INTRODUCTION

The year 2018 has been an eventful year for social inclusion. Whilst the political environment has remained largely peaceful, the economic situation has been turbulent, with negative implications on the wellbeing of the children. The country experienced significant build-up of macro-fiscal vulnerabilities, including unsustainable fiscal and current account deficits, currency crisis, liquidity constraints and foreign currency shortages, shortages of fuel and basic commodities, among others, that have had some negative effects on economic growth. As such, economic growth slowed down from 4.7% in 2017 to an estimated 4.0% in 2018 and is projected to further slow down to 3.1% in 2019. The challenge for the Government remains on the need to ensure that this growth is shared and benefits everyone, particularly those children and their families who are at the greatest risk of being left behind.

“Despite the challenging environment, the year 2018 remained a great year for social inclusion”

Despite the challenging environment, the year 2018 remained a great year for social inclusion. A series of bold, strategic and timely interventions were made to mitigate the impacts of the economic environment on programming and results for children. This was complemented by real time monitoring of the environment to generate evidence that informed decision making to inform and safeguard results for children in Zimbabwe.
Background to Zimbabwe Social Inclusion Results

In line with the UNICEF Strategic Plan (2018-2021), the Social Inclusion programme in Zimbabwe seeks to position Social Policy and Research as the anchor towards achievement of the Global Goal 4 - every child lives in a safe and clean environment; and Goal 5: Every Child has an Equitable Chance in Life. It underpins and cuts across all the main outcome areas of UNICEF programming, seeking to improve policy environment and systems for disadvantaged and excluded children, guided by improved knowledge and data. In addition, our programming seeks to close gaps that are insufficiently covered by each of the other 6 outcome areas. This is because the origins and potential responses to poverty and social marginalization often lie beyond the scope of any single sector.

For instance, influencing policy and the policy environment and the key policy actors, including community members, local authorities, parliamentarians and the Ministries of Finance, plays a crucial role in redressing inequities and ensure that the most deprived and excluded children and their families have the opportunities and resources necessary to survive and thrive. With the key main focus as espoused above, and in line with the Theory of Change (ToC), Social Inclusion for the ZCO seeks to generate relevant and timely data and evidence to support programing and advocacy across the other outcome areas, with the overall goal of ensuring that No One Is Left Behind. This is achieved through interventions in the following functional themes: (i) Policy Advocacy and Climate change; (ii) Public Finance for Children; (iii) Social Protection; and (iv) Data and Evidence Generation (Child Poverty and Research).

PROGRAMME FUNDING

- Social Policy was in a comfortable funding situation with a total $2.3 million expenditure across all outputs;
- Social Policy managed to surpass the $2.4 million required to conduct the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, (MICS) 2018/19 by US$400,000; and
- Secured US$3 million for Climate Change and Greening work from the Swedish Embassy

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2018

Through our strategic engagement with Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and relevant stakeholders for the national budget process, the following are the key results achieved:

- As part of its Fiscal Space advocacy work, UNICEF managed to successfully advocate for a 5% tax on 3rd Party Motor Vehicle Insurance to finance education infrastructure. This proposal was adopted in the 2019 National Budget, though it is now earmarked for financing health through the Road Accident Fund. Advocacy efforts are underway to ring-fence this revenue, with other options being proposed for the Road Accident Fund e.g. ring-fencing a portion of Toll fees or vehicle license fees.

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1Health, HIV, Nutrition, Education, WASH, Child Protection
• Improved budget reporting, transparency and accountability by Local Authorities, through the adoption of systems (PLAnix) and Programme Based Budgeting (PBB) approaches. A total of 68 LAs are PBB compliant following UNICEF support to the development and implementation of PLAnix. The number of Local authorities reporting their budgets in PBB has increased from 14 in 2017 to 45 in 2018. The challenges encountered, particularly low buy-in were addressed through high level engagement with the Government & Town Clerks and CEOs, whilst monitoring activities were enhanced.

• Adoption, in the 2019 Budgets, of some of the measures proposed through the 2015 Fiscal Space Dialogue- led by UNICEF. Examples include reforms on Civil Servant bonuses and enhancing transparency & accountability on Retention Funds, by making these part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund,

• Strengthened national capacity to budget for social sectors. This was achieved through technical and financial support to the 2018 Macroeconomic Framework Seminar, which developed the 2019-2020 Macroeconomic framework, which provided the fiscal framework for the 2019 National Budget.


WHAT WERE OUR INTERVENTIONS...

> Produced fiscal projections from research and data analysis on potential resources that could be mobilized from levying different levels of taxation from 3rd party motor vehicle insurance, towards closing the financing gap in education

> Strengthened the Ministry for Local Government capacity to monitor, and provided technical backstopping to the implementation of PBB through the use of PLAnix.

> Supported (technically and financially) fiscal space scenario mapping including revisiting recommendations of the 2015 Fiscal Space Dialogue to inform policy on strategies of enhancing fiscal space for social sectors;

> Supported the infrastructure prioritization dialogue for all Ministries;

> Joint design of an open budget reform matrix with the Government and NANGO, which provided the monitoring framework for reforms;

> Targeted engagement with parliament on lobbying for Free Universal Primary education through advocacy capacity strengthening and provision of policy alternatives and evidence.
• Additionally, UNICEF successfully supported the 2019 National Budget Infrastructure Prioritization Meeting, Budget Consultations and crafting key advocacy messages and innovative financing mechanisms for social sectors. Partly on account of these interventions, the amount of resources for capital expenditure in social sectors was increased in the 2019 Budget. The average share of non-wage allocation to health and education reached 31% in the 2019 Budget, surpassing the 2020 target of 30%.

• Working with Parliament, the ZCO was able to lobby for the adoption by the government of a Universal Free Education policy and proffered plausible financing options.

• Improved national commitment to budget transparency as evidenced by the express commitment by the government to Transparency and Accountability in line with international recommended best practices such as those of International Budget Partnership (page 170).

• With technical and financial support from UNICEF, the government developed and implemented a Budget Transparency Reform Matrix in February 2018, whose key reforms are being implemented through the 2019 Budget. The on-going reforms, including improving the comprehensiveness of the National Budget and timely publications of the Budget Documents, including a Citizen Budget, are posed to increase the country’s score to 55 in 2019, from 23 in 2017.

• To ensure that monetary and multidimensional child poverty is routinely measured and reported by the government, UNICEF and partners - Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), Government Ministries, World Bank, African Development Bank and UNDP supported the conduct of the Poverty Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey (PICES). The Survey report was finalized in December 2018 and the results are critical for the new development plan, the country’s full Poverty Reduction Strategy, as well as measuring and monitoring progress in reducing child poverty by providing disaggregated data by age groups, geography and gender.

OUR INTERVENTIONS

> Technical and financial support to the conduct of PICES, including analysis and report writing;

> This was achieved through the power of partnerships and strategic engagement with key stakeholders, including government and World Bank, to produce a quality report and timely

• Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey – the heavy phase of preparatory work, including survey design, finalization of instruments and training of enumerators was successfully completed in 2018, paving way for data collection in January, with the final report being expected in August 2019. The ZCO also conducted a child focused secondary analysis of ZDHS 2017, which produced thematic reports on Gender, Health, Education, and WASH and Nutrition. Such an analysis is critical for understanding equity patterns to determine groups of disadvantaged persons so as to enhance programme and enrich policy dialogue.

• Launch of the National Climate Change Policy in June 2018 by President, His Excellency, E. D Mnangagwa and Child Friendly version of the Climate Policy, both, through technical and financial support from UNICEF.

• The ZCO’s greening work was given global recognition through the GreeNewsletter and on ICON.


In addition, ZCO managed to provide technical inputs to the updated 2019 Climate Landscape Analysis for Children (CLAC) reporting framework by HQ.
UNICEF, was also launched its Disability Strategy, whilst a Draft National Disability Policy has been developed by the Government of Zimbabwe with support from UNICEF and other stakeholders such as DFID, and various Disability People’s Organizations (DPOs). Strengthening the disability policy frameworks is meant to provide comprehensive intervention to guide UNICEF and National efforts to deliver on the social inclusion agenda in a manner that respect, protect and promote the rights and dignity of children with disabilities.

• Launch of the Social Protection Sector Review, meant to provide evidence to inform the design of a comprehensive, coherent and shock-responsive social protection system for Zimbabwe. An inception report was produced in November 2018 and the final sector Review Report is expected by end-February 2019.

KEY INTERVENTIONS…

> Mobilize US$3 million for the project on Sustainable Energy for Health Facilities and Surrounding Communities (SE4HF) from Sweden.

> Leading in Monthly Green Fridays initiatives

> Support to the National Strategy on Efficient Cook Stoves by cochairing the Efficient Cookstove National Working Group.

> Environment mainstreaming work - launch of the 4-year plan to have the ZCO run on renewable energy, financed by the Greening and Accessibility Fund

KEY CHALLENGES TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

The major challenges for social inclusion in 2018 included:

• Rising inflation. Annual inflation peaked to 42% in December 2018, a common factor that perpetuate social exclusion, and eroding incomes and value of social protection interventions such as the cash transfer, hence negatively impacting on social outcomes

• Fiscal space constrains affecting the government’s ability to adequately invest in basic social services

• A challenging economic environment and hardships, giving rise to poverty

• Currency shortages and devaluation, impacting negatively of the reach and quality of programming by UNICEF, Partners and national stakeholders.

• Capacity constraints of partners, including government and Partners to plan and implement sustainable social protection systems.
MAJOR LESSONS LEARNT

The major lessons learnt includes:

• Integration of value for money in all interventions can result in achieving more with less.
• The need for joint efforts and stronger collaborations across Sections and Partners to deliver better results, by leveraging on expertise and experiences.
• Hybrid engagement at the highest and technical level is important to achieve the desired results.
• Joint planning and agenda setting is important to enhance Partner drive and leadership by implementing partners, which helps ensure buy-in and smooth programming.

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2019, Social Inclusion objective is to continuously monitor the political & economic environment as well as generating timely and relevant data & evidence, to help UNICEF avoid or predict potential risks both programmatically and operationally and to be able to effectively respond to these with minimal effect on budgets and planned results. Strategic interventions and programming adjustments will be made to respond to the prevailing challenges and position the Social Inclusion agenda to achieve its overall goal of ensuring that no-one is left behind.

Consistent with the above, Social Inclusion programming in 2019 will focus on the following key priorities:

• Strengthen research under the CSSP to inform UNICEF programming and national policy making process;
• Strengthening climate change work, including the Sustainable Energy for Health Facilities and Surrounding Communities and continuing office environment mainstreaming activities;
• Implementation of the ZCO Disability Strategy
• Strengthen the economic and budget analysis and engagement in the national and local budget making process;
• Further integration of UNICEF programme work in public finance advocacy work;
• Further supporting government efforts to improve budget transparency and accountability;
• Design a joint comprehensive and shock-responsive social protection system;
• Complete MICS 6 and the attendant secondary analysis; and
• Produce poverty maps and undertake monetary child poverty analysis from PICES 2018