UNICEF’s Strategic Plan 2014–2017 guides the organization’s work in support of the realization of the rights of every child. At the core of the Strategic Plan, UNICEF’s equity strategy – which emphasizes reaching the most disadvantaged and excluded children, caregivers and families – translates this commitment to children’s rights into action.

The following report summarizes how UNICEF and its partners contributed to protection of children from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect in 2017 and reviews the impact of these accomplishments on children and the communities where they live. This is one of nine reports on the results of efforts during the past year, encompassing gender and humanitarian action as well as each of the seven Strategic Plan outcome areas – health, HIV and AIDS, water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition, education, child protection and social inclusion. It complements the 2017 Executive Director Annual Report (EDAR), UNICEF’s official accountability document for the past year.

Cover image: © UNICEF/UN0162341/Tremeau

Students attend a class in a temporary tent school set up by UNICEF in Mulombela village, Kasai region, Democratic Republic of the Congo, January 2018. The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has deteriorated dramatically over the past year. A surge in violent conflict in the Kasai and eastern regions has forced many people from their homes, including in the Kasai region. UNICEF has scaled up integrated health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), nutrition, education and child protection in the country, with a focus on the Kasai and eastern regions.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The enduring challenge of providing a good education for all children will not be met without ensuring equity in the education sector. Children from the poorest families receive the poorest teaching. They receive the smallest share of public financing for education and they show the lowest levels of achievement. Out-of-school children are mostly those for whom the usual methods of providing access to school simply don’t work. They are far more likely to have disabilities, to live in geographically remote areas and to come from poor families. Half of them are affected by conflict or other forms of crisis. In low-income countries, they are more likely to be girls, although where there is universal primary education, boys are more prone to drop out of secondary education.

The learning gap reduces significantly when poor children are given the same opportunities as rich children. This means that new approaches are needed to increase opportunities for all children, as well as new ways of measuring progress and of supporting teachers, students and parents. Fortunately, as this report demonstrates, the search for such approaches has already begun. More countries than ever before have developed education sector plans with strategies to improve quality and to address the needs of out-of-school boys and girls.

Mother tongue teaching in the early grades is making it easier for all children to learn, while bringing particular benefits for children from ethnic and linguistic minorities. Measures have been introduced to counter school-related gender-based violence. The Education Cannot Wait fund, which is currently housed at UNICEF, targets children living with conflict or the aftermath of conflict. And there is a welcome consensus on the need to improve learning outcomes for all children. Virtually all new education sector plans tackle this issue, and far more countries than ever before are measuring and reporting student learning results.

These are welcome developments that have already resulted in a sector that looks very different from what it was just a few years ago. There are 160 million more children and adolescents enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools around the world than there were just 10 years ago, which is a tribute to the efforts of country leadership and the support of the international community.

UNICEF’s work and key results in 2017

UNICEF provided support to 12.5 million children in 2017 in the form of individual learning materials. More than 248,000 classrooms were supplied with educational materials and nearly 48,000 school communities were trained in management, planning or inclusive education. The percentage of children from the poorest households attending primary school increased from 72 per cent in 2013 to 79 per cent in 2017 across all countries supported by UNICEF.

UNICEF provided leadership by emphasizing and building on the investment case for equity in education and driving a focus on learning outcomes, especially for the most marginalized children. UNICEF has developed new ways to measure learning outcomes through household surveys and led the development of tools used by partners to support education system analysis. UNICEF’s engagement with partners has pushed the agenda forward to improve education opportunities for children with disabilities, as seen in the continuing increase in the number of countries with strategies to support the schooling of disadvantaged children. To address the challenges of the most disadvantaged children, UNICEF supports technological developments and other forms of innovation in education. In 2017, for the first time, more than half of countries reported the extensive use of innovative approaches for improving access to education and learning outcomes for the most disadvantaged and
excluded children. UNICEF produced an important global report presenting the critical
importance of the first years of a child’s life, *Early moments matter for every child* in 2017,
and developed a conceptual framework to support governments to scale up improvements in
the quality of early learning.

A total of 8.8 million children in humanitarian situations were reached with educational
support in 2017. This continues a sharp shift in UNICEF programming in favour of education
programmes in conflict-affected countries. For instance, as temporary host of the Education
Cannot Wait fund, it helped mobilize US$170 million in new funding in the fund’s first year,
surpassing targets. 2017 was also UNICEF’s second year as chair of the Global Alliance for
Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector. UNICEF has become a
major presence in providing education in emergency situations, and is working with partners
to bridge the humanitarian–development divide. This can be seen in the context of the Syrian
refugee crisis, where refugees are increasingly being educated using host country systems,
a necessary adaptation to a reality where conflicts are lasting for decades rather than years.
For a decade, UNICEF and Save the Children have jointly led the Education Cluster that
brings together a range of non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, academics and
other partners to provide education for populations affected by humanitarian crises.

The ‘partnered’ approach has also been key to UNICEF’s increasing role in education sector
planning processes supported by the Global Partnership for Education, and in the policy and
advocacy work of the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative. The Data Must Speak
partnership has also helped UNICEF strengthen accountability for learning.

In 2017, UNICEF spent US$1.2 billion on education, of which US$163 million was from
‘regular resources’ and US$1 billion from ‘other resources’. This included US$498 million
from ‘other resources – regular’ and US$542 million from ‘other resources – emergency’.
From ‘other resources’ spent, US$89.4 million was from education thematic funds. These
funds provide the flexibility countries need to access funds quickly in response to rapidly
evolving challenges.

**Looking ahead**

Of course, much remains to be done. The new UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021
addresses the persistent inequities that affect the futures of millions of children around the
world. As many as 250 million of whom are not achieving basic literacy and numeracy.
Unless improvements occur rapidly, there will still be about 1.5 billion adults in 2030 who
have had no more than a primary school education. They will almost all come from families
whose parents had little education, and their own children will be at high risk of perpetuating
the cycle.

Disruptive strategies are needed to improve the quality of education, to increase access to
good secondary education particularly in rural areas, to ensure that graduates have the skills
they need to succeed. New technologies can play a role – this report shows promising
examples in places such as Sudan where the Can’t Wait to Learn! Initiative provides
opportunities for vulnerable, out-of-school, nomadic and displaced children through applied
gaming. Old technologies can also play a role – early learning is not new, but it has the
potential to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty if it is embraced massively for the
most vulnerable children. But the momentum around early learning has slowed, and there is
not yet the political will nor the financing to support its rapid expansion.

Similarly, child-friendly schools are one of UNICEF’s oldest ‘brands’. This concept is now
being updated to incorporate a broader systems approach. Two years into the
implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in the process of moving from one strategic plan to the next, UNICEF faces the challenge of developing its own capacity to provide and promote both quality and equity, while taking on an increasingly visible and challenging leadership role globally and within countries. In a world that can be all too unfriendly for all too many children and adolescents, the vision of child-friendly schools and child-friendly school systems is more relevant than ever.
STRATEGIC CONTEXT OF 2017

Worldwide in the early 1950s, about 50 per cent of primary school-aged children were out of school. As late as 1970, the figure stood at 28 per cent. Today, in one of the most remarkable development achievements of the past half-century, that figure has come down to 9 per cent. Still, for children living in areas affected by war and insecurity, it is as if none of this progress has happened, as if they are living 50 or even 70 years in the past. Fully 50 per cent of refugee children worldwide are not in school. Girls living in conflict contexts are more than twice as likely to be out of school as their counterparts in countries not affected by conflict. And even when children in these areas make it to school, they are less able to benefit fully. The school year is often interrupted and quality is low. Teaching and learning are both affected by the impacts of conflict, natural disasters and climate change that force children from their homes, trap them in dangerous situations and expose them to violence, exploitation, deprivation and disease.

These are shocking realities, and an apt illustration of the challenges faced by the education sector around the world. It is a context of contrasts. 2017 was marked by multiple and severe humanitarian crises, leaving over 136 million people in need of assistance. Large-scale involuntary migration was at an all-time high. Persistent inequalities in access and learning deny many children the right to an education. Inequalities in learning mean that many children who do get into school are unable to achieve basic skills and knowledge because of poverty, resulting in weak teaching and poorly resourced schools, lack of access to textbooks and supplemental materials, and high absenteeism made worse by unreliable transport. In addition to conflict and disaster, poverty and discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin or disability are severe disadvantages that compound over time, resulting in a vicious cycle of inequity and inequality. Consider the following:

- With the current pace of change, it will take a century for poor children and adolescents to have the opportunity to develop the same skills as wealthy children.
- Globally, about 263 million children and adolescents do not have the opportunity to enter or complete school.
- Approximately half of children with disabilities, living in developing countries are not in school.
- Globally, 51 per cent of preschool-aged children are not enrolled in early childhood education.
- 15 million girls of primary school age are unlikely to ever have the opportunity to learn to read and write in primary school, and about 10 million boys are also likely to miss the opportunity.
- One billion young people will enter the workforce in the next decade and will need high-level skills to compete in a rapidly changing workforce, including an informal employment sector that is expected to employ 89 per cent of workers in developing countries. Yet just 1 in 10 young people in low-income countries are estimated to be on track to gain the secondary-level skills necessary for success in the global economy.
- An estimated 250 million or 38 per cent of primary school-aged children have not mastered basic literacy and numeracy.

A further challenge is that of demographics. Across Africa and Asia, urban areas are expanding in size and population and governments are challenged to provide services and
expand infrastructure to meet the needs of new urban dwellers and the dynamic economies they have the potential to create. In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly half the regional population is under the age of 18. Of the 63 million out-of-school children of primary school age, more than half live in sub-Saharan Africa.\textsuperscript{9} The completion of primary and secondary education would lift about 420 million people out of poverty, thus reducing the number of poor people worldwide by more than half. There is the potential for a stunning demographic dividend, one that could benefit the sub-Saharan region and the world at large. Whether this potential is realized depends on choices made now. Investments in the children and countries furthest behind will determine the extent of progress for decades to come.

This is a time when technology and globalization continue to bring unprecedented opportunities and progress. In the era of smart phones and smart boards in classrooms, textbooks are increasingly a thing of the past for students in many developed countries – everything from homework assignments to chemistry experiments can be done online. However, in low-income countries fewer than 17 per cent of primary schools even have access to basic services such as electricity.\textsuperscript{10}

New forms of digital connectivity create new options and risks, with uneven impacts on children and young people depending on their circumstances. Lack of access compounds disadvantage for some of the world’s most vulnerable children and youth. These imbalances threaten to leave behind some parts of the world, and some groups of children even in the richest countries.

Education is a right enshrined in articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is also a driver of equity, poverty reduction, empowerment, peaceful and inclusive societies, and economic growth. Educating girls is particularly transformative, with evidence showing that schooling for girls opens lifelong opportunities for them. Under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), almost all governments have committed to doing more than filling classrooms. They have agreed to work towards providing all children with an education that equips them with essential knowledge and skills. And they have agreed to provide it for children regardless of who they are, what abilities they have, where they live, or how wealthy their families are.

UNICEF is well placed to provide leadership in this context. In the 20 years since the United Nations Security Council held its first open debate on children and emergencies (in 1998), UNICEF’s focus on the most marginalized has intensified. It brings to this task a staff of dedicated education experts with a large presence in some of the most fragile and conflict-affected states, and long-standing alliances with developing-country partners. It also coordinates closely with other United Nations agencies and frequently works across sectors.

As global lead on community engagement and social mobilization during emergencies, UNICEF coordinates with other partners and uses a wide range of communication tools to foster positive social and behaviour change. UNICEF is also well-placed to address underlying beliefs and norms which impact children’s education, such as the value placed on early childhood or girls’ education. UNICEF increasingly focuses on building C4D capacity in

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national governments and local partners to help overcome social and behavioural barriers to educational access, inclusion and quality.

SDG 4 recognizes that all children have the right to 12 years of quality primary and secondary education. UNICEF is expanding learning opportunities for marginalized adolescents, including children on the move. To improve the relevance of education for children’s future life and work, in 2017 UNICEF launched the Life Skills and Citizenship Education Conceptual and Programmatic Framework in the Middle East and North Africa region, in consultation with 21 national governments and development partners. This is an effort anchored in national education and training systems to develop the skills of children and adolescents.

UNICEF is also working to increase enrolment in early childhood education. A *Lancet* study across 73 low- and middle-income countries estimated the benefit-to-cost ratio of raising pre-primary enrolment to at least 50 per cent to be between 7.8 and 17.6.11 Yet about half of preschool-aged children around the world are not enrolled in early childhood education. In 52 low- and middle-income countries for which data are available, 3- to 4-year-olds from the richest families were five times as likely to attend organized learning as those from the poorest families. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 0.3 per cent of public expenditure on education goes to pre-primary education, and less than 1 per cent of international aid to education from 2012 to 2015 funded pre-primary education. UNICEF works through home- and community-based preschool programmes to reach the most disadvantaged children while at the same time engaging with parents and strengthening their confidence and support for learning at home.
RESULTS BY PROGRAMME AREA

Strategic approach

Under its Strategic Plan, 2014–2017, UNICEF has worked to improve access to a good-quality inclusive course of education for all children. It has given particular attention to the five programme areas for education of: (1) early learning; (2) learning; (3) equity; (4) education in humanitarian situations; and (5) education systems strengthening and partnerships that support the other four programme areas.

The results framework for the strategic plan sets specific targets at three results levels:
- Outputs, reflecting UNICEF’s contributions;
- Outcomes, the products of shared action with national governments and development partners;
- Impact, the longer-term effect of outputs and outcomes.

UNICEF’s country offices develop programmes and activities based on the education needs of children in their country, using the relevant strategic plan indicators. Therefore, while the results framework comprehensively measures global progress on key indicators, the sheer scale and range of contexts in which UNICEF works means that not all education activities can be reflected in the strategic plan indicators.

To meet the challenge of ensuring that all children experience a quality, inclusive education, UNICEF works across the education system in close collaboration with governments and other partners. Its education activities occur in the policy arena, and through direct support to the implementation of services.

In 2017, UNICEF had just over 750 education staff spread across 155 countries. The majority were deployed at the country level, including in fragile and conflict-affected countries or in remote locations where the needs were greatest. This strong country presence allows for close relationships with ministries of education at national and subregional levels and, increasingly, at the level of schools and communities. Staff are supported by seven regional offices. At the global level, staff provide access to evidence and global best practices and contribute to shaping global education policies and partnerships.
Highlights from the Strategic Plan, 2014–2017

This is the fourth and final report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2014–2017. The period between 2014 and 2017 was the best and the worst of times to be a child. Millions of children around the world grew up with a better chance than ever of living healthy lives and achieving their potential. At the same time, poverty, discrimination, disaster, violence and conflict robbed many others of the chance to develop their potential.

The results of UNICEF’s work have made a difference in children’s lives. From 2014 to 2017, UNICEF delivered learning materials to 59.4 million children and training to 182,868 school management committees (or similar school structures). Education was delivered to 36.6 million children in emergency situations.

Through the efforts of the more than 750 staff working in 155 countries:
- 58 per cent of countries have quality early learning policies and programmes;
- 63 per cent of countries have education management information systems (EMIS) that provide disaggregated data;
- 56 per cent of countries have education policies for children with disabilities; and
- 35 per cent of countries have girls’ secondary education as a recognized, targeted and budgeted education priority.

UNICEF supported positive changes for children over the past four years in the following areas.

**Bridging the humanitarian and development divide**

Roughly 40 per cent of UNICEF’s annual budget is used for responding to crises or fragile situations. These funds are not enough to respond independently to all of children’s needs, so UNICEF increasingly supports local systems that can amplify domestic capacities to respond. UNICEF works with its partners to also create a longer-term vision for children’s education in emergencies through humanitarian responses that have a developmental focus.

In Lebanon, the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) programme was launched in 2013 as a result of technical support provided by UNICEF to the government. RACE has become an example of how to create a multi-year approach to national development and humanitarian responses. When a massive influx of refugees from the war in Syria
arrived seeking shelter in Lebanon, the government faced the challenge of accommodating hundreds of thousands of children in a public school system that was already under strain. With the support of international partners including UNICEF, the Government of Lebanon showed leadership and turned a huge challenge into an opportunity. Rather than providing education in camps or informal settlements, Lebanon’s Ministry of Education and Higher Education embarked on an ambitious plan to integrate refugee children into the public schools, strengthening the education system for all students. By using emergency funding, donors, partners and the government worked to develop human resources, infrastructure, curricula and services that led to upgrades in Lebanon’s education system that would not have otherwise been possible.

This experience informed the development of the Education Cannot Wait fund, the world’s first fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises. The fund can be accessed to respond at the onset of crises through the First Emergency Response pooled fund, and in the longer term through Education Cannot Wait’s multi-year resilience programmes.

Progress towards reaching children with inclusive education

It is estimated that 42 per cent of children with disabilities are out of school at the primary level and 56 per cent at the secondary level. Most countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and many have announced policies on inclusive education, but these commitments have only rarely made a difference in schools and classrooms. Only a few teachers have been trained on inclusive pedagogy, and children with disability continue to face stigma. Most school buildings are inaccessible to wheelchair users. Few children, especially in rural areas and poorer countries, have the assistive devices they need.

The global Out of School Children Initiative (OOSCI) found that a lack of disaggregated data was one of the biggest obstacles to understanding the barriers children face, leading to severe underestimates and a lack of resources for children with disabilities. UNICEF has published an inclusive EMIS guide designed to enable ministries to collect data on children with disabilities in school, the accessibility of school buildings and the availability of assistive devices. The completion of a module on Child Functioning for the sixth Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey will enable governments to collect detailed and reliable data on children with disabilities, and a second module will enable governments to accurately assess progress in introducing inclusive education. UNICEF and partners have also drafted a new chapter on inclusive education for children with disabilities for the third volume of the Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines, which was successfully piloted in Ghana. These publications will support UNICEF’s engagement with partners in efforts to train teachers, adapt facilities, provide learning materials, change attitudes, alter policies and strengthen the availability of data to improve education opportunities for children with disabilities.
Increased focus on skills development

Children and youth face unprecedented challenges that impact their education, employment opportunities and the cohesion of the societies in which they live. These challenges are aggravated by conflict and political instability. Education systems are failing to deliver the outcomes needed to advance individual, economic and social development, and the increasing number of education opportunities have yet to translate into economic growth.

The Life Skills and Citizenship Education Initiative, led by UNICEF with contributions from national, regional and global partners, provides a conceptual and programmatic framework on skills and citizenship education for improving quality learning in the Middle East and North Africa region. It mobilizes technical support to countries on planning and implementation. The framework was launched in 2017, building on the findings of the Analytical Mapping of Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa Region.

The Initiative aims to provide diverse stakeholders in the Middle East and North Africa region with an evidence-based framework for action towards the achievement of three interconnected outcomes:

- A knowledge society through improved education outcomes;
- Economic development through improved employment and entrepreneurship; and
- Enhanced social cohesion through improved civic engagement.

In Egypt, UNICEF helped build institutional capacity in the Ministry of Education using the Life Skills and Citizenship Education Framework to define learning outcomes, design textbooks and teaching and learning materials, and update the teacher training framework. This work was central to the process of reforming the curriculum from pre-primary to the end of secondary education. In Tunisia, the framework was incorporated into the country's 2016–2020 strategic plan, which goes beyond knowledge acquisition to focus on the creative individual interacting with their environment, developing graduates who can analyse, lead, adapt and deal with difficult situations.
Strengthened data and evidence

The availability and use of better data and stronger evidence remain at the core of UNICEF’s work on education. In 2015, UNICEF published *The Investment Case for Education and Equity*, which provided input for the Education Commission’s *Learning Generation Report* and informed the establishment of the Commission’s innovative International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd). *The Investment Case for Education and Equity* analysed progress and obstacles in education as well as possible solutions, feeding into UNICEF’s global advocacy for more resources and more equitable and efficient spending on education.

The *Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines* (two volumes) were published in 2014 in partnership with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNESCO and the World Bank Group - IDA. The guidelines support governments to prepare equity-focused sector analyses that inform policy dialogue and planning at the country level. A third volume is currently being prepared. The first two volumes have already been used in tens of countries to build national capacities and produce equity-focused education sector analyses and plans and identify policy options – for example, in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire and Timor-Leste.

The Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy programme was a four-year programme that ended in 2016, funded by the Netherlands, to test how best to deliver equitable social services in the most challenging environments. One hundred and seventy research products illustrated the link between education and cohesive societies. One research effort compared data on education equality and violent conflict from nearly 100 countries over 50 years.

UNICEF’s Innocenti Research Centre also developed studies and research regarding adolescent well-being, the educational impact of violence against children and the impact of cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa on educational enrolment.

Working in partnerships

One of the most striking developments of the period covered by the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014–2017 has been the increase in the number of partnerships in which UNICEF has engaged. This has been a crucial step for implementing an increasingly complex mission within the education sector. Many have been global partnerships. UNICEF plays several core roles in the GPE, including using its own financing to support GPE engagement at country level. UNICEF also played a key role in establishing Education Cannot Wait – a new partnership focused on education in emergencies.

The Humanitarian Education Accelerator is a partnership between UNICEF and UNHCR funded by the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) that helps bridge the gap between humanitarian and development responses. UNICEF is testing a private-sector partnership with Akelius Foundation to support language learning in both humanitarian and development contexts, an innovative approach to shortening the lead time for programme start-up and impact. OOSCI, a partnership between UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and financed by GPE, covered the entirety of the
strategic plan period and brought 87 partner countries to focus more directly on out-of-school children. It also gave UNICEF access to the expertise to produce a range of monitoring tools and guidance frameworks that have proven their operational value.

Other partnerships have provided the flexibility to increase targeted regional efforts in areas of priority need, often reaching the most vulnerable children. The End Gender Violence in Schools initiative is a partnership between UNICEF, GPE and the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), which targeted four sub-Saharan African countries to help girls complete primary schooling and transition to secondary schooling in a safe environment. UNICEF’s partnership with Educate A Child targets out-of-school children. A UNICEF partnership with seven United Nations agencies helped Syrian children in conflict-affected areas prepare for exams. Many more country-specific partnerships similarly give UNICEF far greater flexibility and access to technical expertise while enhancing overall impact.

The increasing focus on partnerships is changing the nature of UNICEF’s work and providing greater flexibility, but also creating broad new responsibilities for donor partner coordination, programme implementation and policy dialogue on behalf of the most marginalized children. These changes will have significant implications for staffing and financing the education sector.

**Thematic funding for education**

Thematic funds are among UNICEF’s most flexible sources of financing and provide needed continuity in what are often inequitable and fragile contexts. They also help build preparedness and resilience to future shocks. They are allocated on a needs basis and allow for the long-term planning and sustainability of programmes. Resource partners can contribute thematic funding at the global, regional or country level. These are efficient, effective contributions that are invaluable for maintaining critical education programmes. Thematic funds are a vital complement to regular resources and are often used to address inequities that the allocation of regular resources is unable to address.

In 2017, education thematic funding was used by 120 country offices, totalling roughly US$89.4 million in spending. An additional US$4 million of education thematic funds was spent on related work in other UNICEF sectors, including social inclusion, nutrition and child protection. UNICEF Afghanistan used the largest proportion of thematic funds in 2017 (7 per cent of total expenditure), with funds contributing to a focus on girls’ education. In Indonesia, 80 per cent of thematic funds supported system strengthening, while in Libya 100 per cent of its thematic funds were used for learning and child-friendly schools.

By far the largest share of these funds are spent on strengthening education systems and UNICEF’s work in partnerships (45 per cent, compared to 23 per cent of overall expenditure from other resources; *see Figure 2*) – investments that are at the core of UNICEF’s education programmes but for which funding can be hard to secure, since short-term impact and reach can be difficult to attribute. Thematic funds are critical to UNICEF’s ability to implement system-wide programmes with a longer-term impact. In Sudan, 18 states received support to develop equity-based strategic plans (2012–2016) which informed the development of Sudan’s first national plan for education (2015–2016, later extended to 2017). The initiative was implemented with technical support from the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning using thematic funding.
Thematic funds are crucial for the work of UNICEF headquarters and regional offices. They support efforts to build evidence, strengthen advocacy and provide thought leadership and technical expertise. This includes work to strengthen UNICEF’s education programmes within the Data, Research and Policy Division, the Division of Communication, and the Innocenti Office of Research. An example is the Global Network of Education Results and Data Specialists (NERDS), developed with support from thematic funding to build capacity and share knowledge around education system strengthening and results-based management.

Thematic funds also support UNICEF’s work to develop global and regional public goods, such as a new Foundational Learning Skills module for the periodic household-based Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, to assess reading and numeracy skills among children aged 7–14. The module includes a questionnaire to parents on their involvement in their children's schooling, both at home and at school. This will reveal educational inequities — an important element in efforts to improve service delivery for disadvantaged children who do not attend school regularly and who may only be reached through household-based assessments, which collect more detailed information on home backgrounds.

UNICEF’s Innocenti Office of Research had no dedicated education programme just over three years ago. Thematic funds were used as a catalyst to develop the programme. Since this initial investment, the programme has attracted additional funding and developed a number of research initiatives to build the global evidence base for education. Current projects include a study on private education in South Asia, a multi-country study on teacher absenteeism and a study of the Rural and Remote Education Initiative for Papuan Provinces.

Thematic funds complement local government funding and provide UNICEF leverage to advocate for increased access to quality education for children with disabilities and out-of-school children and to focus on regions and schools that show poor education performance. In these cases, thematic funding may be the majority or even sole source of funding and is critical for sustaining UNICEF’s work. For example, in the Maldives, thematic funding is the only source of education funds and has been critical in building systems to reveal inequities.
and identify the most disadvantaged children. In Zimbabwe, thematic funds have been an important catalyst for areas of unfunded work, essential for the full realization of results across the different programme areas. The funding enabled results around humanitarian responses, strengthening programme monitoring, supporting teacher capacity development, strengthening data systems and research, and supporting legal reforms and technical expertise in the field.

Thematic funds allow UNICEF to respond quickly to adjust to the changing needs of governments. In Egypt, a new minister of education appointed in 2017 announced large-scale education reforms to improve the quality and relevance of the education system and its outcomes. With an ambitious timeline, the reform plan required rapid support and coordination among education stakeholders, building on the comparative advantages of education development partners. Thanks to the flexible nature of thematic funding, UNICEF swiftly committed technical and financial support to integrating UNICEF’s Life Skills and Citizenship Education Framework into the ongoing curriculum reform and update of teacher training and teaching and learning materials.

In the State of Palestine, thematic funds supported the integration of life skills education into the education system, along with other measures to improve quality. In Viet Nam, support for risk-informed programming through the thematic funds helped increase the resilience of students, teachers, schools and the education system, all of which are critical for quality inclusive education in the context of the growing risks associated with disasters and climate change in the country.
Programme Area 1: Improving early learning

Early moments matter. A child’s most important steps happen long before she sets foot in a primary school; her most important learning experiences occur long before she meets a teacher. In 2017, UNICEF produced an important global report on early childhood development, *Early moments matter for every child*, showing the critical importance of the first years of a child’s life. A child’s brain is 90 per cent developed by her fifth birthday, meaning that the foundations for success at school and in later life are already in place. There is clear evidence that quality early childhood education sets in motion a positive cycle of learning that continues well beyond children’s early years, with benefits that extend far beyond education.

The financial returns to early learning are immense, estimated at between 7 and 10 per cent per year, and as high as 13 per cent for comprehensive, high-quality, birth-to-five-year interventions. The economic benefits are enhanced when early learning is complemented by essential early childhood development inputs, such as health and nutrition.

The SDG agenda, and especially SDG 4, have renewed the global focus and attention on equity and improved learning outcomes. SDG Target 4.2 requires governments “to ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education”. It calls for at least one year of pre-primary education prior to school entry.

**Highlights of results: Improving early learning**

**Access to early learning programmes has increased among the world’s poorest children:** In 32 per cent of UNICEF-supported countries, more than 1 in 4 children from the poorest households attend an early childhood education programme. This was the case in only 17 per cent of countries at the beginning of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014–2017. However, progress was slower than planned, falling short of the 42 per cent target for 2017.

**More countries have effective early learning policies and quality early learning programmes:** The continuing focus on early learning and its related support to governments led to a significant increase in the percentage of countries with effective policies and quality programmes from 31 per cent in 2013 to 58 per cent in 2017. While significant progress was made, the target of 70 per cent was not met, due in part by a lack of spending on early learning between 2014–2017.

**UNICEF developed a conceptual framework to support the capacity of governments to scale up improvements in the quality of early learning:** The framework identifies the essential elements within the pre-primary subsector – such as curriculum, teachers,
engagement of families and communities, monitoring and quality assurance. An accompanying subsector diagnostic and planning tool was developed to engage governments in reflecting on the strengths and gaps of their subsector with the view to target priority areas for action and planning.

### TABLE 1

**Output results for early learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>2017 value</th>
<th>2017 target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countries with effective early-learning policies and quality-early learning programmes</td>
<td>31% (2013)</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results chain for early learning**

The results chain for early learning includes a comprehensive set of strategies: improving the enabling environment through work on national policies; strengthening the subsector by developing standards and measurement for quality implementation; supporting expansion plans for institutional (public) preschools through the education sector as well as by complementing these with community-based child development and learning; and helping parents to be active participants in their children’s learning through parenting education and school readiness programmes.

In 2017, UNICEF provided US$72 million on early learning, representing 6 per cent of total education expenses. Expenditure on community-based and home-based approaches increased significantly, reaching US$25 million. Most of this spending targeted two regions: Middle East and North Africa (Jordan and Lebanon) and East and South Africa (Uganda), where conflicts and emergency refugee crises called for community-based solutions to provide early learning opportunities to children affected by these circumstances. A significant share of financing also went to support national policies (US$20 million) and institutional preschools (US$15 million).

Despite UNICEF’s recognition of the importance of early learning, and its strengths in this area, its financial support for early learning programmes declined slightly in 2017. This continues an alarming trend under which spending on early learning has fallen from 8.2 per cent of UNICEF’s total education budget in 2014 to 6 per cent in 2017.
Constraints and challenges

Early learning programmes have their biggest impact when directed to the most marginalized children. In this regard, there has been modest progress in access to early childhood education for the world’s poorest children in recent years. Yet equity in the provision and the quality of early childhood education remains a major challenge. In 2016, in low-income countries, only 2 out of 10 children had access to early learning opportunities. Children from wealthy families were eight times more likely to attend early learning programmes than children from the poorest households.

Investment in pre-primary education is grossly inadequate. Most low-income countries allocate less than 3 per cent of their education budgets to pre-primary education and are not adequately equipped to accelerate improvements to access and quality. Further, less than 1 per cent of international aid to education supports this subsector, and pre-primary education is rarely integrated as a critical element of education sector plans, processes and budgets. Pre-primary education is often perceived as an optional activity rather than the foundation of a strong education system, and partners may not have a shared vision of early learning, weakening the impact of programmes and initiatives.

Early childhood development, early learning and pre-primary education

Early childhood development applies to the continuum of development in young children from birth to 8 years of age, addressing aspects such as health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection and parent education, while early learning...
focuses on children aged 3–5 or the years directly before primary school entry. Pre-primary education is a key part of the broader early learning agenda. Pre-primary programmes are often school- or community-based.

**Spotlight on thematic funding**

To address a decrease in spending on early learning programmes, UNICEF channelled US$4.3 million of thematic funds to early childhood development and early learning programmes that needed it most. This flexibility allowed UNICEF to respond to funding gaps and to support evidence-based investments. Thematic funds have supported global public goods such as a conceptual framework to strengthen the capacity of governments to scale up improvements in the quality of early learning, and a new investment case for early learning (launched in 2018). These initiatives reflect new data on access, equity, quality, financing and policies, while providing concrete recommendations to strengthen early learning.

**Learning in the early years**

**National policies and programmes on early learning**

UNICEF’s focus on early learning and its related support to governments has led to a significant increase in the proportion of countries with effective policies and quality early learning programmes – from 31 per cent in 2013 to 58 per cent in 2017 – though the ambitious target of 70 per cent was not met.

The overall progress on the indicator is presented in Figure 4. While efforts to develop curricula and standards have been largely successful, with 74 per cent of countries having an established early learning curriculum and related early learning standards, the provision of quality early childhood care and good education facilities remains challenging, and only 48 per cent of countries have centres that protect the well-being of young children.

Progress is most advanced in East Asia and the Pacific, where the proportion of countries with effective early learning policies and quality early learning programmes increased from 71 per cent in 2016 to 87 per cent in 2017. Although notable progress was made in the Middle East and North Africa and in West and Central Africa, only 43 per cent and 40 per cent of countries in these regions, respectively, have effective policies and quality programmes.
In 2017, UNICEF engaged in high-level policy dialogue and advocacy, as well as capacity development, to support an enabling environment that integrates early learning into national policies, financing and education sector plans. Partnerships and evidence generation were also key strategies to maximize impact for the benefit of young children.

In India, a landmark five-year early childhood education longitudinal study on quality identified factors that contribute to school readiness and learning outcomes in the early primary grades. The resulting findings and recommendations were disseminated at a national launch and four regional workshops where follow-up action plans were developed. In Costa Rica, UNICEF-supported research and case studies focused on the reach, potential and constraints of comprehensive development during the first years of life. This research initiative led the Ministry of Public Education to adopt the universalization of preschool education as an institutional norm. The Ministry also lowered the minimum age for admission to preschool education from 5.2 to 4.2 years.

In collaboration with the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa regional office (ESARO), the World Bank Group – IDA and the GPE, UNICEF headquarters organized a regional training workshop on pre-primary financing attended by Ministry of Education representatives from 19 countries. This workshop provided a forum to advocate for the inclusion of pre-primary education in financing and costing exercises as part of education sector processes, and to strengthen the capacity of participants.

In the Pacific Islands, a conference on early childhood development organized in collaboration with the World Bank Group - IDA and the Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education welcomed around 150 senior government officials and representatives from 15 Pacific Island countries and territories across the health, education, finance, child and social protection sectors. This event resulted in the enactment of early childhood care and education legislation in Kiribati, as well as the inclusion of early childhood education in the Education Act of the Solomon Islands, which now mandates universal pre-primary education and introduced a fee-free policy for five-year-olds.

UNICEF’s advocacy efforts also helped raise the priority given to early learning in education sector plans. In Burkina Faso, policy dialogue with the Ministry of Education led to a major increase for pre-primary education from 0.4 per cent of the national education budget in 2016 to 2 per cent in 2017. In Mali, following a national workshop on the strengths and gaps
of the country’s pre-primary subsector, the budget allocation for the pre-primary directorate increased from 0.01 per cent to 1 per cent.

UNICEF recognizes the need to adopt a sector-wide approach to support countries to create favourable enabling environments for developing the pre-primary subsector. It sponsored workshops and events in many countries, including Guinea, Haiti, Nigeria and Senegal, to support ministry officials to make achieving SDG Target 4.2 a reality. UNICEF will continue to support the inclusion and expansion of early learning within education systems, particularly by integrating early learning in education sector plans and ensuring the adequate financing and costing of pre-primary expansion plans. The goal is to ensure that early learning is no longer perceived as optional but understood as a foundational component of strong education systems.

**Conceptual framework for development of the pre-primary subsector**

Building on the early learning indicators in the UNICEF Strategic Plans, 2014–2017 and 2018–2021, the organization developed a conceptual framework for strengthening the pre-primary subsector. The framework proposes a systems approach to examine 1) the enabling environment that facilitates expansion of quality pre-primary services and 2) the key elements of the pre-primary subsector that need to be in place to ensure equitable access to quality programming.

The framework helps organize UNICEF’s work on early learning and guide ministries of education and national partners to reflect on and identify the strengths and gaps in their subsector.
Case Study 1: India’s Leadership Programme for enhancing early learning and school readiness

India has approximately 165 million 0–6-year-old children. There is strong government support to provide early childhood education programmes, but the quality is low, with a lack of basic infrastructure, appropriate learning materials and well-qualified teachers.

UNICEF supported the state of Chhattisgarh to address this problem through the Integrated Child Development Services Leadership Programme. The theory of change behind this programme is that making mid-level managers into trainers, monitors and mentors (beyond their traditional roles as administrators) can have a transformational impact at all levels. The initiative was carried out from 2015 to 2017 in five pilot districts, involving more than 7,000 Anganwadi rural mother and child care centres, which provide a range of early childhood development services, including preschool education.

The programme was a capacity-building programme for middle managers, with each level of management accepting trainer, monitor and mentor responsibilities. The focus of change and training was the child development project officers. The training involved experiential training, reflective practice and peer-coaching. The project officers in turn trained supervisors, who provided intensive coaching support to three or four Anganwadi centres within their sectors to create demonstration centres.

In comparison with the 2015 baseline, the endline assessment found significant improvements in the atmosphere in the Anganwadi centres and in child development outcomes across the developmental domains of early childhood education, including motor skills, cognitive skills, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy, and overall school readiness. The project officers and supervisors also showed clear improvements in the skills required to administer training programmes effectively. However, the transfers of some managers affected the programme’s momentum, leading to variations in quality. Nonetheless, the major positive outcomes demonstrate that empowering middle management can improve quality, provided capacity-building inputs are sustained over a period of 3–4 years or long enough for systemic and large-scale changes to occur. This model is now being adapted for scale-up across the state, where the focus will be on district project officers and Department of Women and Child Development officers at the district level, along with the support of state- and district-level master trainers.
Standards and measurements for early learning

To support the capacity of governments to scale up improvements, UNICEF developed a conceptual framework, described above. An accompanying diagnostic and planning tool engages governments to target priority areas for action and planning.

Illustrative results from standards and measurements for early learning

- In Georgia, the government adopted national standards for early childhood education (on personnel qualifications and service quality). These standards are applicable to all public and private preschool institutions and reflect strong advocacy efforts of UNICEF, as well as consistent technical support and collaboration with partners.
- In Guinea Bissau, UNICEF successfully advocated for the appointment of preschool inspectors for the first time.
- UNICEF supported the launch of P.L.A.Y in South Africa, a large scale online In-service training for early childhood development practitioners.
- In Nicaragua, preschool teachers were provided with updated educational materials and trained on implementation of regular and multilevel preschool programmes.

Early learning in humanitarian settings

Education sector planning for emergencies and conflicts often overlooks the critical importance of early learning, although there are important exceptions. In Jordan, UNICEF contributed to the Early Childhood Education strategy, which was launched in July 2017. This resulted in the establishment of 34 kindergarten classes in the Za’atari refugee camp and 18 in the Azraq refugee camp. In Lebanon, UNICEF worked with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and 16 civil society organization partners to improve education services and early childhood development and education programmes.

Evaluation of early learning and development standards

Over the last decade, an important aspect of UNICEF’s engagement with early childhood development and education has been to support the development and use of early learning and development standards (ELDS) across many countries. These standards reflect what children should know and be able to do with respect to their physical, cognitive, social-emotional and language development from birth to 8 years of age. Since 2002, at least 37 countries have initiated or engaged in the development of ELDS with support from UNICEF.

An evaluation of the work around ELDS and school readiness was conducted in 2015–2016, and the evaluation findings were disseminated in 2017. The conclusions of the evaluation were as follows:

- ELDS contribute to the capacity and awareness of early childhood development and education professionals, although UNICEF has not followed through to adequately operationalize these standards.
- The take-up of ELDS work has varied across regions and countries, with commitment strongest in the regions that have a tradition of standards in public services.
- The implementation of ELDS is hampered by a lack of early childhood education institutional structures, finance and human resources.
• ELDS have contributed to early childhood curriculum improvements and professional development, which are important, but substantial work is needed to further strengthen the pre-primary system.

UNICEF’s work on early learning is expanding rapidly, and many steps are already being taken to address the conclusions of the evaluation. UNICEF’s conceptual framework for an effective pre-primary subsector presents a broader vision and strategy for accelerating early learning programming and strengthening the capacity of governments to implement standards such as ELDS and, more importantly, to plan effectively for equitable provision of quality services.

Engaging parents and communities

Young children’s growth, development and learning are directly influenced and shaped by their families and communities. However, only 33 per cent of UNICEF-supported countries have at least 80 per cent of children aged 36–59 months engaged in activities with an adult to promote learning and school readiness. In 2017, a number of countries were supported to promote quality early learning opportunities and school readiness through home- and community-based programmes as an alternative to centre-based preschools, with innovative methods to engage families and communities.

In the United Republic of Tanzania, UNICEF supported the piloting of a community-based pre-primary satellite model, reaching almost 4,000 pre-primary and standard I and II pupils in very remote areas in Mbeya and Iringa regions. The pilot programme trained editors, community radio presenters, and interfaith groups working for social change. In the Pacific Islands, UNICEF worked with the University of the South Pacific in Fiji to develop talking books for young children. In Nepal, a parental fair (avivawak mela) in Mahottari district introduced health, nutrition, protection, WASH, stimulation and education activities to more than 11,000 participating caregivers.

Standards for parenting programmes on early childhood development in low- and lower-middle-income countries were developed by the Early Childhood Development Section of UNICEF. They are a how-to guide covering good practices for parents and caregivers, reflecting the UNICEF approach that sees parents and families as key partners in the effort to ensure a good start for all children.
Summary and going forward

UNICEF’s engagement in early learning in 2017 demonstrated its shifting focus from policy and advocacy support to the development of the pre-primary subsector and the scale-up of early learning services, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized children. This entails a sector-wide perspective that integrates pre-primary education into sector planning processes.

Yet the breakthrough that will deliver early learning programmes to the remaining tens of millions of children who need them has yet to occur. This work has been hindered by an underqualified workforce, weak governance structures and a lack of data, accountability procedures and standards. The challenge is to maintain the political momentum and unify a common vision around early learning for governments and development partners. UNICEF has suggested that governments dedicate 10 per cent of their national education budgets to pre-primary education, but its own spending is not keeping pace with these priorities, even though close to 50 percent of UNICEF country offices have prioritized this area of work and are requesting guidance and technical support. One reason for the low levels of funding for pre-primary education may simply be the challenge donors and governments face in keeping up with financing demands for existing programmes.

Specific measures are needed to reverse the recent alarming decline in UNICEF’s support for early learning. UNICEF and its partners will need to significantly ramp up programming, advocacy and financing to advance the early learning agenda. It is imperative to proactively seek the inclusion of pre-primary education in fundraising efforts and in establishing new partnerships. It is also essential to build the capacity of UNICEF education staff with knowledge and skills on how to support governments with expanding access to early learning, such that they are better equipped to identify key entry points for leadership, and to collaborate with key partners.
Programme Area 2: Improving learning outcomes and environments

Around the world, more children than ever before are going to school and staying in school. Yet far too many of these children are still not getting what they attend school for and what their parents are counting on schools to deliver: the knowledge, skills and work habits necessary for lifelong success.

Governments have signalled their commitment through the SDGs to turn things around for these children, to provide them with an education that opens up lifelong opportunities regardless of who they are, what abilities they have, where they live or how wealthy their families are. UNICEF programming is designed to help governments fulfil these commitments, to help parents support their children’s futures and to help all children achieve their full potential. It supports child-centred learning environments with curricula and materials that are culturally relevant and gender responsive, where children and adolescents learn free of violence, and where teachers are supported to improve their effectiveness. The child-friendly schools approach promotes a rights-based and results-focused model that involves families and communities, that is inclusive, healthy and protective for all children and that helps children and adolescents develop the knowledge, skills and competences they need to succeed throughout their lives.

Highlights of results: Improving learning outcomes and environments

UNICEF has successfully worked with governments to develop and embed quality standards, consistent with the child-friendly schools approach, into national education systems: The proportion of countries with child-friendly school standards increased from 59 per cent in 2013 to 76 per cent in 2017, shy of the ambitious 91 per cent target.

Support provided by UNICEF includes a wide range of learning assessment activities, from teacher-initiated classroom assessments to national examinations and large-scale assessment surveys: There has been continuous improvement both in the proportion of countries with well-functioning student learning assessment systems, and in the quality and coverage of these systems, with an increase from 42 per cent of countries with good assessment systems in 2013 to 61 per cent in 2017. Despite this progress, UNICEF did not meet the target of 76 per cent, which was based on the trend between the baseline and first year of the strategic plan implementation.

Since 2014, 59.4 million children have received learning materials from UNICEF, short of the target of 65.2 million children. Since 2014, 1,165,426 classrooms have been supplied with education materials funded by UNICEF, well above the target of 949,484 classrooms: In 2017 alone, UNICEF provided books, school kits and other individual learning materials to 12.5 million children and supplied 248,396 classrooms. Support to learning materials goes beyond procurement of supplies. In 2016 and 2017, UNICEF was involved in developing, updating, analysing or reviewing teaching and learning materials in at least 54 countries.
Progress has been achieved in ensuring that children have the opportunity to learn in their mother tongues: The proportion of countries with an education policy or sector plan that includes multilingual education increased from 43 per cent in 2013 to 54 per cent in 2017, far surpassing the target of 20 per cent of countries by 2017.

### TABLE 2
Output results for improving learning outcomes and environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>2017 value</th>
<th>2017 target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countries with functional school management committees at primary and secondary level</td>
<td>34% (2013)</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries in which quality standards consistent with child-friendly schools/education or similar models have been developed or revised</td>
<td>59% (2013)</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries with well-functioning student learning assessment system, especially for early grades</td>
<td>42% (2013)</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries with an education policy/sector plan that includes multilingual education to allow children to learn in their mother tongue during the early grades</td>
<td>43% (2013)</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who were provided with individual (one-per-child) education materials funded by UNICEF</td>
<td>16.3 million (2014)</td>
<td>59.4 million</td>
<td>65.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms that were provided with classroom education materials funded by UNICEF</td>
<td>237,371 (2014)</td>
<td>1,165,426</td>
<td>949,484</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results chain for improving learning outcomes and environments

The results chain applies theory of change principles and presents the expected links between spending, interventions and progress on strategic plan output and outcome indicators for learning. One way in which UNICEF works to strengthen learning outcomes is by helping countries implement mother tongue-based multilingual education. Clear research evidence shows that children learn better and remain in school longer when initial instruction is in their mother tongue and when it builds on their cultural and linguistic heritage. This also allows parents to engage more fully in the education process and gives children a better chance to transition to secondary education. UNICEF also helps to link curriculum development and teacher training programmes, ensuring the availability of relevant classroom materials and interesting books to read that match the child’s learning level, and it provides support to teachers for evaluating the progress of individual students.

In 2017, UNICEF spent US$316 million on improving learning outcomes and environments – a US$38 million increase on 2016 spending. Of this, US$84 million (approximately 7 per cent) was invested through the child-friendly schools approach, providing school infrastructure, better teaching and community involvement. US$11 million was invested in learning assessment systems, while US$90 million was spent on teaching and learning materials, including classroom technology. An investment of US$50 million was made in teacher development, deployment and training – up from US$47 million in 2016 – demonstrating a continuing commitment to teacher development. UNICEF invested US$62 million in life skills, vocational training and adolescent development, which is a significant increase from US$41 million in 2016.
Constraints and challenges

There was very good news in 2017: 160 million more children and adolescents were enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools than 10 years earlier. And there was very bad news: at current trends, 69 per cent of children in low-income countries will still not be learning basic skills by 2030. Disparities in learning start young and widen as children get older. An estimated 250 million primary school-age children (38 per cent of the total) fail to learn basic numeracy and literacy skills. The poorest children and adolescents are much less likely to reach basic competency levels in reading and mathematics, and many countries still do not assess learning outcomes or use learning outcome data to inform policy and practice.

UNICEF seeks to ensure that children enter and remain in school as long as possible, including a successful transition from primary to secondary schooling. UNICEF programmes address demand-side issues to increase the likelihood that parents will want to send their children to school, including by making schools safe, healthy, welcoming environments for all children, with no cost or language barriers. UNICEF programmes also support governments to address challenges on the supply side, such as poor management and governance, weak teaching and inefficient service delivery.
Quality learning environments

Child-friendly schools and child-friendly education

Better learning environments contribute to better learning. The child-friendly schools model is an inclusive, human rights-based approach that seeks to enhance health, resilience and protection as well as empathy for others. It includes cross-sectoral interventions in schools, such as school health and WASH programming. The model, which stresses gender sensitivity, has evolved in some countries towards child-friendly education, where system-wide principles are established to support the emergence of strong individual schools. This is the case in Oman, where the first phase of a shift to child-friendly education was completed during the first half of 2017, with the six principles for schools of inclusion, democratic participation, child-centredness, protection, equity and, finally, resilience and sustainability.

In Côte d’Ivoire, the government is moving to mainstream child-friendly schools (with due attention to health, nutrition, WASH, protection and peacebuilding) across the curriculum. Also, in Guyana, a child-friendly schools pilot programme supported standards and guidelines in 10 schools as a prelude to country-wide implementation. As direct support to child-friendly education spaces, UNICEF invested US$52.2 million in construction and rehabilitation projects for education through Local Procurement Authorizations.

FIGURE 6
Countries with quality standards consistent with child-friendly schools and education, or similar models developed or revised

UNICEF has successfully worked with governments to embed quality standards, consistent with the child-friendly schools approach, into national education systems. The proportion of countries with such standards increased from 59 per cent in 2013 to 76 per cent in 2017. Figure 6 illustrates the progress on the overall indicator, with each of the indicator subdomains identified in the box to the right of the graph. UNICEF’s focus on learning and the measurement of learning beyond basic numeracy and literacy skills is reflected in the area of measuring learning outcomes, with 72 per cent of countries reporting that learning outcomes are regularly measured in most schools.

Spotlight on thematic funds
State of Palestine – Thematic funds supported the work of an innovative co-curricular approach to promoting life skills called Learning Objects. This type of work is often difficult to fund, as many bilateral donors may see innovative work as ‘uncharted territory’.

Timor-Leste – Significant progress was made in 2017 on the development of education policies, standards and evidence, and on implementing models to make quality preschool and basic education more accessible, especially for marginalized children. Thematic funds supported a capacity needs analysis to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education to measure student learning outcomes – a first in the country.

Quality teaching and learning

Learning assessment systems

UNICEF support includes a wide range of learning assessment activities from teacher-initiated classroom assessments to national examinations and large-scale assessment surveys. There have been continuous improvements in the proportion of countries with well-functioning student learning assessment systems, and in the quality and coverage of these systems. The proportion of countries with well-functioning student learning assessment systems, especially for early grades, increased from 42 per cent in 2013 to 61 per cent in 2017. Increasingly, the results of these assessments drive improvements in teaching and learning, with many countries reporting new approaches to teaching and learning in the early grades. The overall progress on the indicator is presented in Figure 7, with each of the indicator subdomains identified in the box to the right.

FIGURE 7
Countries with a well-functioning student learning assessment system, especially for early grades

Despite the overall positive trend, progress has been limited in the West and Central Africa region, where only 46 per cent of countries have well-functioning learning assessment systems. Only 49 per cent of countries report the use of classroom assessments to improve learning outcomes.
In Eritrea, the Ministry of Education used the results of a national learning assessment to develop regional (zoba) action plans to advance the quality of education. UNICEF Eritrea trained 610 supervisors and school directors in the use of the assessment to enhance its impact at the school level.

In Afghanistan, UNICEF helped the Ministry of Education develop a National Learning Assessment Framework as the first step towards a national assessment system. It also supported the Ministry to build the capacity of community-based teachers and academic supervisors to carry out formative assessments. Training materials were developed and printed in English, Dari and Pashto, and will be used in 34 teacher training colleges across the country.

**Curriculum development**

UNICEF helped develop the formal curriculum of at least 48 countries between 2016 and 2017, with materials written at a level that students understand and that cover the competencies children need for success in life. It also supported updates or analysis of curricula for non-formal, informal or accelerated learning programmes in 42 countries.

In Cape Verde, Cuba and the State of Palestine, support was given to strengthening the curriculum for early childhood education and development. In Ghana, UNICEF worked with USAID to prepare print resources in more than 20 languages, and to test more than 50 supplementary readers for the early grades to ascertain age-appropriateness and interest for children.

In El Salvador, UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education to promote flexible secondary education opportunities, in part through improvements to the curriculum and teaching. This contributed to the Ministry’s efforts to reintegrate more than 25,000 children and adolescents into schools. In Guatemala, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to reach indigenous girls by bringing together communities to take turns hosting a secondary education centre. UNICEF also supported the Ministry to align the national secondary curriculum with this model, and to develop materials and teachers’ guides. One goal of the approach was for young mothers who had dropped out of school following childbirth to be able to continue their formal secondary education.

In Syria, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education in implementing an accelerated education programme called ‘Curriculum B’, reaching 83,000 children who were previously out of school to learn two-year curriculum contents in a single year. Curriculum B was designed to help students who have gaps in their education and to reintegrate them into the formal education system.

**Education materials for learning and teaching, including classroom technology**

Learning materials have the power to transmit knowledge, build skills and shape the way children interact with the world. Yet if learning materials (reading and textbooks, games, computers, tablets and other materials) are not adapted to the needs of the most marginalized learners, they can be a barrier to learning.

In 2017, UNICEF provided books, school kits and other individual learning materials to 12.5 million children, supplying 248,396 classrooms. Since 2014, 59.4 million children have received learning materials with UNICEF support, short of the target of 65.2 million children. And 1,165,426 classrooms have been supplied with education materials since 2014, well above the target of 949,484 classrooms. These materials are designed to be inclusive of all
children, regardless of family income or socio-economic status. The global value of education supplies was US$72.4 million in 2017 (a 14 per cent decrease from 2016).

UNICEF’s ability to rapidly procure supplies is often most visible in emergency situations. In 2017, UNICEF and its partners reached millions of children in Somalia, Haiti and Syria with education supplies such as textbooks, stationery and school bags. In Syria, in a sad reminder of the circumstances in which children are trying to learn, shatter-proof film was provided for classroom windows as a way of reducing the impact of shells and mortars.

UNICEF organized a back-to-school campaign in Burundi, providing more than 1 million students with school materials, with targeted support to vulnerable children, including returnees and internally displaced school-aged children. UNICEF Burundi partnered with GPE to edit, print and distribute a remarkable 2.8 million textbooks for Grades 7 and 8, and 73,400 teacher guides for Grades 7, 8 and 9, as well as 440,000 posters. In the Central African Republic, school kits and materials (including notebooks and pencils) were provided to about 370,000 children aged 6–7 years in seven provinces, contributing to more equitable enrolment. In Eritrea, the Ministry of Education was helped to distribute 2,700 school health kits for primary and lower secondary schools nationwide.

UNICEF also works to increase national capacity to meet the needs of the most marginalized groups, including, in 2017, training materials for early childhood care and development teachers in 19 ethnic languages in Myanmar and the construction of 126 classrooms in Mon and Kayin states and Yangon. Over 2.5 million children in Myanmar received essential learning supplies, and kindergarten kits were distributed to classrooms serving 1 million kindergarten students. In total, 100,759 education kits (28,246 recreation kits, 17,254 early childhood development kits, 52,113 standard classroom kits and 3,146 country-specific classroom kits) were shipped to 64 countries.

UNICEF worked with at least 54 countries during the 2016–2017 school year to develop teaching and learning materials, with both traditional and high-tech approaches, according to local needs. In Nicaragua, it worked with the Ministry of Education to train 154 teachers and preschool community educators (92 per cent female) from four rural indigenous municipalities to make education materials from locally available natural resources. In Uganda, UNICEF is exploring the feasibility of a very non-traditional tablet-based numeracy programme to engage out-of-school children and improve learning outcomes.

UNICEF also continues to engage with the Global Book Alliance to improve how materials are developed, procured and distributed, and to make more books available in local
languages. The challenge is to ensure that the provision of teaching and learning materials is integrated fully into sustainable approaches to improve teaching and learning.

**Multilingual education and mother tongue instruction**

The proportion of countries with an education policy or sector plan that includes multilingual education increased from 43 per cent in 2013 to 54 per cent in 2017, although the target of 65 per cent was not met.

In Nigeria, UNICEF supported capacity development across six northern states to enhance teachers’ subject knowledge and teaching skills on literacy and numeracy in English and Hausa. The Hausa Early Grade Reading Implementation Guidelines were introduced in two states, teacher certification on early grade reading is being established, and colleges of education have agreed to include early grade reading in their pre-service training.

In Mexico, UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Education to develop the capacity of 921 teachers and principals from preschool, primary and secondary schools to support learning in three indigenous languages, with a target of benefiting 23,025 indigenous students. The National Institute for Education Evaluation produced a document entitled *Brief Overview of Indigenous Education* in partnership with UNICEF in Mexico.

**Teacher development and deployment**

Giving every child a chance means giving every child a teacher – one who is supportive, well trained and available from the first day of the school year to the last. Good teaching opens up life opportunities for all children, and gives countries a chance to get the most value for money spent. UNICEF’s large investments in teacher training seek in particular to attract qualified teachers to poor and remote areas to benefit disadvantaged children, communities and populations. UNICEF also seeks to upgrade the level of teaching, devoting 37 per cent of its 2017 investment in teachers to capacity development or training. The map below presents four countries where teacher training support in 2017 addressed specific crisis situations.
Case Study 2: Early grade literacy programme in Indonesia – shaping the bright future of Tanah Papua

Children in the Papua and West Papua provinces (referred to jointly as Tanah Papua) of Indonesia face many obstacles to accessing quality education services, particularly in rural and remote highland areas, where the population is predominantly indigenous. National data indicate that in Papua province more than 20 per cent of primary school-aged children in rural areas are out of school, compared with only 2 per cent in urban areas.\(^23\) The most critical quality issues are the weak pedagogical knowledge of teachers, high rates of teacher absenteeism, low government capacity, lack of contextually relevant learning materials and an associated low value attached to schooling by parents. National data on the early grade reading assessment show that nearly half of Grade 2 students in Tanah Papua scored zero for oral reading fluency skills (non-readers) in 2014.

Since 2014, UNICEF has supported the Rural and Remote Education Initiative for Papuan Provinces, with financial assistance mainly from the Government of Australia. The programme aims to improve learning outcomes in early grade literacy. It targets 120 schools in 6 rural districts and has benefited approximately 8,000 students, 600 teachers and 20,000 community members.
After three years of implementation, the early grade literacy model has yielded promising results. A midline study in early 2017 found significant improvements in children's learning. The proportion of non-readers in target schools has decreased from 62 per cent to 27 per cent. The proportion of proficient readers with adequate reading and comprehension skills has increased from 6 per cent to 18 per cent. For both indicators, non-intervention schools did not show improvements.

The positive results have attracted strong interest in the programme from the national government and local governments. Several district governments have scaled up the early grade literacy model using their own financial resources, while UNICEF continues supporting the expansion of the programme nationwide, in part through thematic funds.

Learning opportunities for adolescents

Disadvantaged adolescent girls and boys are being left behind. Many adolescents are unable to progress to secondary education and still lack foundational skills in literacy and numeracy. Youth employment remains a challenge, with 71 million unemployed youth worldwide and 156 million young workers living in poverty. Of the 1 billion young people who will enter the workforce by 2030, almost 90 per cent of those in developing countries will work in the informal sector. Many will be working for low or no pay and are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

UNICEF is supporting ‘second-chance’ education for adolescents who did not complete primary and secondary education, combining foundational literacy and numeracy with the 21st century skills needed to participate in the workforce. Flexible and accredited learning opportunities provide opportunities for out-of-school adolescents, including working adolescents, those in underserved rural communities and refugees. In China, UNICEF continued working with the China Association for Science and Technology to provide skills training for 24,000 adolescents (50 per cent girls). Modules that will be incorporated into the national vocational education curriculum included Career Guidance and Development, Interpersonal Skills and Communication, and Financial Education.
In Thailand, UNICEF is improving the relevance of education by supporting government to integrate 21st century skills into school curricula, pedagogy and materials. *A 21st Century Skills Education Teacher Manual* is being rolled out in schools as a guide for teachers and school principals to promote the development of children’s skills, including decision-making and problem-solving, creative and critical thinking, and communication.

Digital literacy includes the ability to use technologies, as well as developing the social and emotional skills needed to safely navigate the digital space. UNICEF is developing innovative curricula and digital resources to develop adolescents’ digital literacy for use both in and out of school. In Montenegro, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education have developed the NETFriends educational game which helps children to prevent and report online violence. The game will be used as a resource when integrating digital skills into the primary school curriculum.

UNICEF is working to strengthen the link between school and work. In Zambia, UNICEF is supporting adolescent girls across 200 secondary schools to gain skills they need to improve their lives and work. This included a package of entrepreneurship skills and career guidance, as well as engaging with employers to provide internships. UNICEF and FAWE are training teachers and students on financial literacy within Open Learning Centres, which provide second-chance secondary-level education to Zambian adolescents. Both these programmes provide adolescents with opportunities to develop skills in a real context. This boosts their confidence, grows their network and increases their experience, improving their chances to find employment or start a business on their own in the future.

In 2017, over 17,000 adolescents in the State of Palestine took part in life skills training to improve their work readiness and civic engagement, leading over 380 community campaigns and entrepreneurial initiatives in Gaza and the West Bank. In Nepal, 34,000 adolescents – more than half of whom were girls – took part in social and financial education aimed at supporting young people to become economically empowered citizens and to take decisions that affect their lives.

### Summary and going forward

‘Every child learns’ is Goal Area 2 of the new UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. The achievement of this goal area would see all children, particularly the most vulnerable, receive inclusive and equitable quality education. Goal Area 2 supports the achievement of multiple SDGs and in particular the inclusion and gender aspirations of Goals 4 and 5. UNICEF also provides support for the development of children and adolescents’ skills in the context of SDG 4 and Goal Area 2 of the new strategic plan. In the coming year, the organization will build on the framework set out in the new strategic plan, supporting governments to realize children’s right to 12 years of quality basic education.
Programme Area 3: Strengthening equity in education

At the heart of all good education systems lies a profound respect for individual differences. It is these differences that lead to the development of creativity, invention, problem-solving and other transferable skills. UNICEF’s support for children with disabilities and children living in remote areas, in poverty or facing other forms of disadvantage stems from its belief that every child has the right to a good education, and that all children have unique contributions to make to communities and nations.

Many countries have taken a linear approach to education for all, designing education systems that first reach those who are easiest to reach, and only then trying to include others if and when resources permit. UNICEF believes that such approaches contribute to the enduring delays in reaching out-of-school children worldwide and in improving the quality of education for everyone. UNICEF works with countries to develop inclusive approaches designed to provide the best possible education to all children, recognizing that this requires strong system coordination and management, and well-trained teachers who have the skills to tailor their teaching to individual needs and strengths.

UNICEF is committed to advance girls’ secondary education, not only in terms of parity but from the perspective of strengthening the gender responsiveness of secondary education. As set out in the Gender Action Plan, UNICEF aims to enable marginalized adolescent girls to enter and complete primary education, transition to secondary education and learn. This includes supporting adolescent girls to develop the breadth of skills necessary for full participation in society, including productive work.

**Highlights of results: Strengthening equity in education**

**UNICEF supports disadvantaged children through technological developments and other forms of innovation:** In 2017, for the first time, more than half (51 per cent) of countries reported the extensive use of innovative approaches for improving access to education and learning outcomes for the most disadvantaged and excluded children. This represents dramatic progress from the 30 per cent baseline value in 2013, and surpasses the target of 40 per cent.

**UNICEF supports an increased number of governments to strengthen the gender responsiveness of their education systems.** Thirty-five per cent of country programmes had girls’ secondary education as a recognized, targeted and budgeted education priority in 2017, an increase from 27 per cent in 2014, but not reaching the target of 40 per cent.
Progress on ending school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is measured by the number of countries reporting an education sector policy or plan that specifies prevention, along with appropriate response mechanisms: In 2017, thirty-eight per cent of countries had a national education sector policy or plan that specified SRGBV prevention and response mechanisms, up from 28 per cent in 2013, and above the target of 32 per cent in 2017.

More countries recognize and support the right to education for children with disabilities: The proportion of countries implementing inclusive education covering children with disabilities with UNICEF support increased from 36 per cent in 2013 to 56 per cent in 2017, significantly surpassing the target of 46 per cent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3</th>
<th>Output results for strengthening equity in education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries with an Education Management Information System (EMIS) providing disaggregated data</td>
<td>40% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries with policies on inclusive education covering children with disabilities</td>
<td>36% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries with innovative approaches at scale to improve access to education and learning outcomes for the most disadvantaged and excluded children</td>
<td>30% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries with an education sector policy or plan that specifies prevention and response mechanisms to address gender-based violence in and around schools</td>
<td>28% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries in which girls’ secondary education, in terms of enrolment, retention, and completion, is a recognized, targeted and budgeted education priority</td>
<td>27% (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF-targeted children in humanitarian situations accessing formal or non-formal basic education, including pre-primary schools/early childhood learning spaces</td>
<td>5,980,443 (59%) (2013)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results chain for strengthening equity in education

The results chain applies theory of change principles and presents the expected links between spending, interventions and progress on strategic plan output and outcome indicators for equity. Figure 9 presents UNICEF funding in 2017 in support of a range of programme outcomes. By supporting expanded access for children with disabilities, for example, UNICEF is improving inclusive education, which will in turn result in higher numbers of children in school and increased learning outcomes.
UNICEF’s equity-driven programming and commitment to the most marginalized children is illustrated in its equity-focused investment of US$164 million in 2017, representing 14 per cent of total education expenses. While children living in poverty are by far those who are most likely to be out of school, other factors of exclusion include disability, ethnicity, gender, location and child labour. As the centrepiece of UNICEF’s equity work, targeting the most vulnerable groups, the global OOSCI accounted for approximately 40 per cent of spending in this area. UNICEF has directed a significant amount of spending towards vulnerable groups: approximately US$46 million was spent on girls’ education, with a further US$4 million on violence in schools, while approximately US$11 million was spent to reach children with disabilities, an increase of US$3 million from 2016.

Constraints and challenges

A challenge in designing inclusive systems is that decision-makers have little information on the possible policy choices. Most young mothers and children with disabilities, for instance, are severely under-represented in education databases, and may not even be identified through household survey processes. Even those children with disabilities who are in school are often excluded from participation in standardized testing. In this way, their invisibility leads inevitably to a lack of services for them.

Gender biases and discrimination in teaching and learning limit the aspirations and opportunities of girls and boys. Domestic responsibilities, early marriage and the need to contribute to family income can further constrain adolescents’ ability to go to school. National education sector plans rarely consider how to tackle these gendered inequalities through systemic and targeted interventions.

These and other constraints such as cultural biases and geographical distance often work against the inclusion of children from poor families. Studies have consistently found that the
poorest families have the least access to public resources and must use a disproportionately larger share of their family resources to compensate.

UNICEF supports a wide range of approaches to increase opportunities for all children to have access to both formal and non-formal education. UNICEF’s support for non-formal education includes accelerated learning programmes, informal education, alternative basic education (ABE) classes, and other programmes as described throughout this report.

Other approaches described in this section include support for governments to reach gender equality, to tackle gender-based violence in schools, to provide access and quality for children with disabilities and children working in contexts of conflict or instability, and to ensure that schools are places of refuge from insecurity or threat.

**Reaching the most disadvantaged**

One way in which UNICEF supports disadvantaged children is through technological developments and other forms of innovation. More than half (51 per cent) of countries report using innovative approaches at scale for improving access to education and learning outcomes for the most disadvantaged and excluded children. This greatly surpasses the target of 40 per cent for 2017 and represents dramatic progress from the 30 per cent baseline value in 2013. These results strengthen the case for UNICEF’s focus on generating and using evidence to ensure that programme design and implementation take into account lessons learned about what and how to innovate to achieve learning results for the most marginalized children and youth. This is well illustrated in this chapter by initiatives such as the Humanitarian Education Accelerator.

**Case Study 3: Promoting a relevant education model based on indigenous rights for Bolivia’s children**

Bolivia is a multicultural country, with 37 indigenous peoples, first nations and African-descent communities who make up 43 per cent of the population. The Education Law of 2010 established the principle of intracultural, intercultural and multilingual education across the whole country. The Ministry of Education decided that implementation would be led by the Plurinational Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures (IPELC), with support from UNICEF.

UNICEF helped to set up local community education councils (CESC) in coordination with the relevant indigenous peoples’ education councils (CEPO). Each council developed curricula and training programmes with the participation of members of their communities. Today, regionalized curricula have been finalized, and 49 schools with over 4,400 children have appropriate bilingual education materials. Learning is occurring in five mother tongues and Spanish.

The Ministry of Education has proposed extending the programme to another 156 pilot school networks throughout the country, covering all of Bolivia’s indigenous peoples. The scale-up will apply lessons learned from the first phase with the possibility of expansion to preschool and secondary education. This vitally important work has been supported almost entirely by UNICEF thematic funding.
Innovations in education

As the number of innovative approaches grows, our understanding of what works best has also increased: innovations that focus on supporting teachers and improving pedagogy, rather than attempting to substitute technology for teaching. Evidence also demonstrates that there is no innovation ‘silver bullet’ and that top-down approaches that disregard contextual challenges are rarely effective. UNICEF supports its Principles for Digital Development as a guiding set of norms (i.e., design with users, use open source and open standards, understand the ecosystem, design for scale, build for sustainability, be data-driven, address privacy and security, reuse and improve and be collaborative).

In 2017, UNICEF continued its engagement with the Humanitarian Education Accelerator, a DFID-funded partnership between UNHCR and UNICEF. The aim of the partnership is to identify and help scale up promising innovations that address the education needs of children living in protracted crises. The partnership selected five organizations implementing education programmes in Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda. Rigorous evaluations are under way covering areas such as early learning, digital games to support numeracy and literacy, and remedial education for vulnerable girls.

A partnership between UNICEF and the Akelius Foundation represents a notable engagement with the private sector in 2017. Its purpose is to support language learning for children on the move and out-of-school children in humanitarian and multilingual contexts. An information and communication technology tool jointly created with teachers, children and implementing partners will be piloted in Greece in 2018. This cooperation between Akelius and UNICEF is jointly identifying ways in which innovation can accelerate positive results for children.

In Kenya, a digital monitoring system has already enrolled more than 50,000 students and aims to enrol 250,000 more. In Brazil, UNICEF helps municipalities bring out-of-school children into school with a programme that helps the population send information on out-of-school children via the Internet, an app or text message so that a local inter-sectoral team can try to bring them back to school. In Argentina, rural secondary schools equipped with information and communication technology reach 59 isolated communities where secondary education was not previously available. In Sudan, the Can’t Wait to Learn! Initiative, in partnership with War Child Holland and the Ministry of Education, provides certified curriculum content to about 75,000 vulnerable, out-of-school, nomadic and displaced children through applied gaming and personalized engagement.

Out of School Children Initiative

The goal of OOSCI is to achieve a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of out-of-school children worldwide. This goal follows Outcome Statement 2 in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014–2017 that girls and boys, in particular the most marginalized and those affected by humanitarian situations, be provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities, and Indicator 2.4 that the out-of-school rate for girls and boys of primary and lower secondary school age be reduced.

OOSCI promotes policies and programmes based on robust evidence about the barriers that keep (or push) children out of school. It was launched in 2012 as a partnership between UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and received a grant from the GPE in 2013. By the end of 2015, when the GPE grant finished, a total of 87 partner countries had joined the initiative. This number has continued to grow, and new studies were initiated in Haiti, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe in 2017. Many countries have
updated earlier studies, and the initiative continues to produce a range of tools and guidance, such as *Monitoring Education Participation: Framework for Monitoring Children and Adolescents who are Out of School or at Risk of Dropping Out.* The publication and dissemination of the operational manual has enabled ministries of education and UNICEF country offices to conduct OOSCI studies without the external support they needed during the initiative’s early years.

In July 2017, UNICEF Bulgaria’s support led the Council of Ministers to adopt cross-sectoral collaboration for the enrolment and retention of preschool and school-age children. In Kyrgyzstan, OOSCI supported the government to develop a process to refer children in difficult situations to social workers for cross-sectoral case management. In the Maldives, a coordination mechanism led to mentoring support and outreach for some of the more distant islands. These are examples of how OOSCI works within existing systems and structures to provide sustainable access to school for the most marginalized children.

In 2017, UNICEF conducted an external evaluation of OOSCI that showed (see Figure 10) a strong impact on awareness and commitments made by national governments, and a moderate impact on resource allocation. Almost half of all country partners reported a significant shift in government systems or donor priorities. The evaluation found that the initiative had successfully infused the dialogue on out-of-school children into policy debates, with tangible results. The evaluation recommended a greater focus on implementation and the expansion of the OOSCI framework to encompass upper secondary school and non-formal education.

**FIGURE 10**
Achievement of OOSCI objectives

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**Gender equality and girls’ education**

**Gender equality in education**

While gender parity indicators for primary enrolment and completion have been achieved globally, the core indicators are misleading and mask the reality that many regions and countries have not achieved gender parity. Girls are more likely to be out of school in the Caucasus and Central Asia, Northern Africa, Southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and
Western Asia regions. Globally, 5 million more girls of primary school age than boys are out of school (34.3 million girls versus 29.1 million boys).

From 2014 to 2017, the number of countries where boys were disadvantaged at the lower secondary level increased from 22 per cent to 29 per cent, while the number of countries where girls were disadvantaged fell from 41 per cent to 36 per cent. This trend resulted in a lower share of programme countries with gender parity at the lower secondary level: only 35 per cent in 2017, compared to 38 per cent of countries in 2013. However, gender parity alone does not address the causes of these trends. Gender norms are at the root of gender inequalities in education, as they reinforce stereotypes of adolescent girls as ‘compliant’ and boys as ‘troublesome’, curtailing empowerment and educational opportunities for both.

Adolescent boys are more likely to drop out when they experience gender norms that make ‘masculinity’ incompatible with engagement in school. These include expectations for poor boys to become income earners early in adolescence and a sense of not belonging to the school community. Adolescent girls are more likely to drop out of school when they take on unpaid household work, and do not receive adequate support to delay marriage and motherhood.

Gender-based differences in learning depend on the subject. While girls tend to perform better in reading, boys continue to perform better in mathematics and science and enjoy greater access to develop science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and digital literacy skills and to obtain decent jobs. This dynamic is exacerbated in low-income countries and rural communities.

Advancing gender equality in and through education requires eliminating gender bias in the classroom, as well as in society more broadly. It means considering girls’ and boys’ specific needs and opportunities, and the gender responsiveness of education laws, policies and systems. Curricula, pedagogy, teacher education and textbooks play an important role in overcoming gender discrimination and changing gender norms. In Myanmar, gender mainstreaming is being applied to school-based in-service teacher education (SITE). This includes guidelines to increase opportunities for women to obtain teaching and leadership positions. As a result, 60 per cent of SITE facilitators are female, and a growing number of female ministry officers have assumed leadership roles for SITE activities.

Humanitarian crises increase gender inequalities in education, including gender-based violence, but accelerated learning programmes can have a disproportionate positive impact on girls’ enrolment. In Afghanistan, UNICEF support has resulted in 276,000 children being enrolled in over 10,000 community-based schools, while 118,000 children are enrolled in
4,000 accelerated learning centres. The share of girls in these centres and community-based schools is 73 per cent and 59 per cent, respectively.

UNICEF continues to strengthen the evidence on gender equality in education. UNICEF research conducted as part of OOSCI was used by governments to inform policy responses to gendered barriers to education in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, the State of Palestine, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

**Advancing girls’ secondary education**

Across all programmes, UNICEF supports system strengthening and targeted interventions to address the financial and gendered barriers to girls’ access, to improve gender-responsive teaching and learning, build community engagement and develop girls’ life skills.

The share of countries where adolescent girls are disadvantaged has fallen modestly from 41 per cent in 2014 to 36 per cent in 2017. However, progress has yet to be realized in North Africa, Western Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and experience suggests that gender parity in access and completion is likely to improve significantly only as countries move to universalize lower secondary education, at which time both boys and girls are more likely to be included in the system.

In countries where UNICEF supports programmes overall among the poorest adolescents, girls have more limited participation in primary and secondary education, than boys. Thirty per cent of the poorest girls have never attended school, compared to 20 per cent of boys. Overall, more boys attend primary, lower and upper secondary than girls. Gender discrimination and gender roles intersect with poverty, depriving the most marginalized girls from their right to education. Adolescent girls who live in poverty are more likely to speak a language that is not the language of instruction and to live with a disability, experiencing the compounded effects of multiple exclusion, making their access to education the most challenging.

**FIGURE 11**
Distribution of disadvantaged (poorest quintile) adolescents (10–19 years old) by education status in countries where UNICEF supports programmes (classified by International Standard Classification for Education\(^3^)\)

In many regions where girls’ participation in secondary education is very high, gender parity in access and completion has not translated into gender-equitable learning outcomes. For example, based on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Latin American countries that have achieved gender parity in enrolment in lower secondary
education have not achieved gender parity in learning outcomes. Significant gender gaps remain, with girls outperforming boys in reading, and boys outperforming girls in mathematics and science. In no country or economy that participates in PISA do more girls than boys perform at the highest levels in mathematics, while girls outperform boys in reading in most countries.

Where girls have access to primary and secondary education, they tend to make the most of the opportunity to learn. However, girls’ improved achievement of minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics have not led yet to better access to employment and training opportunities for adolescent girls. For example, in East Asia and the Pacific, adolescent girls outperform boys in reading and mathematics, but these improved learning outcomes are not reflected in the large share of young women not in employment or training (NEET).

The proportion of programme countries where girls’ secondary education is a budgeted government priority increased from 27 per cent in 2013 to 35 per cent in 2017. Under the Gender Action Plan, 14 country offices have developed cross-sectoral programmes, created new partnerships and identified evidence with the aim of advancing girls’ secondary education across the global portfolio.

**Highlights of country achievements in 2017: Girls’ secondary education**

Across all programmes, UNICEF is supporting system strengthening and targeted interventions to address the financial and gendered barriers to girls’ access, to improve gender-responsive teaching and learning, build community engagement and develop girls’ life skills.

**Advocating for girls’ right to education:**
- **Niger** – Fewer than 10 per cent of the poorest girls of lower secondary school age are in school. Advocacy by UNICEF contributed to a Presidential Decree to raise the compulsory age of schooling for girls to 16.

**Removing financial barriers:**
- **Madagascar** – Cash transfers helped over 21,000 out-of-school girls re-enter formal schooling, including almost 5,000 at the lower secondary education level.
- **Nigeria** – A UNICEF-supported cash transfer scheme in the states of Niger and Sokoto increased girls’ enrolment by 30 per cent.

**Tackling socio-cultural barriers to adolescent girls’ education:**
- **In 14 countries**, UNICEF worked with government and other partners to develop menstrual hygiene management (MHM) guidelines and model a package of school-
based interventions, supporting more than 50,000 schools over the period 2014–2017. UNICEF is supporting the integration of learning materials on MHM in national curricula.

Supporting girls to learn and to transition from education to decent work:

- **Lebanon** – Information technology-related projects promoted STEM subjects as career pathways for girls, reaching 19,000 girls throughout the country in 2017.

**FIGURE 12**  
Proportion of countries where girls’ secondary education (in terms of enrolment, retention and completion) is a recognized, targeted and budgeted education priority

![Figure 12](image)

Figure 12 shows that 35 per cent of country programmes had girls’ secondary education as a recognized, targeted and budgeted education priority in 2017, an increase from only 27 per cent in 2014. This is a positive trend, even though the target of 40 per cent was not met. The three subdomains relating to girls’ secondary education are identified in the box to the right of Figure 12: (1) creating demand, (2) supportive learning environment, and (3) prioritization and resource allocation. While progress was recorded on all these subdomains, the most notable progress was on ‘supportive learning environments’, which suggests that advocacy and community engagement activities are proving successful. And 60 per cent of all countries have a national education policy or sector plan that includes comprehensive support to gender-responsive learning environments.

Eastern and Central Asia demonstrated strong progress in 2017, with girls’ secondary education being a recognized, targeted and budgeted priority in 67 per cent of the region’s countries, up from 36 per cent in 2016. There was also notable progress in East Asia and the Pacific, with the proportion of countries increasing to 43 per cent in 2017 from 33 per cent in 2016. However, despite the overall progress, the positive trend in most regions has stagnated or been very limited.

**Comprehensive sexuality education**

There is an urgent need for high-quality, curriculum-based comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), which is unavailable in all too many countries around the world. This deprives young people of guidance about physical, social and emotional development as they transition from childhood to adulthood. UNICEF works with countries to provide
children and young people with accurate and age-appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills to help them build positive relationships.

At the global level, UNICEF supported UNESCO’s publication of *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*. The guidance advocates for quality CSE to promote health and well-being, respect for human rights and gender equality, and to empower children and young people to lead healthy, safe and productive lives.

Within countries, UNICEF is working with partners to mainstream CSE as part of quality education, for example:

- **Burkina Faso** – Integration of CSE into the primary and secondary school curriculum of teaching modules on child marriage, sexual and reproductive health and female genital mutilation.
- **Swaziland** – Implementation of life skills-based sexuality education reaching 32,500 learners and extending the roll-out of CSE to 122 secondary schools across the country.

**School-related gender-based violence**

UNICEF uses several strategies to address SRGBV, including policy dialogue and advocacy with education ministries and other partners to promote policy reform and data collection and use, capacity development and the generation of evidence on effective strategies. The child protection and health sectors have helped ministries of education and their partners build enabling school environments to address and prevent SRGBV, including working with teachers, students and parents to raise awareness and develop ways of addressing it. UNICEF continues to support education ministries to strengthen the reporting of SRGBV, as well as expanding a robust evidence base to inform policies and practices.

**Highlights of country achievements in 2017: School-related gender-based violence**

- **Cambodia** – In-service teacher training was provided in 405 schools on positive discipline. Subsequently, the number of students experiencing or witnessing at least one incident of moderate physical violence in school decreased from 73 per cent to 46 per cent in targeted schools.
- **Ethiopia** – With UNICEF support, the Ministry of Education generated and analysed data on incidents of violence from two regions. In Oromia region alone, 780 incidents of violence were referred to relevant protection or legal institutions. In Amhara region, 325 cases of girls’ arranged marriages were annulled.
- **Sierra Leone** – UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education to pilot a national school safety guide in 924 junior secondary schools, including the training of school personnel and the development of school action plans.
- **Swaziland** – In 2017, a toll-free line for reporting violence in schools was re-installed. The support included building the capacity of staff to sensitively answer calls.
UNICEF’s progress in addressing SRGBV is measured by the number of countries reporting an education sector policy or plan that specifies prevention, along with response mechanisms to address SRGBV. In 2017, thirty-eight per cent of countries had such policies or plans, up from 20 per cent in 2014 and 25 per cent in 2016. Figure 13 shows the overall progress in the indicator, with each of the indicator subdomains identified in the box to the right.

The proportion of countries reporting progress on improving awareness, attitudes and empowerment increased from 25 per cent in 2016 to 48 per cent in 2017. In addition, 61 per cent of countries, compared with 47 per cent in 2016, reported having legal and policy frameworks to address SRGBV. However, gaps remain, with only 49 per cent of countries reporting progress in translating these policies into response and prevention plans at the subnational and school level. One reason for this is the limited availability and use of data, with only 32 per cent of countries reporting progress on data collection and use.

**Ending gender violence in schools**

End Gender Violence in Schools (EGVS) was a three-year initiative launched in 2014 by UNICEF in partnership with GPE and UNGEI, with technical support from University College London’s Institute of Education (UCL-IoE). The project targeted Côte d’Ivoire,
Togo, Ethiopia and Zambia, and made a valuable contribution towards girls completing primary school and the transition to secondary education within safe and supportive learning environments.

The initiative made good progress on encouraging partner countries to use evidence-based policies and strategies to reduce SRGBV, drawing on the in-depth evidence base it produced, including the rigorous review of global evidence on policy and practice on SRGBV, together with the scoping studies completed by each of the target countries and the cross-country synthesis report. EGVS also helped increase the institutional and technical capacity to design, implement and monitor SRGBV interventions in the four countries. It also promoted partnerships and advocacy to improve multi-level and multisectoral action against SRGBV by building alliances and engaging stakeholders to address the issue at the country level. At the global level, the initiative sustained advocacy work to keep it on the political agenda.

The catalytic effect of EGVS is expected to promote broader, cross-sectoral discussion about SRGBV policies and practices. The action plans developed in each country are expected to strengthen alliances to prevent SRGBV. At the regional level, evidence generated by the initiative has been widely disseminated and has promoted greater attention to SRGBV by donors such as the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Globally, the EGVS initiative has informed UNICEF’s overall programming on gender equality in education. Drawing on the lessons from the initiative and the ‘action map’ developed under the initiative (see Figure 15), monitoring tools have been developed that will enable UNICEF country offices to establish benchmarks for UNICEF’s efforts to address SRGBV around the world. UNICEF and IoE are members of the Global Working Group to End SRGBV, which provides a network and platform to share the recommendations and tools emerging from EGVS to a broader group of partners.

**FIGURE 14**

_Action map on school-related gender-based violence[^34]_
The year 2017 was pivotal for UNGEI, as the initiative revised its vision and goals to align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to adapt to a world in which an unprecedented number of children are affected by crisis and conflict. UNGEI developed and adopted its Strategic Directions for 2018–2023, reflecting a commitment to advancing gender equality in and through education and the empowerment of girls and young women. UNGEI adopted four objectives related to gender-responsive education sector planning, SRGBV, gender-responsive teaching and learning, and gender-transformative governance and leadership. The partnership will continue to use advocacy and policy dialogue, evidence-building, knowledge-brokering and the building of collective accountability as core strategies.

In 2017, UNGEI expanded the evidence base for addressing barriers to education for girls with disabilities and girls in conflict-affected contexts. In collaboration with Leonard Cheshire Disability, UNGEI launched a report entitled *Still Left Behind: Pathways to inclusive education for girls with disabilities*, and with the Overseas Development Institute, UNGEI produced an evidence review on how to mitigate threats to girls’ education in conflict-affected contexts. UNGEI is supporting the Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies to co-convene the Gender Task Team and update the Gender Pocket Guide.

The UNGEI–GPE *Guidance on Developing Gender-Responsive Education Sector Plans* was launched in English, French and Spanish through regional workshops in Eastern and Southern Africa and South Asia. Results at the country level include the development of a gender review, the launch of new gender-responsive policies, disaggregation of data by sex in the sector analysis, new collaboration between ministries, and new perspectives on gender relations in the workplace.

UNGEI continues to host the Global Working Group to End SRGBV, which held a biennial Global Learning Symposium in Dakar, Senegal in 2017. The symposium highlighted the importance of collective advocacy and the value of knowledge exchange among agencies that do similar work. Methodologies addressing school operational cultures and social norms to address SRGBV have been effective, but the monitoring and evaluation of SRGBV interventions is an ongoing challenge.

UNGEI’s work is made possible in part by UNICEF thematic funding, which enables long-term planning and sustainability of the partnership. Additional support for targeted research on gender and education, to test new approaches, and for capacity-building at the regional level is provided by USAID, Estonia, Global Affairs Canada and GPE.

### Spotlight on thematic funding

**Moldova** – UNICEF supported strategic engagement around inclusive education that likely would not have been possible without thematic funding. UNICEF’s Regional Office in Eastern and Central Asia organized an awareness-raising study tour on inclusive education between the Moldova Ministry of Education and representatives from Portugal. Moldovan representatives who work on psycho-pedagogical services and academics learned from Portugal’s experience on including children with severe disabilities in regular education. These efforts took place alongside progress around inclusive education in the country, as the proportion of children with disabilities integrated into regular schools.
increased by 7.4 per cent, and the number of children with disabilities in special schools decreased by 17 per cent compared with the previous school year.

### Inclusive education for children with disabilities

Children with disabilities are among the most marginalized groups in terms of access to education. Estimates suggest that almost half of all children with disabilities are out of school in developing countries – 42 per cent at the primary level and 56 per cent at the lower secondary level.\(^{39}\) According to evidence compiled by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics,\(^ {40}\) "persons with disabilities are more likely to be out of school, less likely to complete primary or secondary education, and less likely to possess basic literacy skills", although evidence on gender disparities is mixed.

The incompleteness of data has made it difficult to track progress, leading UNICEF to include a new child functioning module in 2017 as part of the sixth round of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. The module was developed in collaboration with the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. During 2017, it was applied in Samoa, Mexico, Serbia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. The data from the surveys are being analysed and will be released in mid-2018.

UNICEF continues to advocate for inclusive education that reflects General Comment No. 4 from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This stipulates that children with disabilities have the right to be educated in mainstream classrooms in mainstream schools rather than in separate classrooms or schools. During 2017, both the West and Central Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Offices held regional workshops on inclusive education, attracting Ministry of Education representatives, staff from UNICEF, other development partners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics and independent experts from 27 African countries. UNICEF also coordinated the education chapter in the UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development, to be published in 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highlights of country achievements in 2017: Inclusive education</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Azerbaijan</strong> – A comprehensive communication strategy was developed to tackle stigma, discrimination and negative social norms and to encourage more favourable legislation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia and Herzegovina</strong> – Individual referral plans were produced for more than 200 children with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cuba</strong> – Equipment was provided for 6 vocational schools in Cuba serving 875 adolescents with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ghana</strong> – In 2017, UNICEF completed a guide for analysing inclusive education in education systems, to be included as a chapter in the third volume of the <em>Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines</em> and to be provided as a standalone resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mongolia</strong> – The partnership between UNICEF and the Mongolian Education Alliance led to the expansion of inclusive education models. The partnership trained parents and established learning and recreational centres for children with disabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Morocco</strong> – Adolescents with disabilities were supported by modelling secondary school transition and completion as part of a pilot project that was built on the inclusive education model for primary education.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Serbia</strong> – One hundred and forty-five children with disabilities were mainstreamed into 45 schools.</td>
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Summary and going forward

Many programmes begun with UNICEF support as urgent one-off responses to persistent inequities in education have now become part of the development landscape, with OOSCI as perhaps the most notable example. One direct result is a continuing increase in the number of countries with strategies to support the schooling of disadvantaged children. Most countries now have a legal framework supporting the right of children with disabilities to a good education, but many countries have yet to develop strong institutional support for these programmes. In the West and Central Africa region, two countries out of three do not have specific policies for implementing inclusive education.

The persistence of inequity in the sector calls for new thinking about how to engage with countries for more inclusive planning and implementation. This is consistent with the new UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, which calls for innovation and new partnerships to operationalize the concept of ‘leaving no one behind’ and to create new ‘efforts to mainstream gender equality and address disability’.

UNICEF is an international leader in this arena. Its ability to build on and update the child-friendly schools approach, to support evidence-based breakthroughs for equity and to use new technologies in support of programming and advocacy for the most vulnerable children will go a long way to determining whether the sector can finally achieve its long-time goal of education for all.
Programme Area 4: Education in humanitarian settings

SDG 4 will not be reached worldwide without increased investments in education and action in humanitarian contexts. In 2017, UNICEF helped 8.8 million children in need of access to quality formal and non-formal education services in 48 countries and all 7 regions affected by natural or human-made crises. UNICEF is significantly advancing efforts to reach the estimated 50 per cent of out-of-school children of primary school age who live in conflict-affected areas. Globally, education made up the largest part of UNICEF’s Humanitarian Action for Children appeals, reaching US$370 million for education in emergencies.

The challenge of providing quality education to children affected by emergencies has grown dramatically in recent years as the number of displaced children and refugees continues at near-record levels. In 2017, 535 million children from 48 countries were affected by conflict, natural disaster or displacement. There were a record number of Level 3 and Level 2 emergencies in 2017. There were 7 Level 3 crises: the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh, the ongoing complex crises in Iraq, Syria and Yemen and the continued escalation of conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Nigeria and South Sudan. Regionally coordinated Level 2 emergencies continue to reflect the multi-country nature of current crises in the Central African Republic, the Horn of Africa, the Lake Chad basin and hurricane-affected parts of the Caribbean. Conflict has devastating effects on education for children and youth, who are at risk of abduction and whose teachers may be threatened or killed, with schools closed for weeks or months on end.

Children in conflict-affected countries are less likely to complete primary school than those in countries not affected by conflict, and only half as likely to complete lower secondary school. Just one in two refugee children attends primary school, and just one in four attends secondary school. Conflict exacerbates education inequality for girls and among socio-economic groups. UNICEF works across the humanitarian–development divide by advancing risk-informed education for resilience interventions. It builds institutional and systems capacity to prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of shocks and stress factors. This complements humanitarian interventions to ensure continued access to safe learning environments and provide critical psychosocial support and life-saving information to teachers and students.

**Highlights of results: Education in humanitarian settings**

In 2017, UNICEF helped 8.8 million children, reaching 73 per cent of targeted children, access quality formal and non-formal education services in 48 countries and all 7 regions affected by natural and man-made crisis: The challenge of providing quality education to children affected by emergencies has grown in recent years, as the number of displaced children and refugees is at near-record levels. UNICEF is advancing

**UNICEF supported more governments to develop education systems that are risk-informed and better prepared for emergencies:** Country offices operated in a number of complex emergencies where multiple crises – from epidemics to displacement to natural disasters – occurred simultaneously. Country offices report a concerted effort to ensure preparedness, especially in natural disaster-prone regions. In 2017, 45 per cent of countries had an education sector plan that included an up-to-date risk assessment and risk management strategies, up from 19 per cent of countries in 2013. Significant progress was made even though the ambitious target of 100 per cent was not met.

**UNICEF country offices demonstrated a growing trend towards bringing together development and humanitarian partners for improved coordination through mechanisms such as education in emergencies working groups with governments:** For example, partners supporting responses inside Syria agreeing that a forum was needed to bring together donors and humanitarian and stabilization actors in education resulted in the Syria Education Dialogue Forum.

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output results for education in humanitarian settings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Output</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF-targeted children in humanitarian situations accessing formal or non-formal basic education, including pre-primary schools/early childhood learning spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries in humanitarian action in which the country cluster coordination mechanism for education meets CCC standards for coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries with an education sector plan/policy that includes risk assessment and risk management</td>
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**Results chain for education in humanitarian settings**

Funding programme outcomes for education in humanitarian settings: The results chain applies theory of change principles and presents the expected links between spending, interventions and progress on strategic plan output and outcome indicators for education in humanitarian situations. Figure 16 presents UNICEF funding in 2017 in support of a range of programme outcomes. For example, by channelling funds and technical assistance to emergency responses, UNICEF supports an increase in the percentage of girls and boys in humanitarian situations who are able to access educational opportunities and a reduction in out-of-school rates.

UNICEF’s spending on education in humanitarian situations and related activities continued to increase in 2017, reaching a total of US$454 million, up from US$426 million in 2016. Approximately 90 per cent of the spending (US$398 million) was focused on direct emergency responses, with a further US$29 million spent on cluster coordination and strengthening in humanitarian action. UNICEF continued to invest heavily in education systems that are risk-informed and better prepared for emergencies and that actively contribute to stable, peaceful societies. UNICEF spent US$26 million in 2017 to support
countries to carry out risk assessments, enhance emergency preparedness and develop peacebuilding education.

FIGURE 15
Results chain for education in humanitarian settings

Constraints and challenges

Although humanitarian funding has seen creative solutions to hurdles posed by emergency settings (for example, multi-year, education-focused funding such as Education Cannot Wait), conflict-affected countries remain the furthest away from achieving education goals. Humanitarian funding does not prioritize education, and development assistance does not make up for the shortfall in areas suffering prevalent protracted crises. Increased and forced migration over the last year has created a huge challenge for reaching children on the move, pushing the sector and donors to be more flexible and innovative in programming.

Collaboration with local actors and governments remains a key challenge in reaching adolescent children who experience prolonged displacement (including internal displacement and those in hard-to-reach zones) so that their education is relevant, certified, and linked to earning opportunities later on. While regional response plans support better coordination and outreach, systems capacity and resources fall short of what is needed. Further investments must target risk-informed, resilience-oriented programming and conflict-sensitive approaches to emergency response.

Emergency response

In 2017, UNICEF’s emergency response efforts used the education system as a way to build resilient communities, as rapid programme scale-up during emergencies provided an opportunity to strengthen systems. Humanitarian interventions also complemented medium-term programming as part of stabilization and recovery efforts. The increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters and protracted forced displacement and conflict resulted in context-specific responses across 11 Level 2 and Level 3 of UNICEF’s priority humanitarian responses as well as smaller-scale crises around the globe.
Large-scale involuntary migration (internal as well as international) remained at an all-time high in 2017, both as a result of citizens seeking new economic opportunities and also as a consequence of conflict, inequality, failures of national governance and climate change. This required UNICEF to support short-term humanitarian approaches and longer-term capacity development. UNICEF’s in-country education personnel who were situated along international migration trails helped protect child migrants and refugees by strengthening the ability of national education systems to give them an education, while at the same time improving schooling for the children of host communities.

Illustrative results from emergency responses

**Caribbean:** The rebuilding of damaged schools to be resilient to future hurricanes was a priority in all Caribbean countries and territories affected by hurricanes in 2017. More than 21,600 children and adolescents were able to resume early childhood and education services after the hurricanes due to UNICEF support, which included the provision of early childhood development, Schools-in-a-Box, recreational kits and tents. By the end of December 2017, most schools in hurricane-impacted eastern Caribbean countries had reopened and were better equipped to deal with future disasters through the implementation of the Caribbean Safe School Programme, with three key dimensions: (1) safe learning facilities; (2) school disaster management; and (3) disaster risk reduction resilience education.

**Bangladesh:** The United Nations has described the Rohingya crisis as the “world’s fastest-growing refugee crisis”, affecting about 1 million people, 85 per cent of whom are children. In this challenging context, in 2017, UNICEF established 738 learning centres, trained 1,074 teachers and provided emergency non-formal education to over 81,000 children aged 4–14. The programme provided support to both Rohingya and host-community children, and consultations with communities, local NGOs, United Nations and international civil society and other stakeholders resulted in the design of a Learning Competencies Framework and Approach, which is under consideration by the government of Bangladesh. The Framework and Approach will present the guiding principles of educating children displaced from Myanmar, as well as pedagogic approaches, and will be used by teachers, trainers and administrators.

**Syria:** UNICEF Syria initiated the Bursaries Project to provide scholarships towards transportation and education materials for more than 12,000 9th and 12th grade students (44 per cent girls) from hard-to-reach areas so that they could sit their national exams. Two thirds (65 per cent) of the students successfully passed their exams. Through UNICEF support, more than 2 million children accessed formal education, and over 48,000 others received non-formal education throughout Syria. Life skills, citizenship education and community-based vocational training programmes benefited almost 475,000 adolescents and youth, including over 58,000 in hard-to-reach locations. UNICEF and partners supported some 113,000 out-of-school boys and girls, providing access to learning opportunities through self-learning materials to those children who are on the move due to active conflict, and enrolling displaced children in accelerated learning programmes.

**Jordan:** UNICEF Jordan continues to support the Ma’An Campaign to reduce physical and verbal violence in schools. The campaign is anchored on school-based activities to promote a new way of discipline among teachers; community-based meetings and celebrations to encourage zero tolerance of violence in schools; and robust media coverage to make the campaign known. It has reached around 900,000 students in 3,000 schools. In 2017, UNICEF collaborated with 17 partners to design a multisectoral national strategy on social norms and behavioural change to eliminate physical violence against children in all settings. Complementary social cohesion activities at the community level, including youth clubs,
sports, art and music activities, were provided for children, with the aim of easing tensions between Jordanians and Syrian refugees and reducing violence in schools.

**Turkey:** In Turkey, UNICEF continued to respond to the Syria crisis within the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), regional refugee and migrant response plans (RRMRP) and the No Lost Generation strategy. This included supporting the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) programme for refugees, which has benefited over 188,444 children. UNICEF continued to provide financial incentives for 13,200 Syrian teachers while training 126,554 Syrian and Turkish teachers. Seven schools were constructed and 530 classrooms established in camps and host communities. For the first time, more Syrian children were enrolled in Turkish public schools than in temporary education centres.

**Macedonia:** In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNICEF worked with implementing partners to provide child protection, education, health and nutrition and basic supplies. The organization also helped identify legal and practical barriers that prevent refugee children from accessing regular education facilities.

**Serbia:** In Serbia, UNICEF worked in partnership with the Danish Refugee Council, the Divac Foundation and SOS Children’s Villages to operate child-friendly spaces for the children of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. Since September 2017, around 85 per cent of all primary school-aged refugee and migrant children have attended primary schools, around 15 per cent of all such secondary school-aged children have attended secondary schools, and 8 per cent of such secondary school-aged children have attended second-chance programmes. UNICEF in Jordan worked closely with the Ministry of Education and its partners to provide a similar mix of formal and non-formal education, with more than 6,400 children accessing the non-formal Catch Up and Drop Out programmes.

**Case Study 4: Radio education programmes in emergencies in Cameroon and Niger**

In 2017, the Boko Haram crisis resulted in 94 school closures in the far north of Cameroon and 28 in the Diffa region of Niger, along with many more attacks on education. To provide continued access to learning under these conditions, UNICEF supported the Radio Education Programme which has been implemented since July 2017. This model supports children for individual listening or in groups, without the help of an adult or a teacher. It is validated by the government as an alternative platform for hard-to-reach children in emergency and conflict contexts until a safer learning environment is provided.

Implementation began with a radio listenership study to determine the potential audience and radio coverage, and an assessment of existing radio stations, their capacities and the materials needed for the programme. In Niger, a pre-test was organized to collect baseline data about children’s knowledge levels in mathematics, reading and protection against risks. Programme scripts were complemented with messages designed to address the protection issues faced by children and communities in areas affected by Boko Haram.

Preliminary evidence confirms the protective nature of the Radio Education Programme. Children are given hope, taking them back in time to when they were in school before displacement. The programme is cost-effective and provides a second chance for learning while providing life-saving knowledge and skills by broadcasting protective messages. The use of local languages in Niger has facilitated learning and monitoring by local communities, who also benefit from the messages. The programme holds the potential to be extended to additional regions and to meet the learning needs of nomadic children and others who are out of school. In 2018, the prototype is being expanded in seven more countries and includes programmes for very young children and children over the age of 2.
six who have never been in school. Parts of the new scripts address the parents of very young children and pregnant mothers.

The Radio Education Programme was developed and piloted under a broader European Union–UNICEF effort to provide a protective learning environment in the Lake Chad region. Targeted Norwegian grants supplemented those of the European Union and prevented any interruption of the programme. The technical support and guidance of the regional office mobilized many specialists and NGOs and was only possible through a combination of funding from the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO – the European Union–UNICEF for Education in Emergencies Initiative) and thematic funds. For the current expansion of the curriculum, UNICEF is collaborating with Save the Children and expanding its partnership with the Children’s Radio Foundation.44

Coordination and surge support

Shifts within the humanitarian landscape, both at the operational and policy levels, as well as within the education-in-emergencies sector,45 prompted the Global Education Cluster to realign the priorities of the Cluster Strategic Plan 2017–2019 with current humanitarian discourse. Resources were also mobilized with ECHO (Euro 1 million) and the Education Cannot Wait fund (US$2.5 million) to strengthen field support activities and contribute to the implementation of World Humanitarian Summit and Grand Bargain commitments.

The Global Education Cluster increased its support to country-based coordination mechanisms through direct and remote support, guidance, education and capacity development. The Helpdesk addressed more than 130 requests in 35 countries in 2017, and 46 participants from 16 organizations received training on core education skills. New guidance to support the development of comprehensive education cluster strategies was
completed; when rolled out in 2018, they will aid countries facing strategic and operational challenges. A unique partnership in Syria brought together seven UN agencies (WFP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, FAO, UN Habitat and UNRWA), where UNICEF set up a technical working group and played a leading role in managing an initiative with a focus on increasing education access and quality in Aleppo and Rural Damascus.

UNICEF country offices also demonstrated the growing trend of bringing together development and humanitarian partners for improved coordination through mechanisms such as education-in-emergencies working groups. The Syria Education Dialogue Forum included three hubs in Amman, Damascus and Gaziantep. UNICEF also facilitated a private-sector partnership to support linkages between humanitarian and development aid for early childhood development for South Sudanese refugees and their host communities in the DRC, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda.

Strategic deployments of Education Emergency Response Team members in Nigeria helped expand UNICEF’s field presence in remote conflict-affected areas. In total, there were 21 education sector deployments in 2017, most in the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia regions.

**Dealing with risk**

UNICEF is increasingly focused on risk reduction. In 2017, it served its second year as chair of the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES). Meanwhile, UNICEF country offices were called on to deal with many complex emergencies where multiple crises occurred simultaneously. In 2017, 45 per cent of countries had an education plan or policy that includes risk assessment or risk management – a significant increase from 19 per cent in 2013 but far short of the very
ambitious target of 100 per cent. Only 33 per cent of countries had sufficient resources to implement their strategies.

Many country offices collaborated with governments and education ministries to create and promote resilience through policy and planning work. Some countries targeted climate change adaptation through education activities at national and school levels. Risk-informed approaches in Honduras led to the inclusion of Zika prevention in the curriculum on climate change. UNICEF worked with environmental departments in Barbados and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to expand training for teachers on Zika prevention. UNICEF DRC applied the risk-informed programming (RIP) approach to adjust its work plans in the Kasaï region to accommodate the humanitarian response. Temporary learning spaces were integrated into the education sector plan after more than 400 attacks on schools in less than a year.

In the Horn of Africa, the UNICEF model of ‘Schools as Integrated Service Platforms’ allows for the provision of multiple services within a safe environment while supporting shared goals to build community resilience. For example, the education sector collaborated with WASH and Food Security clusters to include schools in the food and water distribution in the drought response in Somalia. The Education and Nutrition clusters worked together on a school nutrition project to address the intergenerational malnutrition observed among internally displaced persons. Life-saving hygiene promotion to prevent cholera and acute watery diarrhoea was carried out at schools.

**Spotlight on thematic funding**

**Zimbabwe** – One area that remains weak in the Zimbabwe country office’s programme is a structured, system-wide strategy for an adequate response to humanitarian needs in the education sector. This is partly because this area has not received substantial funding. Thematic funds are being used to fill these funding gaps, which has enabled children affected by disasters (particularly flooding) to continue learning. The largest share of the funds was used to procure emergency materials before an emergency happens, so they can be accessible after, providing immediate assistance to victims.

**Education for peacebuilding**

In 2017, peacebuilding initiatives in Eastern and Central Asia, Eastern and Southern Africa, Latin America and Caribbean and Middle East and North Africa regional offices included:

- Advocacy and media campaigns against violence (Egypt, Jordan, Niger);
- Conflict-sensitive curriculum development and the use of arts and sports for social cohesion development (Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Yemen); and
- Anti-bullying and anti-gender-based violence initiatives (Latin America and Caribbean).

In the Central African Republic, UNICEF in collaboration with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) supported the Ministry of Education in organizing special sessions to enable 10,000 children to take year-end exams at conflict-affected school sites. These students, who were not able to sit with for exams due to increased insecurity, along with 80 per cent of their peers who took the exams at UNICEF Temporary Learning Spaces, passed with rates far exceeding the national average.
UNICEF continues to serve as a member of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), with country offices assisting in the review of 27 national Education under Attack reports and supporting the coalition’s efforts to garner international support for the Safe Schools Declaration. UNICEF’s Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA), which ended in June 2016, was presented in February 2017 to the UNICEF Executive Board as an example of how social services such as education can contribute to peacebuilding and social cohesion.

**Summary and going forward**

In line with the Agenda for Humanity, UNICEF has improved the engagement between humanitarian and development actors. In 2017, the Education in Emergencies portfolio made more innovative use of partnership modalities, mobilizing resources and delivering services to vulnerable and conflict-affected children. Risk-informed programming became more strategic, visible and widespread as UNICEF worked with governments to prevent and prepare for varied hazards. In 2018, as part of the new UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, the organization will continue to bridge the humanitarian and development nexus in education, advance the goals of the Grand Bargain and pursue technological innovations and new public–private partnership opportunities to better reach children and adolescents in both protracted and sudden-onset crises.
Programme Area 5: Global partnerships and system strengthening

Education systems that provide real opportunities to all children and youth are not the product of chance – they are the result of a relentless focus on equity and a devotion to quality. Strong education systems can be measured by the success rates of the most marginalized and vulnerable populations they serve. They are built on clear and consistent accountability relationships among stakeholders at different levels. They also ensure that learning is paramount, that performance is monitored and that data are transparent and accessible, enabling key decision makers to make evidence-based decisions. UNICEF knows that systems with this capacity are possible and will be at their strongest when parents and local communities are well informed about student and school results and have an active voice in promoting good learning outcomes. UNICEF works with governments and with the communities they serve to create local and national institutions with a sense of purpose, able to effectively translate financing into positive results.

Strong education systems require strong partnerships. No country, not even the most successful, has all the knowledge and resources it needs. UNICEF helps governments develop networks of support that include the GPE, Education Cannot Wait and Educate a Child (EAC). They support and complement UNICEF’s own efforts to strengthen education systems at the country level. They are also crucial to UNICEF’s coordination, advocacy and fundraising at the global and regional levels.

Highlights of results: Global partnerships and system strengthening

Significant progress has been achieved in supporting countries to strengthen their education management information systems (EMIS): Nearly two thirds (63 per cent) of countries, shy of the targeted 75 per cent, reported having a reliable and comprehensive EMIS that monitored the most marginalized children, compared with only 40 per cent in 2013. UNICEF helped improve the availability of data on out-of-school children and children at risk of dropout in an array of countries, including Bulgaria, Chad, Congo, Guatemala, India, Kosovo, Maldives, Montenegro, Nepal, Sierra Leone and the State of Palestine.

In 2017, UNICEF trained almost 48,000 school management committees (SMCs), parent–teacher associations (PTAs) and school communities on topics such as school management, planning, health and hygiene, inclusive education and financial management: This brings the total to almost 183,000 local school or community structures trained by UNICEF on these subjects since 2014. The proportion of countries with functional primary- and secondary-level SMCs increased from 34 per cent in 2013 to 55 per cent in 2017, reaching beyond the target of 47 per cent.
The multi-country UNICEF initiative Data Must Speak addressed the need for an improved use of school data for the more equitable allocation of resources and for empowering school communities by developing and distributing school profiles with comparative data: UNICEF headquarters and regional and country offices collaborate on the initiative, which is being implemented in Madagascar, Nepal, the Philippines, Togo and Zambia. It promotes improved system management and accountability to communities, as well as improved knowledge regarding what works in terms of community participation at school level. In Madagascar, in 2017 alone, over 25,000 primary schools received two versions of their school profile, including a simplified, community-friendly version for low-literacy communities.

UNICEF played a critical role in increasing funding and coordination for education in emergencies through its partnership with Education Cannot Wait. UNICEF provided a range of support to investments and coordination of the fund, such as serving as the interim secretariat, facilitating missions, providing in-country coordination, supporting governments on calls for proposals and leading coordination of initial investment work in several countries that will benefit 3.7 million children, half of them girls.

**TABLE 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output results for global partnerships and system strengthening</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>2017 value</th>
<th>2017 target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countries with functional school management committees at primary and secondary level</td>
<td>34% (2013)</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries in which the education management information system feeds finding back to communities or school management committees</td>
<td>32% (2013)</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries with an Education Management Information System (EMIS) providing disaggregated data that allow the identification of barriers and bottlenecks that inhibit the realization of the rights of disadvantaged children</td>
<td>40% (2013)</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Management Committees or Parent Teacher Associations or School communities (or similar structure) that received training funded by UNICEF</td>
<td>47,141 (2014)</td>
<td>182,868</td>
<td>188,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key global and regional education sector initiatives in which UNICEF is the co-chair or provides coordination support</td>
<td>18 (2014)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results chain for global partnerships and system strengthening**

The results chain applies theory of change principles and presents the expected links between spending, interventions and progress on strategic plan output and outcome indicators for global partnerships and system strengthening. By supporting the development of EMIS, for example, UNICEF is improving countries’ capacities to identify the most disadvantaged children and feed information back to communities, which in turn can increase the attendance rates and learning of children from the poorest wealth quintile (see Figure 16).
In 2017, UNICEF invested US$197 million (16 per cent of total education expenses) to support national education system strengthening and enhance global partnerships, up from US$193 million in 2016. Of this total, US$20 million was invested in the development of education sector analyses and plans to guide system development, and to support access to GPE grants. EMIS and school management committees were key output areas under the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014–2017 and represented US$21 million of 2017 expenses.

Constraints and challenges

Despite the acknowledged importance of education for spurring national growth and individual opportunity, most countries do not devote enough resources to the sector. Only 19 per cent of countries with UNICEF programmes devote 20 per cent or more of their budgets to education, which is the minimum recommended by UNICEF, GPE and the World Bank Group - IDA.

The development of data-driven, evidence-based education sector plans and policies has been an area of focus for most partnerships that support education systems in developing countries, but national EMIS and learning assessment systems are not always able to deliver good-quality, comprehensive, disaggregated and timely data. Many technical and human resources capacity gaps remain that impede the development of sound education sector analyses and gender-responsive and equity-focused sector plans. The Gender Responsive Sector Planning Guidelines (GPE/UNICEF/UNGEI) were widely used over the past year to improve planning and implementation.

Also, as recently reiterated by the World Development Report: Learning to realize education’s promise, the various components of the whole education system must be in alignment for learning to occur. Accountability relationships within education systems should be clear, coordinated and consistent from the school level to the central level. This includes the delegation of responsibilities, financing, information management and use, and incentive...
mechanisms. The alignment of these elements continues to lag in many countries, and UNICEF’s work to develop strong partnerships at global, regional and country levels is designed to help countries address these constraints and make more consistent use of evidence to inform decision-making.

Global evidence shows great variation in the impact of social accountability mechanisms on learning.\textsuperscript{48,49} Community participation improves learning when communities are: (1) given a role in influencing school management decisions; (2) receive information on the resources and performance of their school (including comparisons with other schools); and (3) are trained for their roles and for monitoring. With its strong field presence, UNICEF is in a unique position to support this agenda.\textsuperscript{50}

**Strong national systems and planning**

**Education sector analysis and development of evidence-based sector policies and plans**

In 2017, UNICEF supported sectoral analysis and the development of plans for Djibouti, Lesotho, India, Timor-Leste and Iraq, among other countries. The organization also contributed to education sector analysis and planning at the global level. With UNESCO, GPE and DFID, UNICEF started the development of the third volume of the *Education Sector Analysis Guidelines*,\textsuperscript{51} with new chapters on risk and conflict analysis, inclusive education for children with disabilities, political economy analysis and institutional capacity analysis. The chapter on inclusive education was piloted in Ghana, where findings on disability prevalence and data and related capacity gaps informed the development of the government’s sector plan. In-service teacher training modules were completed, and a strategy is now in place to mainstream inclusiveness in the ongoing pre-service teacher training reforms.

UNICEF worked to strengthen institutional capacity and coordination as well as the technical aspects of sector analysis and planning. As a member of all local education groups, it contributed to effective country-level coordination for policy development, implementation and monitoring. In Myanmar, UNICEF jointly led the establishment of coordination mechanisms for general education and technical and vocational education. These groups also worked to enhance aid effectiveness and to put the focus on results, in part through a better framework for monitoring implementation of the National Education Sector Plan.

**Spotlight on thematic funding**

**Maldives** – UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to usher in a series of reforms to enhance its capacity to monitor the education sector. The reforms also entailed strengthening policies through evidence-based decision-making, and improving delivery, accountability and transparency. In collaboration with UNESCO, the existing EMIS was replaced with an open-source software solution with support from thematic funds provided by UNICEF. Thematic funds supported the building of a robust and reliable EMIS and the strengthening of national capacities to provide reliable information for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of education systems.

**Data systems**

Sixty-three per cent of countries reported that they had a reliable and comprehensive EMIS that monitors the most marginalized children, compared with only 40 per cent in 2013. The disaggregation of data requires that an EMIS collect data by gender, urban/rural location and by types of disability. Efforts to support progress on data quality and timeliness have been
particularly successful, with 70 per cent of countries having increased response rates from schools and data that are both increasingly reliable and available quickly to inform action.

There was particularly strong progress in South Asia on supporting governments to improve their EMIS. In 2017, eighty-six per cent of countries in the region had a system that monitored the most marginalized children, compared with 71 per cent in 2016. Progress on this indicator was more limited in the West and Central Africa region, where only 50 per cent of countries have systems that monitor the most marginalized children.

UNICEF support included interventions tailored to countries’ specific needs and capacities. In Angola, the Central African Republic and the DRC, UNICEF helped revitalize the EMIS. Education officials were trained in data collection, processing and use, focusing on elements of the data system that were most in need of strengthening, including student attendance in the Maldives, early learning information in Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania, and teacher- and inspectorate-level data in Rwanda.

UNICEF helped improve the availability of data on out-of-school children and children at risk of dropout in an array of countries and territories, including Bulgaria, Chad, the Congo, Guatemala, India, Kosovo, Maldives, Montenegro, Nepal, Sierra Leone and the State of Palestine. In Kosovo, the integration of the early warning system into the EMIS helped identify children at risk of dropping out of school. In Guatemala, at the beginning of the school year, EMIS data provided inputs for monitoring students at risk of academic failure and early dropout. The inclusion of children with disabilities in national data systems was promoted in more countries, including the Comoros and Togo. In Kosovo, the Violence Case Registry Module was integrated into the EMIS to improve school reports on cases of violence.

UNICEF also supported the appropriate sharing and use of data to inform education sector planning, resource allocation, management and monitoring. In Angola, the existence of a full-fledged EMIS database enabled the introduction of school mapping. In the DRC, India and Serbia, the introduction of user-friendly monitoring tools was supported.

In Serbia, for example, UNICEF supported the national statistical office to upgrade their DevInfo platform to provide easier access to user-friendly education data visualizations. The development and use of school and district profile cards continued in Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Nepal, Peru, Togo and Zambia. In Nepal, the Philippines and Togo, the Data Must
Speak initiative supported the continued development of indices for equity-focused programming and resource allocation. In Madagascar, Togo and Zambia, through the same initiative, UNICEF helped ministries of education merge annual school census data with national exam data. This enabled these countries to include learning outcomes within their monitoring systems, including school profile cards, leading to the potential for targeting pedagogical support to where it is most needed, and providing feedback on learning outcomes to school communities and parents. In Zambia, the initiative has developed school profiles for over 8,000 primary schools, which provide data on school dropouts disaggregated by gender. User-friendly versions of the profiles highlight the scale of girls’ dropping out due to pregnancies and re-entering after pregnancy, as well as learning-outcome data disaggregated by gender. These profiles have been distributed to communities.

**Case Study 5: When data speak – Strengthening education management and information systems in Namibia**

The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in Namibia conducts two censuses each year. The first is a quick snapshot of vital information based on school reports received on the fifteenth day of the school year, such as the number of schools, teachers and learners in all private and public schools in the country. It provides sex-disaggregated data on teachers and learners per region and the distribution of learners per phase and allows for the computation of learner-to-teacher ratios. The second is a comprehensive survey conducted at the start of the third trimester to provide important information regarding the overall situation at a particular school. Together these two censuses are intended to provide the Ministry with the information needed both for critical short-term planning, such as budget allocations, and for longer-term planning. Although this system ran effectively for many years, by 2012 it had become unwieldy and could no longer provide yearly reports in time to inform planning.

UNICEF Namibia collaborated with the Ministry to replace the paper-based EMIS with a web-based platform. A Permanent Steering Committee was formed with representation from the Ministry and partners, as well as the National Statistics Agency. National and regional data planners were consulted, and training was provided to increase in-house capacity. Emphasis was placed on establishing a manageable workflow throughout the data life cycle and on regular communication. The Ministry contracted a private provider to develop a comprehensive web-based system to allow school staff to forward census data automatically.

This effort has produced good results. Since 2015, the quick snapshot reports have been released within the same calendar year. The comprehensive survey data from the Annual Education Census went online in 2017. It now captures data for more than 80 per cent of schools. Information on HIV/AIDS, disability and orphans and vulnerable children is immediately available to all relevant parties. The web-based system eliminates the need for paper-based instruments, although there are still some connectivity issues at the school and regional levels. A remaining constraint is that the central EMIS server is located at the Office of the Prime Minister, which limits the Ministry in terms of accessing and fully ‘owning’ the platform.
A policy for EMIS collection and analysis is being prepared, and emphasis will now be placed on the analysis and use of the data and their widespread availability. The web-based portal is versatile and could potentially be used for other data collection needs, such as information about hostels and the School Feeding Programme. It could also be used by other ministries for their data needs. This would have the added advantage that it could place all data-gathering tools on the same platform and make all data compatible across ministries. The system also provides a model that could be used to strengthen the registration and monitoring of early childhood development centres.

Governance and accountability

Good-quality systems with appropriate evaluation, accountability and remediation mechanisms are as important as resources to ensure value for money in the education sector. Strong education systems need to be well managed and accountable. UNICEF emphasizes community empowerment to help ministries of education and school managers be more accountable to beneficiaries.

UNICEF headquarters and regional and country offices collaborate on the Data Must Speak initiative, implemented in Madagascar, Nepal, the Philippines, Togo and Zambia. This initiative addresses the need for the improved use of school data and for empowering school communities by developing and distributing school profiles with comparative school performance data. The profiles enable school communities to compare their own schools to district and national averages. In Madagascar, in 2017 alone, over 25,000 primary schools received two versions of their school profiles, including a simplified, community-friendly version for low-literacy communities.

In the Philippines, teacher deployment is a particularly challenging issue in the most difficult contexts where there is a shortage of experienced teachers. In 2017, through Data Must Speak, UNICEF supported the development of a teacher hardship index to provide financial incentives for teachers to work in the most disadvantaged areas. Teachers contributed to the development of the index through face-to-face consultations and online surveys. The index combines factors of hardship ranging from travel times to Internet access and municipality poverty levels.

In Haiti, UNICEF technical and financial assistance helped strengthen the Ministry of Education’s regulatory capacity by supporting the installation of the Planning and Study Unit and the General Inspectorate. It is expected that the latter will provide the Minister of Education with evidence-based recommendations to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system. Similarly, UNICEF support to the unit in charge of coordinating early grade reading and writing interventions has strengthened its governing role and field supervision capacity. Through the Haiti Wins: Read, Write, Succeed! programme, the local directorates of education have further developed their capacity for quality assurance activities at the classroom level.

School management committees

The proportion of UNICEF-supported countries with functional SMCs at the primary and secondary level increased from 49 per cent in 2016 to 55 per cent in 2017, well beyond the
target of 47 per cent. The overall progress on the indicator is presented in Figure 17, with the indicator subdomains in the box to the right.

FIGURE 17
Countries with functional school management committees at primary and secondary level

Support to SMCs, school councils, PTAs and other community structures is crucial to strengthening social accountability. Through this support, the most vulnerable groups and communities can have a voice in school management and decision-making processes. Work includes creating new structures, their training and empowerment and the dissemination of lessons learned. Although progress has been made in all subdomains, UNICEF has been most successful in supporting community participation (71 per cent of countries), although more support is needed to develop the communities’ role in monitoring school performance. Only 54 per cent of countries report that SMCs monitor school activities and funds. This will be a focus of future programming under the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, based on evidence that community-based monitoring contributes to improved learning outcomes.

Progress in supporting functional SMCs has been most pronounced in Eastern and Southern Africa. Progress was limited in Eastern and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, suggesting that UNICEF needs more focus on this topic in these regions.
In Iraq, UNICEF provided technical support to the Ministry of Education, including the development of a school-based management policy and guidelines to improve the quality of learning and school environments. Applying the school-based management model, the Ministry has directed that decision-making authority be extended to schools and their communities. By the end of 2017, 365 schools (reaching 193,534 students) had piloted the approach. The impact of the model has created demand for replication, and many schools have embraced school-based management using locally mobilized resources.

In Sri Lanka, UNICEF helped strengthen participatory school planning processes. Teams of master trainers were trained to use provincial guidelines for participatory school self-assessments and planning. Following training programmes across all zones for principals and teachers, school communities reviewed and revised their own school plans for 2017 based on a participatory and more evidence-based school self-assessment and planning process.

Globally, in 2017, UNICEF provided training for almost 48,000 SMCs, PTAs and school communities on topics such as school management, planning, health and hygiene, inclusive education and financial management. This brings the total to almost 183,000 local school or community structures trained by UNICEF since 2014.

Engaging in policy and advocacy through partnership

UNICEF seeks to work through partnerships whenever this provides an opportunity to achieve greater impact. Within the education sector, partnerships have been built on our comparative advantages, such as our strong field presence, our staff's technical expertise and our focus on equity, to complement the expertise of partners. This has helped us to accelerate progress by identifying and applying innovative approaches and digital solutions, while also making better use of knowledge and data. Partnerships have also sharpened our advocacy efforts, leading to greater support for education from the public and decision makers.
Global Partnership for Education

GPE supports 65 developing countries to ensure that every child receives a quality basic education, prioritizing the poorest and most vulnerable and those living in countries affected by fragility and conflict. It does this by providing incentives, resources and technical support to develop, implement and monitor national, subnational or transitional education sector plans.

UNICEF is a member of the GPE board. It represents multilateral partners on the Finance and Risk, and Grants and Performance Committees. UNICEF also worked with GPE throughout 2017 to support GPE’s third replenishment campaign. It helped develop GPE’s offer to developing-country partners, including a new funding and financing framework. It also worked to help accelerate delivery of GPE 2020 (GPE Strategic Plan) results, which align closely with UNICEF’s targets on equity, learning and systems effectiveness.

UNICEF served as coordinating agency in 36 GPE countries in 2017 – over half of all GPE-supported countries. It was grant agent for education sector programme implementation grants in 11 countries, with an active total portfolio of US$346 million. UNICEF also served as grant agent for education sector plan development grants, with new grants in 11 countries totalling US$3.63 million. This placed UNICEF in the role of coordinating development partner support to governments for preparing strong education sector plans.

In the DRC, UNICEF’s advocacy led to the establishment of a permanent secretariat to coordinate the 10-year Education Sectoral Strategy (2016–2025) and the issuance of Standard Operating Procedures for the implementation of GPE grants through the Quality of Education Enhancement Project. In Timor-Leste, UNICEF served as the co-chair of the Local Education Group, and coordinated with a range of development partners, the Ministry of Education, the World Bank Group - IDA and the GPE Secretariat to prepare the education sector analysis, with initial findings presented in July 2017. Through this process, UNICEF Timor-Leste highlighted equity and gender equality issues in education, learning outcomes, linkages with the SDGs and public investments in education.

In Yemen, 420 schools in 13 governorates were awarded a development fund to improve training, school participation and learning environments. The fund also provided psychosocial support and learning materials.

In Eritrea, science kits and reference books were distributed to 152,000 girls and boys in 200 middle schools and 100 elementary schools.

In the Central African Republic, 445,936 reading and mathematics books were distributed to 222,968 girls and boys.

UNICEF Pakistan played a central role as coordinating agency for GPE and in expanding GPE engagement in additional provinces. Funding proposals by Sindh and Punjab provinces to the GPE for sector analysis and education sector planning were developed and approved. In South Sudan, a national system strengthening programme supported the development of materials to improve curricula on literacy and numeracy, helped improve school leadership and improved inspection and supervision. Literacy and numeracy strategies were developed, and literacy and numeracy assessments conducted in five national languages. Literacy and numeracy kits were prepared in these languages as well as English and are being used in
2,611 schools. Training was provided to 30 master trainers (although only 3 of them are women), with 980 early grade teachers trained in 2017.

**Education Cannot Wait**

UNICEF engages with Education Cannot Wait as a partner at the global and country levels, including serving as interim host of the Education Cannot Wait fund and secretariat. Since its launch at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, the fund has exceeded its first year’s funding target, raising US$170 million, providing funds in contexts where crises are the most severe, needs are the largest, and funding and coping capacity are limited. UNICEF played a critical role in the first year of operations and technical support by serving as the interim secretariat and co-directing with GPE and the office of the UN Special Envoy for Global Education. Additionally, UNICEF and DFID jointly led a design and results working group that oversaw consultations and technical work that culminated in the operational design, theory of change and strategic results framework for Education Cannot Wait. UNICEF established a Funds Support Office and served on recruitment teams for the permanent secretariat.

In 2017, the fund invested in four initial countries and a partnership for global goods (a collaboration between the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Education Cluster, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies and UNHCR). UNICEF led coordination of initial investment work in Chad, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ethiopia and Yemen as well as in some of the nine countries that received First Response funds (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Madagascar, Nepal, Peru, Somalia, Uganda and Ukraine). These investments will benefit 3.7 million children, half of them girls. UNICEF provided a diverse range of support to Education Cannot Wait investments such as facilitating missions, providing in-country coordination and supporting governments on calls for proposals. As part of consortia and as a direct funds recipient, UNICEF received US$65.1 million from Education Cannot Wait through its Initial Investments and First Response modalities.

In Yemen, already one of the poorest countries in the Middle East, the ongoing conflict has exacerbated a complex and protracted crisis. The education sector has been directly affected by the situation with the closure of 21 per cent of schools. Through the Yemen grant, UNICEF is working to ensure the continuity of education and mitigate the impact of the conflict for 2.5 million children. The programme was agreed by the Ministry of Education, Yemen’s Education in Emergencies Cluster and the Local Education Group.
After escalations near the ‘contact line’ and the increased shelling of critical infrastructure, including schools, Ukraine was selected for an Education Cannot Wait First Response grant. UNICEF and Save the Children jointly lead the cluster and facilitated a proposal on behalf of the education sector. Funds supported capacity-building to better protect schools and life skills training for over 40,000 students, and resulted in education in emergencies becoming a subsector of the Coordinating Council for International Support of Education Reforms, a group newly formed by the government to coordinate all international assistance to the education sector.

With Education Cannot Wait First Response Funding in Madagascar, UNICEF and UNESCO are supporting the government’s disaster response efforts to category 4 Tropical Cyclone Enawo, which destroyed more than 3,900 classrooms. The reinforcement and replenishment of critical supplies will ensure continued access to education for 50,000 children and youth. This is in line with the new Education Sector Plan, 2018–2021, which has increased attention to disaster risk reduction. UNICEF is working with subnational education offices to prioritize schools and provide direct cash transfers to the most affected schools.

In Chad, multiple crises in neighbouring countries (the Central African Republic, Nigeria and Sudan) have brought an influx of refugees to the already strained Chadian education system. The Education Cannot Wait grant is ensuring sustainable, quality, basic education that is equitable and inclusive for 325,466 children and youth from refugee and host communities. This includes support to over 2,500 teachers. The programme was developed jointly by humanitarian and development partners and agreed by the Ministry of Education and education sector partners. It places an emphasis on strengthening community capacities in crisis-affected areas.

In Ethiopia, host to the second largest refugee population in Africa, the fund portfolio has a focus on addressing gender and equity dimensions for refugee children through the integration of host and refugee data and information management, and the analysis of disaggregated data – such as by sex and location – to determine areas requiring greater support. The building of gender-sensitive WASH infrastructures and the inclusion of women in capacity-building activities promotes the increased participation of girls in education. A challenge which remains to be addressed is the difficulty of recruiting female teachers due to the lower levels of education among female refugees compared to their male counterparts.

**Educate a Child**

UNICEF’s partnership with EAC, an initiative of the Education Above All Foundation in Qatar, targets out-of-school children. The partnership is providing funding to 9 countries (Chad, Comoros, DRC, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen) with a total of 10 million children of primary school age who do not have access to schooling, pledging to help at least 3.1 million of these children receive a good-quality primary education.

In 2017, EAC began a new agreement with Syria that aims to reach 95,000 out-of-school children through a pledged commitment of US$10 million. In Kenya in 2017, 92,772 previously out-of-school children were enrolled in EAC-supported schools, and 165 classrooms were refurbished. In Yemen, 42,203 previously out-of-school children were given access to education through formal schools and temporary learning spaces, non-formal education programmes and community-based classes. In Nigeria, under the EAC-funded project, a cash transfer programme is being extended to two new states, Kebbi and Zamfara, where 13,797 boys and girls have been registered.
Save the Children International

The Education Cluster continues to be the only inter-agency standing committee cluster which is led jointly by a United Nations agency and an NGO. At the country level, even where clusters are not active, UNICEF and Save the Children often jointly lead education-in-emergencies working groups to bolster national coordination efforts. These efforts include leading the call for proposals in Afghanistan and managing appeals in Ukraine, as well as joint investments in training for both programmatic response and cluster coordination.

Another key area of partnership is early learning. In 2017, UNICEF and Save the Children partnered during a regional ‘strategic moment of reflection’ on early learning in the West and Central Africa region. Save the Children presented and built capacity on its signature product for preschool education, the Emergent Literacy and Math toolkit. The aim is to support the development of foundational, early literacy and mathematics skills among 3–6-year-olds both inside and outside early childhood development centres. Initial collaboration in selected countries is focusing on strengthening the national pre-primary curriculum and teacher training and improving early literacy and mathematics skills using play-based, child-centred pedagogy. UNICEF’s Education team and Save the Children are planning joint advocacy efforts around pre-primary education, such as building the investment case for high-quality early learning programmes for ministries of education.

International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity

The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (Education Commission) proposed the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) to multiply the impact of donor funds and fill education funding gaps, complementing the efforts of the Education Cannot Wait fund and GPE. It has been endorsed by more than 30 international organizations and over 145,000 individuals around the world, as well as the United Nations Secretary-General. The Group of 20 (G20) Leaders’ Declaration acknowledged the recommendation to establish the IFFEd and agreed to take it forward under the Argentinian G20 presidency. UNICEF supports the creation of the IFFEd but has stressed the need to ensure complementarity with existing financing mechanisms, including those managed by Education Cannot Wait and GPE.

The Pioneer Country Initiative, launched in November 2016, aims to help countries turn the Learning Generation recommendations into action. Commissioners, including UNICEF’s Executive Director, are leading the charge to inspire Heads of State and Government and ministers of education and finance to implement reforms, increase domestic investment in education and enhance the delivery of high-quality educational services. An initial group of pioneer countries, including Ethiopia, Ghana, Tunisia and Uganda, has demonstrated strong readiness and interest in moving forward. At the centre of the Pioneer Country Initiative is a ‘delivery approach’ with a focus on delivering better and faster education results. This approach emphasizes performance, and encourages countries to prioritize education, execute reform and investment plans and enhance accountability. The delivery approach walks countries through the work of developing implementation plans to achieve education results as quickly and efficiently as possible. The success of this approach hinges on strong partnerships with civil society. UNICEF supports the Pioneer Country Initiative, encouraging
it to look at current education sector plans and GPE processes to build on, rather than duplicate or run a parallel delivery approach in education.

In the coming year, the Commission will continue to advance IFFEd and emphasize the urgent need for more effective investment through the Pioneer Country Initiative. Activities regarding international finance will focus on increasing financing for Education Cannot Wait and supporting GPE’s replenishment.

**Advocacy for education**

UNICEF is a leading voice for and with children, consistently reaching 1 billion people around the world with powerful messages and engaging over 60 million people to take action for children.

UNICEF appointed its youngest Goodwill Ambassador, Muzoon Almellehan, a 19-year-old Syrian education activist and refugee who has worked with UNICEF since her time in the refugee camp in Za’atari, Jordan. At the G20 Summit, Muzoon met privately with world leaders, including the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, the Norwegian Prime Minister, Erna Solberg, and the Dutch Prime Minister, Mark Rutte, to discuss education.

During the United Nations General Assembly, UNICEF published a report entitled *Education Uprooted*, providing essential data and information on educational challenges faced by nearly 50 million uprooted children around the world. The organization also held a public demonstration with Muzoon, where 27 empty school buses drove through New York City, representing the 27 million children who are out of school in conflict zones. To accompany the demonstration, #ChildrenUprooted billboards were placed in 8 highly-frequented locations across Manhattan, where it was viewed tens of millions of times. Education Uprooted posts on Facebook and Instagram were among UNICEF’s 5 most engaging social media posts, potentially reaching 7 million people.
Summary and going forward

During the implementation of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014–2017, significant progress was made on the indicators related to system strengthening and partnerships. Thanks to UNICEF support, the proportion of countries with functional SMCs increased, and there was also significant progress on the indicators related to EMIS. UNICEF has supported improvements in education sector analysis and plans, data systems, governance and accountability, including social accountability. It has also set up, maintained and strengthened key partnerships, such as those with GPE, Education Cannot Wait and EAC, at all levels. The organization managed 11 education sector plan implementation grants provided by GPE, equivalent to 24 per cent of the grants that were active in 2017.

UNICEF will further increase its support in this area, since system strengthening is a guiding principle of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. It will continue to contribute to global and regional public goods and partnerships and pursue its advocacy work to increase the number of countries that allocate at least 20 per cent of their budgets to education. It will also prioritize advocacy and technical support for the more equitable allocation of resources in the sector.

UNICEF will continue to support education sector analysis and planning. At the regional and global levels, it will work with its partners to finalize new chapters for guidelines on education sector analysis on: i) risk and conflict analysis; ii) inclusive education, covering children with disabilities; iii) political economy and alignment of stakeholders; and iv) institutional analysis. UNICEF is also committed at the country level to support ministries of education and local education groups, including by managing GPE grants devoted to sector analysis and planning processes.

UNICEF will prioritize the enhancement of social accountability around three axes of intervention: (1) advocacy for enhanced community participation within legal frameworks; (2) improvement of government data systems in terms of both the quality and availability of data; and (3) training and support for the use of comparative data at the school level. This support will be provided with enhanced multisectoral collaboration – for example, with Communication for Development (C4D) and with key external partners such as the Hewlett Foundation.
Cross-cutting areas

In the remote villages and towns of many developing countries, the local school is the only branch of government that many families encounter regularly. It will be the site for vaccination campaigns and community gatherings. School teachers will often be called on to play a wide range of roles, from counsellor to the arbiter of local disputes. The school is often a link with the external world, and the source, however imperfect, for models of governance and democracy. Through its investments in the education sector, by increasingly targeting its programmes to the school and classroom levels, and by its focus on the most hard-to-reach children, UNICEF builds cross-sectoral and cross-cutting links that can improve a wide range of results for all children. These include learning results, but also the development of citizenship skills, good health and nutrition, and sanitation. UNICEF’s education coordination role at the country level further reinforces the priority given to these cross-cutting areas.

In return, a number of cross-cutting areas support the work of education, including gender, humanitarian assistance, C4D, early childhood development, adolescent development and disability. As can be seen throughout this report, cross-cutting areas are integrated into education programming. This section further highlights examples of UNICEF’s work on human rights, C4D and disability, to illustrate how education programming can advance the mainstreaming of these critical issues in programming.

Human rights

As part of the United Nations system, and also as part of its commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF views human rights norms and standards as the primary frame of reference for everything it does. Human rights and child rights principles guide the organization’s work in all sectors – and at each stage of the process – encompassing access to education, educational quality and the environments in which education is provided.

As a part of their strategic collaboration, UNICEF and the European Union developed the Child Rights Toolkit: Integrating child rights in development cooperation. This toolkit aims to strengthen the capacity of development partners, European Commission staff, bilateral donors and other development actors to integrate a child rights approach, including the right to a good education, throughout development programming, budgeting and policy- and law-making. By providing practical guidance on how to consistently focus on children, and their right to education, the toolkit aims to ensure that children’s rights are applied across all development programming.

Communication for Development

UNICEF’s C4D activities seek to help children survive and thrive by addressing behavioural and sociocultural challenges. The aim is to increase the demand for services, to weaken the pull of harmful social norms and to empower communities and young people, particularly the most marginalized, to be a part of programme design and to hold duty bearers accountable for the delivery of quality services. C4D strategies can also encourage gender equality and discourage gender-based violence at school, while building positive expectations around gender within society.

School-aged children in Jordan face many challenges simply to stay in school. This is especially true for the more than 350,000 refugee children in the country. Through the concerted efforts of UNICEF and 21 civil society partners, the Learning for All (L4A) campaign reached 56,119 children, Iraqi and Sudanese refugee children (47 per cent girls), as well as marginalized Jordanian minority groups, across all governorates. Around half of these children were out of school. Volunteers disseminated messages on the importance of
enrolling and staying in school to 90,515 individuals. From September to November 2017, campaign partners followed up with each child they registered.

Radio has been a potent tool for changing perceptions of the importance of girls’ education and early childhood development. In Nigeria, 60 radio listener clubs were formed to reinforce messages on girls’ education and other social issues, as part of a strategy to boost school enrolment, particularly in the humanitarian setting of Borno State. In Timor-Leste, UNICEF partnered with the government to support the broadcast of a 48-segment radio drama on parenting and a 28-episode talk show on ‘Building Better Brains: New Frontiers in Early Childhood Development’. The radio programmes were aired on national and community radio stations and were complemented by drama performances by youth groups.

Ensuring that education starts early with parental involvement is also crucial to children’s well-being. Study findings in the province of Ratanakiri, Cambodia pointed to the need to boost engagement among parents and caregivers in their children’s education. Strengthened communication and parenting education initiatives promoting targeted caregiver practices led to increases in three targeted districts in timely birth registration (from 42 per cent in 2016 to 56 per cent in 2017) and in the enrolment of 3–5-year-olds in early childhood education (from 37 per cent in 2016 to 45 per cent in 2017). The results of this effort focus on the practices and behaviours of parents and caregivers for integrated early childhood development, as well as support for subnational administrators.

**Children with disabilities**

UNICEF’s work to improve education opportunities for children with disabilities focuses on strengthening the availability of data and analysis, increasing awareness and dialogue around inclusive education, and reinforcing the capacity of schools to accommodate needs.

UNICEF supported the translation of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health into Macedonian, which should improve the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schooling. Following a conference on moving children with disabilities out of segregated institutions into mainstream schools, the government committed to end new institutional admissions to segregated institutions for children under 3 by 2020. This complements ongoing efforts to ensure that all children receive the services they need in mainstream classrooms, and that their families receive ongoing support.
Illustrative results of cross-cutting work

- UNICEF supported an inclusive WASH facility, benefitting children with disabilities to attend school and complete their education in Bhutan. The facility, first of its kind, will serve as a pilot.
- The Adolescent Working Group in UNICEF China undertook an exercise to map adolescent programming across Education, Child Protection, Health Nutrition and WASH. This was used to draft an adolescent strategy which will be finalized in 2018.
- In Bangladesh, UNICEF partnered with a state-owned radio station to coordinate weekly Adolescent radio listener clubs specifically addressing issues of girls’ education.
- In Afghanistan, school management were trained to mobilize communities, hold a dialogue about the social context and develop plans to increase girls’ enrolment, attendance and completion of school.
- For the first time, the Education section was directly engaged in a cholera response. Puppets were used to raise awareness among school children of the importance of good hygiene in cholera prevention in Burundi.
- To promote opportunities for adolescents in Peru, UNICEF has strengthened inter-sectoral spaces at regional and national levels to improve secondary education services.
- In Cote D’Ivoire, interlinking education, health and nutrition, UNICEF supported the launch of a campaign focusing on the 1st 1000 days of a child’s life.
- In Turkey, UNICEF plays an important role in bringing different actors together to address children’s rights. At least once a year, multiple actors discuss child rights issues like expansion of early childhood education and inclusive education for children with disabilities.
- In Georgia, UNICEF supported the development of ‘child rights monitoring’ tools to strengthen knowledge management and capacity of different sectors (social protection, education, health and child protection)
- UNICEF and partners rolled out an Adolescent Girls toolkit in Iraq developed to increase girls’ participation in adolescent development.
FUTURE WORKPLAN

Decades of experience working in education, including lessons learned during the current UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014–2017, have taught the organization and its partners that equitable access to education, the improved quality of teaching and learning outcomes and increased access to skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability are necessary to ensure that all children have access to inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities.

The new UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, Goal Area 2, ‘Every Child Learns’, aims to ensure that all children, particularly the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are offered inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities. It supports the achievement of multiple SDGs, in particular Goals 4 and 5. A new long-term education strategy, currently under development, will continue UNICEF’s focus on learning for the most disadvantaged.

The goals for education programmes supported by UNICEF include providing by 2021:

- early learning, primary and secondary school opportunities for 60 million out-of-school children;
- learning materials for 93 million boys and girls; and
- opportunities for 12.5 million girls and boys to develop skills that lead to learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employment.

These goals also include UNICEF’s support to strengthen education systems so that:

- 36 per cent of countries have effective education systems for learning outcomes, including early learning; and
- 26 per cent of countries have an equitable education system for access, including children with disabilities.

UNICEF education work (staff and programmes) receives important supplemental support through education global thematic funds. The combination of a possible reduction in the 2018 tranche of education global thematic funds and a growing agenda poses challenges to the achievement of education targets, which include: i) increasing and sustaining access to education from early childhood to adolescence; ii) improving learning outcomes; and iii) increasing access to skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability.

Increase and sustain gender-equitable access to quality education for girls and boys from early childhood to adolescence, including children with disabilities, and minorities.
Globally, 263 million children and adolescents are out of school. Fifteen million girls and 10 million boys of primary school age are unlikely to ever have the opportunity to enter primary school. In sub-Saharan Africa, the school-age population in 2030 is projected to be more than double the number of children currently enrolled. Average statistics mask deep inequities within countries. In 35 crisis-affected countries, the education of 75 million children is being disrupted. The number of out-of-school children has stagnated in the past few years, partly due to limited progress in reaching the poorest and other vulnerable groups, including displaced children, children with disabilities, children from rural or remote areas and minority groups.

UNICEF will continue its efforts to ensure that all children have equal opportunities in education. UNICEF will focus on strengthening education systems through: (1) improved gender-responsive learning environments; (2) the provision of inclusive education for children with disabilities; (3) the development, budgeting and implementation of education sector plans and strategies addressing equity issues; (4) emergency preparedness and resilience; and (5) the strengthening of EMIS to provide disaggregated data and their transparent use, including to provide information to beneficiaries. As per the Gender Action Plan, UNICEF will accelerate progress to support adolescent girls to transition to and complete secondary school, delivering on the organization’s commitment to gender equality in education.

UNICEF engages in direct service delivery in humanitarian situations, least developed countries and fragile contexts, hence responding to the most pressing needs while also helping governments make long-term improvements to their education systems. UNICEF will call for new thinking to operationalize ‘leave no one behind’ by emphasizing innovation and new partnerships such as the partnership with the Akelius Foundation to support language learning in humanitarian and multilingual contexts.

**Improve gender-equitable learning outcomes for girls and boys**

Access to education does not guarantee that a child learns. 250 million children fail to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills. The poorest children are eight times more likely to miss out on pre-primary education, and the majority of low-income countries allocate less than 2 per cent of education budgets to pre-primary education.

Evidence points to the importance of preschool education, language of instruction, teachers and teaching, school leadership, accountability (including community-led monitoring) and the provision of materials. Analysis also stresses the importance of strong and coherent education systems, which incentivize and support learning (rather than just enrolment) as a critical factor. Drawing on recent evidence, and the need to prioritize the most marginalized children, UNICEF priorities include: i) gender-responsive teaching and learning; ii) increased quality early learning and pre-primary education opportunities; iii) strengthened learning assessment systems; iv) mother tongue and multilingual education; v) quality teaching, including, but not limited to, early grade literacy and numeracy; and vi) community participation. It also delivers a variety of direct services, including essential materials and training in humanitarian situations.

As set out in the Gender Action Plan, UNICEF will continue to integrate gender across our programmes, including addressing gender inequalities in the teacher workforce. In addition, a number of health and nutrition interventions contribute to better learning, including school feeding, micronutrient supplementation and food fortification, and the prevention and control of anaemia and malaria, which point to the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation.
Increase access for girls and boys to the skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability

At the current rate of progress, by 2030, more than half the world’s 2 billion children will be failing to achieve basic skills at the secondary level. Children and adolescents are not developing the skills needed for life and work. Fast-paced social and economic change means that it is not known exactly what skills children will need in the future world of work and to be constructive citizens. It is known that children will need to be well equipped to face uncertainty and to work collaboratively with others to solve problems. UNICEF is supporting children and adolescents to develop relevant learning and skills across the life course, from early childhood onwards.

Over 156 million young workers are living in poverty, and 3 out of every 4 young people not in education, training or employment are female. UNICEF will tackle gender inequality in education and labour market aspirations. This includes support to build more gender-equitable relationships, postpone marriage and childbearing, and seek help for violence when it occurs. UNICEF will strengthen education systems that develop skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, from early childhood onwards. In humanitarian, least developed and fragile contexts, the organization will target skills development opportunities at the most marginalized children and adolescents. Emphasis will be on: i) mainstreaming skills development within the national education and training system; ii) ensuring the responsiveness of the education/training system to the demands of the labour market; and iii) gender-equitable skills development. Across these outputs, UNICEF will work with governments, the private sector and other partners to deliver results at scale.

Service delivery

UNICEF provides many services directly, including safe spaces for children and adolescents (including WASH services) in the context of emergencies, essential learning materials, teacher training and direct support to communities to help children and adolescents access education and learn. Supplies and large-scale training programmes are also provided for formal or non-formal education and early learning, mainly in the least developed countries, fragile countries and humanitarian situations, to ensure the continuation of children’s education and the sustainability of approaches.

System strengthening

By strengthening education systems at all levels, UNICEF helps governments provide greater access for the most vulnerable children, making the education system safer, more resilient, more gender responsive and inclusive, and better able to support learning and essential skills. UNICEF will use its presence in the field, including at the community level, to enhance social accountability through multisectoral collaboration – for example, through C4D and with key external partners such as the Hewlett Foundation.

Knowledge, data and evidence

Key dimensions of UNICEF’s work are to support access, learning and skills development. This work is informed by existing global evidence of what works to ensure that every child learns. However, evidence needs to be contextualized, as what works in one context does not always work (or work in the same way) in another; hence UNICEF also supports the development of contextualized evidence through support to data systems and education sector and system analysis, including political economy and gender analysis.
UNICEF will continue to support data improvement and evidence-building for effective and equitable programming by supporting the production of disaggregated data, including the strengthening of inclusive EMIS and the production and implementation of new household survey modules. It will contribute to global and regional knowledge by developing knowledge products such as analytical reports, disaggregated data that identify disadvantaged children, evaluations, methodological guidance and tools.

**Global partnerships**

Strategic partnerships are a key means of operationalizing UNICEF’s ‘how’ strategies, managing risks and assumptions in the theory of change, and building coalitions around its vision for change. At the global and regional levels, UNICEF will continue co-chairing and contributing to international education initiatives and partnerships, such as GPE, UNGEI, Education Cannot Wait, EAC, Save the Children International, the Education Commission, the Global Education Cluster and other key partnerships. The organization will promote and support South–South and triangular cooperation and sharing and continue collaborating with regional intergovernmental bodies, NGOs and others to create the conditions for improved learning and the achievement of SDG 4.

With the establishment of the new Young People’s Agenda, UNICEF is focused on finding new ways to ensure that every young person is in school, learning, training or employment by 2030 – with a particular focus on those in the greatest danger of being left behind, including girls, the poorest, those with disabilities, young people on the move and those affected by conflict and natural disasters. Through the Agenda, we will bring together a wide range of partners – including governments, UN agencies, the private sector, academia, international and civil society organizations and young people – to co-create, fund and scale-up innovative solutions to expand opportunity for young people. Young people will help lead this new partnership, informing, advising and helping implement at every step of the way.
EXPRESSION OF THANKS

UNICEF expresses its deepest appreciation to all resource partners who contributed to the work on education for children around the world in 2017.

UNICEF would like to extend particular thanks to partners who provided thematic funding. It is because of thematic funding that the organization has been able to provide technical, operational and programming support to countries in all regions, both for work to improve education systems and the more targeted and strategic interventions that help deliver quality services to marginalized children and communities. It reflects the trust that resource partners have in the capacity and ability of UNICEF to deliver quality support under all circumstances and has made possible the results described in this report. UNICEF will continue to explore new ways of enhancing visibility for partners who provide global level thematic funding and looks forward to brainstorming with the partners themselves how to make a new approach fit for purpose.

Special thanks go to the Government of Norway for its partnership and consistent and generous contributions to achieve results in education.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C4D</td>
<td>Communication for Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAC</td>
<td>Educate a Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO</td>
<td>Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELDS</td>
<td>early learning and development standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>education management information system</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPE</td>
<td>Global Partnership for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFFEd</td>
<td>International Finance Facility for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OOSCI</td>
<td>Out of School Children’s Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>parent–teacher association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMC</td>
<td>school management committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRGBV</td>
<td>school-related gender-based violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>science, technology, engineering and mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNGEI</td>
<td>United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNRWA</td>
<td>United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>water, sanitation and hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 1: DATA COMPANION

Please see Data Companion of the Executive Director’s Annual Report.
ANNEX 2: FINANCIAL REPORT*  

Total revenue to UNICEF increased in 2017 by almost 27 per cent over 2016 to US$6,577. Earmarked funds to specific programmes (other resources) grew by 33 per cent, reaching an all-time high of US$5,153 million. This was largely due to the cooperation agreement signed with the World Bank Group – International Development Association (IDA) for Yemen, and the revision of UNICEF’s accounting policy, which recognizes revenue at the date that an agreement is signed. Regular resources increased in 2017, by eight per cent, going from US$1,317 million to US$1,424 million. However, this source of funding decreased as a proportion of total revenue to UNICEF to 22 per cent, down from 25 per cent in 2016.

![Revenue by funding type](chart)

*Due to a change in UNICEF’s revenue recognition policy, revenue from 2014 onwards has been restated here. Henceforth, revenue refers to the total amount committed in the year the agreement was signed plus any adjustments; while contributions refers to disbursements received in a particular year, inclusive of adjustments.

Contributions from ‘other resources’ rose 19 per cent over 2016, while contributions to the nine thematic funding pools grew more conservatively, by 16 per cent, from US$312 million to US$363 million. Thematic funding has declined as a percentage of all other resources to just eight per cent, from a high of 21 per cent in 2010. Thematic funding remains a critical source of revenue for UNICEF programme delivery.

Regular resources (RR): Un-earmarked funds that is foundational to deliver results across the strategic plan.  
Other resources (OR): Earmarked funds for programmes; supplementary to RR and made for a specific purpose, such as an emergency response or a specific programme in a country/region.  
Other resources – regular (ORR): Funds for specific, nonemergency programme purposes and strategic priorities.  
Other resources – emergency (ORE): Earmarked funds for specific humanitarian action and post-crisis recovery activities.

*All funding data as of 1 April 2018, pending audit and certification.
FIGURE A2
All ‘other resources’ contributions: Share of thematic funding

FIGURE A3
Education other resources regular contributions

*Regular resources are not included since they are not linked to any one outcome or cross-cutting area at the time of contribution by a partner.*
In 2017, partners contributed US$414 million in other resources for education, a six per cent increase from the previous year. The top five resource partners to UNICEF education in 2017 were the European Commission, Norway, the Global Partnership for Education, the United Kingdom and Germany. The largest contributions were received from the European Commission for cross-sectoral programming on education and protection for vulnerable Syrian and host community school-aged children in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey (see ‘Programme Area 4’ for further details), global Thematic Funding from Norway (see the Thematic funding for education on page 15 for more details), and from the Global Partnership for Education for programme implementation in Yemen (see ‘Programme Area 5’ for further details).

### TABLE A1
**Top 20 resource partners to education by contribution, 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Resource partner</th>
<th>Total (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>European Commission*</td>
<td>164,685,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>76,840,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Global Partnership for Education</td>
<td>52,286,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>41,879,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Germany*</td>
<td>34,589,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>UNICEF Qatar</td>
<td>32,605,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>23,142,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Education Cannot Wait Fund</td>
<td>22,325,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Canada*</td>
<td>21,090,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Japan*</td>
<td>14,017,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>13,979,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>U.S. Fund for UNICEF</td>
<td>10,854,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Swedish Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>9,397,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Netherlands*</td>
<td>8,934,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>7,675,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>German Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>7,511,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Korean Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>4,852,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>4,231,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Swiss Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>4,009,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>4,002,143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes cross-sectoral grants SC180009, SC150762, SC170148 and SC170151 (Education and Child Protection), SC170594 (Education and WASH), SC170529 (Education, Child Protection, WASH and Health) and
TABLE A2
Top 10 contributions to education, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Resource Partner</th>
<th>Grant description</th>
<th>Total (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>European Commission*</td>
<td>MADAD III, MENA, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Yemen</td>
<td>113,625,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Education, Global Thematic Funding</td>
<td>64,041,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Global Partnership for Education</td>
<td>Program Implementation Grant, Yemen</td>
<td>22,680,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Girls’ Education Project (Phase III), Nigeria</td>
<td>17,629,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Education Pooled Fund (ETF-Education Transition Fund), Zimbabwe</td>
<td>13,141,148</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>European Commission*</td>
<td>Education and Child Protection, Egypt</td>
<td>12,435,326</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Contribution to Avoiding a Lost Generation - EDF III (Phase II), Zimbabwe</td>
<td>11,848,341</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Germany*</td>
<td>Education and WASH interventions for Children Impacted by the Conflict, Iraq</td>
<td>11,614,402</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Thematic Funding for Education in Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali</td>
<td>10,509,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Global Partnership for Education Program, South Sudan</td>
<td>9,926,493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cross-sectoral grants SC180009 and SC150762 (Education and Child Protection), and SC170594 (Education and WASH).

Thematic resources act as an ideal complement to regular resources. They are allocated on a needs basis, and allow for long-term planning and sustainability of programmes. With a funding pool for each of the strategic plan outcome areas as well as humanitarian action and gender equality, resource partners can contribute thematic funding at the global, regional or country level. Overall, these are the second-most efficient and effective contributions, and have been invaluable for maintaining critical education programmes, particularly in conflict-affected contexts.

Overall contributions to the Thematic Funding pools increased from US$312 million in 2016 to US$363 million in 2017. The largest public-sector contributors to the Thematic Funding pools in 2017 were Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark, while the largest private sector contributions were facilitated by the German Committee for UNICEF and the U.S. Fund for UNICEF. A complete financial statement of Thematic Funding contributions and expenditures, has been annexed to this report. For more information on Thematic Funding and how it works, please visit: <https://www.unicef.org/publicpartnerships/66662_66851.html>.
Thematic funding contributions for education totalled US$87 million in 2017, a two per cent decrease from the US$88 million received in 2016. Over 90 per cent came from government partners. Norway was the largest thematic resource partner, providing 74 per cent of all thematic contributions received. Norway and Luxembourg provided their thematic funding entirely at the global level, which provides the greatest amount of flexibility. Denmark provided thematic funding earmarked to Burkina Faso, Iraq, Mali and Niger. Georgia contributed thematic funding for the first time, earmarking its contribution to Madagascar.

UNICEF is seeking to broaden and diversify its funding base, including thematic contributions, and encourages all partners to use the most flexible modalities possible. Although the number of partners and offices contributing thematic funding to education decreased from 49 in 2016 to 28 in 2017, the government of Denmark became a thematic funding partner, providing country level flexible funding to programmes.

Sizeable thematic contributions were received from the Korean Committee for UNICEF at the global level, as well as for country programmes in Vietnam, Jordan and Laos. The National Committee has been a reliable supporter of the programme, throughout the period of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014–2017. The Norwegian Committee for UNICEF also contributed a portion of thematic funding at the global level, in addition to Rwanda and Malawi. The Swiss Committee for UNICEF contributed earmarked thematic funding to programmes in Brazil, India and Rwanda.
**TABLE A3**

**Thematic Funding contributions by resource partner to education, 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource partner type</th>
<th>Resource partner</th>
<th>Total (US$)</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governments</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>64,041,746</td>
<td>73.95</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>13,979,899</td>
<td>16.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>480,256</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Committees</td>
<td>Korean Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Norwegian Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>764,222</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swiss Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>761,210</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dutch Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>746,318</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Danish Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>677,680</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finnish Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>610,360</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>509,562</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Fund for UNICEF</td>
<td>342,317</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>German Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>260,589</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>258,120</td>
<td>0.30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>213,447</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swedish Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canadian Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>164,817</td>
<td>0.18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Andorran Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>88,863</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Czech Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>71,862</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovak Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>71,742</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Luxembourg Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>49,535</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portuguese Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>35,607</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japan Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>33,604</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Zealand Committee for UNICEF</td>
<td>23,294</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Offices</td>
<td>UNICEF Croatia</td>
<td>72,754</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNICEF Belarus</td>
<td>51,927</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNICEF Ukraine</td>
<td>49,500</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNICEF India</td>
<td>18,744</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td><strong>86,602,975</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Global Thematic Funds remain the most flexible source of funding to UNICEF after regular resources. The allocation and expenditure of all Thematic Funding contributions can be monitored on UNICEF’s transparency portal open.unicef.org. The results achieved with these funds in support of Executive Board approved targets and indicators at the country,
regional and global level are consolidated and reported in the various Annual Results Reports. Specific reporting for country and regional Thematic Funding contributions is provided separately for partners giving at those levels.

FIGURE A6
Education thematic funding contributions at country, regional and global levels

The distribution of the Global Thematic Funds for education across the different regions is based on an equity index, where the level of allocation to a specific region increases with the number of children and youth in the region, the fragility and economic inequality of the region, and if the region is lagging behind in education indicators. The indicators used in the formula of the equity index are: (1) pre-primary gross enrolment rate, (2) primary education out-of-school rate, (3) primary completion rate, (4) secondary education gender parity index, (5) school age population, (6) fragility index indicator (proxy based on the amount of Consolidated Appeals in the region during the last several years), and (7) economic inequality (based on World Bank GINI index). These indicators are consistent with the SP Results Framework wherever possible. The amounts allocated to Country Offices within each region is determined at regional level to prioritize key thematic focus areas in the current and upcoming strategic plans, specifically equitable access to education and improving learning outcomes.
Note: Expenses are higher than the contributions received because expenses are comprised of total allotments from regular resources and other resource (including balances carried over from prior years) to the outcome areas, while contributions reflect only funds received from 2016 to the same.

Total education expenses in 2017 were US$1.203 billion. This represents a 10 per cent increase from 2016 and an increase of over 45 per cent from 2014 levels. In 2017, spending on education accounted for 22 per cent of UNICEF’s total expenses, second after Health at 25 per cent (see Figure A7). This was similar to education’s share for the previous year but up from 20 per cent in 2014.

However, the nature of spending in education has shifted significantly, continuing a pattern observed over the past 4 years. In particular, spending from emergency funds (ORE) has increased dramatically, more than doubling as a share of education spending between 2014 and 2017 (see Figure A8), moving from 22 per cent to over 45 per cent. In 2017, spending from this fund type amounted to US$542 million. This increase reflects the ongoing education needs of children in humanitarian situations, and the growing awareness of the importance of ensuring access to a good education in emergencies. Not surprisingly, the countries with the largest education expenses in 2017 were among those affected by emergencies and humanitarian crises. The Syrian crisis had an impact on many of the countries with the highest education spending including Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Beyond the Syrian crisis, other countries with high levels of expenses included South Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see Table A4). Spending from emergency funds was the highest education spending category in 2017, contrasting with previous years when the highest spending for education programmes came from the ‘other resources – regular’ category. There is a risk that growing humanitarian needs could divert resources from vulnerable populations in more stable, but often fragile, contexts.
FIGURE A7
Total expenses by strategic plan outcome area, 2017

FIGURE A8
Education expenses trend
In 2017, the largest expenses for education were in MENA, followed by Eastern and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa (see Figure A9). These regions together account for roughly 70 per cent of all UNICEF expenses for education. These were also the top three regions for expenses in 2014, according for roughly 64 per cent of all UNICEF expenses or education, although at that time, MENA had the lowest expenditures of the three regions.
Education in emergencies accounted for 38 per cent of expenses in the sector in 2017 (see Figure A10), contrasting with 27 per cent in 2014. Twenty-six per cent of education spending was for learning and child friendly schools, highlighting UNICEF’s support to strengthen the quality of learning environments, combined with better data on learning outcomes through strengthening of learning assessments. UNICEF invested 16 per cent of total expenditure on education to support partnerships and systems strengthening to develop strong and responsive education systems, use evidence-based education strategies and advocate for the development of capacities to ensure that education commitments are translated into policies and programmes. The expenditure on early learning accounted for 6 per cent of expenses, a decline from 8 per cent in 2014.
In 2017, ‘transfers and grants to counterparts’ was the largest cost category for education spending. The total of US$622 million in 2017 represents an increase of 68 per cent compared with 2014. The steady growth of this cost category each year since 2014 is consistent with UNICEF’s increasing use of partnerships to achieve greater impact, as documented elsewhere in this report. By contrast, direct operating costs and travel costs have remained flat or declined slightly (see Table A5).

TABLE A5
Expenses for education by cost category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost category</th>
<th>Other resources – emergency</th>
<th>Other resources – regular</th>
<th>Regular resources</th>
<th>Total (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contractual services</td>
<td>116,917,256</td>
<td>257,952,789</td>
<td>60,628,952</td>
<td>435,498,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>12,897,000</td>
<td>66,745,869</td>
<td>11,676,307</td>
<td>91,319,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>30,980,590</td>
<td>65,185,310</td>
<td>13,262,093</td>
<td>109,427,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>27,909,625</td>
<td>68,411,854</td>
<td>14,185,696</td>
<td>110,507,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>45,130,041</td>
<td>57,609,755</td>
<td>21,504,856</td>
<td>124,244,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment, vehicles and furniture</td>
<td>3,515,362</td>
<td>3,469,428</td>
<td>6,678,087</td>
<td>13,662,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>796,339</td>
<td>721,925</td>
<td>1,351,620</td>
<td>2,869,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>844,955</td>
<td>848,457</td>
<td>1,882,604</td>
<td>3,576,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>900,598</td>
<td>644,112</td>
<td>1,733,878</td>
<td>3,278,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>973,470</td>
<td>1,254,935</td>
<td>1,709,985</td>
<td>3,938,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General operating + other direct costs</td>
<td>45,727,070</td>
<td>74,631,090</td>
<td>72,442,476</td>
<td>192,800,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>10,270,401</td>
<td>19,584,481</td>
<td>17,261,940</td>
<td>47,116,821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>12,119,800</td>
<td>17,373,009</td>
<td>18,869,306</td>
<td>48,362,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>15,604,606</td>
<td>13,565,555</td>
<td>19,840,421</td>
<td>49,010,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incremental indirect cost</td>
<td>110,581,164</td>
<td>128,326,373</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>238,907,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>13,988,361</td>
<td>31,270,335</td>
<td>45,258,696</td>
<td>90,517,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>24,825,777</td>
<td>32,187,374</td>
<td>57,013,151</td>
<td>114,026,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>31,460,986</td>
<td>32,526,408</td>
<td>63,987,393</td>
<td>127,974,787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>40,306,041</td>
<td>32,342,256</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>72,648,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and other personnel costs</td>
<td>112,277,891</td>
<td>276,367,056</td>
<td>203,071,284</td>
<td>591,716,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>16,289,831</td>
<td>70,731,607</td>
<td>49,232,349</td>
<td>136,253,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>25,354,828</td>
<td>70,929,011</td>
<td>50,695,275</td>
<td>146,979,115</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>30,422,161</td>
<td>69,328,386</td>
<td>50,905,986</td>
<td>150,656,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>40,211,070</td>
<td>65,378,052</td>
<td>52,237,674</td>
<td>157,826,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies and commodities</td>
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<td>247,217,904</td>
<td>57,424,073</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>48,879,795</td>
<td>48,945,190</td>
<td>9,403,883</td>
<td>107,228,868</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>66,870,224</td>
<td>81,173,300</td>
<td>18,337,288</td>
<td>166,380,812</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>92,726,335</td>
<td>62,208,293</td>
<td>16,044,860</td>
<td>170,979,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>81,485,889</td>
<td>54,891,122</td>
<td>13,638,043</td>
<td>150,015,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers and grants to counterparts</td>
<td>768,503,315</td>
<td>1,014,357,751</td>
<td>180,469,855</td>
<td>1,963,330,921</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>78,122,063</td>
<td>251,751,174</td>
<td>40,470,617</td>
<td>370,343,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>157,554,060</td>
<td>239,415,869</td>
<td>48,203,575</td>
<td>445,173,504</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>218,918,356</td>
<td>260,437,216</td>
<td>46,100,197</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>313,908,837</td>
<td>262,753,492</td>
<td>45,695,466</td>
<td>622,353,795</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<th>Travel</th>
<th>17,777,387</th>
<th>46,099,242</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3,908,623</td>
<td>13,729,621</td>
<td>6,999,654</td>
<td>24,637,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4,396,708</td>
<td>12,249,915</td>
<td>8,120,504</td>
<td>24,767,127</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4,701,014</td>
<td>10,092,825</td>
<td>7,150,509</td>
<td>21,944,348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4,771,041</td>
<td>10,026,882</td>
<td>7,929,366</td>
<td>22,727,289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total** | **1,465,261,688** | **2,048,421,632** | **610,914,760** | **4,124,598,080**

*Due to rounding, the totals may differ slightly from the sum of the columns.

**TABLE A6**

**Total expenses by type of resource**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Other resources – emergency</th>
<th>Other resources – regular</th>
<th>Regular resources</th>
<th>Grand total (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>182,614,274</td>
<td>508,003,766</td>
<td>135,605,237</td>
<td>826,223,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>321,097,543</td>
<td>521,573,717</td>
<td>157,763,280</td>
<td>1,000,434,540</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>419,158,876</td>
<td>521,022,101</td>
<td>154,990,433</td>
<td>1,095,171,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>542,390,995</td>
<td>497,822,049</td>
<td>162,555,810</td>
<td>1,202,768,854</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total** | **1,465,261,688** | **2,048,421,632** | **610,914,760** | **4,124,598,080**

*Due to rounding, the totals may differ slightly from the sum of the columns.*
PHOTO CAPTIONS

P.12 Atila Komaromi was born in spring 1999 with severely damaged limbs. UNICEF in Serbia continuously works to develop inclusive education policies and supports all actors in the education process to realize the right of every child to a quality education. Atila is one of the beneficiaries: today he is 18 years old and is finishing seventh grade in Becej, Serbia.

P.18 Nevia Magno, 4 years old, goes to UNICEF-funded alternative early childhood education centre in her village, Darabay, in the countryside of Timor-Leste. The closest government-funded preschool would be less than 30 minutes' walk away, but it already has 70 students and only one teacher. In the UNICEF-run early childhood education centres, group sizes are much smaller, on average 30 children, and usually there are two voluntary teachers looking after the children.

P.24 Children’s fun activity with Anganwadi teacher at Anganwadi Center-Ist, Cheriyal village, Kandi mandal, Sangareddy district, Telangana state.

P.27 Fatoumata Ouattara, a Mama Yeleen (model mother) trained in early childhood development, watches children during a drawing and colouring session at the Early Childhood Development Center in Baraouéli village, Ségou Region, Mali, February 2018. The Mama Yeleen initiative is promoted and supported by UNICEF and its partners.

P.28 “I love to study science because it is easy for me,” says Palunda Jovin Tabi, aged 14 years, at Jurumini Primary School in Adjumani District in Uganda. He wants to become a doctor so he can help advise people in his community. This school in the local community is right in the middle of the current refugee crisis.

P.34 Students learn with the help of a computer tablet provided by UNICEF at a school in Baigai, northern Cameroon.

P.37 No caption

P.38 Balou, aged 15 years, writes on a blackboard during an informal class at the DIAP-ado (Dispositif Itinérant d’Appui Psychosocial; psychosocial itinerant support mechanism) space in the informal refugee settlement of Garin-Wazam, located along the RN1 road in Diffa Region, the Niger. The DIAP-ado space offers informal education to children aged 15–18 years, as well as teaching basic literacy to those having never been in education. It caters for both displaced and local children.

P.39 Silvina Barreto (centre), is attending preschool at Si-Rui Suco Laubonu, Ermera Municipality, Timor-Leste. “I always like to come to school because here we sing and learn a lot. I want to come every day,” she says

P.45 Happy girls and boys in front of a chalkboard at a local elementary school in Nalaikh district, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

P.47 During a training session for income generation, a woman learns to sew at a Women Development Centre in Markazi camp for Yemeni refugees, Djibouti.

P.50 Students of Sali Primary School in Sali village, Guadalcanal Island, gather to greet UNICEF Pacific Representative Karen Allen and the UNICEF Solomon Islands team, who visited their school to inaugurate new washing facilities, including school toilets. The funds for building the facilities were provided by Live&Learn Solomon Islands in partnership with UNICEF

P.55 Children at the Projapoti Child Learning Centre in Kutupalong makeshift camp, Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.

P.60 No caption

P.61 (Right) Hanaa, 8 years old, who was paralysed by an exploding bomb and lost the use of her legs, sits next to her classmates at a school in east Aleppo city, Syrian Arab Republic. For months after her injury, Hanaa did not want to leave her home, “I was scared and I couldn’t even play with my sisters,” she says.
Then volunteers from a UNICEF-supported child-friendly space in Aleppo brought her to the centre where she can play, sing and draw. Hanaa also dropped out of school for a year, but she has now resumed her education and loves learning to read, to write, and mathematics. Hanaa also attends physiotherapy three times a week and she is happy that she is getting better little by little. Hanaa has two wishes: “My dream is to become a physiotherapist to help children like me. And my big dream is for peace to return to my country.”

A group of children walk to school on the first day of classes since floods disrupted schooling in Shitalpur Bairgania village in Rautahat District, Nepal.

On 7 August 2017 in Iraq, Akram, 6 years old, looks at the destruction in west Mosul. “I don’t know if things will go back to how they were before,” said Akram. As of 11 September 2017, across Iraq, more than 5 million children were in need of assistance as heavy fighting intensified, including in Mosul and Tel-Afar.

Radha Yogi, aged 9 years, engages in a number learning activity at Samudayik Bodhshala Center, Indok Radi, Umren Teshil, Alwar district, Rajasthan, India.

Eduardinho, 12 years old, smiles as he sits at his desk in a classroom at the ADEMO school, which caters for children with disabilities, in Maputo, Mozambique. “I will be a lawyer to defend people in need,” says Eduardinho, who is always smiling and has a great sense of humour. He loves going to school where he has made many friends. But, when an outreach worker came knocking on Eduardinho’s door last year, the picture was quite different: he couldn’t walk, he was still in nappies, and was having a hard time. The outreach workers convinced his family that Eduardinho belonged in a school. Within a year, Eduardinho not only learned to read and spell, but also to stand and, most impressive of all, he is now walking.

Rolando Ramos (aged 18 years), “As the eldest son, I have a responsibility to support my family. My task is collecting wood, feeding the animals; since we are fishermen, I am also helping my father fixing the fish net. I love to study on the beach because it is fresh and calm. Every day after study I go for a dive with a spear gun looking for some fish for a meal. In the future, I want to be a doctor so I can help my family and my community.” (Atauro island, Dili municipality, Timor-Leste.)

Hilaire Sansera, 14 years old, who attends grade CM2 and lives in a Christian neighbourhood, holds up a tablet at a school in Bouar, Central African Republic. Before violence erupted, Hilaire used to live in Bocaranga. As with many other children in Bouar, Hilaire is internally displaced. “That day, I had just woken up, and suddenly gunfire erupted,” she says. “I fled in one direction and my parents fled in another. On the road I met an uncle on my father’s side. He took care of me from Bohong to Bouar. When I got to Bouar, the school year had already started a month and a half before. I had to work hard to catch up but now I am good in arithmetic and generally in maths.”

On 17 September 2017, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Muzoon Almellehan stands for a portrait near a bus in the convoy of 27 empty school buses traveling through the streets of Manhattan to shine a spotlight on the 27 million out-of-school children living in conflict zones. Muzoon Almellehan – who was forced to give up her education as their family fled unspeakable violence in Syria in 2013 – and the convoy came together ahead of the United Nations General Assembly to call on world leaders to prioritize education for every child uprooted by war, violence and poverty.

Children enjoy their break time during a morning session at Srae Tahen primary school in Kratié province, eastern Cambodia.


23 The National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas) is a survey conducted by BPS Statistics Indonesia aimed at producing socio-economic data on the population separated into core data (principal) and modules data (detailed).


26 All these tools and guidance are available on the All in School website: <allinschool.org>, accessed 5 April 2018.


The International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED) is an international reference classification organizing education programmes by levels and fields to make data comparable cross-nationally. In most countries, ISCED 1 refers to primary education, ISCED 2 to lower secondary, ISCED 3 to upper secondary, and ISCED 5–8 to higher education. See: <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-ised-2011-en.pdf>, accessed 5 April 2018.


UNGEI Strategic Directions describes UNGEI’s vision, goals and objectives for 2018–2023. It details mechanisms for measuring progress as UNGEI helps set the international agenda through advocacy, policy dialogue, promoting evidence-based solutions, and sharing good practice for advancing girls’ education and gender equality.


45 Examples of this ‘shift’ include the creation of the Education Cannot Wait fund; key donors, with ECHO at the forefront, significantly increasing commitments and funding for education in emergencies; and the creation of the Education Commission.


50 Evidence from UNICEF’s Data Must Speak initiative on Burkina Faso shows that more active community participation is highly associated with the better availability of health, nutrition and water and sanitation supplies at the school level and with a reduction in student drop-out rates.

