

East Asia and the Pacific

Update on the context and trends

The second year of the COVID-19 pandemic brought an unprecedented mobilization of efforts across the East and Pacific (EAP) region to accelerate equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. The region was heavily impacted by the emergence and rapid spread of COVID-19 variants, which continued to cause disruptions notably during the second half of 2021. The arrival and rapid rollout of COVID-19 vaccines brought optimism and hope in the region, which also began to see a gradual easing of control measures and steps towards economic recovery.

Despite all efforts, 2021 recorded the highest number of positive cases across the region as well as deaths, likely leaving tens of thousands of children orphaned due to caregiver deaths, denying 80 million children adequate learning; saw many children face increased violence at home while elevating mental health challenges of children and adolescents.

Evidence started to gather on the regression on key child indicators and on Sustainable Development Goals, which point to disparities that see millions of children left behind. The strong economic growth that secured a remarkable reduction of poverty in the region is at risk, with the risk of pushing an additional 22 million children into poverty and exposing weaknesses and fragmentation in the social protection system. Recovery remains unbalanced, with divergence between more advanced economies and emerging markets deepening, with equitable vaccine access being the key fault line.

With one third of the population living in urban areas and one quarter children under 18 years, multidimensional child poverty remains significant in the region, with at least one in ten children multidimensionally deprived, with significant disparities within the region (40% in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar, and over 70% in Timor Leste), between rural and urban populations, and among the most hard-to-reach populations including ethnic minorities.

Health outcomes that improved considerably over the past decade is also at risk, with access to maternal and child health declining due to COVID, in addition to the already existing disparities in child mortality, particularly among the most marginalized populations.

Despite overall progress on child nutrition in the region, the triple burden of malnutrition continues, with persistently high stunting rates, increasing obesity while wasting is also an issue in many countries. While an increasing number of children and adolescents are becoming overweight, the pandemic impact sees many families provide less nutritious meals, less often.

The education sector has been among the most severely affected areas by the pandemic: all countries in the region reported major disruptions to their education systems, affecting some 325 million children. School children in the Philippines, for example, faced the longest school closures which lasted for 18 months. COVID exposed a stark digital divide, whereby the majority of children in remote areas could not access online education and most teacher having never used digital technology in class.

The impact of the ongoing pandemic on access to WASH services across the region remains to be seen. Estimates made by the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program covering the period of 2000-2020 showed gains in access to basic water and sanitation services; however, data on the safely-managed service level is not available for water supply and shows a doubling of effort is required for sanitation. Ethnic populations and girls in particular lack access to hygienic handwashing and safe menstrual hygiene management.

Reports of violence against women and children increased in 2021, with concerns over underreporting of sexual abuse and violence including in boarding schools, making this a key development challenge for countries in the region. Online child abuse and exploitation is a growing threat.

Gender inequality, high adolescent pregnancy and early marriage rates, especially among ethnic populations, continue to be a pressing concern. Worryingly, gender inequalities widened in 2021, the pandemic causing livelihood losses for women; a double burden of caring; to an increase in gender-based violence.

Child and adolescent mental health concerns have increased during the pandemic. In Viet Nam, for example, eight per cent of children and 29 per cent of adolescents suffer from mental health concerns. Lack of effective platforms limit meaningful participation of children and adolescents in local/national decision-making, in addition to the already limited civic and child rights space in the region.

2021 saw a confluence of climate-related disasters: the consequences of climate change were felt across the region with typhoons, tropical storms, flooding and droughts hitting EAP countries with higher intensity than ever, while also growing in magnitude. As the end of year 2021 closed in, the Philippines was hit by its 15th and its strongest Typhoon (Rai/Odette), claiming 405 lives and displacing nearly 3 million people.

EAP region is highly vulnerable to climate change. Increasing natural disasters, environmental degradation and difficulties to access clean water are key risks to be addressed. The impacts of climate change and pollution on child and maternal health and wellbeing remain under-researched, with limited policy and public health interventions.

Myanmar was confronted with a triple crisis of COVID, climate change and conflict, notably after the military takeover in February 2021 that led to major interruptions to basic services that left millions of people in need of humanitarian assistance. UNICEF has been contributing to the broader UN Framework to address the escalating situation while also ensuring that displaced people who have fled across the border to Thailand could be provided assistance.

In spite of multiple challenges UNICEF EAPRO seized many opportunities in 2021, notably in accelerating efforts to drive digital transformation; scaling up of social protection mechanisms; expanding partnerships with key public sector donors and private sector partners to promote children's rights.

In 2021, EAPRO developed its Regional Office Management Plan 2022-2025, articulation key results and strategies to contribute to all five Goal Areas of the Strategic Plan. The ROMP positions a rebound from COVID-19, elevates and refocuses on UNICEF's the normative role that drives a gender transformative approach and focuses on leaving no child behind. The ROMP also responds to the growing threat of climate change and natural disasters, as well as emerging issue of mental health.

Major contributions and drivers of results

Programme Excellence

EAPRO provided technical guidance and support for the development and Executive Board approval of the Country Programme Documents (CPDs) for China and Lao PDR in 2021, and for Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam whose CPDs were approved in the February 2022 Executive Board.

Every Child Survives and Thrives

2021 saw scaled up support to COVID-19 response including the preparation for vaccine rollout and delivery, development of guidance and job aids to improve public health messaging and strengthening

health worker interpersonal communications to address vaccine hesitancy, and leveraging of digital health technology to increase scale and access of vaccines in response to the high influx into countries. Continuous support was provided in monitoring the risk of polio outbreak in the region and for COVID-19 pandemic response, ensuring that countries have sufficient capacities and commodities to address the outbreak, including accessing personal protective equipment (PPE), therapeutic and oxygen supplies. All efforts were focused also on building the resilience of health systems, and to ensure the continuation of essential maternal, newborn and child health services.

For nutrition, the Global Action Plan for Wasting Roadmaps were finalized in five EAP countries to chart out strengthened national efforts to prevent and treat childhood wasting. Five countries were supported with measures to strengthen breastmilk substitutes code laws and improve related monitoring systems. UNICEF EAPRO created the COMMIT initiative with WHO, WFP, and NGO partners to assess nutritional quality and labeling practices of commercially available complementary foods as part of an effort to prevent child malnutrition.

Early childhood development (ECD) regional guidance was developed to support COs in implementing the ECD agenda by enhancing ECD policies and programmes in the region and positioning its importance in policymakers' plans. The Nurturing Care Framework **Rapid Assessments** have been conducted in Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand to examine countries' progress against key components of the NCF to gauge their readiness to operationalize the framework. **Reopening guidelines for ECD/ECE services** was developed to support COs in their role in providing technical assistance to government partners and other organizations for reopening of services for young children.

Every Child Learns

EAPRO provided support to advance the **Early Learning agenda in access, equity and quality** in China, Lao PDR, Philippines, Indonesia, Pacific Island States, and Timor-Leste through guidelines for reopening services for early years, quality service provision and evaluation of the early learning. EAPRO also supported the development and implementation of **inclusive education strategies** in seven countries with specific focus on teachers, development of digital strategies for remote learning for ethnic minority languages, and provision of early learning opportunities through a Community-Based School Readiness programme. Technical guidance was provided to Indonesia, Thailand, and China on integrating transferable skills into secondary education curricula and skills development programmes for adolescents. Substantial capacity building support around learning assessment was provided to Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam and Myanmar UNICEF teams. As part of the Reimagine Education Initiative, four COs (Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Lao PDR) received technical assistance in the planning for and development of the digital learning solutions through the partnership with EdTech Hub. It also includes support to five countries to launch and maintain the **Learning Passport** platform (Lao PDR, Kiribati, Myanmar, Indonesia and Timor-Leste).

Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation

EAPRO continued to provide timely and high-quality support for the COVID-19 response and transition in addition to technical guidance for child protection, access to justice and child rights. The roll out of Child Protection Information Management Systems (with a focus on Primero), to strengthen case management and administrative data for child protection, continued to be central for systems strengthening – the system went live in PNG and Thailand in 2021 bringing the total to four, with a further four countries in the process of establishing the system and two in the pipeline.

EAPRO continued to oversee the three-region multi-country EU/UNICEF Migration Programme (including Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand), contributing to increased protection and access to services for children affected by migration.

With UNICEF's sustained support, 2021 saw a 91% recorded increase in the number of children who experienced violence being reached by UNICEF supported health, social work and justice services, and a 52% increase in the number of social service workers certified to provide child protection services in the region from 2020. Engagement on child rights was revitalized in 2021. EAPRO established a human rights community of practice with focal points in all COs, developed human rights compendiums for eight COs, delivered three trainings, and provided technical support on treaty body reporting to six COs.

Every Child in a Safe and Clean Environment

In 2021, UNICEF continued to support the elimination of open defecation through strengthening enabling environments, mobilizing communities, and strengthening sanitation markets, resulting in over 1.4 million new people in EAP region living in open defecation-free communities despite the pandemic restrictions. COs directly supported WASH facilities in 7,427 schools and 306 healthcare facilities, while ensuring accessibility for children with disabilities and support for menstrual health.

A WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool workshop in Mindanao, Philippines, advanced subnational enabling environment; a virtual workshop on climate resilient WASH technologies for Vietnam and Climate-resilient WASH 'deep dives' for Myanmar and Cambodia strengthened programming strategies to achieve climate resilient results, while the Hand Hygiene for Asia virtual event organized brought sector practitioners to accelerate expanded hand hygiene innovations and evidence-based behaviour change. Menstrual hygiene learning events held together with WaterAid focused on disability and sexual and gender minority inclusion and innovation.

With EAPRO's strategic guidance and technical assistance, COs have significantly enhanced their capacity and established a solid foundation for accelerating climate, environment and DRR actions for and with children. There has been an important increase in country offices' capacity, as demonstrated by China (children's environmental health indicators), Indonesia (climate landscape analysis), Thailand (climate impact assessment) and Malaysia (completion and wide dissemination of the first national study on the impacts of climate change on children).

A new generation of climate-proofed and environmentally sustainable country programmes has been formulated, with the new CPDs of Vietnam, Thailand and Lao PDR with dedicated outcomes and outputs on climate, environment and DRR.

Every Child Has an Equitable Chance in Life

UNICEF's first regional strategy on Social Protection in Emergencies was developed based on learnings from 2020. Myanmar and Philippines COs were trained on humanitarian cash transfers, which later enabled both COs to scale up their Humanitarian Child Grant and other cash transfers in response to the respective crises.

Continuous technical support has been given to COs in the formulation, design and implementation of Social Protection policy and programmes, including the roll out of the Maternal and Early Childhood Grant in Lao PDR, strategic advocacy for improving social protection for children and families in Malaysia, analytical report and recommendations for an inclusive and risk-informed poverty registry in the BARM region of the Philippines, feasibility analysis on the delivery of cash assistance for children in emergencies in Viet Nam, and mainstreaming shock-responsiveness into Mongolia's national social protection system. EAPRO provided support to COs in the assessment of socio-economic impact of COVID on children. A special attention was given in promoting the capacity to do solid applied research with hidden and marginal populations, and on research ethics.

As part of the EU-UNICEF project on the Public Finance Facility for EAP and ROSA, the social policy team led 7 countries in ROSA and EAP for public finance-based evidence generation and advocacy for social sector budgets. This led to the co-creation of a Country and regional Strategy for Public finance as well as more visibility and strategic positioning of UNICEF as a player in the PFM arena. Technical support was also provided to 10 COs in conducting public expenditure reviews for the social sectors with child-based expenditure reviews and child markers, social sectors costing exercises, and budget briefs.

EAPRO co-hosted the first regional conference on ‘Young People's Rights to Civic Engagement in East Asia and the Pacific: Building pathways to empowerment’ in October 2021. It was the first conference that was entirely co-designed with young people, where the topics of discussion were also selected by the partnering youth organisations and networks. UNICEF will work with partners to advocate with governments and regional bodies on these recommendations and operationalize them at local level.

Leaving No Child Behind – gender, human rights and disability

Guidance to COs has been given to address the increasing gender inequality arising from the continued COVID-19 pandemic. This included support for the prevention of, and response to, gender-based violence (GBV). This included the real time assessment of the Malaysia COVID-19 Emergency GBV response including risk mitigation and referral in digital platforms and the EU-UN Spotlight programme to end violence against women and girls in PNG, Timor-Leste and the Pacific.

EAPRO developed a structured system to operationalize human rights norms and a human rights-based approach into programming. As a starting point each office has been appointed a specialized Child Rights focal point which is regularly trained on human rights standards and developments. On a structural level Compendium on Outstanding Human Rights recommendations were developed for 8 countries and presented to the respective country offices with a view to incorporate them into their implementation and planning.

To advance the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, EAPRO has worked across the pillars of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, by building the capacity of regional and country staff across sectors. UNICEF co-led the Asia-Pacific wide working group which strengthened collaboration and information exchange amongst UN agencies on disability inclusion, and 100% of UNICEF country offices have reported substantive results on disability inclusion, through mainstreaming or targeted activities for children with disabilities. EAPRO played an instrumental role in the development of UNICEF’s first global Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy.

2. Global and Regional Programmes

Evidence Generation

EAPRO continued to play a crucial thought leadership role in the region, generating evidence in support of country and regional advocacy on children’s rights. Following up on the key findings of the evidence diagnostics for the region, EAPRO revitalized its research and evidence committee to strengthen the quality and standards of evidence generation conducted by the regional office.

The South-East Asia Primary Learning Matrix (SEA-PLM) secondary analysis was done in partnership with Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), used new learning data from the latest dataset on key equity challenges faced by lowest performing learners as well as on learning

inequities between boys and girls. The next cycle will produce critical data on the expected learning loss from COVID-19 school closures to facilitate development of appropriate learning recovery programmes.

EAPRO and UNDP Regional Hub conducted a study: 'What barriers do girls and young women in Southeast Asia face to entrepreneurship and leadership?', which examined how girls' and young women's expectations and values are shaped in adolescence and how this affects their capacity and agency for entrepreneurship and leadership.

In collaboration with the Burnet Institute, UNICEF applied implementation research on the engagement of the private sector in adolescent health service delivery. Collaboration with UNAIDS and WHO is also ongoing to identify appropriate and innovative methodologies to ensure young key populations participate and are included in routine data collection. Also in partnership with the Burnet Institute, EAPRO initiated a review of mental health needs and current responses to identify priority actions and sector roles.

EAPRO also supported six country offices to develop detailed landscape analyses on the prevention of overweight among children, highlighting priority actions to accelerate evidence-based policies and legislation to prevent overweight. In recognition of UNICEF's work on overweight prevention, Bloomberg Philanthropies funded this work in the EAP region for the first time.

In 2021, Fiji, Tuvalu and Viet Nam have released Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) findings in spite of the complex operating environment for conducting household surveys. Lao PDR and Thailand were also supported with the planning and designing of the upcoming MICS in 2022.

As an important contribution for enhancing child rights in business principles, a landscape study of the business sector engagement in WASH in Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines and Vietnam was conducted, following the implementation of a landscape study on nutrition in the previous year.

Partnerships

As in previous years, EAPRO's work was underpinned by strong regional partnerships, notably with ASEAN. EAPRO also engaged with multilateral development banks (ADB, AIIB), business sector organizations (chambers of commerce and private sector), universities and academic institutions as well as foundations while continuing to strengthen existing partnerships.

Advocacy

EAPRO continued to support Country Offices in developing new advocacy strategies in line with their CPDs. Prioritised focus was given on COVID-19 and COVAX-related communication, including donor and visibility communication, with coordination across the organisation with HQ and Supply Division. EAPRO also worked with the regional ambassador and special projects to boost engagement and brand building for UNICEF across the region.

EAPRO has witnessed increased traffic to the regional website and social media platforms: more than 50 million people were reached in 2021 on social media compared to about 20 million in 2020. EAPRO website users increased by 8 per cent in 2021 compared to 2020, with 230,000 visitors and 318,000 page views. This increase in social media and website use shows greater visibility for the issues faced by children in the region and owes a lot to improved targeting using Facebook ads, and increased budget.

UN Reform

EAPRO, together with ROSA, continued to play a central role as part of the UN Development System Regional Collaborative Platform. Notable efforts in 2021 included UNICEF's role as co-chair of the UN Issue Based Coalition (IBC) on inclusion and empowerment which focused on social protection as a measure for COVID response and recovery, and towards the end of 2021 as co-chair (with UNDP) of a new IBC on Inclusive Economic Growth and COVID-19 Recovery which replaced the inclusion and empowerment IBC. EAPRO provided technical and staff support to the joint UN evaluations in Thailand, DPRK and the Pacific. EAPRO together with ROSA, continues to be an active member of the UNEDAP, and was a key player in evaluation trainings for UN staff.

Humanitarian Action, DRR and Risk-Informed Programming

- In 2021 EAPRO ensured coordinated support to country offices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and humanitarian emergencies in Myanmar, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Cambodia and the Pacific. EAPRO continued to strengthen integration of child protection, gender-based violence, disability inclusion and shock responsive social protection into COVID-19 response and for humanitarian responses throughout the region as well as for emergency preparedness.
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- Emergency preparedness and response (EPR) capacity of UNICEF Country Offices in the region was strengthened through the delivery of remote EPR trainings and simulation exercises which targeted Lao PDR, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Mongolia, and Malaysia. EAPRO also supported the rollout of the new CCCs including their integration into EPR trainings delivered to Thailand and Cambodia COs as well as the first local language translation of CCCs in the region in Thai.
- As part of the L2 emergency response in Myanmar, the Regional Emergency Management Team was activated to guarantee RO support to all areas of the response undertaken by the country office.
- A regional consultant for the Accountability for Affected Population has also supported cross-sectoral preparedness actions for AAP, displacement and population movements.
- EAPRO continued to provide technical leadership and support to country offices in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and risk-informed approaches into their country programmes. A joint climate and DRR network meeting brought together the CO climate and DRR focal points, contributing to better synergy and coherence between climate change and DRR approaches. The RO successfully mobilized a multi-country grant from Irish Aid, while continued to oversee and quality assure the implementation of the Cargill grant in the Philippines, including supporting documentation of good practices in child-centred DRR.

5. Internal Management

- EAPRO increased capacity and resources to practice modern, transparent, sustainable and accountable governance throughout the region for the reporting period, with 2021 consolidating the learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic. EAP was the first region to have been impacted by COVID, and continues to be affected. The regional office fostered strong adaptive management in the region, providing flexibility, real time technical guidance and backstopping country offices. The regional office fostered a learning environment, facilitating exchanges and documentation of good practices in responding to this unprecedented pandemic and COVID-19 recovery, embracing flexible working mechanisms and improving efficiency. Since the onset of COVID RMTs were held on a regular basis as virtual meetings to ensure agility and continuous

information flow and participation of members in timely decision making.

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- EAPRO also was actively engaged in supporting resource mobilization, particularly supporting COs in their COVID-19 response from 2020, resulting in new funding from the Government of Japan, ADB, and World Bank as well as the strengthening and establishment of new partnerships, including with the private sector.
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- The EAP region has demonstrated consistently high response rates to the Global Staff Survey (89%) conducted in 2020. The employee engagement score was 75% for the RO, with need for improvement in office efficiency and effectiveness (56%), performance management (68%), knowledge and information sharing (76%) while staff security, job satisfaction, work life balance and personal empowerment scored were highly positive, and continued to be consistent in the pulse survey results.
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- Supply capacity of the region was strengthened, particularly with the impact of COVID-19 pandemic reemphasizing the importance of EAPRO's role in supporting this function in the region, in view of the large amount of PPE and other supplies ordered and with the implementation of the COVID-19 vaccine roll out. A significant increase was made in total procurement and supply spending in 2021, totaling over \$550 million in goods, services and procurement services including for GAVI.
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- Significant progress was made for PSEA, as a result of sustained technical support, capacity building for focal points in all 14 COs and advocacy. All COs completed PSEA implementing partner assessments in a timely manner and six COs had functioning external reporting channels for SEA cases with a 98% increase in coverage, with these channels being available to over 7.5 million people.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

The **Regional Office Process Evaluation** conducted in 2021 has highlighted key findings as follows:

- EAPRO is well-positioned to provide necessary support to CO but needs to focus on addressing sensitive, high impact and underlying issues at the country level, where less capacity or political will exists.
- COs will benefit from a holistic approach by EAPRO, as opposed to short-term and siloed approach to ensure synergies and complementarities in regional support to countries.
- A more ambitious, utilization-focused, and forward-looking research agenda by EAPRO would help position UNICEF strongly as a knowledge leader for children in the region. Knowledge management could also be more holistic and aligned with CO needs.
- EAPRO's CO support request platform could be better utilized to prioritize and measure contribution of RO to the achievement of CO results.
- Resources dedicated to C4D in an emergency context could be further strengthened, as evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings and recommendations emerging from the evaluation have been incorporated into the operationalization of the ROMP and captured in the 2022 Annual Management Plan of the RO.

As COVID-19 related travel restrictions continued in 2021, providing RO **guidance and technical support for CPD development and reviews** proved to be effective through virtual support, which enabled better coordination, integration and participation of regional teams in the process, while having efficiency gains. Consultation with COs confirmed that targeted, coordinated and prioritised in-country support are still needed, with key RO staff providing in-country support for gaining better insight, dialogue with CO and national counterparts, and capacity building.

UNICEF's participation in the **peer support group mechanism and regional collaboration platform, while high in transaction cost**, proved to be beneficial in ensuring good communication and coordination with DCO and other agencies, nurturing a transparent and constructive dialogue to support country processes, and also supporting and guiding RCOs, UNCTs and COs in aligning the cooperation framework and CPDs.

For **COVID-19 response**, collaboration was strengthened with WHO WPRO, SEARO and UNICEF ROSA for the preparation of COVID-19 vaccine rollout through streamlined communication and alignment of guidance provided to the countries. While there were challenges around the different approaches taken by the different ROs, the collaboration allowed for good practices from one region to be transferred to another WHO region. The establishment of a cross-EAPRO group on immunization has also led to better collaboration and information sharing among the different sections of the RO, working towards COVID-19 vaccine rollout. Key challenges related to the short-term nature of funding for immediate pandemic response, with insufficient resources made available to address more long-term requirements to build resilience in the existing systems. It was also observed that not all countries have managed to innovate and harmonize data management at the same pace as vaccination was being rolled out, with RO support needs expected to continue, particularly where parallel systems have been set up, to synergise with the existing systems. The use of digital technology for COVID-19 provides an opportunity to strengthen health systems more broadly.

Robust engagement with ASEAN continued in 2021 – they remain a critical partner for the adoption of regional frameworks that not only set standards for the member states and elevate key child rights issues in the region, but also provide an important advocacy tool for COs. Key lessons from such regional engagement include: (i) regional entities such as ASEAN has political access to the decision-makers and senior officials through various platforms and mechanisms (e.g. Ministers' regular meetings); (ii) identifying and supporting 'champion/lead countries' ensure better buy-in among the member states and sustainability; (iii) UNICEF is seen as a trusted partner of choice by ASEAN especially for national-level follow up and implementation and (iv) UNICEF could serve a catalytic role to facilitate and support South-South cooperation among the member states.

UNICEF EAPRO's support to **child online protection** championed an integrated approach, based on the evidence of an online-offline continuum of violence against children. Therefore, it positions child online protection within the broader child protection system strengthening approach and leverages existing prevention and response structures, while also bringing the online-specific sectors such as industry stakeholders to the table. The safeguarding risks of engaging with digital media is considerable, requiring RO and HQ oversight on new initiatives.

In terms of **humanitarian response**, the Myanmar crisis has brought EAPRO's emergency response the forefront of its programming. It showed that EAPRO has a vital role to play in support of country-level programming, including in countries such as Thailand that were affected by the Myanmar crisis but did not have nutrition expertise in the office. However, there is more room for exchanges within EAPRO to align its overall support to emergencies, in terms of approach and capacity. In addition, it will remain important to evaluate whether EAPRO staff should play functions that are ideally fulfilled by staff affiliated with the concerned Country Offices.

The RO pursued innovative ways to **further the resilience agenda** in the region. For instance, together with climate section, it carried out a virtual technical support mission to Cambodia, which involved bilateral consultations with climate/DRR focal points and the individual programme teams on potential entry points and opportunities for risk-informed programming. The mission concluded with a set of recommendations for the office on mainstreaming climate and disaster resilience into their country programme. Similarly, the joint climate and DRR network meeting provided an excellent opportunity to promote convergence of climate change and DRR approaches in the region, thereby contributing to a more coherent and synergistic resilience approach.

While significant progress has been made on PSEA, there are still gaps in country level implementation. COs require continued and sustained technical support from the RO, clear guidance from HQ on the applicability of the PSEA framework in non humanitarian settings and clear direction on the integration of child safeguarding and PSEA.