

Bolivia, Plurinational State of

Update on the context and situation of children

In 2023, Bolivia's population reached 12.4 million people, of which approximately 36% are children and adolescents (ECLAC forecast, 2022). Most Bolivians live in urban areas (71%) and living in a rural area is still an important exclusion factor, as rural households are more likely to be deprived of basic rights and suffer from multidimensional poverty. The latest available information shows that the poverty rate in Bolivia is 20 percentage points higher in indigenous rural populations than in urban areas (52% vs. 32% respectively).

Bolivia has experienced relative economic stability after the COVID-19 pandemic. Following an economic contraction of 8.7% in 2020, the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) returned to its pre-pandemic level in 2022, accompanied by a growth rate of 3.6% (IMF, 2022). However, growth started to slow down in 2023, to 2.2% in the first semester, and recent projections indicate that it was probably around 1.8% by the end of the year (IMF, 2023). This trend is expected to continue: forecasts for 2024 estimate levels as low as 1.5% (World Bank, 2024). Inflation has continued to be managed effectively, hovering around 2.1% throughout 2023 – one of the lowest rates in the region.

Nevertheless, Bolivia's overall stability is at risk. The decline in its natural gas output and the high cost of maintaining fuel subsidies (estimated at 3.7% of the GDP) continue to put pressure on international reserves, which by the end of 2023 were at US\$1.7 billion. According to the latest official information, although total social spending remained stable at 20% of the GDP in 2020 and 2021, social spending specifically targeting children declined from 8.6% to 7.8% of the GDP in the same period.

Social indicators show that improvements in critical areas have been regaining momentum since the end of the pandemic. Poverty decreased from 39% in 2020 to 36.4% in 2021 (official poverty data is not yet available for 2022 and 2023). However, monetary poverty continued to affect children disproportionately: 48% overall and a staggering 65% of indigenous girls. The latest data from the Ministry of Education for 2022 showed higher net enrolment rates compared to 2021 in pre-primary (75.5% versus 74.3%), primary (96.6% versus 95.8%) and secondary (79.8% versus 79.1%) schools. Regarding children's health, immunization rates have not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels. For instance, that latest information shows that vaccination coverage with the third dose of the pentavalent vaccine in children under 1 year of age was 69% in 2022, 1 percentage point lower than in 2021, and still far below pre-pandemic levels (79% in 2019). Consequently, by September 2023, 892 cases of whooping cough had been reported, with 94% of them in the department of Santa Cruz. The number of new cases of COVID-19 decreased progressively until August 2023, with a weekly average of 202 positive cases in the first week of that month, one of the lowest rates since the start of the pandemic. However, by the end of the year, case numbers rose to an average of around 1,300 cases per week. The rate of stunting among children under 5 years nearly halved between 2008 and 2016 (27% and 16% respectively); an update on these numbers is expected in the Demographic and Health Survey 2023, which is not yet available.

Despite the government's efforts, violence, especially against children and women, continues to be an issue of grave concern. By mid-December 2023, the Attorney General's Office had reported 24 infanticides and 79 femicides, and Bolivia continues to have one of the highest femicide rates in Latin America (ECLAC forecast, 2022).

In addition to recurring challenges in the statistical information system in terms of geographical coverage, disaggregation by age and gender, and the limited inclusion of vulnerable groups, additional challenges were found related to the timeliness and implementation of statistical operations. For example, the most recent census was carried out over 11 years ago, in 2012, and the next one is planned for March 2024. Having said this, a Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) from the last quarter of 2023 includes a module to estimate the Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI-2030), which will provide nationally representative and internationally comparable, disaggregated data.

Bolivia will be one of the first countries in the region to publish ECDI data, with UNICEF's support.

In the policy arena, in 2023 the government approved the Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy, which aims to ensure optimal and holistic levels of development in the first years of life. It emphasizes the integration of the healthcare, education, and social protection services currently provided by the government.

The Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan estimated that around 30,000 refugees and migrants from Venezuela arrived in Bolivia by the end of 2023. Most of them are in transit to other countries – mainly Argentina and Chile – and suffer from a lack of shelter, food, nutrition, protection from violence, access to primary healthcare services, and hygiene supplies. Joint data collected by the International Organization for Migration and UNICEF indicates that 3 out of 10 migrants surveyed were accompanied by an average of 2 children. Over half (57%) of the migrants surveyed reported an irregular or unresolved migration status, which causes difficulties in accessing essential rights, such as work opportunities, healthcare services, and education. For instance, 4 out of 10 migrants reported having difficulties accessing healthcare services, and 2 out of 10 only had enough money to buy food for that day.

In terms of emergency response, in the first quarter of 2023 a total of 50 municipalities were affected by flooding, frost, and heavy rains in seven of the country's nine departments. More than 33,000 families (including 73,000 children) were affected by these severe weather events. Finally, according to the Ministry of Defence, as of 2 December 2023, wildfires had destroyed 3.4 million hectares of Bolivian land and affected around 80,000 families (including 185,000 children), significantly jeopardizing their livelihoods. UNICEF provided direct support to the response efforts in both these emergencies.

Unless otherwise noted, all data are from official governmental institutions.

Major contributions and drivers of results

In 2023, UNICEF Bolivia achieved significant milestones across its programmes, serving the most vulnerable children and their families, driven by the support of donors and partners and the innovative efforts of its team. Strategic partnerships were key, with local and national governments, civil society, United Nations agencies, academia, the media, the private sector, and communities nationwide. These collaborative approaches, addressing multifaceted issues simultaneously, facilitated efficient, cost-effective, community-based solutions to the complex challenges children and adolescents continue to face in Bolivia.

The Plurinational Public Policy on Integrated Early Childhood Development (ECD), facilitated by persistent inter-agency advocacy, with technical guidance from UNICEF Bolivia, was formally enacted in July. This policy encompasses crucial recommendations supporting ECD surveillance programmes, and champions family-centric learning, exemplified by initiatives such as UNICEF's Bilingual Nest Programme, which engages multiple generations within communities, fostering the preservation of indigenous languages as an integral part of culture and community cohesion. This important legislative achievement will improve developmental opportunities for the nearly 1.5 million Bolivian children under the age of 5 years.

The Skills4Girls programme proved highly successful in narrowing the gender gap among children and adolescents in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). A total of 714 girls and young women participated in the 'RoboTICas' courses on robotics and mobile app development, for which UNICEF Bolivia received a GovTech2023 award from the Government Agency for Electronics and Information Technology and Communication as the 'best ally in gender gap reduction'. Course content was also translated into Bolivian Sign Language, fostering the innovative inclusion of deaf girls alongside their hearing peers. Student participation in national robotics championships was also encouraged, and a team of three female and two male students advanced to the First Global World Robotics Challenge Championship in Singapore in October, ultimately winning a remarkable third place among the 190 competing country teams. Local and national Science Olympics were revived after widespread dormancy during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 54% of participants in 2023 were

female students. Finally, STEM laboratories brought lasting benefits to school communities, including UNICEF-facilitated training courses for teachers in robotics and practical STEM applications. In its commitment to combat family violence and provide mental health support to adolescents and teens, UNICEF Bolivia launched the *Desahogate* campaign. This initiative aimed to raise awareness and encourage the use of the Safe Family Helpline – a service established by UNICEF in response to heightened violence and mental health challenges during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. The helpline has played a crucial role in offering nationwide mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and violence prevention that is accessible to every Bolivian citizen free of charge. It is staffed by over 200 volunteers and specialists and has received more than 110,000 calls since its inception. A strategic collaboration with Google's technical support team optimized search results, elevating the Familia Segura helpline in Bolivia as a primary and accessible mental health support tool and establishing it as a leading resource in the country.

Collaborative violence prevention initiatives involved families, community leaders, and child protection systems. A total of 191 indigenous community promoters were trained to identify family and community violence, and to aid in access to local violence prevention services. Around 700 fathers and male leaders in indigenous communities underwent training on childcare. Comprehensive services provided to migrant families incorporated violence prevention and conflict resolution, the 60,661 parents and caregivers who participated in UNICEF Bolivia's integrated ECD programmes received training on nurturing care and violence prevention, and a free, online conflict resolution course was launched for parents and caregivers. In partnership with the Ministry of Education, questions related to safety and hygiene in girls' bathrooms were incorporated into the Educational Infrastructure Census conducted in September, providing a foundation for heightened advocacy in this area. The Safe Schools programme, emphasizing peacebuilding and tolerance in public schools, continued to place special emphasis on preventing gender-based and sexual violence. Finally, the Child and Adolescent Friendly Market Model continued to provide a safe space for marketplace workers' children, blending education and play with lessons on inclusion and tolerance.

UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the Observatory on Education Quality (OPCE) to conduct learning assessments in 3rd, 6th, and 9th grades in 2023, generating data that could potentially respond to indicator 4.6.1 of the SDG 4. It is the first time under the framework of the current education law that a learning assessment has been carried out at the secondary level. The Resilient Schools programme, which fosters climate action and resilience in indigenous school communities, was extended to encompass 45 schools across 11 indigenous communities in the Amazon region, including the Guaraní, Monkox-Chiquitano, Yaminawa, Machineri, Cavineño, Tacana, Esse Ejja, Yuracaré, Yuqui, Tsimane, and Ayoreo nations. The programme's inclusive approach involves the entire educational community; in 2023 it benefited 1,173 teachers (602 men and 571 women), 12,617 students (6,208 boys and 6,409 girls), and 1,105 family members and local authorities (649 men and 456 women). Additionally, investments in infrastructure provided solutions to water scarcity and extreme temperatures in schools, addressed the need for renewable energy, and contributed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. School gardens, cultivated by students and teachers, supplemented school and community diets and enhanced overall community resilience.

In collaboration with the Cochabamba's Board of Education, subject tests were conducted in public elementary and high schools across 10 school districts, offering a comprehensive diagnosis of education quality. The revision of the infrastructural module of the Education Management Information System (EMIS), carried out with technical support from UNICEF, has been fundamental in centralizing data to sustain ongoing quality assurance efforts and decision-making, including WASH and MHH in schools, contributing to indicator 4.a.1 of the SDG 4. The EMIS includes all primary schools that encompass a pre-primary section (children aged 4-5 years). Community-based strategies, focused on improving and expanding curricular content, were developed with local school boards, student and parent focal groups, and education authorities.

In Bolivian communities with higher numbers of permanent Venezuelan residents, a cash transfer programme was developed and implemented in partnership with Save the Children, providing supermarket vouchers worth a total of US\$100 to 600 migrant families. Each family was then able to

make individual choices regarding their most imminent needs, empowering them to take control of their economic situation and supplementing their nutritional and hygiene requirements. This programme was complemented by integration activities with Bolivian community members, thereby reducing incidents of xenophobia and discrimination. Moreover, UNICEF supported the revision of the Ministry of Education's Resolution 001/2024, which explicitly reduces barriers for migrant children to access the education system.

UNICEF Bolivia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Water, successfully expanded decentralized sanitation solutions in 2023. Complemented by a social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) strategy highlighting the direct link between access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services and enhanced health, a total of 68 new Family Sanitation Models, including a dry toilet, a shower, and a sink, were installed. In Montero (Santa Cruz), UNICEF provided technical support to the COSMOL Water Company, which now offers dry faecal sludge collection services to 200 families and treats and repurposes the waste into fertilizer for municipal green areas; the EPSAS Water Company in Cobija (Pando) serves 43 families in a similar manner. In Independencia (Cochabamba), open defecation was successfully eradicated in 10 Quechua indigenous communities, positively impacting 228 families; improvements to WASH facilities in 8 schools benefited 906 children and adolescents; and an SBCC strategy promoting the correct use of family toilets and heightened awareness about menstrual hygiene directly impacted the daily life of 618 people (82 children, 38 adolescents, 138 women and 360 men), directly promoting the dignity of women and girls by supporting their uninterrupted education and adequate hygiene solutions.

In collaboration with national immunization programmes, UNICEF focused its efforts on reaching remote communities and zero-dose children, and on strengthening immunization support systems and the cold chain infrastructure. With support from national and international partners, including substantial funding from the Government of Japan, 173 refrigerators were delivered to communities nationwide, including 33 solar-powered devices to areas without access to the national power grid, alongside the implementation of digitalized information systems for secure vaccine storage and distribution. UNICEF supported the National Health System, leading to an increase of approximately 5 percentage points in vaccination coverage, reaching more than 920,000 children under 5 years of age (76% of the national total). A total of 757 community health agents (590 women and 167 men) were trained in information dissemination and community engagement.

Successful SBCC strategies were employed to motivate families to complete their children's vaccination schedules, and Human-Centred Design (HCD) models facilitated the collection and analysis of immunization data, enhancing accessibility for front-line workers and providing a more accurate assessment of both progress and ongoing challenges. UNICEF, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, continued its strategic partnerships with microfinance entities to promote the HPV vaccine and the core childhood vaccination programme, reaching a total of 561,146 children. Female community leaders encouraged women to receive the HPV vaccine as part of the social behavioural change strategy highlighting the participation of female authority figures.

UNICEF sponsored the signing of a public agreement with four business unions and the Ministry of Health to promote the creation of breastfeeding-friendly rooms in workplaces and universities. The Ministry published a guide on this process via ministerial directive #614, with the technical assistance of UNICEF.

Under the Humanitarian Action for Children's appeal 'Children on the Move, including Venezuelans and other Crisis-Affected Communities,' humanitarian assistance was provided to 13,743 migrants and refugees (4,383 girls, 3,967 boys, 2,852 women, 2,518 men, and 23 members of the LGBTI community). Support for essential services in the areas of child protection, health and nutrition, education, and WASH for migrants in Bolivia was provided, which in turn led to more streamlined coordination with government authorities. In response to two severe floods in 2023, technical assistance was provided to local government officials, and direct humanitarian assistance benefited 2,011 individuals (693 girls, 678 boys, 320 men, and 320 women). A total of 500 hygiene kits were delivered to affected families, and backpacks and school supplies provided for 211 students (113 girls and 98 boys) from affected local schools. In anticipation of potential repercussions from the El Niño

phenomenon, UNICEF developed a comprehensive multisectoral response plan (with the health, nutrition, education, child protection, WASH, and social protection sectors) to address potential floods and droughts, including emergency drills, contingency plans, Long-Term Agreements, and strategically pre-positioned essential supplies (including educational materials, hygiene kits, and play kits).

UNICEF collaborated with Bolivia's Plurinational Mother Earth Authority to enhance the Plurinational Climate Change Policy, with a specific focus on intergenerational climate justice; coupled with interdisciplinary programmes intertwining education and health with climate action, it was officially endorsed in April. Four youth representatives from Bolivia participated as negotiators at the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28), and another 7 as observers, and the advocacy efforts of 24 Bolivian youth organizations garnered recognition from the national government during the Committee on the Rights of Children Recommendation No. 24 process in September, underscoring the significant role adolescents played in climate action throughout 2023, with support from UNICEF.

UNICEF Bolivia's programme structure now features an Expert in Gender, who ensures that every programme is tailored to create real-world impact on the lives of girls, adolescents, and women, including the allocation of funds to address their specific needs. Additionally, a dynamic Gender Task Force, comprising focal points from each sector, substantially magnifies programmatic actions to make them gender transformative.

Building on the foundations laid by laws emphasizing healthy nutrition and promoting breastfeeding, community-level efforts were intensified to reinforce this crucial legal framework. UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Justice to assess the Children's Code and participated in the implementation of the Multisectoral Plan for Children 2022–2025. Another central policy initiative was the launch of the Child-Friendly Municipality programme, focused on instigating a profound shift in public management policies, with children's issues at the core of the regional agenda. This programme was officially launched in April, and 76 municipalities applied to be included in the first stage of certification, with 41 passing the first phase of certification, including 7 departmental capital cities and prominent urban centres such as El Alto, La Paz, and Santa Cruz de la Sierra, collectively representing over 55% of Bolivia's child and adolescent population.

UNICEF Bolivia also participated in the overhaul of the National Children's Management System (SINNA), created to streamline appropriate care, improve information management, and strengthen the monitoring of family services. Technical support was also provided to the Ministry of Justice in the development of the Functional Network Model, designed to consolidate child protection service responses, especially in cases involving violence against children in rural municipalities; in collaboration with UN Women and UNFPA, networks were launched in 135 municipalities. UNICEF Bolivia also supported improvements in the Care Work System, an integral component of Bolivia's Social Protection Scheme, by mapping the legislative and programmatic initiatives implemented to date and collecting proposals from central gender rights groups, thus ensuring an inclusive approach to the improvement process.

UNICEF Bolivia provided support to the Vice Ministry of Equal Opportunities during the National Children and Adolescents Congress, in the formation of the new board of directors for the Plurinational Children's Committee, tasked with representing children at the national level. The Congress marked an inaugural exercise in national accountability on integrated ECD services, and the Children's Committee's new two-year work plan is now focused on various critical child rights issues. Moreover, to enhance regional public management, the Child-Focused Planning Toolkit was developed, and training sessions for the technical teams of 75 municipalities were conducted on its use, equipping these municipal representatives with the knowledge necessary to integrate a rights-based approach into their planning processes.

In collaboration with the Social Policy Departmental Service and the Institute for Advanced Development Studies Foundation, an Integrated Regional Early Childhood Policy was formulated in Cochabamba, and the governor publicly announced his commitment to the creation and approval of a departmental early childhood law. Similarly, in Pando, a Departmental Plan for Children and

Adolescents was devised with technical support from the governor's office and UNICEF, and with the active participation of children and adolescents from the region, who contributed their perspectives and insights throughout the various stages of its development.

A national Demographic and Health Survey is currently under development, and this pivotal initiative will, for the first time, incorporate the national data necessary for calculating the innovative Child Development Index. The first set of results is due to be published in the first quarter of 2024. Staff at the National Institute of Statistics (INE) received specialized training on the use of the latest generation of Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS7). Additionally, UNICEF Bolivia successfully conducted two independent, internal programme evaluations on the Integrated ECD Programme and the Decentralized Urban Sanitation Programme; both evaluations will promote advocacy efforts, accelerate results, and refine evidence-based programming.

In 2023, diagnoses using the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) and HCD methods were carried out in 17 Bolivian municipalities. The U-REPORT initiative engaged the perspectives of adolescents and teenagers via 24 consultations conducted in 2023, on critical issues such as climate change, digital skills, mental health, human trafficking, menstrual hygiene, and teen pregnancy, and integrated the results into United Nations and governmental policies and programmes. Nearly 20,000 adolescents and teenagers currently belong to the U-REPORT community, and more than 3,500 members participate on average in each survey.

In response to substantial reductions in support from national governments and other major donors, UNICEF was required to diversify funding strategies in 2023, and renewed emphasis was placed on engaging the private sector, including National Committees and private Bolivian and international companies. Additionally, considerable efforts were made to strengthen domestic fundraising, resulting in a total of nearly 16,000 individual donors. Programme effectiveness efforts were focused on the successful implementation of internal tools such as ePD, eZHACT 2.0, and eCN, to enhance efficiency in partnership procedures and associated financial transactions. Thirty local staff members and 28 civil society organization members participated in comprehensive training exercises, and outcome focal points were established to support internal and external requests. Ten new agreements with civil society organizations and 17 annual work plans with governmental entities were signed, and a donor proposal platform to register and track submissions and approvals, set for roll-out in early 2024, was developed. Finally, due to the much-appreciated support from our international and national donors, UNICEF Bolivia successfully implemented a total budget of US\$ 12.6 million, as follows: Other Resources - Regular accounted for USD 5.9 million (46.8 % of the total budget); Regular Resources (RR) accounted for USD 1.3 million (10.6%); Other Resources-Emergency (ORE) accounted for USD 4 million (32.1%); Private Fundraising and Partnership 0.57 million (4.5%); and Management and Administration and others accounted for USD 0.745 million (5.9%).

UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

UNICEF's successes hinge on strategic partnerships spanning the private and public sectors, both nationally and internationally. This collaborative approach ensures impactful programmes aligned with authentic community needs, fostering genuine, community-driven results.

In 2023, UNICEF collaborated closely with governmental partners, including the ministries of Justice, Health, Education, Environment and Water, and the Vice Ministry of Equal Opportunities. The invaluable input from local autonomous governments played a crucial role in project implementation. Key institutions such as the Plurinational Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures (IPELC), and the Government Agency for Electronics, Information Technology, and Communication (AGETIC) facilitated innovative projects, and collaboration with officials from Child Protection, Health, and Immigration Services improved the quality of the services provided to children and families. UNICEF and UNFPA partnered with the Observatory for Quality Education (OPCE) to measure learning outcomes in secondary education. Given the investment that both agencies have made in

Comprehensive Sexual Education, a section was included that measured knowledge and attitudes about sexuality, gender, violence prevention, and sexual and reproductive health. The inquiries in this section were implemented with students in sixth and ninth grades and are based on the content of the Education System's baseline curriculum.

Local and departmental school boards, administrations, and communities provided crucial information and infrastructure, allowing UNICEF's educational programmes to be tailored to students' needs. The Gabriel René Moreno Autonomous University and the Bolivian Catholic University actively participated in data collection, piloted new programmes, and fostered innovation. Meaningful partnerships were formed with indigenous leaders' associations, facilitating the development of projects addressing climate action and resilience that align with the genuine needs of their communities.

Collaboration with non-governmental and other grass-roots organizations enhanced the reach and community-centric approach of UNICEF's programmes in 2023. These national and international organizations included the Foundation for Aid to Indigenous Nations (SAMMA); the Services, Studies, Projects, and Analysis (SEPA) Foundation; the Integral Sexual and Reproductive Health Systems (SIESAR) Foundation; AGUATUYA ('Your Water'); Caritas Pando; SOS Children's Villages; Educo; Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation; Agencia Asturiana Cooperación al Desarrollo; Water for People; Save the Children; ChildFund; World Vision; and ACT2gether.

International partnerships are also essential to UNICEF Bolivia's operations and programming at both national and local levels. In 2023, collaborative projects with ECHO, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, and Multi-partner Trusts enabled UNICEF to extend its impact beyond national boundaries. Inter-agency initiatives with UN Women, UNFPA, and WHO offered a strategic approach to broadening the reach to more beneficiaries and communities while optimizing the utilization of funds and resources.

Participation and leadership in the Platform for Integral Coordination for Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees (R4V), various United Nations agencies such as IOM and UNHCR, Convenio Andrés Bello, and the Bolivian Red Cross amplified the impact of UNICEF's work with migrant children and families. As part of the United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETE), UNICEF Bolivia participated in the establishment of an inter-agency Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) protocol and helped to develop a coordinated Humanitarian Emergency Response Plan in the face of the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon.

UNICEF Bolivia extends heartfelt gratitude to global donors, notably the governments of Japan, Canada, Sweden, and the United States of America, as well as the UNICEF National Committees of Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and the US. Special mentions include Canada's Global Initiative for Vaccine Equity (CanGIVE) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Support from the Kimberly Clark Corporation through the regional partnership supported by UNICEF LACRO provided US\$ 150,000 of flexible catalytic funds for ECD programmes over the course of three years (2023 – 2026). Finally, contributions from nearly 16,000 individual national donors in 2023 significantly improved the well-being of children in Bolivia.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

In 2023, UNICEF Bolivia promoted innovative and collaborative efforts to enhance and improve all aspects of life for Bolivian children and adolescents. This transformative year accentuated the intrinsic value of community-centred, multi-partner initiatives. Strategic collaboration empowered our programmes and projects, allowing them to reach a broader spectrum of children and to explore innovative methods and tools for implementation. Notably, the ability to address various critical factors simultaneously in cross-sectoral projects demonstrated UNICEF Bolivia's adaptability and commitment to the overall well-being of children.

Collaborative endeavours with the local and national government, civil society, implementing partners, and other organizations are known to amplify the success and reach of UNICEF programmes. As an expansion of this collaborative work, multi-agency initiatives that unite various United Nations agencies on a regional scale effectively leveraged shared expertise and resources for impactful

solutions to the complex challenges faced in 2023. These extensive collaborative efforts played an especially pivotal role in regional emergency preparedness and response plans. Collective climate action will become increasingly crucial in 2024, anticipating the exacerbation and extension of the impacts of El Niño and other climate events.

Partnerships were formed and reinforced with indigenous leaders and community members from the Yurakaré, Moxeño Trinitario, Tacana, Machineri, Yaminahua, Esse Ejja, and Cavineña nations, integrating traditional wisdom with innovative approaches, and enhancing UNICEF's response to climate disasters and other challenges nationwide. At the local level, training community promoters to identify and report cases of violence significantly increased protection for vulnerable children, adolescents, and women. Workshops and professional development courses for public servants in the health, protection, and education sectors underscored the significance of their contributions to children's well-being and enhanced the services they provide to the community at large. Innovative approaches were explored, such as a cross-sectoral strategy for ECD involving both parents, emphasizing nurturing care, health, nutrition, and a safe home environment. The Skills4Girls programme successfully combined gender and education concerns, using STEM subjects, robotics, and programming to enhance gender equality in community, family, school, and work settings. This gender-inclusive approach was further extended to disability inclusion by translating course content into Bolivian Sign Language, ensuring the participation of girls and adolescents with hearing impairments alongside their hearing peers.

UNICEF Bolivia expanded the impact of its violence prevention and mental health support for children, adolescents, and their families by enhancing the highly successful Safe Family Helpline. Innovations such as podcasts, teen boot camps, and the ground-breaking *Desahogate* social media campaign were introduced, as well as technological advancements which were implemented to make the service more accessible, thus encouraging its use by a greater proportion of the population. The adoption of renewable energy sources saw significant growth across various sectors. Solarpowered refrigerators were installed in remote rural communities, ensuring a robust cold chain for vaccine storage. Additionally, solar panels were employed to facilitate internet access and power water distribution systems in schools within indigenous communities.

Cash transfer programmes were implemented to cover basic needs for migrant families from Venezuela as well as for Bolivian families facing economic hardship and the effects of climate disasters. These innovative initiatives granted recipients the autonomy to prioritize their own needs and make choices regarding the utilization of the vouchers for the real needs of each family. In an intentionally gender-affirming move, these vouchers were distributed to mothers, grandmothers, and other female family members, recognizing their vital role within the family unit.

Launched in the first quarter of 2023, the Child-Friendly Municipality programme has accelerated the implementation of the Childhood Code at the subnational level. 41 municipalities were able to organize Municipal Committees for Children and develop Municipal Plans for Children and Adolescents. Prior to the launch of this programme, only 14 municipalities had developed this important planning tool for children at the local level.

Innovations in data collection and analysis were especially numerous in 2023. The HCD model, a cornerstone of various UNICEF initiatives, proved particularly valuable for swiftly and efficiently gathering and analysing immunization data, thereby enhancing outreach efforts in remote areas. The HCD methodology was also instrumental in generating evidence, crafting content, and developing tools for SBCC interventions within communities, and its success extended to programmes dedicated to nurturing mental health in adolescents and teenagers. Comprehensive surveys and analyses were performed nationwide to supplement scarce data from the INE, and the U-REPORT 'Uniting Voices' platform evolved into a vital feedback tool for adolescents and teenagers in the context of human mobility, in the prevention of discrimination and xenophobia, as well as in amplifying the voices of young people regarding climate action.

UNICEF, which has always made an intentional effort to include children and adolescents in the planning, execution, and evaluation of all programmes concerning them, found new ways to empower these important members of society, both in UNICEF's programmes as well as in governmental and

civil society spaces, including the strategic participation of the 11 teenagers at COP28 alongside their adult counterparts.

Confronted with a reduction in high-value international donors in 2023, it became imperative to diversify funding sources, compelling UNICEF Bolivia to explore various financing alternatives, including the private sector and individual donors. While this transition is still ongoing, early successes emphasize that relying solely on static funding sources could hamper UNICEF's capacity to sustain existing crucial programmes and develop future initiatives in Bolivia.

As 2023 ends, UNICEF continues to grapple with ongoing challenges and threats to the well-being of Bolivian children. It is vital that existing programmes be expanded and that solutions be found for multifaceted issues, including alarming rates of adolescent pregnancies and marriages, violence against women and children, challenges in indigenous communities, climate action imperatives, precarious mental health among adolescents and teenagers, the intersection of health care and gender, the urgency to eradicate open defecation, the demand for more efficient public financing for children, limited data availability (despite anticipated improvements with the 2024 census), and challenges in resource mobilization.