

Update on the context and situation of children

In 2019, Namibia continued to maintain its peace, security and political stability based on multi-party democracy, constitutionalism, rule of law and respect for human rights. The country held its 6th Presidential and Parliamentary elections in November 2019, won by the ruling South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) party. Despite Southern African Development Community (SADC) declaring the process free and fair, the opposition parties including the Independent Presidential candidate filed a court order contesting the outcome of the elections particularly around the use of Electronic Voting Machines.

The Namibian economy experienced lacklustre performance since 2016. In real terms, the economy is estimated to have contracted by 1.7% in 2019, before a modest 0.8% recovery in 2020 and further strengthening to a long run average of 3% growth is foreseen (IMF 2019). The economic growth is constrained by fiscal consolidation, overreliance on underperforming South African Customs Union (SACU) revenue and poor performance of the key trading partners (South Africa and Angola). Namibia's overall economic growth has, thus, not been enough to counter the country's triple challenge of high poverty, inequality and unemployment. Furthermore, the country's economic status as Upper Middle-Income Country (UMIC) is not reflected in all aspects of its social development. Progress has been uneven across income groups and regions and in some instances, the country's social indicators remain weak. The country remains the third most unequal in the world, with a Gini Index of 0,56. Poverty is steadily reducing, from 34% in 2010 to 18% in 2016 while unemployment remains high among the youth (46% in 2016).

The triple predicament has, in recent years, been compounded by the driest season in 38 years, resulting in severe drought that has affected around 556,000 people, approximately 239,442 children. The drought had disproportioned impact on vulnerable children, particularly those with disabilities and children from marginalized communities. Inadequate food and water in schools and deteriorating economic conditions at household level have reduced access to and participation in education and increased the risk of children to malnutrition, (sexual) exploitation, and family separation (living on the streets). The Education Ministry estimated that 197,999 adolescent girls needed support to ensure that their education was not disrupted. Windhoek has seen an increase of children living on the streets, mostly from drought-affected regions and marginalized communities. These children are increasingly at risk of commercial and sexual exploitation, substance abuse, coming in contact with the law, and being trafficked. The situation is further compounded by high gender-based violence and HIV prevalence.

Namibia is making considerable progress towards the global targets of ending AIDS as a global health threat by 2030, such as reaching the 90-90-90 target. In 2019, the percentage of pregnant women receiving treatment for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV increased from 96% to 99%; and there was a corresponding drop in the percentage of infants testing positive for HIV, dropping from 4.05% to 3.6% among infants born to HIV-infected women. However, a few challenges remain. The average rates hide considerable gender inequalities. For instance, the prevalence rate among women aged 15-49 years remains considerably higher than among men (14.1 vs 9.3 according to UNAIDS in 2018). And the new infections among adolescent women (aged 15-24 years) is considerably higher than of men the same age (0.99% vs 0.03% according to NAMPHIA 2017). At the same time the testing rates of men lag behind with 62.1% for men as compared to 71.4% for women (NAMPHIA, 2017).

About 75% of the neonatal deaths in Namibia occur during the first week of life and around 50% of them happen on their day of birth. What is more, neonatal mortality rates have been stagnant for the past two decades at around 20 per 1,000 live births. According to the preliminary November 2019 IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis, an estimated 429,274 people (approx. 185, 000 children) are severely food insecure (IPC Phase 3) between October 2019 and March 2020. The May 2019 Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis showed that the population at risk of food insecurity had increased from 39 per cent in 2018 to 73 per cent in 2019. The dual challenge of prolonged drought and increase in food insecurity amplified the risk of malnutrition, especially among children, and has the potential to undermine other positive social development outcomes the country has achieved. Children are particularly vulnerable to climate shocks due to inappropriate feeding practices — only 13% receive a minimum acceptable diet.

The drought continues to put pressure on domestic development resources, limiting Government's capacity to accelerate implementation of priority interventions for children in the first decade of life. Likewise, for UNICEF, an urgent response to the increased risk of malnutrition and related health outcomes, necessitated reallocation of significant Child Survival and Development resources earmarked for development to an emergency drought response.

The Hepatitis E Virus (HEV) outbreak first reported in December 2017 persisted in 2019. Namibia remains vulnerable to the spread of HEV because 49% of the population practices open defecation and access to WASH is unequal. The November 2019 Situation Report showed that 6,746 people were affected by HEV, with 56 deaths, 43% of which were maternal deaths, thereby undermining efforts to reduce maternal mortality. Concerted efforts in raising public awareness and

Country Office Annual Report 2019

Namibia



providing health care support led to a reduction in infection rates, from over 200 new cases per week at its peak, to under 30 cases per week at the time of reporting. However, all but one of the 14 regions have now reported cases, with the epicenter of the outbreak remaining in the two urban informal settlements in Khomas and Erongo regions. To support the City of Windhoek's rapid response and help contain the spread of the virus, UNICEF's focus on community-led total sanitation was expanded to the urban informal settlements in 2019.

The education sector saw an increased investment of the total education budget to pre-primary education from 1.5% in 2017, to 3.4% in 2019. There has further been a slight increase in access to pre-primary education, from 44,081 in 2018 (22,452 F/21,629M) to 46,323 in 2019 (23,310F/23,013M). Despite these positive developments, learning outcomes are not commensurate with investment in the sector (PER 2017).

The Regulations to the Child Care and Protection Act No. 3 of 2015 was gazetted in January 2019, which saw a paradigm shift from a focus of general welfare of the child to the principle of the best interest of the child and holistic protection.

Major contributions and drivers of results

Against the backdrop of UNICEF custodianship of ten global SDG indicators, Namibia Country Office (NCO) supported advancement of the Sustainable Development Agenda for children using a lifecycle approach. In the first decade integrated programming facilitates progress towards achievement of SDGs 2, 3, 4, and 6. Interventions in the second decade considered the interdependence and indivisibility of human rights in a bid to progress towards Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, 5 and 16. Working across decades, UNICEF contributed to achievement of results articulated in the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF) 2019-2023, the UNICEF ESAR regional priorities and national priorities in the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5).

In response to the global and national development agenda, NCO strategically positioned its support towards gazetting of the Child Care & Protection Act and the operationalization of the following policies: Food and Nutrition Security Policy, National Policy on School Health and Education Management Information System Policy and the National Sanitation and Hygiene Strategy. Further support was provided to drafting Regulations for the revised Education Act and the National Social Protection Policy. These laws and policies are essential instruments for government to implement the National Agenda for Children.

UNICEF Namibia support for children in the first decade of life seeks to accelerate achievement of SDGs 2,3,4 and 6, focused primarily on assisting the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) to improve resource allocation and expenditure efficiencies, deliver quality services to women and children, and improve community engagement and behaviour change in the areas of health, nutrition, sanitation, early learning and birth registration.

UNICEF's technical support and advocacy for improvements in health sector expenditure efficiencies resulted in a 60% cost reduction in vaccine procurement (approximately USD7M) in 2019. Delivery of newborn and child health quality services has been strengthened through UNICEF's technical support for development of anti-retroviral therapy guidelines. Key health providers in all 15 regional hospitals gained capacity to systematically monitor newborn mortalities and improve on-site service delivery for newborns, and 326 health care workers have gained skills to provide quality newborn care, including for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Additionally, five underserved regional hospitals have received critical life-saving equipment and supplies for neonatal intensive care units. These achievements in Quality Improvement, made possible with funding from the Governments of Japan and Canada in collaboration with UNAIDS, have now reduced long-distance referrals and improved timely treatment of newborn complications, thus expected to reduce newborn deaths. UNICEF's support for integrated service delivery in health facilities facilitated expansion of e-birth notification and timely birth registration to 50% of the regions, capturing 32,943 births through the system. To prevent deaths associated with the increasing food insecurity induced by the drought, UNICEF procured nutrition therapeutic treatment for 26% of children who were diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition (SAM). SAM treatment including through the procurement of therapeutic food, a key response to the drought emergency, has been mainstreamed in the health system. The Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Implementation Plans were finalised and will play a key role in guiding accelerated implementation of stunting prevention interventions.

UNICEF's advocacy contributed to improvements in resource allocated to early learning, with the Government doubling the share of the Education budget going to pre-primary education from 1.5% in 2016 to 3.4% in 2019, resulting in approximately an additional USD 6.2M of Government budget allocated to pre-primary education and ECD in 2019. Thanks to the contribution from the EU and UNICEF's technical support to improve delivery of integrated ECD services, a new and improved management information system (MIS) for ECD now provides quality, timely, accessible and easy to use data for decision makers, enabling the Government to monitor coverage and quality of centre-based ECD services. UNICEF's support facilitated the establishment and operationalization of multi-sectoral structures for implementation, coordination and oversight of the integrated ECD framework. A comprehensive, multi-platform ECD campaign called RightStart, was

launched 2019 and reached 260,030 people through a locally produced TV cartoon series (WakaWakaMoo) watched by children and families, and 3,000 people through community outreach. This campaign is expected to influence change in norms and practices and result in improved care and feeding of children, and improved uptake of early learning services.

In pursuit of achieving SDG 6 by eliminating open defecation, 146 community leaders in 5 regions mobilized their communities through Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) resulting in triggering of 74 villages and 133 schools, and certification of nine villages as open defecation free. UNICEF's successful advocacy and technical support led to the introduction of CLTS in urban informal settlements, the epicenter of Hepatitis E outbreak, contributing to a reduction of the spread of the virus from over 200 cases per week at its peak to under 30 cases per week by end of 2019.

Building on gains from ECD, the Country Office followed life-cycle approach by improving learning outcomes in basic education, contributing to SDG 4. Overall, since 2012, Namibia has seen an increase to 85% of children starting in Grade 1 continuing to Grade 8. The Sector Policy on Inclusive Education, the School Health Policy and the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) laid foundations for an integrated approach to an inclusive, conducive and protective learning environment. The 23 school boards trained by the MoEAC and the Rössing Foundation with support from UNICEF, strengthened their social accountability and school governance to benefit approximately 4,600 learners. In addition, 26 schools have functioning Edu-Circles, where learners take up initiatives in their school and surrounding communities such as supporting learners from poor and marginalized communities, donating sanitary products, painting walls and planting trees, and offering homework support to those of their approximately 5,200 school fellows who need it. Principals, School Board members, teachers and secondary school learners of 50 schools were trained to roll out Edu-circles to benefit another 10,000 children. Furthermore, 2,168 teachers were trained on the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education with the expectation of building more inclusive schools conforming to the "leave no one behind" SDG principle. For evidence-based planning, policymaking and programming, the Government continued to strengthen its Education Management Information System (EMIS) and engage in specific research to obtain quality disaggregated data to track and address inequities in education.

Multi-sectoral cooperation and coordination form the basis for effective child protection from violence, abuse and exploitation, in line with SDG 16. With support from UNICEF, UNODC and the UK's National Crime Agency, at the refurbished and highly trained Gender Based Violence Protection Unit (GBVPU) in Windhoek the capital city of Namibia, police, social workers, health professionals, and prosecutors worked together to investigate, support and prosecute cases of sexual violence in an effective and child-sensitive way, including through video-interviewing to avoid revictimization. Victims of violence are now assisted in a more coordinated manner by a multisectoral team through the Gender Based Violence Protection Units in all 14 regions. Furthermore, 72% of justice professionals nationwide responsible for dealing with child victims were trained in child-sensitive investigation, prosecution and adjudication. Therefore, access to justice in terms of prosecution and conviction rates in cases of violence against children are expected to increase. Contributions from the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children have been instrumental in supporting this endeavour. The Child Witness Training Programme not only targets justice professionals and social workers but has also been adapted for the education sector to give educators tools to deal with sexual violence in their work and refer cases in a timely manner to the social welfare and justice sectors. The guidelines the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) developed in 2019 with support from UNICEF, the Embassy of Finland, and the Legal Assistance Centre to guide the implementation of the Child Care and Protection Act (2015) and its regulations (2019), will further support the integrated approach, as the said Act expanded specific roles and responsibilities to various social service and justice professionals.

The response to HIV infection among adolescents is equally addressed both within and outside schools. The 2018 Annual Education Census (AEC) report produced in 2019 showed an increase of 70.7% in 2016 to 76.2% in the number and percentage of schools in Namibia that provided life-skills based HIV and sexuality education since 2016. Besides the efforts to increase the life skills education in schools, UNICEF in partnership with Centre of Disease Control (CDC), UNAIDS and the German, Swedish and Swiss National Committees, continued to invest in psychosocial support and strengthening resilience among adolescent boys and girls. The Galz & Goals Programme of the Namibian Football Association (NFA), rolled out to 11 of the 14 regions, is now reaching over 4,000 girls with HIV and life skills-based messages through sports. Teen clubs continue to expand and promote adherence to treatment and care, currently reaching over 3,000 adolescents in 13 regions, with girls being the majority. Adolescents who 'graduate' into adults, continue to be engaged as part of peer support to encourage more Adolescents Living with HIV to seek services. An outreach campaign by local NGOs OYO and I-Tech, supported jointly by UNICEF, UNFPA and UNAIDS in the Erongo region, reached over 3,000 people with HIV prevention and care messages, and 500 young persons at risk with HIV testing and counselling services. Subsequent index testing is expected to indirectly increase the reach of the campaign in the coming months. The outreach encouraged male testing, since boys are less likely to test for HIV infection than girls. The 2nd edition of the National Guidelines on Adolescents living with HIV launched in August 2019 and supported by the Joint UN Team on AIDS and other development partners, is expected to enhance care and support for ALHIV, to increase the testing and adherence rates for boys and address the overall female face of HIV in contribution to SDG 3.

In pursuit of the SDG principle of *leaving no one behind* and UNICEF's strategic Goal Areas 4 and 5, significant progress

was made in creating strategic partnerships and alliances with key Government, UN and civil society partners. This is a key imperative towards creating a strong base for data and evidence generation on the status of children with regards to poverty (both monetary and multi-dimensional), which informs policy formulation, reforms and resource allocation within the Government budget. The aim of data and evidence generation is to strengthen social protection systems for children, including those in marginalized areas and those living with disabilities. Partly attributable to UNICEF continued advocacy, the share of the national budget allocated to non-contributory social protection increased from 5% to 6.7% in 2019. In addition, UNICEF is part of the recently constituted working group on the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF). This representation will position children's issues at the center of national efforts on finance for development. Furthermore, UNICEF continued to provide technical and financial support towards the development of the National Social Protection Policy. The policy put emphasis on the need to increase the size and coverage of the child benefits, which has proved to have the greatest impact on both inequalities and reducing child poverty in Namibia. The Social Protection Policy aims to create a comprehensive social protection system that is efficient and effective in addressing risks and vulnerabilities, putting emphasis on the life cycle to ensure that the various dimensions of vulnerability facing people in all life phases are addressed. UNICEF supported national capacity development for integrated Social Protection Management Information System (MIS). This laid a firm foundation for the design of an integrated MIS for Namibia, which is expected to improve efficiencies of Government spending on cash transfer programmes.

UNICEF Namibia identified key priorities and opportunities for UNICEF's work in Social Policy. For example, a steering committee for a national child poverty study was established, paving way for a non-monetary child poverty study to be undertaken during the first half of 2020. In addition, a memorandum of understanding with Parliament was initiated, which is expected to create opportunities to influence legislation, policy and budgets for children.

To mitigate the impact of climate change and in line with SDG13, UNICEF Namibia prioritized response to drought emergency in 2019. Under the auspices of UN response to the drought emergency, UNICEF alongside other UN agencies reprogrammed development resources to meet the immediate life saving measures on nutrition, WASH and Health including mitigation to protect and ensure continued learning by school going children. UNICEF reprogrammed over USD 500,000 to mainstream the drought response into the existing programme- and mobilized an additional 200,000 Euros from the German National Committee for climate change mitigation and adaptation for children under the UPSHIFT project. The UPSHIFT project is supporting young people to become social innovators and will be implemented in 2020, focusing specifically on building resilience through child centered innovation in Climate, Energy and Environment at school and community level, applying a clear gender lens. In addition, UNICEF contributed to the UN resource mobilization effort through Central Emergency Relief Funds (CERF) for life saving measures on nutrition, WASH, health, food security and child protection. This resulted in approval of US\$ 3million by CERF of which close to fifty percent was channeled through UNICEF. As part of the CERF implementation in the first half of 2020, a robust mechanism for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is also being set up.

To ensure effective programme delivery, UNICEF Namibia employed mix strategies comprising communications, partnerships, youth participation, innovation, Public Private Sector partnership to rally key stakeholders to better understand the implications of programming in UMIC and the CRC@30 commemoration. NCO continued to maintain the strong relationship with existing donors and National Committees such as Canada, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, USAID, Germany and the EU. Three million USD was raised through these partnerships for the next two financial years. During this reporting period, new funding partnerships dialogue were initiated with China, GIZ, KfW Bank, and a mining company B2Gold, while the discussions with the Finish Embassy will result in a technical support to the Ministry of Health for the Maternal newborn package.

To promote child participation in decision making, UNICEF worked with the Parliament of Namibia to host the fifth session of the Namibian Children's Parliament. The one-week event organised in partnership with the Namibian National Assembly, presented an opportunity for youth from diverse socio-economic and political backgrounds to exchange ideas to influence national policies. The UNSDG Advocate Mr. Edward Ndopu addressed the session by highlighting the plight of children with disabilities. A key outcome of the address was the approval of a motion on "Inclusive education – towards disability friendly schools".

In line with the global and regional strategy on Public Private partnerships, NCO held a Partnership meeting with the Business Council. The meeting reaffirmed the role of the Business Council in identifying key actions for implementation in 2020 and the importance of UNICEF as a coordinator in the shared value partnership with the Council.

As part of global CRC celebrations, the Prime Minister of Namibia made a pledge recommitting to the CRC. The CRC was also a prominent advocacy opportunity amongst the "Friends of Children in Namibia", a group of Executive Directors from key line Ministries. To consolidate its partnerships, UNICEF Namibia developed capacity of journalists with regards to child rights.

Finally, UNICEF alongside Namibia's United Nations Country Team (UNCT), leveraged Namibia's chairmanship of the SADC

Country Office Annual Report 2019

Namibia

to advocate around several crucial development agenda items such as HIV, Sexual Reproductive Health, nutrition, young people, education and migration.

Effective management oversight was maintained throughout 2019, with regular monitoring of progress against the annual priorities. Especially in light of the first year of the new Country Programme (2019-2023), which adopted an integrated life cycle approach supported by a matrix management Office structure. The key management focus was on leadership and management excellence. Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) assurance, financial management, effective human resources management, performance management, staff learning and development, as well as the implementation of the change management strategy based on the new CPMP formed the back-bone of the 2019 Management approach of Namibia Country Office. One of the key challenges faced during this reporting period is contract management. In response to this constraint, a contract tracking mechanism was developed to support programme delivery. Overall, operational effectiveness in the office remains of high quality. Staff development and wellbeing were prioritized in response to the global staff survey.

The above notwithstanding, administrative barriers and unharmonized processes that have also been a challenge to the UN in achieving efficiency and effectiveness at the country level despite the reform agenda continued. Under the auspices of the UN Operations management Team, UNICEF worked closely with other entities towards a more practical, efficient and effective manner to address these constraints.

UNICEF Namibia strengthened its governance in line with commitments to efficiency and effectiveness by ensuring that guidelines and policies are adhered to, by maintaining control over funding and other assets, and through implementation of peer review recommendations. Financial management for NCO remains one of the strong points. Approximately 25% savings on operational cost were observed through the use of common services and other UN greening initiatives.

Good relations with the Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Eswatini Hub and Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) facilitated strong management of the Country Programme. The exchange programme with GSSC added to improving the overall control and governance of funds and assets. Ongoing capacity development of new colleagues on grant management saw an improvement in fund allocation and monitoring.

The new Country Programme necessitated an above-normal recruitment rate with 8 new positions, which were well managed except for the recruitment duration of two, that exceeded the recommended global requirement of less than 45 days. Staff well-being was prioritized in 2019 and mandatory trainings were completed by staff. The regional staff counselor supported the office on mental health, including through individual tailor-made support. In response to the recommendations of the UNICEF led Independent Task Force report, UNICEF NCO developed a roadmap with commitment to prioritise staff well-being. The rolling out of a mood meter to gauge and respond promptly to staff matters is a key outcome thanks to Management and Staff Association partnership and joint accountability on staff issues.

UNICEF Namibia continued to improve systems and procedures to ensure effective programme planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation. The 2019 Work Plans, which included the HACT plans and Integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Plan (IMEP), were developed timely and quality assured. The country office is working towards adopting e-tools in 2020 and work is underway to implement e-tools. Integrated programming and Matrix Management were at the core of the CO's AWP in 2019; this enabled cross-sectoral programme delivery to optimize results for children in Namibia's UMIC context.

Recognising the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the National Statistics Agency (NSA) produced the first national SDGs Baseline Report. The document serves as a key reference for Namibia's monitoring of progress towards achieving SDG targets. Moreover, Government together with UN partners developed and launched the Sustainable Development Goals Fifth National Development Plan Indicator Framework. Its purpose is to reflect the level of alignment of NDP5 indicator framework with SDGs, minimise duplication and redundancies in data collection and reduce response fatigue. UNICEF continues to support overall architecture and functionality of sectoral Management Information Systems. Despite having a conducive legal and policy environment which governs statistics, another persistent challenge is inadequate implementation and coordination of the wider Namibian Statistical System (NSS). This predicament is made worse by the general decline in resources to the statistics sector and the general freeze in recruitment to fill vacant positions. Sustained efforts are thus needed in the coming years to broaden the monitoring scope horizontally (to cover more indicators) as well as vertically (to increase the level of data disaggregation). Timeliness and quality of data remain overarching priorities for Namibia.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Valuable lessons were learned in 2019, which will inform the implementation of the new Country Programme. The more closely integrated Country Programme and its leaner Matrix Management structure allowed NCO efficient in supporting

Government to reach its national goals, an increasingly important aspect of UNICEF programming in Namibia's UMIC context. Integrated programming was placed at the heart of NCO's 2019 AWP, and the staffing structure has accordingly been revised to be fit-for-purpose, also with the UN reform as backdrop. The lesson learned so far has been that this new structure enhanced coordination between vertical (sectoral) and horizontal (cross-sectoral) programming to integrate actions within and between outcome areas while strengthening coherence and accountability. Despite some initial resistance to break down silos, this led to staff co-creating lifecycle interventions that effectively address challenges faced by children in Namibia. In addition, staff have started seeing positive impact on their careers, as they are exposed to areas and tasks that had previously not been part of their role. Key challenges, such as a need for strengthened coordination, clarity around decision-making authority as well as roles and responsibilities also to ensure a fair distribution of workload, will continue to be addressed moving forward.

Lack of standard care in health facilities has been identified as one of the key hurdles and investing in quality care during time of labour, childbirth and first week after delivery is one of UNICEF's top priorities in Namibia. In 2019, UNICEF initiated, in close collaboration with the Health Ministry, site-based, competency-focused coaching and mentoring of midwives. A clear lesson learned was that these skills building workshops conducted in health care settings, focusing on practical skills for essential newborn health, resulted in better skills transferred and post-training implementation than traditional off-site, theoretical trainings. Another lesson learned was that immediate and ongoing follow-up, including remotely via video calling applications, and on-site support drove implementation of learned skills for sustained gains and systems strengthening.

In 2019, UNICEF in close collaboration with key line Ministries, facilitated the scaling-up of co-locating e-birth notification/registration with the registration of some key social protection services at health facilities. The integration is working because it takes advantage of an existing contact point (facility birth) that reaches nearly all women and children in the country. Integrating registration of all social protection services and enabling families to apply for those social services with a single application at the health facility helped to ensure that nearly all families in need can access available social services as soon as their child is born.

The added value of the multi-sectoral approach, which more effectively combined different stakeholders working on child protection to better understand their roles and responsibilities and to strengthen integrated case management, was another important lesson learned. Furthermore, addressing violence from a child protection perspective as well as a barrier to good learning outcomes, increased the response to school-related and community violence.

In terms of solutions to key programmatic challenges, one successful innovation spearheaded by UNICEF, Government and civil society in 2019 was the roll-out of Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) in urban areas. To contain the Hepatitis E outbreak, a strategic shift was taken to include informal urban settlements in programming to end open defecation. Initially, the programme faced administrative difficulties given the informal status of the settlements, but CLTS in urban areas can be successfully implemented and scaled-up, by leveraging UNICEF's advocacy and expertise.

The full participation of regional stakeholders in the policy formulation process for the National Policies on School Health and EMIS was another key innovation. Centred on principles of social accountability and C4D, such upstream work ensured country ownership of child-friendly policies. The involvement of parents in policy formulation through the School Boards contributed significantly in 2019 to an improved understanding of the crucial role parents and communities play in the education of their children. In this regard, the use of vernacular languages as well as sign language at school board trainings and community engagements proved vital for building a more conducive learning environment for children, especially from the most disadvantaged communities. In a similar vein, involving learners in identifying barriers to education and developing mitigation strategies at school and community levels was a key innovation in fostering child agency. Listening to the voices especially of children with disabilities themselves has been crucial in 2019 for the development of interventions informed by their challenges and needs.

Data Must Speak (DMS) has become the cornerstone of data work in the education sector and beyond in 2019, spanning both decades. Building on DMS, Namibia CO has undertaken an analysis of the existing data landscape for children in Namibia, including the demand for, supply, and uses of data in the country. In conjunction with data landscaping, a new analytical tool developed at HQ, the Administrative Data Maturity Model (ADAM), was developed for the first time in Namibia and will be field tested in 2020. Regional Office and neighbouring countries appear keen to learn from Namibian experiences in streamlining data for children work.

The UNDP-UNICEF partnership launched the Vehicle-Grid-Integration (VGI) and Electric Vehicle (EV) project. By using these cars and charging them through the solar energy, the agencies will contribute to Greening the Blue efforts and reduce carbon emissions significantly. This pilot project is the first installation of VGI technology in Namibia, and the first at a UN compound in Africa, standing to demonstrate the solution to internal and external stakeholders, with the aim to trigger widespread adoption of EVs across the country.

Country Office Annual Report 2019

Namibia

Based on these lessons learned in 2019, UNICEF and partners will continue to (1) shift towards in-service training modalities that offer both improved effectiveness and higher efficiency with strategic partnerships to strengthen pre-service training of critical cadres; and (2) drive further integration both within UNICEF's programme and across Government institutions. The Public Finance for Children (PF4C) programme will be a crucial cross-sectoral strategy to ensure child-focused PF4C in Namibia. Increasing the efficiency of in-service training and focusing on pre-service training are other crucial adaptations to the current resource-constrained environment. For example, GRN does not currently finance procurement of life-saving therapeutic foods for treatment of malnutrition. UNICEF has continued to support procurement of these commodities as part of the drought response, but with limited resources that were not sufficient to meet needs. Cost-sharing between UNICEF and Government in the procurement of these commodities, through a revised MoU, is necessary for sustainability and to avoid stock-outs.

The country office will strategically sustain the gains achieved in 2019 in the area of management excellence, Public Finance for Children (PF4C), data for children, violence against children, resource leveraging and mobilization, into our 2020 Annual Management Plans (AMPs). Exploring new avenues such as those under PF4C, including poverty analysis and measurement, strengthening Social Poverty as a tool for reducing inequality and poverty, as well as a sharper focus on co-creating innovations through partnership building, will remain a core orientation for NCO in 2020.