

Montenegro

Update on the context and situation of children

Montenegro is an upper-middle-income country in the Western Balkans with a moderately developed legal and institutional framework and an EU candidate country. Montenegro's population of 617,683 is ageing and declining rapidly. In 2021, there was a historic minimum of livebirths in the country (7,033) while deaths exceeded births by almost 2,100.¹

Although Montenegro was perceived as a front-runner in the EU accession process in Western Balkans, the absence of constructive engagement of political parties caused the collapse of two governments in 2022, thus stalling decision-making processes and reform implementation. Challenges remain over the effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, primarily due to a weak accountability framework, inadequate and insufficient administrative capacities, lack of systematic monitoring and quality assurance of existing laws and strategies, and insufficient funding to ensure enforcement of children's rights.

After a sharp recession in 2020, the economy recorded a strong rebound in 2021 and kept growing at a steady pace in the first half of 2022 as the removal of COVID-19 restrictions buoyed both domestic and external demand. Driven by surging global commodity prices, inflation increased significantly, putting additional pressure on the most vulnerable families. Unemployment remains high, slowing the pace of poverty reduction. Job loss disproportionately affected young people and women (youth unemployment was registered at 37% according to World Bank 2021 data.²)

Post-COVID-19 effects sparked a continuing drop in demand for child health services in 2022, putting vaccination and other preventive measures at risk. Coverage for the first dose of measles, mumps and rubella fell from 90% in 2010 to 18% in 2022. Breastfeeding rates also remain low: only 24% of newborns were breastfed within the first hour after birth and just 20% were exclusively breastfed for six months as per MICS 2018. Conservative estimates of the Situation Analysis of Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) in Montenegro show that, between 10% (3,700) and 15% (5,550) of children from 0 to 6 years require ECI services annually, but only between 31% and 46% have been identified and served. Adolescents and young people have insufficient access to mental health services while reporting an increased need for support.

It was only in September 2022, that schools and preschools in Montenegro resumed regular operation by dropping all COVID-19 prevention measures. The percentage of children enrolled in preschool education increased by 7% in comparison to 2021, with coverage rate of 3–6-year-old children currently standing at 76% (75% for girls, 77% for boys). An upward trend is also evident for children from the most vulnerable groups – the percentage of children with disabilities by 7% and Roma children in preschool education saw a major increase by 47%. An important increase was recorded of the number of children with disabilities by 5% in secondary education. A comprehensive Education Sector Analysis was finalized, highlighting the major issues affecting the education system related to quality (almost 50% of students do not reach basic literacy levels on PISA), equity (children affected by poverty are six to eight times less likely to attend preschool education), infrastructure (68% of primary school students attend 13% of schools) and financing (relatively low public expenditure on education). The education system is also failing young people, who are unable to acquire skills required for employment. Data from the International Labour Organization showed that 21.1% of young people were not working, studying or in training.

The prolonged pandemic increased the risk of family violence, child abuse and deteriorating mental health for children and parents. Although the process of deinstitutionalization was slowed down, there was still a 7.5% decrease in the number of children in residential institutions from 2021. Compared to

2021, the number of children in foster care increased by almost 5%, while the number of foster families providing non-kinship and kinship care increased by 90% and 39% respectively. Violence against children (VAC) was recognized as an area of concern in the last three EU Progress Reports, including for 2022, which noted an increased occurrence and intensity of domestic violence and a reduced availability of services and cross-sectoral response. In the EU report, women's NGOs reported approximately 20% increase in cases of domestic violence in 2021 compared to 2020, and as high as 80% increase compared to 2019. Peer violence at school, including bullying, also showed an alarming growing trend. Montenegro has not yet acted on recommendations by UN monitoring bodies to raise the minimum age for marriage. The practice of arranged child marriages in Roma communities remains a concern (32.5% of girls aged 15–19 and 15.8% of boys are currently married or in union). Children's increased reliance on digital solutions highlighted the need for strengthened online protection.

Preliminary data shows that the state of WASH facilities in schools is of inadequate quality, while menstrual hygiene in schools is not being considered at all. Air pollution represents a health risk for children, especially in cities. In 2020, in Montenegro, exposure to PM2.5 concentrations above the 2021 WHO AQ guideline level was linked to 920 premature deaths and 1,531 years of life lost per 100,000 inhabitants.³

Around one third (30.5%) of Montenegro's children live in poverty, according to MONSTAT (SILC 2021). The 2022 national budget introduced universal child benefits for all children aged 0–17 and free textbooks for all primary school students. Introduction of universal child allowance increased coverage of children with non-contributory social assistance to 122,200 children in 2022. UNICEF assessed that over 90% of all children were registered for the benefit, thus connecting almost all children to the social protection system. The expansion of child allowance to all children up to the age of 18 is expected to decrease general poverty by 3.8 percentage points, and child poverty by as much as 6.7 percentage points. Children with disabilities and Roma and Egyptian children continue to face significant barriers and inequalities in their access to basic services. According to the Global Gender Equality Index report for 2020, Montenegro achieved a score of 55, significantly lower than the EU average of 67.4.

1 <http://www.monstat.org/cg/page.php?id=49&pageid=49>.

2 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/38189/>

3 <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/air-quality-in-europe-2022/health-impacts-of-air-pollution>. P17947818ec26c8c17fe014901194ac104a1b5d70a2a.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

Major contributions and drivers of results

GA 1: The Ministry of Health, with the support of UNICEF and the EU, initiated the process of developing the first national Early Childhood Development Strategy which is due to be adopted in 2023. A national high-level commission on immunization was established to oversee activities related to the catch-up in coverage with children's routine immunization. UNICEF supported catch-up and system-strengthening interventions, including capacity building for 130 health professionals from the Institute for Public Health. With collaborative work between the Behavioral Insights Team and UNICEF, a set of evidenced-based BI interventions designed to increase demand for immunization services in Montenegro have been developed. The Effective Vaccine Management Improvement Plan was completed. In the area of nutrition, the Law on Breastfeeding and national guidelines on baby-friendly hospital initiatives and on infant and young child feeding were drafted. The micronutrient survey was successfully launched and completed by the Institute for Public Health while the report is expected in the first half of 2023. The survey will provide a comprehensive assessment of micro- and macro-nutritional indicators for more than 2000 young children, women of reproductive age and pregnant women, thus contributing to the GAP priority related to maternal health and nutrition

including for the prevention of anemia. Health workers from the Clinical Centre of Montenegro received training on family-centred developmental care for small and sick new-borns. The Situation Analysis of Early Childhood Interventions was completed and presented at the regional conference “Optimal Early Childhood Development for Every Child”. More than 180 professionals were trained in social and behavioural change approaches to increase demand for services and practices promoting early childhood development and health (preschool education, breastfeeding, interpersonal communication for immunization). The Parenting for Lifelong Health for Young Children programme was expanded to new municipalities, now totaling 12, following the training of the fourth generation of facilitators. During 2022, 385 parents were recruited into the programme, including 29 fathers, demonstrating the remaining gender gap in child rearing. The Bebbio mobile app for parents was launched in February 2022 in cooperation with the Institute for Public Health and the European Union. By the end of 2022, it had almost 10,000 downloads (15% were male caregivers).

GA 2: The Education Sector Analysis (ESA) was launched as a joint initiative with the Ministry of Education, providing in-depth insights in the education system in the period 2015–2020 from the aspects of quality, equity, governance, and financing. ESA sets the basis for developing a comprehensive multi-year Education Reform Strategy, for which commitment was ensured from the Ministry of Education, along with financial support from the EU. In preparation for the UN’s Transforming Education Summit (TES), broad consultations were conducted with support of UNCT and UNICEF as a leading agency with students, parents, teachers, the business sector and all relevant institutions, confirming the need to re-imagine education through sound, long-term and budgeted policies. Through the regional DG NEAR funded project in cooperation with the Bureau for Education, over 20% of teachers received training in using digital tools in teaching in a quality and inclusive manner, reaching almost 50% of all students in primary and secondary schools in Montenegro. The national Digital School Platform became fully functional, containing 12,000 lessons categorized into 1,000 courses and reaching over 24,000 users. Textbooks Publishing Agency developed the first national Standards for Quality Digital Textbooks, setting the necessary policy and quality framework for future work in this area. The programme for developing social and emotional skills was implemented in 105 primary and secondary schools (half of all schools in Montenegro), providing students with opportunities for social and emotional learning at school. As integral part of the programme, the first national Children’s Symphony Orchestra was established, and a series of concerts organized across Montenegro under the slogan “Values and Virtues in Music”. In relation to the emergency response to the Ukraine crisis, 784 children in preschools and schools were provided with support for learning and mental health prevention through formal and non-formal education. Furniture and IT equipment for four preschools and six primary schools were purchased, and relevant policies and procedures developed and put in place to ensure smooth enrolment in Montenegrin schools.

GA3 : The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare was supported to develop the first-ever five-year national Strategy on Deinstitutionalization which will be adopted in early 2023. Support was provided to strengthen the capacities of the social services workforce and also for the Institute for Social and Child Protection to fulfil its role relevant to quality assurance and quality of social work, covering approximately 200 social service professionals. A total of 155 social workers went through the meta-supervision process, which accounts for about 24% of the total number of licensed professional workers, while 35% of the Institute for Social and Child Protection professionals completed their education in external supervision. UNICEF supported strengthening of the system’s response to violence and exploitation through the introduction of advanced Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics training which presents an innovative approach to the treatment of children exposed to violence and trauma, enabling professionals from social and child protection, health and education sectors to provide protection and support to 40 children and 30 adults with experiences of trauma. UNICEF with the Council of Europe supported the Government of Montenegro in conducting a feasibility study for establishing the Barnahus model, a multidisciplinary service for child victims of sexual and other severe forms of violence. To promote positive disciplining of children, CSO Parent Helpline was supported, which resulted in 1,350 mothers and fathers (30% of fathers and 70% of mothers) being reached by the Parent Helpline, while 107,461 of people are being reached with messages on positive parenting, and 21 new advisers capacitated for counselling support on the Parent Helpline. Mental health and psychosocial

support were provided by the only National Child Helpline, which received 418 calls from children (40% of boys and 60% of girls). Promotional activities on the importance of mental health and the importance of seeking support for mental health issues reached 67,782 people. The Institute of Social and Child Protection was supported in development of the Guidance on mental health and psychosocial support services in CP including an overview of relevant services in social welfare, education and health sectors. In relation to emergency crisis, the focus of child protection was on support to the system and civil society organizations to provide psychosocial support and prevention of GBV. 381 children and 684 caregivers benefitted from these activities and 541 children and adults received information on safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers. Ministry of Justice drafted the amendments of the Law on Free Legal Aid, to be adopted in early 2023, proposing expanding the right to legal aid to all children. GA4 : UNICEF supported the Institute for Public Health to conduct a comprehensive situation analysis of WASH in schools covering the majority of schools in the country, followed by the development of a concrete action plan and guidance for improvements with a specific focus on menstrual hygiene management and accessibility for children with disabilities. Support was ensured by the Swedish International Development Agency, in partnership with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, to implement a programme on air quality. The programme focuses on the education of adolescents, and their direct involvement in developing evidence-based adolescent- and youth-led solutions for this issue in partnerships with the Association of Scouts and the Ministry of Ecology. GA 5: In 2022 Montenegro further expanded universal child allowance to cover all children until 18 years. The policy was introduced after UNICEF developed substantial evidence about the relevance of universal social protection policies in Montenegro and provided technical assistance to roll out and improve the design of universal child allowance for 0–6-year-olds in 2021. UNICEF partnered with the World Bank to produce the Social Protection Situational Analysis advocating for further social and child protection reform.

UNICEF successfully completed the Beneficiary Assessment analysis in line with the CODI methodology. This evidence will give a “human face” to the proposed reforms and will be used to further promote the necessity of a comprehensive system reform and of increasing and capacitating the social service workforce. UNICEF provided technical assistance to improve the social protection statistics (poverty and inequality rates). Improvements will imply: i) faster data collection and publishing – from 18 months down to six months, and ii) an improved questionnaire (SILC) which is better-aligned with the national cash benefit system’s requirements (notably the means-tested benefit). This will allow cash benefit simulations in a timely manner to inform further cash benefit reform processes, using the simulation tool which was already developed in 2021. UNICEF successfully advocated for the recognition of European Child Guarantee in the national IPA III planning documents, to comprehensively address both multidimensional poverty and social exclusion. UNICEF partnered with Duke University to apply behavioral science principles for increased family investments in early childhood education, through the universal child allowance expenditure on the youngest children.

Child rights monitoring With UNICEF support, the Government of Montenegro reinforced the role and mandate of the Council on the Rights of the Child, as the main child rights governance body in the country, by placing it for the first time at the level of the Prime Minister. The process of establishing an independent expert body on child rights to support the Council was initiated with UNICEF support. Particular attention was given to strengthening partnership with the Women’s Club of the Parliament of Montenegro, which demonstrated strong democratic potential to facilitate political dialogue and social cohesion and promote an equity agenda. UNICEF supported the Women’s Club in a number of actions, such as expert assistance for prohibition of child marriages in Montenegro’s legislation and raising the minimum age for child marriage to 18 years of age for both women and men without exception, preparing policy and economic briefs for sustaining public finances for the social and child protection sector, and maintaining essential funds for financing a minimum package of preventive child and family support services in the state budget. In 2022, the capacities of the Ombudsperson’s

Institution were strengthened to accelerate child participation, generate evidence about children as witnesses and victims in misdemeanor procedures and monitor of child safety from online violence and harm. 830 children from eight municipalities actively took part in 36 workshops on child rights and access to justice, organized with UNICEF support. In addition, UNICEF agreed with the Ombudsperson's establishment of the Platform for Independent Monitoring of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, through a UNPRPD-funded initiative implemented in cooperation with the RC Office (OHCHR) and UNDP. Agreement was reached with the Ministry of Finance for UNICEF technical assistance for the development of methodology for Child Rights Budgeting. Also, economic briefs on education sector reform, and investing in essential child and family support services in the social and child protection sectors were developed and shared with the Ministry of Finance, line ministries and the Women's Club of the Parliament of Montenegro. Cooperation with the National Statistical Office (MONSTAT) was strengthened through active support in implementation of the SILC survey and initial preparations for the MICS7 survey. Line ministries and MONSTAT were supported in the expansion and regular update of the TransMonnee database.

Adolescents and young people Montenegro hosted a boot camp for the third iteration of the Generation Unlimited (now Imagen Ventures) Youth Challenge, which gathered 10 teams out of as many as 250 applicants from across the country. Five national finalists were selected, two of which participated in the global finals. The five incubated solutions reaching more than 2,000 adolescents and young people with over 60% girls participation. In partnership with the Association of Youth with Disabilities, UNICEF Montenegro continued its programme of supporting adolescents with disabilities and their families in acquiring socio-emotional and skills for independent living, and receiving educational, social and legal support. In all, more than 200 adolescents with disabilities and their families received direct support, while the partner through its portal reached out to more than 1,000 more beneficiaries. Through its partnership with the TUI Care Foundation, the programme "Prilike" offered job-shadowing and internship opportunities to adolescents in their final two years of secondary school. In 2022, more than 1,500 adolescents had the opportunity to go through experiential learning, with 98% reporting that this was the first time they had had this type of opportunity. Additionally, UNICEF is collaborating with the ILO on introducing "Prilike" as part of the broader EU Youth Guarantee initiative. Through the joint UN programme "Activate", UNICEF supported the programme for socio-emotional skills in non-formal environments for 1,522 adolescents in all three regions. Additionally, in partnership with the Association of Scouts, over 1,200 adolescents and young people attended workshops on wellbeing and mental health, and a portal with information on mental health was prepared. The U-Report digital platform remained an important part of the communication with adolescents and young people, with a base of 2,500 to 3,000 U-reporters during the year, which is about 4% of the total adolescent population.

Gender equality A strong partnership was developed with the Parliamentary Women's Club, focused on assessing entry points for gender mainstreaming across sectors and identifying priority areas for improving children's and women's wellbeing. UNICEF supported the Women's Club with expert assistance for the prohibition of child marriages in legislation and raising the minimum age for child marriage to 18 years of age for both women and men, without exception. Under the Gender Thematic Fund, a comprehensive analysis of the gender-focused COVID-19 response in Montenegro, Albania and Serbia was finalized. Fathers and other male caregivers increasingly participated in parenting programmes including through fathers-only groups. Women's rights organizations were heavily involved in the Ukraine refugee response with a focus on preventing GBV, reaching over 300 women and girls. A separate sub-chapter in the Education Sector Analysis provided an overview of gender related differences in access to and education outcomes.

Public communication

UNICEF remains the strongest UN brand in the country – 96% of citizens heard of it and 79% have a positive opinion about it. More than 2,000 media reports mentioning UNICEF were generated through public communication activities in 2022. There were no negative media reports about UNICEF. Our media releases were published more than 30 times on the front pages of dailies, bringing child rights issues to the top of the public agenda. Half of all media reports on children's health issues, a quarter of all media reports on violence, a fifth of all media reports on poverty and 1 in 10 of all media reports on

education published in Montenegrin media during 2022 mention UNICEF. Apart from being the leaders of UNICEF's TikTok and Instagram accounts, an inclusive group of UNICEF Montenegro Young Reporters participated actively in a public debate on key child rights issues. 129 media reports with their voices were generated during the last year. As a result, 28% of Montenegrin citizens noticed them and 85% consider them to be a good role model for young people. The number of UNICEF Montenegro social media followers increased by 10% from 110,545 to 121,384.

UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

UNICEF continues to play a key role in the UN country team and has been leading discussions and coordination of the Social Inclusion Results Group. During 2022, critical steps were taken towards development and government endorsement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework; UNICEF positioned itself well within the framework and throughout the process, taking the lead in the strategic prioritization of human capital development and reducing vulnerability, and in the social cohesion working group at the inter-agency level. UNICEF jointly with other UN agencies, supported the Government to develop the child focused Second Voluntary National Review 2016-2021, which is the first official review of the level of implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in the country. Two UN joint programmes – one on social protection funded by the Joint SDG Fund and the other on disability inclusion funded by UNPRPD – were implemented, adding value to system-strengthening efforts.

UNICEF maintained partnerships with senior decision-making levels, at the same time strategically managing communication and advocacy to position priorities for children higher up on the government agenda. UNICEF's partnership with Parliament Women's Club prioritized child and maternal health, prevention of child marriages and improving social and child protection services across various consultative and decision-making processes.

As a result of multiple strategies applied through a broad partnership with line ministries, National IPA Coordinator office, and EU Delegation to Montenegro, major child rights commitments were integrated in the IPA III Strategic Response Framework, including Child and Youth Guarantee. Strong public communication, joint advocacy with UN agencies and civil society partners, as well as international organizations – particularly the EU Delegation to Montenegro – helped to acquire commitment from the Ministry of Education on the need for development of a multi-year education reform strategy.

A new partnership with the EU Delegation in Montenegro to strengthen the national child protection system for prevention of, and protection of children from, all forms of violence and exploitation was signed.

The partnership with the TUI Care Foundation has been extended for four more years and will be focusing more on introducing the programme into schools and becoming part of the formal education system. Additionally, UNICEF is collaborating with ILO on introducing the initiative as part of the broader EU Youth Guarantee initiative.

In 2022, UNICEF successfully implemented the first UNICEF Business Council Action Plan, which envisaged three areas of cooperation with the private sector to support the following programme objectives: 1) Every family to have adequate time and resources to care for their children; 2) Knowledge and skills for children and young people to meet the needs of the 21st-century labour market; and 3) Adolescents and young people able to successfully transition from school to work. In addition to non-financial engagement with Business Council members, the first fundraising initiative was launched in partnership with the Rotary Clubs of Montenegro, to support procurement of medical and developmental equipment which raised a total of EUR 92,000 for the Children's Hospital equipment and improvement of care practices in the neonatology department.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Montenegro has been facing significant political instability, including the fall of two governments in the last two years, a dysfunctional judiciary, and significant shifts in the staff structure at the levels of decision making and middle management. Additionally, the functioning of most of the institutions was practically paralysed for three months due to the cyber-attack on the Government's IT systems. This prolonged situation was a continuous threat to the child rights agenda and the overall human rights and rule of law agenda. UNICEF continuously applied a professional, knowledge-based and neutral approach, rooted in international standards and commitments on child rights to support the country to sustain the results achieved so far and foster continuation of reform initiatives.

The following strategies contributed to mitigating the external negative effects, as well as ensuring that planned activities were initiated in as timely a manner as possible:

- An immediate and well-planned advocacy approach by the management and programme section towards decision makers for joint action and partnership on ensuring the continuation and launch of priority activities to address key issues in the education, social and child protection and health sectors.
- Strong partnership and support to technical teams in the relevant institutions to ensure continued implementation of priority activities.
- Partnership with the EU Delegation, IFIs and relevant civil society organizations to ensure strong advocacy for priority reform activities.

The elevated Council on Child Rights has the potential to be instrumental in accelerating the most pressing child rights issues in the country in a cross-sectoral manner, but more work is needed for its full operationalization. As fundamental custodians of political commitments on child rights, parliamentarians are crucial to achieving better results for children. Therefore, Parliament and its committees served as important forums for awareness raising and monitoring of child rights policies; UNICEF further invested in its long-standing cooperation with Parliament and continued to foster joint thematic sessions around the most pressing child rights issues. Consultations with children and youth were at the core of UNICEF planning and provided valuable insights, an example of which was the implementation of the process of National Consultations for the UN Global Summit on Transforming of Education. Cross-sectoral cooperation proved to be challenging in many domains, and remains a priority to be strengthened through policy dialogue, policy briefs, platforms for multisectoral work and financing. UNICEF and other national and international partners were focused on vulnerable groups of children who experience inequality and are not counted in national averages, as well as the barriers and bottlenecks that prevent them from enjoying their rights and reaching their full potential. UNICEF continues to leverage its neutrality to mobilize the private sector, government and wider community to develop new initiatives and build alliances for children. In all phases of business engagement, including unpacking strategic areas for engagement, developing the Business Council action plan and integrating this into CPD development, it was important to communicate how the business will benefit through shared-value partnerships.

Regular meetings and informal check-ins with government partners, donors and CSOs proved invaluable for ensuring continued national ownership and buy-in for key programme areas, including scale-up of initiatives. Joint cross-sectoral collaboration with UN agencies undoubtedly has the potential for strengthening joint work plans, joint programmes and joint funding within the context of the UN reform. Through regular monitoring of government strategic and legislative planning, UNICEF pursued evidence-based advocacy and successfully integrated key priorities for children into relevant national strategic and planning documents including key EU documents. Important lessons were also learned during the Ukraine refugee response, about how to support partners in the future, regarding emergency preparedness and overall planning and monitoring systems. Due to frequent institutional changes and staff turnover, the country context is rapidly changing, volatile and complex, and requires agile approaches and analysis to design and implement evidence-based programmes.

UNICEF continued to apply innovative tools and methods to reach out to the most vulnerable children and families. In 2022 this was done through the introduction of a new multisectoral approach to treatment of children exposed to trauma and violence – advanced Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics training, an innovative approach imported by the Child Trauma Center from USA. The multisectoral approach is also nurtured through the advocacy efforts in the establishment of the Barnabus model, for child victims of the most severe cases of violence. The Bebbi mobile application

for parents is a digital innovation that was launched in Montenegro and another 11 additional countries in the Europe and Central Asia region. It had a high level of reach in Montenegro, proving that digital support to parents for consistent and accurate tracking and stimulation of young children's development from birth to the early years is feasible and in demand in Montenegro. UNICEF partnered with Duke University on an innovative initiative to apply behavioural science interventions on the design of a cash scheme. The initiative is a pilot for UNICEF in the region and globally, and the first results will outline the initiative's potential in social policy, are expected in 2023. The first national Digital School Platform was expanded to include an additional 1,000 courses containing over 11,000 lessons, and experience and models were shared as good practice with countries in emergency situations such as Ukraine and Afghanistan.

Overall, the CP 2017–2022 successfully contributed to an increased respect for and awareness of children's and adolescents' rights in Montenegro. This was reflected through national commitments through the adoption of a wide range of legislation, strategies, plans of action and investments for education, ECD, social and child protection, young people and justice. The CP has particularly responded to the needs of the most vulnerable children and adolescents including ethnic minorities and children with disabilities. UNICEF envisions four key priorities for its new country programme: (1) protecting children from poverty, adversity and violence; (2) ECD for the best start to life; (3) improved learning outcomes, skills and empowerment for all children, adolescents and young people; and (4) institutional accountability for child rights and leveraging resources for results for children.