

## El Salvador

### Update on the context and situation of children

Children comprise 28% (1,781,716) of El Salvador's population, estimated at 6.3 million. Multidimensional poverty affected 27% (521,762) of households and those with children saw an increase of 0.9 percentage points (34.7%) compared with 2020 (33.8%), nearly double (18.0%) that of adult-only households, with greater concentration in rural areas (52.0%) (Ministry of Economics 2021). Children are vulnerable to economic fluctuations, and child labour can ensue. In 2021, 81,164 children were working: 41.9% (34,008) were out of school and 71.0% (58,007) engaged in hazardous work.

As per Ministry of Health's (MoH) latest figures, by 2021, 98.1% of births were institutionalized, and the under-five mortality rate reached 10.8 per 1,000 live births. Neonatal mortality went from 5.1 per 1,000 live births in 2015 to 5.7 in 2021. The pandemic decelerated regular immunization coverage from 91.1% (2015) to 78.0% (2021).

COVID-19 vaccination progressed with 4,329,694 people receiving two doses by December 2022. By 2021, 60% of children were vaccinated (MoH, 2022).

Some progress exists in lowering stunting (from 13.6% in 2015 to 10.0% in 2021), while malnutrition in all its forms is of concern: from 2015 to 2021, overweight children under 5 rose from 6.4% to 8.3%, while those underweight rose from 2.1% to 2.9% (MoH, 2021).

In 2022, 1.3 million students enrolled in schools. Education continued virtually and in-person, but in-person attendance remained voluntary. The Government announced a full in-person return to schools for the 2023 academic cycle. Investments in computers and connectivity are being combined with a learning recovery focus. The education sector continues to face pre-pandemic challenges with net enrolment rates dropping significantly from 81.2% to 41.1% in the transition from elementary education to secondary school, according to the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2022). In 2021 the MoE identified poor academic performance (14.3%), change in address (2.3%), migration (2.1%) and economic difficulties (1.5%) as predominant causes of dropout. The COVID-19 pandemic caused socioemotional distress in students, with 15.6% reporting notable or elevated depression. Those most affected were 10th grade students (21.5%), girls (17.2%) and those living in rural areas (13.6%). Additionally, 78.3% of students presented notable anxiety symptoms, with 8th graders (30.7%) being most affected, followed by 9th and 10th graders, particularly in rural areas (22.4%). Overall, nearly 97,000 students need professional psychosocial care (MoE, 2022).

2022 was a pivotal year for children's rights legislation. The new law *Crece Juntos para la Protección Integral de la Primera Infancia, Niñez y Adolescencia* (Grow up Together for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents) for children aged 0–18, overrode the previous child protection law, LEPINA (2010). Coming into effect in January 2023, the law considerably strengthens the State's commitment to early childhood development (ECD). Aligned with the Government's strong ECD focus, the *Amor Convertido en Alimento* (Love Converted into Food) law was passed promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding and guaranteeing this right for every infant. The *Nacer con Cariño para un parto respetado y un cuidado cariñoso y sensible para el recién nacido* (Born with affection for a respected birth and loving and sensitive care for the newborn) law strengthens quality care during pre-conception, pregnancy, childbirth and infancy, promoting parental co-responsibility.

On 27 March 2022, in response to 87 civilian murders in 72-hours by gangs, the Legislative Assembly approved a nationwide state of exception suspending core constitutional rights for 30 days, including freedom of association, due process, the right to be charged within 72-hours or released and the right to

state-sponsored defence in court. After 10 months of consecutive extensions, this state of exception is ongoing and, given the psychosocial and economic trauma historically caused by gangs in El Salvador, enjoys widespread popular support. Trends show significant reductions in homicide rates, going from 18.1 per 100,000 people in 2021 to 7.8 in 2022 (Ministry of Justice and Public Security).

On 30 March, the Legislative Assembly reformed the juvenile justice law allowing adolescent children from 12–15 to be imprisoned for up to 10 years for ‘gang association’ and those 16–18 for up to 20 years. The reform does not allow for modification, substitution or judicial revocation of a provisional detention measure, and detention can be extended until sentencing.

El Salvador’s Third Periodic Report to the Committee Against Torture indicated, 2,464 adolescents were detained between January and September 2022. As of 3 January 2023, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security registered 61,300 persons captured and deprived of liberty during the state of exception, of which around 3% are adolescents, including pregnant girls. Adolescents appear disproportionately stigmatized as drivers of gang violence.

On 26 October, reforms to the law to combat organized crime allowed for adolescents to be tried with adults and judged jointly under a single collective legal process that, in the case of adolescents, is overseen by two judges – an organized crime judge and a juvenile justice judge. Bringing adolescents to trial with adults, risks adolescents not being afforded the specialized legal protections embodied in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, the law allows adolescents to be detained for up to 24 months prior to being formally sentenced.

While 2022 legal reforms positively strengthened ECD social policies seeking to correct historical underinvestment in children aged 0–8, a focus on adolescents is now critical to ensure investment in children’s rights is sustainable through their second decade.

Violence affects children from early stages of life. MoH (2021) reported that 54.5% of children aged 1–14 experienced violent forms of discipline. Women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by violence. According to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, between January and June 2022, 12,739 acts of violence against women were registered, with 25.9% (3,299) being acts of sexual violence, 64.4% (2,123) were committed against girls under 18.

As of November 2022, 13,721 migrant persons were returned to El Salvador, a 91.2% increase compared with 2021. Approximately 32.4% were children, of which 7% were unaccompanied. Economic factors (41.9%), insecurity (18.9%) and family reunification (17.3%) were the main reasons cited for migration. Data on internal forced displacement is unavailable.

## Major contributions and drivers of results

2022, was the first year of the Country Programme Document (CPD) 2022-2026, which is strategically aligned to support El Salvador’s Social Development Plan 2019–2024 priorities and to contribute to the implementation of the seven result areas of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022–2026, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025. It also contributes to the implementation of the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports for El Salvador in 2018 and their follow-up.

The Government presented its Voluntary National Report (VNR) assessing progress on its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and detailing advances, challenges and lessons learned towards realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Progress was reported in stunting, child mortality, maternal health and sanitation, and it identified that acceleration is needed in regular vaccination, malnutrition and child protection. Data gaps were also identified in gender-based violence, child

marriage/early unions and water quality.

UNICEF provided technical assistance to ensure that the new legislation on child and adolescent protection (Crecer Juntos) and breastfeeding (Amor Convertido en Alimento) adhere to international standards according to the 2018 recommendations of the Committee of the Rights of the Child; these efforts will be strengthened in 2023. The Crecer Juntos law also reforms the child protection system and institutions, creating a new overarching governing and implementation entity (CONAPINA). UNICEF is supporting CONAPINA through training of its personnel and raising awareness among system stakeholders.

UNICEF health, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programmes supported the Government's social welfare objectives. Working in partnership with Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) to increase vaccination coverage, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health's (MoH) national vaccination plan, including for COVID-19. The UNICEF-PAHO/WHO coordination in El Salvador was identified as a best practice and lesson-learned in the Real Time Assessment of UNICEF's support to the COVID-19 vaccine rollout and immunization programme strengthening in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. Contributions from the Government of Japan and the Global Alliance for Vaccination strengthened national cold-chain capacities, supporting both the National Biological Centre (CENABI) that serves as the primary and central vaccine-specialized storage facility, as well as other storage facilities throughout El Salvador. UNICEF complements these achievements through investments in front-line health personnel and vaccination teams, providing specialized equipment and training to manage vaccines and reach communities through vaccination campaigns and door-to-door efforts. Communication strategic campaigns promoting vaccination to prevent polio and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) were undertaken in coordination with the MoH and PAHO/WHO leveraging UNICEF social and behavioural change strategies. The MoH campaign Ponte al Día reached 6,501,240 people, providing families with support for the prevention of communicable diseases. Combined with door-to-door vaccination efforts in the prioritized urban, peri-urban and rural municipalities with the lowest vaccination coverages, specialized vaccination teams and health promoters were deployed with UNICEF and PAHO/WHO support to address both regular vaccination schedules and COVID-19 vaccination. The UNICEF Vaccines-Save-Lives campaign reached 5.8 million people, combatting vaccine myths and disinformation.

UNICEF continued building on the health system adoption in 2021 of the care for child development (CCD) approach by integrating work with the education and child protection systems and civil society organizations, including rehabilitation institutions and municipalities. The health solidarity fund (FOSALUD) was supported through the provision of early stimulation resource kits to equip newly established centres for infant care, benefiting 3,867 children and augmenting capacities in all 21 maternity waiting wards. The Benjamín Bloom Children's Hospital received recreational materials and capacity-building sessions to support training of parents and caregivers in early stimulation of their infants.

The Amor Convertido en Alimento legislation was passed in the third quarter of 2022, which guarantees the right of every infant to access breastfeeding by providing appropriate safe spaces and conditions to promote and safeguard this right. UNICEF contributes to its implementation by providing technical assistance for developing and disseminating guidelines for the establishment and operation of legally mandated lactation rooms, according to international standards. UNICEF supported the expansion of human breastmilk collection centres and equipped lactation rooms for the MoH, the National Health Institute, FOSALUD and the municipality of Mejicanos.

In late 2021, El Salvador approved a new overarching water resources law recognizing access to water and sanitation as a basic human right and created the Salvadorean Water Authority (ASA) as the national governing body for water resources. UNICEF supported this nascent institution in the

dissemination of its oversight roles and responsibilities and awareness-building among civil society organizations and international cooperation agencies working in the WASH sector, including on legislative changes affecting water resources and their management.

UNICEF further supported the participation of youth from rural areas in the Caribbean Health and Climate Change Congress. Additionally, in coordination with the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO), youth were supported to participate in the COP27 held in Egypt.

During the reporting period, the global Reimagine Education initiative continued to support MoE's strategies to address challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in school closures for 10 school months (March 2020 to April 2021), followed by 17 school months of blended education where in-person learning was undertaken voluntarily (April 2021 to October 2022).

Challenges continued in guaranteeing that the 1.3 million enrolled students in 2022 benefited from full in-person education. While safe in-classroom learning remained voluntary and was complemented with virtual modalities through new technologies and support for mental health needs, including investments in computers and connectivity, flexible modalities with a learning recovery focus, family orientation programmes and the generation of evidence to design programmes and policies supporting educational retention and reintegration, including during emergencies.

By May 2022, 633,291 students attended classes in person daily, though not necessarily for all five days per week. Given that schools represent safe spaces for children and adolescents not only to learn but also to receive critical protection, health, meals and psychosocial support services, UNICEF engaged in advocacy efforts with national authorities focused on promoting a full in-person return of students to their classrooms.

UNICEF contributed to developing and implementing the ECD policy *Crecer Juntos*, launched in 2021 by the First Lady of the Republic to address the historic underinvestment in children 0–8 years old. This policy was developed with the support of UNICEF, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and funded by the World Bank and IADB. It has a strong emphasis on investing in ECD. UNICEF provided technical assistance to develop strategic plans for its implementation, including the National Plan to Develop Parenting Skills and the National Intersectoral Strategy to expand early childhood education coverage.

Working closely with the MoE, the strategic alliance between UNICEF and the World Bank enabled achievements through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE): an agreement was signed for the achievement of Quality Early Childhood Learning with Equality and Inclusion of Vulnerable Populations; the GPE Multiplier and Girls' Education Accelerator and the System Capacity Grant were approved, raising USD 16.6 million for the MoE; and the first joint sectoral review was developed in consultation with the Local Education Group (GLE) coordinated by UNICEF.

The prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) in schools and promotion of gender equality were the focus of the UNICEF implementation of the European Union/United Nations Spotlight and the Government of Canada Protective Learning and Nurturing Environments: Bringing Girls to New Heights (PLANE) initiatives. The peaceful coexistence programme *Soy Música* (I am Music) was adopted by the MoE, and the *También Soy Persona* (I am Also a Person) methodology promoting positive parenting practices will be assessed for scaling by CONAPINA in 2023. UNICEF continued to promote safe-learning spaces, strengthening the leadership of student committees in over 50 schools benefitting 6,406 children (3506 girls and 2900 boys), and supporting participatory diagnoses for the design of an online child protection course. The PLANE initiative enabled the design, strengthening and expansion of retention strategies, and reinforced technological education with a gender focus. As a result, 19 schools are implementing STEAM methodologies (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics), 20 provide job initiation orientation and two offer technical courses, benefiting more

than 4,000 students. Additionally, 109 students in highly vulnerable conditions completed their virtual accelerated education from 2nd to 6th grade and, thanks to the support of UNICEF, MoE has materials to extend accelerated education through 9th grade.

Given the proven track record of UNICEF in community educational interventions, the MoE requested support to strengthen its recently established Interim National Student Council. UNICEF was selected as a strategic partner for the formulation and implementation of two initiatives with the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and the Educate a Child programme (EAC) of the Qatari Education Above All foundation. These efforts will be advanced in 2023.

As contemplated in the Crecer Juntos law, the Government has taken definitive steps to invest in ECD with a focus on children aged 0–8. To complement this investment, the Government will be supported by UNICEF in 2023 to strengthen the measurement of multidimensional child poverty as a necessary step to further inform the implementation of focalized social policy interventions in territory. This work will further support the Government in its planning, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of its child-focused social policies, and serve to create an alert system spotlighting multidimensional child poverty in communities. Additionally, UNICEF is supporting the Office of the First Lady in the development of national standards and definitions for child and adolescent development milestones.

In 2022, support was provided to the Executive's Secretariat of Innovation, which is responsible for developing and introducing new technologies and innovations to the National Registry of Natural Persons (RNPN). As part of the support for the implementation of Crecer Juntos Policy and Law, UNICEF provided technical support and contributed to strengthening the operational capacity of the RNPN to implement unique identity registry at birth at the municipal level. This initiative will positively impact social policies and the education, health and child protection systems, facilitating the monitoring of needs, access, quality and timeliness of care received by children and their families. Support was provided among other efforts by acquiring computer equipment to bring registration units to maternity wards in the main hospitals.

Collaboration with civil society stakeholders continued, incorporating best practices and lessons learned from the #EsHoraDeLaNiñez initiative (2021) of UNICEF and the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) by focusing on raising awareness and providing appropriate fora for children and adolescents to express opinions on issues pertaining to them such as education, environmental protection, migration, family coexistence, elimination of gender stereotypes, violence (including gender-based violence (GBV)), and the appropriate use of technology and social networks. UNICEF and FLACSO continue to create meaningful participatory fora and gather primary quantitative and qualitative data on children's opinions and needs. Consolidated inputs will inform UNICEF advocacy in El Salvador for augmenting public investment in sectoral and intersectoral initiatives benefitting children and adolescents.

Over 17,000 children and adolescents engaged in activities organized by UNICEF, including World Children's Day and International Day of the Girl Child. On social media, Facebook followers increased by 106.9% (107,000 new followers). Instagram followers increased by 3.5% (1,000 new followers) and Twitter by 12.3% (5,500 new followers). This was achieved through the publication of 2,000+ posts, videos and interactions on all three platforms. UNICEF El Salvador continues to be the children's organization with the most followers nationally on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

In collaboration with the leading Latin American thinktank Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo (FUNDAUNGO), the country office has supported the creation of evidence and the preparation of strategic reports to advocate on key issues for children in public policies, including socioeconomic vulnerability in households with children, the impact of COVID-19 on social development, the evolution of public spending and the digital divide. Evidence demonstrates the incidence of multidimensional poverty, is more prevalent among children: in 2021, 34.7% of households with

children experienced multidimensional poverty compared with 18% of households with only adults.

UNICEF continued to focus on strengthening violence prevention programmes and specialized child protection services to address children and adolescents in vulnerable contexts, prioritizing care for child victims of violence, exploitation, and abuse, including GBV, as well as adolescents in conflict with the law, and internally displaced, migrant and returnee children, adolescents, and their families. At the local level, UNICEF is strengthening alliances with authorities and consolidating its violence prevention strategy in six municipalities with high rates of violence, internal displacement, and migration, building on lessons learned and best practices.

In response to the state of exception and the reformed juvenile justice law that allows 12–15-year-olds to be imprisoned for up to 10 years for being associated with gangs and for adolescents 16–18 for up to 20 years, LACRO coordinated a joint statement with the United Nations Special Representative of the SG (SRSG) on Violence Against Children, the Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the UNICEF and UNFPA Regional Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean expressing concern and urging the Government to revise the Juvenile Justice Law in line with international standards: Imprisoning children is not the solution to gang violence in El Salvador ([unicef.org](https://www.unicef.org)).

In partnership with Doctors of the World, UNICEF is supporting the Government for adolescents deprived of liberty to receive medical care and psychological support.

The final phase of the European Union - United Nations' Spotlight Initiative to eradicate violence against women and girls was successfully finalized, with UNICEF continuing to work with the justice sector to strengthen services for children suffering from violence, including GBV. Under this initiative, UNICEF's contributions in the health sector included specialized gender-sensitive training for 1,488 health personnel and organizations providing direct support for appropriate referral of cases of child victims of sexual violence to receive medical and mental health care. Additionally, inclusive educational materials to prevent sexual violence were designed, including in braille, and validated by education professionals. Child-friendly spaces were created in eight hospitals to provide mental health care to children and adolescents affected by sexual violence, and training for specialized personnel was conducted.

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) remained active. UNICEF continued leading the education, nutrition, WASH sectors, co-leading the protection sector with UNHCR and in 2022, at the request of PAHO/WHO, also assumed the health sector co-leadership. The Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2023 were developed through different sector leads. The protection sector, led by UNHCR (co-led by UNICEF for child protection) and comprising 26 UN agencies and NGOs, supported internally displaced and migrant returnees, in-transit children and their families, child victims of violence and those affected by tropical storm Julia. While, the national WASH sector was activated also in response to the impact of Tropical Storm Julia. 4,300 affected women (2,324 of which - 1,415 are girls and adolescent women) and men (2,069) received hygiene kits including menstrual hygiene supplies. Additionally, UNICEF provided the MoH with artisanal water treatment filters to improve water quality in emergencies. to be prepositioned in preparation for the rainy season.

## UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

The First Lady of the Republic is a staunch ally of children's rights, strongly positioning the country's investment in ECD within the public policy and social consciousness agendas. Under this leadership, UNICEF is committed to supporting Government efforts, including those of line ministries and institutions in addressing the historical underinvestment in ECD and is supporting the implementation of the Crecer Juntos policy for ECD for children 0–8 years.

In 2022, the strategic alliance of PAHO/WHO and UNICEF focused on supporting the MoH's National Vaccination Plan to increase widespread reach of COVID-19 vaccines, as well as child vaccination against MMR and polio. While challenges remain for regular under-5 child vaccination coverage, this partnership and its community-based approach bolstered vaccination rates, particularly in high-risk and hard-to-reach communities, and helped address zero-dose children owing to COVID-19 factors. MoH door-to-door vaccination efforts supported by PAHO/WHO and UNICEF were complemented through COVID-19, polio and MMR campaigns promoting vaccination using UNICEF social and behavioural change strategies.

Aligned with the strategic objectives set by the MoE, the UNICEF and World Bank partnership supported El Salvador in strengthening educational policies. In 2022, the GPE approved two grants (USD 16.6 million) to improve student learning. UNESCO and UNICEF, together with the Resident Coordinator, galvanized UN system agencies in support of the MoE planning and consultation processes informing the Transformation of Education Summit held in September 2022 in New York. Consultations reached over 1,200 stakeholders in the educational community, including children, adolescents and youth, LGBTQIA+ community, pregnant and adolescent mothers and people with disabilities.

UNICEF supported children on the move in coordination with other UN agencies. The US Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) enabled critical support for in-transit children through UNICEF. The European Union Directorate-General for International Partnership and Development Policy (INTPA) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) enabled UNICEF support for gender-focused programming and Government and NGO specialized services for children on the move. INTPA supported the joint UNCHR-UNICEF programme implemented in El Salvador, Mexico, South Africa and Zambia, identifying best practices and lessons learned for protecting child migrants. The UN Migration Network for El Salvador, led by the International Organization for Migration with the participation of UNICEF, was advanced.

UNICEF also worked with the Executive's Secretariat of Innovation, within the GIGA initiative promoted by UNICEF and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), to map school connectivity at national level and close the digital divide, bringing connectivity to 32 schools in rural areas in the process.

The work implementing the Protective Learning and Nurturing Environments (PLANE) initiative developed with the Canadian Government supports subregional efforts in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, and the European Union Spotlight Initiative to End Violence Against Women and Girls strategically enabled critical support for girls in vulnerable situations as a result of GBV, migrants and internally displaced populations and those suffering from discrimination, including LGBTQIA+ persons and adolescent mothers.

UNICEF leads the Humanitarian Country Team nutrition, WASH, child protection, education sectors and co-leads health.



Year one of the CPD 2022–2026 implementation yielded the following lessons learned:

- The Government’s investment in ECD and children (0–8 years) since assuming office in June 2019 has proved central to its change agenda. Through leveraging international and national evidence, UNICEF supported El Salvador’s original ECD investment case, with UNICEF’s technical assistance subsequently enabling its implementation in territory. UNICEF continues to work closely with the Office of the First Lady, the World Bank and IADB to support the Government investment portfolio for ECD of USD 500 million, showcasing the relevance of partnering with International Financial Institutions to support increased social investment in children.
- To ensure that a comprehensive focus on child rights and state investment in children 0–8 is sustainable in the second decade, renewed attention is required for older children and adolescents. A life-cycle approach to adolescent development and participation is required, identifying critical risks, milestones, and opportunities for realizing children’s rights from the first decade through the second. For example, education continues to face historical challenges with net enrolment rates dropping significantly from 81.2% to 41.1% in the transition from elementary to high school.
- UNICEF and specialized child rights entities continue to express concern about the regressive reforms to the Juvenile Justice Law (March 2022) and the Law Against Organized Crime (October 2022). According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, detention should only be used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period. Non-custodial measures are more cost-effective than detention and generate better outcomes for children and society at large.
- Whole-of-society efforts addressing unsubstantiated stigmatization of adolescents and the regression of their rights is required. Adolescent children appear disproportionately stigmatized as fuelling gang violence: During the state of exception, some 61,300 people were detained, of which 2,464 were adolescents. Approximately 1,000 have been released.
- The importance of addressing child labour is evidenced by 2021 data.
- New legislative frameworks to strengthen co-responsibilities between public and private sectors to promote the rights of children related to health and nutrition (such as laws promoting breastfeeding and the rights to water and sanitation) are essential to encourage whole-of-society approaches for the optimum development of children in El Salvador.
- Continued strengthening of psychosocial support, including mental health services, is necessary for students returning to school, victims of violence, including GBV and violence suffered by adolescents in conflict with the law, migrants, and internally displaced persons, to strengthen their resilience and facilitate their societal reintegration. Resources are needed to strengthen specialized services for children on the move, including those internally displaced and returnees, to continue supporting Government and civil society efforts.
- According to the findings of the Regional Real-time Assessment of UNICEF’s Support to the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout and the Strengthening of the National Immunization Programme, national and local governments recognized the country office’s contribution in strengthening cold-chain capacity, risk communications and community engagement to address misinformation and increase demand for COVID-19 and routine vaccination. Furthermore, UNICEF El Salvador’s close collaboration with WHO/PAHO in sharing technical expertise and additional resources with the Ministry of Health under a single work plan was highlighted positively as “sharing the same stage” and raised the reputation of the UN with the Government and other stakeholders.

UNICEF innovations contributing to achieving important results for children in 2022.

- UNICEF strengthened institutional capacity for digital birth registration through unique identity numbers at birth, supporting the Executive’s Secretariat of Innovation by increasing operational capacity of the National Registry of Natural Persons in two of the main maternity hospitals. Their registration units received computer equipment for the entry of medical and identity records and generation of a unique ID code at birth. Equipment was provided to enable more systematic tracking and monitoring of new-borns, as well as the linking of maternal and neonatal digital data from birth



through to hospital discharge. These achievements addressed a previously highlighted need to equip delivery rooms for control of mothers and children, including internet connection, adequate equipment, and trained personnel.

- UNICEF met its prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) targets, with 99% of its partners achieving low risk status, leading among UN agencies in PSEA implementation and supporting the Resident Coordinator and system agencies in El Salvador in meeting PSEA requirements. To promote ongoing and sustainable PSEA training of UN system partners, the country office developed an online Agora course in Spanish benefiting over 250 individuals to date and being used by other UN agencies.

- The joint ITU, UNICEF and GIGA initiative to bring connectivity to schools supported the Government in its connectivity mapping process to enable decision makers to have information in real time for all schools.

- Given children with disabilities are vulnerable to violence, UNICEF worked with partners to promote an inclusive approach. UNICEF produced resources for children and adolescents with visual and auditory impairments designed to support them and their caregivers in seeking urgent care within the first 72 hours in cases of sexual violence. These resources, adapted in braille and LESSA sign language, are available to first-line responders, including civil society organizations.

- UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Health to create a manual addressing violence prevention for women and adolescents, including GBV, that is complemented by a virtual training module for Ministry of Health personnel through a train-the-trainer approach and represents a breakthrough in specialized care for victims of sexual violence, especially in its emphasis on the importance of psychological first aid and its gender-sensitive focus.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health vision for health sector transformation predicated on the decentralization of the national health system through innovation and geared towards strengthening first-level care in communities and developing training. Through integrated courses, 300 health professionals from the Ministry of Health, Military Health, municipalities, churches, universities, and civil society organizations were trained in the comprehensive care for children (CCD) methodology and Kangaroo strategy, thereby