In 2019, UNICEF celebrated 30 years since the signing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). 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 visit of UNICEF’s Deputy Executive Director. This high-level visit presented a strategic opportunity for advocating at the most senior levels of government, and with private sector leaders for transformative changes for children in Thailand in critical areas highlighted in this report. This was also the third year of the 2017-2021 Country Programme. With an annual programme budget of US$11.39 million, UNICEF managed a total of 68 strategic partnerships with 33 government departments and 35 civil society groups.

UNICEF Thailand undertook a Mid-Term Review of its Country Programme (2017-2021) in 2019, sharpening its strategic focus in line with national and global priorities. The programme was re-aligned to target more fully the intergenerational cycle of inequities and deprivation for children in the first and second decades of life, concentrating on building sustainable systems and policy reform.

To that end, in 2019, Thailand took the next step forward for its investment in Early Childhood Development (ECD) through targeted legislation, improved quality ECD services and social transfer grants for families with young children. The National Early Childhood Development Act was enacted and implemented. The emphasis in ECD model centres, which now benefit up to 66,000 children, was on capacity development with almost 800 teachers and caretakers receiving training on quality pedagogical care while over 1,800 teachers at ECD centres nationwide were trained on newly developed Nutrition and Hygiene Guidelines.

The child support grant (CSG) was once again a headline government policy and a subject of research at national level. Advocacy conducted by UNICEF in partnership with a coalition of national civil society organizations resulted in the expansion of the grant, following the completion of a flagship impact evaluation co-funded by UNICEF, to cover children up to six years of age from families with an annual income under THB 100,000 (approx. USD 3,000). Over 1 million children now benefit from the scheme and when fully implemented in 2024 it will reach 1.8 million children.

Over the year, UNICEF Thailand focused on strengthening systems to improve learning outcomes, in both primary and secondary education. National literacy promotion was supported by UNICEFs’ first ever literacy campaign “Every Child Can Read” which reached over 10,000 children nationwide. Together with partners, UNICEF advocated for the introduction of a competency-based curriculum as well as a development of a national skills
framework to promote 21st century skills, so that when students graduate they are workplace ready. Nearly 30,000 adolescents and young people actively engaged through online platforms to contribute their feedback on required skills and aspirations to inform the process.

UNICEF also further prioritized action in 2019 on improving young people’s employability, especially those who were disadvantaged and out-of-school. A secondary landscape review on adolescent and youth employability was conducted to inform future planning and identify current gaps. In addition, a model to promote practical skills for job readiness and future employment for vulnerable adolescents and youth, especially those who have dropped out of school, was developed and promoted, benefiting 992 young people. The lessons learned from the implementation of this model will also be used for future planning of programmes to promote adolescent and youth skills development, in particular 21st century, vocational and entrepreneurial skills.

In 2019 UNICEF Thailand continued its support to adolescents’ access to health information via an online health platform, Lovecarestation.com. Throughout the year, 1.8 million young people accessed information, referral and counselling services on sexual, reproductive and mental health through this website.

In 2019 UNICEF continued to support government efforts to better protect migrant and stateless children. Integration of migrant children in Thai public schools was promoted by creating effective linkages between policy, practice and evidence. The research on promising practices on integrated migrant education was completed and disseminated among policymakers. More than 1,300 migrant children were enrolled in public schools in Chiang Mai and Ranong through UNICEF direct support in model schools to inform policy reform and implementation. In addition, more than 13,000 migrants (including some 3,500 children) accessed a low-cost community-based health insurance in Tak province. An inter-ministerial Memorandum of Understanding and associated standard operating procedures to end immigration detention of children were signed, with children and their mothers being released from detention in early 2019. UNICEF also supported the placement of a child protection officer in the Mae Sot immigration facility to screen for migrant children at risk prior to any return to Myanmar. UNICEF continued to support the government on child protection capacity development among a range of stakeholders in armed-violence-affected southern Thailand.

Across the lifecycle of children, child protection against violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation remains a top priority. An innovative surveillance and case management system known as “ChildShield” was developed to enhance detection and reporting in the public health sector while a campaign for the use of the government’s 24-hour Helpline 1300 resulted in an increase in the number of calls from 6,000 per month to over 14,000. Support to the capacity development of public prosecutors and judges nationwide resulted in an increase in the rate of application of pre-trial alternatives to detention in qualified cases from 34% in 2018 to 47% in 2019. A number of key milestones were achieved in 2019 for Thailand’s investment in generating and using data on children to inform policy, planning and budgeting. First, the data collection for the sixth round of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was completed in 2019 thanks to a partnership between UNICEF and the National Statistical Office. Second, the results of the 4th National Disability survey highlighted the need for a review of the disability grant system which currently only services 52 per cent of the 139,000 children in Thailand living with a disability. Finally, the first-ever official measure of Child Multidimensional Poverty Index was adopted, showing that more than 1 in every 5 children (22 per cent) is multidimensionally poor, highlighting the importance of investing in children to achieve the 20-year National Strategy objectives.

Two new partnerships developed in 2019 are expected to have a catalytic impact on national policy, strengthening public finance for key strategies and plans related to children in Thailand. A partnership between UNICEF and the Fiscal Policy Office (FPO) in the Ministry of Finance, will help scale up work on Public Finance for Children (PF4C) and social protection while a new partnership with Parliament Budget Office (PBO) will contribute to promoting evidence-based and child-sensitive budget decisions.

In 2019, UNICEF Thailand continued to have its voice heard with an estimated 70 million reaches recorded online and through traditional media. A campaign to end violence against children (EVAC) recorded over 9 million reaches itself alone and over the course of the year there were over 2,600 mentions of UNICEF in national newspapers, TV, magazines and online media. Supporter engagement was enhanced by two activities in 2019. The successful continuation of I Am UNICEF saw the volunteer platform become the second largest in the country with approximately 13,000 registered individuals and 1,600 active supporters volunteering on behalf of children. The fundraising Blue Carpet Show for UNICEF now in its second year, reached 66.3 million people in its bid to promote UNICEF’s efforts to improve the lives of children while raising awareness of issues facing children in Thailand and around the world.
UPDATE ON THE CONTEXT AND SITUATION OF CHILDREN

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted thirty years ago in 1989. Thailand signed and ratified the CRC in 1992 binding itself to the protection of, and respect for, the full range of rights of all children. The years since have been marked by many achievements and successes for children and their rights; however, many children still do not get a fair chance for a bright future and the possibility to realize their full potential.

The ambitious targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) drew one step closer in 2019 and pressures to address roots of inequity and to “leave no child behind” have intensified. SDG global rank for Thailand is 59 out of 156 countries, with an SDG score of 69.2, higher than the regional average.¹ The 2019 Voluntary National Review² (VNR) for Thailand prioritized the empowerment of people and communities as the main theme, highlighting progress in reducing malnourishment in young children, and reducing educational disparity. Thailand’s Human Development Index (HDI) is 0.765³, the developing country whose HDI has improved the

¹ SDG Index 2018
² VNR 2019
³ UNDP Human Development Report 2019
most from 2013 to 2018. When discounted for inequality however, Thailand’s HDI falls by 16.9 per cent to 0.635. Six million Thais live below the national poverty line, including approximately 1.5 million children. Furthermore, economic growth in 2019 is expected to slow to 2.7% of GDP (lower than earlier predictions of 3.8%).

A new, broader measure of poverty shows that 22 per cent of children in Thailand live in multidimensional deprivation, according to the Child Multidimensional Poverty Index (CMPI) released in September by the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) with support from UNICEF. The MPI measures multiple deprivations beyond monetary poverty alone and reflects on four areas relevant to children: education, child welfare, living standards and health. The highest deprivations were noted in education and health, and rates are higher in rural areas and in the Northeast region.

Following March elections, Thailand’s first democratically elected government in five years reinforced commitment to long-term goals in its 20-year National Strategy (Thailand 4.0, 2018-2037) for attaining high-income country status through broad reforms that address economic stability and human capital development articulated in 23 masterplans adopted in 2019. Of these, seven relate directly to children, (such as lifelong human development, assistance and capacity-building for the disadvantaged, including children, stateless and those living with HIV, increasing social participation and awareness), while another four relate to them indirectly or include a sub-component on children’s issues (such as prevention of abuses of children in tourism sector).

Thailand took a step forward in its investment in Early Childhood Development (ECD) in 2019 by implementing the National Early Childhood Development Act and by the expanding the Child Support Grant (CSG), a headline government policy, to cover children up to six years of age, up from the current limit of three years, as well as increasing the annual income threshold from 36,000 THB to 100,000 THB (USD 3,000). When fully implemented, the scheme will reach almost 1.8 million children.

The Royal Thai Government (RTG) approved the Regional Action Plan for the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth in October, a step towards a flexible education approach for the 30 percent of 15-year old’s dropping out of high school and the 15 percent of all young people in Thailand aged 15-24 years who are not in any kind of education, employment or training (NEET).

Member States at the 35th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok in November 2019, chaired by Thailand, signed a Reaffirmation of Commitment to Advancing the Rights of the Child, committing leaders to 10 actions including accelerating efforts to remove barriers hindering child rights, safeguarding rights of children to express themselves, and increasing social investments to lift children out of poverty. Member States also adopted two further declarations; the ASEAN Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration and another committing to further protect children from online exploitation and abuse.

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4 CMPI Report, Sep 2019
5 World Bank, 2019
6 Report on national strategic plans, 2019
Migrant children in Thailand continue to be among the most vulnerable. A lack of legal identity and residence puts them at risk of arrest, detention and deportation. In a move which aligns government policy with the CRC, a Memorandum of Understanding on the Determination of Measures and Approaches Alternative to Detention of Children in Immigration Detention Centers was adopted in Jan 2019, and its associated standard operating procedures in September, establishing a practical link between Thai migration and child protection law. 2019 also marked the second year of a cross-regional EU-UNICEF migration programme entitled ‘Protecting children affected by migration in Southeast, South and Central Asia’, of which Thailand is a beneficiary.

Mental health, especially of adolescents, is emerging as an urgent priority for children in Thailand. The most recent figures regarding mental health of students aged 13-17 in Thailand show that 1 in 10 have attempted suicide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is one of the leading causes of illness and disability amongst adolescents, with mental health conditions accounting for 16 percent of the global burden of disease and injury in people aged 10-19 years.

The effects of climate change have again been felt in Thailand this year. Floods in 32 provinces affected more than 2.6 million people from over 400,000 households. In Ubon Ratchathani, almost 160,000 people were affected, including up to 3,500 children. Dangerous levels of air pollution were frequently detected in many urban areas of Thailand, forcing the closure of schools for several days. Exposure to high pollution levels affects children in irreversible ways, damaging brain cells, affecting cognitive and intellectual development with long term implications on future learning, welfare and earning ability.
MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS AND DRIVERS OF RESULTS

Introduction

The Country Programme supports Thailand’s aspiration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, as articulated in the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP). It is firmly linked to the outcome strategies of the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF) 2017-2021.

Following a scheduled mid-term review of its programme this year, UNICEF sharpened its strategic focus in line with national and global priorities. In the long-term (a vision for 2037 in line with the 20-year National Strategy) UNICEF envisions that all children and adolescents in Thailand, especially the most disadvantaged and excluded, have their rights progressively fulfilled and develop to their full potential in an inclusive and protective society. The principal pre-condition for this change is that the intergenerational cycle of inequities and deprivation is halted and children and adolescents from deprived and vulnerable backgrounds have an equal chance of reaching their full potential.

To deliver this change, in 2019 UNICEF focused on systems building and reform through policy development, demonstration models, and decentralized government budgeting. We also developed our convening role and aim for a catalytic role in decision making by strengthening data systems, public finance mechanisms, public-private partnerships and national evaluation capacity. We strengthened the coherence of various parts of our programme to link the first and the second decades, especially to address inter-generational cycles of inequity and deprivation.
What we did: Life cycle approach

The 20-year National Strategy, the national reform agenda, and the 12th NESDP address social inequality as a core priority in policymaking. In response to this, in 2019 UNICEF strengthened its programming focus through a life cycle approach to link the early and later years (first and the second decade) of a child’s life.

First Decade

Evidence shows that investing in children early builds the foundation for their future development and learning, with long-term gains in health, nutrition, education and future employment. Many young children in Thailand still do not have equitable access to quality care, education and support in their early years. Providing support to the Government in defining national policies and systems for ECD, education reform, child protection and social protection, is at the heart of the Country Programme. We have also worked with teachers, parents and children directly.

One of the flagship impact evaluations on the Child Support Grant (CSG), aimed at evaluating the impact of the CSG and assessing the targeting quality of the programme, was finalized this year with UNICEF support, and played a catalytic role in expanding the coverage of the scheme by lifting the age threshold from under 3 years to 6 years of age and to almost triple the income threshold of the eligibility criteria. The key features of the evaluation were its country-led nature, its rigorous evidence, combined with high-level policy advocacy. Over one million children now benefit from the expanded CSG, and when fully implemented in 2024, the scheme will reach almost 1.8 million children.

In early 2019, the National ECD Act became law, paving the way for access to quality ECD services for more than four million children up to six years of age, as well as up to 600,000 pregnant women. The ECD Operational Plan, adopted by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in October, provides guidance for the development of ECD plans at the provincial level where authorities will be accountable for results for children.

A national curriculum for caretakers of children aged 3 to 36 months was established following an analysis of the “3-3 challenge” (3 months to 3 years) in the second half of the year. The “3-3 challenge” refers to the need for children, in the period between the end of parental leave (3 months) and entry into a pre-primary programme (3 years), to be cared for in an environment that promotes optimal development with access to quality affordable childcare.

The ECD demonstration programme, which expanded to 24 provinces in 2018, aims to improve the quality of ECD centres for children aged 3 to 5 years, meeting national targets in line with the national reform agenda. This expansion, benefiting up to 66,000 children in Thailand, also provided for the training of 783 teachers and caretakers from 275 ECD centres nationwide in 2019. 44 teachers and caretakers from 15 ECD centres in 12 provinces were certified as Lead Trainers in line with the Early Learning Development Standards and Parenting programme.

UNICEF this year expanded its support of parents of young children by addressing malnutrition with capacity building of ECD professionals and with the development
of tools for parents. Nutrition and Hygiene Guidelines, developed by the Department of Health (DoH) in partnership with UNICEF in August 2019, will enable improved provision of quality nutrition and child-friendly spaces in ECD centres. 1,822 teachers from 1,752 ECD centres were trained on these guidelines this year. Parenting programmes in ECD centres were expanded this year with focus on the first 1,000 days, nutrition, responsive caregiving and referral systems. 3,329 parents established a parenting network to exchange ideas on nurturing care.

Nearly 18,000 parents have so far registered on the “Early Moments Matter on Mobile” (EMMM) communication platform, launched in January 2019 by the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) in partnership with UNICEF, to increase parent’s health literacy in terms of skills and knowledge on a variety of child related topics including nutrition, wellbeing, safety and protection. The EMMM Facebook page, which produces 2 to 3 articles on ECD per week, has over 68,000 followers to date, with more than 1.2 million people reached overall.

To support national literacy promotion detailed in the Master Plan of Reading Culture Promotion by the Ministry of Culture, the Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC) and the MoE, over 10,000 children engaged in UNICEF’s first ever literacy campaign in 14 schools nationwide. The programme, entitled “Every Child Can Read”, was complemented by the “A Book A Week” reading activity campaign. OBEC plans to expand the scheme to an additional 50 schools in 2020. Remote communities continued to be served this year by the UNICEF-supported mobile library initiative, part of a push to improve literacy levels in disadvantaged communities. The programme expanded to Mae Hong Son, Loei, and Tak provinces providing reading materials and active reading activities to more than 5,500 children. 24 mobile library staff were trained on material development and teaching children whose mother-tongue is not Thai.

This year UNICEF and partners completed the evidence and recommendations from a Mother Tongue Based Education (MTBE) demonstration programme in 15 schools in the southern provinces. This programme was undertaken in partnership with local education authorities and will be used to inform policy decisions to ensure access to education for children from ethnic minorities. 128 teachers were trained and 1,056 hilltribe children were supported to complete primary education.

Equitable access to quality education for disadvantaged groups was another area of enhanced strategic focus. A study entitled ‘Education Knows No Border’ was launched in December, in collaboration with the European Union, the MoE and local education authorities. It details a scalable model developed by UNICEF, to be used for policy development to ensure effective access to education for migrant children. Under the scheme, more than 1,300 migrant children were enrolled in public schools in Chiang Mai and Ranong along with vocational training activities for a further 90 students.

Much needed data on those living with disabilities, another vulnerable group caught in a cycle of inequity, was derived from the fourth National Disability Survey. UNICEF supported the National Statistical Office (NSO) to include a child disability module into the survey. Of the 139,000 children living with disabilities only half are registered in the administrative system and receive the disability allowance, and over a third are not attending school.
Second Decade

Children in the 10-19 age group (over eight million) face tremendous challenges. The adolescent birth rate (36.5 births per 1,000) remains high, and half of all new HIV infections in Thailand occur in young people aged 15 to 24. By 17 years of age, almost one-third of adolescents are already out of school while 15 per cent of all young people aged 15-24 (1.3 million) are neither employed nor in education. UNICEF focused its ‘second decade’ work on policy making and systems support, but also worked with professional providers and young people directly.

To this end, UNICEF Thailand’s education programme focused on building systems to improve learning outcomes, competency-based learning and readiness for employability in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. UNICEF partnered with the Office of Education Testing, the Office of Basic Education Commission and the MoE on systems reform towards a competency-based curriculum with an integrated skills framework informed by feedback from children and young people. Additionally, UNICEF and the National Statistics Office (NSO) introduced learning assessment modules in the MICS6 methodology for the first time, offering insights into how children learn and retain knowledge.

A scalable model for skills development for the employment of vulnerable young people was used to provide life-skills education through ‘sport for development’ activities to almost 1,000 adolescents. The programme, which will be used to advocate for policy development in this area, contained components on vocational training, market-aligned job readiness training and career counselling and was organised in cooperation with Friends International, Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection (DJOP) and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

UNICEF partnered with the DJOP, the NGO Saturday School, and King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi, to support youths from Ubekkha Detention Center in their successful bid to win the “Generation Unlimited” Global Challenge this year, based on an idea for the creation of a hiring platform for young ex-offenders. Campaigns aimed at improving young people’s engagement and participation surpassed targets; as part of the Gen U Challenge the U-report reached over 16,000 young people and the “Dare to Dream” campaign registered over 165,000 online engagements with young people.

Recognizing that mental health is the most important non-communicable health issue affecting young people in the second decade of life, UNICEF worked this year with the Department of Mental Health to develop an app aimed at promoting positive mental health in young...
people. Also, this year, 1.8 million young people accessed information, referral and counselling services on sexual, reproductive and mental health through Lovecarestation.com, an online health platform.

Across the life-cycle of children, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation continue to be priority issues for UNICEF Thailand. The need for further consideration of child protection system reform became clear in 2019. UNICEF advocated for a national visioning exercise and development of a long-term roadmap to guide inter-ministerial efforts in developing protective services, guiding and informing work on ministerial plans, the revised Child Protection Act, and the National Child Protection Strategy.

Detection and reporting of child protection cases and prevention of risks remain important areas for further development. UNICEF supported MOPH to develop “ChildShield” an innovative surveillance and case management system screening and tracking children and families at risk of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, and organizing preventative action. Launched as part of a bigger effort entitled “One Thousand Nightmares Can End with Your One Voice” UNICEF and the Department of Children and Youth collaborated on a campaign this year to increase detection of violence against children by encouraging witnesses to use the government’s 24-hour Helpline 1300. The number of reports increased from 6,000 per month to over 14,000 during the months of the campaign.

In 2019 UNICEF continued to support government efforts to better protect migrant and stateless children. In a move aligning government policy with the CRC, UNICEF provided technical support for an inter-ministerial MOU that ended pre-trial detention of immigrant children. Additionally, almost 13,000 migrants (27% of them children) accessed a low-cost community-based health insurance in Tak province, lessening the burden on the Thai national health service. UNICEF also supported the placement of a child protection officer in the Mae Sot immigration facility to screen for migrant children at risk prior to any return to Myanmar. In partnership with Chiang Mai University, UNICEF undertook research into stateless children to identify potential models for use supporting government acceleration of nationality status review for those children, and to contribute to government targets of ending statelessness by 2024.

UNICEF continued its support to the capacity development of justice actors. 132 public prosecutors trained in child protection policies are now employed in juvenile and family litigation offices in 53 (of 77) provinces nationwide resulting in an increase in the rate of application of pre-trial alternatives to detention in qualified cases: from 34% in 2018 and to 47% in 2019 (2,428 children from 5,162 cases). Child protection training sessions were also provided to 160 judges and to provincial public prosecutors through newly formed Regional Centers for Children, Youth and the Family.
Emergency Response

The needs of vulnerable or marginalized children are sometimes overlooked in general emergency response efforts. On two occasions this year UNICEF aimed to fill this gap by ensuring the wellbeing of children. In early November, 1,000 deprived families with children in flood affected areas in Ubon Ratchathani were provided cash assistance in the form of a one-off 2,000 Baht payment to cover needs and assist recovery. In addition, 1,000 school bags and learning materials were distributed at 16 schools in coordination with the Ministry of Education. In December, UNICEF supported the delivery, through a local CSO, of basic needs such as food and water to 600 Mon people, including 233 children, seeking temporary refuge in Sangkhlaburi District, Kanchanaburi, following displacement due to armed clashes near the Thai-Myanmar border. UNICEF plans to further engage with the Government to improve preparedness in the case of future emergencies.
The RTG and UNICEF continued fruitful collaboration in 2019. Significant strides were made in developing a better coordinated and coherent approach to engaging with government counterparts through joint workplans and government partnerships, thereby delivering more effective and efficient support across the different programme areas. This harmonized approach also helps to identify synergies and gaps in programming assistance, delivering better results for children.

Two new partnerships were developed in 2019 that can be expected to have a catalytic impact on national policy, strengthening public finance for key strategies and plans related to children in Thailand. A partnership between UNICEF and the Fiscal Policy Office (FPO) in the Ministry of Finance, the key body responsible for public spending and control of social and economic policy, will help scale up work around Public Finance for Children (PF4C) including support for advocacy of the CSG and strengthening the national social welfare card scheme. A new partnership with Parliament Budget Office (PBO) will contribute to promoting evidence-based and child-sensitive budget decisions through capacity building and technical assistance on PF4C. Knowledge building on PF4C in terms of 4 budget brief papers (fiscal space, health, education and social...
protection) was initiated, providing our programme team with an important tool for advocacy to improve budget allocation for children.

Several key knowledge generating activities were completed in 2019, ensuring the availability of high-quality evidence and information for programme design, monitoring and for advocacy. Among them, the CSG Impact Evaluation Report contributed to a major reform of the cash transfer programme and triggered expansion of the coverage by increasing the age threshold and income threshold, while reviews of the Mobile library and Swimsafe programmes supported future quality improvement. A formative evaluation of the Lovecarestation.com platform was initiated, to assess the functioning of the platform and results achieved over 4 years while suggesting improvements; the evaluation will be completed in early 2020.

The availability and use of reliable data is key to informed decision making. In 2019, secondary analysis of Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5 (MICS5) data led to a better understanding of the drivers of the double burden of malnutrition as well as school dropout rates at upper secondary level, triggered high-level policy discussion at the national sub-committee on teenage pregnancy, and around equity issues that affect school attendance. MICS6 data, collected from 40,000 households nationwide (undertaken this year with 70 per cent RTG funding for the first time), will be ready for rollout and interpretation in 2020.

Data gathered from 1,598 adolescents at 197 hospitals will further enhance understanding of the current state of adolescent reproductive health. An assessment of the HIV data management system completed in collaboration with UNAIDS and the Department of Disease control, produced a set of technical and operational guidelines to improve data quality and streamline the data system.

Results from the Child Multidimensional Poverty Indicator (CMPI), which show that more than 1 in every 5 children (22 percent) are multidimensionally poor, were used to underline the importance of investing in children to achieve Thai 20-year National Strategy objectives.

Thailand was selected as a recipient of the SDG Fund on social protection in 2019, one of only 36 countries worldwide. The joint programme represents an opportunity to harness a unified UN voice to better coordinate and harmonise efforts for the benefit of children and families in Thailand.
The success and sustainability of our programme relies on sound financial standing and the ability to maintain visibility and support in Thailand. Advocacy on key priority areas saw greater focus in 2019, with decision makers, stakeholders, supporters and with the public at large. Advocacy activities with the business sector created long lasting impact for children at the policy level, as well as in specific industries. Children’s rights were included in Thailand’s National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, and the Thai Construction Association issued a declaration in support of the rights of children living in construction sites while banning the use of child labour by its members.

UNICEF Thailand continued to reach large audiences both online and through traditional media, with an estimated 70 million reaches recorded, engaging over 2 million people and with almost 7 million video views. A highlight of digital engagement was the collaboration with influential social media platforms such as partnership with ‘Toolmorrow’ on advocacy for the campaign to end violence against children (EVAC); over 9 million reaches were recorded. The 2nd Blue Carpet Show for UNICEF, a fundraising TV show held in early January 2020, reached 66.3 million people, engaging almost 300,000 people on social media, generating 650 pieces of media coverage.

Over the course of the 2019 were over 2,600 mentions of UNICEF in national newspapers, TV, magazines and online media. UNICEF had the largest share of voices on children’s issues in traditional and online media, compared to other leading organizations and charities, helping to advance UNICEF’s priority agenda for child rights.

Widening the reach of UNICEF messages, an estimated 80 influencers and celebrities supported UNICEF through a total of 215 engagements including video content and other communication material production,
field visits, media engagements and social media amplification. This support contributed to drawing public interest to key issues affecting children in Thailand, promoting children’s rights, and raising awareness about UNICEF’s work to potential donors. Celebrity engagement is also an important feature in fundraising campaigns which attract high media coverage and public interest, such as the Blue Carpet Show, #ThaiforCyclone, and Box of Life campaign.

Several flagship initiatives were launched under the Global Supporter Engagement Strategy initiative, which UNICEF Thailand has been piloting. The campaign for the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC@30) involved partnering with key opinion leaders on Facebook, engaging new digital users around our advocacy messages, focusing on child participation and empowerment. Other initiatives included the ‘Dare to Dream’ campaign for promoting youth skills and employability, the launch of the #EatPlayLove campaign on the importance of the first 1,000 days of life and the launch of #ABookAWeek campaign.

Supporter engagement was also enhanced by the successful continuation of ‘I Am UNICEF’, initially launched in 2018. The volunteer platform became the second largest in the country with approximately 13,000 registered individuals and 1,600 active supporters volunteering on behalf of children. The programme is a solid contributor to our campaigns, with supporters joining advocacy activities and amplifying messages, while also helping to engage existing supporters.

This year UNICEF Thailand raised 604,897,833 THB (19,464,633 USD) from individuals and companies, an almost ten percent increase on 2018. UNICEF Thailand continues to focus on growing the number of monthly pledge donors while building loyalty amongst existing donors. Efforts in 2019 secured continued and deep-rooted commitment from many private sector donors whose financial contributions had significant impact.