Update on the context and situation of children

COVID-19 was largely contained in Bhutan due to strict containment measures and exemplary leadership. While 2022 saw an increase in the transmission rate, the fatality rate has remained amongst the lowest in the world with 21 deaths reported. Largely due to the efficacy of vaccines, decline in national positivity trends and decrease in severity of cases, further relaxations came into effect from May 2022. Almost 96 per cent of the population was vaccinated against COVID-19 with at least three doses (gender disaggregation unavailable). Borders were reopened from 23rd September 2022. Since the pandemic started His Majesty’s Druk Gyalpo Relief Kidu Fund has dispensed more than Nu. 5.2 billion (more than USD 65 million) as social security support to 59,413 beneficiaries (State of the Nation Report, 2022).

Bhutan’s socioeconomic development situation continues to remain severely disrupted by the pandemic. From an all-time low of -10.08 per cent in 2020, GDP growth in 2021 was recorded at 4.09 percent, indicating a slight improvement (National Statistics Bureau Website). Growing inflation continues to be a major concern. Despite the continued economic downturn, the Government allocated 29.2 per cent of the 2022-2023 budget to the health and education sectors (National Budget Report, 2022-2023). This commitment continues to remain critical as children and adolescents comprise 34 per cent of Bhutan’s 735,553 estimated population (48 per cent female; 64 per cent rural) (RGOB, Population and Housing Census, 2017).

Essential health, nutrition, water and sanitation services continued for newborn, children, adolescents and women during the post-pandemic phase in 2022. Bhutan achieved 100 per cent open defecation free status with all homes across the country having access to improved sanitation.

Bhutan successfully ensured that all schools (including Early Childhood Care and Development Centres) remained open in 2022. Access to primary schooling and basic education stands at 93.3 per cent and 91.6 per cent, respectively (Annual Education Statistics, 2022). Currently, 38.6 per cent of eligible children attend an ECCD Programme (Annual Education Statistics, 2022).

The legal framework and institutions for child protection continued to be strengthened in 2022 through the development of the Bhutan Nuns Foundation Strategy and Action Plan, the revised National Youth Policy and the updated Child Protection strategy and action plan for monastic institution and nunneries. The National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) is also preparing the State Party Replies to the List of Issues Prior to Reporting issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The Civil Service Reform Bill 2022 proposes restructuring and reorganizing the civil service (including ministries and agencies) to improve efficiency and effectiveness within the civil service.

Key challenges and risks to children:

The Bhutan Living Standard Survey 2022 reports that poverty rate for 2022 is estimated at 12.4%, with poverty in rural areas (17.5%) significantly higher than urban areas (4.2%). The most recent study on multidimensional poverty, however, was in 2017 and it found that multi-dimensional poverty remained high at 7.1, affecting mostly children aged 0-9 years (Bhutan Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2017). The factors attributing to multi-dimensional poverty include deprivations in education and factors pertaining to child mortality (26.7 per 1000 live births). COVID-19 has disrupted economic growth and the impacts of the pandemic and enforced restrictions including school closure and the risks associated with it (including psychological distress and impact on children’s learning outcomes) are
yet to be ascertained. Mental health promotion, addressing violence against children and gender-based violence (GBV), and ensuring online safety remain priorities.

In 2021, youth unemployment stood at 20.9 per cent with the rates for females higher than males at 24.6 and 16.9 per cent respectively (Labour Force Survey Report, 2021). Accelerated youth employment and skilling programs, especially the accelerated Desuung integrated training programs providing targeted and high-level skills, have provided options for youth and these need to be enhanced for sustainability.

Post COVID-19, Bhutan’s efforts towards sustainable development and economic diversification will continue to face challenges, including those related to dependency on agriculture and hydropower and the climate risks associated with it. The rural population (especially women and children) will be increasingly vulnerable.

Poor data and non-availability of disaggregated data in child wellbeing and protection is a huge constraint towards gauging the progress made and the level of future interventions required (the last MICS was conducted in 2010). Another challenge is limited planning, monitoring and evaluation capacity (in both central and local governments) for effective implementation of programmes. The need to enhance social and behavior change interventions remains another challenge. Additionally, weak stakeholder coordination and collaboration within agencies hampers efficiency of service delivery and often leads to duplication of resources and efforts; a bottleneck that may be reduced through the ongoing reform. While Government reform and structural changes are ongoing, UNICEF continues to reinforce partnerships with redefined entities to ensure coordination and facilitation with Government.

**Major contributions and drivers of results**

**GA1: EVERY CHILD SURVIVES AND THRIVES**

UNICEF continued to support Government’s efforts to contain COVID-19 and maintain high coverage of essential health, nutrition and WASH services. Bhutan contained COVID-19 through high vaccination coverage for both children and adults. Seventy-three nurses received training on competency-based training on Early Essential Newborn Care and Kangaroo Mother Care and are providing services to premature and low birth weight babies.

Following an assessment of 289 health facilities, additional cold chain equipment was procured and installed for storage and transportation of COVID-19 and routine vaccines, expanding Bhutan’s cold chain capacity fourfold. An assessment of the national Medical Oxygen System was done in 52 hospitals and oxygen cylinders were procured to fill the gaps.

With support from UNICEF and WHO, the newly established Pema Center Secretariat, under Royal Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen, is coordinating a multisectoral approach to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). A new maternal mental health screening tool is being piloted at the Jigme Dorji Wangchuk National Referral hospital.

Micronutrient Powder supplementation reached 97 per cent coverage in 2022 (95 per cent in 2020). Infant and Young Child Feeding module was revised to incorporate recent scientific and global recommendations. Integration of Nutrition Management Information System within Health Management Information System is ongoing.

Faculty of Nursing and Public Health was supported to include a Social and Behavior Change (SBC)
module in the health worker pre-service and in-service training curricula.

GA2: EVERY CHILD LEARNS

UNICEF supported expansion of inclusive, quality and gender-responsive learning opportunities. Expansion of ECCD services continued through establishment of two additional community based ECCD centers targeting 44 children (24F), and through alternative models. An inclusive ECCD center for 30 children was established to serve as a model and resource center. UNICEF and Ministry of Education piloted home-based ECCD interventions in six districts to ensure that 123 children (62F) in remote locations have access to early learning and stimulation. A Multi-sectoral ECCD Strategic Action Plan was finalized and costed. Support for 8,933 caregivers was provided through National Parenting Education Programme.

New Normal Curriculum, which is ICT-driven, competency-based and facilitates contact and non-contact teaching-learning, was developed further. Introduction of Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers has further addressed the quality of education in Bhutan.

UNICEF is supporting Monastic Education Council to develop an Information Management System to strengthen its capacity to collect, analyze and use data for evidence-based planning, monitoring and decision making.

Two schools with Special Educational Needs programme and two specialized institutes for the Deaf and Blind offer access to education to more than 800 students with disabilities. Thirteen transition schools were identified to facilitate smooth transition for children with disabilities. Seventy-eight teachers (35F) from newly identified inclusive schools participated in an immersion programme to improve their knowledge and practice on inclusive education. An Exploratory Study on the Readiness of Colleges under Royal University of Bhutan to accept students with disabilities revealed that colleges are not ready due to accessibility, capacity, and policy barriers.

Around 1,500 young people (700F) were trained in marketable skills such as entrepreneurship, digitalization, coding and programming, and other computing assets.

GA3: EVERY CHILD IS PROTECTED FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

To strengthen policy environment for children’s well-being in monastic institutions and nunneries, UNICEF supported Bhutan Nuns Foundation (BNF) and Commission for Religious Affairs (Dratshang Lhentshog) to develop BNF Strategy and Action Plan, and to update Child Protection Strategy and Action Plan for monastic institution and nunneries.

With UNICEF support, NCWC is preparing the State Party Replies to the List of Issues Prior to Reporting issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Continuing work on developing capacities of Bhutan’s social service workforce, UNICEF with NCWC, RENEW and Nazhoen Lamtoen trained 225 (132F) frontliners in child protection case management. Fifty-six (34F) GBV specialized service providers were trained to provide MHPSS and safety services. To increase access to MPHSS services, the “I support my friends” package on psychological first aid was used to train 3,330 peer helpers (gender disaggregation unavailable) in 128 schools. UNICEF’s support to women and girls’ safe spaces (WGSS) enabled 16,398 (10,111F) women, girls, and boys to access case management, livelihood, and other services.

UNICEF worked with NCWC to form a multisectoral Child Justice Technical Working Group (TWG) which, among others, reviewed the existing SOP to deal with Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). To strengthen rehabilitation and reintegration of CICL, UNICEF worked with Nazhoen
Lamoten to provide lifeskills workshops, and to map and establish partnerships with community service providers for diversion programmes. A women and child protection desk under the Royal Bhutan Police was established in Zhemgang district. Currently, 17 of 20 districts have these desks in place.

Building on COVID-19 RCCE experiences, UNICEF and NCWC established consortium of 20 implementing partners from government, youth volunteers’ network, CSOs, disabled people’s organizations, faith-based organizations, law enforcement agencies, sports bodies, mainstream media and social media to develop and implement a multi-sectoral SBC campaign on ending violence against children (EVAC) – “Our child; our wealth.” More than 120,000 people (gender disaggregation unavailable) were sensitized on preventing violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect. More than 20,000 (9,000F female) community influencers – comprising local leaders, village elders, youth volunteers, scouts, sports persons, religious leaders, service providers, and schoolteachers – were mobilized for community engagement. More than 50 child wellbeing groups, including social media groups, were formed, instituting child wellbeing as a standing agenda in community decision making fora. About 15,000 frontline workers and influential people (gender disaggregation unavailable) were provided with EVAC and COVID-19 communication materials.

UNICEF engaged 47,750 young people (25,261F) through programmes such as adolescent skills and employability project (29,014; 15,761F), multimedia and entrepreneurship training (1,500; 700F), civic engagement and participation programme (10,000; 5,000F), and sports and construction of WASH facilities across 13 youth centers (7,236; 3,800F).

GA4: EVERY CHILD LIVES IN A SAFE AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

Access to safe water, clean toilets, and improved hygiene in schools, monastic institutions, health facilities, and communities increased through UNICEF-supported WASH services. Bhutan was declared 100 per cent Open Defecation Free (ODF). Another 17,274 children (773F) in 47 schools and 5,977 children (582 nuns) in 111 monastic institutions benefitted from WASH services. Handwashing stations and safe drinking water facilities were installed in 34 Primary Health Centers (PHC), benefitting 690 people daily.

The ‘Red Dot’ campaign and high-level advocacy on Menstrual Health and Hygiene with the theme ‘Men Take Lead’ was observed on Global Menstrual Hygiene Day. Fifty-nine health coordinators (gender disaggregation unavailable) in 49 monastic institutions were trained on hygiene behavior benefitting 2,554 children (145 nuns) in monastic institutions. Another 41 monks from 40 monastic schools, 10 nuns from five nunneries and 45 support staff (5F) from 45 schools were trained on sustainable and quality WASH services – 2,206 child monks, 287 child nuns and 15,271 school children (7,797F) benefitted from the training.

Environment-friendly heat pump hot water systems were installed in five monastic institutions benefitting 150 monks and 125 nuns. 530 child monks and 25 child nuns have access to safe drinking water through safe water filtration systems installed in 10 monastic institutions (one nunnery).

Construction of two inclusive toilets each for schools and monastic schools are benefitting 2,003 children (976F) including 92 children with disabilities (35F) and 100 monks. Access to improved WASH services in health facilities was ensured through introduction of WASH FIT (Facility Improved Tool) in 49 health centres and will benefit 2,109 patients daily.

GA5: EVERY CHILD HAS AN EQUITABLE CHANCE IN LIFE

UNICEF and UNDP supported Parliament to revise their Strategic Development Plan (2024-28), ensuring that strategies are fit-for-purpose in the context of Parliament’s role in SDG implementation
and monitoring.

UNICEF is supporting Ministries of Finance and Education to develop an education sector budget brief to assess government spending on children’s education, review expenditures from an equity lens, and identify spending inefficiencies.

UNICEF continued to support the Central Monastic Body in further advancing development of a social security scheme, including a financing strategy and operational manual for monks and nuns to provide them with a secured income.

The Child-Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) initiative was advanced by developing a resource guide to sensitize local government officials, elected leaders and young people on importance of child and youth participation in local planning and budgeting. UNICEF together with the CSOs Bhutan Media and Democracy and Youth Development Fund sensitized 21 local government authorities (10F) and 45 young people/adolescent (25F) on CFLG and adolescent participation in local governance. 5,000 youth volunteers (3,000F) were engaged through civic engagement and participation programmes to design and co-create solutions to address issues in communities.

As a part of UNICEF’s upstream policy work with Sherubtse College, the certificate course on social policy for local government officials capacitated 31 newly elected local government authorities (1F) on policy making at central level, implementation at local level, and factors determining effective policy formulation and implementation.

CROSS-CUTTING
Gender
Gender was mainstreamed into annual workplans while using disaggregated data wherever possible.

UNICEF-supported EVAC SBC campaign trained and mobilized more than 20,000 community influencers (9,000F). With UNICEF support, NCWC is preparing State Party Replies to List of Issues Prior to Reporting issued by CRC. UNICEF continued its support to the ‘Red Dot’ campaign and high-level advocacy on Menstrual Health and Hygiene with the theme ‘Men Take Lead.’ UNICEF’s support to WGSS enabled 16,398 (10,111F) women, girls, and boys to access case management, livelihood, and other services.

A Gender Programmatic Review was completed to provide inputs for next country programme (2024-2028), identifying gender transformative priorities and strengthening existing programmatic approached to gender, with a focus on adolescent girls.

Humanitarian Assistance
Bhutan’s cold chain was expanded fourfold through procurement and installation of 14 Solar Direct Drive Combos (Refrigerator + Deep Freezers) in rural health facilities. Cold chain temperature excursion monitoring devices were installed at all health facilities. Twenty Primary Health Centers (PHC) were equipped with inclusive handwashing stations and safe drinking water, benefiting 322 people daily. Thirty-four PHCs were equipped with inclusive handwashing stations and safe drinking water, benefitting 690 people daily.

Schools were reopened for face-to-face learning on April 18. 64 Disaster Management Focal teachers (gender disaggregation unavailable) were trained virtually on Basic Disaster Risk Management and Planning to strengthen School-based Disaster Management Planning.

Building on COVID-19 RCCE experiences, one of UNICEF’s priorities was to strengthen systems and networks for SBC with a focus on advancing multi-sectoral collaboration and meaningful community engagement.
**CHANGE STRATEGIES:**

**Programming excellence for at-scale results for children:** UNICEF Bhutan provided continued support to improve subnational data sources to better identify vulnerable children and continued to build capacity of district administrations and communities to improve planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring to achieve results for children and adolescents.

**Gender-responsive programming:** Described under Cross-Cutting above.

**Winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public:** UNICEF harnessed advocacy opportunities including COVID-19 vaccination campaign for children (5-11yrs), reopening of schools, and meetings with government to ensure recovery plans were inclusive of children and young people’s issues. Advocacy efforts complemented strategic media coverage, and UNICEF’s support to COVID-19 response and recovery contributed to prioritization of children and young people’s wellbeing.

UNICEF’s EVAC advocacy efforts engaged Prime Minister’s Office, NCWC Chairs – Foreign and Health Ministers, Parliamentarians, district administrators and national media. UNICEF harnessed World Children’s Day and World Cup to advocate for inclusion and protection of children from all forms of violence. These efforts, among others, resulted in Government announcing the roll-out of an anti-bullying campaign in schools across the country from 2023 onwards and resulted in protection helplines recording a three-fold increase in calls.

UNICEF is the most followed international agency in Bhutan on social media and continues to reach many followers, especially those between 13-44 years. Three social media platforms recorded more than 105 million (105,286,780) impressions, which is the number of times the Country Office’s posts were seen. The posts received 6,142,712 engagements and were viewed by 52 per cent male and 48 per cent female. UNICEF Bhutan had 50 media mentions in national media. Country Office issued 29 stories including press releases, news articles and reports, highlighting issues impacting children and young people during the pandemic and recovery efforts being made.

**Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children:** UNICEF Bhutan played an instrumental role in leveraging substantial financial resources for Bhutan’s post pandemic recovery from the ADB, COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Support, and the Government of Japan, including through UNICEF’s Global Humanitarian Action for Children Fund.

**Harnessing the power of business and markets for children:** UNICEF partnered with iBest, a private training institute to organize multimedia skills for 40 unemployed youth. 50 aspiring entrepreneurs (25F) started social enterprise projects after availing foundational skills and knowledge on developing proposal, access to finance and mentorship programme. Two long-term agreements with private sector entities (iBEST and Druk Holdings and Investments Ltd) were prepared for launching in January 2023.

**Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children:** UNICEF continues to advocate for next MICS Survey to be conducted at the earliest to provide accurate, timely and disaggregated data for informed planning and evaluation. The Situation Analysis (SitAn) for Women and Children in Bhutan was drafted to provide evidence for next country programme (2024-2028). The SitAn stakeholder discussions included intensive consultations with members from LGBTQIA+ community and parents of children with disabilities.

**ENABLERS**
UNICEF Bhutan’s results and change strategies are supported by four organizational performance enablers.
Governance (modern, transparent and accountable governance for the organization): CO was further strengthened through strong compliance to necessary procedures, strategic review, and rationalization processes. There are currently 10 functional committees. Management regularly practices timely, transparent, and horizontal sharing of relevant information via the staff association and exchange of ideas. All regional benchmarks for programme performance, security, HACT, and risk mitigation were met. Regarding people management, CO has one of the best pulse survey results (85.35%) and GSS survey results in the region, consistently scoring highly on conducive working environment.

Management (results-oriented, efficient, effective, and collaborative management): UNICEF Bhutan continues to invest in staff capacity for rights and results-management (RRBM). A short RRBM refresher was organized for staff prior to the Visioning and Strategic Prioritization Exercise for next country programme.

People (versatile staff, staff as agents of change): Staff members received professional development through staff exchanges (2), stretch assignments (4), and surge deployment (1). A UN common learning platform was established to share knowledge and skills. Recruitment of staff, interns and consultants was done in a timely manner to ensure smooth office functioning.

Knowledge and information systems (efficient, safe and secure systems connecting results & people): UNICEF continues to work with relevant partners to strengthen Bhutan’s data ecosystem. An external evaluation of the current CPD (2019-2023) was commissioned by ROSA to inform the design and support managerial decisions for the next CPP. UNICEF, Evaluation Association Bhutan (EAB), and EvalYouth developed a module on Basic Evaluation and a Communication Strategy to disseminate findings from evaluation reports, build capacity of evaluators and advocate for stronger evaluation culture. With UNICEF support, EAB and Community of Evaluators, South Asia conducted 5th Evaluation Conclave.
UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

UNICEF contributes to Inter-Agency Task Teams, UN PME Group, HACT Working Group and UN Business Operating Strategy under the UNSDPF and is supporting the development of the next Cooperation Framework. Among others, UNICEF continues to leverage its partnerships for improved synergy, resource efficiency and to strengthen complementary efforts.

GOAL AREA 1 & 4:
UNICEF worked with Health, Nutrition and WASH partners to continue strategic planning and implementation of programmes. The Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Education (MoE), Academic Institutions such as Faculty of Nursing and Public Health (FNPH), development partners (JICA), Ministry of Works and Human Settlement (MoWHS), the Religion and Health Project (RHP) of the Central Monastic Body, SNV (Netherlands Development Organization), Bhutan Toilet Organization (BTO), Local Governments and rural communities remain UNICEF’s key partners in achieving results under these two goal areas.

GOAL AREA 2:
UNICEF supported the MoE’s Department of Youth and Sports to partner with iBest, a private firm, to help young people including out of school youth learn marketable skills through targeted sessions on multimedia skills, entrepreneurship, and digital coding and programming through youth centers.

UNICEF is the coordinating agency for the Global Partnership for Education and helped to leverage GPE’s Multiplier Funds together with other Education sector stakeholders. UNICEF partners with Monastic body to provide educational services to children in Monastic schools.

UNICEF and UNDP are developing an online mentorship programme for aspiring entrepreneurs. Through UNICEF’s support, UNDP conducted field research to test newly developed national innovation platform in a few schools implementing the UPSHIFT programme.

GOAL AREA 3:
UNICEF and NCWC partnered with other Government entities, CSOs and media to implement the EVAC campaign. UNICEF and WHO supported Government and CSOs in implementing multisectoral strategies to deliver MPHSS for children, adolescents, and caregivers. UNICEF is working with ITU to jointly support the Department of Information and Technology for establishing online protection measures.

UNICEF supported MoE to partner with the Loden Foundation and Youth Development Fund, to rollout the UPSHIFT programme across 64 schools and 10 youth centers, helping 4,639 young people (2496F) with problem-solving, decision-making, teambuilding, entrepreneurial, and leadership skills. More than 18,736 young people (9,500F) including out-of-school youth are engaged through programmes such as multimedia skilling, Sports, and civic engagement.

GOAL AREA 5:
UNICEF’s upstream policy work in 2022 was further enhanced by collaborating with the Parliament, the Prime Minister’s Office, and the Ministries of Finance, Health and Education.

CROSS-CUTTING:
UNICEF worked with UNRCO to share experiences from the multisectoral, multiple partner EVAC campaign. UNICEF in collaboration with NCWC and Bhutan Football Federation observed World Children's Day to promote EVAC as a joint event by organizing an exhibition football match coinciding with the opening of the World Cup 2022.

Lessons Learned and Innovations
GA1: EVERY CHILD SURVIVES AND THRIVES

**Innovation:** Water contamination from flooding, landslides, inadequate and damaged sanitation infrastructure, and poor management of wastewater pose risks to providing sustainable quality WASH services. Introduction of new technologies (i.e., installation of water filtration system with high grade pipes, elbow/pedal-operated faucet and water saving aerators in all tap points) will help provide sustainable access to safe drinking water and prevent the spread of infectious diseases at health care facilities as well as enhance effective use of water resources.

GA2: EVERY CHILD LEARNS

**Lesson learned:** The steady recruitment of ECCD facilitators continues to be a challenge due to the ongoing civil service reform. Advocacy with the Ministry of Education to use innovative ways to resolve this issue, especially by working with the local governments, must continue.

GA3: EVERY CHILD IS PROTECTED FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

**Lesson learned:** Extensive consultations with different members of the community including persons with diverse gender identities and with disabilities helped inform the design and establishment of the Women and Girls Safe Spaces. This ensured that these Centre are providing services that are tailored to the needs of women and girls and have also led to greater ownership by the community and local leaders.

**Innovation:** Civic engagement and participation training co-designed with potential employers from the private sector helped to provide marketable skills for unemployed youth. Engaging the MoE and partners in the planning process and rollout of the UPSHIFT programme across 64 schools and 10 youth centers helped to garner support and commitment from the decision makers from each agency, expanding the programme across 20 districts within a short duration. Further the building capacity of each focal person, Principals and districts education officer helped to streamline implementation of projects across schools and youth centers. Engagement and feedback gathered from young people also contributed towards reaching the most unreached youth.

**Innovation:** To enhance learning experience of young people and support schools and youth centres to scale up the UPSHIFT programme, UNICEF’s Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) and Office of Innovation supported to implement UNISOLVE, a digital platform designed to facilitate UPSHIFT delivery through a school-based, teacher-facilitated blended learning model. UNISOLVE combines the advantages of distance learning opportunities and face-to-face activities to promote creativity among adolescents and young people. Designed with and for the education system, keeping scalability in mind, UNISOLVE aims to skill students on social innovation and 21st century skills.

**CROSS-CUTTING:**

**Lesson learned:** COVID-19 restrictions and the civil service reform posed risks to timely implementation of planned activities with regular government implementing partners. Anticipating these risks, UNICEF expanded its partnerships with non-traditional partners namely, CSOs, faith-based organizations, youth networks, mainstream media and social media, allowing most planned activities to be implemented on time.

**Lesson learned:** Intra- and inter-sectoral collaboration remain critical in ensuring effective social and behavior change interventions to address issues as the country recovers from the pandemic. Partnering with non-traditional partners such as CSOs, religious organizations, sports bodies, and leveraging social media and mainstream media reach was effective for community engagement. The technical and financial support received from the ROSA’s SBC Programme was instrumental in implementing joint
multisectoral SBC initiatives.

**Lesson learned:** Leveraging Campaigns, partnerships and linking the issues affecting children for international days such as the World Children’s Day proved powerful in advocating the rights of children and in securing renewed commitment from the Government to uphold the provisions and principals of the CRC. Engaging new partners and influencers such as the Bhutan Football Federation, Humans of Thimphu, an online storytelling platform by a group of youth, and the Snowman Race Secretariat to support advocacy for child rights were effective in positioning issues affecting children and young people high on the national agenda.

**Innovation:** Based on the emerging needs of the new country programme and COVID-19 RCCE experiences, with support of ROSA, UNICEF Bhutan has initiated the development of an interactive mobile App platform designed for parents, harmonizing lifesaving advisories across the sectors. The App will be launched in 2023.

The lessons learned highlighted above will be considered and taken forward while developing the new CPP (2024-2028), and to inform the annual priorities of the subsequent years.