UNICEF South Sudan Annual Report 2018
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Looking ahead to 2019, we must hope that peace will prevail ...
Representative’s message

In South Sudan, 2018 ended with a sense of cautious optimism following the signing of a peace agreement by the main parties to the five-year long conflict. Areas that were previously inaccessible began to open up to humanitarians and there was hope that 2019 could be defined by return and reconciliation.

Much of the rest of the year continued to be marked by emergency response as UNICEF and our partners worked to address the urgent humanitarian needs of those affected by the fighting. Together we provided assistance to 2.7 million people, of whom 1.6 million were children.

A notable achievement was the release of more than 900 children by armed forces and groups, which took place during four separate ceremonies over the course of the year. Those released were provided with psychosocial support, vocational training and educational opportunities to ensure that they were able to successfully reintegrate with their families. Across the country, more than 570,000 children were supported with child protection services.

In other areas, the response was equally vigorous: 2.6 million people received life-saving treatment, mainly for malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea; more than 200,000 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition were admitted into therapeutic feeding programmes; and 559,000 children were provided with access to educational opportunities and more than 500,000 with access to safe water.

Together with the World Food Programme and other partners, we used the Integrated Rapid Response Mechanism to reach 544,000 people living in remote and insecure locations over the course of 50 missions.

All of this was achieved in what is one of the world’s most challenging and hostile environments for humanitarians. As of December 2018, at least 112 aid workers had been killed in South Sudan since the conflict began in 2013.

Looking ahead to 2019, we must hope that peace will prevail and that we and our sister United Nations agencies and other partners are able – unhindered and unharmed – to reach the millions of people who will continue to need assistance, whatever the situation in the country. The coming year will also include more recovery and resilience programming in selected field locations, including basic social service delivery, community-based system strengthening and accountability to affected populations. Again, we thank our partners and donors for their vital support.

Mahimbo Mdoe
Country Representative
Situation for children

On 12 September 2018, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and key opposition groups signed the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The agreement is intended to pave the way for a revitalized transitional government of national unity and peace in the country.

Even with the hope of better times to come, the cumulative effects of the conflict lasting half a decade – as well as simultaneous intercommunal conflicts over land and cattle – have led to sustained poverty and persistent humanitarian and protection needs for more than 7 million people. Since December 2013, the crisis has uprooted 4.5 million people, of whom 2 million remain internally displaced while 2.5 million have taken refuge in neighbouring countries. Drivers and multipliers of crisis include insecurity and violence, ongoing displacement, sparse basic services, disease, climate shocks, economic instability and insecure access to food and livelihoods. This is particularly the case in Equatoria, Jonglei, Upper Nile and Western Bahr el Ghazal. While prospects of peace may begin to generate some confidence for returns, relocations or local integration, this remains difficult to project.

Significant displacement in mid-2018 from central Unity State reflected a persistently volatile security situation. Meanwhile, high-level conflict in Greater Equatoria since mid-2016 has brought persistent violence and human rights abuses, including abuses against children. Closure of many schools in the region led to more unsupervised children and thus greater protection concerns. The deteriorating security and economic situation also increased the use of harmful coping mechanisms, including survival sex among girls, child marriage and involvement of boys in armed groups and crime, and more children separating from their families.

Progress against the Sustainable Development Goals is extremely difficult to measure in South Sudan because of inadequate or missing data. Inaccessibility impedes data collection and use, especially at the local level. The last census was conducted in 2008 and all population data since then have been projections, made more problematic by new administrative boundaries. Despite the data gap, it is clear that the situation for children has continued to be abysmal in 2018.

Given the conflict and associated humanitarian crises, children continue to be left behind across the board, with their safety, health and well-being all deeply compromised, and access to even basic services denied.
Between December 2013 and April 2018, the conflict is estimated to have caused 382,000 excess deaths, approximately half from violence, including widespread sexual violence, targeted killings and destruction of livestock and property. About 19,000 children are associated with armed forces and groups: since February 2018, in Yambio County alone, 745 children (including 263 girls) were released. Cases of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, are under-reported by survivors due to fear of stigma, shame and low confidence in the authorities of bringing perpetrators to justice.

Given the worsened security and economic situation, it is likely that maternal mortality has increased since 2015, when it was estimated at 789 deaths per 100,000 live births. Infant and under-five mortality are also likely to be extremely high. Destruction of health facilities and disruption of services has made it impossible to provide continuous basic primary health care in many locations, and to implement routine expanded immunization programmes and planned vaccination campaigns, contributing to widespread reports of measles in 2018. Malaria remains the main cause of morbidity and mortality for children.
... every third school has been damaged, destroyed, occupied or closed since 2013, and more than 70 per cent of children who should be attending classes are not receiving an education ...
Despite large-scale humanitarian assistance, in 2018 the conflict pushed more people into hunger than ever before. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis released in September 2018 indicated that some 6.1 million people (nearly 60 per cent of South Sudan’s population) faced severe food insecurity between July and August, due to lack of access to health and nutrition services, prolonged conflict and displacement. In early 2019, 5.2 million people will face crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity.

With limited data and analysis available, around 6 million people required emergency water, sanitation and hygiene services in 2018, an increase of 7 per cent on 2017, because of recurring humanitarian crises provoked by conflict, drought and economic distress. Women and girls face risk of harassment, assault and sexual violence when collecting water and using communal latrines; and access to menstrual hygiene products and appropriate and dignified washing locations remain essential.

Research in 2018 found that every third school has been damaged, destroyed, occupied or closed since 2013, and that more than 70 per cent of children who should be attending classes are not receiving an education, as schools continue to be destroyed or remain unusable and teachers have fled violence and economic stress. There are now over 2.2 million out-of-school children across South Sudan.

To leave no child behind, all children must be reached with services. However, humanitarian access continues to be restricted across the country by all parties to the conflict, as well as by civilian authorities and criminal elements. Of 7 million people requiring assistance, approximately 1.5 million (including 920,000 children) live in counties with significant access constraints.
2 Response strategy

UNICEF has been at the forefront of providing a multi-sector response to the multiple humanitarian crises in South Sudan, with our 13 field offices across South Sudan enabling wide coverage and quality programming.

The year’s results were achieved with partners, including state authorities and civil society, through static, outreach and mobile interventions. Though space for development programming remained limited, UNICEF continued training frontline professionals and government staff on social protection, public finance, justice for children, maternal and child health and education. It has advocated for policies and made the case for providing free essential social services to all, in order to promote equity, peace, stability and long-term development.

In 2018, 470,519 children and 266,221 caregivers and community members continued benefiting from critical child protection services. These included psychosocial support (120,545 girls, 136,937 boys and 18,090 caregivers and community members); family tracing and reunification (2,152 children receiving family tracing support); mine risk education (64,345 boys, 59,607 girls, 108,527 women and 55,787 men); and reintegration of children from armed forces/groups (955 children newly released and 1,763 children released in 2017 who continued receiving economic support). In addition, 67,817 women, 52,013 girls, 37,072 boys and 34,090 men benefited from gender-based violence prevention and response services and 99,012 children (49,724 girls) received birth notification in supported health care facilities in communities and protection of civilian sites.

UNICEF continued strengthening routine and supplementary immunization. Sixty-six per cent of children were vaccinated with Pentavalent 3, an increase on the 53 per cent figure from 2017. Additionally, 814,890 children (aged 6 months to 15 years) were vaccinated against measles. A total of 42,586 pregnant women attended antenatal care four or more times, 15,407 delivered under skilled care and 685 pregnant women living with HIV were newly identified and referred for treatment.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to operationalize its Boma Health Initiative to boost demand for use of essential services, while strengthening community resilience. This included costed scenarios and investment case analysis to illustrate the programme’s public health benefits and inform national roll-out plans.

UNICEF provided 520,221 people with access to safe drinking water and 158,274 people with access to sanitation facilities and services, including 23,589 through
community-led total sanitation. The locations covered included some of the most remote and conflict-affected areas of the country.

In 2018, together with partners, we admitted 206,673 children under the age of 5 suffering from severe acute malnutrition (107,720 girls) into outpatient therapeutic services across South Sudan. Of these, 88.2 per cent were discharged cured. A total of 950,376 mothers and caregivers acquired knowledge and skills on appropriate maternal, infant and young child feeding practices in targeted communities. UNICEF supported the introduction of evidence-based planning with civil society partners and the Ministry of Health using bottleneck analysis of key nutrition interventions.

UNICEF and partners also ensured that 559,450 children (332,203 boys and 227,247 girls) gained access to education services and built the capacity of 7,347 education personnel and community members to effectively deliver quality, age-appropriate learning opportunities, and inclusive education services. The South Sudan Out-of-School Children Study and the national Girls’ Education Strategy were updated to inform dialogue and strategies to ensure more equitable access to quality basic education.
Throughout 2018, the Integrated Rapid Response Mechanism, led by UNICEF, the World Food Programme and partners, remained the primary mechanism for reaching the most inaccessible children and women in the most insecure locations with a multi-sectoral package of life-saving services comprising general food distribution; nutrition; health; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); protection; and education services. The Food and Agriculture Organization joined the Integrated Rapid Response Mechanism to distribute livelihoods and emergency kits (fishing and agricultural tools, and seeds). A total of 50 Integrated Rapid Response Mechanism missions were deployed to hard-to-reach locations, reaching 544,969 people, including 111,642 under-fives, during 2018.
UNICEF continued supporting routine immunization service delivery through social mobilization, strengthening of the cold chain and distributing vaccines and other primary health supplies.

Some 66 per cent of children received the first dose of Pentavalent, though only 52 per cent received the third dose. UNICEF supported a Ministry of Health survey that informed a five-year strategic plan for the National Expanded Programme on Immunization. Results revealed a 42 per cent rate of non-vaccination due to lack of information: this will be addressed through a national communication strategy for the programme.

Supplementary immunization activities ensured adequate immunity among children, with outreach accelerated in the dry season. During 2018, 450 suspected measles cases, including five child deaths, were reported. UNICEF, the World Health Organization and partners supported the Ministry of Health to conduct a countrywide measles follow-up campaign and local outbreak responses. Combined, these activities vaccinated 814,890 children aged 6 months to 15 years against measles in 2018 (84 per cent of the target).

UNICEF supported the installation of 186 solar refrigerators, increasing vaccine cold chain coverage at health facility level from 37 per cent in 2017 to over 45 per cent in 2018.

UNICEF also conducted intensive social and community mobilization activities through an integrated community mobilization network for two rounds of national immunization days towards polio eradication, with an average of 90.2 per cent pre-campaign awareness among mothers and caregivers.

In 2018, 2,678,863 people (1,161,446 under-fives) received life-saving treatment, mainly for malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea. Cases were managed through community programming, and UNICEF and partners strengthened case management by training front-line health workers in integrated management of childhood illness and integrated community case management. This enabled 920,870 children to access malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea treatment.

Malaria continues to account for 45 per cent of deaths among all age groups in UNICEF-supported sites. UNICEF provided 187,423 families with two mosquito nets each (75 per cent of the target). Indoor residual spraying was undertaken in two of the country’s largest protection of civilian sites, in Bentiu and Malakal, with 25,431 dwellings sprayed and 145,576 individuals protected: this reduced malaria incidence by 55 per cent.
Cholera prevention activities continued reducing the risk of cholera outbreaks in hotspots, supported by social mobilization campaigns. No cholera cases were reported in 2018. The current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is at risk of spreading to neighbouring countries. South Sudan has prioritized Ebola preparedness, supported by UNICEF, including community surveillance, risk communication and infection prevention and control.

During the year, 98,266 pregnant women were supported to attend their first antenatal care visit. However, only 42,586 pregnant women attended four or more antenatal care visits, while skilled health providers attended only 15,407 pregnant women in UNICEF-supported areas (well below the targets). Progress was hampered by displaced populations becoming mobile and difficult to access. UNICEF, with the Health Cluster and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, negotiated humanitarian access to allow outreach and participated in 50 Integrated Rapid Response Mechanism missions to reach displaced populations at the earliest opportunity.

UNICEF helped support operationalization of the Boma Health Initiative to boost demand for and use of essential services, while strengthening community resilience. The Ministry of Health – with support from UNICEF and Management Sciences for Health – developed and validated the Boma Health Initiative costing and investment case analysis, which revealed that if the initial Boma Health Initiative package is implemented at scale, by 2028 129,576 deaths could be averted, including 35,491 neonatal deaths, 88,751 child (1–59 months) deaths and 5,334 maternal deaths. A community health management information system was developed and pre-tested with support from the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine to monitor routine data emerging from the Boma Health Initiative nationwide.

UNICEF supported HIV-preventive and curative services targeting pregnant women, newborns and children under 5 years of age. To support prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, 56,735 pregnant women had counselling and testing for HIV. Of these, 1,085 (1.2 per cent) tested positive and were given antiretroviral therapy.
Between 2015 and 2018, UNICEF supported increasing the coverage of quality care for severely acutely malnourished children aged 0–59 months from 60 to 77 per cent, contributing to a reduction in prevalence of severe acute malnutrition from 9.9 per cent in 2010 to 2.7 per cent in 2018.

During 2018, 206,673 children with severe acute malnutrition were treated (96 per cent of the target); around 70 per cent were located in the five high malnutrition burden states of Jonglei, Lakes, Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Unity and Warrap.

Severe acute malnutrition treatment achievements are attributed to an 86 per cent increase in the number of outpatient therapeutic programme treatment sites, from 462 in 2015 to 858 in 2018; increased partnership with civil society implementing partners; and active community case finding. Dry season prepositioning of essential nutrition supplies enabled continuity of service delivery. Harmonization of treatment protocols through development of national guidelines and roll-out of community management of acute malnutrition training supported the scaling up of severe acute malnutrition treatment.

Strengthened collaboration between UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization ensured continuity of care through seamless referral mechanisms across the different treatment programmes for children with moderate and severe acute malnutrition.

UNICEF integrated vitamin A supplementation and deworming in its agreements with civil society organizations and in national immunization days. In 2018, the number of children supplemented with vitamin A increased by 50 per cent to 2,310,639. Similarly, the number of children receiving deworming tablets in the first six months increased by 57 per cent to 1,884,491. It should be noted that 45,178 children received vitamin A supplementation and 34,211 children received deworming tablets through Integrated Rapid Response Mechanism missions.

The number of caregivers of children aged 0–23 months reached through maternal, infant and young child nutrition counselling increased from 539,547 in 2015 to 950,376 in 2018. This remarkable progress contributed to increases in the proportion of children aged 0–5 months exclusively breastfed, from 45 to 74 per cent between 2010 and 2018.

Despite huge investments in nutrition in South Sudan over the last five years, no national-level data had been available on key nutrition indicators since 2010. In 2018, thanks to a UNICEF-led initiative, the nutrition data gap was reduced with generation
of national-level data on stunting, acute malnutrition, infant and young child feeding and vitamin A coverage, supported by near real-time data. The data revealed that national global acute malnutrition prevalence decreased from 23 per cent to 13 per cent and that stunting prevalence fell from 31 per cent to 17 per cent between 2010 and 2018.

UNICEF supported continuous capacity-building of government and non-governmental actors, advocated for enhanced use of evidence in planning and provided technical inputs to ensure rigorous review and validation of survey results. The average reporting rate of nutrition sites in South Sudan improved steadily from 86 per cent to 98 per cent between 2016 and 2018. UNICEF supported training of 60 staff from civil society and government on use of the revised Nutrition Information System (NIS) platform and data collected through the NIS have been instrumental in supporting state-level evidence-based planning.

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Programme, conducted the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Survey (FSNMS), which provided critical inputs for preparing the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification and for planning and prioritizing UNICEF interventions. UNICEF supported 45 county-based standardized monitoring and assessment of relief and transitions surveys to inform the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification and the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan. Improved FSNMS data quality was achieved through activities such as revision of the data collection tool, harmonization of training, and regular data checks and strengthened supervision.
During 2018, 520,221 people were provided with access to safe drinking water. Weak government institutional capacity, a lack of budget allocation to deliver water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, and a significant shortfall of WASH funding contributed to not meeting the planned target (62 per cent unmet).

WASH activities were integrated into nutrition and health programming by rehabilitation or construction of WASH facilities in communities and health and nutrition centres, in targeted areas; and by building the capacity of actors for operations and maintenance and hygiene promotion, which played a vital role in managing acute malnutrition in under-fives.

UNICEF supported construction of new facilities for safe water, using mechanized drilling, spring catchment water supply systems, rehabilitation of non-functional boreholes and the establishment of surface water treatment systems, such as in protection of civilian sites and internally displaced person camps. UNICEF also explored affordable technologies, such as manual drilling, particularly in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap states. Some 60 new boreholes were established and 537 water points rehabilitated in communities, schools and health care facilities, including in areas where Guinea worm is endemic. Despite this, there was a resurgence of Guinea worm disease in 2018, with eight cases confirmed. UNICEF has intensified its WASH-related response through the Ministry of Health and Carter Centres in the endemic villages.

To ensure ownership and sustainability of the safe water supply infrastructure, UNICEF built the capacity of 432 WASH committees and hand-pump mechanics associations for operating and maintaining WASH facilities and hygiene promotion. This played a vital role in supporting the integration of WASH activities into nutrition and health programming for managing acute malnutrition in children under 5 years of age.

Most of the previous gains towards access to sanitation, particularly through community approaches to total sanitation (CATS), were lost due to massive and multiple displacements of communities. However, 2018 witnessed a renewed interest in CATS, particularly in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Central Equatoria. Following the training and efforts of 40 master trainers on CATS, a total of 23 villages in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, 33 villages in Central Equatoria and 10 villages in Eastern Equatoria were declared open defecation-free, meaning that over 23,589 people now have access to safe sanitation.
A WASH knowledge, attitudes and practices survey was conducted to inform community-led total sanitation programming. Community mobilizers supported families with inadequate or no knowledge on how to prepare oral rehydration salt solution and WASH key messages.

UNICEF supported WASH policies and strategic frameworks for subsectors such as urban water, water management and sanitation; supported the development of a water bill, investment plan and regulation of the WASH sector; and built structures within the community for the operation, maintenance and sustainability of water facilities.

In emergency-affected locations, UNICEF reached 520,221 people with safe water supplies, 158,674 with sanitation facilities and over 1.1 million with core WASH pipeline supplies. UNICEF supported 217,700 internally displaced persons in protection of civilians sites and settlements to receive daily water, sanitation, rubbish collection and hygiene promotion. In addition, 97,248 people were served with solid waste and sewerage activities.

UNICEF continued engaging with line ministries, the WASH Cluster and civil society to prevent and combat cholera outbreaks. It prepositioned supplies, including chlorine, soap, water storage containers and sprayers, within referral facilities. Key cholera prevention messages were disseminated by a range of means, including school interventions, radio messages, community meetings and public announcements.
... prepositioned supplies, including chlorine, soap, water storage containers and sprayers ...
UNICEF’s advocacy and technical support to the government resulted in the Civil Registry Act 2018 being signed into law. This milestone will enable children to be registered and receive birth certificates; civil registration is a fundamental tool for planning and good governance. UNICEF was also instrumental in increasing birth notification across the country from 47 per cent to 62 per cent.

Additionally, a policy was passed on children without appropriate parental care, facilitating appropriate care for the most vulnerable children, with associated comprehensive case management guidelines contextualized for South Sudan. To support the formal comprehensive case management system, the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) is being transitioned towards CPIMS+ with UNICEF leadership.
National family tracing and reunification services reached 2,152 new beneficiaries and reunified 1,112 unaccompanied and separated children; and formal case management was expanded to six new implementing partners. National case management standard operating procedures accommodating all types of extremely vulnerable children were finalized and 70 humanitarian workers were trained on coaching and supervision.

Gender-based violence (GBV) risk mitigation, prevention and response services were prioritized, exceeding the target by supporting 190,992 people (67,817 women, 52,013 girls, 37,072 boys and 34,090 men). UNICEF provided financial and technical support to GBV coordination, implementation of the Real-Time Accountability Partnership on GBV in emergencies, the United Nations Joint Programme on GBV, the Joint Communiqué to end Conflict Related Sexual Violence, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

In partnership with the United Nations Mine Action Service, 123,952 children were reached with mine risk awareness messages, while 1,546 children received dedicated mine risk education training to promote mine risk safety in their communities and among their peers. Capacity-building on mine risk education was provided to 12 implementing partners, who then received accreditation from mine action authorities.

UNICEF and the country-level United Nations country task force for monitoring and reporting on grave violations affecting children in armed conflict are working progressively with government security forces to develop and implement an action plan to end these violations. Between January and September, the task force documented and verified 349 reported incidents of grave violations against children, affecting over 6,805 boys and over 6,099 girls. The overall trends in 2018 show an increase in reported incidents, particularly on recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups, sexual violence and abduction.

As part of implementation of the action plans signed by the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) and the SPLA in Opposition to stop and prevent grave child rights violations, UNICEF, in collaboration with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, successfully released 955 children (265 girls) associated with armed groups and enrolled them into reintegration programmes in Pibor (Jonglei) and Yambio (Western Equatoria). UNICEF continues to provide reintegration support for children who were released or escaped between 2015 and 2017, including economic reintegration services such as animal husbandry, agricultural training, vocational training and small business start-ups. At the same time, 1,552 other children in emergency situations (1,041 girls) were also supported.

All 36 UNICEF partners engaged in working with child protection in emergencies and gender-based violence, of which 80 per cent are national civil society organizations, have been supported to plan, develop and implement child protection projects.
Education

With Global Partnership for Education funding, and in partnership with the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and others, UNICEF helped develop evidence-based and cost-effective education policies, strategies and systems.

A nationwide annual education census was conducted for the first time since 2013. The census will provide critical information about school infrastructure, management and finances, which will improve the government’s capacity for policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation.

Research was conducted, including an assessment on early grade literacy; a back-to-learning assessment for previously out-of-school children; a joint assessment with the World Food Programme for the school feeding programme; an evaluation
of the five-year Global Partnership for Education programme (2012–2017); and an assessment of teacher incentives on the impact of teaching and learning in schools.

The continuing Back-to-Learning initiative led to 559,450 children (target 500,000) being brought back to and retained at school, in partnership with 29 international and national civil society organizations. To support this, 460 temporary learning spaces were established, with 38 classrooms rehabilitated by implementing partners. Challenges persist in inaccessible counties in Greater Upper Nile and conflict-affected parts of southern Unity and Western Equatoria, where schools are either closed or functioning irregularly. UNICEF and partners are closely monitoring the situation and will resume interventions when security permits.

The communication for development unit supported peacebuilding as a key focus area for youth-led social change programming through the integrated community mobilization network (ICMN), which covers 67 per cent of the 2,916 bomas. School enrolment in ICMN-covered areas increased from 68 per cent in January to 71 per cent in November.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of General Education and Instruction to develop textbooks and teacher guides to support the new national curriculum for all 18 primary and secondary subjects. Literacy primers and teacher guides were developed in five national languages, and Primary 1 subject textbooks were translated into these five national languages to initiate mother-tongue instruction for improved learning outcomes.

UNICEF procured essential items for children and teachers, distributed with the support of 29 international and national civil society organizations. The materials included 11,891 children’s kits; 11,870 teachers’ kits; 2,197 early childhood development kits; 2,976 recreation kits; 478,732 school bags; and 59,041 dignity kits, benefiting 559,450 children and their teachers in primary schools and alternative learning programme facilities.

With partners, UNICEF trained teachers, volunteer teachers, parent-teacher association members, school management committee members and Ministry of General Education and Instruction staff in all states. UNICEF supported the Ministry of General Education and Instruction to provide curriculum orientation training for 16,010 teachers, and a series of teacher training events were held on the learner-centred approach and competency-based curriculum on which the new textbooks are based.

In 2018, 7,347 volunteer teachers (2,272 women), education officials and parent-teacher association members were provided with induction and school management training (target 5,200). This training had a positive impact on classroom interaction and management by the volunteer teachers. Parent-teacher association members had local support as they play a key role in participatory management of schools, especially temporary learning spaces.
9 Social policy

UNICEF strengthened the coordination of various social protection initiatives, including cash-based programmes, through work with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MoGCSW) and the National Social Protection Working Group as co-chair, and partnering with the Inter-Agency Cash Working Group. In particular, UNICEF supported the revitalization of the National Social Protection Working Group (NSPWG), which had been dormant since 2016.

To ensure UNICEF’s preparedness on delivering cash transfers in humanitarian situations in line with corporate commitments, a dedicated expert was recruited late 2018 to build the capacity of the country office, including field offices, on implementing cash-based approaches. In addition, UNICEF supported Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare staff to acquire skills on cash transfer programmes. This was done by facilitating officials’ participation in training and community of practice sessions such as the World Bank and UNICEF-supported Uganda community of practice, on the role of social safety nets in adaptive social protection.

UNICEF significantly expanded the scope of the national public finance for children agenda by using key entry points such as the 2017 Open Budget Survey for South Sudan, supported by UNICEF. Launched in 2006, the Open Budget Survey is the world’s only independent, comparative assessment of public budget transparency, oversight and public participation. UNICEF disseminated findings to national partners including the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and the National Legislative Assembly to open up a dialogue around public finance for children; South Sudan has a transparency score of 5 (out of 100) on the Open Budget Index – substantially lower than the global average of 42, and ranks very low in public participation and legislative and audit budget oversight. With UNICEF support, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and civil society delegates participated in a regional Open Budget Survey meeting in Nairobi. A national action plan for budget transparency was developed, which led to the first ever national budget transparency stakeholders’ workshop, organized by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. This workshop sensitized around 30 senior level government and stakeholders on transparency themes pertaining to budgetary processes.

UNICEF also supported South-South learning exchanges, where two Zimbabwean delegates (from the government and civil society) participated and shared their Open Budget Survey experiences; and six Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning practitioners received training on good budgeting practices by experts from the International Budget Partnership and the Global Initiative on Fiscal Transparency, as well as the Kenya National Treasury.
In addition, with UNICEF support, a user-friendly Citizen’s Budget was developed on social sector institutions to support the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. To increase public participation, awareness activities were held on national budgetary processes through two radio shows and panel discussions on the education and health sector budgets, targeting youth, women, academia and civil society organizations. Activities were also conducted to build the capacity of parliamentarians for budget reading and related activities. To further develop the evidence base for increasing budgetary allocations for social services, UNICEF started working on the 2018 national budget brief and education budget brief in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and the Ministry of Education.

Overall, the focus in 2018 expanded to strive to shift from humanitarian assistance to early recovery programming. In this context, UNICEF has combined efforts with other United Nations agencies and partners to build resilience and support recovery, particularly in areas where there is stability, to lay the groundwork for durable peace and, ultimately, sustainable development. For example, the United Nations Joint Programme for Recovery and Stabilization project in Aweil aimed at establishing a base for recovery by building resilience through a multi-sector approach. Ongoing initiatives in Aweil and Yambio aim to improve the health and well-being of women and children living in epidemic-prone locations through the provision of safe water, improved hygiene and sanitation services.
In 2019, UNICEF will provide life-saving humanitarian assistance in South Sudan through a timely and effective integrated package of nutrition, health, WASH, child protection and education services delivered through interconnected, complementary responses.

To ensure that support has wide reach, services will be delivered through static operations, direct outreach and rapid response modalities. UNICEF’s operations will be led by its 13 field offices to enable wide coverage and quality programming across the country.

The public finance for children agenda is nascent but has been quickly expanding since 2018. In 2019, UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of General Education and Instruction with an upcoming Public Expenditure Review and Public Expenditure Tracking Survey through the Global Partnership for Education programme and is starting a national capacity-building programme on public finance for children. Moreover, UNICEF signed the first-ever multi-year 2019–2021 workplan with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, laying the foundation for more strategic and formal engagement in South Sudan.

UNICEF’s leadership of the nutrition and WASH clusters and the child protection area of responsibility, and its co-leadership of the Education Cluster, will enable strategic planning, coordinated response, capacity-building of partners and advocacy, both at the national and state levels. Emergency cash programming will be implemented through UNICEF’s strong existing collaborations and inter-agency mechanisms, such as the Cash Working Group.

The response will expand in 2019 to include recovery and resilience programming in selected field locations, including basic social service delivery, community-based system strengthening and accountability to affected populations. UNICEF will invest in increasing the localization of aid in South Sudan through capacity building and targeted resource allocation. Following the peace deal, UNICEF will also further invest in building the capacities of central and subnational state authorities.
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