Better Together
Country Stories of UNICEF Working with UN Partners

Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

This is the first iteration of a living series of country stories. We hope it will serve as inspiration for further stories from UNCTs and UNICEF Offices around the world.

This collection plots each country’s contribution towards a more unified United Nations. This is a UN that increasingly works together to improve effectiveness and efficiency, and whose relevance to the lives of the world’s most marginalized children and their communities is clear. The stories represent a diversity of regions, income levels and development contexts. While each country is at a different stage in either formally or informally implementing the collaborative approaches suggested by the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), what they share is an inspiring commitment to work together.

These are stories of making a difference to thousands of vulnerable children and their families. This is crucial in view of the post-2015 agenda and a future that is certainly growing in complexity and challenge. Through robust partnerships with UN sister agencies wherever feasible, UNICEF has a better chance of ensuring that the needs of disadvantaged children are at the heart of sustainable development. By providing examples of successfully working with other UN agencies, we hope to encourage an even greater embrace of collaboration and a UN that is ‘fit for results.’

In Nigeria, we have a clear example of how the SOPs allow for a flexible approach to UN coherence. Given the country’s highly decentralised government, the UN system decided to implement a state-level self-starter Delivering as One programme in 2009. In Benue State where UNICEF leads UN coherence efforts, the positive results are clear as efforts to promote good sanitation practices mean greater access to clean water and latrines for thousands of children and their families.

In Rwanda we see a Delivering as One pilot maturing into a global leader in integrated approaches to sustainable development. Coordinated support to Burundian refugees and One Stop Centres that support survivors of gender-based violence both offer inspiring examples of UNICEF collaboration with partner agencies. UNICEF has also taken great strides forward in tightening operations and supports the whole UN in its efforts to speak as one.

In the Philippines, clearly defined roles for UN agencies translate into an effective model of vertical coordination and results in strong impact on national policy development. In concert with three levels of government, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO successfully promote maternal and neonatal health in the country’s first official joint programme.

In Ethiopia, we see how steady, incremental UN coherence can lead to many strong results. UNICEF’s multi-sectoral response to a sudden refugee influx and the agency’s work with UNHCR meant that 140,000 South Sudanese women and children received desperately-needed assistance in a timely manner. Cost-savings in procurement and through common premises are significant. Currently UNICEF is working with the UN Country Team on implementing Harmonised Cash Transfer which will further the UN’s coherence goals.

In Jordan, we find the story of a dynamic UN Country Team finding ways to work together effectively in the context of an unprecedented global refugee crisis. Understanding that a business-as-usual approach cannot work in such an environment, the UN has taken on the ambitious but necessary role of promoting a resilience-based approach in its support of the government. Through simultaneous humanitarian and development programming, UNICEF and partner agencies offer timely and effective solutions when crises arise.

In Suriname, we have the story of a small country office struggling to make the most of scant resources. In one of South America’s most diverse nations, it seems fitting that collaboration in Suriname is about bringing together the UN to maximise results for marginalized children and youth. Adapting a common sense approach to partnership means that UNICEF shares communication talent with sister agencies. It means shared services and, for most agencies it means sharing a single building. It means an effective Joint Steering Committee and Programme Coordination Groups. But pragmatic informal approaches are made more effective through a strong mutual commitment – something noted time and again in interviews with government representatives and UN staff members across agencies.
Decentralized Delivering as One UN
In this lower middle income nation with minimal Official Development Assistance (ODA), adapting UN reform guidelines to the local environment has improved the way the UN works in Nigeria. With 168 million people and around 350 cultural and ethno-linguistic groups, implementation must account for local contexts.

Nigeria has a highly decentralised three-tiered government system. It features a Federal Capital Territory (FCT), 36 States and 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs), each with a high degree of autonomy. Given the unique system, it made most sense to the UN Country Team to commence the self-starter “Delivering as One” (DaO) approach at the state level.

With 19 agencies based in the country, the UN system is currently implementing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) III and its Action Plan 2014-2017 in pursuit of the MDGs, SDGs and other internationally-agreed development frameworks.

Reducing Duplication, Increasing Transparency
Nigeria’s experience in decentralized Delivering as One points to positive impacts on both programme and operations management. Increased collaboration also means that duplication is reduced as agencies such as UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO now conduct joint capacity development and training on Results Based Management. As well, today agencies employ the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) for all Ministries and Departments including conducting joint micro-assessments and audits for common implementing partners.

There have been improvements in common services with the states offering shared UN offices. Longer-term planning is now more effective since funding flows are better predicted and reveal gaps that require attention. The consolidated reporting of UN support has helped boost the perception of the UN as transparent.

Although it remains challenging to get all UN agencies on board, collaboration has definitely improved among the main agencies. Further, joint programmes among the main UN health agencies have been ‘strong connectors.’

The key benefit of Nigeria’s decentralized DaO is that it successfully leverages each agency’s comparative advantages and mandates so that state governments can better attain their planned targets at the sub-national level.

A Pivotal Role for UNICEF
In Nigeria, UNICEF leads in many sectors at both the federal and the state level. As a result, UNICEF is well-positioned to promote greater UN collaboration in Nigeria. The substantive spread of UNICEF, its presence at the state level, and its strong capacity coupled with the agency’s practical way of delivering on the UN system’s expectations has made UNICEF effective in promoting UN coherence in Nigeria.

In UNDAF III, UNICEF leads in the three states of Benue, Borno and Anambra. According to the UN Resident Coordinator, the agency has played “a pivotal role in encouraging the UN to Deliver as One at the sub-national level.”

In the case of Benue State, there is strong ownership of the UNDAF by the government and the UN. Coordination for DaO is led by UNICEF and the Benue Planning Commission.
UN joint work plan development activities as well as mid and annual reviews are undertaken with government ministries and departments, UN agencies and civil society organisations. The process leads to the State Governor signing Joint Work Plans with the UN Resident Coordinator thereby signaling shared commitment to the UNDAF in the state.

Given the success of DaO in Benue, the number of UN agencies, funds and programmes adopting a more coherent approach has increased steadily since 2010 when the first UN joint work plan was signed between the State and the UN system.

Joint planning and reviews between the UN and the State Ministries Departments and Agencies led by the State Planning Commission has enhanced the awareness of policy makers about UN-supported programmes.

High Level Advocacy to Promote Sanitation
UNICEF is a critical partner with the government in eliminating the practice of open defecation in the country by 2025. In June 2014, the country committed to helping 28,000 communities in 70 LGAs become Open Defecation Free by the end of 2018. UNICEF works closely with the government and other partners in the Sanitation, Hygiene and Water in Nigeria (SHAWN) project.

UNICEF is the lead agency for water supply and sanitation in Benue, a state of 5.3 million people. As the leader of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), UNICEF has been able to engage the highest levels of government. Across the country, just 49% of rural households can access safe water and only 25% have access to enhanced sanitation.

High level advocacy is coordinated by the State Planning Commission Director General who is an active participant in project activities thereby linking the State Governor and commissioners to the SHAWN initiative.

According to UNICEF Nigeria’s WASH team, “the key to our successful leadership has been the presence of comprehensive WASH engagement in the state that allowed us to frequent the state and engage regularly with key decision makers.”

UNICEF’s involvement in multiple sectors also helps the organization collaborate with UN agencies in other sectors. For instance, UNICEF’s use of Water Sanitation and Hygiene Committees has been a good entry point to promote birth registration and immunisation services.

Building on earlier successes, SHAWN II focuses on helping communities take charge of their sanitation and health and links water, sanitation and hygiene interventions to health, nutrition and education.

The project continues to make real impacts on the quality of life for thousands of Nigerians. A recent update on SHAWN in Benue highlights vital results for children and their families. For instance, procurement related to construction of 116 water supply facilities has wrapped up and will lead to 90,000 people accessing safe water.

Recently, 3 new LGAs representing 150 communities have joined the project. One hundred LGA staff members have developed skills in the Community-led Total Sanitation approach to help trigger abandonment of open defecation practices.

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As a result of UNICEF’s leadership and good results on the ground, the government now regards the agency as a partner of choice to support the state’s development efforts along with other UN agencies.

Working Together to Stop Polio
UNICEF’s collaboration with WHO to eradicate polio was crucial to one of the most successful stories in the global eradication of polio.
2015 saw the removal of Nigeria from the list of polio endemic countries. As long as the nation maintains its zero case status, it will be certified polio free in 2017.

UNICEF and WHO are core members of the Polio Emergency Operations Center. UNICEF leads the social mobilization and polio communication activities, while WHO is leading in the surveillance and mobile teams during the National Immunisation Plus Days.

With funding from the Government of Nigeria, Gavi, World Bank and the Government of Japan, UNICEF procurement systems are deployed for the supply of all vaccines for vaccine preventable diseases including polio.

In 2015, 300 million doses of polio vaccines were procured. Other development partners and donors supporting polio eradication in Nigeria include: USAID, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary, Germany, Canada, Australia, EU, UK and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The maintenance of these important gains requires further strengthening of the surveillance system, improving routine immunization performance, maintaining high quality campaigns and continuing the engagement and involvement of traditional leadership and communities.

**Partnering to Prevent HIV**

In a bid to support the rapid uptake of Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission Services, UNICEF has promoted the integration of HIV Testing and Counselling (HTC) for pregnant women in the Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Weeks which are held biannually.

The convergence programme is planned and implemented across Nigeria through the National Primary Health Care Development Agency and the State ministries of health supported by UNICEF, WHO and UNAIDS with other partners. While UNICEF and WHO support most maternal and child health interventions, UNICEF and UNAIDS support the HTC activities for pregnant women.

**Nigeria Safe School Initiative (SSI)**

A recent collaboration between UNICEF, UN Office for Project Services, and UNDP shows that when the UN works as a team, time can be saved and funds pooled in support of children. The Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) was launched in response to the Boko Haram attacks in Northern Nigeria that targeted schools and led to the abductions of hundreds of girls.

The SSI entails school-based interventions, community interventions to protect schools and special measures for vulnerable populations. Funds are channeled through the Nigeria Safe School Initiative Multi Donor Trust Fund. To date, more than 50,000 children have been helped through the SSI.
Taking Coherence to the Next Level

Rwanda has made remarkable human development progress since the 1994 genocide. Children are clearly at the heart of the national agenda, as evidenced by a sharp decline in under 5 mortality, exceptionally high primary school enrolment rates and the attainment of gender parity in primary schools.

The Government of Rwanda’s Vision 20/20 contains the country’s objective of becoming a middle-income country by 2020. Increasingly, the UN shares work and resources to help the nation realize its development goals.

In 2007, Rwanda became one of 8 UN programme countries to voluntarily pilot the Delivering as One (DaO) or One UN approach to UN reform. This approach brings together 22 UN agencies in Rwanda: 12 resident and 10 non-resident. Between 2013-2018, the combined budget of UN agencies contains approximately USD 411 million to support Rwanda’s development.

The government’s Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy and the 2013-2018 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) are closely linked. This alignment supports considerable collaboration among UN agencies and with the government.

There have been many instances of the UN collectively supporting the government with policy advice, innovations and capacity development. With a reputation for having a strong network of experts and a multilateral mandate, development partners view the UN in Rwanda favourably. Its expertise and ability to take on cross-cutting issues makes the UN useful in dealing with key issues involving children.

The Rwanda UNDAF reflects the country’s long-standing DaO status by incorporating many of the One Programme recommendations. The act of initiating the One Programme helped reinvigorate UN Rwanda’s Vision and demonstrated its ongoing relevance and ability to carry out programming work that supports the government’s development priorities.

As a result of greater coherence, UN Rwanda shares a platform for conducting mid-term and end-term evaluations as well as for planning joint field visits and joint annual reporting.

Coordinated Refugee Support

Humanitarian work with refugees in Rwanda illustrates on-the-ground results for children and their families. As of November 2015, Rwanda hosts about 47,000 Burundian refugees, 48% of whom are children. The key issues concern ongoing water treatment at Mahama camp, education attendance rates, child protection cases and the increase in childhood diseases due to the rainy season.

While the government and UNHCR coordinate the inter-agency response to the refugee situation, UNICEF is a lead in Early Childhood Development and is the UN co-coordinator for the response in WASH, Child Protection, Education, Health (with WHO and UNFPA) and Nutrition (with WFP).

The results are certainly positive: the provision of clean water meets minimum standards of 15 litres per day per person; nearly 400 children have been cured of severe acute malnutrition; UNICEF-supported immunisation against malaria and respiratory infections covered nearly 30,000 refugee children and women; 971 out of 1,200 unaccompanied minors receive care support with 100 registered cases of child protection; and nearly 12,000 children are enrolled in education orientation classes in the camp.
Programming Together: One Stop Centres
When it comes to eliminating gender-based violence, UNICEF and UN Women collaborated to provide care and support to child and adult survivors of gender-based violence. The initiative demonstrated the good results that can emerge through UN collaboration.

The multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary One Stop Centre Programme led to the creation of 16 centres providing free referral and specialised services such as gynaecological, medico-legal, mental health and social integration. Survivors can stay in safe rooms at the centres and receive basic necessities. Given the success of the programme, the Government of Rwanda now plans to scale it up by establishing a centre in all 30 districts of the country.

Savings in Business Operations
In 2014, the UNCT approved a One UN Business Operations Strategy (BOS). By the end of 2018, the goal of the BOS is to save USD 13.67 million through more streamlined and transparent business practices. The key pillars are One House, Financial Management, Procurement, ICT Services and Infrastructure, and Human Resources.

In terms of financial management, the BOS focuses on current good financial practices and plans to extend these across the UN. The expected outcome is a USD 10 million savings from currency transactions.

The BOS calls for better quality procurement through the use of Common Long Term Agreements (LTAs). Jointly prepared by the Operations Management Team (OMT) under the leadership of the Operations Chiefs of UNICEF and UNDP, 8 long term agreements (LTAs) were finalized in 2014.

The LTAs cover areas such as travel, transport and cleaning services, translation and event management services. Agreements also concern clearing agents, live streaming services and micro-assessment services. As a consequence of these LTAs, the Country Office saved USD 192,953. Additional agreements are in development to further increase efficiencies and savings.

Another priority is the implementation of the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT). The Finance Working Group is working on securing the best banking services by leveraging One UN as single unit.

UNICEF also cut costs by sharing facilities and services with other UN agencies. A 2-year agreement to store 450 cubic metres in the WFP warehouse was signed as were LTAs to deliver goods to implementing partners and beneficiaries. In chairing the UN supply team, UNICEF helps reduce transactional costs by supporting supply management. By bringing together various operations, the UN in Rwanda is expected to save up to USD 15 million.

Communicating Together
The UN Communications Group in Rwanda is a strong example of collaboration. UNICEF Rwanda’s Communications team underlines the group’s systematic way of working: “It can be deemed as a role model with a clear implementation plan for joint activities that highlights the work of the UN as well as raises key issues for children and women in Rwanda.”

As part of the DaO mandate, the United Nations in Rwanda developed a common website which unifies communication and reinforces the One UN brand. UNICEF supports the UN Communication Group (UNCG) – made up of all UN agencies - by providing strategic support in increasing the visibility of children’s issues in the country and the UN’s work in general.

The results of a more concerted effort to speak as one are positive. Improved media relations in 2014 led to a 25% increase in local and regional media coverage of field missions, events and key thematic issues over the year previous.
Working Together to Support Policy Development, Endorsement and Implementation

The country’s first joint programme - the Joint Programme on Maternal and Neonatal Health (JPMNH) - is a UNICEF partnership with UNFPA, WHO, the Government of the Philippines and the Australian Government. The programme’s objective is to support the Department of Health’s national strategy.

The JPMNH shows how through clearly-defined roles and the use of appropriate coordination tools, UNICEF and partner agencies together with government entities effectively support national health and nutrition goals.

While this nation of 100 million is a middle income country with increasing economic growth, many people still suffer from significantly under-resourced social services and infrastructure. Although the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is projected to further increase in 2016, the decline of under-5 mortality rates has stagnated due to persistently high levels of neonatal deaths and health inequities. Furthermore, it is likely that the country will not meet Millennium Development Goal 5 to improve maternal health.

UNICEF is part of a UN Country Team (UNCT) consisting of 15 Resident Agencies, Funds and Programmes, 11 Non-resident Agencies (5 with in-country offices) and 4 International Financial Institutions. In close collaboration with the United Nations (UN), the government is currently implementing the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2012-2018.

Promoting Healthy Mothers and Newborns

Through joint programming, the UN supports the implementation of the Department of Health’s Maternal Newborn and Child Health and Nutrition Strategy to rapidly reduce maternal and neonatal mortality.

The Philippines increasingly requires a mix of technical and policy-oriented support from UN organizations. One of the strengths of this unique joint UN programme is its policy implication at national level.

The Joint Programme on Maternal and Neonatal Health (JPMNH) reflects this evolving reality. While UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA commonly engage at district level, all 3 organisations make major efforts to transfer such catalytic engagement on district level into upstream policy dialogue with government, advocacy, brokering, transfer of knowledge, and policy formulation and implementation.

Nation-wide Health Impacts

The Joint Programme shows good examples of working commonly with districts, on the policy level with the Ministry of Health and other entities as well as providing direct services to beneficiaries and forming common networks for such services.

As part of the joint programme, UNICEF and partners took a systematic step-by-step approach towards creating national training modules by incorporating evidence-based interventions for both pre- and in-service training. The modules included 5 books covering antepartum to postpartum pregnancy care such as basic midwifery skills, newborn care, and resuscitation and examination.

The JPMNH output is regarded as a milestone in the Philippines’ maternal and newborn health care landscape and its strength lies in its ability to have a nationwide impact. For instance, the manuals developed in the joint programme inform training across the nation reaching 6,500 midwifery students, 70,000 nursing students, and 4,000 medical students annually.
In addition, while used in pre-service training, 640,000 obstetrics and newborn health care professionals directly benefit from the manuals. An important next step is implementing a robust plan to systematically scale-up training activities. Training for midwives in remote and rural areas is stressed as a reflection of the government’s focus on equity.

Effective Coordination Tools
Coordination arrangements of the JPMNH include a national steering committee chaired by the government, a common calendar, conducting joint monitoring missions, and monthly Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings.

First, the mechanisms for joint work start with a joint programme document signed by all three agencies, the Australian government, the Department of Health and the UN Resident Coordinator.

Second, the Joint Programme Agreement contains a Programme Steering Committee co-chaired by the Department of Health and one of the JPMNH Technical Team Leaders. While UNICEF leads the programme currently, technical leadership rotates among the three agencies.

These arrangements minimise overlapping activities and ensure the presence of the UN agencies. They also align policy directions, and maximise meeting efficiencies.

At the same time, a venue is created for local officials across the different levels of government to discuss policy directions on the theme of maternal and newborn health. The result of strong coordination is the strengthening of health systems and networks in the local governments.

In terms of joint planning and monitoring, the JPMNH employs the government’s Joint Appraisal and Planning Initiative for overall coordination of UN support with the Programme Steering Committee (PSC). The Committee is made up of agency heads and is led by the Department of Health. It includes a Technical Working Group comprised of programme managers.

Another important coordinating mechanism is the Field Technical Working Group that manages implementation of UN agency-supported and funded activities at the municipal and community level.

A multi-level Joint Work Plan (JWP), incorporated in the UNDAF for the programme brings together the work of each agency ensuring that it matches government priorities.
While all three agencies involved participate in implementation, a designated Joint Programme Coordinator, who reports to the United Nations Resident Coordinator's office, is responsible for reporting and administration of the joint programme and also liaises with the UN Multi-donor Trust Fund Office.

**Leaving an Educational and Policy Legacy**
While the programme will not be continued beyond mid-2016, UNICEF believes that the impact will be felt for years to come, particularly on the policy upstream level.

For instance, a key contribution was the UNICEF-led development of one uniform and harmonised basic emergency obstetrics and newborn care module. This module serves all midwives, midwifery students, nurses, nursing students, medical students and selected doctors and forms the basis for evidence-based obstetric and newborn care.

There are several other important initiatives begun under the Joint Programme. The UN provided technical help in drafting important Maternal Newborn and Child Health and Nutrition policies, including the RA 10354 Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law and the Revised Department of Health AO 2013-013 on Adolescent and Youth Health.

The development of IT tools to provide accurate and timely data in health surveillance and programming such as the Maternal and Neonatal Death Reporting System, also ensures that the impact of the JPMNH will endure past the end of the programme.

Another important contribution of the joint programme is that it has institutionalised regular UN – Ministry of Health discussions around joint activities. The real success of JPMNH is that it has become a MNCH platform for UN partners and the Department of Health and will continue to be the common platform after the joint initiative ends. Indeed, all UN agencies plan to incorporate many of the activities initiated during the joint programme into their future programming.

Given the success of this first joint programme, the future looks promising for UN collaboration that reflects local realities and makes the most of each agency’s strengths and expertise.
Steady, Incremental Reform in a Large Country Programme

With a population of nearly 100 million, Ethiopia is a large country where 83% of people live in rural areas. While Ethiopia has made important socio-economic gains, 20 million people remain under the poverty line.

As one of the largest UN programmes in the world, Ethiopia presents a variety of challenges. Working across programmes as diverse as national governance and grassroots health service delivery - and in a geographic setting which stretches from desert-like environments to lush forests - requires a well-functioning and coordinated UN body.

In response to this need, commitment to partnership is very strong. The UNICEF Country Office believes that its ability to deliver results is improved when working in a coordinated manner, alongside the government and other partners.

Present in the country since 1952, UNICEF is the key agency in the country for children. With over 400 staff, UNICEF Ethiopia is a large country office. There are 24 UN resident agencies, funds and programmes including specialized agencies.

Formally considered a voluntary Delivering as One (DaO) country since 2010, the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) plays a lead role in the UN Reform process. Ethiopia’s United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) aligns with the national Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). A key goal of the GTP is to bring the country to middle income status by 2020-2023.

The 2012-2015 UNDAF was the country’s third and benefitted from an innovative structure to improve coordination and enhance planning and quality assessment. A Management and Planning Team (MPT) - made up of Deputy Heads of UN agencies - met weekly to develop the framework.

The governance structure guiding the UNDAF Action Plan (UNAP) features a High Level Steering Committee made up of the GoE, development partners and the UN who provide implementation oversight and agree to new joint programmes.

The UN Country Team oversees work towards attaining results in support of the national agenda. Programme Heads from all agencies make up the Inter-agency Programme Team and provided technical leadership in developing the UNDAF. Five Technical Working Groups comprised of implementing partners and UN agencies work on four key UNDAF pillars.

The next UNDAF represents an important achievement in UN coherence in Ethiopia. The document features the UNCT’s choice to make UNDAF country outcomes also the programme outcomes for several agencies.

UNICEF’s Coordinated Crisis Response

As a nation prone to both chronic and rapidly-arising humanitarian crises, UN agencies recognize the importance of effective coordination, leveraging each other’s comparative advantages and working in robust partnership with the Government and other humanitarian actors.

While challenges do occur due to fluid and unpredictable situations, humanitarian coordination in Ethiopia does yield significant results - both in planning and response - in addition to the information gathering and management used to inform these two elements. Major efforts from all agencies are placed into this critical area.

The results of coordinated response are impressive. At the end of 2013, following the
eruption of conflict, about 200,000 South Sudanese refugees fled to Gambella region. UNICEF quickly coordinated a multi-sectoral emergency response strategy for refugees and host communities.

With the arrival of a large number of refugees, basic social services were frayed and malnutrition rates among children high. UNICEF’s emergency response included joint action with UNHCR to provide basic social services in refugee camps and to support to host communities in an attempt to reduce the potential for conflict.

The collaboration with UNHCR and other partners meant that more than 140,000 women and children received timely assistance. In addition, UNICEF seconded specialists in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), child protection, education and nutrition as well as an immunisation officer to support UNHCR.

In 2014, UNICEF developed the UNHCR partnership into a detailed agreement on points of coherence around supporting the South Sudan refugee operation. Today the agreement is viewed as a model for other such operations.

**Reducing Child Mortality**
Ethiopia has one of the continent’s highest mortality rates. In late 2009, the H4 partnership of UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA and the World Bank helped the GoE and health officials develop a three-year programme to increase the use of Maternal and Newborn Health services.

**Enhancing Public Service**
When a 2009 formal review of Ethiopia’s development progress revealed four particularly underdeveloped states, the response was the Developing Regional States (DRS) Joint Programme.

The UN’s unified work in the joint programme has enabled a multiplier effect demonstrating stronger results in these regions than any one agency could achieve working alone.

The joint programme features the twin objectives of building resilience and enhancing equity through developing under-served areas. The programme is coordinated by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and at the regional level through Bureaus of Finance and Economic Development. UNICEF, UNDP, UNCDF, WHO, WFP, FAO and UN Women provide technical support and daily follow-up on output delivery and joint monitoring.

The DRS Joint Programme has helped enhance institutional and technical capacity in regional sector bureaus. The bureaus are better able to effectively coordinate and report on development initiatives and manage limited resources. As well, a robust Monitoring and Evaluation system within the joint programme’s UNDAF has been established.

The programme’s positive impacts extend beyond the field. The DRS Joint Programme has not only offered a strong platform for service delivery to vulnerable populations, but also provided an advocacy opportunity to place increased attention towards these groups. Today, the programme is a strong example of UN convergence and is welcomed by donors and government alike.

**More Efficient Operations**
The UN Country Team adopted the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) in 2014. UNICEF Ethiopia’s Management Team continues to work on the strategy’s seven priorities before setting up Long-term Arrangements (LTA), namely Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) micro-assessments, ICT equipment, printing, cleaning services, conference services, vehicle maintenance, and uniforms.
The office works with other UN agencies on the strategy across a number of activities: “The common bidding and common LTAs shared by UN agencies and diplomatic missions have proved successful and time-saving.”

UNCT savings in these areas are expected to be significant. LTA for uniform procurement and micro-assessment were in place from January 2014 saving UNCT US$211,000 and UNICEF Ethiopia US$137,000. With UNICEF support, the UN Inter-agency Procurement Working Group set up several LTAs that can be used by all UN agencies for graphic design and printing.

Reflecting Delivering as One principles of common services and premises, the safety and well-being of staff were enhanced recently by moving UNICEF Ethiopia to purpose-built premises. The new country office is now located on the UN Economic Commission for Africa compound along with most of the country’s UN agencies.

**Streamlining Cash Transfers**

In 2014, the implementation of HACT has been a major focus area for UNICEF and the UN Country Team in Ethiopia. The UN Operations Management Team created a UN HACT Technical Working Group (HACTTWG) in Ethiopia. UNICEF has co-chaired the group from the outset.

Working closely with the Government of Ethiopia, the Working Group was able to ensure the UNDG framework elements are fully part of the operating manual of how UN agencies work with Government partners. This enables more streamlined fund transfer and risk assessment processes for agencies involved.
Promoting Resilience through Partnerships
The efforts of UNICEF and the entire UN Country Team (UNCT) in Jordan reflect a strengthening commitment to working together in the face of a longstanding refugee crisis. In Jordan, the UNCT has developed quick reflexes to tackle challenges as they arise. Operating under difficult and often unpredictable circumstances requires quick reflexes and innovative thinking.

With 17 resident agencies, funds and programmes as well as numerous non-resident agencies, the United Nations operates in a highly complex and changing context. Five years into the Syrian crisis, 20% of Jordan’s population of 6 million people are refugees. The influx continues to place the country under considerable humanitarian, security, environmental, developmental and political pressures.

At the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit, Jordan’s Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, HE Mr. Imad Fakhoury stated: “This crisis is unprecedented and not just a refugee issue; but also a serious national resilience issue” that “is devastating our entire development gains that we have worked so hard to achieve.”

Serious funding shortfalls add to the challenges under which the UN must operate. The 2011 classification of Jordan as an upper middle income country increased the difficulties since Jordan cannot apply for concessional financing arrangements. The strains on Jordan’s resources are enormous requiring greater coordination and collaboration to make the most of severely limited resources.

Shift in the way the UN operates
At a recent tree-planting event to mark the UN’s 70th anniversary, the Resident / Humanitarian Coordinator stated, “Through this symbolic activity today, we reaffirm the commitment of the United Nations to supporting Jordan …. The only way to achieve progress is through strong and coordinated partnerships which can bring us together for a better Jordan.”

Indeed, in a context of crisis and heightened vulnerability, it is critical that the UN work together to provide much needed support to vulnerable children and their families.

In Jordan, the UN has forged new approaches to development that better reflect the country’s realities than more traditional ways. The five-year old conflict in Syria defies conventional conflict resolution approaches and challenges aid responses, therefore requiring a shift in the way the United Nations does business.

In view of Jordan’s own development needs and the ongoing humanitarian crisis, the UN in Jordan champions a resilience-based approach in which both humanitarian and development support to the country take place together rather than one after the other. For instance, the 2015-2017 UN Assistance Framework (UNAF) features a section focussed on the Syrian refugee response and stresses resilience programming to support government institutions.

A crucial first step taken by the UN to bolster coordination between humanitarian and development programming was the merger of the Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator roles into a more coherent management structure.

As part of the DaO approach, increased accountability and UNCT leadership are
supported through having each of the 6 UNAF Results Groups assigned to a UN agency head. The UN Communication Group, Operations Management Team, Gender Theme Group and Post-2015 Group are now better coordinated to help support the national priorities outlined in the UNAF.

The Jordan Resilience Fund
The Jordan Response Plan is a national framework developed in cooperation with entire UNCT and the international community. The Plan brings together humanitarian and development responses to help refugees and host communities.

With the help of the UN, the government set up the Jordan Resilience Fund (JRF) to fund the Plan via the international community. Co-signed by the UN, the platform pools funding and strives to increase partnerships, enhance accountability, and cut transaction costs through improved joint government, UN and donor management. The fund includes a national window as well as one through which support can be directed to UN activities that concern the impact of the Syrian crisis on Jordan.

UNICEF Collaboration with UNHCR
One of the best ways the United Nations works together most effectively is through making the most of each agency’s strengths. UN collaboration in Jordan leverages the comparative advantage and proven capacity of each agency, while ensuring a continuing focus on results.

In Jordan, 92% of Syrian refugee families cannot meet even basic financial and non-financial needs. UNICEF data also indicates that a great many Syrian refugee families – most of whom live outside of camps in the poorest areas – resort to a number of negative coping mechanisms to deal with poverty.

Some of the coping mechanisms that hurt children include early child marriage, child labour and begging, reduced food consumption and restricted access to education given the additional costs associated with schooling.

It was with these stark realities in mind that UNICEF devised the Child Cash Grant Programme. According to a member of one of thousands of beneficiary families: “The cash grant for me is like I’ve been in a desert dying of thirst and someone offered me a cup of water.” The UNICEF Child Cash Grant Programme with UNHCR illustrates just how working together enables the delivery of innovative, timely and cost-effective programming for children.

Initiated in February 2015, the grant provides the most vulnerable off-camp Syrian refugee families with a cash safety net to reduce the chances that they will turn to negative ways of dealing with poverty.

Instead of undergoing its own separate process to determine the most vulnerable refugee families, UNICEF worked closely with UNHCR who had already targeted those most at-risk by providing grants to help with housing costs. In this way, the UNICEF CCG was a good complement to an already existing UNHCR grant for rental assistance.

Between February and August 2015, 15,000 families (about 56,000 children) in Jordanian host communities received unconditional cash grants of JOD 20 (USD 28) per child per month to add to UNHCR housing support. The UNICEF-UNHCR collaboration not only aided in appropriate and cost-effective identification of the most at-risk households, it also led to the sharing of innovative technology to ensure selected families received the cash grants securely. For instance, UNICEF employed UNHCR’s cutting-edge biometric identification technology at no additional operational cost.

UNICEF Jordan has a strong record with the government of supporting child protection. As a result, the agency’s programmes actively contribute to the UN’s promotion of social cohesion in the country.
Families are notified by SMS when grants are ready to be withdrawn via bank ATMs equipped with iris-scanning technology. In this way, UNICEF is able to ensure cash reaches the most at-risk families. Although the grants are unconditional, community-based activities are undertaken to encourage the use of grants chiefly in the interests of children. But how do recipients respond to the collaborative programme and what is the impact on children?

From February to June 2015, the UNICEF CCG Programme undertook a Post Distribution Monitoring analysis. One participant described the elation felt by her children when she received notification that the grant was available: “Once I receive the text message, my children start jumping out of happiness.”

Among the findings were that recipients spent the money chiefly on child-specific items including clothes and shoes, medicine, school-related expenses, and fresh food such as vegetables, fruits and meat.

The UNICEF Child Cash Grant also led to fewer instances of child labour, selling or redeeming food vouchers, dropping out of school, borrowing, reducing healthcare expenditures and returning to the dangers and instability of Syria. Of the 500 families surveyed in Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) analysis report, 89% noted that the grant contributed to overall family well-being.

Given the cost-effective delivery and positive impacts of UNICEF’s collaborative Child Cash Grant, the Programme is being scaled-up in 2015 to reach 75,000 extremely vulnerable children. In a challenging environment such as Jordan, nimble, innovative and cost-effective UN teamwork is crucial.

UNICEF Partnership with WFP
In early 2015, UNICEF partnered with the World Food Programme (WFP) to help Syrian refugees deal with an upcoming winter storm. It is imperative that children are protected from harsh weather conditions so that they remain healthy and active, and continue to attend schooling.

The partnership targeted 41,000 vulnerable Syrian refugee children under 14 in the refugee camps of Za’atari and Azraq. UNICEF gave each child 14 JOD to enable their families to buy them winter clothing. Refugee families learned about the programme through posters, flyers and SMS.

The one-time grant was distributed through the existing WFP electronic food voucher system of e-cards. Clothing such as boots, hats, jackets, and gloves could be purchased at WFP-contracted supermarkets within a limited time frame.

The collaboration not only helped children from almost 13,000 families face harsh winter conditions with at least some protection, it also enabled the WFP to expand its e-card programme to other agencies with UNICEF being the first one to incorporate it into their winterization programme.

Looking Ahead
As recent UNICEF partnerships with UNHCR and WFP show, the UN continues to use ingenuity and quick thinking to help Jordan’s most at-risk populations. Even in volatile environments, UN collaboration leads to more effective programming and better results for children. By introducing various ‘delivering results together’ approaches into how the UN operates in Jordan, the UNCT Team strengthens it abilities to make the most of scant resources. As a result, the country is on its way to becoming the first DaO country in the Middle East by 2018.
Common Sense Collaboration in a Small Country Office

Suriname’s capital city, Paramaribo, features street after street of attractive white wooden buildings that speak to its Dutch colonial past and robust national pride. In the heart of this UNESCO World Heritage site, sit two lovingly attended and stately buildings. For many Surinamese, the fact that a mosque and synagogue are peaceful neighbours is a point of pride. Indeed, amicable relations characterise how people work together in this small, isolated upper middle income country, one of Latin America’s most ethnically diverse nations.

The same collaborative spirit marks relations both among UN agencies in the country and between the UN and the Government of Suriname (GoS). In fact, it was at the request of the government that the UN began to work together more closely. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Ellen Naarendorp remarks that in turn “UN coherence made us more coherent.”

With just four UN agencies based in the country – UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and PAHO/WHO - the UN Country Team (UNCT) believes that it makes good sense to partner wherever possible. The Suriname Country Office epitomizes UNICEF’s pragmatic, proactive approach to working together, constantly looking for opportunities to collaborate and partner effectively.

Joint Steering Committee & Programme Coordination Groups

The Joint Steering Committee (JSC) and Programme Coordination Groups (PCGs) are useful mechanisms to translate cooperative spirit and commitment into pragmatic results.

The JSC is an important mechanism that brings together permanent secretaries and UN agency heads to make decisions on the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Action Plan. The committee is led by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator.

As the Suriname Ministry of Foreign Affairs points out, the JSC is a great mechanism for not only bringing together permanent secretaries with UN agencies but also because “we need everyone involved in our country’s development. And because we can also discuss what is new in development, it is a very effective approach.” She further notes that unlike in the past where the UN led discussions, today the exchange between the government and the UN is much more balanced and therefore more useful.

Joint Steering Committee members in turn share information with their respective Programme Coordination Groups. The coordination

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1 Five non-resident agencies – FAO, ILO, UN Women, UNAIDS, UNESCO – participate in the UN Country Team via Skype.
mechanism unites all relevant UN agencies and government focal points around a particular area of concern including: water, sanitation, hygiene; environment; agriculture; education; governance; emergencies, education, health, HIV, nutrition, social services and gender and data.

The PCGs serve as a useful platform to exchange information and inform one another regarding the UNDAF as well as programming. As one of the major structures in place to meet with government, the PCGs lead to very detailed reporting and good monitoring of implementation progress. The PCGs also help to identify opportunities to work jointly to address gaps.

**Practical, Opportunistic Team Work**

While the PCGs and JSC structure clearly promote strong coordination, UN entities in Suriname also benefit from an informal, common sense approach to partnership. While the UNICEF Representative is based in Guyana and the UN Resident Coordinator in Trinidad and Tobago, both officers coordinate their schedules to be at UN House together one week per month.

While both officers are in Suriname, they constantly look for opportunities to bring the teams together because it just makes sense. The UNCT’s practical, nimble approach to collaboration suggests that in a small country office maybe the UN doesn’t need Joint Programmes *per se*. It just needs to work together.

UNFPA colleagues echo this informal yet effective approach to partnership: “You don’t have to always be side by side. It is also about picking up where one leaves off by using all available technical knowledge, sharing resources, being humble and not always waving your own flag.”

**Sharing Resources**

With a modest country budget of $1.5 million in 2015, UNICEF in Suriname has found ways to function that make the most of limited resources in operations and programming.

Recently three of the four UN agencies in Paramaribo moved into the new UN House, a two-story building where the rent is paid for by the government. Here UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA sit side by side, sharing office resources and a common receptionist, IT expert, security guards and drivers. In a further nod to practicality, the RC and UNICEF Representative share an office that also features a child-friendly corner serving as a spot for young visitors to UN House. It can equally serve as a space for mothers who want to breastfeed.

Given the human resource constraints of a small office, sharing resources for programming purposes is likewise crucial. The Suriname Country Office has fewer than 10 professionals, including one national health officer. While PAHO/WHO is not in the same building, the PCG encourages the collaboration of PAHO, UNFPA and UNICEF to support the Ministry of Health and other health counterparts.

In addition to sharing a collaborative spirit as well as office resources, communication is another way in which the UN Country Team increases effectiveness and profile. The recent addition of a UNICEF communications consultant, who works with all agencies to promote the UN, is a boost for its visibility within Suriname.

In 2016 each agency will designate a communications focal point to start “Communicating as One” under the leadership of UNICEF’s Representative.
Promoting Youth Participation
The UNCT’s initiatives on youth participation and health inequalities provide strong examples of UN teamwork netting results for children and their families. UNICEF plays a crucial role in each of these initiatives.

With more than 50% of the Surinamese population under 24 years of age, the government of Suriname prioritizes youth in the Development Plan 2012-2016. Given high dropout rates and an inherited school system that is in need of change, the UN partnered with a local NGO to support an innovative response to these challenges. Indeed, support for youth is an emerging priority for the UN as a whole in the country.

For instance, ahead of recent elections, a series of televised youth debating programmes called KRUTU was produced to encourage youth awareness and participation. KRUTU is the Maroon (descendants of escaped African slaves in Suriname) word describing a traditional village assembly.

In developing the show, local NGO The Back Lot worked with adolescents, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA. UNICEF was the lead agency and co-funded the programme with UNDP. All three agencies brainstormed with the NGO about how best to proceed on the programme, each bringing their different perspectives.

In Suriname, it is not only necessity that leads to collaboration but also the commitment to make good use of each agency’s strengths. The positive results are clear. The recent KRUTU was so widely anticipated that hundreds of young people waited in the darkness of dawn just for a chance to be part of the studio audience.

Health in All Policies
In the realm of health and development, Suriname likewise gains from UN partnership. Here again UNICEF’s contribution is crucial. Each year the country loses 170,000 productive life-years due to ill health and premature death. In response, the UN has advocated for a more comprehensive approach to health issues in Suriname. As a result, the country is poised to lead the Caribbean in the innovative Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach to development that sees all sectors as impacting health.

While still in its early days, the HiAP initiative enjoys widespread and enthusiastic buy-in across the government and UN agencies. As Maureen Van Dijk, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Health notes, “we wanted to be the first country. While PAHO initiated it, the idea was brought to the entire UN Country Team.” Indeed, as she further points out, in HiAP the strengths of all UN agencies are needed. It is a natural fit for the UN - an example of the SDGs being brought to life.

The HiAP initiative highlights what the UN can achieve as partners in Suriname and how UNICEF ensures children’s concerns remain at the forefront of national development. A recent HiAP conference was organized by PAHO and the entire UNCT. PAHO notes that UNICEF played an important role in the recent quick assessment of health inequities as requested by the government. Importantly, the results of the HiAP initiative will be used to inform the next national development plan and UNDAF. Going forward, UNICEF’s contribution will be invaluable as a full health assessment rolls out and includes a critical component on Early Childhood Development.

Strong Government-UN Partnership
The UN in Suriname has earned its place at the table with the government through a strongly collaborative spirit and obvious commitment. The Ministry of Health notes clearly improved communication among UN agencies. Today the UN has a “better face” in the country and now operates at a higher level of influence.

The Resident Coordinator echoes the evolution of the UN’s role in the country by noting that now its “convening power is strong.” With such a small presence in the country, this is a remarkable achievement.

Progress is clear but there is room to improve. While the UNCT have broken silos physically there could still be more integration and further cross-fertilization of ideas. In Suriname, UN coherence is a work-in-progress.

In a very small country team, partnership is a necessity. Through sharing premises, resources and ideas, the UN team is moving steadily in the right direction. Its strong relationship with the Government of Suriname is proof that modest resources need not limit UN impact where collaborative spirit, commitment to national development and nimble ingenuity exist.

While it can be challenging as a small nation operating in relative isolation, the UN in Suriname has found marked success via the Joint Steering Committee and Programme
Coordination Groups as well as through many informal instances of collaboration. The innovative KRUTU youth debates and the Health in All Policies approach being pioneered in Suriname are powerful examples of results in favour of children and their families.

Looking Ahead
The UN in Suriname is preparing for a new multi-country UNDAF with 15 neighbouring countries. Given the successes to date, the new document will feature even greater coherence among UN agencies in the Caribbean. With a newly elected government in Suriname, UNICEF’s role of highlighting children’s issues as part of the UN Country Team remains as crucial as ever.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for increasingly joined up approaches in support of results for children. The new SDG Agenda and the upcoming Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework in the Caribbean will provide Suriname with new opportunities. In 2015, 12 of the proposed SDGs were identified as priorities at a symposium convened by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean’s Sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean.

In this atmosphere of change and possibility, UNICEF stands ready to facilitate more regional knowledge sharing, South-South cooperation and to provide regional development resources for Suriname.
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