Update on the context and situation of children

The State of Palestine is affected by a protracted protection crisis and suffers from chronic humanitarian concerns, exacerbated by under-development and development-reversal resulting from conflict, the tense and unpredictable political situation and increasing violence. This has significantly impacted the lives of 2.3 million Palestinian children and youth living in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, the primary victims of this conflict. More than a million children remain vulnerable and in need of humanitarian assistance.

The year 2021 remained a challenging year for children in Palestine with the spread of COVID-19 continued for a second year aggravating existing vulnerabilities, affecting children’s well-being, and limiting boys’ and girls’ access to essential services. COVID-19 affected access to education, including learning outcomes, in particular for children with no access to digital learning opportunities. This divide is often manifested in remote and disadvantaged areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Many students lack internet access, devices, and adequate digital literacy. Only 44 per cent of households with children between the ages of 10-17 have the required devices. In August 2021, face-to-face education resumed in all schools, subject to COVID-19 related protocols set by the Ministry of Health. As of 31 December 2021, there were 470,087 confirmed cases of COVID-19, of which 50 per cent were women and 12 per cent were children under the age of 18. On 17 March, the State of Palestine received the first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines. In 2021, UNICEF with WHO and other partners supported the procurement of 1,918,010 COVID-19 vaccines, of which 1,816,220 were received via the COVAX facility. As of 30 December, only 1,425,187 people had received the first shot of COVID-19 vaccine, and 1,569,790 are now fully vaccinated.[1] In May 2021, the humanitarian situation deteriorated with the rise of tensions and violence in the West Bank, specifically East Jerusalem, and the escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip. During this escalation in the Gaza Strip, 67 children were killed, and 685 were reported injured. Two Israeli children were killed in Israel, and 60 were reported injured. In 2021, in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, seventeen Palestinian children were killed, and 1,119 children were reported injured by live ammunition, rubber-coated bullets, concussion grenades, tear gas and other conflict-related violence.[2] In East Jerusalem, at least 557 Palestinian children were arrested during the same period. As a result, Child Protection and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) needs grew significantly. In the Gaza Strip, some 675,000 children need MHPSS services, while over 15,000 children need similar support in the West Bank. Health services in the Gaza Strip were also highly impacted in May 2021, with 33 health facilities damaged during the conflict. This, combined with the spread of COVID-19, overwhelmed the capacity of functioning health facilities, leaving an estimated 1.5 million people, of whom 700,000 are children, in need of emergency health care services. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation remains a major struggle for a large part of the population in the Gaza Strip. The State of Palestine experienced a challenging year with regards to their fiscal situation. While an increase in fiscal revenues is reported, public spending grew at the same rate and aid reached a record low. This has directly impacted the government's ability to continue to provide quality services to their citizens and respond to new emerging needs as a result of COVID-19 and the escalation.3 Estimates by the World Bank indicate that the escalation has pushed poverty in the Gaza Strip to 59.3 per cent in 2021. This is 2.3 percentage points higher than the COVID-19 induced peak in 2020. The unemployment rate in the State of Palestine reached 26.4 per cent in the second quarter of 2021 (16.9 per cent in the West Bank and 44.7 per cent in the Gaza Strip), reflecting the particularly difficult economic situation in the Gaza Strip due to the effect of the 11-day
conflict and the ongoing restrictions. The extremely high unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip comes hand-in-hand with deteriorating social conditions. Despite all challenges, the Palestinian Government took steps to enhance child rights in Palestine. In July 2021, The Government published the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) in the Official Gazette, making the CRC a binding document at the national level and enforceable in national courts. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health and partners to continue the provision of early interventions to high-risk pregnant and lactating women and children with developmental delays and disabilities. UNICEF also continued to support essential health care services during COVID-19, including protection of health workers in partnership with WHO and other agencies. UNICEF facilitated access to safe drinking water. UNICEF continued to prioritize and strengthen child protection systems, facilitate access to comprehensive gender-based violence services, and supported the Palestinian authorities to operationalize their COVID-19 emergency response plan. UNICEF supported the safe return of students, teachers and service providers to schools during the COVID-19 crisis by facilitating the implementation of safe school protocols for infection prevention and control in partnership with UNESCO and other partners. Through the National Cash Transfer Programme, UNICEF piloted shock-responsive social protection mechanisms with the Ministry of Social Development and other partners to support vulnerable households affected by the pandemic and the conflict reaching over 4000 vulnerable children and laying the foundation for system strengthening for social protection at national level. UNICEF collaborated with UN agencies, humanitarian and development actors to strengthen systems for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse[1] www.corona.ps [2] Data on Casualties, United National Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – occupied Palestinian territory, accessed 26 January 2022

Major contributions and drivers of results

In 2021, UNICEF continued to provide support to the Palestinian Government to adapt its programmes to better respond to the new Covid-19 reality working closely with WHO and other partners, while leading a communication response strategy to prevent and mitigate risks associated with COVID-19, including promoting vaccination. With UNICEF co-leading the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) taskforce, alongside MoH and WHO, over 6 million people were reached cumulatively, while over 3 million people were engaged through multi-format activities carrying messages.

In May, UNICEF – under the lead of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) - shifted its focus to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to affected children and their families, while continuing to ensure links between the humanitarian response and the longer-term development strategy.

Around 56,000 people both in Gaza and West Bank, including pregnant, lactating women and children under five, benefited from essential lifesaving services; 800,000 affected people benefitted from improved WASH services through the repair of damaged water and wastewater networks across the Gaza Strip; 46,200 children were supported with safe access to school through the rehabilitation of 20 schools in the Gaza Strip, while over 74,000 vulnerable children (50 per cent girls) received school material. Additionally, 4,300 children in 1,160 households were reached with a child sensitive cash transfer component, to ensure that the most vulnerable of conflict-affected children are able to continue with their studies and access essential services. Nearly 600 children affected by the conflict-related violence, were provided with legal assistance in East Jerusalem.

UNICEF scaled up its public communication and advocacy outreach, ensuring child rights remained central to the narrative. This included significant outreach to media outlets, with interviews provided to over 30 major news organizations. UNICEF SoP Twitter account grew to 19,000 followers, with some posts reaching tens of thousands of people.


UNICEF stepped up the production of data for evidence-based planning through the commissioning of a disaggregated analysis of the MICS results at the governorate and Area C level as well as a MICS Education analysis (EAGLE) in collaboration with the PCBS. It is expected that this data will inform the PA’s new National Policy Agenda (NPA) planning from 2022/23 and the preparation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework in coordination with the UNCT.

Two major evaluations - WASH and Early Childhood Development programmes were completed, and in view of improving the programme quality and contributing to strategic planning, management responses were discussed and agreed jointly with the respective national authorities and other key players in these sectors. Following the acute phase of the May escalation, the country office conducted an After-Action review and documented good practices and areas for improvement which served as a basis for the update of the Emergency Preparedness Plan.

The Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) remains high in the agenda with dedicated capacity building sessions organized and actions plans conducted with partners.

1. Every Child Survives and Thrives
In 2021, MoH prioritized the roll out of COVID-19 vaccination and revision of the National Deployment Vaccination Plan. UNICEF, with WHO, played a leading role in finalizing and implementing it, while submitting COVID 19 vaccine Deployment Support application requests to the COVAX initiative. UNICEF was able to support the continuum of provision of essential health care services through leveraging previous investments and linking humanitarian interventions with investments in policy definition, provision of essential medical supplies, infrastructure and human capital to further improve the delivery of gender sensitive maternal and child health care services. This includes the use of innovative approaches in service delivery reaching the most vulnerable women and children through the continued postnatal mobile clinics. Over 9,000 women and nearly 50,000 children under five, half of them girls, including nearly 8,000 neonates, benefited from access to improved quality health and nutrition services in Gaza. In total over 5,500 high-risk pregnant and lactating mothers benefited from individual hotline counselling sessions on child health, nutrition, and hygiene in both Gaza and West Bank.

UNICEF carried out the logistic management information system mapping, including supply chain assessment in both West Bank and Gaza, with focus on warehouse data management. The final results are to be validated by MoH and will form the basis for developing an action plan for medical supplies intervention.

In line with the regional accelerators on primary health, UNICEF continued investing with WHO and UNFPA in strengthening gender-responsive services and develop systems scaling up the implementation of a comprehensive package of sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health (SRMNC) care quality services. In total nearly 8,000 neonates benefited from upgraded maternal and neonatal health care services, while 14 maternity and neonate units were equipped with essential drugs, medical consumables, furniture, and medical lifesaving equipment. The rehabilitation of Khan Younis maternity hospital continued during COVID-19 and a total of 15,500 mothers and newborns accessed improved maternity and neonatal health care services directly impacting the neonatal mortality rate.

These services remained fully operational, further complemented by additional support provided to MoH for essential lifesaving services benefiting around 56,000 people both in Gaza and West Bank, including most vulnerable pregnant, lactating women and children under five.

UNICEF continued to play a vital role in providing technical assistance and coordination between MoH, MoE, MoSD, and the World Bank to leverage resources for strengthening ECD and Early
Childhood Intervention (ECI) systems. Building on previously developed models for parenting education and ECI, UNICEF supported the three sectoral ministries to roll out and implement the Palestinian national multi-sectoral Developmental-Behavioural Scales tool. In addition, a cost analysis of the package of ECD services was conducted and the development of an ECD investment case, including the action plan for the scale-up of the ECD services. The ECD investment case was validated, and recommendations were endorsed by the three sectoral ministries for action, informing the ongoing revision and update of the national sectoral strategies including health, social protection and ECD/ECI. In 2021, some 630 children with disabilities benefited from the early detection of developmental delays and intervention services including assistive devices, in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

UNICEF with MoH, WFP, and partners, finalized and rolled out of the National Nutrition Protocol for women, adolescents, and children. UNICEF contributed to the roll out of updated protocol and capacity building of 150 health professionals. An action plan for the introduction and roll out of the Complementary Feeding Bowl - an innovative tool for ensuring good feeding practices at home – was also jointly supported with WFP targeting 20,000 children under the age of two in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

2. Every Child Learns
Education was particularly hard hit by COVID-19. In support to MOE response to address the learning loss because of the COVID-19 outbreak, UNICEF with UN agencies supported the development of the recovery and protection priorities for 2020-2021. UNICEF contributed to improving access to quality, safe and inclusive learning opportunities through supporting the learning environment. Capacity building of teachers, parents, students and education stakeholders were provided at national and subnational levels on how to ensure safe learning environments free from disease infections.

UNICEF provided recreational activities to support the well-being and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) for over 55,000 children and adolescents. With UNICEF support, over 74,000 (50 per cent girls) vulnerable children were provided with essential stationery kits and 3,019 children were provided with tablets to enable them access remote learning. 20 damaged schools were rehabilitated providing safe learning environment to 46,200 children. 26 schools are being rehabilitated for 121,092 students (59,008 girls).

In line with the UNICEF MENA Regional Accelerators on improving adolescent girls’ and boys’ skills, learning and employability right from early childhood, as a frontrunner country for GenU, UNICEF worked closely with UNDP, UNFPA, Prime Minister Office and the Higher Council of Youth and Sports to establish a National Youth Volunteer Services Platform (NYVSP) is being established to connect potential youth volunteers with opportunities to contribute meaningfully to their communities, while gaining valuable work experience and skills for future employment aiming in its first phase to reach 10,000 unemployed out people An assessment mapping of volunteerism has been completed and a NYVSP framework has been drafted.

As Education Cluster co-lead with Save the Children, UNICEF successfully coordinated the Gaza escalation response plan, education component of MSNA, HNO/HRP. Through the education cluster, UNICEF also advocated for children’s safety and facilitated safe access to schools through protective presence partners in the H2 area of Hebron.

3. Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation
UNICEF continued to support the strengthening of comprehensive child protection systems, while further aligning humanitarian and development approaches to better address the protection needs of children. This included the launch of the National Inter-Sectoral Violence Against Children Strategy (NIVAC), in line with the UNICEF MENA the Regional Accelerators after being updated to reflect COVID-19 needs, complemented by the child protection mapping review for which cumulatively
UNICEF supported the implementation of 39/69 recommendations.

MOSD increased the number of Child Protection Counsellors to a total of 35 (increase of 12%) ensuring protection support to nearly 2,400 children (one out of five are girls) in six governorates, while the development of the professional Social Workers diploma was jointly initiated in partnership with the Palestinian Government, in aims to reach nearly 3,000 active social workers in government and civil society organizations. Meanwhile the curriculum for social work students is taught in two universities reaching, in 2021, 60 undergraduate students.

To enhance the protection of children and ensure a coordinated response, the CP Area of Responsibility (AoR) and Protection Cluster in Gaza collected data on the protection impact of COVID 19 on vulnerable communities to identify child protection needs and inform responses. The main child protection concerns identified include psychological distress, domestic violence, child neglect, lack of specialized services for children with special needs, child separation, lack of space and privacy. UNICEF supported 30,500 children (nearly half of them are girls) with Child Protection and MHPSS services, while the cluster reached 64 per cent of their targets. Out of those reached, over 3,000 children (more than half girls) accessed case management services. Structured psychosocial services reached over 30,000 caregivers (50% women).

In the Gaza Strip, UNICEF conducted risk-educational sessions on Explosive Remnants of War reaching over 8,600 children more than half of them girls and nearly 12,000 caregivers (over half of them were women). UNICEF also supported more than 600 children affected by the conflict related violence with legal assistance in East Jerusalem. UNICEF increased its investment in supporting two hotlines, reaching more than 7,900 people (2,700 children (59% boys) and over 5,000 adults (65% men) with psychosocial counselling and referral to appropriate CP, GBV and legal services, MHPSS peer support was provided to 71 Child Protection professionals in Gaza to ensure healthy interactions and sustained support to children most in need.

On the Justice for Children, the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) and MOSD trained 50 community mediators, CP counsellors, juvenile police and juvenile prosecutors on the mediation guidelines developed with the support of UNICEF in 2020 and appointed the first 20 community mediators, creating an institutionalized pool of professionals dealing with minor crimes involving juvenile. Following the assessment of the Alternative to Detention (A2D) institutions last year, UNICEF supported the scaling up A2D initiatives in seven governorates in the West Bank reaching 143 children.

4. *Every Child Lives in a Safe and Clean Environment*

UNICEF has made progress in constructing the second phase of the Desalination Plant in Gaza (87%) to provide additional access to safely managed water for 175,000 people. In 2021, 87% of the second phase was completed. The first phase remained operational throughout the year maintaining uninterrupted water production for 76,000 people. In line with the regional accelerators on Water and Climate change, UNICEF initiated the upgrade and operation of the water network in the Yatta Municipality in the West Bank aiming at reaching 76,200 people (38,862 women and 37,338 men) with safe access to water, while strengthening Yatta water utility and the Palestinian Water Authority’s (PWA) capacity to operate the system.

As a flood prevention measure to mitigate the potential impact of climate change and unreliable power supply in the Gaza Strip, UNICEF has implemented storm water drainage projects, thereby preventing 80,000 people from being affected by seasonal flooding. UNICEF also equipped six critical WASH infrastructure sites with Photo Voltaic (PV) systems as alternative energy sources that will ensure reliable WASH services to 200,000 people.
In collaboration with the MOE, UNICEF rehabilitated and upgraded WASH facilities in 20 schools to meet minimum child-friendly standards and benefiting nearly 50,000 children (more than half are girls) to safely return to schools. UNICEF and partners also conducted hygiene promotion and menstrual hygiene promotion reaching nearly 8,000 students.

In response to COVID-19 and the May 2021 escalation, UNICEF provided essential supplies, repaired damaged sections of water and wastewater networks and equipment across the Gaza Strip. The May 2021 actions urgently restored access to improved WASH services to an estimated 800,000 affected people (nearly half of them women) for the first 90 days. UNICEF also continued to support the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) with the required WASH supplies and repairs to various WASH services across the Gaza Strip.

As WASH Cluster lead, UNICEF supported coordination and dissemination of information among Cluster partners to ensure a timely response to the most vulnerable people across West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Cluster conducted a WASH partners’ capacity building program that targeted 35 organizations, focusing on WASH strategies, advocacy, information management and risks analysis. In cooperation with the PWA, CMWU, the WASH cluster led the rapid needs assessment following the escalation, the results of which contributed to resources mobilization and advocacy. The WASH Cluster also conducted several national-level assessments to measure access to WASH services, including WASH in schools and WASH standards assessment in healthcare facilities.

5. Every Child has an Equitable Chance in Life

The continuous impact of COVID-19 on the Palestinian economy, the May conflict in Gaza, the fiscal crisis faced by the Palestinian Authority and the resulting steep declines in Social Protection payments through the flagship Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme (PNCTP) are showing a worrisome trend related to child poverty which has triggered UNICEF to start an innovative cash transfer programming reaching 1,160 households affected by the Gaza conflict and additional 687 households affected by COVID-19 with multi-purpose cash. These programmes are built in support of the Ministry of Social Development’s Social Assistance programmes and are planned to contribute to the strengthening of the Shock Responsiveness of the PNCTP promoting Nexus programming within Social Assistance.

At the policy level and in support towards Social Protection reforms for Persons with Disability and Elderly Persons, UNICEF, under UN Joint Programme on the Sustainable Development Goals Fund with WFP and the ILO, supported the Ministry of Social Development to undertake important steps to better integrate services for these vulnerable groups into the national Social Protection system, including the costing of the draft new Law for Persons with Disability and Mapping Social Service Providers towards reinforcing referral mechanisms.

UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

In 2021 UNICEF continued to lead the WASH cluster, co-lead the Education cluster and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP-AOR). UNICEF provided the technical advisor to the LACS Social Protection Sector Working Group. The role of the humanitarian clusters was reinforced in 2021 during the May escalation, which provided, under the leadership of the RC/HC, strategic coordination including for humanitarian and early recovery needs assessment and response coordination.

In WASH, UNICEF established a strategic partnership with the national Environmental Quality Agency as the designated national authority on climate issues. UNICEF works with the Global Water Partnership and the Stockholm International Water Institute on climate resilience programming further strengthening environment and climate related evidence generation.
In Health, UNICEF continued to support coordination of line ministries and the World Bank to strengthen systems for ECD and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI). Furthermore, UNICEF is leading a UN joint programme on Health Systems Strengthening in the Gaza Strip with UNFPA and WHO. The roll out of COVID-19 vaccination and the revision of the National Vaccination Deployment Plan were further supported jointly with WHO with 2 million COVID vaccine delivered through the COVAX initiative and over 1.5 million Palestinians fully vaccinated.

In Education, UNICEF is hosting the joint ECW funded Multi-Year Resilience Programme with UNDP, UNESCO and UNRWA aligning with the UN ‘new way of working’ building on capacities and joint accountabilities towards collective education outcomes. Through Generation Unlimited, UNICEF worked with UNDP, UNFPA, the Prime Minister’s Office and the Higher Council of Youth and Sports to establish a flagship National Volunteer Service Programme. With the Bank of Palestine UNICEF promoted entrepreneurial and social initiatives through young people’s engagement and participation.

The Sawasya-II rule of law joint programme with UNDP and UNWOMEN allowed to capitalize on each partner’s mandates, skills and capacities towards a more comprehensive child protection programming. Similarly, UNICEF partnered with WFP and the ILO on Social Protection reform for persons with disabilities and the elderly, strengthening UNICEF role in strategic engagement on national Social Protection reforms including through a costing of the national disability law and social services mapping.

The development of national action plan to follow up on the CRC Concluding Observations provided inter-ministerial policy engagement opportunities. UNICEF worked with OHCHR and NGOs to influence the PA on strengthening the fulfilment of child rights, including engaging with national actors through the Optional Protocols reporting.

UNICEF’s media visibility outreach increased reinforcing its position as a credible source of information for children. UNICEF SoP’s Twitter account grew from 13,000 to 19,000 followers with some posts reaching tens of thousands of people.

UNICEF marked World Children’s Day and UNICEF’s 75th anniversary through two high-level events in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Both events renewed the commitment of participating stakeholders to put children’s rights at the forefront of social and political agendas in the State of Palestine. The events included mural painting, dancing, orchestral arrangements, the showing of films produced by and about youth in Palestine, and other performances by children.

**Lessons Learned and Innovations**

The protracted nature of the crisis in the State of Palestine has required a focus on strengthening the nexus approach to promote complementarity between humanitarian and development programming. This approach adopted by UNICEF and subsequent investments made on systems building, service quality and community engagement were highlighted as a key lesson in the 2020 WASH evaluation, as well as during the May 2021 escalation in the Gaza Strip. The essential WASH operations and maintenance supplies for water and sanitation networks prepositioned with the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, as a strategic partner, in their decentralized warehouses across the Gaza Strip, as part of emergency preparedness interventions is a successful example. These supplies were utilized for real-time emergency repairs by trained engineers to some of the 290 damaged water and sanitation infrastructure units. Without these emergency repairs 415,000 people would have been left with
limited water and sanitation services during and after the conflict. During the crisis UNICEF also provided fuel for generators and chemicals to complement the spare parts.

Furthermore, the WASH evaluation highlighted the positive impact of the adoption of diverse implementation modalities, such as the use of e-vouchers delivered to most vulnerable households to promote their uptake of hygiene practices alongside the construction of essential WASH infrastructure and support to the continual operations and maintenance of infrastructure. The evaluation has also supported a structured policy dialogue with the national stakeholders on areas including cost recovery and operations and maintenance of infrastructure.

A second example of nexus programming which bore fruit in 2021 was the UN joint programme, led by UNICEF on Health System Strengthening (HSS) in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. While the May escalation overwhelmed the health system thus jeopardizing the provision of health, nutrition and development services for children and their care givers, the system strengthening support around sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health (SRMNCH) services helped to ensure health services were maintained. The support of UNICEF, UNFPA and WFHO helped to ensure the continuity of essential primary health care services, reaching 7,800 neonates in 2021, while these services often are not sustained in the peak of emergencies. UNICEF pre-positioned drugs in Gaza allowed the prompt response during the hostilities, giving time to establish an emergency supply pipeline due to the strict restrictions on import into Gaza during and after the conflict. Furthermore, this Health Systems Strengthening work has provided important entry points for UNICEF to foster dialogue between the government and civil society partners which further complemented the immediate health response to the hostilities. This policy dialogue has proven key in the State of Palestine given the fragility of service provision where the range of government services are limited requiring the procurement of more specialized services from NGOs, and where trust between civil society and the government is fragile.

Finally, as COVID-19 crisis has highlighted weaknesses in the shock responsiveness of the National Cash Transfer Programme, UNICEF has worked with the EU, ECHO, ILO, WFP and other partners, throughout 2020 and 2021, to form a coalition to reinforce the shock responsiveness of the national social protection system, including the piloting of the first agency-led cash transfers delivered with MoSD to facilitate learning towards strengthening the existing system. In the first quarter of 2021 UNICEF reached 687 households with a one-off cash transfer, these households were directly affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19 in the Gaza Strip. In December 2021 UNICEF delivered the first of four monthly payments, under the Gaza Child Cash Grants programme, to 1,160 households directly affected by the May 2021 escalation. All work was undertaken with MoSD including the verification of the targeted households, and the feedback on the functionality of the system to MOSD through the evidence generated through Payment Verification and Post-Distribution Monitoring. Through this, UNICEF has leveraged MoSD to procure RapidPro as a tool for the real-time monitoring of national social protection payments. A Shock Responsive Social Protection readiness assessment of the national system is planned in early 2022 towards identifying other capacity building priorities.

Evaluations have continued to provide important feedback on UNICEF programmes. The two evaluations in WASH and Early Childhood Development (ECD) finalized in 2021 led to management responses implemented with key national and international stakeholders. The continual engagement with stakeholders has led to better uptake for impact: the ECD evaluation findings, alongside the national ECD Investment Case (also drafted in 2021), were taken up by the National Inter-Ministerial ECD technical committee in advance of the drafting of the next National ECD Strategy planned in 2022. The findings of the ECD evaluation have helped guiding the new investment in ECD from the World Bank with the national ECD partners which have aligned with the ongoing work by UNICEF with the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Development.

To make UNICEF programming more accountable and responsive to the targeted communities
UNICEF is working with UN Agencies and implementing partners to improve policies and systems for Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). UNICEF State of Palestine is one of the six UNICEF country offices rolling out the global project on the Voices of Change aiming to enhance and scale up communities’ access to information and response to complaints and feedback, to build community trust and increase access to safe and reliable reporting channels on SEA. To date an AAP context analysis has been completed including a systems diagnostic of the targeted NGO partners’ AAP systems. Alongside this UNICEF is building agency specific systems including for direct community feedback, a data architecture as well as procurement of a data management platform to allow the secure integration of this data. Operationally UNICEF joined the Inter-Agency AAP mechanism, with feedback received through the inter-agency mechanism referred to UNICEF for follow up. Finally, UNICEF is also supporting a national NGOs call centre for the handling of sensitive SEA issues.