme learning modalities. The virtual or blended education modalities facilitate teachers' training in previously neglected areas, including psychosocial support and socio-emotional education, which proved critical during the school closures.

The country office consolidated its partnership with the Ministry of Education to strengthen specific programmes for the reintegration and retention of migrant and displaced children, evidencing the need for an intersectoral strategy that allows individualized monitoring and case management of returned and displaced children and adolescents to quickly identify and support those children to ensure their early reintegration into the educational system.

To support the scale-up and improve the national reach of the Care for Child Development approach, health staff from municipalities have been trained to help the decentralization of attention to premature children and strengthen care for children aged 0–5 years.

The exchange with Plan Ceibal of Uruguay and the Government of El Salvador has made it possible to incorporate a different vision of the use of technology in education and has contributed to strengthening the commitment to measure learning outcomes of the students and to adjust technology services to assure good quality services and to improve learning results. Investing in technology and improved school connectivity with the Giga initiative is crucial to reducing the digital divide.

The education model for adolescents and youth in conflict with the law in social insertion centres needs to include a transition strategy to facilitate their effective reintegration into their families and communities by promoting their incorporation into higher education and developing opportunities to access formal education and jobs. The development of this strategy should be comprehensive, innovative, participatory and adaptable to the individual needs of each adolescent.

Inter-agency initiatives constitute an opportunity to scale results-oriented interventions, lessons

learned, and best practices through interdisciplinary approaches, promoting complementarity and the principle of competitive advantage. As an example, the collaboration with UNHCR as leader of the Protection cluster with UNICEF serving as co-leader and lead for the Child Protection sub-cluster has proved highly effective in successfully advocating for the inclusion of specialized child and adolescent protection services and their strengthening.

Inclusion of psychological support coupled with a life-plan focus for interventions to support children and adolescents proved effective in strengthening ties to the community and is recommended for inclusion in all interventions targeting internally displaced and migrant returnee children and adolescents undertaken by the Protection cluster.