

unicef 
for every child

UNICEF THAILAND ANNUAL REPORT 2018

UNICEF THAILAND ANNUAL REPORT 2018

A. Acronyms	iii
B. Executive summary	1
C. Situation update in the country	3
D. Achievements for children in 2018	9
I. Early childhood development	9
II. Adolescent development and participation	10
III. Education	12
IV. Child protection	13
V. Social policy	15
VI. Social protection for children	16
VII. Communications and public advocacy	17
VIII. Children's rights and business principles	18



A

ACRONYMS

BOB	Bureau of the Budget
C4D	Communication for Development
CSG	Child Support Grant
DLA	Department of Local Administration
DTAC	Total Access Communication Public Company Limited
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EEF	Equitable Education Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KAP	Knowledge Attitude and Practices
MDGs	United Nations Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSDHS	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NESDC	Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council
NGOs	Non-governmental organisation
NSO	National Statistical Office
OBEC	Office of Basic Education Commission
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPHI	Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative
PCA	Partnership Cooperation Agreements
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RBM	Result-Based Management
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TDRI	Thailand Development Research Institute
TOPS	Central Food Retail Company Limited
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
YM2M	Young Men to Men

B

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, UNICEF celebrated its 70th year in Thailand. This milestone provided a platform to hail the enormous progress made by Thailand in improving children's lives over the last decades, as well as to highlight the challenges that remain. In this context, the country hosted the visits of UNICEF's **Executive Director and the East Asia and Pacific Regional Director**. These high-level visits provided a strategic opportunity for advocating at the most senior levels of government, with Her Royal Highness Princess Sirindhorn and with private sector leaders for transformative changes for all children in Thailand in critical areas highlighted in this report. This was also the second year of the 2017-2021 country programme. With an **annual programme budget of US\$11.4 million**, UNICEF managed a total of 40 strategic partnerships with 19 government departments and 21 civil society groups.

In 2018, Thailand took the next leap forward for its investment in Early Childhood Development (ECD) through focused legislation, improved quality ECD services and social transfer grants for families with young children. The **National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Act** was approved by the Cabinet in October and by the Council of State in December 2018. UNICEF supported the **expansion of ECD demonstration centres** to 24 provinces, now implemented in over 147 ECD centres enrolling 10,300 children. The program offers a scalable model of ECD capacity building aimed at strengthening the quality of care and services for children aged 3-5 years old.

The **child support grant (CSG)** was once again a headline government policy and a topic of discussion at national level. Significantly, the number of beneficiaries of the grant increased by 50 per cent from 2017 to 600,000 – more than four times the

take-up in its first year of operation in 2015. Given the high proportion of teenage and young mothers among the beneficiaries (> 40%), the CSG is also supporting the well-being of vulnerable young women. A reason to celebrate was the Prime Minister's public announcement in August of his support for **expanding the CSG** to children up to six years of age from the current under-three limit. This position was informed by the evidence produced through the UNICEF co-funded impact evaluation of the grant and advocacy conducted by UNICEF in partnership with a coalition of national civil society organizations.

A number of key milestones were achieved in 2018 for **Thailand's investment in generating and using data on children** to inform policy, planning and budgeting. First, The National Statistical Office (NSO) and the Bureau of Budget (BoB) included the next round of the **Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)** in the list of surveys to be funded by the national budget. Second, the previous round of the MICS was used to inform the UNICEF-supported development and endorsement of **70 provincial ECD budgeted plans** in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE), BoB and Thammasat University. Finally, UNICEF initiated work with the Government on the **SDG nationalization** process, in particular the development of the methodology for a national **multidimensional poverty index** to measure progress on SDG 1.2 (reducing poverty).

In 2018, UNICEF's investment in equitable access to quality education yielded significant results in legislation, funding and policy recommendations from innovative demonstration models. In May 2018, a year-long advocacy effort supported the establishment of the **Equitable Education Fund (EEF)**, through the Equitable Education Fund Act.

The Fund aims to address inequities in education and to support the education of disadvantaged children.

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand strengthened its focus on adolescents and young people, setting a precedent under the “**Generation Unlimited**” initiative. An estimated 15 per cent of young people (15-24 years) in Thailand today (about 1.3 million people) are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Thus, UNICEF Thailand is developing a vision to bring together partners and young people to unlock investment, co-create solutions and take them to scale to end NEET by 2030. The UNICEF-supported adolescents and young people-focused online health platform, **Lovecarestation.com**, multiplied its reach five-fold in 2018 with over 750,000 young people accessing information, counselling and referrals on sexual, reproductive and mental health.

UNICEF Thailand’s top priority for **child protection** is strengthening the system for **case management at the community level**, a challenging and ambitious goal to respond to the needs of some of the most at-risk children in the country. In 2018, UNICEF’s demonstration model in 236 sub-districts reached a record 25,000 children screened for child protection risks and 1,589 cases were referred as medium and high-risk from those 236 sub-districts alone (out of 7,200 sub-districts).

A significant and tangible result for migrant children was achieved in 2018 with the release of almost all **children in immigration detention** in Bangkok thanks to UNICEF Thailand’s ongoing advocacy with UNHCR, IOM and NGOs to end immigration detention of migrant children in favour of release to families during case review. In addition, an inter-ministerial MoU with standard operating procedures on the release of children was developed with UNICEF’s technical support.

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand’s **voice and reach** achieved a wider echo than ever before with a 250 per cent increase in social media reaches from the previous year. A multi-phase campaign as part of UNICEF’s **70th Anniversary celebrations** drew intense public interest with over 20 million reaches online during August to December, over 20,000 people signing a petition for the cause of children through Art for the Future and the flagship video amassing 1 million views on YouTube.

A new initiative launched in October called **I Am UNICEF** recruits volunteers through a platform for activities supporting UNICEF Thailand’s work. Over 11,200 people had registered on the platform by the end of December, with 1,900 active volunteers devoting 1,521 hours of work on behalf of children.

UNICEF Thailand was the **first UNICEF country office to finalize an evaluation of advocacy** to strengthen accountability and UNICEF’s ability to manage resources towards results for children. This marks a key organizational milestone for middle-income countries, where advocacy represents a core investment to leverage positive change for children and is one of UNICEF’s principal roles. As such, the findings and lessons learned were shared with headquarters, regional advisors and country offices as part of the Global Evaluation meeting.

The Blue Carpet Show, a television variety show launched by UNICEF Thailand and the first of its kind in Asia, brought together more than 40 high-profile celebrities and influencers to garner public support for vulnerable children by raising awareness of issues facing children in Thailand and around the world. The show engaged over two million viewers for two hours of prime time giving them opportunity to better understand UNICEF’s efforts to improve the lives of children.



© UNICEF Thailand/2017/Preechapanich

C

SITUATION UPDATE IN THE COUNTRY

In recent decades, Thailand has seen significant achievements in reducing poverty and spearheading social development. The most recent national poverty rate (2015) was 7.2 per cent, down from 20 per cent in 2008. Thailand also achieved many of the MDG targets ahead of time and is recognized as one of the success stories in social and economic development, aided by free education, universal healthcare and social protection benefits. However, the child poverty rate is estimated at almost 10 per cent (1.4 million children). Further, there remains a sizeable proportion of the population that has not fully benefited from the economic growth and poverty reduction. In order to achieve the ambitious targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to “leave no one behind”, the need to address inequity with a focus on children has, if anything, grown more urgent.

The most recent data from the Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey (MICS) 2015-2016 (both national and for the 14 most disadvantaged provinces, including the five southernmost provinces) highlight

inequities for children in terms of wealth, gender, language, education level of parents and geographical location. For example, data on adolescent birth rates show that for adolescent girls living in the poorest and second poorest quintiles, the birth rates were significantly higher (76 births per 1,000 and 82 per 1,000 respectively) compared to adolescents living in the richest households (12 births per 1,000). With regards to stunting amongst children under five, the prevalence in Narathiwat (one of the five southernmost provinces) was 29 per cent compared to the national average of 11 per cent.

Another structural challenge in Thailand is the sweeping demographic change, driven by the growing elderly population and the declining birth rate. By 2022, Thailand will be the first country with a gross national income per capita below US\$12,056 (high income) to become an “aged” society, according to the Bank of Thailand, with more than 14 per cent of its population over 65. By the time today’s children reach adulthood, there

will be just 1.7 workers to support each old person, compared to 5 to 1 today.

As the demographic time clock ticks, the Government is promoting a new economic blueprint (Thailand 4.0) aimed at pulling Thailand out of the middle-income trap and shifting the country from a production-based to a service-based economy, emphasizing industries such as next-generation automotive, smart electronics, high-income tourism and medical tourism, efficient agriculture and biotechnology, robotics and aerospace.

Thailand is a nutritional transition country facing a growing double burden of malnutrition, characterized by the coexistence of undernutrition (11 per cent of children under five years of age are stunted and 5 per cent are wasted) and overweight (8 per cent of children are overweight).

A secondary data analysis of MICS 2015/2016 (MICS 5) by UNICEF, conducted to identify the key drivers of the double burden, shows that there is a significant increase in the risk of stunting among children born with low birthweight. The results show that undernutrition in Thailand starts 'in utero'

and thus, nutrition-sensitive interventions should start from maternity care. Another driver is the low exclusive breastfeeding rate, with less than one quarter of children in Thailand exclusively breastfed for the first six months of their life, far from the World Health Organization's target of 50 per cent.

Thailand achieved the WHO targets for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis in 2016 and received validation for maintaining this status in 2018.

The 2017 Constitution expanded the concept of free education to include three years of pre-primary education, a provision which has been included in the Draft Education Act. Over 94 per cent of all 4-year-old Thai children now attend an ECD programme, according to MICS 5 data. Those missing out are the most vulnerable, including children in the north-east and conflict-affected far south. The quality of ECD services, however, is a more pressing challenge than access for children 3 years and above, based on assessments conducted by the Office of Education Standards and Quality Assessment.



© UNICEF Thailand/2018/Gratzer

The need for quality ECD services within the reach of every home is especially acute in a context where both parents commonly leave their children in the care of relatives to seek work in Bangkok and other big cities in order to support their family. As a consequence, almost one quarter of all children in Thailand, more than 3 million, live with neither biological parent. A next step towards full ECD coverage will involve addressing the “3:3 challenge” – the period between three months of age, when maternity leave ends, and three years of age, when free structured ECD services begin. Overseeing a standardized and regulated programme of child care for all children aged 0-3 presents several challenges for the Government, from regulating the curriculum, standards and caregiver qualifications to supporting relevant service delivery channels, which could include incentives for businesses.

Thailand’s hefty investment in education (20 per cent of the national budget) has spearheaded very high levels of school attendance, with primary school attendance at 95 per cent, though disparities remain based on wealth and geography, particularly at secondary school level.

Indeed, while the Ministry of Education’s 15-year free education policy (from pre-primary to upper secondary) does not discriminate on the basis of a child’s nationality or legal status, the most disadvantaged children are still falling through the cracks. It is estimated that half of all migrant children are out of school and almost three quarters of children with disabilities advance no further than primary school. Language also remains a key barrier to learning for children who do not speak Thai as

their mother tongue, with significant and recurrent impacts on learning outcomes. While Thailand has a 98 per cent youth literacy rate, about 1 in 3 youth aged 15-24 from non-Thai speaking households are illiterate in Thai, according to MICS 5. Local education authorities are stepping up efforts to support enrolment of marginalized children, including ethnic minority children in Mae Hong Son, migrant children in Chiang Mai and Patani Malay-speaking children in the far south, with UNICEF support. In order to address inequities and as part of wide-ranging reforms under way or planned for the Education sector, the Equitable Education Fund Act came into effect in May 2018. The new Act and accompanying fund is an indication of the Government’s stated intention to improve equity-focused budgeting using research, data and evidence-generation to address issues of disparity, educational dropout and the quality of teaching and instruction.

Thailand’s participation in the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) continually points to a deficit in skills development in literacy, numeracy and science, with a drop-in performance in the most recent international student assessment in 2015. To provide young people with the necessary and relevant skills, the Government is proposing an agenda of education reform, which includes developing a competency-based curriculum to strengthen the focus on skills development, including life skills. The implementation of such a curriculum will also require a revamping of teacher education and development strategies to modernise classroom pedagogy to focus more on student knowledge and skills.



© UNICEF Thailand/2016/Thuentap

At the secondary level, fewer males pursue secondary education (77 per cent) than females (86 per cent), with clear disparities based on wealth and mother's education. Almost one-third of 17-year-olds are no longer in secondary school, leaving many young people without marketable skills and meagre employment prospects, a factor perpetuating the cycle of poverty and relatively low youth workforce participation. In Thailand, 7 per cent of 15-24-year-olds are unemployed and almost two-thirds of those employed work in the informal sector. According to data from the ILO, around 15 per cent of young people aged 15-24 years (฿1.3 million) are not in education, employment or training, two-thirds of whom are young women, indicating important gender-based challenges for girls in their transition to adulthood.

According to the ILO's 2017 Asia-Pacific regional report, over the next two decades in Thailand up to 98 per cent of workers could be replaced in what it stated are the 10 most vulnerable professions: subsistence farmers; farm labourers; retail sales assistants; stall and market salespeople; livestock and dairy producers; food counter attendants; cooks; construction workers; office clerks; and junior accounting professionals. This adds up to about 9.2 million jobs. Furthermore, three in four workers in the auto-industry – a major manufacturing sector – are potential victims of automation. All

told, up to 44 per cent of all jobs in Thailand are at risk, many of which are the kinds of jobs in which most young people are employed today. Thailand's 4.0 vision to transition to a high-income, innovation-based economy over the next decade will require massively skilling up its young people, especially those currently excluded.

The 10-17-year-old group is garnering a whole new level of attention amid the sweeping demographic tilt towards an aging society with fewer children. The health and development of adolescents, how they think, behave and spend money has never been of more importance in the Thai context, galvanizing the Government to brainstorm about adolescent-friendly policies, strategies and procedures to help them safely navigate the road to adulthood and gainful employment.

A key challenge for adolescents in Thailand is sexual and reproductive health. Currently, the average age that Thai adolescents start having sex vastly precedes the age they can get access to sexual and reproductive health services without adult consent. Many adolescents still have little or no knowledge about HIV. Some 70 per cent of all sexually transmitted infections, including almost half of all new HIV infections, occur amongst 15-24-year-olds in Thailand.

The teenage pregnancy rate in Thailand is three times the regional rate, translating into almost 300 girls aged 15-19 giving birth every day, or over 90,000 births from adolescent mothers per year. According to the 2015 UNICEF situation analysis of adolescent pregnancy, gender roles are a key factor. Girls commonly lack negotiating power, weakening their ability to demand the use of contraception and determine what happens to them after they get pregnant. Teenage pregnancy has life-altering consequences, including risks to health risk and a high likelihood of school dropout. With access to a very limited public nursery system, young mothers often struggle to find and hold even low-skilled jobs. Mothers aged 15-24 years are over-represented in poverty targeting schemes like the child support grant (more than 40 per cent of beneficiaries are young mothers). Finally, teenage pregnancy perpetuates intergenerational poverty: teenage pregnancies happen in poor, low-education households; they cause poorer outcomes for the young mother and the child, which in turn results in a higher risk of teenage pregnancy for the next generation.

UNICEF's focus is on supporting the Government to implement the Teenage Pregnancy Act (2016) that articulates Thailand's vision to reduce adolescent births by two-thirds by 2030.

Another key challenge faced by adolescents and young people in Thailand is mental illness, a critical but often neglected problem. Globally, 70 per cent of lifelong mental health problems are estimated to start before age 24. The WHO's global school-based student health survey of 13-17-years-old conducted in 2015 indicated that 1 in 8 students (13 per cent) surveyed in Thailand reported to have attempted suicide. This issue is compounded by the factors mentioned above affecting young people's future in terms of health, education and employment.

Efforts to expand Thailand's child protection system continued to gain ground amid still-high levels of violence, abuse, exploitation and child neglect. Every day, 52 children, the vast majority of them girls, are reportedly abused in Thailand, although the actual incidence is probably much higher due to significant under-reporting of cases. The Government recognizes this challenge and is undertaking large-scale reform of the child protection and social protection legislative frameworks, building

the capacity of multi-disciplinary teams in provinces and districts, refining case management tools, improving data collection and quality, and adopting safeguard measures in child welfare and juvenile justice institutions.

Legislative changes are set to strengthen child protection frameworks. Work is in progress to amend the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 years to 12 years. The 2003 Child Protection Act is under revision to further strengthen key child protection provisions following establishment of the first-ever five-year National Child Protection Strategy in 2017. Underpinning these moves is the imperative to mainstream migrant, refugee and stateless children into the child protection fold and better protect children in the far south.

An estimated three quarters of parents use corporal punishment or other violent means to punish their children, according to MICS 5, with 4.2 per cent of all children aged 1-14 years (almost half a million children) having experienced severe physical punishment. National campaigns such as Early Moments Matter are aimed at gradually influencing attitudes and behaviours by driving home the harmful, lifelong impacts of hitting children.



© UNICEF Thailand/2006/Few



On the health emergency front, a measles outbreak in October and November 2018 struck the southernmost provinces of Thailand, with Yala province most affected. There were more than 2,400 confirmed measles cases and 22 deaths, mostly of children aged under five. As part of the Government's rapid response, routine immunization was strengthened, a fact that highlights the region's low immunization coverage. Over a third of young children in the far south are not fully protected against immunization-preventable diseases, double the national average.

In terms of migrants, Thailand is home to as many as 4 million migrants, mostly seeking employment as low-skilled or semi-skilled workers. The number of children accompanying their migrant families is estimated between 300,000 and half a million. More than half of these migrants are reportedly undocumented and therefore considered illegal immigrants under Thai law. Thailand has established a very progressive policy environment that offers documented and undocumented migrant children legal access to basic services including education, healthcare and child protection. However, migrants face practical obstacles to access, such as negative attitudes towards migrant children, fear of authorities, lack of understanding of policies and procedures

by officials and migrants themselves, weak capacity of service providers to support migrant children, and poor ability to pay for associated costs. Thus, an estimated 50 per cent of migrant children are out of school and only 25 per cent are accessing healthcare. In terms of detention, a crackdown on illegal-entry persons led to the detention of more than an estimated 100 children and their families, many of whom are refugees and asylum seekers, at the Central Immigration Centre in Bangkok. UNICEF and its partners continue to strongly advocate with and provide technical support to the Government on finding alternatives to the detention of children in immigration centres. Though significant progress was achieved during the last quarter of 2018, much remains to be done to ensure a systematic and sustainable approach.

No major natural hazards struck Thailand in 2018, although the country remains vulnerable on this front. The effects of climate change have raised the risks of natural and human-induced disasters, threatening economic development and livelihoods. The drive to self-sufficiency in disaster preparedness and response has already paid dividends. Thailand appears to be ready to handle all but the largest natural disasters without significant external support.

D

ACHIEVEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN 2018

I. EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)

UNICEF engaged with the drafting of the National ECD Act, which was approved by the Cabinet in October and by the Council of State in December 2018.

In partnership with the Department of Local Administration (DLA) and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, UNICEF supported the expansion of ECD demonstration centres to 24 provinces. The ECD demonstration programme is aligned with the national reform agenda whereby DLA will improve the quality of its ECD centres to meet national Early Learning Development Standards, including through the use of demonstration centres in each province.

Several tools and resources were developed in 2018 to support the demonstration programme, including a training curriculum for ECD professionals and the nutrition and hygiene guidelines for ECD centres, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).

MICS data (including provincial data) underpinned the development of provincial ECD plans in 2018 through a UNICEF partnership with the MoE. UNICEF's technical support ensured the alignment of these provincial plans with national ECD priorities, and the use of results-based management (RBM) approaches to planning and the capacity development of a resource team within the MoE to take the lead on future planning exercises.



Based on the findings of the Knowledge Attitude and Practices (KAP) survey of decision-makers and priorities identified, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the MoPH to strengthen their communication efforts to reach parents and caregivers with information to improve their health literacy and support positive behaviours. Most notably, UNICEF co-led the creation of a joint UNICEF-MoPH platform, 'Early Moments Matter on Mobile', – developed in 2018 and launching in 2019 – established to send daily parenting tips and advices to parents of children aged 0-6. The platform is understood to be a world first of its kind with an aim to reach all parents nationwide with instantaneous two-way communication platform. Parenting Guidelines were launched in August with

UNICEF support, and UNICEF advocacy has ensured that parenting, including positive discipline, positive communication and good nutrition and feeding practices, has become a central component of services at ECD centres.

The public campaigns #EatPlayLove with Central Group and #Workplaceformom implemented in 2018 primarily through online channels served two objectives: 1) to mobilize public interest and action to create an enabling environment for children (such as raising awareness about the importance of ECD or advocating with employers to create breastfeeding rooms in the workplace); and 2) to reach parents with information that allows them to practice positive care and parenting.

II. ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand was a trailblazer in the "Generation Unlimited" initiative, a new global partnership of young people, the private sector, governments and civil society that aims to ensure all young people are in school, training or employment by 2030. Thailand was the first country to organize the Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge: Over 50 youth aged 14-24 from diverse backgrounds, including those from juvenile training centres and those living with HIV and disabilities, gathered for a three-day boot-camp in Bangkok in October to unleash their creativity and develop solutions to address pressing challenges they face in their daily lives. Five winning teams received seed grants and mentoring opportunities to further test and validate their ideas in their communities.

In the context of addressing Thailand's high adolescent pregnancy rate, UNICEF Thailand provided assistance to the MoPH to integrate qualitative adolescent pregnancy-related data as collected by a number of hospitals and clinics into the existing reproductive data management system. This integration is aimed at generating more accurate information on why the rate is so high with the aim of better addressing the root causes, given the disruptive impact of teen pregnancy on the lives of young women.

Younger generations are spending more and more time online (40-50 hours per week), with internet connectivity at 97 per cent and only slightly lower for mobile technology, which makes online media the most strategic platform to reach young people.

Over 770,000 adolescents used the UNICEF-supported online health platform Lovecarestation.com in 2018, particularly for information on contraception and teenage pregnancy. This was a significant jump from 150,000 users in 2017. Moreover, in 2018, 7,209 young people registered for its online counselling and referral services, the majority (5,334) being girls aged 10-25 years. Furthermore, the site also expanded to include information and counselling for men who have sex with men and transgender people. Young men having sex with men are the only population group with an increasing HIV infection rate. For the very first time, Lovecarestation featured information and counselling on mental health.

Mental health training was also added to the MoPH's capacity development of 2,053 health professionals – mainly nurses, psychologists and health development officers. The MoPH also trained 200 teachers from schools in Bangkok on psychological first-aid, mental health screening and the referral system. UNICEF



© UNICEF Thailand/2018/Preechapanich

Thailand and the MoPH developed two screening tools in 2018: A patient health questionnaire for adolescents to identify depression and a Thai youth checklist to assess mental health overall. The mental health of more than 188,000 adolescents in schools was assessed in 2018 using the new tools.

Thanks to the training sessions for pharmacy staff and nurses, organized by UNICEF in collaboration with Path2Health, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and the Pharmacies Association, there are now 92 pharmacies and 88 hospitals in Bangkok – from 30 and 44 respectively in 2017 – with at least one staff trained to provide adolescent-sensitive counselling, conduct an initial health screening and make an appropriate referral to medical or other social services.

With the goal of helping vulnerable youths improve their prospects of finding decent employment, over 350 Thai adolescents in welfare institutions, juvenile training centres and small communities in Bangkok as well as 112 migrants (aged 10-19 and 20-24) in Fang district were engaged in life skills education, sports for development, job readiness coaching, and links to job placement opportunities with local businesses.

By the end of 2018, 6,950 migrants were enrolled in the community-based health insurance scheme that UNICEF Thailand is supporting in Tak province; of these 1,622 received health services in 2018.

Unleashing youth participation, creativity and innovation was the ethos behind U-Report Thailand. In 2018, U-Report, reached 10,000 users in Thailand – two thirds of whom are adolescent girls aged 15-19. About one quarter of them, on average, responded to each of the 25 opinion polls that were conducted in 2018 using mobile technology.

III. EDUCATION

The engagement on key education legislation built upon UNICEF's year-long successful advocacy for the Equitable Education Fund, which aims to address inequities in education and support the education of disadvantaged children. The Fund was established in May 2018 through the Equitable Education Fund Act. UNICEF was invited to be a member of the Committee to draft secondary legislation for the Fund, helping to develop its principles and modes of operation. UNICEF successfully argued that the Fund should be a catalyst for the entire education plan and budget and should support research and information management for more effective and equity-focused planning, including around access and retention of migrant children living in Thailand.

UNICEF developed a Life Skills Education partnership with Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC) to develop a new skills framework for education

in Thailand and strengthen Life Skills Education in the curriculum and teacher training systems. This work will involve a wide range of education stakeholders, including private sector representatives and young people.

Language remains a key barrier to learning for children who do not speak Thai as their mother tongue, with an absence of national strategies to support their specific learning needs. At the MoE in September 2018, UNICEF and Mahidol University launched the results of a 10-year longitudinal research of the mother tongue-based education programme in the southern border provinces of Thailand. The programme, supported and documented by UNICEF, focuses on mother tongue-based instruction in the early grades as a bridge to the national language and has transformed literacy and learning outcomes for children whose mother tongue is not Thai. The publication also includes



recommendations for scaling up the approach to other schools in the far south and other parts of Thailand, and advocacy with policy-makers will continue in 2019, including on the draft National Language Policy.

As part of its advocacy for equity in education, UNICEFThailand convened a human-centred design co-creation exercise bringing together private sector partners and local education authorities and schools in Fang District, Chiang Mai, to support planning to strengthen migrant education and learning. Several innovative initiatives were identified to strengthen education provision for migrants and during the year over 500 migrant children accessed education in Chiang Mai with UNICEF support.

UNICEF began documenting the results and lessons learned of a programme providing education for disadvantaged children in Mae Hong Son, where

over 1,000 children from 33 Highlander communities are enrolled in schools with UNICEF support. UNICEFThailand is amassing a body of knowledge on small-school management initiatives that can be used to advocate for greater investment in disadvantaged communities as well to replicate good practice in school mapping, budget allocation and teacher recruitment in remote areas.

These remote communities are served by the UNICEF-supported mobile library initiative, which has encouraged more children to read books, part of a push to improve literacy levels in disadvantaged communities. Supported by UNICEF private sector partner TOPS, the programme expanded to the most remote part of Tak province in 2018 and is now working with 51 schools and over 2,700 children.

IV. CHILD PROTECTION

Work to strengthen Thailand's child protection system in 2018 focused on four major thrusts: legislative revision; national level advocacy on the system structure and child protection workforce composition; capacity development of child protection personnel in sub-districts and provinces; and strengthening protection frameworks for migrants and stateless children and children in the southern border provinces.

To reinforce protection for migrant, refugee and stateless children, UNICEFThailand and the European Union embarked on a multi-year initiative, 'Protecting children affected by migration in Southeast, South and Central Asia.'

UNICEF Thailand's advocacy with UNHCR, IOM and NGOs to end immigration detention of migrant children in favour of release to families during case review achieved a major result. When their advocacy began, Thailand still held nearly 50 children in immigration detention, some of whom had been detained for months. Many were asylum seekers whose claims were being assessed by UNHCR. By the end of 2018, most children had been released from the central Immigration Detention Centre in Bangkok either to the community, to shelters with

their mothers, or to foster care. In addition to this successful policy advocacy, UNICEF Thailand provided technical support on both an inter-ministerial MoU as well as on standard operating procedures relating to alternatives to immigration detention for children.

Capacity development of child protection teams in sub-districts progressed – with a view to improve detection and management of child protection cases at the community level. In 2018, more than 200 sub-districts in 21 UNICEF pilot provinces received capacity development in child prevention, detection, response and referral. A total of 25,024 children were screened for child protection risks, a record achieved on the back of previous efforts to improve detection of cases at the community level.

Promising results came from a new UNICEFThailand partnership with the Inquiry Official Association of Thailand, which developed the capacity of 51 female inquiry officials across the country on child protection skills. In police stations, these officers are often assigned to collect evidence from child victims of crime so trainees could potentially play the role of de facto child protection focal points in their offices.

Through the Office of the Attorney General, specialized child protection training continued for the third year for an additional 31 public prosecutors, with the result that prosecutors who have completed this specialized child protection training are now present in 41 out of Thailand's 77 provinces. The objective is to have national coverage of trained prosecutor focal points who will have adequate knowledge and skills for addressing children's cases and for treatment of children in the provincial justice system.

In a new joint initiative with the Central Juvenile and Family Court, UNICEF supported a workshop on alternatives to detention attended by 103 professional judges and 82 psychologists of Juvenile and Family Courts. Thanks to a briefing session given by UNICEF Thailand in Udon Thani, 2,500 lay judges have improved their knowledge of international standards of juvenile justice.

Work on strengthening alternatives to detention and ending violence in juvenile justice institutions continued through a review of policies and

informational sessions for directors of juvenile justice institutions. The application of pre-trial alternatives to detention increased from 1,468 cases in 2017 to 2,765 cases in 2018. Another significant result was the expansion of the child safeguarding policy to cover all 29 government residential child care institutions.

Similar activities were pursued with partners in the southern border provinces, where children face unique challenges related to armed violence. More than 160 child protection professionals, security personnel and NGO staff took part in a training workshop on child protection by the Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre and the MSDHS, aimed at raising awareness of child protection issues and approaches, enabling exchanges on organizational child protection roles and responsibilities, creating common understanding on critical practices of detection and referral of child protection cases, and reinforcing networks between diverse protection actors to secure protection results for children.



© UNICEF Thailand/2012/Jingjai

V. SOCIAL POLICY

Successes achieved in equity-driven social policy over the year have cemented UNICEF Thailand's position as a key advisor to government partners on data for children, entrenching the use of evidence to inform policies and child-focused budgeting.

Research generated with UNICEF Thailand's support guided major development blueprints in these sectors, extending to the 20-year national development strategy. Data from MICS 5 were heavily used. Survey findings informed, for example, the National Economic and Social Development Board third quarter social outlook analysis on ECD outlining priority areas for investment, which generated interest among Cabinet members.

An outstanding testament to the importance of MICS data was the decision in 2018 by the NSO and the BoB to include MICS 6 in the list of surveys to be funded by the national budget. This is a much welcome decision and a strong indication of the value associated with MICS datasets by the Government. Such a decision will ensure continuous availability of data for a range of SDGs, with the much-needed disaggregation by different indicators to enable monitoring of the implementation of outcomes for children.

UNICEF Thailand technical guidance to two of the key members of the National Committee on Sustainable Development – NESDC and NSO – led to the establishment of an important basis for SDG implementation. The groundwork in 2018 towards nationalization of SDG 1.2 established with the adoption of the child multidimensional poverty index undertaken with the NESDC set a good-practice precedent in Thailand for at-scale consultations on nationalization of other SDGs led by the NSO. The global sharing of the Thai experience with peer countries who have opted for the multidimensional poverty index at the OPHI Forum in late 2018, also helped inform approaches to nationalization of SDG 1.

Increased capacity in cross-sectoral planning and budgeting, and provincial capacity for planning and budgeting on ECD were notable social policy results in 2018 through a partnership between UNICEF, the MoE, BoB and Thammasat University. As a result, 70 provincial teams successfully developed



and received approval for their provincial ECD plans and budgets. The documentation of this result will serve as a solid model to inform the ongoing efforts of the BoB and MoE to prepare a cross-sectoral multi-year framework for budgeting, essential for the achievement of national ECD strategic plan results.

Another key priority was capacity building of the Government to think beyond performance monitoring and using evaluation to make evidence-based policies. Success is marked by the adoption and dissemination of a national case study on national evaluation capacity, and the public discussions on the use of evaluation by the National Legislative Assembly that followed. Moreover, the Thailand Evaluation Network decided to boost the capacity and use of the professional evaluators' network with the creation of an in-service training centre for evaluation within Kasetsart University.



© UNICEF Thailand/2016/Thuentap

VI. SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand and its partners ensured that the widely acclaimed child support grant (CSG) continued to be a headline topic of discussion at national level. Significantly, the number of beneficiaries of the grant rose to 600,000 more than four times the take-up in its first year of operation (2015). The 600-baht monthly cash transfer has proven a vital fillip to poor families – particularly impoverished young parents – helping them to cover basic child needs for food, clothes and toys. Further, given the high proportion of teenage and young mothers among the beneficiaries, the CSG is also supporting the well-being of vulnerable adolescents.

One of the highlights of the year was the official announcement in August by Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-ocha of the Government's intention to expand the CSG to children up to six years of age. This announcement is a recognition that the current age-three cut-off misses a crucial period of early child development, making it that much more difficult for many girls and boys in Thailand to have a better start in life. Extension of the CSG, scheduled for a vote in early 2019, is sure to be closely followed in the region, where it has been hailed as a model

for equity-enhancing child social protection.

Several factors were instrumental to achieving this fantastic result. One was a national evaluation of the impact of the CSG, funded by the Government and UNICEF Thailand and led by the respected Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI). The data-rich findings on the scheme's impact revealed both the big plusses of cash assistance and a stark fact: large-scale exclusion. Tens of thousands of children who should benefit are being left out because of the very low yearly income ceiling (36,000 baht) set as the criteria for eligibility. The evidence on exclusion, in particular, proved to be a game-changer in the willingness and appetite of policy-makers to review the grant's conditionality rationale and impact.

Public advocacy for the CSG was successfully coupled with individual high-level lobbying. Personal advocacy by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore during her visit to Thailand helped elevate the commitment of the Government for further investment in children, including an expansion of the CSG to cover children aged under six.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ADVOCACY

In 2018, UNICEF Thailand's voice and reach achieved a wider echo than ever before, with this digital growth instrumental for its advocacy efforts. UNICEF Thailand's Facebook page recorded 60 million reaches in 2018, double the total of the previous year. The number of online Facebook and Twitter followers grew by 25.75 per cent, for a total of 245,262 followers on both platforms.

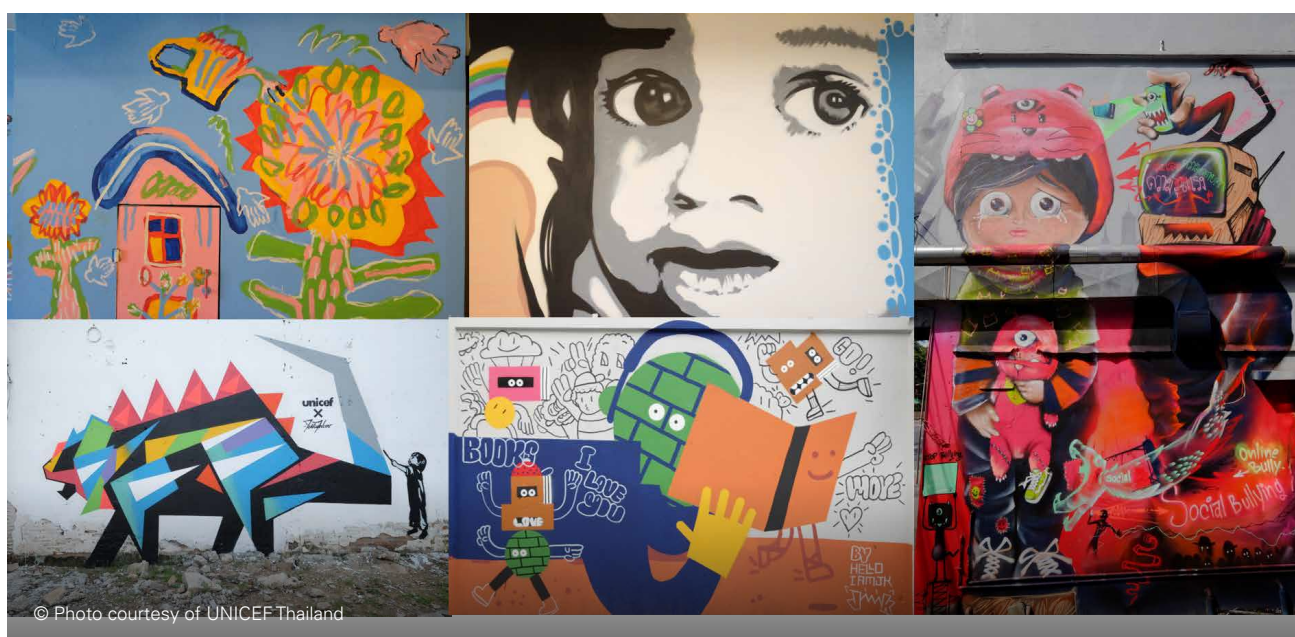
One of the key successful advocacy initiatives in 2018 was UNICEF Thailand's 70th Anniversary campaign conducted in phases: celebrating the progress achieved for children in the country and recognizing the unsung heroes behind those successes; and then highlighting the remaining key challenges for children, and a call to action for all stakeholders to commit to addressing those challenges. The campaign rallied a wide range of strategic partners, from high-level government officials at ministerial level to the private sector, civil society, celebrities including artists, the media, as well as young people and the general public. The public took note: There were over 20 million reaches online during August to December. Over 20,000 people signed a petition through Art for the Future, which showed the different barriers blocking children in Thailand from having a fair chance in life while also inspiring people to get involved and become UNICEF supporters. Art for

the Future's flagship video became the first UNICEF Thailand video to amass 1 million views on YouTube.

Other notable campaigns that galvanized a wide audience included the #WorkplaceforMom campaign, YM2M Love Care Station, U-Report Act Out Loud and #EatPlaylove. In addition, UNICEF Thailand adapted messages for a Thai audience from several global campaigns, including #GenerationUnlimited and #LongestGoal competition during the World Cup.

There were over 2,655 mentions of UNICEF in national newspapers, TV, magazines and online media, an increase from 1,934 mentions in 2017, driven by strong content and media partnerships, as well as multiple campaigns implemented during the year.

During 2018, initiatives such as the Blue Carpet Show for UNICEF, the Expo focusing on early childhood development with Central Group, and #ThaiforChildreninAfrica, were supported through different communication activities. Key communication support included celebrity engagement, video content and other communication material production which also involved organizing field missions for celebrities, as well as media engagement and visibility generation, and social media support.



© Photo courtesy of UNICEF Thailand

The Blue Carpet Show, a television variety show launched by UNICEF Thailand and the first of its kind in Asia, brought together more than 40 high-profile celebrities and influencers to garner public support for vulnerable children by raising awareness of issues facing children in Thailand and around the world. The show engaged over two million viewers for two hours of prime time giving them opportunity to better understand UNICEF's efforts to improve the lives of children.

Programme effectiveness was also enhanced with a new initiative launched in October called I Am UNICEF. Through this platform, volunteers can sign up for activities that support UNICEF Thailand's work, for example in advocacy, educational materials and donations. Over 11,000 people had registered on the platform by the end of December, with

1,820 active supporters devoting 320 hours volunteering on behalf of children. This supporter base will allow UNICEF to further amplify its messages in 2019 and create more opportunities to advance children's wellbeing in Thailand and strengthen UNICEF's brand in the country.

Following the completion of a KAP baseline survey on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of parents, adolescents and decision-makers, advocacy and C4D strategies were developed for four priority issues (ECD, equity, adolescent health, and violence against children). The KAP survey provided formative inputs for designing social and behaviour change communication strategy and activities, with C4D activities implemented to support the achievement of programme goals for children.

VIII. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND BUSINESS PRINCIPLES

In 2018, the focus of UNICEF Thailand's efforts was to secure commitment from leaders of industry for integrated partnerships with UNICEF at scale, including dedicating core assets, advocacy efforts and financial contributions to improving the lives of children in Thailand. There were four priority areas for corporate engagement: (1) ECD and family-friendly workplaces; (2) adolescent education, skills and pathways to decent employment; (3) migrant children's access to social services; and last but not least, (4) integrating child rights into Thailand's corporate sustainability frameworks.

In terms of ECD and family-friendly workplaces, UNICEF launched two major initiatives in 2018: first, the partnership with the Central group for the EatPlayLove Expo, which toured 10 Central malls across the country, raising awareness about the importance of ECD; and second, a campaign to support breastfeeding in the workplace, conducted with Sansiri, Delta Group, DTAC (Telenor's subsidiary) and other partners and launched during Breastfeeding Week.

For the Generation Unlimited initiative, UNICEF Thailand's efforts in 2018 focused on developing new partnerships with key corporate leaders in education and pathways to employment for young

people. Thailand's hosting of visits by the UNICEF Executive Director and the East Asia and Pacific Regional Director provided unique opportunities to engage at the highest level with captains of industry such as the Charoen Pokphand Group, Sansiri, the Petroleum Authority of Thailand Public Company Limited, and the Stock Exchange of Thailand, which



© UNICEF Thailand/2011/Athit



the collective revenue of corporate leaders engaged during these visits represents more than 30 per cent of Thailand's GDP. These engagements created opportunities for UNICEF to discuss a range of critical partnerships towards Generation Unlimited. These engagements also resulted in a key partnership towards thought leadership with the Thailand Development Research Institute to better map out the challenges facing young people's learning and employability and articulate a common national vision around some of the solution pathways at national scale.

In terms of migrant children's access to social services, UNICEF Thailand's engagement with the private sector focused on the real-estate and construction sector. In March 2018, UNICEF, Baan Dek Foundation and corporate partners, including Sansiri, launched a report entitled "Building Better Futures in Thailand" based on the joint initiative to help children living in construction site camps gain access to education, health and a protective environment. This report identified the challenges facing an extremely vulnerable child population estimated in the tens of thousands living in and

around construction sites in Thailand, and recommendations for addressing these challenges. UNICEF Thailand's vision is to achieve an industry-wide commitment to take this framework to scale to reach all children living in construction site camps in Thailand.

In terms of integrating child rights into Thailand's corporate sustainability frameworks, the focus in 2018 was on developing strategic partnerships with the Stock Exchange of Thailand and Thailand's Global Compact Network. These partnerships aim to create opportunities for capacity building, reporting and investment incentives for the corporate sector—particular top-listed companies—to better protect and promote child rights in line with UNICEF's "Better Business for Children" initiative.



UNICEF THAILAND

19 Phra Atit Road
Pranakorn, Bangkok 10200
Thailand

Website: www.unicef.or.th
Telephone: +66 2 356 9499
Email: thailandao@unicef.org