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**REALIZING CHILDREN'S  
RIGHT TO SOCIAL  
PROTECTION IN MIDDLE  
EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

A Compendium  
of UNICEF's  
Contributions

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Social Policy Section  
UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office  
Abdulqader al-Abed Street, Tla’a Al-Ali, Building no. 15  
P.O. Box 1551, Amman, 11821 Jordan



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## Acknowledgments

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This Compendium was written by Edward Archibald, an independent consultant; and was commissioned and supervised by Buthaina Al-Iryani (Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF MENARO) with overall leadership provided by Arthur van Diesen (Regional Adviser, Social Policy, UNICEF MENARO). Invaluable support was provided by the following UNICEF Country Office teams: Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen.



## Overview

**Children's rights in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have seen a negative trajectory in recent years.** The region has faced tremendous challenges, including the effects of civil uprisings in 2011, and the eruption of armed conflict and subsequent humanitarian crises in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Children have acutely felt the effects of these shocks. They have been affected by displacement, decreased access to basic social services, high unemployment, food insecurity and escalating malnutrition rates.

**The region's social protection systems have not served children and their families well.** Children continue to face challenges across the region, whether or not their country is affected by conflict or humanitarian crises. Significant challenges include limited synergies with the health, nutrition or education sectors; cash transfer programmes which do not specifically target children; government-implemented social protection programmes which are not enshrined in national legal frameworks; lack of fiscal space and resources for social protection for children; and social protection systems that are ill-equipped to provide protection in the event of covariate shocks.<sup>1</sup>

**Over recent years UNICEF has strengthened its focus on child-sensitive social protection to help fulfill children's rights.** Social protection is an avenue to address the complex vulnerabilities facing children in the region. Working in close partnership and collaboration with governments, UNICEF has supported policy reforms, implemented programmatic interventions, advocated for implementation of children's rights, and collaborated with national systems and development partners.

**National leadership has been a key guiding principle underpinning the work of UNICEF MENA to ensure the progressive realization of children's rights to social protection.** National leadership is key to ensure coherence, sustainable public financing, and at-scale coverage that allows the most vulnerable children to be reached. UNICEF has played a key role in supporting national social protection coordination and monitoring mechanisms, where the efforts of all stakeholders are orchestrated and tracked under Government leadership. In very specific circumstances, mainly humanitarian

settings, where the Government is not able to fulfil the rights of children to social protection, UNICEF works directly and in coordination with development partners to deliver humanitarian social protection solutions for children, always with the ultimate aim of restoring and strengthening national social protection systems.

**This Compendium documents the broad range of UNICEF's social protection interventions in MENA from 2014-2017.** The Compendium illustrates how UNICEF has worked hand in hand with partner governments in both humanitarian and development settings and succeeded in reaching the most vulnerable children with social protection mechanisms. The timeframe selected represents UNICEF's previous global Strategic Plan, which included social inclusion and social protection as a discrete focus area. Where possible, documented evidence for impacts that have emerged in 2018, have also been included. Information for the Compendium has been sourced from UNICEF Country Office Annual Reports (COAR), internal reporting<sup>2</sup>, or has otherwise been documented in a published study or report.

**UNICEF takes a holistic approach to helping governments build a child-sensitive social protection system.** The Compendium includes 20 case studies detailing UNICEF's contributions in the MENA region across the following five Action Areas:

- I. Generating evidence on child poverty and social protection, and conducting advocacy for evidence-based social protection policies and programmes.
- II. Supporting policies, coordination and financing to strengthen the integration, coherence and child-sensitivity of social protection systems.
- III. Expanding and improving the use of cash transfer programming for children.
- IV. Linking cash transfer recipients to information, knowledge and services, and building a better social service workforce.
- V. Supporting social protection in fragile and humanitarian contexts through leveraging or improving the national social protection system.

**The compilation of case studies for this Compendium was undertaken in several stages to ensure that information is well-referenced.** The first stage entailed compiling all social protection interventions which were initiated or completed by MENA country offices during the 2014-2017 period and already featured in the COARs and internal reporting. In the second phase, the compiled interventions were further studied, and those that demonstrated results or were not previously documented (internally or otherwise) were selected. Consultations were undertaken with MENA country offices through email and/or online interviews to ensure consensus on the composition of the compendium and to fill information gaps.

**A list of references for the case studies is included at the end of the Compendium.** Utmost efforts were undertaken to source and extensively reference the information for the case studies through publicly available documents or online sources.

**A summary of the case studies** in the Compendium is as follows:



## EVIDENCE AND ADVOCACY

**Many countries have measured and analyzed child poverty to inform social protection policies and programmes.** Capacity building and technical support to national counterparts enabled **Algeria** to conduct a multidimensional child poverty analysis in 2016. Significant progress has since been made to institutionalise measurement and analysis of child poverty through the recent establishment of an equity commission. In **Egypt**, child poverty analysis has been undertaken in urban slums and at a national level. The insights from these assessments have shaped programme reforms in urban areas and contributed to important social policy debates on social protection. UNICEF's **MENA Regional Office** has complemented these country-level initiatives with a sharing of information and evidence through knowledge products and collaborative events. Sharing of tools and instruments has enabled the design of effective policies which respond to child deprivations. Child poverty analysis has gained greater prominence in **Iraq** through the preparation and dissemination of a Child Poverty Report in 2016. The findings were shared with

policymakers, leading to the inclusion of child poverty data in the new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2018-2022.

**UNICEF has also supported countries to assess their social protection systems and model the impact of subsidy reforms on children.** In **Iran**, a systems assessment has underpinned advocacy on whether and how children could be better supported by the social protection system. The government subsequently supported a feasibility study of a child cash grant. An analysis of the social protection system in **Lebanon** led to the development of a roadmap for a national framework on social assistance. The government has also proposed a pilot of what would become the country's first cash transfer programme. In pre-crisis **Yemen**, a survey to assess living conditions of vulnerable households and the impact of a cash transfer programme built the confidence of stakeholders in its administrative structures. This led to a 50 percent increase in transfer levels and enabled the World Bank to use beneficiary information to deliver emergency cash support to 1.5 million households. UNICEF modeled the impact of reforming commodity subsidies on poverty and children in **Morocco** to influence the government's subsequent decision to reform its social protection system. The Moroccan government has recently announced an expansion of its flagship social protection programme for children.



## POLICIES, COORDINATION AND FINANCING

**A number of countries in the region have strengthened the integration, coherence and child-sensitivity of their social protection systems through engagement on strategies, policy frameworks and coordination.** In **Djibouti**, a systems assessment led to the creation of a joint platform to tackle poor coordination among partners and limited coherence in targeting methodologies. The country's new social protection strategy also gives a prominent role to children, including a child grant for households living in acute poverty. A mapping assessment in **Morocco** showed fragmentation among social protection programmes, leading to a nationally owned vision for an integrated social protection system which features children and emphasizes life-cycle vulnerabilities.

## Overview



### CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMING AND SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

**Numerous countries have taken steps to expand and improve the design and implementation of cash transfers for children, including through systems strengthening.** In **Egypt**, UNICEF supported an analysis of the quality, accessibility and availability of education and health services for which attendance is required under a conditional cash transfer programme. An enhanced monitoring and evaluation framework is expected to improve the programme's impact on children's health, nutrition and education outcomes. The national government of **Jordan** worked closely with UNICEF to leverage the national social protection system and initiate a new child cash transfer programme for the most vulnerable Jordanians. The initiative has helped to strengthen institutional and infrastructure capacities within the national social protection system. UNICEF conducted numerous analyses in **Tunisia**, including an evaluation of a cash transfer programme and a simulation of the impact of subsidy reform on children. Several policy options were subsequently considered and the government is currently exploring the financial implications of introducing a child grant.



### CASH PLUS INTERVENTIONS AND SOCIAL SERVICE WORK

**In line with global evidence, UNICEF is seeking to leverage existing social protection systems to link cash beneficiaries to information, knowledge and basic social services.** In **Iraq**, UNICEF collaborated closely in the joint design of a pilot conditional cash transfer programme to help mitigate the potential challenges of programme conditionality. Technical advice and analysis led to the introduction of a strong case management system, including referrals to specialized services. The **State of Palestine** is

promoting the integration of social services and cash transfers through a case management approach. The government has also established a social registry to serve as a 'gateway' to families or individuals considered for inclusion in social programmes. UNICEF has worked with government agencies in **Yemen** to gather evidence on the needs of minority Muhamasheen communities. This led to an integrated package of integrated financial inclusion, education, and child protection interventions, including outreach support.



### SOCIAL PROTECTION IN FRAGILE AND HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS

**UNICEF has also leveraged social protection systems to help households respond to shocks in protracted humanitarian crises.** In line with the increasing use of cash in humanitarian responses in the region and beyond, UNICEF has worked with partners to deliver cash and related interventions to affected populations. In **Yemen**, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to preserve the operational capacity of the national cash transfer programme. This facilitated the reactivation in 2017 of payments to 1.5 million households with World Bank funding and prevented the total collapse of the system. A social assistance programme was introduced in **Lebanon** to help displaced Syrian children attend school. The programme provided case management services to complement the cash transfer, and an impact evaluation found numerous positive and immediate impacts related to education and other important issues for children. UNICEF designed and rolled out a new phase of a child grant programme in **Jordan** in 2017, incorporating a 'cash plus' approach which combines monthly cash assistance with referrals to enabling social protection services. The programme has shown positive results in improving child wellbeing, and provides an example of how social protection programmes can leverage existing networks. In 2017, UNICEF launched an integrated social protection programme for children with complex disabilities in **Syria**. In a highly challenging context, the programme has reached over 8,000 children with a combination of cash transfers and case management services including referral to social care services.

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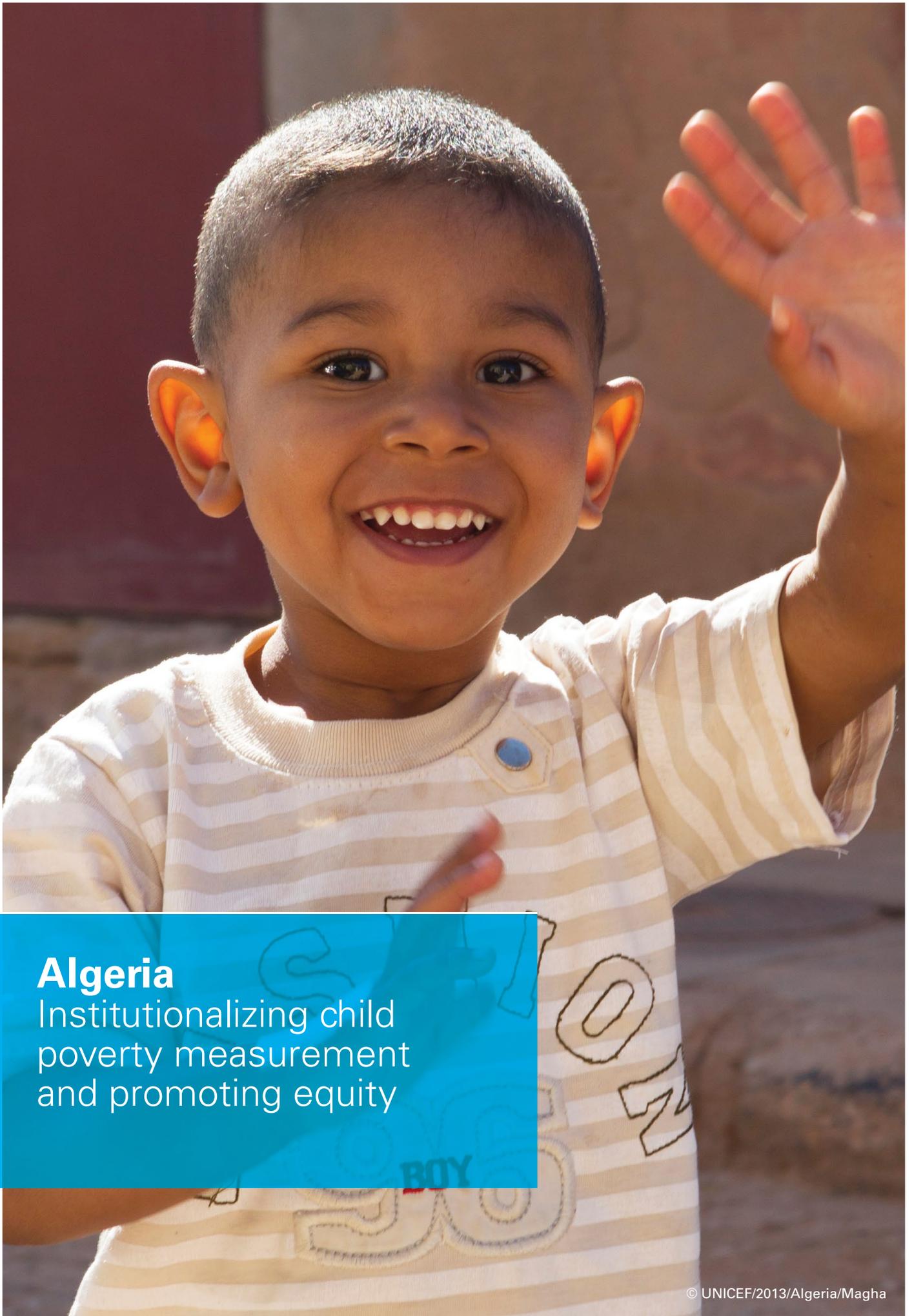
## **Action Area 1:**

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Evidence and Advocacy







## Algeria

Institutionalizing child poverty measurement and promoting equity



## ISSUE

**Collapsing oil prices in 2014 posed significant risks to the most vulnerable in Algeria, as a decrease in national revenue would impact national funding for social programmes.**<sup>3</sup> The government created an *equity cell* within a government advisory body to generate knowledge and evidence on addressing social inequity in the country.<sup>4</sup> Led by the National Council on Economic and Social Affairs (CNES), a government advisory body, the *equity cell* was also tasked with developing strategic options to promote and mainstream equity in public policies and programmes, including those related to children and youth.<sup>5</sup>

**UNICEF had advocated for a number of years for a specialist unit within government to focus on equity.**<sup>6</sup> Establishment of the *equity cell* represented a significant opportunity to progressively institutionalize children's rights in policy development. The routine measurement of child multidimensional poverty provided a key evidence base for policy formulation on youth and children's issues for the *equity cell*. However, national technical expertise on this area needed to be built.



## ACTIONS

**After the establishment of the *equity cell*, UNICEF built the capacity of the cell's members, and other government officials, on the measurement of multidimensional poverty.** This was undertaken in 2015 with technical expertise from the Economic Policy Research Institute, an independent research institute based in South Africa, leveraging south-south technical exchanges.<sup>7</sup> Participants included staff from the National Office of Statistics and other government institutions.<sup>8</sup> The training covered potential approaches to measure and analyze inequity and child poverty.

**UNICEF also created additional south-south cooperation opportunities for the *equity cell* to learn from experiences of other middle-income countries.** Government officials from Mexico met with members of the *equity cell* and provided their insights on institutionalizing multidimensional poverty and equity-focused evaluations.<sup>9</sup> Discussions were also held with Brazilian experts on how to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of social protection, and its links with child poverty.<sup>10</sup>



## IMPACT

**In 2016, the *equity cell* prepared the first multidimensional child poverty measurement in Algeria, adopting the National Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (N-MODA) methodology.**<sup>11</sup> With UNICEF technical and financial support, the *equity cell* conducted the analysis and drafted the report with the participation of many government and non-government stakeholders.<sup>12</sup> The report found that a small but significant proportion of children and youth (2.5 percent) were deprived both socially and monetarily, and that 4.3 percent of children and youth were monetarily poor without being socially deprived.<sup>13</sup> A summary report was produced and disseminated at different fora, including a regional child poverty conference held in Morocco in 2017, a South-South cooperation workshop with Mexico, and among national institutions in Algeria.<sup>14</sup>

**The child poverty report informed government policy considerations on addressing inequity.** CNES used the child poverty analysis to prepare a number of policy recommendations, which were submitted to the Head of State cabinet.<sup>15</sup> The report also contributed to the ongoing government review of energy subsidies through an established dialogue with national institutions directly working on the subsidy review.<sup>16</sup> The child poverty report is also expected to inform the implementation of Algeria's recently revised Constitution, which now explicitly refers to the promotion of social justice and elimination of regional disparities (Article 9).<sup>17</sup>

**Equity is becoming progressively institutionalized within government.** In light of the positive experiences of the *equity cell*, the CNES has created a permanent equity commission to undertake equity analysis, with an emphasis on children and other vulnerable groups.<sup>18</sup> Commission members are expected to be appointed from Government, civil society and experts.<sup>19</sup> The equity commission is anticipated to continue the work of the *equity cell*, in particular to function as a forum to raise and discuss critical issues of inequity. This includes matters affecting children and youth, and the effectiveness and efficiency of social policies and social protection.

**The analysis is shaping UNICEF's approach to the promotion of child-sensitive and equity-focused social protection reforms in Algeria.** Children with inadequate access to social services and social protection programmes are at greater risk of social exclusion. A subsequent analysis has revealed that systems are not yet in place for government officials to monitor children's access to existing social protection schemes.<sup>20</sup> As a result, UNICEF is providing technical assistance to strengthen information management capacities of government workers at the local level.<sup>21</sup> UNICEF is also considering a feasibility assessment of a digital information system.<sup>22</sup>



## Egypt

Strengthening national policy systems to better support children in poverty



## ISSUE

**Already the most populous country in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, Egypt has been experiencing a population boom in recent years due to rising fertility rates.**<sup>23</sup> Like many countries in the region, the aspect of the social protection system that took the bulk of Egypt's public expenditure on social protection in 2014 was a fuel subsidy, which tends to help wealthier citizens more than those who are poor.<sup>24</sup> With a lack of evidence and analysis about the monetary and non-monetary deprivations faced by children, and budgetary constraints on additional social protection programming, it was challenging for Egyptian policy-makers to determine appropriate policy responses.

**Better data on child poverty, in both rural and urban areas, would help policy makers understand the multiple deprivations faced by children.** UNICEF recognized this data would be particularly useful at a time when the government was considering reforms to its fuel subsidy and in light of the large proportion of children that live in urban slums. UNICEF understood that an analysis of subsidy reforms would highlight the various options available to address the specific rights of children, including the financing of effective and well-designed social protection programmes.



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF collaborated with government and non-government agencies to build capacity and evidence on child poverty.** In 2014 UNICEF supported the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) to improve the ability of national statistics officials to measure and report on children.<sup>25</sup> This led to a publication containing data and analysis of child monetary poverty – the first of its kind in Egypt.<sup>26</sup> UNICEF and CAPMAS subsequently worked to develop a methodology to assess multidimensional child poverty using nationally tailored indicators.<sup>27</sup> UNICEF built capacity and evidence specifically around one of the most vulnerable groups of children: those living in urban slums. In partnership with the Informal Settlements Development Facility, a government unit, the *Multidimensional child poverty in slums and unplanned areas in Egypt* report was published in 2014.<sup>28</sup> In 2017, the Ministry of Social Solidarity and CAPMAS, together with UNICEF, prepared and disseminated the *Understanding Child Multidimensional Poverty in Egypt* report.<sup>29</sup> Using data from Egypt's 2014 Demographic and Health Survey, it provided evidence on deprivation and the vulnerability of Egyptian children disaggregated by age group, region and contributors to child poverty.

**In 2014, UNICEF generated policy-relevant evidence through an analysis of the potential impacts of energy subsidy reform on child poverty.**<sup>30</sup> The study was undertaken by the Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) at Laval University, Canada, in collaboration with the Egyptian government and UNICEF. The study found that energy subsidies were generally regressive, particularly those for gasoline, diesel and electricity.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the analysis also showed that abolishing energy subsidies would put an additional half a million children at risk of falling into poverty if no compensatory measures were put in place.<sup>32</sup> By running simulations of the impacts of investing fuel subsidy savings into social protection programmes, the study identified a policy response that could substantially reduce the number of children living in poverty.<sup>33</sup> The study was made available to the government and the public.<sup>34</sup>

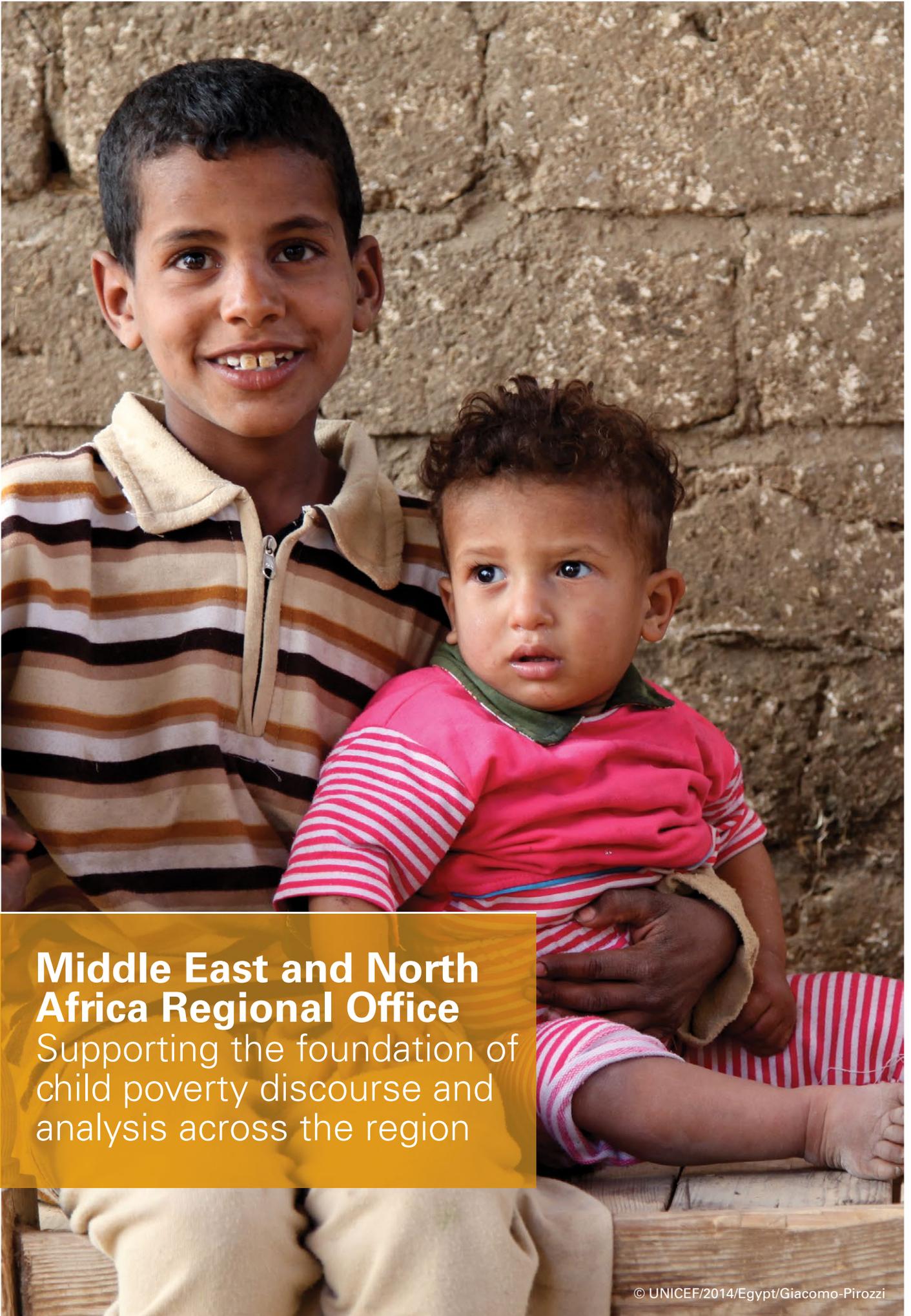


## IMPACT

**UNICEF enhanced the capacities of CAPMAS to measure and report on child poverty, including the technical capacity to replicate and adjust the child poverty analysis with new data over time.**<sup>35</sup> Child poverty indicators are now included in the CAPMAS reporting plan.<sup>36</sup>

**The report on child poverty in slums and unplanned areas led to the establishment of a multi-sectoral initiative in urban areas of Cairo.**<sup>37</sup> Under the leadership of the Cairo Governorate, the *Integrated Child Survival Partnership Initiative* has been implemented in partnership with Egyptian NGOs and local government directorates responsible for health, water, social protection and informal settlements. The initiative has resulted in increased primary health care service coverage to a difficult-to-reach community, with increases in the number of antenatal visits and improved immunization coverage for children under two. The model is currently being documented and costed, and a strategy for replication by government and major partners is under development.

**UNICEF's analysis of subsidy reforms and child poverty contributed to important social policy debates in Egypt.** Landmark reforms to social protection were agreed to in 2015. Commodity subsidies (energy and food) were reformed, and a new social protection programme – Takaful and Karama – was established which focuses on poorer people and includes a specific focus on children.<sup>38</sup> The programme was financed by savings from subsidy reform and a World Bank loan, and has since become a successful and large-scale initiative.<sup>39</sup> Takaful and Karama is the subject of a complementary case study on Egypt under Action Area 3 [see page 34].



## **Middle East and North Africa Regional Office**

Supporting the foundation of  
child poverty discourse and  
analysis across the region



## ISSUE

### **Inequity has emerged in recent years as an increasingly significant and complex policy issue across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.**

While each national context is unique, it is important to understand regional trends, as well as promote cross-national learning on approaches and solutions. The civil uprisings which emerged in late 2010 were fueled by many issues, including wide-ranging citizen grievance around social inequities, perceived inadequacies in governance, increasing food and fuel prices, pervasive corruption and high unemployment rates.<sup>40</sup> Alongside the promise of political and social reform, there was momentum to reduce inequity and in particular to address the inequalities that have kept many of the 157 million children in a state of poverty and vulnerability.<sup>41</sup>

### **UNICEF recognized that effective responses to child deprivations required intensified advocacy and analysis of child poverty.**

Many governments had responded to citizen protest by seeking to formulate and implement policy measures to reduce child poverty and address deprivations facing the most vulnerable. But there was limited measurement or analysis of child poverty in the region by governments and international institutions. The UNICEF MENA Regional Office (MENARO) saw a need to improve how knowledge and evidence on child poverty measurement and analysis is shared, and to highlight successful policy responses to child deprivation across the region to inspire cross-national learning and collaboration.



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF contributed to a substantial pro-equity initiative: the first ever Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report.** This 2017 report was developed under the auspices of the League of Arab States (LAS) and in close collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and UNICEF.<sup>42</sup> It documented multidimensional poverty, including among children. The LAS and its member states had not previously given explicit consideration to multidimensional poverty in MENA, particularly as it pertains to children.<sup>43</sup> The report was validated by all member states and was launched at the UN General Assembly and discussed at the Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers.<sup>44</sup>

**In parallel, UNICEF sought to increase awareness of child poverty through presenting the detailed analysis synthesized in the Arab Multidimensional**

**Poverty Report.** Entitled *Child Poverty in the Arab States: Analytical Report of Eleven Countries*, the analysis looked at differences, gaps and trends in child poverty.<sup>45</sup> The report found that approximately 29 million children (one in four) across 11 countries were facing acute poverty, and was accompanied by a summary report and policy briefs on nutrition and education.<sup>46</sup>

### **UNICEF also supported the first child poverty conference for MENA, hosted by the Government of Morocco in 2017.**

The conference took stock of efforts to measure child poverty, identified methodological challenges and innovations, strengthened commitments to routine measurement of child poverty, and encouraged the exchange of information and experiences across the region.<sup>47</sup> The content of the conference was designed through collaboration between UNICEF MENARO, UNICEF Morocco, UNICEF officials and government counterparts.



## IMPACT

### **The Analytical Report on Child Poverty demonstrated that the right tools can help highlight the reality of multidimensional child poverty in the MENA region.**

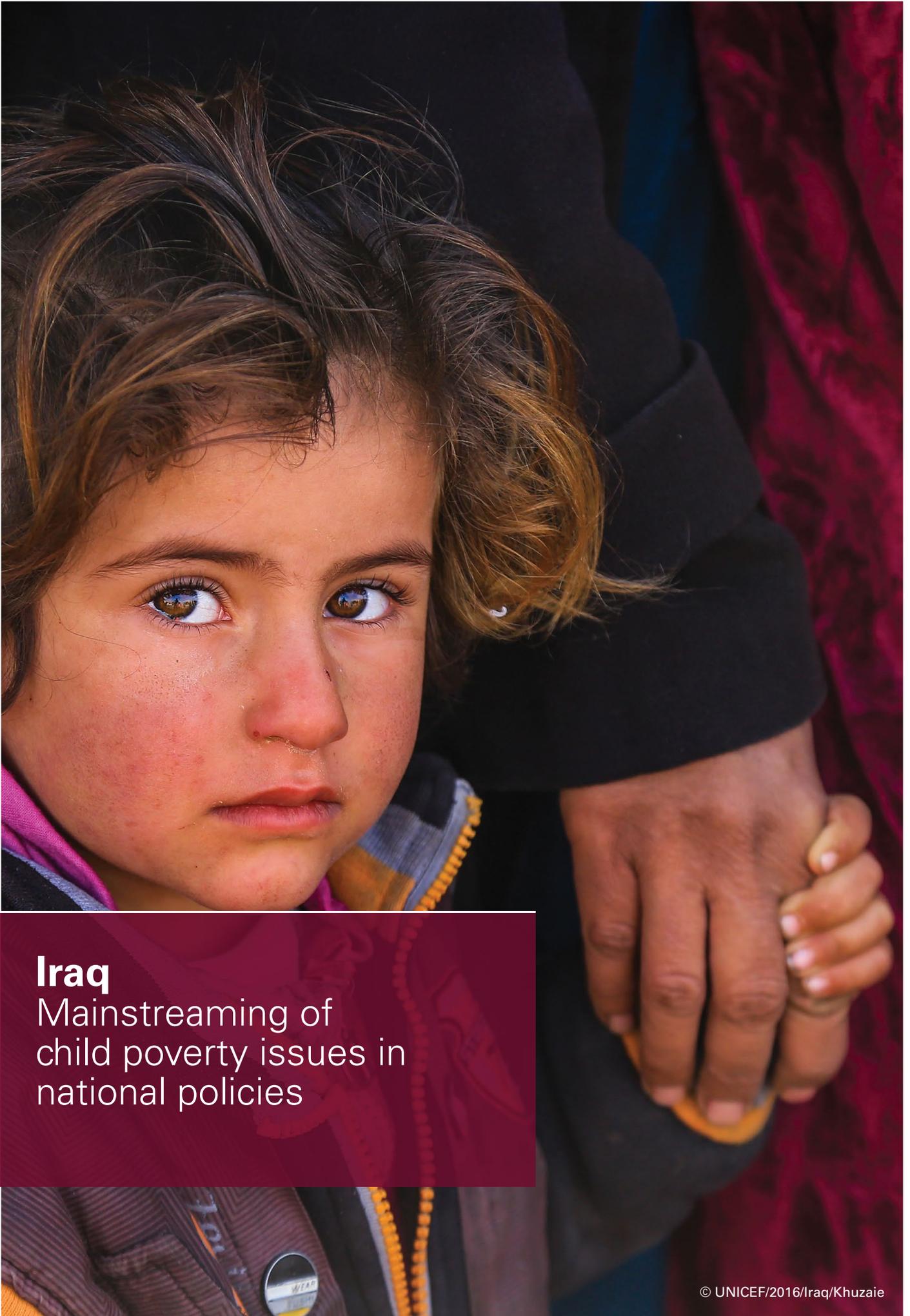
It underlined the need for national policy responses to child poverty, and provided an evidence-base for dialogue with and among government partners. The report advocated for the importance of routine monitoring of child deprivation rather than ad hoc studies. It also provided a methodological approach for measuring multidimensional child poverty robustly, regularly and routinely in the region.

### **The Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report led to a wider understanding of multidimensional poverty trends across MENA and its effects on children.**

In addition, the report triggered discussions on establishing an Arab Poverty Centre under LAS to serve as a regional centre of expertise on measuring poverty, developing poverty reduction policies, and evaluating poverty-focused public policies.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Child Poverty Conference was a powerful regional advocacy event and knowledge-sharing platform.**

The conference was indicative of the opportunities presented by South-South and regional collaboration to identify global good practice on child poverty measurement and policy responses. The final communiqué called for strengthened actions to produce quality evidence to influence policies, with a permanent request to put the child at the heart of analysis and actions to combat poverty.<sup>49</sup> It recommended that international organizations continue to play a central role in facilitating cross-country collaboration and learning on child poverty measurement, analysis and policy reform.<sup>50</sup>



## Iraq

Mainstreaming of  
child poverty issues in  
national policies



## ISSUE

**In 2015, there was limited national evidence on the extent of child deprivation as Iraq continued to recover from past and on-going conflict.** Household Socio-Economic Surveys were conducted twice in the previous decade, but child poverty (monetary or multidimensional) was not a lens of analysis. National planning documents – such as the national development plan and poverty reduction strategy – did not disaggregate children as a demographic with specific analysis or policies.<sup>51</sup>

**UNICEF identified an opportunity to strengthen the capacity of key governmental partners to develop a child poverty analysis and formulate strategies to address this issue.** The measurement and analysis of child poverty could generate evidence on addressing gaps in social policies leading to better social protection for the poorest children. Increasing the priority government officials placed on child poverty could also help advance national actions to alleviate poverty for multidimensionally deprived children.



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF worked with government counterparts in 2015 to build skills and awareness on child-sensitive social policies.** UNICEF supported a series of activities, including capacity building of key stakeholders in government on child poverty and a rapid assessment of social protection in Iraq.<sup>52</sup>

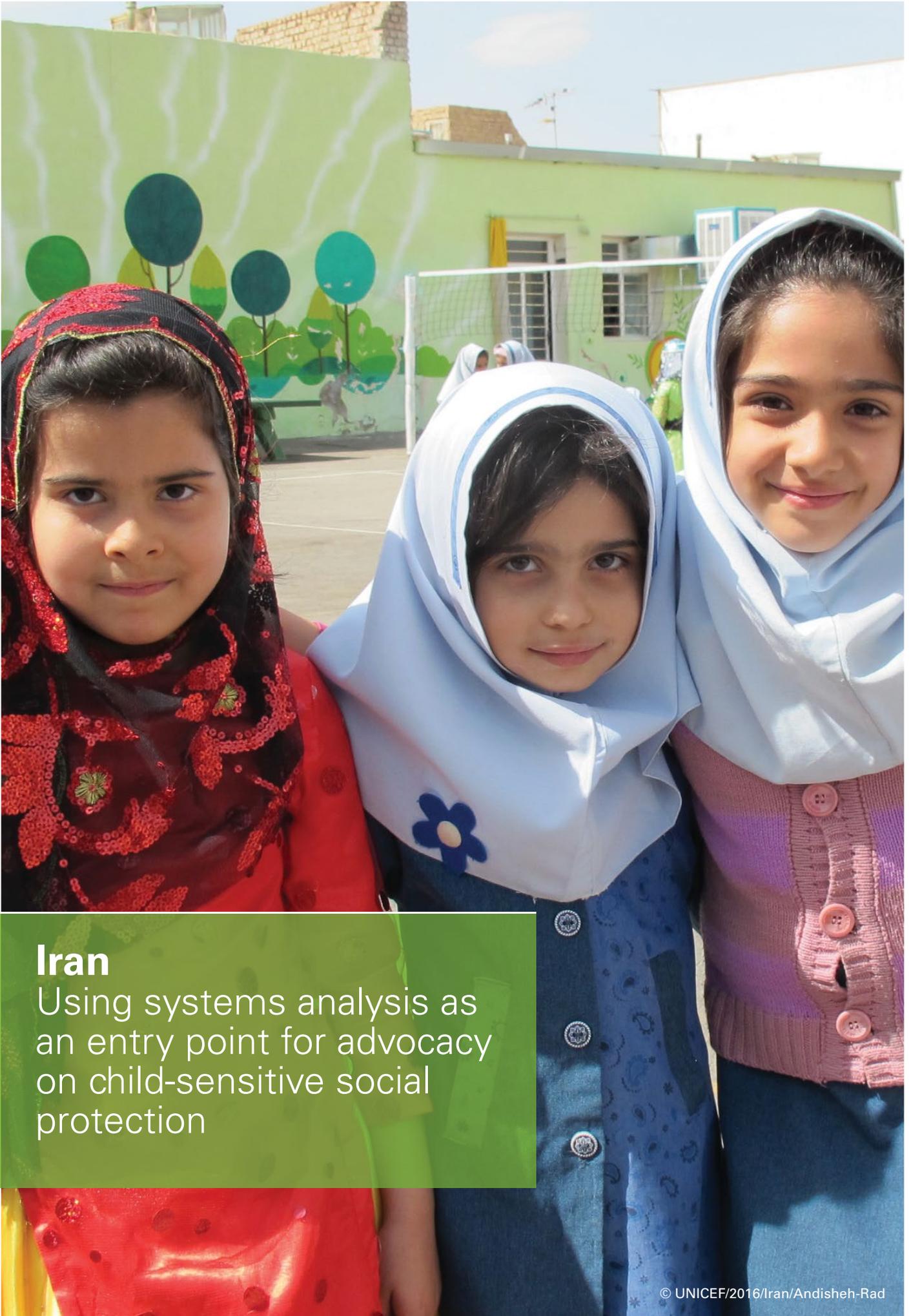
**In 2016, UNICEF and the Government of Iraq prepared and disseminated a Child Poverty Report.** It is a comprehensive analysis of child monetary and multidimensional poverty using Iraq's Household Socio-Economic Surveys conducted in 2007 and 2012.<sup>53</sup> The report found that 23 percent of children were living in income poor households and between 18 and 25 percent suffered from multidimensional poverty (depending on the age group).<sup>54</sup> The report also assessed key determinants of child poverty to help understand the interaction between expenditure (monetary poverty) and deprivation of child rights. It found that geographic location, household size and head of household employment status were key determinants of child monetary poverty in Iraq.<sup>55</sup> The report also considered whether the social protection system was helping to reduce child poverty, and found that poor children and poor households were not adequately covered by social protection mechanisms.<sup>56</sup> Its recommendations included the introduction of a child grant and giving children the highest priority in the design of anti-poverty strategies.<sup>57</sup>



## IMPACT

**The Child Poverty Report led to the inclusion of child poverty analysis in Iraq's new national Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) 2018-2022.**<sup>58</sup> This is in contrast to Iraq's first Poverty Reduction Strategy 2010-2014, which did not explicitly refer to child poverty.<sup>59</sup> The findings of the Child Poverty Report were presented at the request of the Government of Iraq and the World Bank, during a workshop in 2016 to develop the new PRS, and were shared with the technical committee responsible for drafting the new strategy.<sup>60</sup> As a result, the PRS 2018-2022 includes information for use by policy makers such as the severity and distribution of child poverty, and the relationship between overall poverty and child poverty. The PRS noted that despite a fall in overall poverty levels during 2007-12, there had been an increase in child poverty over the same time period, because more children were born into poor families.<sup>61</sup>

**There is increased awareness of the interaction between child poverty and social protection.** The Child Poverty Report recommended a child grant be established within the existing social protection scheme with a focus on vulnerable, poor and extremely poor children.<sup>62</sup> This recommendation was specifically quoted in the PRS 2018-2022, which highlights that children represent the majority of the poor in Iraq (57 percent), and that current social protection schemes in Iraq do not specifically cover children, except for children deprived of parental cares.<sup>63</sup>



## Iran

Using systems analysis as an entry point for advocacy on child-sensitive social protection



## ISSUE

**Iran's large national social protection system is well entrenched, however the targeting of resources and coherence of policy are key potential areas of improvement.** Despite significant public funding for many programmes, there has been very little investment in gathering information or assessing their effectiveness. As a result, opportunities to analyze or reform the system have been hampered in part by a lack of information.

**In 2017, UNICEF and government officials considered the merits of conducting a thorough assessment of the social protection system.**<sup>64</sup> Such an assessment would shed light on the extent to which the system is child-sensitive and highlight opportunities to better address children's rights. In addition, generating data on social protection would help strengthen a national evidence base.



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF supported the government in a mapping and analysis of social protection programmes to foster understanding of the breadth of existing initiatives and their objectives.**<sup>65</sup> The assessment was conducted in 2017 and finalised in 2018. It was based on the Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI) approach.<sup>66</sup> It confirmed that the social protection system suffers from fragmentation and duplication, and that the lack of monitoring and evaluation hampers its ability to respond to quality issues and newly arising needs. The assessment showed that lack of data has constrained national resource allocation for social protection.

**Despite the wide coverage of the system, the assessment showed that the most vulnerable are still left out.**<sup>67</sup> The 2010 Targeted Subsidies Reform Act, which provides cash grants to families, has almost universal coverage.<sup>68</sup> However, high inflation of the Iranian Rial has contributed to a declining real value of transfers.<sup>69</sup> The assessment found that the social protection system is historically concentrated on particular communities, and thus does not guarantee that everyone is protected during the life cycle, including persons in the informal economy.<sup>70</sup>



## IMPACT

**The assessment created an entry point for policy discussions on improving the sensitivity of social protection systems for the most vulnerable children and households.** In 2017, the government led a feasibility study of a universal child cash grant to help low income families spend more resources on the health, nutrition and education of their children.<sup>71</sup> The study was undertaken under the leadership of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare (MCLSW).<sup>72</sup> It calculated the minimum desired transfer level and modeled the estimated impacts on child wellbeing.<sup>73</sup> The study created the evidence, and discussions are ongoing for a design and financing model for a child grant pilot.

**Government officials gained a better appreciation of the role of robust evidence generation and analysis in the successful design and implementation of social policies.** The collaboration between UNICEF and the government to map the social protection system has led to a broader recognition by officials of the challenges facing existing cash transfer programmes in Iran, and the value of evidence-based policy dialogue. A number of follow-on analyses are currently planned by the government, including a needs assessment of the social protection system using a child lens.



## Lebanon

Helping to build a coherent and integrated social protection system



## ISSUE

**Lebanon's fragile social protection systems were significantly stretched by the arrival of more than one million Syrian refugees in the past seven years.**<sup>74</sup>

Overall expenditure on social safety nets was one of the lowest in the region,<sup>75</sup> alongside low levels of coordination among government bodies implementing social protection programmes. The country's main non-contributory social protection mechanism – the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) offers health and education fee waivers to poor households, and the poorest beneficiaries also receive e-card food vouchers.<sup>76</sup> But less than 10 per cent of the population are eligible, and the actual coverage of programme benefits is significantly lower. Only 10,000 households receive food vouchers.<sup>77</sup>

**At the same time, there was a need for dialogue within Lebanon on how to strengthen the social protection system.** Humanitarian agencies had been the primary means of support over many years for Palestinian refugees and, more recently, for Syrian refugees. But the Government continued to express concern that the well-being and livelihoods of vulnerable Lebanese households were not being adequately addressed. In response, UNICEF and the Government agreed to work progressively towards establishing a more coherent and comprehensive national system for social protection.



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF undertook an assessment of Lebanon's social safety net programmes.**<sup>78</sup> The analysis was undertaken in 2017-18 with the support of the Overseas Development Institute, and covered the NPTP and other key protection programmes implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA).<sup>79</sup> Based on the Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI) framework, the analysis examines the effectiveness of Lebanon's main social protection programmes in terms of poverty and vulnerability. Key findings of the draft report include the need for improved institutional coordination of social protection and an expanded role for more effective social assistance to vulnerable groups.

**In taking forward key findings of the assessment, UNICEF worked with the government to prepare a Roadmap for a national framework on social assistance.**<sup>80</sup> In collaboration with other key partners, UNICEF organized an orientation on social protection for MoSA staff focusing on potential new tools to strengthen social protection.<sup>81</sup> Lebanon is the only country in the MENA region that does not have a

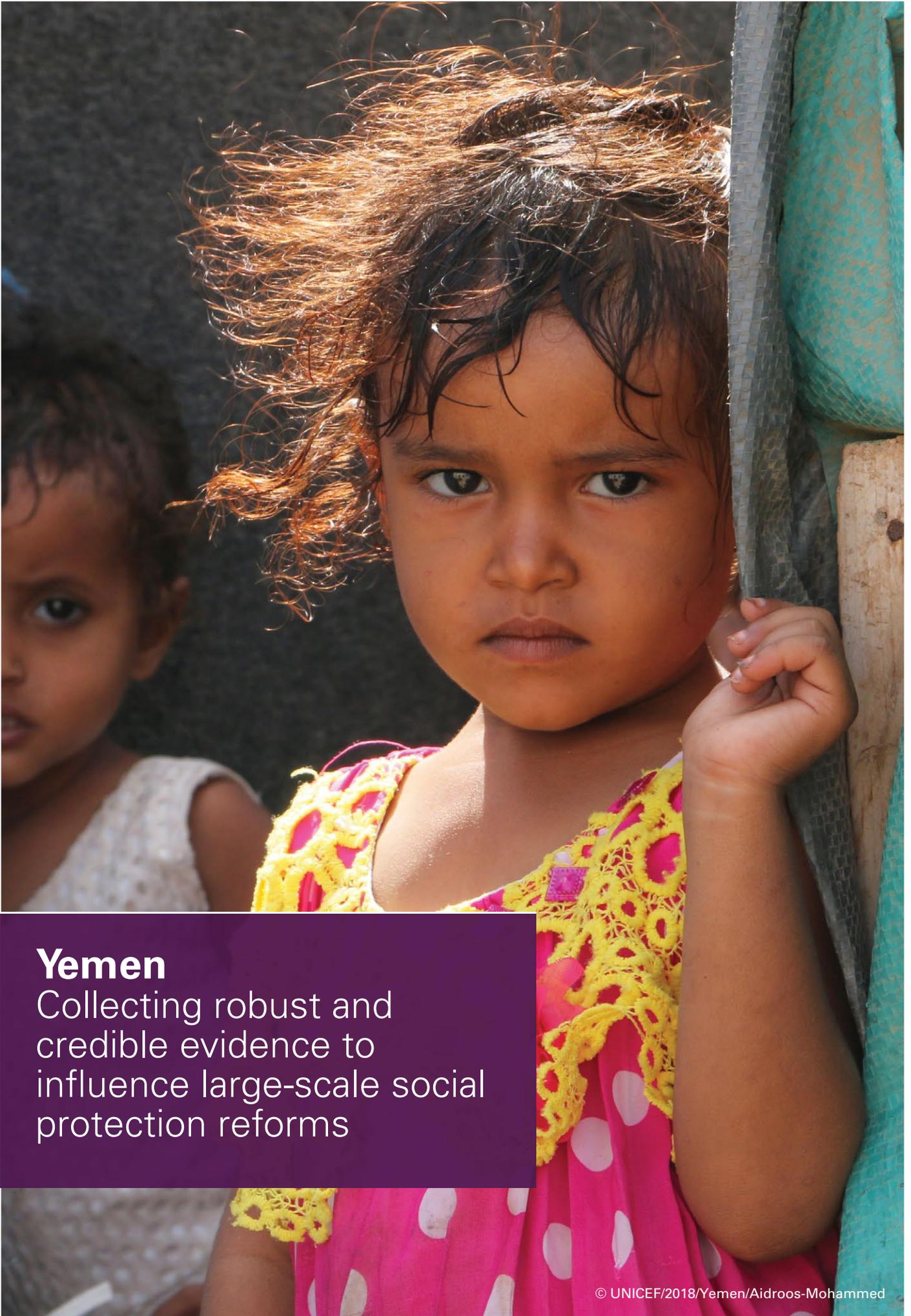
cash transfer programme as part of its national social protection system (although humanitarian actors do provide cash transfers to Syrian refugees in Lebanon). UNICEF facilitated a series of technical discussions within the government to consider whether cash transfers are a valid and relevant option for the country.



## IMPACT

**A roadmap to establish a national social protection framework has been drafted.** It focuses on four main elements: (i) strengthening evidence on social protection; (ii) ensuring adequate capacity, coordination and institutions are in place; (iii) promoting national dialogue on social protection, including on key strategic issues such as cash transfers and 'graduation'; and (iv) initiating a process of consultative drafting of the national framework.<sup>82</sup> The assessment of the social protection system is also informing a broader review of social protection in Lebanon, which will support the Government to define a long-term vision and strategic framework for an integrated social protection system.<sup>83</sup>

**Having reflected on potential social protection tools, the MoSA proposed designing a pilot cash transfer programme.** As a result of UNICEF's efforts, the government recognized that cash transfers to the poorest households are a key component of any national social protection system. Although Lebanon's social protection system has previously included other measures such as fee waivers, vouchers and in-kind transfers, the government is now exploring the use of cash transfers for the first time.



## Yemen

Collecting robust and credible evidence to influence large-scale social protection reforms



## ISSUE

**From 2011 until the start of the war in 2015, protests and civil uprising in Yemen had major economic and social ramifications.**<sup>84</sup> There were many anecdotal reports underscoring the negative impact of the national crisis on households.<sup>85</sup> The Social Welfare Fund (SWF) was the key public cash transfer programme in Yemen in 2011. It was created in 1996 as a social safety net for the poorest households in response to the gradual phasing out of costly food and fuel subsidies.<sup>86</sup> It was one of the largest programmes of its kind in MENA, providing transfers to 1.5 million beneficiary households (comprising more than 8 million individuals) who were identified using a Proxy Means Test.<sup>87</sup>

**However, at that time there was no up-to-date information on the effects of the crisis and the impact of the SWF cash transfer programme.** UNICEF and government officials recognized there was a lack of evidence on how the poorest and most vulnerable households had coped since the 2011 crisis. Stakeholders hoped the SWF would serve as a social safety net to cushion the effects of the crisis on beneficiary households. But there was a lack of data about the impact of the SWF on development indicators and the accuracy of beneficiary targeting.



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF and the government conducted a survey to assess living conditions of vulnerable households and the impact of the SWF.** The National Social Protection Monitoring Survey (NSPMS) was a longitudinal survey designed and implemented in 2012-2013 by UNICEF and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, in collaboration with the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.<sup>88</sup> The NSPMS found the SWF to be pro-poor and – in line with what was shown by the SWF's administrative data – the programme covered one-third of the population.<sup>89</sup> However, the survey also found that a significant number of poor people were excluded from the programme. Less than fifty percent of the poorest quintile in Yemen were beneficiaries of the programme.<sup>90</sup> The report also found the SWF had inclusion errors, with approximately a quarter of the beneficiaries not being poor or vulnerable.<sup>91</sup> It was noted however that this could be partially explained by the failure to exit 'old beneficiaries' who no longer qualified when the targeting formula was changed. The report noted that inclusion of the non-poor was likely to be less concerning than the high level of exclusion error.<sup>92</sup>

**UNICEF used the evidence from the NSPMS to strongly advocate with the Government of Yemen to increase the value of SWF cash transfers.**<sup>93</sup> The report found that the transfer level had not been revised since 2008, and that adjusting the transfer level, combined with regular payments, would help the programme achieve its intended impacts.<sup>94</sup> UNICEF also supported efforts to expand programme coverage,<sup>95</sup> as the NSPMS found 44 percent of the extreme poor were not covered by the programme.<sup>96</sup>



## IMPACT

**The NSPMS built confidence in the integrity of the SWF system, as demonstrated through the government's endorsement of a 50 per cent increase in transfer levels.**<sup>97</sup> The increase in the transfer level was agreed to as part of a programme with the International Monetary Fund in September 2014.<sup>98</sup> It was implemented for cash transfers disbursed at the end of 2014, and was expected to have a significant impact on the wellbeing of beneficiary families. The government's decision to expand coverage of the SWF to an additional 250,000 cases further demonstrated the programme's integrity.<sup>99</sup> In addition, the NSPMS catalyzed a World Bank proposal to conduct a re-certification survey to broaden the inclusion of eligible beneficiaries and exclude those who were no longer eligible.<sup>100</sup> UNICEF was supportive of this proposal. However, the onset of war in 2015 meant that neither the expansion of coverage nor the re-certification survey was undertaken.<sup>101</sup>

**The NSPMS also played a role in the use of the SWF beneficiary list for the Emergency Cash Transfer programme (ECTP).** After the escalation of conflict in Yemen in 2015, UNICEF commenced a large-scale cash transfer in 2017 to 1.5 million households, funded by the World Bank.<sup>102</sup> UNICEF and the World Bank chose to use the SWF beneficiary list (as of late 2014, which was the most recent list prior to the outbreak of conflict) as the beneficiaries of the ECTP.<sup>103</sup> Evidence generated by the NSPMS established the trust of stakeholders in the SWF system, and has facilitated the establishment of a cash transfer response in a humanitarian setting. The World Bank's Project Appraisal Document for ECTP cites some of the positive findings of the NSPMS in relation to the SWF. These findings include that over 70 percent of SWF beneficiaries depended on cash transfers to purchase food and improve their livelihoods, and that cash transfers reduced negative coping strategies and improved access to basic social services.<sup>104</sup> (The ECTP is elaborated on in further detail in a separate case study in this Compendium under Action Area 5, at page 50.)



## Morocco

Modeling the impact of subsidy reforms to catalyze child-sensitive social protection



## ISSUE

**In 2013, and in the wake of the 2011 civil uprisings, the Government of Morocco decided to restructure its extensive consumer subsidies due to increasing budget constraints.**<sup>105</sup> Since the 1940s, Morocco

had provided subsidies to the general population for essential commodities such as fuel and food.<sup>106</sup> By 2013, with prices of oil and food commodities rising, these subsidies had become a major fiscal burden.<sup>107</sup> As a result, the government began progressively reforming and restructuring many of its subsidies.

**UNICEF was concerned about the impact subsidy reform would have on child poverty.** It was unclear

whether the Moroccan government would make any significant adjustments to the social protection system to protect the most vulnerable children. To avoid subsidy reforms having a negative impact on child poverty, UNICEF conducted impact modeling to generate evidence for key decision-makers in the Moroccan government.



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF led a modeling exercise to predict the impact of reforming subsidies on poverty and children.** In 2014, according to the International Monetary Fund, government estimates showed that 9 percent of all Moroccan subsidies benefited the poorest quintile of the population, while 43 percent benefited the richest quintile.<sup>108</sup> UNICEF's analysis modeled the impact of the abolition of subsidies in the absence of compensatory measures. The analysis also included literature reviews about (i) the impact of subsidy reform on people living in poverty in similar countries; and (ii) the impact of subsidy reform on the middle class.<sup>109</sup> This was the first occasion for such research in Morocco, and was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of General Affairs and Governance (MAGG) and with the support of the Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) at Laval University, Canada.<sup>110</sup> The analysis drew on panel survey data collected by the Moroccan Observatoire National pour le Développement Humain (ONDH) which included information on deprivations faced by children.<sup>111</sup>

**UNICEF then developed a number of policy options that could mitigate the impacts of subsidy reform.**

Working in partnership with the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), a policy and research institute based in Brazil, UNICEF analyzed various options for using social protection mechanisms to reduce the negative impacts of subsidy reform on child poverty.<sup>112</sup> The recommendations were both short and medium term, and included reallocation of savings from subsidy reform to support poor and vulnerable households and their children through a more integrated social protection system.<sup>113</sup> Other recommendations included the harmonization of targeting among social protection programmes.<sup>114</sup>



## IMPACT

**UNICEF's policy proposals influenced how the Moroccan government reformed its social protection system.** Specifically, UNICEF recommended expanding Morocco's flagship social protection programme for children,<sup>115</sup> TAYSSIR, which seeks to improve education

outcomes through provision of cash transfers for up to three children in a beneficiary family.<sup>116</sup> The level of benefit increases as children progress through school.<sup>117</sup> In October 2018, the Ministry of Finance announced that the Government intends to significantly expand TAYSSIR to all rural communes (municipalities) for all children who are in primary school; and to all rural and urban communes for all children who are in secondary school.<sup>118</sup> This will almost triple the number of child beneficiaries to more than two million children.<sup>119</sup>



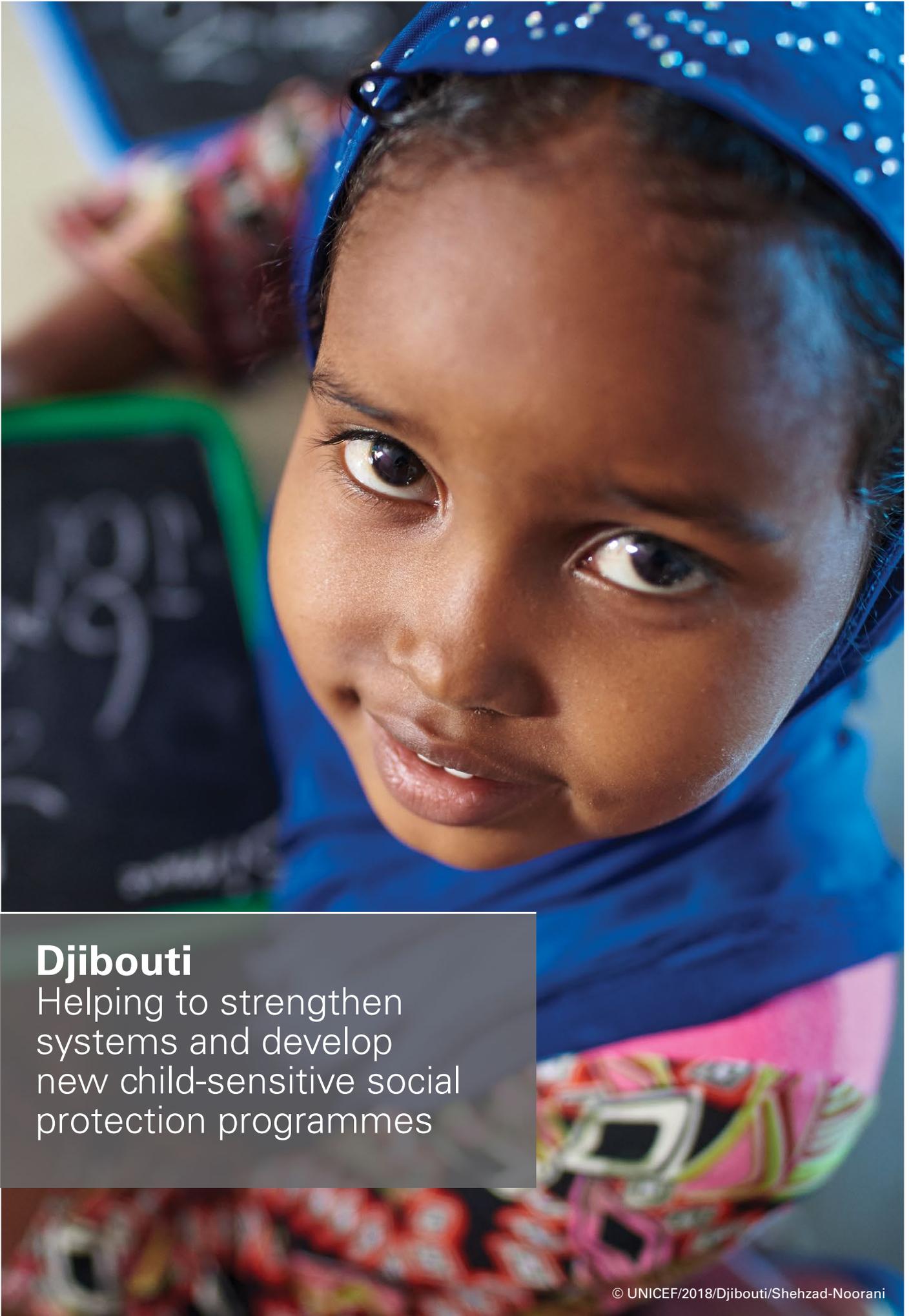
## Action Area 2:

Policies, Coordination  
and Financing





# 2



## Djibouti

Helping to strengthen systems and develop new child-sensitive social protection programmes



## ISSUE

**Djibouti's nascent social protection system was not giving sufficient attention to children, and was not coherently designed or implemented.** The 2012-2017 national social protection strategy recognized the importance of nutrition for children under the age of two, but it did not focus on other aspects of their development or later stages of their life cycle.<sup>120</sup> In 2016, child malnutrition rates rose above World Health Organization emergency thresholds as an ongoing drought extended into its eighth consecutive year.<sup>121</sup> Djibouti's social protection system was beginning to expand rapidly at this time,<sup>122</sup> yet struggled to address the growing demands of coordination and coherence.

**UNICEF was well positioned to support the development of a new, coherent and child-sensitive social protection strategy.** UNICEF had previously worked closely with government counterparts in the design and implementation of the National Programme of Family Solidarity (PNSF).<sup>123</sup> This programme targets children and provides an unconditional cash transfer with accompanying measures to support children's access to health, nutrition and education.<sup>124</sup> UNICEF also understood the human capacity challenges facing the government, having previously supported systems strengthening activities, including in monitoring and evaluation.<sup>125</sup>



## ACTIONS

**In 2016, UNICEF provided financial and technical support to an assessment of Djibouti's national social protection system.** The assessment found that the State Secretariat for Social Affairs lacked sufficient capacity and qualified staff to fulfill its responsibilities, and that a multitude of actors in social protection were working in an uncoordinated way.<sup>126</sup> It recommended establishing a high-level inter-ministerial coordination body along with a steering committee chaired by the State Secretariat for Social Affairs.<sup>127</sup> The assessment also proposed universal coverage of children with social protection programmes.<sup>128</sup>

**Based on the assessment, UNICEF supported the development of a new social protection strategy.**<sup>129</sup> UNICEF provided a consultant to work closely with government officials in drafting the new strategy.<sup>130</sup> UNICEF also created an opportunity for a broader dialogue on relevant issues by organizing a national forum on social affairs under the leadership of the State Secretariat of Social Affairs.<sup>131</sup>



## IMPACT

**The assessment helped to build momentum for better collaboration and coordination among government and development partners.** A joint platform was established to tackle persistent constraints, such as lack of coordination among partners and lack of coherence in targeting methodologies.<sup>132</sup> Under the leadership of the State Secretary for Social Affairs, the social protection coordination system includes all technical and financial partners with interest in the social protection agenda.<sup>133</sup> The government has also agreed to use formal impact assessments to analyze the results of social protection measures and programmes.

**Djibouti's new social protection strategy acknowledges the social protection rights of children.** With the support of a UNICEF consultant to assist government officials in drafting the document, the National Social Protection Strategy (2018-2022) was approved in November 2017.<sup>134</sup> One of the strategy's four main axes is a social protection floor that includes a child grant for households that experience acute poverty.<sup>135</sup> UNICEF has supported scenario planning for the design and implementation of the child grant, with assistance from the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), a policy and research institute based in Brazil.



## Morocco

Shaping a child-sensitive social protection system through analysis and advocacy



## ISSUE

**In 2015, the Government of Morocco was in the process of considering strategic reforms in the social protection sector.**<sup>136</sup> These reforms had important implications for Moroccan children, especially the most disadvantaged. Although an existing cash transfer programme targeted children, the social protection system was not strongly child-sensitive.<sup>137</sup> The reforms posed a risk that some children would be left behind if not given sufficient attention within the new policy framework.

**UNICEF was well placed to collaborate with government and support development of child-sensitive reforms.** UNICEF had already attained a strong profile regarding social protection in Morocco based on its efforts to model the impact of subsidy reforms on poverty and children, and its work to design and propose mitigating policy options.<sup>138</sup> (UNICEF's contribution in this regard is outlined in this Compendium in a complementary case study on Morocco under Action Area 1, page 24.)



## ACTIONS

**In partnership with the Ministry of General Affairs and Governance (MAGG), UNICEF undertook a mapping of the existing social protection system in 2015.**<sup>139</sup> The mapping paid special attention to children, taking different age groups and risks into account.<sup>140</sup> It showed the social protection system was already fragmented and lacked coherence in terms of targeting.<sup>141</sup> This meant that certain categories of children – such as those out of school and of pre-school age – were vulnerable and at risk of social exclusion.<sup>142</sup> UNICEF also worked with government counterparts to conduct an analysis of how the Moroccan social protection system compared to approaches within similar countries.<sup>143</sup>

**After the mapping, UNICEF helped develop a Vision for an integrated social protection system.**<sup>144</sup> This effort was led by MAGG, with support from UNICEF and the Economic Policy Research Institute, a non-government research body based in South Africa.<sup>145</sup> The Vision was developed through a participatory process involving multiple stakeholders, and was informed by research and evidence – including mapping and comparison studies.<sup>146</sup> UNICEF consistently advocated for inclusive targeting of the most vulnerable children.<sup>147</sup> The Vision was endorsed in November 2016, after discussion with Ministries and national institutions.<sup>148</sup>



## IMPACT

**Children now feature in Morocco's new social protection framework.** The Social Protection Vision calls for special attention to be paid to children. The document reflects gender and life-cycle vulnerabilities, and singles out 'childhood' as one of the strategic axes of social protection reform for Morocco.<sup>149</sup>

**The social protection policy also outlines the importance of greater coherence.** The Social Protection Vision proposes to transform social protection in Morocco from a system characterized by widespread fragmentation and lack of coverage to a modern system of integrated social protection interventions that address the multiple different risks that individuals face. The Moroccan Government has assigned a coordinating role to MAGG.<sup>150</sup>

**Other donor partners are now providing significant financial support to help implement a child-sensitive approach to social protection.** The European Union is supporting social protection reforms, including collaboration with UNICEF, to support the development and implementation of a harmonized social transfer programme for poor and vulnerable children.<sup>151</sup> UNICEF has committed to providing technical support for child-sensitive social protection in the broader agreement between the Moroccan government and the United Nations.<sup>152</sup>

**The reforms have attracted broad-based political support in Morocco.** With a new government elected in 2017, there were risks that progress made in recent years might not be sustained. UNICEF successfully advocated for seamless continuation of the strategic direction of social protection in Morocco.<sup>153</sup> The Vision has prepared the ground for the subsequent elaboration of a national Integrated Social Protection Policy, which is currently underway, with the support of UNICEF and others.<sup>154</sup>



## Action Area 3:

Cash Transfer Programming and  
Systems Strengthening



# 3



## Egypt

Supporting the implementation of child-sensitive social protection programmes



## ISSUE

**In 2015, Egypt announced the launch of a new social protection programme with a strong focus on children.**<sup>155</sup> This was a significant development. While Egypt had a wide-reaching but fragmented infrastructure of social protection programmes, child poverty was not explicitly addressed. The new Takaful and Karama Programme consisted of a conditional cash transfer for poor families with children (Takaful) and a cash transfer for the elderly and individuals with disability (Karama).<sup>156</sup> The programme was scaled up significantly in 2017 to support more than two million families, with over 50 per cent of beneficiaries being children.<sup>157</sup>

**The new programme presented mixed opportunities for child-sensitive social protection.** The investment in child-sensitive social protection was well received by many stakeholders, particularly as previous research (supported by UNICEF) had showed that an additional half million children would be at risk of falling into poverty if subsidy reforms were implemented without any compensatory measures.<sup>158</sup> However, as participation in Takaful is conditional on behaviours such as school attendance, UNICEF wanted to analyze whether the pre-requisite children's services were actually available to families otherwise eligible for transfers. If social services were not accessible or available, or of poor quality, this would jeopardize the child-sensitivity of the programme as it may lead to fewer children receiving the cash transfer.



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF launched a study in 2017 on the quality, accessibility and availability of education and health services which beneficiaries are required to attend.**<sup>159</sup> The evidence from the assessment was then used to produce a range of analytical products, including three targeted papers to transform the report into a tool to influence national policies, and two papers on making the health and education systems work for the poorest families. A summary report was also produced to facilitate dissemination of the findings.

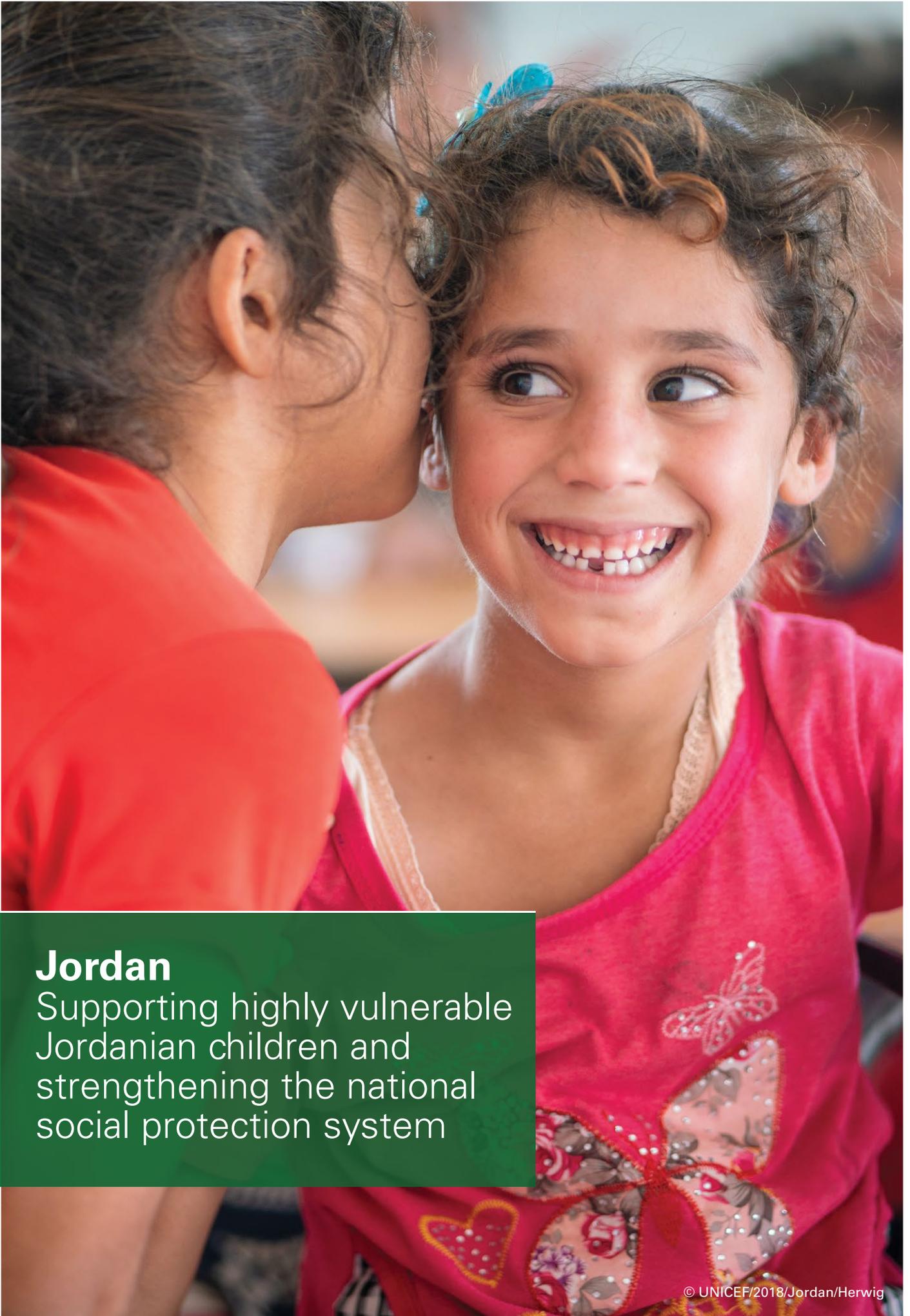
**UNICEF has also provided technical advice to the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) to establish effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for Takaful.**<sup>160</sup> Given that improving the health and education of beneficiaries, particularly children, is the ultimate target of Takaful, UNICEF and the government

recognized the importance of monitoring relevant indicators. Through South–South cooperation with the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), a policy and research institute based in Brazil,<sup>161</sup> UNICEF supported the MoSS with **two advisory notes** which focused on monitoring health and education indicators. The advisory notes provided additional information and justification for the use of conditionalities, and analyzed the different pathways through which a conditional cash transfer programme can improve health and education outcomes. The notes provided detailed information on how to monitor conditionality compliance, and proposed a set of potential indicators for monitoring health- and education-related outcomes among children enrolled in the Takaful programme. They also assessed the current status of the monitoring cycle, and proposed appropriate protocols for use of administrative data. In addition, the notes address the use of electronic tools and potential improvements of health and education data collection and analysis. The collaboration with IPC-IG has also led to the development of a new **monitoring and reporting tool.**<sup>162</sup> The tool is based on the data collected during targeting, and produces reports on the profile of beneficiaries.<sup>163</sup>



## IMPACT

**The monitoring and evaluation system for Takaful now includes a specific focus on children.** The overall system has been upgraded, with a particular emphasis on ensuring the monitoring and evaluation framework has a child lens.<sup>164</sup> This enables the government to effectively monitor the programme's coverage of children and its impact on children's health, nutrition and education outcomes. Takaful is currently using the two advisory notes to consider improvements to health and education-related indicators and the programme's monitoring cycle. The new monitoring and reporting tool is expected to enhance the understanding of policy makers and programme managers on the socio-economic situation of beneficiaries.<sup>165</sup> The tool is expected to support improvements in programme design and implementation, which in turn should enhance the wellbeing of beneficiaries.



## Jordan

Supporting highly vulnerable Jordanian children and strengthening the national social protection system



## ISSUE

**After seven years of the Syrian crisis, Jordan continues to host more than 650,000 registered refugees,<sup>166</sup> a significant strain on resources and infrastructure.** The international community has responded with an influx of emergency, humanitarian and development assistance.<sup>167</sup> UNICEF, for instance, has provided multi-sectoral support to Syrian refugee children, including annual winterization transfers and the provision of monthly cash grants (US\$28) to help improve access to education for 56,000 girls and boys from 15,500 of the most vulnerable refugee families.<sup>168</sup>

**But national systems have been significantly stretched.<sup>169</sup>** Both refugee and vulnerable host community children need access to services, such as education. The international community has provided parallel cash transfers to Syrian refugee families, while vulnerable Jordanian families rely on a patchwork of social protection programmes.<sup>170</sup>



## ACTIONS

**In 2017, UNICEF and Jordanian government officials initiated a new child cash transfer programme for the most vulnerable Jordanians.<sup>171</sup>** In parallel with other efforts to focus on the vulnerability of all children irrespective of nationality and status, UNICEF established a partnership with the National Aid Fund (NAF), Jordan's main social protection programme. Through NAF, UNICEF supported a pilot to provide cash transfers to 2,000 of the most vulnerable Jordanian girls and boys to improve their education outcomes.<sup>172</sup> The initiative prioritized the most vulnerable families with children who are living below the national poverty line and at risk of school dropout.<sup>173</sup> It initially supported 1,000 families with at least two children aged 6-18 years, and is harmonized with current targeting methodologies used by the NAF.<sup>174</sup>

**UNICEF also supported the NAF in a number of systems strengthening initiatives.** These included technical advice to improve monitoring and evaluation systems; institutional and infrastructure capacities strengthening such as staff capacity development; ICT system support; and establishment of a training centre.<sup>175</sup> UNICEF also provided support to strengthen the government's capacity to review targeting systems and assess the impact on children of the cash transfer.<sup>176</sup>



## IMPACT

**The cash transfer initiative has helped to strengthen the national social protection system and the NAF's institutional and infrastructure capacities – a key systems-strengthening approach that UNICEF has prioritized in collaboration with the Government of Jordan.** By working with the NAF to implement this new initiative, UNICEF has reinforced the capacity of the government to deliver cash transfers. By identifying vulnerable children at the household level regardless of their nationality or registration status, the programme is also expected to decrease social tensions that have arisen in response to the international community providing cash transfers to Syrian refugees.<sup>177</sup>

**UNICEF has also collaborated with the World Bank to develop a Technical Working Group (TWG) on NAF Support.<sup>178</sup>** The TWG is expected to: (i) develop guidelines and technical thematic notes to drive support for NAF; (ii) contribute to national strategies and documents on social protection related issues; and (iii) advocate for and drive resource mobilization for NAF support and related social protection needs.



## Tunisia

Child-sensitive social protection – modeling subsidy reforms and using fiscal space analysis to design a child grant



## ISSUE

**Despite the Tunisian government's efforts to reduce poverty and social exclusion in recent years, social well-being has not significantly improved.** In the aftermath of the 2011 civil uprisings, Tunisia sought to reform its social protection system.<sup>179</sup> Although poverty rates dropped from 23 percent to 15 percent in the decade before 2015, many Tunisian children remained poor<sup>180</sup>. Tunisia's classification dropped from that of an upper middle income country to a lower middle income country in 2016,<sup>181</sup> and about one in four children under 18 years of age lived in multidimensional poverty.<sup>182</sup> Tunisia's existing social protection programmes are not designed in a coherent way,<sup>183</sup> which reduces efficiency and creates gaps in terms of the adequacy of services and coverage of vulnerable children.

**UNICEF recognized the opportunity provided by emerging discussions among Tunisian political leaders around the need to reform social protection programmes.** The government was seeking to respond more effectively and efficiently to rising social pressures, and to promote inclusive growth and poverty reduction.<sup>184</sup> UNICEF saw an opening to improve the potential impact of subsidy reform on child poverty.



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF supported an evaluation of Tunisia's monthly cash transfer programme intended to improve children's access to education.** The evaluation of the Programme d'Allocations Scolaires (PPAS) was undertaken in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs and finalized in 2014.<sup>185</sup> Although PPAS covers over 80,000 children,<sup>186</sup> UNICEF's evaluation found vulnerable children were often excluded. The programme's limited coverage meant many children at risk of school dropout were not included in the programme.<sup>187</sup> The evaluation also found indications of substantial geographic variation in how the programme targets the poorest populations,<sup>188</sup> and a lack of clarity as to whether the programme's purpose was to enhance educational outcomes or reduce poverty.<sup>189</sup>

**Building on this evidence base, UNICEF prepared a social protection strategy paper that proposed a range of policy options for consideration by policymakers and development partners.**<sup>190</sup> The policy options were based on existing evidence, and included ways to improve existing social protection programmes as well as options for establishing new programmes.<sup>191</sup> The paper outlined the expected costs of the various measures, and what would be required – in terms of time and capacity – to implement them.<sup>192</sup> The studies and options paper were disseminated to

decision makers at Tunisia's 'National Conference on Social Protection' in September 2014.<sup>193</sup>

**UNICEF also supported an analysis that compared the effectiveness of subsidy reforms to a potential new child-sensitive social protection programme.**<sup>194</sup>

This involved modeling the effectiveness and efficiency of a food and energy subsidy programme (implemented by the Tunisian government) in comparison with a proposed universal child grant. That analysis showed that significantly more people would be pulled out of poverty through a child grant than through existing subsidies.<sup>195</sup> If all the savings from reforming food and energy subsidies were invested in a universal child grant, the rate of child poverty would decrease by over 14 percentage points in comparison with continuation of existing subsidies.<sup>196</sup>



## IMPACT

**As a result of UNICEF's efforts, the Tunisian government is evaluating the financial implications of introducing a child grant.** The government's strategic vision for 2015–25 now calls for reforms to the social protection system. In 2016, a consensus to introduce a 'child grant' as a pillar of the social protection floor was reached with government and all technical partners.<sup>197</sup> UNICEF and the World Bank have supported several ministries to consider how a child grant could be designed and progressively implemented, and a concept note for a child grant has been finalized and validated by a national steering committee. However, financing for the child grant remains under discussion. A fiscal space analysis<sup>198</sup> has commenced, addressing three potential scenarios with a view to ultimately achieving universality. The scenarios being considered include: (i) a pilot child grant in a small number of the poorest delegations, with progressive scale up to all areas; (ii) a child grant for a limited age group (for example 0-5 or 8-12 years) across all delegations; and (iii) universal targeting of children that are not covered by any social protection mechanisms.<sup>199</sup> The analysis will develop robust estimates of the total budgetary costs and inform decisions regarding funding and sustainability.

**UNICEF has established a strategic partnership with the World Bank -- a significant stakeholder for social protection reforms in Tunisia.** A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed which outlines how the two agencies will collaborate to provide technical support to the government's efforts to establish a child grant programme.<sup>200</sup> The collaboration is closely aligned with the World Bank's flagship Human Capital Project, as a child grant would seek to reduce child deprivation in education, health and nutrition, reduce child poverty and promote social inclusion.<sup>201</sup> The MOU includes collaboration on knowledge, technical expertise, communication, policy dialogue and advocacy.<sup>202</sup>



## Action Area 4:

Cash Plus Interventions and  
Social Service Work



# 4



## Iraq

Enhancing the impact of cash transfer programmes through case management and outreach



## ISSUE

**Iraq has strengthened the legal and policy framework underpinning its social protection system in recent years.** It has enshrined a number of core provisions in its Social Protection Law (11/2014), and developed a comprehensive Roadmap for Social Protection from 2015-2019.<sup>203</sup> However, the Social Protection Law contains complex provisions, including the introduction of conditions within some cash transfer programmes.<sup>204</sup> The Law allows for cash transfers to be provided to eligible beneficiaries subject to conditions such as children regularly attending school and families who comply with health procedures such as immunizations and ante-natal checks.<sup>205</sup>

**UNICEF was concerned about how the conditional cash transfer programme would be designed and implemented under the new Social Protection Law.** UNICEF was supportive of the government's efforts to strengthen the social protection system; Iraq's Child Poverty Report had identified several opportunities for social protection to help address deprivations faced by Iraqi children, particularly with regards to health and education.<sup>206</sup> However, the effectiveness of using conditionalities to achieve human development outcomes varies according to the context. The ability of beneficiaries to comply with conditions is often subject to a range of barriers outside their control, including the availability of services.<sup>207</sup>



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF collaborated closely with the Iraqi government to jointly design a pilot conditional cash transfer programme.** Under the leadership of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA), and in partnership with the World Bank, the pilot targeted approximately 4,000 households in Baghdad.<sup>208</sup> Based on the premise that poverty is multi-dimensional, the pilot used cash transfers that are conditional on the fulfillment of a set of co-responsibilities related to regular school attendance and primary health care.<sup>209</sup> Participants in the pilot are beneficiaries of an existing national programme – the Social Protection Network, an unconditional cash transfer for approximately one million Iraqi households living under the national poverty line.<sup>210</sup> The pilot is specifically aimed to test the effectiveness and appropriateness of conditional cash transfers to improve education and health outcomes for people below (or very close to) the national poverty line.<sup>211</sup>

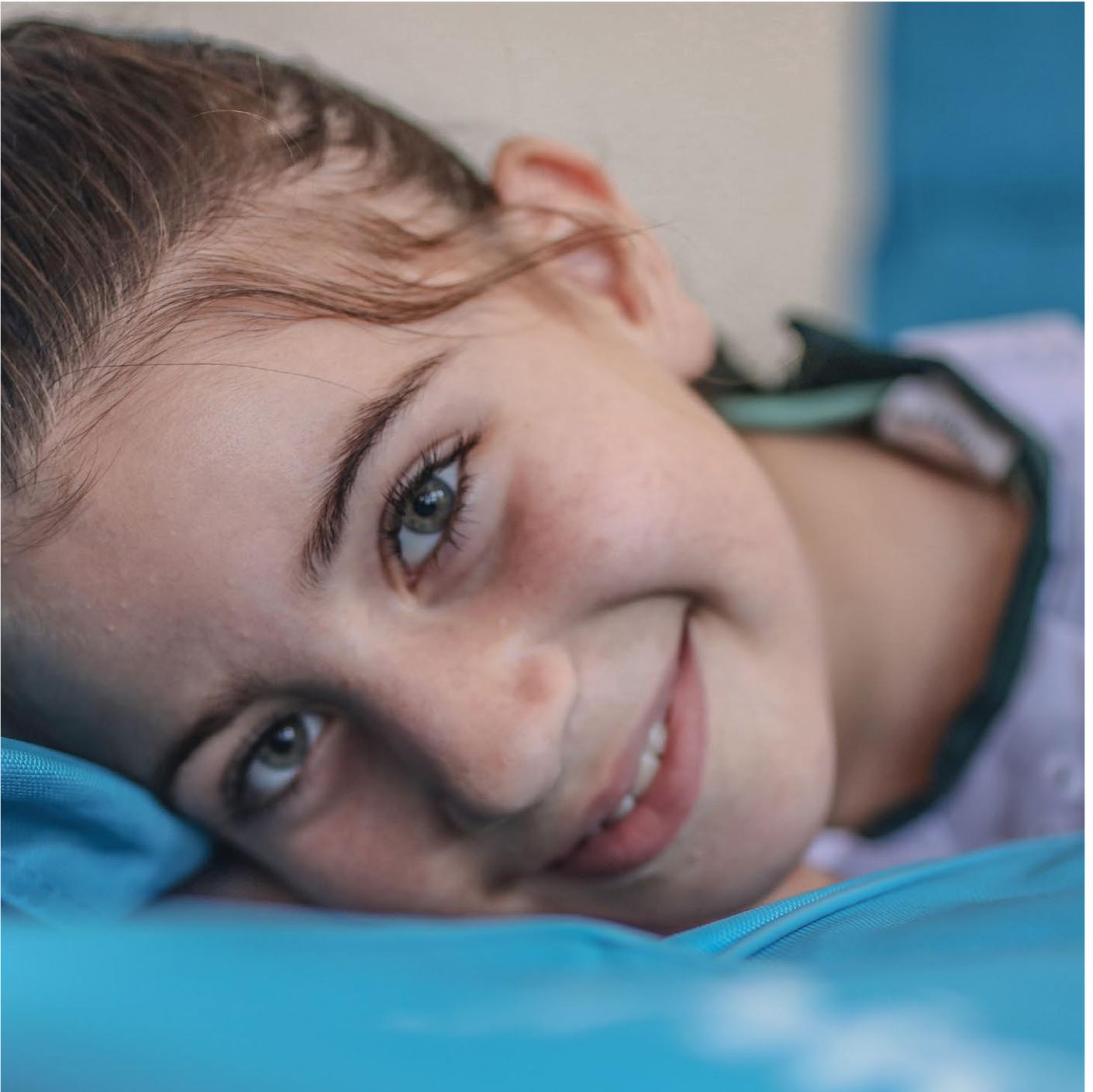
**UNICEF ensured a case management approach was built into the pilot, due to the various barriers that can hinder access to services by vulnerable Iraqi households.**<sup>212</sup> Drawing on its experience linking children to psychosocial support and school enrolment through a humanitarian child grant, UNICEF introduced a strong case management system involving cross referrals to services for non-compliant households.<sup>213</sup> UNICEF also assisted the MoLSA to develop a web-based Information Management System (IMS) to support implementation of the cash transfer.<sup>214</sup> Tablets were procured for social workers, schools and primary health centres to support rapid collection and transfer of data.<sup>215</sup> Service mapping was conducted to identify key services (private, public, or non-government) to facilitate referrals, and over 40 social workers visited more than 4000 families to collect data.<sup>216</sup>



## IMPACT

**By introducing a strong case management system that involved referrals to specialized child services, UNICEF identified and mitigated the potential drawbacks of conditionalities within the cash transfer programme.** The required data for referrals is now shared through an information management system (IMS) operated by MoLSA.<sup>217</sup> The IMS links with schools and health facilities to register beneficiary information and track compliance with their co-responsibilities.<sup>218</sup> A strengthened IMS is expected to improve the administrative infrastructure of social units at the local level, which is important for case management. The monthly data it gathers is used to develop reports and automated text message alerts for behavioral change and awareness raising.<sup>219</sup>

**UNICEF's contributions have shaped the future direction of cash transfer conditionality and case management in Iraq and supported the operationalization of the Social Protection Law.** MoLSA intends to scale up the programme with the support of the World Bank and informed by the findings of the impact evaluation.<sup>220</sup> UNICEF's involvement in shaping the pilot has strengthened the capacity of the Iraqi government, particularly with regards to case management and coordination of social services between ministries. The next phase of the conditional cash transfer programme is to develop a competency framework for social workers, including defining the skills and behavioral attributes needed to work with beneficiaries and conduct home visits.<sup>221</sup> A data collection instrument for casework will also be developed, including a methodology to define needs and conditions.<sup>222</sup> Other initiatives include establishing a family development plan for beneficiary households, preparing guidelines and procedures for implementation support, and drafting a user manual for the case management system.<sup>223</sup>



## **State of Palestine**

Promoting the integration of social services and cash transfers through bespoke case management



## ISSUE

**The Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme (PNCTP) is the flagship social protection programme of the State of Palestine (SoP).**<sup>224</sup> Beneficiaries are selected according to a consumption-based Proxy Means Test that estimates the welfare of each applicant household.<sup>225</sup> The PNCTP was formed in part through the 2010 merger of the SoP's various fragmented social protection programmes, and is managed and administered by the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD).<sup>226</sup> The amalgamation of initiatives to create the PNCTP was generally welcomed, as some families have received more cash income under the merged programme than previously.<sup>227</sup> However, other families have suffered from the loss of valuable in-kind support – particularly households with special disability needs such as equipment and access to therapeutic services.<sup>228</sup>

**UNICEF was concerned that the PNCTP was insufficiently child-sensitive.** Key dimensions of children's rights to social protection and a life free from poverty and vulnerability were not being adequately addressed – including for children with disabilities. UNICEF also recognized that a strong social protection programme needed clear communication and coordination across agencies, and strong referral mechanisms to ensure the deprivations of vulnerable children are identified and addressed effectively.



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF commissioned an analysis of the effects of the PNCTP's cash transfer and complementary services on children and their families.**<sup>229</sup> The mixed methods study was undertaken by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and published in 2014. It sought to inform decision-makers in the SoP as to how the PNCTP could be more effectively integrated with other elements of social protection to maximize its ability to meet children's developmental needs and fulfill their rights.<sup>230</sup> The report, titled *Effects of the Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme on children and adolescents*, found that the PNCTP had evolved into a more integrated approach but there were still important gaps.<sup>231</sup> It found the PNCTP could be more child-sensitive if it had stronger linkages to relevant complementary services that tackle children's broader vulnerabilities.<sup>232</sup> The study concluded there was an urgent need to address such gaps if the programme was to adequately respond to the multiple dimensions of children's vulnerability.<sup>233</sup> Its recommendations included doing more to address the specific needs of children with disabilities, and helping all children to complete upper secondary school and be protected from violence.<sup>234</sup>

**UNICEF also commissioned a situation analysis and needs assessment to better understand whether and how Palestinian children with disabilities were**

**marginalized and excluded, and what obstacles they faced in fulfilling their rights.**<sup>235</sup> The analysis used a lifecycle approach and examined differences at the individual, family and community levels.<sup>236</sup> The report, *Every child counts: understanding the needs and perspectives of children with disabilities in the State of Palestine*, was disseminated in December 2016. It identified many gaps in the law, including the absence of consideration for children with disabilities and limited provisions on the responsibilities and accountability of specific institutions.<sup>237</sup> One of the recommendations of the analysis was to revise the Disability Law 1999.<sup>238</sup>

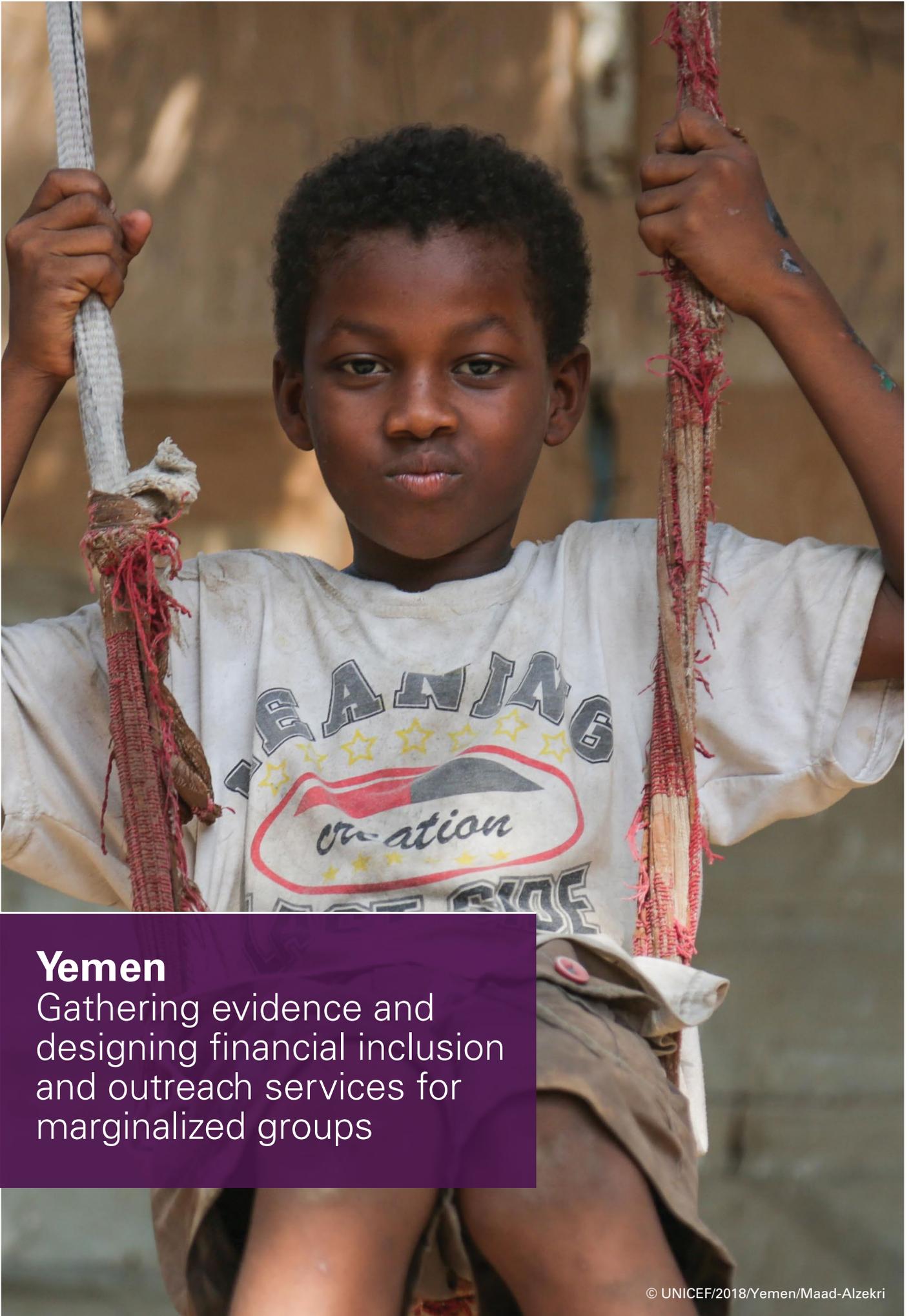


## IMPACT

**The State of Palestine has now established a more integrated approach to social protection and has reformed its approach to case management. UNICEF helped forge** a consensus with key development partners – including the World Bank, EU and WFP – to adopt a case management approach as part of a Social Development Sector Strategy, which was endorsed in 2017.<sup>239</sup> This paved the way for the MoSD, with support from UNICEF, to introduce a new case management system. Under the new system, families classified as extremely poor are now assigned to a social worker who meets with families to assess their needs and establish a customized plan of care and support services which are appropriate to their specific deprivations.<sup>240</sup> The case management system is being piloted in the West Bank.<sup>241</sup> Social protection networks have also been created in all districts to support families in accessing assistance.<sup>242</sup>

**The MoSD has also established a new administrative infrastructure to underpin its social programmes.** This includes a social registry to serve as a 'gateway' to families or individuals considered for inclusion in social programmes, and a Unified Portal to support the case management system.<sup>243</sup> UNICEF is focusing its support on strengthening the MoSD's capacity in: (i) monitoring and evaluation, particularly on analyzing data from the social registry and subsequent decision-making; and (ii) the Unified Portal, which aims to promote coordination among all partners providing social services and assistance; attain the broadest possible coverage of poor households; and prevent duplication in assistance delivery. It facilitates children's access to social protection and other services, including school fee exemptions, health insurance and social assistance from various agencies.<sup>244</sup> It links together various databases within the MoSD as well as with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, among others.<sup>245</sup>

**In addition, the MoSD has initiated legal reforms to strengthen the rights of persons with disabilities.**<sup>246</sup> UNICEF and the Institute of Law at Birzeit University are providing technical support.<sup>247</sup> UNICEF is also scaling up its own policy and programming work to improve care and support provided to children with disabilities.<sup>248</sup>



## Yemen

Gathering evidence and designing financial inclusion and outreach services for marginalized groups



## ISSUE

### **The highly vulnerable Muhamasheen communities of Yemen have lived in seclusion for many years.**

These communities, historically of African descent, face economic and social barriers that have forced them to live in slum areas, and have previously been seen as unlikely to access basic social services.<sup>249</sup>

### **UNICEF recognized there was no formal information on this population group, or any programmes intended to reduce their exclusion.**<sup>250</sup>

The apparent lack of a savings culture in the Muhamasheen communities was likely to be compounded by limited access to social protection programmes – including financial inclusion services. The scant available information suggested a large proportion of Muhamasheen families and their children were deprived in areas such as education, health care, birth records and financial inclusion.



## ACTIONS

### **To improve the quality of information on this marginalized group, UNICEF supported a comprehensive mapping of Muhamasheen communities in 2014.**<sup>251</sup>

Taiz Governorate was selected as the initial site for a survey due to its high density of Muhamasheen communities in both rural and urban areas.<sup>252</sup> UNICEF's survey mapped every existing Muhamasheen community across nine districts.<sup>253</sup>

The survey confirmed high levels of social exclusion: nine percent of this population had piped water in their dwellings; 39 percent of school-aged children were enrolled in education (compared to 69 percent nationally); and the net intake ratio in the first grade of primary education was 10 percent compared to 33 percent nationally.<sup>254</sup>

### **In response to the findings of the survey, UNICEF and government partners launched an integrated package of social protection interventions targeting the Muhamasheen communities in Taiz.**<sup>255</sup>

UNICEF worked with government entities to discuss barriers facing Muhamasheen households in accessing social and financial services and to design an equity-focused social and financial inclusion project. The programme was designed to enable Muhamasheen children to go to school, provide basic financial services to Muhamasheen communities in Taiz Governorate, and mobilize support and advocacy for Muhamasheen families to improve their access to basic services.<sup>256</sup> It also aimed to support children and families to demand and use social protection systems.<sup>257</sup>

### **UNICEF complemented the package of interventions by providing support to the national social protection system, the Social Welfare Fund (SWF).**

UNICEF provided capacity building support to the SWF

Beneficiary Development Network (BDN), a monitoring and referral body.<sup>258</sup> The BDN collects and analyses data on the situation of children, conducts outreach, and refers the poorest and most vulnerable children and their families to social services.<sup>259</sup>



## IMPACT

### **The Muhamasheen Monitoring Survey revealed important evidence to inform the planning, design and implementation of an integrated social protection programme to help fulfill the rights of this community.**

While it was widely known that this community was disadvantaged, the mapping provided the first statistical evidence on the Muhamasheen community's situation. This evidence allowed UNICEF and its partners to develop a new social protection programme to respond to this community's specific needs.

### **The first phase of the Muhamasheen social and financial inclusion project in Taiz delivered a set of integrated financial inclusion, education and child protection interventions.**

After extensive advocacy, civil registration authorities in Taiz issued and waived the cost of valuable documentation for Muhamasheen communities: national identification cards for parents and birth registration certificates for children.<sup>260</sup> Bank savings accounts were opened for over 21,000 parents and children, and over 7,000 people participated in financial education training.<sup>261</sup> Regrettably, a second phase was suspended due to security challenges and the outbreak of conflict in 2015.<sup>262</sup>

### **The complementary outreach support through the BDN reached a large number of vulnerable children.**

More than 2,300 children were enrolled in school; over 650 malnourished children were referred to outpatient therapeutic programme centres; more than 70 suspected cholera cases were referred to health centres; and over 12,500 children were referred to Civil Registry for birth certificates.<sup>263</sup> Almost 1,000 cases of child abuse were identified and referred to government child protection committees.<sup>264</sup>

### **UNICEF's experience in these initiatives has generated important evidence on the design and development of case management modalities.**

It has also underscored the very high levels of exclusion of Muhamasheen communities from mainstream services. UNICEF has since accelerated its emphasis on social inclusion in Yemen through the Integrated Model of Social and Economic Assistance (IMSEA), an innovative effort to address the most pressing and multi-faceted deprivations of the poorest and most marginalized communities in an unstable and humanitarian context.<sup>265</sup> The IMSEA intends to pilot an integrated approach through provision of socio-economic opportunities to enhance livelihoods and strengthen resilience.<sup>266</sup> The Muhamasheen communities are an important target group. The programme successfully completed the first stage of data collection and analysis in 2018.<sup>267</sup>



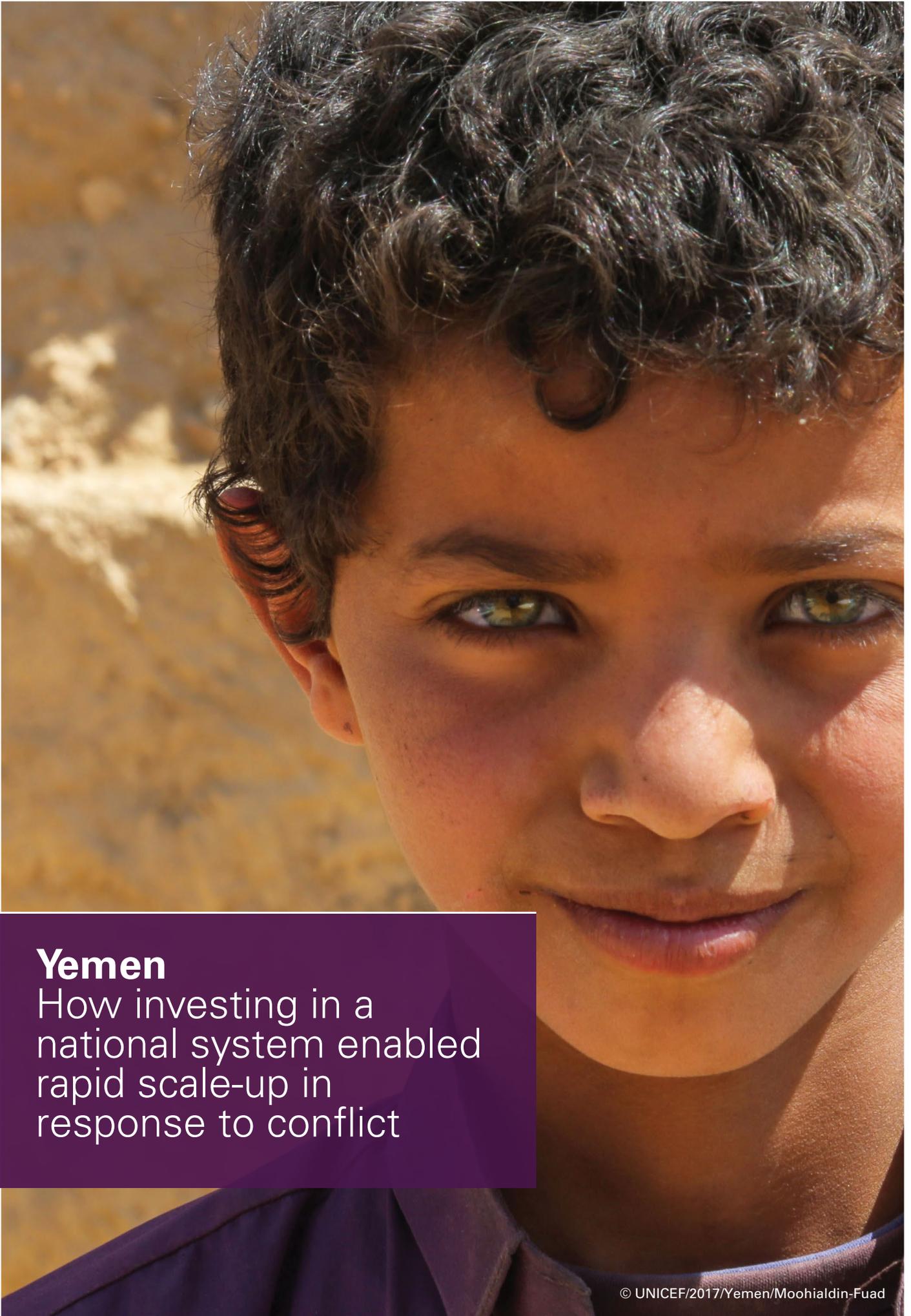
## Action Area 5:

Social protection in fragile and humanitarian contexts/settings





# 5



## Yemen

How investing in a national system enabled rapid scale-up in response to conflict



## ISSUE

### **When Yemen descended into fully-fledged military conflict in March 2015, existing gains in social protection were severely eroded.**<sup>268</sup>

The rapidly deteriorating security situation made it impossible to maintain basic social protection programmes. The flagship Social Welfare Fund (SWF) cash transfer programme, established in 1996, was suspended.<sup>269</sup> Until the civil war broke out, the SWF had been supporting 1.5 million of the poorest households (around 8 million people).<sup>270</sup>

### **Yemen was facing a major fiscal crisis,<sup>271</sup> and the suspension of the SWF in March 2015 placed the national social protection system at risk of collapse.**

Since 2011, UNICEF had provided various forms of social protection support, including generating evidence on ways to improve the SWF and strengthening the management of the SWF by training SWF officials in management information systems, by-laws, operational manuals, improving the beneficiary database and enhancing the use of IT equipment.<sup>272</sup> However, the suspension of the SWF, and the lack of government funds due to the conflict, threatened to undermine the social protection system's ability to resume its operations should the conflict abate.



## ACTIONS

**In 2015 and 2016, UNICEF continued its technical and financial support to the SWF with the aim of preserving the system's operational capacity.** Almost 8 million direct and indirect SWF beneficiaries were left without any social protection when the programme was suspended. UNICEF sought a re-activation of the programme, and submitted a proposal in 2016 to the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Yemen for resuming SWF payments. However, given the stalemate of Yemen's peace talks, and the political complexities involved, it was not possible to reactivate the SWF via Government systems. UNICEF continued its advocacy for re-starting national social protection programming,<sup>273</sup> and the United States agreed to provide funding for UNICEF to undertake an assessment of the SWF's institutional effectiveness and operational capacity at central and decentralized levels.<sup>274</sup> UNICEF also supported the development of strategies and plans for monitoring and evaluation, communication, security and fundraising.<sup>275</sup> But payments to SWF beneficiaries were not resumed, leaving 1.5 million poor beneficiary households without much-needed cash transfers.

### **In 2017, the World Bank approached UNICEF to implement the Emergency Cash Transfer Project (ECTP), which aimed to provide cash transfers to the**

**1.5 million SWF beneficiary cases.**<sup>276</sup> The World Bank regarded UNICEF favourably, particularly in terms of its capacity, field presence and social protection mandate, and offered for UNICEF to manage the implementation of the ECTP.<sup>277</sup> UNICEF created a dedicated Project Management Unit to manage the ECTP,<sup>278</sup> which has demonstrated flexibility and efficiency in designing, planning and implementing a large-scale cash-based emergency response. This initiative incorporated a core element of the pre-conflict social protection system by using the SWF's most recent beneficiary list, which dated from 2014.<sup>279</sup>



## IMPACT

**The ECTP has delivered positive results for beneficiaries and the broader social protection system.** In addition to supporting approximately 8 million conflict-affected people through three rounds of transfers delivered in 2017 and 2018, the ECTP has provided a cash influx into the local economy.<sup>280</sup> The ECTP has also continued to strengthen the national system through ongoing cleaning of the SWF database, and has developed new mechanisms or tools for payment, monitoring, and grievance and redress.<sup>281</sup> In addition, the ECTP has demonstrated how real-time reporting can monitor progress against targets: RapidPro was used to allow real-time reporting of issues at project sites during the second payment and to reach out to some beneficiaries who submitted grievances.<sup>282</sup>

**UNICEF's systems strengthening work facilitated the reactivation of payments to SWF beneficiaries and prevented the total collapse of the SWF.** In addition, UNICEF's efforts have generated valuable evidence on how to establish a shock responsive social protection system. Building and investing in national systems and institutions prior to conflict enabled a rapid and scalable crisis response after conflict broke out.<sup>283</sup> It is also evident that maintaining a collaborative and ongoing dialogue with the established institutions of Yemen, including during programme suspension, allowed for quick re-engagement when the opportunity arose.<sup>284</sup>

**UNICEF's actions have catalyzed further analytical and systems strengthening work to underpin future programming in Yemen.** UNICEF completed an assessment of the institutional and operational capacity of the SWF in early 2018, which provided recommendations on capacity-strengthening measures to revive the system.<sup>285</sup> UNICEF is also supporting MoSAL in strategic planning and capacity building.<sup>286</sup> A Social Protection Consultative Committee (SPCC) has been established to maintain strategic dialogue and coordinate social protection initiatives, which will also help to build national capacity.<sup>287</sup> Looking ahead, UNICEF is considering how to support Yemen's efforts to rebuild the SWF with the long-term goal of ensuring the government can fulfill the social protection rights of its citizens.



## Lebanon

Boosting school attendance and reducing negative coping strategies through social assistance



## ISSUE

**Lebanon has the highest per capita population of refugees in the world.**<sup>288</sup> In 2016, approximately one out of every four people living in Lebanon was displaced from Syria, and there were about 500,000 Syrian primary school age children in Lebanon.<sup>289</sup> The majority of Syrians arrived with limited financial savings, and they struggled to earn a steady income in Lebanon.<sup>290</sup> More than three-quarters of Syrian refugees live below the poverty line, and many of them carry substantial debt obligations.<sup>291</sup>

**UNICEF was concerned that poverty and lack of access to a steady income was making it difficult for Syrian refugees to realize their rights, particularly access to education for their children.** Household poverty can prevent children from accessing and completing their education, and reduces the quality of diets. It can also drive negative coping strategies such as early or forced child marriage and child labor.<sup>292</sup>



## ACTIONS

**A social assistance programme was introduced to help displaced Syrian children attend school.** UNICEF worked in partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) to launch the No Lost Generation (NLG) Min Ila programme in 2016-17.<sup>293</sup> Using a social assistance model, the programme sought to move beyond a pure 'cash transfer' approach and incorporated household visits and a multisectoral referral system.<sup>294</sup> It was designed to help households meet the costs of education and reduce reliance on children through negative coping strategies such as child labour, early marriage, school non-attendance or reducing meals.<sup>295</sup> Under this initiative, children received a basic monthly education grant to cover a portion of the indirect costs of going to school.<sup>296</sup> For older children, an additional amount was provided to reflect the higher earning potential of a working child.<sup>297</sup> The programme, which ran for two years, was piloted in two governorates in the first year and scaled up to a third in the following year.<sup>298</sup>

## The programme also provided case management services to complement the cash transfer.

No conditions were attached to the cash transfer, such as attendance at education or health services.<sup>299</sup> However, school attendance was monitored to record and help understand the reasons for non-attendance.<sup>300</sup> If children did not attend school regularly, households were visited by frontline workers.<sup>301</sup> The household visits were not intended to focus on how households were spending the cash or to take the cash away if children were not attending school.<sup>302</sup> Rather, the purpose of the visits was to offer additional help in the form of referral to services such as health or child protection.<sup>303</sup>



## IMPACT

### The programme had a number of positive and immediate impacts on education and other development indicators.

An impact evaluation showed a range of results, including higher school attendance of enrolled children, increased daily school attendance at the mid-point of the school year, improved food consumption and reduced child work.<sup>304</sup> For children who were absent from school, a single household visit caused 60 per cent of these children to return to school.<sup>305</sup> The positive impacts generated by the programme also demonstrated the ability of stakeholders, including UNICEF, WFP and MEHE, to successfully implement a social assistance programme for refugee children.<sup>306</sup> The rigorous impact evaluation is one of a very limited number of such evaluations of humanitarian cash transfer programmes.<sup>307</sup> Insufficient funding prevented the programme from scaling up nationally in 2018-19. As a result, the programme is being redesigned to further integrate education and child protection issues, and to refine how it targets Lebanon's most vulnerable refugee children.



## **Jordan**

Leveraging the impact of a child grant through a comprehensive approach to social services



## ISSUE

**The large influx of Syrian refugees fleeing conflict has severely strained Jordan's social services in recent years.**<sup>308</sup> Over 650,000 Syrian refugees are registered in Jordan, more than half of whom are children.<sup>309</sup> More than 200,000 Syrian refugee children are of school age.<sup>310</sup> These refugee children are highly vulnerable and have unique needs, which has strained the capacity of Jordanian public institutions to deliver essential social services including education.<sup>311</sup> UNICEF has supported the emergency response to Syrian refugees in many sectors. This includes a monthly child cash grant programme for Syrian refugees, which began in 2015 and aims to reduce vulnerable families' reliance on negative coping strategies by contributing to child-specific expenses.<sup>312</sup>

**However, an evaluation recommended the child grant programme be re-designed to help overcome demand-side barriers to education.** The independent evaluation conducted by the Overseas Development Institute, a think tank based in the United Kingdom, found the child grant programme could be improved in several important ways.<sup>313</sup> While the programme had a range of positive impacts, including supporting greater spending on schooling and improved academic performance, the child grants were not leading to the desired increase in school enrolment.<sup>314</sup> To address this, the evaluation recommended the programme be amended to include an integrated package of social protection services.<sup>315</sup> UNICEF was also concerned about the emergence of social tensions due to the provision of cash transfers to Syrian families but not to vulnerable Jordanian households.<sup>316</sup>



## ACTIONS

**UNICEF designed and rolled out a new phase of the child grant programme in 2017, based on a 'cash plus' approach.** The revised programme, known as Hajati ("my needs" in Arabic), targeted 55,000 vulnerable children in the 2017-18 school year.<sup>317</sup> The programme was not restricted by nationality, and included children from Syria (86%), Jordan (11%) as well as Iraq, Yemen, Egypt and other countries (3%).<sup>318</sup> On average their families lived below the national poverty line and relied heavily on humanitarian support.<sup>319</sup>

**The programme combined monthly cash assistance with referrals to social protection services.** By monitoring school absenteeism, the programme established a trigger mechanism for referring children and their families to additional services.<sup>320</sup> The family is contacted by SMS if a child is absent after five and 10

days, and if a child is absent for more than 15 days they are contacted through a home visit to determine what additional support is required.<sup>321</sup>

**Social services are provided by UNICEF's Makani partners in host communities.** The Makani services aim to promote and contribute to children's full development and physical, cognitive, social and emotional wellbeing.<sup>322</sup> Makani links many different sectoral interventions, including education (eg. learning support services), child protection (eg. psychosocial support services) and adolescent and youth participation (eg. life skills).<sup>323</sup> Other available services include home visits, case management systems and behaviour change communication.<sup>324</sup> Each Makani centre also has a community outreach component, as well as referral services to refer special cases to appropriate services.<sup>325</sup>



## IMPACT

**After its first year, the programme has shown positive results in improving child wellbeing.** Post distribution monitoring (PDM) indicates the programme has demonstrated an ability to return children to school and reduce early school drop-out. The survey found that 3.5% of children were prevented from dropping out of school, and almost one in four (24%) of out-of-school eligible children were re-enrolled in school.<sup>326</sup> The PDM also indicates that 6% of Hajati children were prevented from falling into poverty, and over 18% of households were less likely to use negative coping mechanisms.<sup>327</sup> In line with global evidence that cash accompanied by additional services often has a more powerful and long-lasting effect on its beneficiaries than the provision of cash alone,<sup>328</sup> the programme is promoting social inclusion and reducing the marginalization of vulnerable children.

**Hajati provides an example of how to augment a social protection programme by creating synergies with external networks.** UNICEF worked closely and effectively with Jordanian government counterparts to establish a 'cash plus' approach that was built on international best practices.<sup>329</sup> UNICEF's Makani programme provides services to vulnerable children and families irrespective of their status in more than 200 Makani centres in host communities, refugee camps and informal tented settlements across Jordan.<sup>330</sup> By collaborating with the Jordanian government to forge a cash plus approach and build on the existing network of Makani centres is helping to fulfill the rights of children.



## Syria

Reaching children with complex disabilities through cash transfers and case management



## ISSUE

**In Syria, the non-contributory social protection system provided limited support to children with disabilities both before and after the outbreak of civil war in 2011.** In one programme, the Syrian government provided monthly cash transfers to households with members with cerebral palsy, including children.<sup>331</sup> Another social protection programme, the National Social Aid Fund (NSAF), provided cash transfers to 439,000 families in 2011 before being discontinued.<sup>332</sup> Family eligibility for assistance through the NSAF was based on proxy means testing and other factors, however the program was not specifically targeted toward children with disabilities.<sup>333</sup>

**UNICEF sought to identify opportunities to better support children with complex disabilities.** Most government-run social protection programmes were discontinued after the war began in 2011.<sup>334</sup> The financial burden of caring for children with disabilities meant these families are often among the poorest in Syria.<sup>335</sup> UNICEF initiated a cross-sectoral dialogue with national and local stakeholders on social inclusion and social protection to establish entry points for strategic action.<sup>336</sup>



## ACTIONS

**In 2016, UNICEF launched an integrated social protection programme for children with complex disabilities.**<sup>337</sup> Implementation started in Aleppo, one of the most conflict-affected parts of Syria, and Lattakia, and reached almost 5,900 children in its initial cycle.<sup>338</sup> The programme provides monthly unconditional cash transfers to families of children with complex disabilities, along with professional case management services that include referral to specialized social care services.<sup>339</sup> The programme provides US\$40 per child, a sum based on the estimated cost of the minimum monthly food basket for two people in consideration of the livelihood needs both of children and their caregivers.<sup>340</sup> The cash is distributed directly to the family through a third party financial institution.<sup>341</sup> Beneficiary families are selected based on criteria that include the presence of children with complex disabilities including intellectual disabilities and cerebral palsy.<sup>342</sup> The social workers were provided training on innovative methodologies to support dialogue with public service providers and make appropriate referrals.<sup>343</sup> The case managers were hired through partner NGOs, in coordination with government officials,<sup>344</sup> and facilitate referral of caregivers to livelihood opportunities such as vocational and entrepreneurship training.

UNICEF closely coordinates the implementation of the programme with the Directorates of Social Affairs and Labour at the local level. A network of service providers has been mobilized to enhance referral mechanisms and better integrate interventions across different departments.<sup>345</sup>

**UNICEF also raised awareness about the importance of high quality case management and service delivery within an integrated social protection programme.** In 2017 UNICEF launched an assessment of the quality and availability of services for children and adults with disabilities in Syria, and their level of social inclusion.<sup>346</sup> Through this process, UNICEF mobilized national and international partners and developed data collection tools and protocols for key informant interviews and focus group discussions to generate new knowledge about the status of social protection programmes.<sup>347</sup>



## IMPACT

**Syria's integrated social protection programme was expanded after a thorough review by the MoSAL in late 2017, and in 2018 it reached over 9,500 children with disabilities with cash transfers and case management services.**<sup>348</sup> The government agreed to expand the programme to new areas including Tartous and parts of Rural Damascus.<sup>349</sup> The combination of cash transfers and case management support is demonstrating that, even under the most severe humanitarian conditions, providing an integrated social protection programme is possible. Data from post distribution monitoring surveys and a consumption analysis will be used to assess the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme.<sup>350</sup> Anecdotal evidence has also highlighted the improvement of caregiving modalities, even in extreme circumstances.<sup>351</sup>

**The programme has the potential to transition from an emergency response to a nationally owned social protection scheme.** UNICEF purposefully identified interventions that can be implemented by human resources within the country. Although the programme is building awareness and evidence regarding the role of social protection and case management in humanitarian contexts, it is designed to be implemented by existing public services and could potentially be expanded in a post-conflict scenario. In addition, UNICEF has improved the capacity of local agencies to collaborate in case management activities, and is considering developing a management information system for case management.

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**REALIZING CHILDREN'S  
RIGHT TO SOCIAL  
PROTECTION IN MIDDLE  
EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

A Compendium of UNICEF's Contributions

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for every child